



[MY CURRENT JOB](#)

[MY JOB OFFERS](#)

[MY WHAT-IFS](#)

**RESOURCES**

[MY PROFILES](#)

[MY ACCOUNT](#)

More from PayScale

- [GigZig](#)
- [Research Center](#)
- [PayScale Blog](#)
- [Meeting Miser](#)

## How to Clinch a Killer Resume Cover Letter

Experts say keep resume cover letters short, sweet and memorable.

By [Kristina Cowan](#)

Do you enjoy writing resume cover letters about as much as you relish root canals? Dread isn't uncommon when it comes to resume cover letters.

"It's an area where job-seekers could do the most to improve, because it does require a certain amount of heavy lifting," said Anna Ivey, a career counselor based in the Boston area. "Most people just write generic resume cover letters, and it's the resume cover letter that's really going to open or close that door, that will decide whether they [employers] bother to read on and look at your resume."

But dread shouldn't get the best of you. Instead, try thinking of resume cover letters as jalapeno peppers-small, but packing a wallop-and heed the following tips on how to write a cover letter from career experts Ivey, Laura DeCarlo, Bernadette Kenny and Deborah DeCamp.

### How to Write A Cover Letter

1. Keep it short. Ivey suggests resume cover letters stick to one page, with about three paragraphs total. "Once you roll over onto a second page you're really taking a risk," Ivey said. DeCarlo, executive director of Career Directors International in Melbourne, Fla., said writing should be punchy and crisp. "Resume cover letters are a form of marketing. Make it easy for recipients to be interested and find what they're looking for, and easy for them to find reasons to keep going," DeCarlo said.
2. Draw the reader in immediately. The first paragraph of a resume cover letter should be an attention-grabber, DeCarlo said: Use an interesting fact, ask a question, or mention a personal connection to someone at the company. Learn how to write a cover letter that engages the reader.
3. Pack it with a "wow" factor. DeCamp, a Chicago-based regional director for Manpower Professional, said you create the wow factor by highlighting accomplishments on your resume cover letter. "You're not just stating what you did in your last job, but what you achieved, created, that you saved the company money, blew out a budget, exceeded expectations," she said.
4. Write well! Resume cover letters are a prime place to demonstrate that you have strong grammar, writing and communication skills, said Kenny, the Melville, Long Island-based chief career officer at Adecco Group North America.
5. Don't recreate your resume. You might underscore one or two points on your resume, but be selective and don't turn the resume cover letter into a laundry list, Ivey said. Learn how to write a cover letter that is unique.
6. Have someone else read it. A second set of eyes is always a good idea, Kenny said, and after someone reads your letter, ask if he or she thinks it's effective.
7. What about responding to ads that ask for salary history? While this is a difficult question to address in a



Find degrees to help increase your salary

**FREE!** Compare Your Salary

Get salary data matched to you and your job.

▼ [Start Here](#)

Job Title

Country

- click to select -

City

State/Province

Years Experience

[Next](#)

**More on PayScale:**

[Jobs Affected By the Real Estate Market](#)

[Recession Proof Jobs](#)

[Guide to Office Gifts](#)

[Holiday Office Party Faux Pas](#)

[Holiday Tipping Guidelines, Holiday Tips](#)

[Tipping Etiquette for Service Providers: Who Should You Tip?](#)

[7 Steps to Stop Meeting Madness & Have More Effective Meetings](#)

[PayScale - Meeting Icebreakers](#)

[Putting Meetings out of Their Misery](#)

[Unproductive Meetings, Meeting Free Fridays](#)

[Career success book list: 25 great reads](#)

[Search for a new job](#)

**Tools & Calculators**

resume cover letter, DeCarlo said it's best not to ignore it. Be broad and vague, giving a general salary range, and stress that you're negotiable.

- 8. Finish with a statement that keeps the conversation rolling. "A good resume cover letter has an action close, that asks to take the next step," DeCarlo said. She explained that many job-seekers aren't interested in coming on too strong, so she suggests a phrase such as "I look forward to hearing from you."
- 9. Follow up! Ivey encourages job-seekers to follow-up. "I think when it comes to your own job search you need to take more control," she said. If you're hesitant because an ad reads "No phone calls," Ivey suggests sending an e-mail to follow up your resume cover letter.

Kristina Cowan is the senior writer for PayScale.com. She has over 10 years of journalism experience, specializing in education and workforce issues. [Email Kristina Cowan.](#)

**NEW Cost of Living Calculator**

Will moving help or hurt your budget? [Compare the cost of living >](#)

**Meeting Miser**

Are your meetings worth every penny? [Find out today >](#)

**Gig Zig**

Where is your career going? [GigZig your job >](#)

**SPONSORED LINKS**

**Project Management**

100% Online. Project Management certificate from Villanova. Free info. [www.VillanovaU.com](http://www.VillanovaU.com)

**Top Teaching Programs**

Earn Your Accredited Online Teaching Degree. Request free info now. [findtherightschool.com](http://findtherightschool.com)

**Leading MBA Programs**

Earn your MBA degree online or on campus. Top Programs. Free Info. [www.gcu.edu](http://www.gcu.edu)

**Basic Grammar Essentials**

Online Grammer course contains essentials for better business writing. [www.hrtraininguniversity.com](http://www.hrtraininguniversity.com)

[Buy a link here](#)

**I want a degree in...**

Business -- Administration & Management

**Find a degree >>**

Degrees for Fastest Growing Careers:

- [Healthcare / Nursing Degrees Online](#)
- [Criminal Justice Degrees Online](#)
- [Teaching / Education Degrees Online](#)
- [Business / Management Degrees Online](#)

[Financial Aid for your Online Education...](#)

**Sponsored Links**

**College Degree in 1 Year**

Earn AS, BS, or MS degree in 1 year. Financial Aid Options. Start Now! [USADegreePrograms.com](http://USADegreePrograms.com)

**Take a Free Career Test**

Find out which jobs and educational opportunities are right for you. [www.livecareer.com](http://www.livecareer.com)


**Nursing Jobs**

Quickly Find Nursing Jobs In Our Nursing Job Directory. [www.allaboutnursingjobs.com](http://www.allaboutnursingjobs.com)

**Online Employee Reviews**

Secret to No-Hassle Employee Review. Download Your Free EZGuide Now [www.hrshopper.com](http://www.hrshopper.com)

[Buy a link here](#)

 Privacy Notice: PayScale takes your privacy seriously and is sensitive to the nature of information collected on this site.

[Syndicate PayScale Data](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [About PayScale](#) | [Help/F.A.Q.](#)  
PayScale, The PayScale Report and People Like You are Trademarks of PayScale, Inc.

© 2000-2007 PayScale, Inc. All rights reserved. Patents Pending.