



# Cover Letters

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A compilation organized  
by TQM Consulting in association with the  
Kamloops Work Search Centres

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## Great Cover Letters are Important!

First impressions count in all areas of your work search, including cover letters. Employers say that they generally take less than thirty seconds to scan cover letters so they need to be customized and relevant.

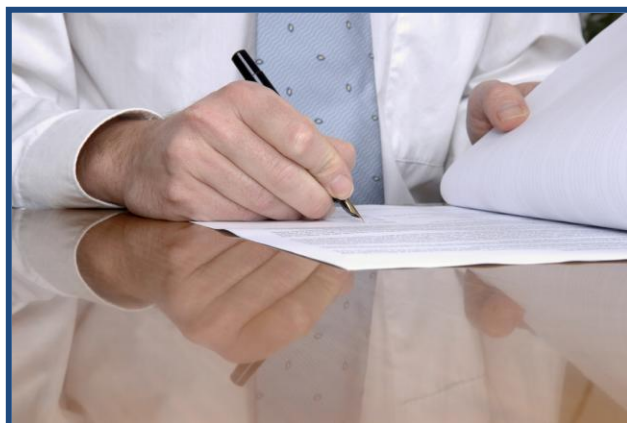
The importance of the cover letter cannot be over-emphasized. It allows you to direct the reader's attention to areas of your resume that are most specific to the job, show your knowledge of the company and explain any part of your work history that needs clarification.

Prior to composing your letter, you must research the hiring organization's core business and personnel needs. This will enable you to tailor your letter and emphasize why you are a great match for the organization and the job.

## What Local Employers are Saying

The Kamloops Work Search Centres and Connections Employment Services conducted a survey with over 70 employers in 12 different industry sectors in the Kamloops region. This is what they shared with us regarding cover letters.

- **Cover Letters are an important part of the application process.**  
Most employers feel that a targeted cover letter should be included with the resume. They say that it demonstrates interest in a particular position and/or company, and contributes to the positive "first impression" that is so important in most industries.
- **Always check for spelling and grammar mistakes!**  
By working at making your resume and cover letter error-free, you'll significantly improve your chances for interviews and job offers.
- **Include relevant information.**  
Make sure that your cover letter and resume contain information that is relevant to the position to which you are applying.
- **Show knowledge of the company** and an enthusiasm for working in a particular industry.



## Writing a Cover Letter

Here are some key points to keep in mind when writing a cover letter:<sup>1</sup>

- ✓ Elaborate on the **skills, experience** and **training** that are relevant to the position.
- ✓ Use **action verbs** (i.e. built, encouraged, coordinated, and maintained).
- ✓ **Be brief.** Your letter should be no longer than one page.
- ✓ Proofread your letter to **avoid** any **grammar** and **spelling mistakes**. A letter that is well written is a testament to your professionalism and attention to detail.
- ✓ Explain why you want the job.
- ✓ Always write your letter in the first person (using “I”).

For detailed formatting information please refer to the ‘Cover Letter Examples’ section of this handout.

## Cover Letter Checklist

Is your cover letter:

- Professional looking
- Printed with a quality printer and on good paper
- Formatted properly and easy to read (the same font size and no smaller than 10 point)
- Free of errors
- One page
- Written in a confident tone
- Addressed to the proper person and/or company
- Specifically written to the position you are applying for
- A strong reflection of your characteristics, skills and qualifications as they are mentioned in the job posting
- Signed
- Used as a regular tool in your work search

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<sup>1</sup> This section includes information taken from [www.careerswithoutborders.com](http://www.careerswithoutborders.com) (accessed Sept 2008). The information has been altered by Work Search Centre staff to improve readability.

## Cover Letter Format Guidelines

When developing a cover letter, effective formatting is important. The following example provides a common formatting option.

Your Street Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Telephone Number  
Email Address

Month, Day, Year

First Name Last Name  
Title  
Name of Organization  
Street or P. O. Box Address  
City, Province Postal Code

Dear Mr./Ms Last Name:

**The first paragraph** serves as an introduction. It describes who you are, what you are applying for and why you are writing your letter. Consider including brief facts about the organization. Be careful not to elaborate too much or include too many details. You simply want the employer to know that you have taken some time to understand the nature of their organization.

