

## **Write Cover Letters and Resumes that Get Noticed**

© 2021 John B. McHugh and Liz Novak

By

**John B. McHugh and Liz Novak**

The job market can be like the stock market or the housing market: they all have their ups and downs. There are times when it's great to be an employer, because numerous people are knocking at your door and you can have your pick of talent. At other times, it's more of a "sellers' market," in housing terms, and the job hunter has more negotiating power because there simply aren't enough qualified candidates to fill necessary positions. When the unemployment rate is down to 4 percent, it can be a great time to find a job.

For a decade or more, companies have been concerned about the loss of talent and institutional knowledge that happens when their Baby Boomer employees retire. Add to the already tight job market the impact of COVID-19, which opened many employees' eyes to the benefits of working remotely, and job seekers are enjoying the ability to be picky and select the right position for them, often expecting a signing bonus and negotiating for better salary and benefits.

In this short article, we aim to help job hunters with a short checklist that will help you write compelling cover letters and a resume that gets noticed.

### **How to Write a Cover Letter**

- Write with brevity and conciseness; try for a maximum of three paragraphs and 200 words. You are talking to busy people, so you want to make their jobs easier and be the obvious candidate to interview.
- Tailor your cover letter to the job requirements; too often excellent candidates are overlooked because they aren't matching the jargon used in the job posting.
- Ask for the interview.
- Provide contact information and link to your LinkedIn® page; make sure your LinkedIn profile is updated and ask colleagues to write a glowing referral for you.

### **Resume Evaluation Checklist**

- Check your links and contact information for accuracy.
- Use verbs liberally; match the tense when using verbs. For example, all duties related to your current position should be in the present tense. When listing your duties for a previous position, use the past tense.
- Ensure your resume is error free. We can't stress this point enough: Proofread, proofread, proofread. Ask friends and family to proofread your resume. Typos in a resume are sloppy and give a terrible first impression.
- Don't use inflated or unverifiable numbers, such as "Increased sales \$60,000,000."

- Write to match the requirements of the position; plan to revise your resume to match specific job responsibilities.
- Eliminate clichés, such as, “rain maker,” “team-player,” “paradigm shift” “synergize,” etc.
- Be concise; your goal is a maximum of two pages that can be reviewed in three minutes.

Writing an effective resume is the beginning of a successful job search. Your resume is the entry point to the job portal in any organization. A sloppy and incomplete resume will close the door to employment opportunities. Take your time in crafting your resume. Proofread it numerous times and have someone read and proof it for you. The time and effort you invest in this process, before ever applying for a position, will be worth it.

**Free Career Management Articles are available at <https://tinyurl.com/478xcfdj>**

#### **Contact Information**

Jack McHugh, 414-351-3056

**Email** [jack@johnbmchugh.com](mailto:jack@johnbmchugh.com),

**Website** <http://www.johnbmchugh.com>

Liz Novak

[www.linkedin.com/in/lnovak](http://www.linkedin.com/in/lnovak).