Writing A Job Application Letter

Write an application letter (also called a cover letter) to mail with your resume when you apply for a job. The resume is a summary of your job skills while an application letter persuades an employer to hire you for a job.

Goal:

The goal of an application letter is to get a job interview. You usually need an interview to get a job. Your letter should both interest and motivate an employer to interview you. Your letter should sound confident about your qualifications, but not sound bragging or pushy.

Parts of Application Letter:

Attract:

Attract your reader's attention. Keep this first paragraph short (1-2 sentences). You can interest an employer in reading your letter by using various techniques: 1. Refer to someone the employer knows who has recommended you; 2. Ask an attention-grabbing question related to the job; 3. Summarize (briefly) how your qualifications make you the right person for the job. 4. Persuade your reader that your qualifications will help with the future development of the business; or 5. Show the reader you have the employee qualities the reader is looking for. You can also use your own attention-grabbing opening.

Link:

Use a linking sentence to connect your first paragraph with the body of your letter. For example, if you mentioned your job skills in your first paragraph, you could discuss your job skills in more detail in your second paragraph.

Persuade: The body (middle part of your letter) should persuade an employer to hire you because you are the right person for the job. Show your reader what you can do for the company and how you have the right job qualifications. The body of your letter should be from one (1) to three (3) paragraphs long. To persuade an employer, you can talk more about one or more points in your resume, but don't just repeat what's in your resume. Don't forget to refer to your enclosed resume in your letter.

Here are some reasons you can use to convince your reader: 1. Talk more about your qualifications for the job; 2. Show your knowledge of the employer's organization and its employee needs; 3. Talk about your personal interest in working for organization; 4. Talk more about your other skills and abilities not covered in your resume.

Interview Request:

Request an appointment for a job interview. Your request should be clear, polite, and short. Here are some sample requests:

Short-Distance Employer:

1. Can I meet with you to discuss specifically how I can help your company? Please feel free to call me at —— to schedule an interview.
2. I am eager to discuss my interest in pediatric nursing with you. Therefore, please call me at —— to schedule an interview.

Long-Distance Employer:

1. If my experience and skills interest you, Ms./ Mr. ———, please write or call me collect at (808) ——— to schedule an interview.
2. I will be traveling to the Big Island in May of 1998. If you are interested in my qualifications, I would like to meet with you. You can contact me at (808) —— to arrange an interview.

Parts of Application Letter:

1. Reader: Address your letter to a particular person and address your reader as Mr. or Ms. ——. Try to find out the name of the person you are writing to. If you can't find out your reader's name, then address your reader by his or her job title, such as "Personnel Manager."
2. Heading: Date you send the letter and your name and address.
3. Inside address: Employer's name and address.
4. Salutation: Dear Mr. or Ms. —— with a colon (:).
5. Body: Middle part of your letter. Single space lines in your paragraghs and double-space between paragraphs.
6. Closing/Signature lines: Close your letter with a pleasant-sounding sentence such as "Hope to hear from you soon." Choose a standard signature line you can use, such as "Very truly yours," or "Sincerely." Put "Enclosure" on the bottom of your letter to remind the reader that you have enclosed your resume.

Edit: Double-check your letter for spelling, grammar, punctuation, and typo's before mailing out your final draft. Your final draft should be perfect to reflect the professional-image you want to give to an employer.

See the enclosed sample for formatting.

Don't Be Discouraged: Keep sending out your application letters, even if you don't get an interview offer. It's common not to get a response or to get a rejection letter. BUT REMEMBER: It only takes one good application letter to get your dream job.

Material from Business Communications, Second Edition, by Michael E. Adelstein and W. Keats Sparrow.

March 1, 1998

Jane M. Kealoha
1433 Kamaile Lane
Kailua, Hawai`i 96734

Ms. Carla Perez
Personnel Office
Matson Company
851 Pikake Avenue
Honolulu, Hawaii 96824

Dear Ms. Perez:

Is there a place in your labor-relations department for a person who is specially trained in the field, who knows working people, and can talk with them on their level? My background, experience, and skills have given me these unique qualifications to fill your labor assistant position advertized in the February 15, 1998, Honolulu Advertiser.

For most of my life, I have lived with and worked with laboring people. I grew up in Kalihi, and my parents worked as conveyor belt operators and truck drivers with the Dole Cannery. While I was a teenager, I also worked in the pineapple fields and apprenticed as a shipping and receiving clerk. During summer vacations in high school, I worked as a shipping clerk and tractor driver for both the Dole Cannery and Castle and Cook. While attending community college, I still work part-time as a shipping clerk to learn more about the labor relations field, and I'm an active member in the Local 579 Union.

I have also planned my community college classes to assist me with my labor relations career.
My classes have included industrial workshop, psychology, and business accounting. I'm also active with my school's business club and the Honolulu Jaycees.

My mechanical and people skills also would meet your company's needs. I can fine-tune and fix common mechanical problems in cars and small engines. My volunteer work with the Suicide Crisis Center has also given me some good interpersonal skills.

My enclosed resume further describes my diligent efforts to prepare for a career in labor relations. Can I discuss my qualifications in more detail with you personally? Please feel free to call me at 262-9849. Hope to hear from you soon.

Truly yours,

Jane M. Kealoha

Legal Aid Society of Hawai`i
924 Bethel Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Legal Aid Society of Hawai`i

Writing A Job Application Letter

Use this brochure when you are looking for a job. Employers will often want a cover letter when you send your resume in.

Use this brochure along with our brochure entitled "How to Write A Resume."

If you have any legal questions or problems, call Legal Aid's intake hotline at 536-4302.

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