

## Cover Letter Tips for Legal Professionals

By **Brendon Buthello**

Your resume is the best means to introduce yourself to the employer. To distinguish your credentials, attributes, and experience, the cover letter is the best medium. The main purpose of the attorney cover letter is to make a significant impact on the hiring manager, and to move your resume from the tottering stack of hundreds of resumes to the well-balanced stack of a few. Therefore, like your resume, your cover letter should be all of the following:

- Concise
- Well-structured
- Persuasive
- Well-reasoned, and
- Grammatically perfect.

The cover letter is written with two intentions. Firstly, to make clear to the hiring manager about your legal career-related intentions and secondly, to attract your prospective employer to your unique traits and qualities related to the job you are applying for.

Some essential tips to writing a cover letter:

- The color of your cover letter should never be a color of the rainbow and should match the color of your resume and envelope. If you are a starter in the legal field, your cover letter should not exceed one page.
- Develop a standard but flexible letter, which can suit your prospective employers with slight modifications for a personalized feel.
- You should never write a letter addressed "To Whom It May Concern." If you don't have the details, always send your letters to the recruiting coordinator at a particular employer.
- In the cover letter, clarify your intentions for applying for the job, the reasons for applying in the particular sector and skills, strengths, and attributes which you possess that can be helpful in securing the job.
- Do not start the letter with "My name is Brendon Buthello," but rather, give an indication of your educational status and explain briefly why you are writing (E.g. I am a first year law student at the Washington School of Law and am interested in being considered for a summer associate position, this year.")
- While writing about the practice area, try to demonstrate that you are an informed consumer. Expressing your passion for work to the employer is especially important. It is also important to highlight particular attributes of the employer that attract you and inspire you to take up the job.
- Prove that you have the traits which an employer expects from an employable law student. Some of the traits may include excellent legal writing and research skills, demonstrated through various instances of the same in the law school and career.
- Put forth something about you which distinguishes you from the masses in a very positive way. Compose something that the reader will remember one hour later.

# ATTORNEY RESUME

- State your interest in an interview. If you plan visiting the employer's city on a certain date, you should indicate this fact.
- When using email, it is imperative that cover letters and resumes be sent as individual attachments written and appearing as if you were mailing it.

To sum it up, the following should comprise the content in your cover letter:

*First paragraph:* State the reason why you are writing, explain the type of internship or practice area you are interested in, and indicate how you learned about the agency and/or the specific position.

*Second paragraph:* Be specific about why you are interested in the position, and how it fits into your legal career ambitions. Summarize some of your strongest qualifications and something you want to learn from your job process.

*Third paragraph:* Refer the reader to the resume or the application letter, you are enclosing. Declare your interest in an interview and offer to provide further information upon request.

## **Conclusion**

The most important step in writing letters is not what you write in the cover letter - but the eventual follow-up. Confirm receipt of your materials by calling or emailing. Remind the employer that you will be in his or her town on a specific date and time. This will be the best culmination to an extraordinary resume and cover letter.