

Tips to stand out from the crowd with your Covering Letter

Employers have to read through hundreds of covering letters so it's just as boring for them to read as it is for you to write. Therefore the standard covering letter a la 'I would love to work for (insert company name) as you are a fantastic company' isn't going to get you very far.

1. Match the job description to your experience and skills

Although it might seem obvious, one of the most important things to do is read the job description and that doesn't mean a quick skim. Have a good read of it, get a feel for what the company are looking for and if it interests you the enthusiasm to apply will come more naturally.

Relate the experience and skills that you have to specific parts of the job description. For example if part of the job involves liaising; talk about how excellent you are at communicating, where you've used these communication skills in the past and how this relates to what you'll be doing in the job.

2. Not too long and don't regurgitate your CV!

Despite this being your opportunity to show off your skills and experience be careful not to waffle on about things that aren't really relevant to the job. Your covering letter is supposed to give the employer a brief insight into why you are a good fit. Employers don't want to be reading through page after page; one is more than enough. So keep your points brief and concise and make sure that the things that you talk about are actually relevant to the job description.

3. Show Understanding of the Company and the Role

Put some research into the company that you are applying for - how long they've been around for, are they a small or large company; local, national or international? Each of these types of company has its perks so talk about them and use your previous experience to relate to this. For example if you've worked for a large or international company in the past explain why you particularly enjoyed it e.g. lots of opportunity for career development, international opportunities etc. The same goes for a small or local company e.g. more of a personal feel to the job.

4. General Tips

Despite the importance of making your covering letter different and standing out from others, there are a few general rules which always apply.

To open with it's important to reference the position that you are applying for as they might have more than one vacancy. It's also generally advised to reference where you saw the job advertised.

Another general rule is to make sure you take the time to proofread! Go through your covering letter two or three times to check for any errors; be it spelling, punctuation or even making sure that you've put down the correct date. Small details can make a huge difference and the smallest of errors can tarnish the whole letter so checking through it is always worth it.

5. Don't Lose Hope

One of the most important things is not to lose motivation and start sending the same covering letter to each employer again. If you become fed up after writing a load of tailored cover letters then have a break for a while until you're ready to start again. It's important to make sure that each covering letter is as good as it can be. Believe it or not you have much better prospects applying for five jobs per day with fantastic cover letters as opposed to twenty jobs with average ones. By following these simple tips you will go a long way with potential employers so keep working at it and make yourself stand out from the crowd!