**The second paragraph** highlights your skills, experience and education relevant to the position. It is important to include only what applies to the job.

**The third paragraph** is where you describe why you are a good fit for the position and the organization. It is your chance to put into words why you would be a valuable asset in this role.

**The fourth paragraph** is where you mention that you would be interested in scheduling an interview. The last line of your letter should thank the hiring manager for his/her time and consideration. Do not forget to sign off with your full name signature.

Sincerely,

(Your handwritten signature)

Your name typed

## Resources and Assistance

More cover letter information is available from the following resources:

**Books** in the Resource Library at both Kamloops Work Search Centres

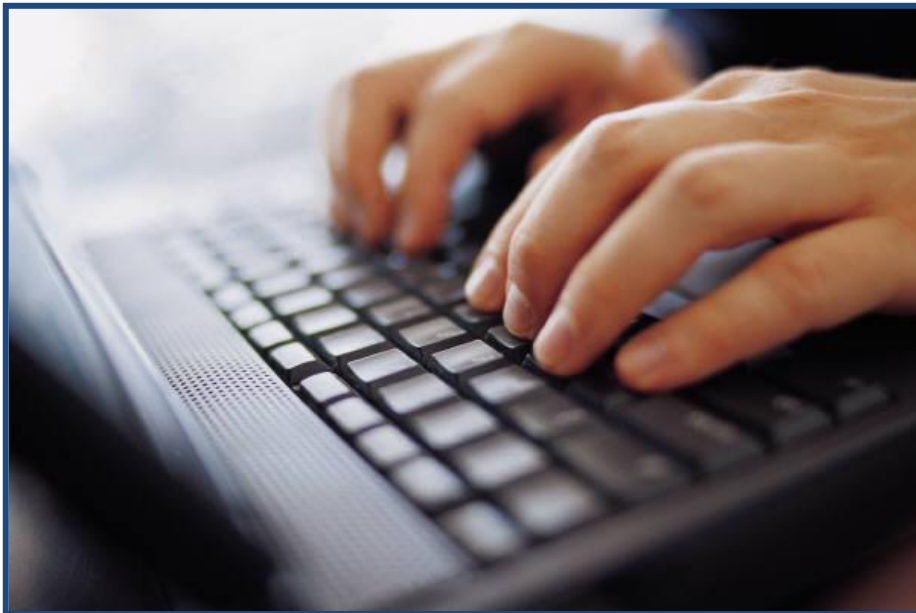
**Cover Letter Sample Binder** is available at both centres with excellent samples for customer service, labourer and various other common position titles

**Electronic Resume and Cover Letter Template** programs

- ▶ Winway Resume
- ▶ Microsoft Word

### Websites

- ▶ [www.nothingbutcoverletters.com](http://www.nothingbutcoverletters.com)
- ▶ <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverlettersamples/a/coverlettsample.htm>
- ▶ [www.coverletter-samples.net](http://www.coverletter-samples.net)



## How to Develop a Cover Letter from a Job Posting

### JOB POSTING

#### SAMPLE JOB ADVERTISEMENT

##### JOB PROFILE

SOURCE: Kamloops Daily News  
POSITION: Customer Service Representative  
TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT: Full Time, 40 Hours/Week, 9 am to 5 pm  
SALARY: \$10.00/HR  
LOCATION: Kamloops, BC

##### QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum 3 years experience in a retail setting
- Basic computer knowledge
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Good telephone speaking abilities
- Excellent organizational skills
- Must be able to plan, organize and supervise

##### EDUCATION:

- Some post secondary education preferred
- Superhost Certificate
- Microsoft Word knowledge

EMPLOYER: Canadian Tire, Kamloops, BC

HOW TO APPLY: In person and submit resume w/cover letter to  
Robert DeNiro, Human Resources Manager

MORE INFORMATION: [www.canadiantire.ca](http://www.canadiantire.ca)

### COVER LETTER

Tom W Hanks  
517A Tranquille Rd  
Kamloops, BC V2B 3H3  
Phone: (250) 666-6666 E-mail: [thanks@email.ca](mailto:thanks@email.ca)

Month/Day/Year

Robert DeNiro  
Human Resources Manager  
Canadian Tire  
Kamloops, BC  
Phone (250) 555-5555

RE: Customer Service Representative Position

Dear Mr. DeNiro,

Please accept this letter and resume as my application for the position of Customer Service Representative as advertised in the Daily News.

