

Cover Letters

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A cover letter is one of the documents that will introduce you as a candidate to an employer. The other document is the resume. Thoughtful, well-written, and succinct documents will catch an employer's attention and place you above the rest of the applicants. Remember, you'll have limited opportunity in these short documents to make an impression. Employers will typically spend less than 30 seconds scanning an application ... so always put your best effort into their preparation.

The cover letter serves as an introduction. It supplements the resume and should be customized for each employer. In order to accomplish that, you should first find out everything you can about the potential place of employment. The Internet is a good place to start. Typically, a cover letter should be three paragraphs long:

1. State the name of the position you are applying for, where you found out about the position, and why it interests you.
2. State your skills, qualifications, and experiences that make you the best candidate for the job. Explain any gaps in employment on your resume.
3. Sum up by emphasizing your interest in the company by mentioning something unique to that firm, your qualifications for the position, and contact information for an interview. Be sure to provide all information requested by the employer in their recruitment ad.

Your cover letter and resume should show enthusiasm for the desired position. Make sure any voice mail messages and email addresses reflect a professional image.

Courtesy of the AVMA.