

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

STAND OUT COVER LETTERS



“The secret of joy in work is contained in one word - excellence.
To know how to do something well is to enjoy it.”

Pearl Buck

COVER LETTERS

WRITING A COVER LETTER

A cover letter sells the enthusiasm of your application. It always (unless specified) accompanies your resume or curriculum vitae. Its purpose is to introduce you and outline how you meet the criteria in the job advertisement and summarise how you are the best matched candidate for the role.

You have ample opportunity to sell your enthusiasm throughout the letter including:

- Your interest for the role - show you have researched the position, for example through mentioning your current employment goal and possibly long term interests, even thinking about the training on offer as well as progression and how this aligns well with your professional goals.
- Your interest in the organisation - demonstrate you have researched the organisation, you know a little about their culture and their current business for example any recent business development activities such as mergers and acquisitions or a move into the global market.

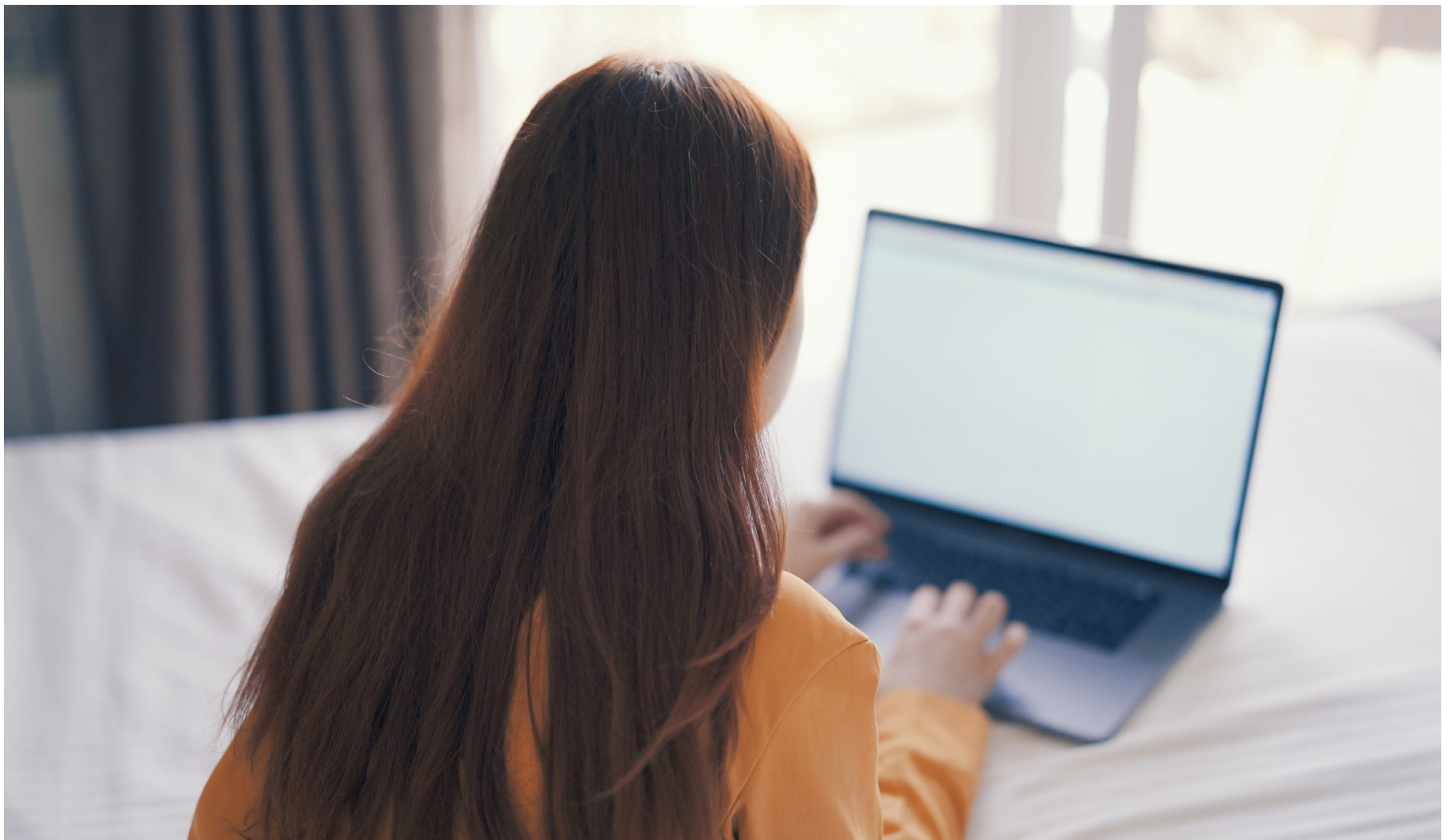
A cover letter may also expand on your resume where sometimes you would like to add more but can't. However, the employer will probably spend less than 30 seconds reading your covering letter so it is a fine balance of putting too much versus too little information.

