Let Your Attorney Cover Letter Make the Case for Interviewing You

Your cover letter is your personal marketing tool. Its purpose is to sell your qualifications to a prospective employer, and it provides you with your first chance to make a favorable impression. Many employers read cover letters first, and if they do not like them, they read no further.

A good cover letter grabs the reader’s attention and motivates him or her to read the resume and set up an interview. Your resume and cover letter together determine whether you get an interview with a particular employer.

The Role of Your Attorney Cover Letter

Your cover letter is different from your resume in several ways:

- It is less rigid and less limiting.
- It can include abilities, aspirations, and personal qualities that are not included in the resume but that might help you to obtain an interview.
- It is more personal than the resume. It can help pin your resume down to the specific job you want. While resumes can be somewhat customized for a category of employers, a cover letter can be personalized and tailored to fit the specific circumstances of a particular job.
- In a cover letter chronological order is not required. You have the flexibility of emphasizing any accomplishments you wish. Don’t draw attention to flaws.
- Your cover letter should not disclose your entire academic and work history. Instead, it should emphasize your strongest qualifications that you believe make you a good match for the job.

Make your cover letter interesting, not dry. Focus your letter on what the employer will gain from you, not what you will get from the employer. Employers don’t care about you. They only care about how you can help them out.

The Content of Your Attorney Cover Letter

The first paragraph should identify who you are and your purpose. Keep it short, and get permission before you drop names.
The second paragraph should communicate your interest in the particular city and employer. It shouldn’t sound like a form letter. Mention ties you may have. Briefly sell your qualifications, but don’t rehash your resume. Use examples such as “The fact that I billed 3,000 hours last year shows I’m a hard worker.”

The third paragraph is the “action close.” Note that you are enclosing a resume, and express a desire to meet. Don’t use weasel words like “if.” Make sure you thank them for their time.

The Tone of Your Attorney Cover Letter

A cover letter should be polite and businesslike, not chatty. It should be to the point. The point is to get an interview, not get hired. Most interviewers will be looking for evidence of intelligence and analytical ability, motivation and work ethic, reliability, good writing ability, efficiency, and so forth. This means you need to proofread and edit your cover letter extremely carefully to eliminate spelling and grammar errors.

Good luck!

See the following articles for more information:

- 21 Major Interview Mistakes to Avoid at All Costs
- The Best Way to Prepare for a Job Search and Interviews
- How to Talk About Other Interviews in Your Interviews
- How to Answer the Tell Me About Yourself Interview Question
- How to Answer the Do You Have Any Questions for Me Interview Question