My extensive experience working with the general public and strength in providing excellent customer service both in person and by telephone are valuable assets I can bring to the Canadian Tire team. Superior verbal and written communication skills, excellent organizational/supervision abilities and my strong work ethic are additional skills I can provide to ensure high quality service which this position entails. Being proficient with Microsoft Office along with my educational background in Retail Management has taught me valuable lessons for the world of work.

The enclosed resume details my extensive background with a variety of businesses working as a Customer Service Representative.

Thank you for any consideration you may give my resume. I may be contacted at (250) 666-6666 or leave a message. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

*Tom W Hanks*

Tom W Hanks

Enclosure: Resume

**Paragraph 1**  
Mention  
the position  
you are  
applying for  
in the opening  
sentence

**Paragraph 2**  
Be sure to  
paraphrase  
the  
qualifications

**Paragraph 3**  
List additional  
requirements  
for the  
position

Example 1: Inquiring About Employment Opportunities

Karen Stevens

517A Tranquille Rd. • Kamloops, BC • V2B 3H3  
Phone: (250) 222-2222 E-mail: [kstevens@email.ca](mailto:kstevens@email.ca)

August 25, 2008

Mr. Jeff Burns  
Health Association  
125 Any Street  
Kamloops, BC Postal Code

Dear Mr. Burns:

I learned of the Health Association through online research and believe there would be a good fit between my skills and interests and your needs. I am interested in an administrative assistant position upon completion of my Office Administration Diploma in October 2006.

As a student, I am specializing in medical terminology. I have a strong background in office administration and believe my computer and organizational skills would benefit your department. Enclosed is my resume which further outlines my qualifications.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss a position with you, and will contact you in a week to answer any questions you may have and to see if you need any other information from me. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Karen Stevens*

Don't forget to sign your name.

Karen Stevens

## Example 2: Responding to a Newspaper Advertisement

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August 23, 2008

Jennifer Joyce  
Human Resource Manager  
ABC Company  
Kamloops, BC V2C 1S2

If the posting has a competition number, include it in the cover letter.

### **RE: Forklift Operator Position (Competition # 245389)**

Dear Ms. Joyce:

John Friend, the manager of your Manufacturing Division, suggested that I contact you regarding the position of Forklift Operator presently available in your warehouse. I am therefore enclosing my resume for your consideration.

A review of the requirements in the Kamloops Daily News advertisement suggests that I would be an excellent match for this position. My qualifications include:

- Certified forklift operator
- Five years shipping and receiving experience
- Worked in automated warehousing environment
- Team player with good communication skills

Grab the reader's attention by highlighting your relevant qualifications.

I have also been credited with several recommendations that led to greater department productivity and efficiency. Should you agree that I am a good fit for his position, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you. I can be reached at 250-555-5555 or via e-mail at [tbuster@email.ca](mailto:tbuster@email.ca).

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Sincerely,

*Tom Buster*

Tom Buster

### Example 3: Following up on a Job Lead

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**Tom Goodfellow**  
222 Any Street  
Kamloops, BC V2B 3P8  
(250) 555-5555  
E-mail: [goodfellow@email.ca](mailto:goodfellow@email.ca)

August 15, 2008

Michael Kerr  
Human Resources Department  
ABC Company  
Kamloops, BC B3M 3X5

Provide an appropriate e-mail address.

Dear Mr. Kerr:

The CFJC evening news recently has been providing coverage of the new Call Centre which will be coming to the area in the near future. I am very interested in opportunities which may arise as a result of this new venture.

