

## **Cover letters**

WorkQuest meeting, July 8, 2003

Janis Ramey

### **Who needs cover letters? – YOU DO!**

- And each one has to be specifically created for the recipient.

### **Purpose**

- Interpret the data-oriented, factual resume and add a personal touch.
- Complement your resume --don't duplicate.

### **"You" attitude**

- Use the word "you" rather than "I" – to make the letter important to the reader.
- Write in natural style – not stuffy, formal, or old fashioned.
- Maintain a courteous tone throughout.

### **Opening paragraph**

- Mention referring person, job lead, or ad.
- Mention job you are seeking

### **Content**

- Respond specifically to any qualifications mentioned in job lead, including job title (some people recommend putting these in boldface).
- Use the same terminology ("keywords") that the company and industry uses.
- Show that you know something about the company and the industry.
- Show that your qualifications fit their needs.
- Refer to your resume. (Change resume to contain qualifications and job title mentioned in job lead.)

### **Conclude**

- Clear, courteous request to set up an interview
- Suggest a procedure for setting up interview.
- Include contact information (email, phone especially).
- Use a complementary close ("Sincerely," etc.), even in an email cover letter.

### **Mechanics**

- Respond IMMEDIATELY to a job lead.
- Address to hiring manager – use his or her name and title (Mr., Ms, etc.)
- Make sure cover letter works in ASCII.
- Don't waste the subject line.
- Professional format, organization, style, grammar.
- No spelling or typing errors – NONE.
- Make sure your automatic signature file is professional (no clever quotations, blinking icons, etc.) and that your name appears on the "From" line.
- Use a professional sounding email address (one with your own name).
- If sending followup paper copy, use nice but not fancy paper and envelop.
- Ask someone to review your letter before revising and sending it.
- Wait as long as practical before sending – to catch errors.