

# COVER LETTER GUIDE

Your cover letter is the first thing employers see when you apply for a job. Its content can help you stand out from the crowd. A cover letter isn't just a summary of your resume— it draws the reader's attention to your strengths and accomplishments. It serves as a personalized introduction to generate further interest in your resume.

**A cover letter answers the question:**

## What makes YOU the most suitable - candidate for the job?

### Cover letters contain these primary sections:

#### 1. The Intro -

- Who are you? What led you to write to this particular person/company?
- Why do you want to work for this organization?
- What position are you applying for?
- Let the reader know why this letter has arrived at his or her desk.

#### 2. The Body/Highlights of your qualifications -

- Be concise when you state your best skills - They should be relevant to the job you are seeking.
- Include sentences that demonstrate your skills and relate them to the job requirements – show how they would benefit the company

#### 3. Request for further contact -

- Clearly ask for the next step in the job search process (the interview) without apology or arrogance.

A cover letter needs to be customized - it's not meant to be mass emailed.

It should be catered to fit each position.

So if the letter reads like junk mail, be warned that it may be treated like junk mail!

### Always Include:

- ✓ Your contact information at the top of the page (in the same format as your resume): your name, address, phone number(s), email address (**do not use a hotmail account**).
- ✓ Recipient's work title, address, and whenever possible, their name (**check spelling**). If you can't find out the name of the recipient, begin the letter with "Dear Human Resources," or —Dear Hiring Manager! **NOT** "To whom it may concern".

**Employers often receive hundreds of applications for one job opening, so they may take only 30 seconds to scan each one.**

Cut to the chase; get to the point...in other words,

## Keep It Simple!

<b>Tip #1 - Voice</b>	Write in a tone that feels good to you, while keeping it professional and to the point. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Include action words and phrases and avoid passive sentences.</li><li>❖ Express interest, concern and enthusiasm for the field, position and company.</li><li>❖ Avoid using abbreviations like —wouldn'tll or —isn'tll and personal pronouns</li></ul>
<b>Tip #2 - Layout</b>	A cover letter should only fit on one page. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Watch out for run-on sentences. Don't start each sentence with —ll.</li><li>❖ Keep it as short as possible without sacrificing any important information</li></ul>
<b>Tip #3 - Appearance</b>	Use 8 1/2" x 11" good quality paper: print on one side only. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Keep the format similar to your resume (fonts, size, letterhead, margins, etc.)</li><li>❖ Avoid using illustrated stationery, or other distracting graphics.</li></ul>

 **Finally...**

**CHECK YOUR SPELLING! & FOLLOW UP...**

- ❖ **Even the greatest letter can get buried among a stack of other contenders**
- ❖ **If you wait for the responses, you may be waiting a long time**
- ❖ **Keep track of the letters you have sent and follow up with contacts**

# Cover Letter Troubleshooting

## What information is considered unnecessary?

You can leave out headers that say "Cover Letter", or "Letter of Application". Also, information such as reasons for leaving previous jobs, lists of references, and salary expectations (unless requested by the employer), are considered inappropriate.

## Are your descriptions too vague?

Try to avoid unspecific, frequently used phrases. For example, many people state that they have "good interpersonal skills". But that could mean a variety of things, so try and pinpoint your strengths. Do you mean that you are particularly good at resolving conflicts, following instructions, motivating a group, making tough sales, etc.?

## Don't know where to cut information on your cover letter?

You might be repeating yourself. Remove or merge sentences with the same general ideas.

Read the letter out loud to yourself. Does it sound anything like you? Sometimes, in an effort to impress the reader, we write in ways we would never usually communicate. If the phrasing is awkward, think to yourself, "In other words..." and jot down, in straightforward terms, what you really mean. There is no need to repeat what is already in your resume, this will avoid wasting the employer's time.

Have someone, such as an instructor, or someone in the industry look over the letter for criticism. The Career Centre offers resume and cover letter editing in person or online at [careers.humber.ca](http://careers.humber.ca)

## Helpful Web Sites

For samples of program-related cover letters go to Print Resources on <http://careers.humber.ca>

Advice and Samples for different situations, as well as other career information. <http://www.careerlab.com/letters/>

EducationCanada.com Resource Centre <http://resource.educationcanada.com/tips.html>

And don't forget to use keywords **cover+letter** in your favorite search engine OR ask for some samples in the Career Centre.

## Sample Cover Letters

**Law Clerkley**  
888 Canada Goose Way  
Brampton, ON L6R 2G4  
(905) 555-5555  
lawclerkley@humbermail

October 24, 2012

Ernst & Young LLP  
Barristers and Solicitors  
Ernst & Young Tower  
222 Bay Street  
Toronto, Ontario M5K 1J7

Re: Job ID# TOR00003 - Business Immigrant-Tax Law Clerk Position

Dear Hiring Manager:

The Tax Law Clerk, posted on the Humber College Career Centre job portal is of great interest to me. As a new graduate, I recently completed a field placement with the City of Toronto. This experience allowed me to exercise and improve the practical skills that I have learned through my education at Humber College. During my placement I was exposed to the practice of business law, personal injury law, as well as real estate law. The experience that I have gained has heightened my understanding of the procedures and policies that are required in a legal environment.

I can offer you excellent time management and organizational skills developed through my experience in effectively managing a full course load and maintaining my status as an honors student. I can confidently draft a number of legal documents without assistance, research case law, and prioritize my workload to meet the needs of the clients and solicitors. I take pride in completing work ahead of schedule. My computer skills are extensive; I am proficient in using PC Law, Lexis-Nexis, Teraview, DivorceMate, Cyberbahn and MS Office.

The prospect of joining your dynamic team is truly an exciting one and I am confident that my education, dedication, determination, flexibility and energy will be a great advantage to your team. Please contact me at (905) 555-5555 or lawclerkley@humbermail.ca to arrange a time when we can discuss this position in greater detail.

Yours truly,

Law Clerkley

**Buzz. I. Ness**  
333 Ever Gold Place  
Toronto, ON M8F 2N4  
(416) 555-5555  
buzzness@humbermail.com

April 14, 2012

Ms. Jaime Stardust  
Operations Manager  
Only Fruits Corporation  
125 Pine Place  
Toronto, ON L9E 4S4

Dear Ms. Stardust:

I am interested in exploring opportunities in your logistics department. My academic, pursuits and previous work experience have helped me to recognize the inter-relationship of logistics in the total operation of the company. You will find me to be an energetic team player and detail oriented, with the ability to positively affect the bottom-line. As well, my self-motivation has enabled me to work my way into leadership positions. The experiences that I feel would benefit you the most are:

- Quality / Inventory Control
- Purchasing, Shipping/ Receiving
- Price Quotes / Auditing
- Employee Supervision

I look forward to being a part of the Only Fruits Corporation Team and am confident that I will be able to have a positive impact within the logistics department. I look forward to discussing my qualifications further and can be contacted for an interview at your earliest convenience at (111) 111-1111.

Sincerely,

Buzz I. Ness