

## 5 Parts to a Cover Letter (a.k.a. How to Write a Good One!)

By Debra Wheatman, President – Careers Done Right  
(Edited Version)

**The Salutation** (The Hello): Get a name, any name. By hook or by crook try to get a name. Sometimes you can't – then try Dear Hiring Manager...

**The Opening** (The Grab): Your opening paragraph is your introduction and presents the reader with some immediate and focused information regarding the position you are pursuing and a **few core competencies** that demonstrate your strength---and your enthusiasm for the job.

**The Second Paragraph** (The Hook): This paragraph should define some examples of the work performed and results achieved. It should be connected to your resume. This does not mean you should copy verbatim what is in the resume. Rather, cover some key competencies that you feel define your success. In the event you are highlighting some information not contained in the resume (if you are switching careers, or have a unique value proposition), this is the perfect place to cover that information. Use bullets to define key areas of achievement and highlight the value you bring to the employer.

**The Third Paragraph** (Paragraph of Knowledge): Here demonstrate something you know about the company that prompted you to write. This shows the reader that you did some preliminary homework and understand the company's drivers, goals, values, etc.

**The Fourth Paragraph** (The Close): In the closing paragraph quickly summarize what you offer and close by either suggesting a meeting or indicating that you will call in a certain number of days. If you choose the latter approach, make sure you follow-up within the time frame you reference.

Sincerely,

Full Name  
Phone #

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### Cover Letter Tips

- Write the job title in the subject line of the email.
- Don't tell your "whole story". Include only relevant information.
- Make your letter accomplishment driven. Demonstrate your value to the employer.
- Show enthusiasm for the position.
- Include a "call to action".
- Use Spellcheck and have your letter reviewed by another set of eyes.