

When you have prepared your prospect list and you are satisfied that you have gathered all the relevant information for your job search, it is time to prepare your resume for distribution. To do this you must ensure that your resume accurately represents your candidacy and has been proofread to eliminate the risk of any grammatical errors that will impede your chances of success.

It is very important that when you distribute your resume you do so with the help of personalized cover letters. Distributing your resume is not unlike executing a successful marketing campaign. You should always secure the name of the contact person to whom you are sending the resume. Writing Dear Sir/Madam or To Whom it May Concern is simply not appropriate. You can verify this information by placing a call to the company receptionist. Always make sure that you get the spelling correct! Finally, ensure that you get the correct title for your contact name as nothing causes greater offence than using an incorrect title and name.

A strong introduction is required to make an immediate connection with a hiring manager. You must open the communication with a statement designed to generate interest. Quantifying accomplishments works very well in this situation as a hiring manager can immediately determine your potential contribution and ability to add value to their organization. Demonstrate the fact that you have actively researched their company and that you have familiarized yourself with their products, services, market and culture.

Your cover letter must be a persuasive marketing document that makes them want to pick up your resume and read on. They must want to see more of your accomplishments and identify your potential and viability as a potential employee. Offering a brief but carefully chosen insight into your professional background as well as demonstrating your skills, expertise and competencies is what will make you stand apart from the other candidates.

Your cover letter must be strongly worded and must challenge a prospective employer to read further. You must make them want to speak to you or at the very minimum pick up your resume and take it one step further. By quantifying selected accomplishments, you clearly demonstrate why you are an interesting prospect and highlight the contribution you can make to the bottom line.

Closing is always the hardest part as you don't want to simply say. Call me that won't work! You must make the employer call you and do this you have to give your candidacy one last marketing plug. Think of it as a very strong sales pitch where you get one final opportunity to convince a prospective employer of your worth. Finish strongly, cementing your potential in the employers mind.

Remember that each personalized cover letter should be brief, certainly no longer than one page. Review it several times in an effort to condense the language further. It should be punchy and reader friendly. It must flow naturally and generate interest from the very outset.

As with your resume the paper you use for printing your cover letter should be high quality watermarked or bonded white or off white paper. Only use a laser printer that won't blob ink all over the documents. The cover letter must be suitably pristine and the presentation impeccable.

Don't sit back once you have sent the letter and the resume and think you have played your part. You must follow up! As mentioned previously competition for jobs is particularly intense and managers are increasingly busier in their everyday working lives. Call one week after you have submitted your application and courteously request an update. This will ensure that your enthusiasm, good manners and commitment are on display and will prompt an employer to take a second look at your resume with a view to hiring you. Persistence and diligence are two key factors in a candidate's success.