

## COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

### BE SURE TO ...

- Write the letter yourself *and* have someone else proofread it for grammar, syntax, and spelling.
- Keep the letter to one page, three to four paragraphs (shorter for email).
- Address the letter to a specific individual with his or her correct title and business address.
- Tailor your letter for each situation.
- In the opening paragraph, mention the name of the person who referred you, if applicable.
- Write a letter that is work-centered and employer-centered, not self-centered.
- Mention something you know about the company that is related to the position for which you are applying.
- Tell the reader why you are qualified for the position.
- Mention a personal interest you have in the company, its location, service, or product.
- Make it attractive and easy to read.
- Use high quality, matching stationery and envelopes (16-25 pound weight).
- Produce error-free, laser-printed, clean copy.
- Refer the reader to your resume.
- Be honest. Be positive. Be direct.
- Write clearly and simply; use industry-specific keywords.
- Use the active voice and action verbs.
- Be sure your phone number, email and home address are included.
- Sign your cover letter in blue or black ink (or type your name if you are sending it electronically).
- Keep your letter personal, warm and professional.

### NEVER...

- Give a summary of your life, values, goals, etc. longer than 50 words.
- Describe, at length, your admiration for the company's history.
- Overuse the pronoun "I."
- Explain why you left your last job or want to leave your present one.
- Use a form letter and just change the company name.
- Begin the letter with "To Whom It May Concern," or "Gentlemen."
- Repeat verbatim the information in your resume.
- Include your salary history or current salary requirements (unless specifically required to do so, and even then it may not be advisable).
- Inflate or exaggerate your experience and qualifications.
- Hint that you are interested in virtually any job with that organization.
- Say anything negative about your previous employer(s).
- Expect the reader to figure out what job you are best qualified for.
- Use copier paper and/or a dot-matrix printer.