



Preparing to write a cover letter

What is a cover letter?

With the application letter, you show a potential employer your interest in a given position. After reading your letter, the human resources manager needs to know what your qualifications are and why you are interested in the offer. Ideally, he or she can get a clear picture of you as an employee, even without having to consult your other application documents.

Tips for writing your cover letter

Keep your CV, the documents developed in Session 1&2 on your skills and know-how at hand. Also have the job offer nearby.

Read the ad carefully!

Your cover letter should, to the extent possible, address as many references as possible to the job offer and the position you are seeking. A prerequisite for this is that you read the job advertisement for the position in detail.

Collect information about the company (its size, activities, clientele, projects).

Find out about the nature of the work and duties of the job advertised.

Ask yourself why you are interested in this job offer:

- What skills are required by the employer?
- What types of skills are explicitly named?
- What are you really interested in the company and the job offered?
- Is it a new experience, a challenge? Or, on the contrary, is this position familiar to you?
- What experiences and skills do you want to highlight? (Think about different things from those on your CV. This will make your file more dynamic).

Ideally, it is advisable to take notes: for example, write down the 5 most important points of the job offer that you want to address in your cover letter.

- Avoid talking only about yourself; address the needs of the employer. These are usually described in the job advertisement.
- Use positive and affirmative turns of phrase such as "I have accomplished.
- Show originality, without aggressiveness or arrogance.
- Avoid repeating the contents of your CV word for word. Find new wording and different information.
- Be concise (one page maximum).
- Take care of the form and presentation of your letter:



- Type it single-spaced and divide it into paragraphs.
- Avoid scratches and stains.
- Read your letter carefully before sending it.
- Is the employer looking for someone with more experience than you?

If you think you can do the job, apply anyway. The motivation you show in your cover letter may make up for your lack of experience.

Content of the cover letter

Structure of a cover letter :

The above structure has proved its worth in terms of cover letters and is also expected by many companies. It would be preferable to deviate from it as little as possible.

Sender/coordinates

Insert your contact details at the top left of the document. Also provide the recipient with various information so that he can contact you such as your address, your telephone number but also a serious email address.

Subject

Here, the recipient must immediately recognize what type of document it is and which item you are applying for. Write the object in one sentence, clearly and concisely.

Salutation Formula

If you know who you are addressing, then you can use either "Dear Sir," or "Dear Madam," to begin your letter. Do not begin your letter with "Dear Sir" or "Dear Madam," as this is too familiar. Also, do not include the last name of the person concerned. You should remain neutral and keep a certain distance. If you do not know whether the recipient is a man or a woman, use "Dear Sir or Madam. However, it is advisable to look for the name of the contact person in order to write a more personalised letter of motivation.

Introduction

The introduction aims to arouse the reader's interest in just 3 to 5 lines so that he or she does not immediately reject your application. To do this, proceed as follows:

Briefly state your motivation for the advertised position. Ideally, you should be able to justify in the introduction that your interest results from your previous professional activity and that the advertised position optimally matches your skills and qualifications. However, limit yourself to a few sentences.

Name the main argument for your recruitment. This can be specific knowledge and skills, your work experience, education and training or previous successes. But focus on the essentials. The more detailed description should only appear in the main section.

The body of the letter



In this part, it's about selling yourself as an employee and as a person in the most convincing way possible. The main section should cover the following points:

- Name the most relevant ones for the job such as Hard Skills (either technical or academic skills). Be sure to include the skills that are explicitly required in the job advertisement. Don't just list these skills, but explain how you acquired or used them by referring to your previous work experience or education.
- Also name your most outstanding Soft Skills (they represent a person's personality and life skills). In many workplaces, certain soft skills are in high demand, such as the ability to work in a team, the ability to solve problems and the ability to cope with stress. Avoid non-technical skills that are too personal and difficult to prove (e.g. empathy, etc.) or those that are of no use to you in the desired position.

The bulk of your skills should be related, as much as possible, to the job you are applying for. In this way, you clarify why your abilities make you the ideal candidate for the job. It also allows you to make an elegant transition to the next section.

Mention of the company

In this section, you answer the following questions:

- What else can I bring to the company?
- Why did I choose the company as a potential employer?

You need to give the reader the impression that you are the ideal candidate for the job. Not only do you need to relate your skills to the job, but you also need to explain why you, as an individual, fit the company's profile. You can do this in the following ways, for example:

Describe the position as the next step in your career. This will give you the impression that the job you are aiming for is the logical next step in your career.

Briefly explain why you find the company interesting. Explain why your personal goal is to work in this company.

Conclusion

The last impression is one of the most important. However, if the reader has held up to the end of the letter, it means that the letter has been interesting enough. You still have one last piece of persuasive work to do. Be sure, however, to express your wish for feedback. Also indicate your willingness to come personally to the company for a job interview.