

# Modern Principles for Cover Letters and Interviews

## Cover Letter Best Practices

1. **Personalize Aggressively:** Address the hiring manager by name whenever possible. Never use "To Whom It May Concern."
2. **Structure for Impact:**
  - **Opening:** Start with a strong hook. Mention the specific role you're applying for and a key accomplishment or qualification that makes you a perfect fit.
  - **Body Paragraphs (1-2):** Connect your specific experiences directly to the requirements listed in the job description. Use the STAR method to tell a brief story. This is your "why you" section.
  - **Closing Paragraph:** Reiterate your enthusiasm for the role and the company. State your confidence in your ability to contribute. Include a clear call to action, such as "I am eager to discuss how my experience in cloud infrastructure management can benefit your team."
3. **Keep it Concise:** A cover letter should be 3-4 paragraphs and never exceed one page.
4. **Mirror Language:** Use some of the same keywords and phrasing from the job description to show you've done your research and are a good fit.

## Interview Preparation Essentials

1. **Research:** Understand the company's mission, products/services, recent news, and culture. Research your interviewers on LinkedIn.
2. **Prepare STAR Stories:** Prepare 5-7 detailed stories about your key accomplishments using the STAR method. These will be the foundation for answering most behavioral questions (e.g., "Tell me about a time you faced a conflict," "Describe a challenging project").
3. **Know Your Resume:** Be prepared to speak in detail about every single point on your resume.
4. **Prepare Your Questions:** Prepare 3-5 insightful questions to ask the interviewer about the role, the team, the challenges, or the company culture. This demonstrates genuine interest. Examples:
  - "What does success look like in this role in the first 90 days?"
  - "What is the biggest challenge the team is currently facing?"
  - "Can you describe the team's communication and collaboration style?"
5. **Follow-Up:** Send a brief, personalized thank-you email to each interviewer within 24 hours.