My work experience includes a number of years in the clerical field. I have provided quality customer service, both in person and over the phone, and pride myself on my capabilities in this area. I believe that you will be looking for candidates with a client-centred focus. Both my former supervisor and many of my clients can attest to my strength in this regard. I also have accurate keyboarding and data entry skills, and have performed volume work with strict attention to both detail and deadlines.

Enclosed is a resume for your perusal. I look forward to the possibility of contributing as an employee of your new Centre, and will call you early next week to discuss the matter in further detail. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Tom Goodfellow*

Tom Goodfellow

## Example 4: Personal Connection

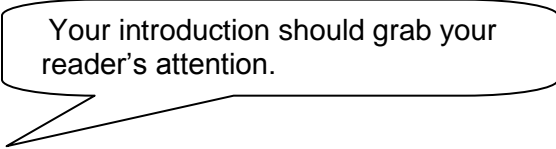
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**Donna Smith**

Any Street • Your Town, BC • Postal Code • Phone (250) 222-2222

October 17, 2008

Mary Hunter  
Principal, Any Elementary School  
555 Lorne Road  
Kamloops, BC V2C 1S1



Your introduction should grab your reader's attention.

Dear Ms. Hunter:

I enjoyed our conversation on October 12th at the Family and Child Development seminar. This letter is to follow-up about the fourth grade teacher position we discussed. I will be completing my Bachelor of Education Degree at Thompson Rivers University (TRU) in May of 2007, and will be available for employment at that time.

The teaching program at TRU includes a full academic year of student teaching. Last semester I taught second grade and this semester, fourth grade. These valuable experiences have afforded me the opportunity to:

- develop lesson plans on a wide range of topics and varying levels of academic ability,
- observe and participate in effective classroom management approaches,
- assist with parent-teacher conferences, and
- complete In-Service sessions on diversity, math and reading skills, and community relations.

Through my early childhood education courses I have had the opportunity to work in a private day care facility, Rainbow Riders Childcare Center, and at TRU's Daycare Centre. At both locations, my responsibilities included leading small and large group activities, helping with lunches and snacks, and implementing appropriate activities. Both experiences also provided me with extensive exposure to the implementation of developmentally appropriate activities and materials.

I look forward to putting my knowledge and experience into practice in the public school system. I can be reached before then at (250) 377-0001. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Donna Smith*

Donna Smith

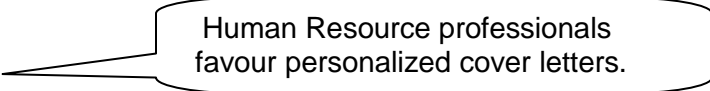
## Example 5: Responding to a Posting on a Job Board

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**Cam Ray**  
222 Any Street  
Kamloops, BC V2C 1W2  
Phone: (250) 555-5555  
E-mail: [camray@email.ca](mailto:camray@email.ca)

September 10, 2008

Rose Plant  
Best Foods Bistro  
555 Lansdowne St.  
Kamloops, BC V2C 1W2



Human Resource professionals  
favour personalized cover letters.

Dear Ms. Plant

I became interested in Best Foods Bistro and Market last year after reading an article in the Kamloops Daily News describing your efforts to support local food producers. When I read your ad for a Customer Service Associate on the Work Search Centre job board I immediately decided to apply for the position. I want to be part of your team because I also place a high value on buying locally and on the importance of customer service. With my strong interpersonal skills and related work experience, I feel I would be an asset to your company as a Customer Service Associate.

In my job as a sales clerk at Caper's Food Store, I regularly work with a high volume of customers, and have developed good interpersonal and time management skills in order to provide fast, effective customer service.

As a volunteer at the Farmer's Market, I run a customer information booth. I feel my skills from this are directly transferable to the Customer Service job, where I would also be listening to clients, asking them relevant questions, and helping them find the answers they need.

I look forward to discussing further how my skills and experience would benefit your company. I can be reached at (250)555-5555. Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

*Cam Ray*

Cam Ray