Grab the attention of the employer immediately by including the key skills and experience that match the job requirements, show the employer what's in it for them by indicating what benefit they will gain from employing you. Remember, you are the product on offer, so show the employer you have branded yourself effectively to be placed in their market.

BEFORE WRITING A COVER LETTER

- Analyse the job description, especially attributes the employer is seeking. Highlight these skills in the advertisement and jot down some brief examples of where you have used them.
- Know the employer! Are there any particular areas where you align your skills / abilities specifically to meet the organisation's needs? Demonstrate in your cover letter how you are a suitable fit.
- Critique your background including study, experience, group projects, internships / work experience, community involvement and travel in relation to the tasks and duties of the role. How can they best be utilised and transferred to your cover letter?

Vault states: "The 'why' is the mitochondria, the powerhouse, the nucleus of your letter. You could have done basic administrative duties for an office or participated in a university club or society. Perhaps you helped organise a local event. Mention it. List any awards or honours you may have. Show your employer that you are not only an excellent candidate for the job, but the best candidate for the job. This is the essence of the 'why' - why you are the best."



Contact details

Date

Recipient's name, title and
organisation address

Dear (Use recipient's name here and only "To whom it may concern" as a last resort)

Paragraph 1: Introduction

- What position you are applying for including reference numbers.
- Why you are interested in applying for the position - be specific!
- Where you located the advertisement.
- Sell enthusiasm in the introduction without being overzealous.

Paragraph 2: 'Why you?'

- Address the criteria in the advertisement, responding to each key requirement by identifying the skills, attributes or particular knowledge you have that matches the position.
- Provide evidence through these examples of how and why you would be an asset to the company.
- Include experiences that are most relevant for the role, even if it's not the most recent. Interlace your recent experience throughout this section where you can identify specific skills that would also be an asset for the organisation.

Paragraph 3: 'What's in it for me?'

- In this section you can reiterate your enthusiasm for the role and opportunity by providing some evidence of knowledge of the company and how your goals align with what they are offering.
- Incorporate any key attributes that may be seen as a benefit for the employer.

Paragraph 4: Close

- This section is about a call to action welcoming the opportunity of an interview to further discuss the application.
- Reiterate your interest in the position and your desire to know more.
- Formally state you have attached all requested documentation including a resume / CV or selection criteria and note your contact details.

COVER LETTER TRAPS

Using the cover letter as a summary of your resume.

A cover letter is an entirely unique document that not only complements the formal document of a resume but is the key to establishing rapport through your written communication skills. Your cover letter needs to include meaningful information that does not review your resume.

Feeble and long winded introductions.

You have one opportunity to grab the interest of the reader and this is it. Have an opening statement that separates you from the other applicants and doesn't cause confusion about what you're applying for.

Using cover letter templates.

Personalise each cover letter and show the employer you have taken the time and effort to consider how their opportunity aligns with your career path. By all means, have a look at some cover letter samples but only to model yours on.

