

## **Capsule 9 – The cover letter**

***Goal: Write a cover letter to distinguish yourself***

### **Introduction**

The cover letter is your chance to make good impression: it is the first thing that a boss will see from you! Here are three good reasons for writing a cover letter.

1. This tool, in addition to the resumé, is essential because it allows you to contact a future employer, hence the importance to be careful not to neglect important facts when composing it. It is a way to distinguish yourself from the other potential candidates.
2. The cover letter is perfect to show up your good points. Do not be shy and do not hesitate to talk about your interests, your experiences and the qualities that make you an interesting candidate.
3. It also shows that you feel that this application is important. A personalized letter will testify of your efforts to get the job and show your motivation. It shows you are really interested in a job offer.

### **The cover letter, step by step**

It can seem complicated but the cover letter is not as difficult to write as it first seems. You just have to know the essential information to put in it.

#### LETTERHEAD

First, you have to write the name of the city where you live as well as the date. Then follows the name of the person to whom you are addressing the letter (if you know it), then the address of the organization.

Always verify the name of the person as well as his/her title. If you do not have this information, you could certainly obtain it by calling the company. Use this occasion to confirm the address. Small details can make a difference.

Example:

Montreal, July 18<sup>th</sup> 2007

July Cuts

Owner

Short cuts salon

2110, Scissors st

Montreal (Quebec)

H1W 2V3

## FIRST PARAGRAPH

The first paragraph basically contains two elements: the title of the position you are applying for and how you learned that it is vacant.

Example:

With regards to the ad published in The Gazette of July 18th, 2007, I wish to propose my candidacy as a stylist.

Or

Following the suggestion of July Milds, in charge of human resources, I wish to apply for the graphic designer's position.

## SECOND PARAGRAPH

When writing the second paragraph, do not hesitate to assert yourself. In other words, you have to answer the question: "Why me rather than anyone else?" Try as much as possible to link the requirements to your skills. Use action verbs. Even if it seems difficult, be as concise as possible: think about the pile of resumés the employer will receive!

Example:

Over the last five years, I have cumulated experiences as a hairstylist. Rapidly, I was able to use my creativity in order to serve my clients. Through the years, I have learned to develop a sense of initiative as well as many skills concerning beauty and hairstyle. I always look out for new styles; I am curious and an innovative person. That is why I believe I have all the qualifications required to join your team.

## THIRD PARAGRAPH

This paragraph should include information on the company. List what you could bring as an asset to the organization and why you would like to work for it. This is a good way to demonstrate that you have gathered information on the company.

Example:

For years, your salon has shown the creativity which made its reputation. It would be an honour for me to join your team of hairstylists. Furthermore, I completely adhere to your philosophy, where team work comes first.

## FOURTH PARAGRAPH

In this paragraph, clearly state your wish to meet the person and indicate your availability. Conclude the letter by formal greetings.

After your signature, write your name and contact information. Verify carefully to avoid any errors!

Example:

It would be a pleasure for me to meet you, discuss my experience and show you the realizations I have carried out through the years.

Sincerely Yours.

Anna Cuts  
1246, Cissors road  
Montreal (Quebec)  
MON 2R1  
Tel. (514) 555-5555 Cell. : (514) 555-6666  
E-mail: [acuts@home.ca](mailto:acuts@home.ca)

## Tips

- Do not hand write your cover letter.
- Be concise: your letter should hold in one page.
- Be careful! Do not just summarize your resumé. Take this occasion to relate your skills to the job offer.
- Be precise: avoid meaningless and conventional formulas.
- Personalize your letter by adding information on the position or the organization.
- Keep it simple
- Like your resumé, the presentation of your cover letter must be flawless
- Ask someone to read and check the spelling of your letter: mistakes are unacceptable
- Check out your contact information. Do not forget that it is the only way to join you
- If you send an electronic copy of your resumé, insert your cover letter into the message
- You still have to respect the presentation rules to write your letter

Need help? Do not hesitate to consult an employment advisor!

**To learn more**

You do not know how to start? Here are some resources to help you

Various templates

[http://crep.qc.ca/ta\\_lettres.htm#valent-elles](http://crep.qc.ca/ta_lettres.htm#valent-elles)

<http://www.maildesigner.com/formules-politesse.htm>

Cover letter templates

Saint-Hyacinthe College

Cover letter templates depending on the situation. You can choose templates depending on whether you have experience or not.

<http://svec.cegepsth.qc.ca/placement/pages/etudiants/modeles.html>

These templates give ideas on how to include the information which you have found about the company where you desire to apply for a position.

[http://www.emploisetc.ca/content\\_pieces.jsp?category\\_id=204&root\\_id=202&crumb=68&crumb=740&crumb=540&crumb=1&crumb=34&crumb=106&lang=f#sample](http://www.emploisetc.ca/content_pieces.jsp?category_id=204&root_id=202&crumb=68&crumb=740&crumb=540&crumb=1&crumb=34&crumb=106&lang=f#sample)

[http://www.emploisetc.ca/content\\_pieces.jsp?category\\_id=204&root\\_id=202&crumb=68&crumb=740&crumb=540&crumb=1&crumb=34&crumb=106&lang=f#more](http://www.emploisetc.ca/content_pieces.jsp?category_id=204&root_id=202&crumb=68&crumb=740&crumb=540&crumb=1&crumb=34&crumb=106&lang=f#more)

These examples constitute an excellent reminder of the required elements to include in a cover letter.

<http://emploi Quebec.net/Guide/fr/Exemples/lettre1.htm>

<http://emploi Quebec.net/Guide/fr/Exemples/lettre2.htm>

Here are three examples showing how to follow up to a newspaper ad, to a phone call to an organization or to apply for a position which was not officially announced.

<http://www.jeunesse.gc.ca/yoaux.jsp?lang=en&ta=1&auxpageid=217&flash=1>

## Evaluation

Have you written your cover letter?

Have you asked a reliable person to correct your letter?