

Step 15

Cover Letters

Introduction:

A cover letter is a short letter that accompanies your CV when applying for a job.

Although many job seekers don't use a cover letter, it is certainly a good idea. A CV with an accompanying cover letter creates a good impression, and is an opportunity to impress potential employers with extra information that reinforces the information on your CV. A cover letter also has an element of intimacy about it that is not available on a CV as it addresses the reader directly.

Considering that many jobseekers do not use a cover letter, it also makes your CV stand out.

Cover letters must always be written specifically for each job being applied for.

Structure:

A cover letter should have three paragraphs only, and should be no more than one page long.

- 1. Why you are applying for the job**
- 2. Your selling points**
- 3. Request an interview**

1. Why you are applying for the job:

Briefly explain the reason for your application. This can mean for instance, that if you are replying to an advertised post, you simply state that this is the case and that you are interested in working with the employer or company. You state the position you are applying for and if the position is advertised with a reference number then you include this number.

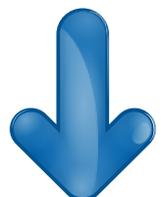
2. Your selling points:

Here is your opportunity to show the employer some of what you can offer the employer. It is best to list a few short bulleted points. You can get these points from your profile list. It is better not to repeat word for word points that you have covered in the profile on your CV, though you can rephrase some of the points. It is best to tailor the profile on your CV and the bulleted selling points in your cover letter so that they add extra information, and/or reinforce or compliment each other. If you have not yet completed your profile list then perhaps you should consider doing so at this point. Go to [Profile Tool](#).

3. Request an interview:

In this final paragraph you request an action on their part. This usually means asking directly for an interview and making it known that you are available for interview. Be definite in your request, and ask for a reply. You may not get it, but you should ask. This should be done in a courteous manner.

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Cover letter tips:

- Use short, to the point sentences
- If you have exceptionally good handwriting, it is worth the extra effort to handwrite your cover letter. This will not apply to most of us
- Keep it simple and clear. Stick to relevant information only and avoid prosaic flowery language
- Good appearance. Use standard or good quality printing paper, or plain stationary, and ensure that the print quality is good
- Ensure that you check for typo's, spelling, and correct punctuation. Ask someone else to check it over if you are a bad speller or have doubts about your punctuation
- Do not open your letter with 'To whom it may concern' and avoid 'Dear sir/madam'. Make an effort to refer the letter directly to an appropriate person, but if you can't find the name then it is okay to use 'Dear sir/madam'
- When using bulleted profile points do not use 'I'. This is already understood by the reader
- Finish the letter with 'Yours faithfully' if you do not know the person receiving the letter. If you know the person then it may be appropriate to finish with 'Yours sincerely'
- Research the company and show that you have done so in your letter. This shows that you are interested, and the research itself will likely give indicators as to what you should include in the both the cover letter and in your CV.
- Keep a record of each cover letter sent. The reason for this will become more obvious in the **Job Hunting Stage (4th Stage)** of the programme.
- There are standard layout conventions for a cover letter and it is appropriate that you use them. **These conventions are covered in detail on the next page, and there are two sample cover letters available to view or adapt to your needs.**

Cover Letter
Layout



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Layout

Standard layout of a cover letter:

Conventionally, there is a right way to layout a cover letter.

Although sticking to these conventional standards is not written in stone, it is wiser to apply them, as it will meet the expectations of many employers.

Below is a sample of the standard conventional way to lay out your cover letter:

Put your address
ONLY
on the top right hand
side of the page

12 Sunview Heights,
Barrack Hill,
Bantry,
Co. Cork.
Skip one Line

Mr. John Horgan
HR Manager,
Enterprise Solutions,
Glengarrif,
Co. Cork.

Skip one line

Ref: 3403

11th Jan 2012

On the left hand side, one line
under your address you insert:

- Name of person being written to
- Job title of person being written to
- Company name
- Company address

You need only include a
reference if you are applying
for an advertised job with a
reference number.

Dear Mr./Ms **Surname**

Letter Content Goes Here

Yours sincerely,

Sign your name here

Type your name underneath your signature

You may choose to include your contact details here if you wish though it is not necessary as you will have them on your CV.

Sample letters can be seen on the next page

Sample cover letters:

Here are some sample cover letters:

10 Woodview,
Cloheen,
Clonakilty,
Co. Cork.

Mr. Michael O' Sullivan,
Proprietor,
Technico,
Roscarbery,
Co. Cork.

20th July 2012

Dear Mr. O Sullivan

I am aware that Technico is a growing company in the IT sector that sometimes requires additional employees to cope with its increasing workload. I am interested in applying for the role of general operative with Technico.

I would like to work with your company especially as it is the type of work environment that I enjoy. You will find my CV attached.

I believe I will be a valuable addition to your current workforce and in addition to my relevant past experience working in ISO 9001 environments I can offer you the following:

- Strongly target orientated when working to specific workplace objectives
- Dependable and versatile worker
- Accustomed to working to deadlines and going the extra mile
- Always willing to respond to busy times
- Flexible and enjoy working in a variety of roles
- Work well under supervision or on own initiative

I would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss my application, and whether there may be suitable place for me to work with your company.

Yours sincerely,

Allen O Donovan

087 2626785
allen@coolmail.com

Padua,
Coolfada,
Bandon,
Co. Cork.

Cathal Dorney
Managing Director,
Miramex Textiles,
Irishtown,
Bandon.
30 August 2012

Dear Mr. Dorney,

In a recent visit to your website I noted that you are planning to expand your Bandon operation, and are likely to be employing extra supervisory staff to strengthen your current team.

I am aware that Miramex Textiles have a reputation for excellence and would welcome the opportunity to work with you.

With this in mind, please find my enclosed CV detailing my qualifications, and my considerable relevant experience.

I would also like to draw attention to what I can contribute to your team.

- 10 years experience as a line machine operator.
- 6 years supervising up to ten people with responsibility for monitoring and assessing productivity outputs.
- Excellent relations between floor staff and management
- Very reliable, responsible, and co operative in the work environment.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you, with a view to discussing how I might be a valuable addition to your supervisory team.

Yours sincerely,

John Kelliher

John Kelliher