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## **About Cover Letters**

The higher the position, the higher the compensation level, the more your cover letter can help or hurt your chances of being invited to an interview. You can dramatically improve your chances of being called in for an interview—provided you know how to write effective cover letters.

Review these seven tips and consider structuring your cover letters along the guidelines provided. They have worked for other job seekers and they can work for you! So if you think cover letters aren't important... guess again!

**Tip #1** - Poorly written cover letters annoy hiring managers, who consider them a reason not to interview their senders. Poor cover letters are often:

- \* Too long and wordy
- \* Have no objective or point
- \* Loaded with choppy or run-on sentences
- \* Follow a canned format
- \* Present the exact same information as the resume
- \* Contain the personal pronoun "I" more often than necessary.

**Tip #2** - Effective cover letters can differ greatly in style, because no one style is clearly the "best" "or "most effective." For this reason, do not get hung up on style, focus on the content. Does the text make the reader want to continue past the initial 30-second screening?

Tip #3 - Avoid obsolete phrases such as:

"This letter is written in response to..." "Enclosed please find..." "Per your request..." "Please consider this my application for the position of..."

Begin your letter with a statement that says something about your skills and experience.

**Tip #4** - Do not rehash what is on your resume; cover letters should compliment your resume, not be redundant of it. Your resume must give them the facts; the cover letter must give them the person.

**Tip #5** - Are your cover letters negative? For example: "Despite the fact that I have minimal LAN experience," or, "I feel my credentials...." WRONG! Try this approach, "Unlike others who have spent a lot of time doing this work, I bring something extra to the table."

**Tip #6** - Throw out past advice about humility and taking too much credit. This is the time to brag, but realize you are walking a fine line. Being assertive works; being pretentious does not.

**Tip #7** -Your cover letter should show:

- 1) The quality of your work
- 2) Attention to detail
- 3) The results you expect from yourself and others
- 4) Excellent grammar, punctuation, and spelling

## **Joe Hodowanes**

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