

CAREERS *Special Edition*

Five Common Cover Letter Mistakes

Recruiters read thousands of resumes over their careers. After a while, all those resumes start to blend together.

So how can you, an anonymous job seeker, catch a recruiter's eye? Introduce yourself with an effective cover letter.

Sure, a resume lists all of your achievements, but a resume can't capture your personality, passion or desire for a particular job. A cover letter is the perfect place to let potential employers know you as a person: What you've done, what you can offer and how you express yourself. And there's an added bonus: You can write in full sentences instead of fragments or bullet points.

Many job seekers spend hours crafting each item on their resume. Then they whip out a quick-and-dirty cover letter full of mistakes — not realizing that a cover letter is just as important as a resume.

State exactly which job you're applying for. Include the exact name of the position. If the ad provided a job ID number, then include that too. It's also a good idea to mention where you heard about the opening.

Many recruiters handle hundreds of job openings, so they won't automatically know which one you're gunning for. By reminding them of the specific opening for which you're applying, you'll make it more likely that your resume will be read by the right person.

Do you send the exact same cover letter to every employer?

Big mistake.

The point of a cover letter is to make a personal connection with the reader. So to write a successful cover letter, you should tailor it specifically to each company you send it to.

Community College Grads on Career Paths



North Portland resident Tracy Leanne Jones overcame a learning disability and economic disadvantages on her career path as a student at Portland Community College.

Portland Community College is celebrating its 41st and largest graduation ceremony ever, awarding 2,934 diplomas to PCC graduates. Commencement exercises are set for Friday, June 13, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Memorial Coliseum.

Family, friends, faculty and staff will be on hand to congratulate the graduates and celebrate their accomplishments.

PCC is the largest and most ethnically diverse institution of higher education in Oregon. It serves more than 105,000 full- and part-time students. Ethnic minority students make up 26 percent of the student population. Students hail from all walks of life, ranging in age from 14 to 96. This year's graduating class is 14 percent larger than last year.

Tracy Jones, student leader at the Cascade Campus in north Portland, was chosen to deliver the student address. Jones, a single mother of three who began her studies from

a homeless shelter, has plans to transfer this fall to the University of Maryland.

The 36-year-old mother of three young boys had a rocky start to college. She lost her ability to pay for housing when her partner and the father of her children lost his job.

From there, the road began to smooth out. Jones said.

"I have created a support system in this family at PCC and I am forever indebted to the people who have helped me succeed in life," she said.

Although talented in art and math, Jones struggled with reading and retaining information due to a diagnosed learning disability. But it did not prevent her from earning good grades and induction in the national community college honor society, Phi Theta Kappa. She has also been a student leader at Cascade Campus, directing student programming.

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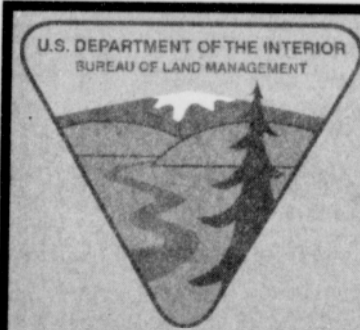
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