Rambling.

Don't talk at length about your experiences without explaining their relevance to the position as it demonstrates a lack of focus and leaves the employer guessing how you match their role.

Self focused rather than employer focused.

Remember, it's not about explaining what the employer can do for you! Focus on translating your experiences to the skills the employer is seeking.

Grammatical errors.

Proof read and spell check your document, especially if you are claiming to have attention to detail. Being careless with details, even if otherwise more than qualified may be the cause of a no-go.

Going over one page.

There is a skill involved with developing a cover letter and displaying how you meet the employer's requirements all on one page! Don't force the employer to go over the page in a hunt for your skills. Being able to place all your information on one page (unless an employer expressly states you can use more than one page) conveys professionalism as well as your ability to be concise in how you sell your skills.

COVER LETTER SAMPLE

The following cover letter is a response to the below job advertisement.

Sales / Marketing Administrator Graduate Position

Rewarding and fun working environment - Great Culture
Suburban Location - Parking Available
Diverse role with a Leading PR Firm - ABC LTD

Our client is searching for a graduate administration / marketing administrator to provide assistance to an established and successful sales team.

Your role will be to assist in driving our client's branding and recognition, helping to coordinate all advertising / marketing material and provide support to the sales staff for all forms of brochures, personalised marketing and print / online media. You will liaise with advertising agencies and media outlets, ensuring a high level of professional and dynamic advertising content are presented to the market place.

Our preferred candidate will have:

- Some exposure in an advertising environment
- Refined communication skills, with the ability to handle multiple tasks and deadlines.
- Exposure to preparing a high level of custom brochure and marketing paraphernalia for a sales team.
- Energy to maintain and improve an industry success story.
- A positive, outgoing personality that will add energy to our client's sales team.
- Some experience in producing IM's and marketing submissions, together with a high level of English and grammar skills.

You will have a strong desire to be a part of a successful team. This is your opportunity to become a part of the success story - offering an excellent working environment, a fun, vibrant and rewarding culture with good remuneration.

Please submit an application letter and resume outlining how you meet the requirements to ABC Ltd, 60 Exhibition Drive, Sydney NSW 2000.

For further information contact Kent on 02 5555 5555.

Chelsea Fraser
50 Bunbury Crescent
Parkwood, QLD 2414

13 July 2010

Kent Harrison
Human Resource Manager
ABC Ltd
60 Exhibition Drive
Sydney, NSW 2000

Dear Kent,

I wish to express my interest and enthusiasm for the position of Sales / Marketing Administrator – Graduate position as advertised on the Seek website. I see this as a key opportunity to be entering into the field of my professional interest and transfer the marketing, advertising and human resource knowledge and skills gained throughout study in a role that focuses on my specialisation.

As you will see from the attached resume, I have undertaken work experience in the advertising field where I had the opportunity to be a part of a current advertising project, particularly the creative brief where I participated in conceptualising ideas. I participated in client meetings and worked with a group of ten people. The highlight was when I was chosen to present findings to management. This gave me an opportunity to use my strong communication, administrative and organisational skills as well as being exposed to an environment where there are multiple deadlines.

Throughout my time at university I have had the opportunity to further cement my enthusiasm for this field by being an active member of the Business Students' Association where I was responsible for marketing various events on campus. In addition to this, I am a volunteer tourism ambassador for the Gold Coast, providing information on local community events to visitors and advertising the Gold Coast.

I envisage being part of a vibrant and dynamic organisation and ABC's success story incorporates a fresh challenge where I can further develop my advertising and marketing skills whilst working in a fast paced environment with a diverse team of people.

Please find attached a copy of my resume outlining my skills and experience. I look forward to discussing this opportunity further and am available to interview at your earliest convenience. I can be reached on 0410 123 456.

