

Cover Letter

What Employers Want?

Format

The First Paragraph

The Second Paragraph

The Third Paragraph

The Final Paragraph

The Hidden Job Market

Considering Your Approach

What employers want?

A Cover Letter is your opportunity to show how you fit a job role by selling your skills and abilities to the recruiter.

Each cover letter you write must be specific to the job you are applying for.

Applicants who write generic cover letters often forget to remove the name of their competitor from the first paragraph– if this happens the employer will likely put your application straight in the bin!

What they are looking for

In addition to looking for people with the right skill set, employers also want to see:

- * That you have done some research about their organisation for
- * That you understand the sector and the role you are applying
- * That you are enthusiastic about working for their organisation – not just any organisation

Format

Summary of Format

Dear

Mr Sutton/Jane/Hiring Manager (try to get a name if possible)

1st Paragraph

State why you are writing and where you saw the role advertised

2nd Paragraph

State why you want the role and why you want to work for the company

3rd Paragraph

Outline how your skills and attributes match the job

Final Paragraph

Show your enthusiasm towards the role. Add a link to your work, best way to be contacted - call to action, I look forward to seeing you soon

Yours

sincerely/ yours faithfully (If you don't have the name of a person to write to)

The Paragraph Breakdown

First things First!

Get a name!

Where possible address your letter to the person recruiting. You call the company, search their website or look on LinkedIn to get the right name. This also shows that you have done your research and been proactive.

If you cannot find a name you can use “Dear Hiring Manager” but this should be a last resort.

1st Paragraph

State the reason you are writing and where you saw the role advertised.

From the start get your interest and enthusiasm across for example:

“

*I was very interested to see the role of ****
advertised...*

”

The Paragraph Breakdown

2nd

Paragraph

State why you want the role and why you want to work for the company.



Show that you have done some research about the company and that you are applying because you really want to work for them (not just any company!). This will help you to stand out from other applicants.



Look at their website and Google the company—is there an article about them that you could comment on? Have they been in the news recently? Were you impressed by a particular marketing campaign that they ran? Compared to their competitors what is it about them that interests you – size, client base, culture?



If you met someone from the organisation and talked to them about the company – say so! This will underline the fact that you proactively attended one of their workshops / approached someone or went to find out more about them at the Careers event on campus. Remember that at Careers events recruiters will make a note of the people that they met that impressed them so it is a good idea to mention the name of the person you spoke to.



What is it that enthuses you about the particular job role.

The Paragraph Breakdown

3rd

Paragraph

Outline how your skills and attributes match the job.

A covering letter is not a place to repeat everything on your CV but a place to highlight your most relevant skills / attributes for this particular role.

Look at the Job Description, what are the key skills / experience they are looking for? Select 3-4 and describe how your experience will be beneficial to them and make you the ideal candidate. Where possible, quantify your achievements:

“

I worked with the committee to brainstorm, agree and act on a plan to reverse a decline in membership of the Art society. This increased membership by 5% compared to last year.

”

F^{inal}

Paragraph

A positive ending!

This is where you reiterate your interest and tell them that you are attaching your CV. Be positive and upbeat and state that you look forward to hearing from them. You can also say how you can be reached and add a link to your work for reference (if relevant).

Considering Your Approach

Accessing the hidden job market

Some statistics say that
between **60-80%** of jobs are never
advertised!

Many creative industries tend to recruit through their contacts. This is why networking is vital. Being able to write a great speculative covering letter will help you to approach companies to find out about any opportunities that might come up.

How to make an approach

- * Research! Ensure you find a name – try to avoid sending a speculative letter to the HR Department, instead look at the website and on social media, or call the company to ask if they could give you the name of the correct person to approach via email or on their platform.
- * State why you are interested in the company and the department and give an overview of your skills and experience avoiding being too specific. Your aim is to come in for a chat initially so that they can meet you and keep you in mind for any openings.
- * Speculative cover letters are much shorter than a usual cover letter:

Considering Your Approach

....EXAMPLE

Dear Katie,

I am in my final year at AUB in Interior Architecture and Design. I recently attended the London Interior Show and saw your exhibition stand. I was intrigued by *** It really connects with my final year project where I'm exploring.....I've developed skills in I've become really interested in office design and I'd be grateful if you could give me some feedback on my most recent work which can be seen here..... I've attached my CV for your reference, and I'd be grateful to hear your thoughts and any tips you may have.

I can be reached on 07945 454539 and I look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes,
Alison

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