



## **Preparing Your Cover Letter: CHECKLIST**

- Did you follow a standard business format?**  
The cover letter should be neat, concise, well-organized and almost always fit on one page (except in unusual circumstances). Avoid unusual typefaces or anything too fancy. Print your cover letter on white or a light colored paper that matches your resume and envelope.
- Have you proofread your cover letter and asked others to proofread it as well?**  
Make sure there is no incorrect spelling, improper grammar, poor organization, and/or inappropriate language. Your letter is a direct reflection of the quality of work that you produce.
- Have you highlighted your strengths and what you have to offer?**  
Brag a little! Give a few facts, list relevant skills and state accomplishments on recent jobs that will be impressive.
- Did you describe what makes you different or sets you apart from other applicants?**  
Emphasize your skills, talents, and experiences to show how you would be a valuable addition to the team! If you have relevant volunteer or professional experience, mention it briefly in your cover letter.
- Were you direct and to the point?**  
State your intentions and qualifications right up front. Don't expect a senior personnel manager or recruiter to wade through a mishmash of information on your cover letter before understanding why you are sending your resume. Remember cover letters have a life expectancy of approximately eight seconds.
- Have you personalized your letter to the company?**  
Show that you have done your homework by mentioning company specifics such as a department, a new project or a recent acquisition. A cover letter that relates your skills and experience to a specific position in a specific organization is more effective than a generic "all-purpose" cover letter.
- Are you sure you have not included negative information?**  
Never include personality conflicts with previous employers, pending litigation suits or sarcastic remarks in your cover letter. If you are bad-mouthing your present place of employment, interviewers may fear a repeat performance if they hire you.
- Did you convey personal warmth and enthusiasm?**  
Individualized cover letters should be very specific and should communicate the applicant's skills and qualifications as well as the attitude (professional, enthusiastic, etc.) employers are looking for. In each cover letter, you should ask for the interview. This will show your enthusiasm and confidence in your work!