Step 3:
How to Write Good Cover Letters
WAYS TO CRAFT A BETTER COVER LETTER:

- Make your cover letter work for you - think of it as an extension of your resume not just another piece of paper required in the application packet.

- Tailor each cover letter to the position and job description so that you don’t have to write a completely new resume every time you apply for a new job.

- Be sure to cite the CORRECT position title and job number. HR Reps report this common error: Applicants are NOT EDITING A PREVIOUS COVER LETTER and therefore submitting the wrong cover letter.

- State how you meet/beat the position requirements in the 1st or 2nd paragraph.

ONLINE COVER LETTERS:

- Tailor your letter to the position and use topic headings & bulleted sections.

- Use wording directly from the job ad or bulletin as topic headings in your letter.

- Under each topic heading, cite by bulleted section the number of years of specific experience, skills, duties and accomplishments.

- Because you’re using language from the bulletin, you are giving the raters exactly the information they’re looking for.

- This format works well for ONLINE applications.

ACTION VERBS / ACTIVE VOICE & OTHER TIPS:

- Use action verbs to start each bullet and write in active voice, not passive voice.
  - Example -- Active Voice: “I edit out-going letters.”
  - Example -- Passive Voice: “My job is to edit out-going letters.”

- Avoid trite phrases such as “...enclosed please find...”

- Don’t forget to provide your phone number, even though it's on your resume.

- In the closing paragraph, briefly summarize qualifications and experience.
MORE TIPS:

- Avoid the temptation to provide extra information about your professional qualifications -- the raters are looking **only for the skills outlined in the bulletin. THEY DON’T WANT YOUR LIFE STORY.**

- Raters can spend as little as **60 – 90 seconds per resume and cover letter!!** Think of the best way to make your case in one minute total.

- Make your letter user-friendly & succinct. Raters have **very little time** to spend on each resume & cover letter. Too many words and unrelated detail work against you!

- Make sure you state how you meet or beat the minimum qualifications as stated in the job ad in your first or second paragraph.

- **Pay special attention to the application instructions** as specified in the bulletin and **follow the instructions to the letter.**
August 22, 2009

I. Wanda Reyes  
City of San Gabriel  
Department of Public Works  
123 Sea Breeze Drive  
San Gabriel, California  90503

Re: Job Number 243546

Ms. Reyes:

I am writing in reference to the Senior Grounds Maintenance Crew Chief position, Job #243546, with the Department of Public Works. I believe my qualifications; skills and experience would complement and strengthen the position as described in the Employment bulletin.

As my resume demonstrates, I have over fifteen years of experience in maintenance and facilities work ranging from Energy Conservation Representative to Maintenance Crew Chief. Two positions required me to: perform grounds, parks, or landscape maintenance work and one position required expertise in energy conservation:

GROUND MAINTENANCE:
* Ten years experience performing grounds maintenance responsibilities; six years experience in a Crew Chief capacity.
* Ten years experience maintaining records and writing reports.

SUPERVISING CREWS:
* Ten years experience supervising maintenance crews; six years experience in a Crew Chief capacity.
* Six years supervising the safe usage and storage of toxic materials.

PLANNING, DEVELOPING AND ADMINISTERING DISTRICT WORK PLANS AND BUDGETS:
* Six years experience drafting and implementing district work plans in collaboration with staff and management.
* Six years experience developing and monitoring annual budgets that include salaries, supplies, services, utilities, and equipment.

In closing, I offer over fifteen years of maintenance-related experience. I am interested in continuing my career as a Senior Grounds Maintenance Crew Chief. Should you have questions or need further information, please call me at 999-9999.

Sincerely,  

Moe D’Lawn
Re: Job Number 354657

I am writing in reference to the Administrative Specialist II #354657 position. I believe my technical expertise and interpersonal skills position me to be a strong candidate for the position.

As my resume demonstrates, I have over 15 years experience that includes supervisory responsibility. I am proficient in Office 2007 Applications such as, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, and Publisher. Throughout my 15-year career, I have consistently demonstrated:

ORGANIZATIONAL AND WRITING SKILLS, such as:
* Drafting and producing letters, memos, reports, and resource guides.
* Creating and maintaining organized file system for massive amounts of hard copy data.
* Scheduling multiple meetings and maintaining appointment calendars for three people
* Maintaining and producing statistical and narrative reports for management on a quarterly basis.
* Organizing workload for subordinate staff.

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS such as:
* Serving as front-line reception staff to provide service and information to citizens.
* Assisting and calming irate citizens who have problems or complaints.
* Responding quickly to assist agitated accounting clients with tax information for IRS audit.
* Supporting staff and management under extreme deadline pressure by producing all required work ahead of schedule and in an accurate manner.

From my 4 years as Executive Secretary to Lou Pole, Chief Accountant at Dewey, Cheetham & Howe, to my current position as Administrative Specialist I for Ella Fynoe, Manager of Technical Training, I offer 15 years proven experience. I look forward to the opportunity to meet you to further discuss my qualifications for this position.

Sincerely,
Marge Inovera
June 25, 2006

Re:  Job Number 896745

Dear Ms. Reyes:

This letter is in application for the position of Working Crew Chief for Cascade City Utility #896745. I have enclosed a resume for your consideration. I believe I am well positioned to provide the right balance of working experience and leadership skills to best serve the crews, the Utility, and our customers.

I have been working “out of class” as a Working Crew Chief in the North Power Stations Unit of Cascade City Utility for 23 months. I have gained experience and skills in the area of supervision, material procurement, workload forecasting, budget, and knowledge about working with a diverse work force.

I have completed a Washington State Certified Apprentice Program in the Electrical Trades and have been a Union 77 Electrician Constructor for the past five years. As an Electrician Constructor, I have specialized in installation, maintaining and operating power station equipment and circuitry.

EXPERIENCE IN PLANNING, ASSIGNING AND MONITORING WORK OF SUBORDINATE STAFF:
*
Maintained, repaired or rebuilt equipment and electrical wiring.
*
Tested and rebuilt transformers for distribution use.
*
Ensured equipment and parts were available to complete scheduled projects.
*
Laid out, performed work, and supervised maintenance and test procedures of generators, motor generator sets, electric motors, and transformers.

My goal as a Crew Chief is to keep an open line of communication with employees and to build a safer, more productive customer service oriented work team. I believe the experience I have gained in my out-of-class position has given me the practical experience I need to achieve this goal.

I look forward to meeting you for an interview to discuss my qualifications. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Sammy Conductor
Employee # 9848445