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Cover Letter Impression Management

Spelling errors, poor grammar, and poor organization are primary reasons why cover letters get rejected according to 72% of recruiters surveyed (McDowell, 1987).

*Grammar

Do Not Include

Result: X out of 3 checks passed

1. □ Spelling errors
2. □ Awkward word choices
3. □ Inappropriate pronoun usage

*Proofreading recommended if more than two errors are detected
Content, Flow, and Structure

The ideal cover letter’s sentence make-up is 92.58% verbal. Verbals consist of gerund with examples represented by “developing” or “programming,” participles like “marketing” or “rotating” and infinitives such as “to analyze” or “to apply” (Myers, 2004).

Include

Result: X out of 8 checks passed

1. □ Features
   a. □ Length
   b. □ Paragraph count
   c. □ Word count
   d. □ Sentence count
   e. □ Contains title of job in question
   f. □ Mention of enclosed resume

2. □ Introduction
   a. □ The first paragraph seeks to attract attention
      i. □ Offsets weakness or highlights strengths
   b. □ Career/Job objectives are stated
   c. □ Expresses desire to apply for the role

3. □ Middle
   a. □ Establish need
      i. □ Feature – your personal characteristics
      ii. □ Evidence – proof that your characteristics exists and performs effectively
      iii. □ Benefit – how your feature will help a prospective employer
   b. □ Contains Information regarding the ability to contribute to the job in question
   c. □ Contains Information not found in your resume that is relevant to the job in question
   d. □ State own’s understanding of role’s requirement
   e. □ Correlate resume’s item to job requirements

4. □ Closing
   a. □ Move employer to act (e.g., you may reach me at) or
   b. □ Take ownership of contact (e.g., I will be personally contacting you in two weeks...)

5. □ Appropriate requests or “asks.”
a. ☐ Request for a personal Job interview
6. ☐ Customization for the role of interest
7. ☐ Demonstration of knowledge regarding the potential employer
8. ☐ Specific facts supporting claims

Do Not Include

**Result:** X out of 2 checks passed

1. ☐ Redundant resume information
2. ☐ Flattery and ingratiation
   a. ☐ Overemphasis of own needs
   b. ☐ Exaggerated self-descriptive statements
Perceptions of the Ideal Cover Letter and Ideal Resume

In-text: (McDowell, 1987)

Impression Management: A Literature Review and Two-Component Model

In-text: (Leary and Kowalski, 1990)

The Resume Research Literature: Where Have We Been and Where Should We Go Next?

In-text: (Risavy, 2017)

The Million Dollar Letter: Some Hints on How to Write One

In-text: (Myers, 2004)