

How to Write About People Skills in a Cover Letter

by Laura Scott

Standard resumes list achievements, degrees, and credentials, but cover letters give job hunters a chance to highlight and demonstrate other abilities such as people skills.

Cover letters that emphasize people skills still follow the rules and tell potential employers who you are and why you are writing. But the soft-skill focus lets you avoid repeating what's already on your resume, and it offers additional information and insight into how you might fit into a company or organization.

Employer Standards

Cover letters typically explain why you're interested in a particular job and company. You can introduce the topic of people skills by referring a few examples of how a potential employer taps and uses these abilities. You might mention that you appreciate the company's team building strategies, its group project approach to problem solving, the company's long-term client relationships or its emphasis on networking. Providing actual examples of a potential employer's emphasis on people skills shows you understand an essential aspect of company and your interest in the job is genuine. It also shows you recognize and respect the role of soft skills in the workplace.

Examples of Success

Once you have recognized the company's interest in soft skills, you can offer a couple of brief examples of how similar skills have made a difference in your career. You might, for example, explain how collaborative problem solving led to a breakthrough at a previous job or that a great sales record is due partly to your ability to listen to clients and customers. Instead of just claiming you have excellent people skills, you are providing examples of how you have successfully used those skills.

Potential Benefits

Employers look at what job candidates can bring to the company table. You can use a cover letter to suggest how your people skills could benefit the employer. If you are flexible about work hours or job responsibilities, explain that you are willing to make

adjustments that could help the organization. If you have experience teaching or coaching, mention that you are interested in working with interns or volunteers. Express a willingness to pursue additional training that would allow you to assume responsibilities and tasks that would ease stress on the business and your potential co-workers.

Demonstrating Skills

According to Peggy Klaus, author of "The Hard Truth about Soft Skills," writes that a cover letter is itself an important test in soft skills. Cover letters reveal how effectively you communicate. In cases where employers have requested specific information, a cover letter may indicate how carefully you listen and follow directions. Your tone in a cover letter often reflects your level of confidence about your abilities, and may also leave an impression about how well you may fit into a work environment with an established structure. The amount of time you invest in formatting, grammar and spelling shows where you stand on the importance of presentation and professionalism.

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