The Anatomy of a Cover letter:

**Contact information:** Put the employers contact information at the top, and put your contact information in the header of your cover letter (name, email and phone number and address). This will save space on the page for you to write more in the body of your letter, and ensure that the reader sees that information first.

**Addressing the letter:** Instead of putting “Dear Hiring Manager” or “To Whom it may concern” use LinkedIn to research and locate the hiring managers name to address them directly in the cover letter.

**Introduction:** Begin with how you found out about the position, and why you believe that you are the best candidate. You can also include how you have a personal connection to the company or industry. This is the area where you can mention that you found out about the position from an internal referral or professional acquaintance.

**First paragraph:** Speak to the main experience required of the position – and how you have become proficient in that skill or area. Mention a previous employer and reference a specific project you managed or achievement you had while performing in that role.

**Second and third paragraph:** Determine the remaining two or three skills required of the position, these are usually under the qualifications section of the position description. You may use one paragraph per skill, and reference different employers, or different responsibilities within the same employer. It is key to be specific about how you are knowledgeable and can perform the duties of the role, this is where you are citing specific projects or other details that would not normally be included in your resume.

**Conclusion:** Now that you have cited your specific experience, knowledge and skills as they relate to the position you are applying to, it is important to communicate your culture fit. Chances are that there are hundreds or even thousands of applicants who have similar skills and experience to you. So why should the hiring manager pick you? The closing paragraph is your chance to impress them with your research, and your personal relationship with the employer or industry.

**Call to Action:** Ending your cover letter with a call to action brings it to the attention of the reader that you are prepared to take on the challenge of the position, and are ready to be considered right away. You can also speak to how you can best be reached (email or phone) and when you are available to speak (Monday to Friday, or any day 9 am to 5 pm, etc.).

Remember that your cover letter is simply a chance to broaden the reader’s view of why you’re a good fit for the role, it is your chance to make specific references that will tie you to the company’s mission, values and culture. Do not be afraid to make it personal, and show them why you are passionate about what you do.