



Making an impact with a covering letter

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Giving your CV impact

It's really important to include a covering letter or a short note with an application for a position, whether you're responding to an advertisement or whether you have been approached by our researchers. Writing a covering letter gives you a great opportunity to highlight exactly why you are good for a particular role, and demonstrate something of your personality which is frequently hidden behind a short CV.

What to include?

If we have approached you, we will have sent you a detailed brief outlining the position and giving you a really solid understanding of what we're looking for. Usually the brief will contain details of the company we're working with, so include reasons why you'd like to join them. You'll stand out if you have taken the time to understand the deliverables of the role and have pointed to a few areas of strength that you have in relation to the brief. This tells us that you have great attention to detail, that you're keen to progress your career and that you're taking the process seriously.

“The recruiter has a chance to get a feel for why you want to win the appointment”

When we have advertised a position you will undoubtedly have applied for a reason, so it's even more important that you take the time to compose a covering note indicating why you're suitable for the role and what interests you. If the advert is branded, use the covering note to demonstrate what you know about the organisation, why working for them appeals to you and in particular what you could bring to the party.

Crucially, the recruiter has a chance to get a feel for why you want to win the appointment, which can be a real differentiator when it comes to the final selection and shortlisting process.

General tips

As communication is primarily electronic you have a variety of options, all of which are fine – attaching the covering note as a separate letter, including it within the body of the CV or simply writing your notes directly into the email. Keep your note relatively short – certainly no more than a page of A4 – and make sure that you use the name of the person you are writing to. Be concise and use bullet points if appropriate, and make sure that you conclude your letter on a positive note.

A few final points

Check for any mistakes and have someone else proof-read it before you send it. Ask yourself “would I interview this person?” and if your answer is not a definite yes, rewrite it.