Cover Letters, Resumes And The Job Hunter...What's It All About?

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Any good job hunter needs a resume package. The cover letter and resume always go together and do the same basic thing in slightly different ways. A job hunter without both of them will probably not get very far in the search for a good career position. With that in mind, let’s take a look at what these crucial documents should do for you. The first part, the cover letter, is a short one page letter consisting of three or four paragraphs. It serves as an introduction to t...

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With that in mind, let’s take a look at what these crucial documents should do for you. The first part, the cover letter, is a short one page letter consisting of three or four paragraphs. It serves as an introduction to the resume. It is the part that will always be seen by the gatekeeper.

The second part is the resume itself. Many job hunters make the mistake of thinking they can just leave a resume without a cover letter. That is like putting on a suit and tie, but forgetting the shirt or the pants. They are a package and they go together.

The resume itself may be in either functional or chronological format. The functional format concentrates on skills. The chronological format concentrates on employment listings. The most effective resumes use elements of both formats to create a combination resume that gets results. It should be laid out in a graphically appealing style, with adequate use of white space, bullet points to draw attention to important parts, and conservative fonts used. While you will occasionally bold face or italicize a font to draw attention to a point or break up a large section of type, changing fonts often makes it hard to read, so stick with one basic font. Also never go smaller than ten point type, and if possible stick with twelve or eleven point. Those sizes are easier to read. If your cover letter and resume are in a small type and hard to read, they simply will not be read, and will not help you.

Many job seekers wonder how they should present the resume package to the decision maker. There are several acceptable methods. If mailing it, use a large nine by twelve white envelope to avoid folding your materials. The white envelopes look nicer than the tan manila commonly used in business. Also large envelopes are generally the first thing people open when they get their mail. If not the first then they may save the large envelope for last. Since people tend to remember the first and the last – the alpha and the omega – while forgetting much of what is in the middle, either first or last is a good thing.

If you are hand delivering your documents stop by an office supply shop and pick up a clear

plastic folder with a pressure binder spine and place your cover letter and resume in it. It makes a great presentation and will complement it perfectly. Use these tools well and you are on your way.