

## Cover Letter & Resume Preparation

**“Sell the customer what the customer wants to buy; not what you want to sell them.”**

Employers are looking for people that are motivated, have been successful, can produce results and will always strive to make things better. They do not want “status quo.”

So how do you convey that in your cover letter and resume? Emphasize how you have made the places you worked a better place and show how these successes parallel their priorities.

Your resume and cover letter are nothing more than a sales pitch for you. While presentation needs to be eye catching with all of the T’s crossed and I’s dotted, the content is critical in selling you. **It needs to be polished and targeted to each employer’s needs.**

Keep in mind that research shows that hiring committees, GM’s etc. may spend as little as 24 seconds scanning your documents. So your documents need to catch their attention quickly. Tasteful and conservative are key. Make them as powerful and concise as possible and at the same time, show a bit of your personality, especially in your cover letter. Remember, you have only 24 seconds!

**Target your resume and cover letter to the specifics of the employer’s needs and wants.** Do your homework on the facility, job requirements, current employees, and the “hot buttons” that the employer has in relation to the needs of the facility. Reach out to your Employment Consultant, PGA members in the area, contacts you may have at the facility or who know the facility and the job.

Tailor your cover letter with specific accomplishments that fit the employer’s needs, construct your resume objective or professional summary to those needs in conjunction with your skills and history, and make sure your work history bullets support your cover letter and profile.

**Fonts Typically Used:** It is highly suggested to use only one font for your documents. To add emphasis or to make a section stand out, consider using italics, making it bold or in capitals, or underlining. Here are suggested fonts to utilize:

- Arial
- Book Antiqua
- Bookman
- Century Gothic
- Garamond

- Lucida Sans
- Palatino Linotype
- Tahoma
- Times New Roman
- Verdana

## COVER LETTER TIPS

**A good one grabs their attention in the first line, shows who you are, what skills you possess and what kind of communicator you are. Employers expect applicants to make strong, clear, positive statements about themselves in both a cover letter and resume. While employers typically just scan resumes, they will read a cover letter word for word unless it is filled with empty words and clichés.**

Make sure to include something that shows you have researched the facility, you have the necessary skillset and experience and that you desire to join the team.

**Length of Your Letter:** Normally, cover letters are one page, however as long as the information is concise, pertinent to the employer and helps to differentiate you from the other candidates, it is acceptable to expand to two pages.

**Components:** Critical and optional components are:

- Your Contact Info
- Today's date
- Employer Address
- Address by Name - Dear Mr./Ms. ...
- Reference Job #- Re: PGA Job # \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- Compelling Opening Paragraph
- Match your Qualifications to Job
- Key Accomplishments
- Recognize Needs and Offer Solutions
- Ask for an Interview
- Sign-off
- Signature (either scanned and inserted or use a cursive font)
- Famous or Reference Quote (optional)

The following is a checklist to assist in formatting a cover letter to achieve the ultimate goal of landing an interview.

- In theory, employers will decide to call you for an interview based on how well you match the stated job qualifications. Develop a cover letter that will be a word-based snapshot to help an employer picture you in the job they will need to fill.
- Take the time to write a new cover letter for each position for which you may apply. Each letter needs to be “custom-fit” to that particular position.

## **PORTFOLIO TIPS**

**Assembling information into a portfolio illustrating your unique qualifications and emphasizing your professionalism may leave a lasting positive impression on employers. It also may be the key ingredient that sets you apart as exactly the right candidate. Use this tool to further “sell” you to the employer.**

The intent should be to provide information and materials that demonstrate your programs, philosophies, skills, strengths, experience, accomplishments, awards, etc. Make certain that they relate to the needs of the particular position and employer. Like the cover letter, it should be customized to the opportunity. There really is no absolute to portfolio presentations. Technology allows for creative applications such as an e-portfolio stored in a cloud or a PowerPoint presentation.

Many employers place a great deal of emphasis on success stories, seriously considering any candidate who could demonstrate that they started / took over a position and improved rounds, revenues, or profits by X% or X\$. Demonstrating this verbally and on paper is very powerful.

Additionally, pictures are very convincing. One angle could be to show a "commitment to excellence" through the use of before and after pictures from a previous job.

A concept that seems to work well is dividing the presentation into the different programs that will be a part of the job, in essence creating a business plan for each area of the operation. It could include some of the following:

### **Goals and philosophy**

### **Special member/customer services and programs**

### **Financial**

### **Personnel management**

- Staffing plan
- Areas of responsibility
- Methods for recruiting, hiring, training, and managing personnel
- Expectations of employees
- Policies and procedures

**Presentation:** Consider the facility for which you are preparing this piece. It should be a conservative, professional presentation bound at a copy center. Elaborate leather bound presentations for each committee member with each committee member's name

embossed on the cover might work at some facilities but could be overkill and turn off some employers at others.

When to present to the committee may be challenging. Some consider it best to send a portion or all of it with your resume. If that is not possible, the next best option is after the interview has been granted but before the interview. This gives them time to review it and become better acquainted with your skills before you sit down at the formal interview. Lastly, present it at the beginning of the interview. At all costs, avoid leaving it with the committee at the end of the interview, as often their minds are made up when you leave the room.

Make sure to take a few minutes during the interview to walk the committee briefly through your portfolio, asking for questions and leaving them copies.