



**QUINTESSENTIAL CAREERS™**  
Your Job Search Starts Here



## Cover Letter Components Worksheet

You have perhaps a maximum of 20 seconds to wow the reader of your cover letter, so maximize its impact by making it dynamic. This worksheet provides a “formula” for cover letters; *however, it is critical that each cover letter be unique and specific to you and to the employer* – not one that any applicant could have written to any employer. Read more in our article, “Cover Letter Success is All About Specifics” ([http://www.quintcareers.com/cover\\_letter\\_success.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/cover_letter_success.html)). Keep your cover letter brief. Never, never more than one page, and it’s best to keep it well under a full page. Each paragraph should have about one to three sentences.

### First Paragraph

Do not waste this opening paragraph of your cover letter. Your first paragraph must spark the employer’s interest, provide information about the benefits the employer will gain from hiring you, and help you stand out from all the other job-seekers who want the job. Focus on your Unique Selling Proposition (See: <http://www.quintcareers.com/USP.html>) – the one thing that distinguishes from all the other job-seekers – and identifying two or three benefits you can offer the employer.

*Weak opening paragraph:* I am writing today to apply for the account manager position you have posted on your company Website.

*Better opening paragraph:* I have increased the size and sales levels of my client base in every position I have held, which in turn has increased the revenues and profits of my employers. I want to contribute this same success in the account manager position you have posted on your Website.

Below, develop a draft first paragraph, telling why you’re writing, what position you’re targeting, and emphasizing your USP:

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### Second Paragraph

Provide more detail about your professional and/or academic qualifications. Detail more information about how you can contribute the benefits you mention in the first paragraph. Be sure to stress accomplishments and achievements rather than job duties and responsibilities. If you’re responding to a job posting or ad, be sure to tailor this paragraph to the employer needs described in the ad.

Below, develop a draft 2nd paragraph expanding on how you can contribute to the employer’s success, especially in relation to the employer’s needs (usually stated in the ad/job posting):

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### Third Paragraph

This paragraph is your opportunity to show what you know about the employer. Relate yourself to the organization, giving details why you should be considered for the position. Do your homework – demonstrate that you know something about the organization. Use the resources in our Guide to Researching Companies

([http://www.quintcareers.com/researching\\_companies.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/researching_companies.html))

Below, develop a draft 3rd paragraph demonstrating your knowledge of the employer and relating that knowledge to how you can meet the employer’s needs:

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### Fourth Paragraph

The final paragraph of your cover letter must be proactive – and request action. Ask for the job interview (or a meeting) in this paragraph. Express your confidence that you are a perfect fit for the job. Put the employer on notice that you plan to follow up within a specified time.

*Weak closing paragraph:* I hope you will review my resume, and if you agree with what I have stated here, consider me for the position. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

*Better closing paragraph:* I am eager to help advance the success of your company, and I am convinced that we should arrange a time to meet. I will call your office in the next week to schedule an appointment.

Below, develop a draft 4th paragraph reinforcing your fit for the job, requesting an interview, and telling the employer you plan to follow up:

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- See sample cover letters: [http://www.quintcareers.com/cover\\_letter\\_samples.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/cover_letter_samples.html)
- See many more cover letter resources in the Quintessential Careers Cover Letter Resources section: <http://www.quintcareers.com/covres.html>.