



What is a Cover letter and how can you make it work for you?

What is a Cover Letter and why is it important?

A cover letter is important as it allows you to demonstrate how your unique combination of skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience meet the key requirements of the position description.

A cover letter should be clear and concise, but provide sufficient detail for a hiring manager or recruiter to clearly understand why you are applying for their vacancy and why they should consider you over all other applicants for the position. It should also include responses to key selection criteria where required.

A Cover Letter gives you the opportunity to show your enthusiasm and passion for a position, the organisation, and/or the sector.

It also allows you to clarify anything that may not be clear from your resume. For example, you may be in the process of relocating from Brisbane to Perth or from the Eastern suburbs to the Western suburbs of Melbourne. Based on your current location you may not be shortlisted, but by clarifying in your cover letter that you are moving, this may ensure that you are considered.

How should I format my Cover Letter?

There is no set way that a Cover Letter must be presented, but the following is a generally accepted format. If you use this format it should ensure that you include all the important details, and that you provide the information in a way that it is easy for the reviewer to read and understand.

Formatting Options for Cover Letters

Contact Section
If you are uploading or mailing a letter, it should be at the top of the page.

Font Choices
Choose a professional font in a 10 or 12 point size.

Body
It should include why you are interested in and qualified for the job.

Proofreading
Avoid errors— details count!

Molly Smith
21 Spring Street
Anycity, NY 12000
555-122-3333
msmith@email.com
August 1, 20XX

John Brown
Sales Manager
ABC Company
321 Main Street
Anycity, NY 12000

Dear Mr. Brown,

I wish to apply for the sales position advertised on Monster.com. Terry Johnson suggested that I contact you directly, as we have worked together, and he felt that I would be a good fit with your team.

For the past two years I have been working in sales for MQX Company. I have consistently exceeded my targets and I was recognized last quarter for outstanding service. I am confident that my experience, communication skills, and ability to convey product benefits effectively would enable me to excel in the sales role.

I would be delighted to discuss with you how I might be asset to the ABC sales team. Thank you for your consideration; I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully yours,
Molly Smith

the balance

The following is an example of an unprofessional Cover Letter. It contains spelling mistakes, different fonts and colour text, incorrect details and lacks relevant information. The candidate wouldn't be shortlisted based on this letter.

Poor example of a Cover Letter

Hi,

I want to apply for the job you guys listed on Seek. I have attached my resume, and as you can see I have all that is required to do a great job for Roberts and Jones and Co!

I cant wait for you to call me for an interview.

Rgds,

FJ 😊



The following is an example of a professional Cover Letter. It is in a clear format, uses consistent fonts and style, includes the candidates' contact information, addresses the company, provides a reference to the specific position and where they saw the advertisement, and relevant information about why they are applying and should be considered for the role. The candidate is likely to be shortlisted based on this letter.

Good example of a Cover Letter

Frankie Jacobs
Email: jacobs@notanemail.com.au
Telephone: 0500 999 9999

1 July 2020

Robertson and Jones Entertainment Pty Ltd
100 Disney Lane
Melbourne VIC 3000

RE: Administration Officer Position advertised on Seek 29 June 2020

Dear Sir / Madam,

I would like to apply for the Administration Officer Position that you advertised on Seek. I have over 6 years' experience working as an Administration Officer in the entertainment industry, in roles very similar to the one you have advertised. I am currently seeking a new opportunity in the entertainment industry as the business I worked for has recently closed due to the impacts of Covid-19.

At AllVids I was responsible for processing all the invoices, new accounts and data entry for our Children's Movies Department, as well as assisting with the production of new documentaries for children. My passion for many years has been creating educational videos and online resources for children, so working in the children's entertainment industry is a great fit for my professional skills and experience, but is also personally gratifying.

I was very excited when I saw your job advertisement, as Robertson and Jones Entertainment P/L has a long history of developing high quality children's movies and I think I could learn a lot more about the industry if I am successful for the position. I have a lot of transferable skills and could quickly transition into this role, as I have used EntSys database for over 5 years and have advanced Microsoft Excel and Word skills, as well as knowledge of industry.

I have outlined below my responses to the key selection criteria, and have attached my resume for your consideration.

I look forward to hearing from you, but if you have any queries about my application please contact me on 0500 999 9999 or at jacobs@notanemail.com.au

Yours faithfully,

F. R Jacobs

Frankie Jacobs



Key things to remember

- ❖ How do I address my Cover Letter? Check if there is a contact person in the job advertisement and address it to them – but make sure you spell their name and position correctly! If not, address it to the business name
- ❖ Make sure you include the name of the position you are applying for and any reference number that is included in the job advertisement in your letter. Recruiters are often reviewing applications for many vacancies at the same time so make it easy for them
- ❖ Prepare a new Cover Letter for each position you are applying for and make sure it addresses all requirements listed in the job advertisement
- ❖ State how you meet the requirements
- ❖ Make it clear why they should choose you – what you can offer that differentiates you from other applicants
- ❖ Be enthusiastic, professional and include why you are interested
- ❖ Add anything that will help explain anything that isn't in your resume – e.g. relocation plans if you are applying for a job in different city/state
- ❖ Include key selection criteria if required
- ❖ Often hiring managers or recruiters receive high volumes of applications so make sure yours grabs their attention – in a good way!
- ❖ Make sure there are no spelling or grammatical errors – have a break after you write your Cover Letter and then re-read it, or ask someone else to read it, especially if English is your second language
- ❖ Don't use unusual fonts that may not upload properly to applicant tracking systems, and keep it consistent with the font type throughout your letter
- ❖ Don't use different colours or different formatting. Colours are often hard to read and look unprofessional, and different formatting makes a document look inconsistent
- ❖ Try to use a common font such as Calibri, Arial or Times Roman – not all fonts are able to be uploaded to applicant tracking systems so use a common font to ensure it uploads correctly
- ❖ Don't write it like you would a text message – it should be professional and business formal



Key things to remember (cont'd)

- ❖ Keep it clear, consistent and to the point – nobody will read a 10 page cover letter!
- ❖ Include your full name in the file name – recruiters and hiring managers may be reviewing 100s of files and if they are all called Cover Letter 2021 it could be confusing

You should include your:

- ❖ First Name & Second Name – use your full names, not just initials or just one name
- ❖ Contact Phone Number – mobile is best
- ❖ Contact Email Address - consider smart phone access to emails when recruiters are contacting you

Don't Include:

- ❖ Details that are false, contradict your resume or job site profiles
- ❖ Details that are incorrect (such as wrong company name or position title)
- ❖ Details that are not relevant to the position you are applying for or are unnecessary
- ❖ A list of tasks / duties from your PD or repeat of your resume! Summarise in your own words, and keep it brief and relevant

Key Selection Criteria

- ❖ Read the job advertisement **AND** the Position Description
- ❖ Look for experience, qualifications, knowledge, skills and other relevant information (such as working remotely, travel, after-hours work, WWCC, Licences) and make sure you address them all
- ❖ Print or save the job details and position description, so you can easily refer to them later
- ❖ Highlight key words in the KSC
- ❖ List examples from your current or past work experience, volunteering or education to show how you meet the KSC
- ❖ Describe relevant skills, experience, incidents, training, personal qualities and expertise
- ❖ Follow the 'STAR' method
- ❖ Address each part of the STAR response in just a few sentences. Be factual and positive, without exaggerating or minimising your capabilities and experience