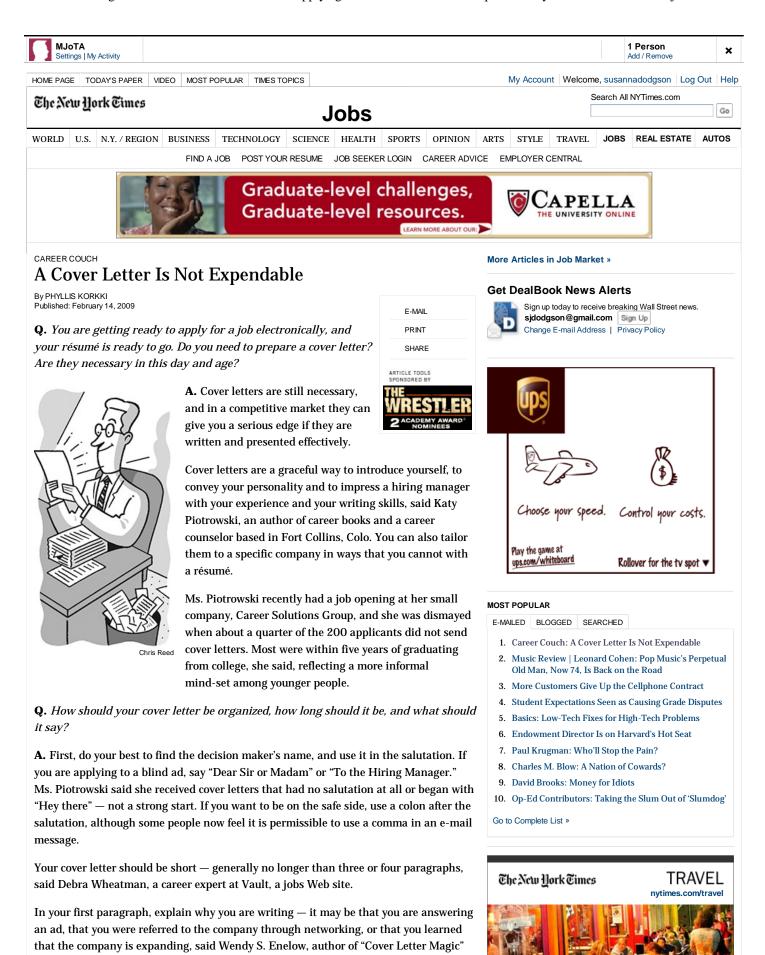
and a professional résumé writer in Virginia.



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1 Person

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highlight specific past achievements. This can either be done as a narrative or in bullet points. Ms. Enelow said.

You can also highlight qualities you possess that may not fit the confines of a résumé, Ms. Wheatman said.

She once worked in human resources at Martha Stewart Living, and recalls reviewing applications for a chef in a test kitchen. One woman had a career in manufacturing, but her cover letter described how she had grown up in a family that was passionate about cooking and where she had frequently made meals from scratch. The woman got the job despite her peripheral work experience.

Finish your letter by indicating that you will follow up in the near future (and make good on that promise). Sign off with a "Sincerely," "Cordially," "Thank you for your consideration" or similar closer, followed by your name and, if you like, your e-mail address.

Q. Where should your cover letter appear, in an e-mail or in an attachment?

**A.** You can include your letter in the actual text of your e-mail message or place it above your résumé in an attachment. If you put it in a separate attachment from your résumé, you run the risk that a harried hiring manager will not click on it at all. If you place it in the text of your e-mail message, it should generally be shorter than if you use an attachment, Ms. Enelow said.

Then, if you really want to make an impression, make a hard copy of your cover letter and résumé and send it to the hiring manager by regular mail. Attach a handwritten note that says, "Second submission; I'm very interested," Ms. Piotrowski said. "I've had clients double their rate of interviews simply from doing that," she said.

Ms. Enelow calls this "double-hitting," and says she has seen it work remarkably well. She said a senior-level client of hers got an interview and was hired because the hard copy of his cover letter and résumé reached the company president, whereas his electronic application was rejected by someone in human resources because it did not meet certain rigid criteria.

**Q.** What are some common mistakes in cover letters?

A. A cover letter with typos, misspellings and poor sentence structure may take you out of the running for a job. If you cannot afford to pay someone to review your cover letter and résumé, enlist a friend or a family member with good language skills to do it instead.

Another misguided thing people do is to make the cover letter all about them: "I did this, I'm looking for, I want to ... I, I, I." Structure your letter so that it stresses the company and what you can do to help it reach its goals, Ms. Piotrowski and others said.

Another danger is including too much information — for example, very specific salary or geographic requirements, Ms. Enelow said. It is also unwise to point out that you do not meet all the criteria in the job description, she said. You can deal with that later, if you get an interview.

Hiring managers are looking for ways to exclude you as they narrow down their applications, she said. Do not give them that ammunition.

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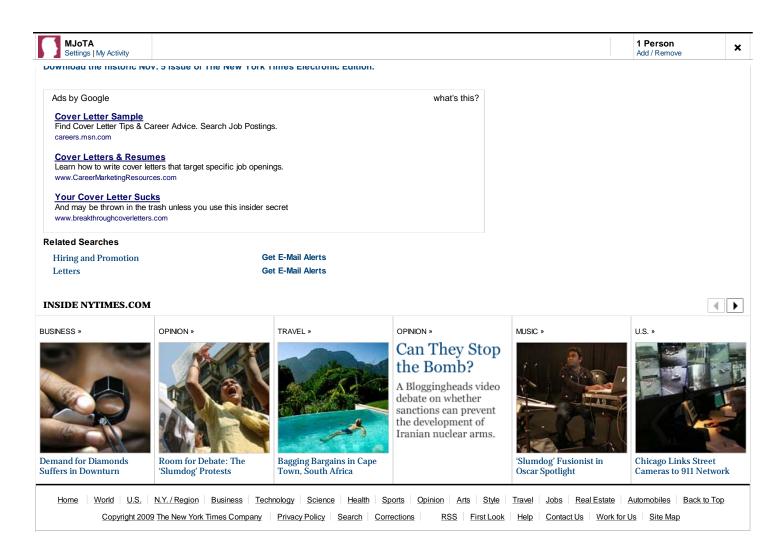
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