Yours faithfully,

Chelsea Fraser

ADDITIONAL TYPES OF COVER LETTERS

INTERNSHIP COVER LETTER

In a cover letter for an internship opportunity, although your goal is still to get to interview stage, the process is a little different. Here, the primary difference lies in the level of experience. In cover letters where you are applying for positions, you express how the experience in your resume reflects what the employer is looking for. However, in an internship cover letter, you are more than likely undertaking study and seeking some relevant experience. It is about displaying your passion in the field, identifying and showing how your attributes are most suited and what you hope to gain from the internship experience.

What do I include?

Layout may be as follows:

- Introduction: What you are applying for and why - sell enthusiasm here.
- 'Why you': Attributes to offer and your knowledge of the organisation, how this internship fits in with your overall career goal and why you are excited about it.
- Close: Commit to further action.

Additional tips

- Keep the cover letter brief, no more than one page and remember to include the person's name in the introduction.

PROSPECTING / EXPRESSION OF INTEREST COVER LETTER

If you would like to enquire about possible openings in your field, planning is the key here! The goal is the same, but this is a little more challenging as you need to establish a connection immediately with the reader where there isn't a direct link from an open position or mutual acquaintance.

What do I include?

The layout may be as follows:

- Introduction: Establish why you are specifically interested in this company and explain why you have chosen to target them.
- 'Why you': A little about you including what you are studying and anticipated graduation date, matching specific skills and attributes in a short and concise manner.
- Close: Commit to further action. Acknowledge if you are unsure about current staffing plans but state you are interested in learning more about potential opportunities.

Additional tips

- The reader is most certainly busy and not expecting a prospecting letter so keep the letter short. The aim is just to get the attention of the reader. If there are a lot of paragraphs, the reader may not even read past the first sentence.
- Find out exactly who to address the letter to and be as specific as possible with the type of position that interests you and commit to further action in your letter.



MUTUAL ACQUAINTANCE COVER LETTER

This could potentially be a great opportunity if you orchestrate it well. A mutual acquaintance letter or referral letter can either be a letter written in response to a job vacancy that you came to know of through your friends or network or a general referral by a friend or contact for an expression of interest for possible opportunities.

What do I include?

A suggested layout may be:

- Introduction: Prominently include referral name and their role here to maximise interest and create a connection. State why you are interested in the organisation or what position you are applying for. When talking about the organisation, state how your study or previous experience can match. This provides a lead in to the next paragraph.
- 'Why you': Draw attention to relevant skills and show when / how you have used them and how this will be an asset to the organisation.
- Close: Reiterate how your skills have built on the experience you possess and how you could contribute to the organisation. Commit to action and follow up.

Additional tips

- Ensure you have the correct name and role of the person reading your letter from your contact.
- Keep the cover letter to one page.
- Follow up!

FINAL TIPS FOR COVER LETTERS

- Use action verbs to describe your experiences.
- Make it personal! Know the name of the person who will be reading your application.
- Market your unique contribution.
- Have something to say about the organisation.
- Check spelling and grammar.
- Don't be afraid to follow up.

THE EMPLOYABILITY EQUATION



CAREER ADVICE

Your time at university isn't confined to the classroom. The career counselling team provide a personalised service to students and Bondies.

We can help you explore and define your career path, work with you on job applications and resumes, prepare for interviews and make connections with key employers.



PLACEMENTS

The Industry team will work with employers to design an experience for you that adds value to your degree and study. The placements are discipline related and tailored to your interest areas and you will be under the supervision of an industry professional from your study area.



GET CONNECTED

Join workshops, seminars, networking events and the annual Job & Internship Fair to access opportunities to grow your network and improve your skills ensuring you stand out now and after you graduate



BONDSCOUT

Accessed only by Bond students and alumni plus employers seeking Bond talent, BondScout is an online careers and employment portal. Once a Bondy, you have access to jobs, events, career resources and much more.

A LIFETIME OF SUPPORT

Once a Bondy, always a Bondy. As a member of our alumni community, you'll have lifetime access to Career Development Centre services beyond graduation.