Five common cover letter mistakes

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With every resume submission, you should have a cover letter that accompanies it and presents you as a positive and qualified candidate for the job. A cover letter should highlight areas of your resume which promote your professional experience, and should address any questions an employer may have about hiring you for the job. There are five common cover letter mistakes outlined below that you must avoid in order to get through the first round of resume review and move one step closer to getting the job that you want.

1. Addressing the cover letter using a generic greeting, or misspelling the name of the personal contact or the company. The address line is the most prominent part of the cover letter; it should be included even if the cover letter is sent via email. Generic greetings are not favored; they make it seem like you have a template for your cover letter and you simply send it to all employers you are interested in working for. Do the research and find out who the appropriate contact is for the cover letter. However, make sure that they name and the company name is spelled correctly. If your address line contains errors, your cover letter is likely to never make it to the hiring manager.
2. Telling the company what they can do for your career. Simply stated, employers care about your qualifications and what you can do for the company. Do not spend your time telling the company how working for them can be great for your career. While that could be true, it certainly is not what the employers want to hear. Your potential employers want to hear how you can benefit their team; they want to know what you can bring to the table that is innovative, and focused on results. Make sure that your resume lets your employer know just why you are the best candidate for the job.
3. You re-state your resume. Do not go over the information that is in your resume in your cover letter. Your cover letter is meant to entice, and provoke the employer to review your resume in great detail. Re-stating the information in your resume doesn’t address what the employers want to know, which concerns reasons why you are the best candidate for the job. Highlight certain areas of your resume but do so in the context of your career goals and how such qualifications benefit the company.
4. Starting every sentence with “I”. While your cover letter is about you, starting each sentence this way will make your employer believe that your communication skills are not up to the level of your professional background. Discuss your qualifications, your goals and what you bring to the table in terms of the company, and your professional attributes.
5. Asking the employer to call you at their convenience. The most generic closing statements in cover letters ask the employer to contact you at their convenience. If you are truly excited about the opportunity with the employer, you won’t want to wait for them to call you back whenever they feel like it. What you should do instead is let them know when you want to follow up – and then do follow up. Close your cover letter by letting your potential employer know that you will contact them, as well as the manner in which you will do so. This shows your interest, and your take-charge attitude.