

OUR TOP TEN ✓ COVER LETTER TIPS

Alongside your CV, your cover letter is incredibly important in creating a great first impression and helping you successfully move to the next stage in the application process. Our tips below will help ensure your cover letter not only provides a professional introduction but helps to further communicate why you're the perfect fit for your next career move.

TOP TIP #1: ALWAYS SEND ONE!

One of the biggest cover letter mistakes is simply not including one at all. Some advertised positions may suggest that more concise information can be provided but all applications still should contain a cover letter as part of the process. At its greatest importance, the cover letter can be seen in equal weighting to your CV and provide the chance to discuss your suitability in detail. However, even as more of a formality, the cover letter still plays an important role in introducing yourself and ensures your contact details are always to hand for the recruiter or company.

TOP TIP #2: DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Before beginning your cover letter, you will need to ensure you find out as much information as possible about the role.

- Understand exactly what the company does.
- What are the exact skills required?
- Does the company have a definable culture?
- How does the company compare to its competitors?
- Who is their key target market?
- Is the company moving through transitional period?
- Who will be receiving your cover letter?

TOP TIP #3: FOLLOW A STRUCTURE

It remains best practice to use a formal approach for the layout and structure of your cover letter.

- Begin with your address and essential contact details.
- If applying directly, include their address next.
- Ensure any job reference code number is included.
- Say why you're writing the letter & reference your CV.
- Communicate your suitability to the role.
- Highlighting the relevance of the extra information you found out about the company and role where possible.
- State your availability and your desire for an interview.
- Sign off the letter professionally.

TOP TIP #4: DON'T COPY YOUR CV

Your CV and cover letter should stand together as two separate, complimentary documents. Try not to repeat too much information as given on your CV.

It is much more effective to highlight a few select areas of your CV that have the most relevance to the specific role you are applying for. Use the cover letter to expand on these key areas of experience and reinforce their compatibility.



**TOP TIP #5:
TRY NOT
TO WAFFLE**

All the fantastic and well-researched details you want to include will fall flat if they're written badly. As a general rule, the more concise you can make your text the better... as long as your writing doesn't lose its enthusiasm or professionalism. It's important to remember that a cover letter does not need to be a lengthy document. In fact, the opposite usually tends to be true. Half, to a single side of A4 should be your target.



**TOP TIP #6:
DON'T BE AFRAID TO
SHOW YOUR PERSONALITY**

A document that is largely seen as highly formal can be a challenging backdrop to let your personality shine through. The most effective way to do this without sacrificing professionalism in your writing is to use impactful and energetic terms to describe which particular parts of the job description appeal to you the most. This will showcase which parts of the role you really carry a passion for.



**TOP TIP #7:
START STRONG AND
FINISH STRONG**

It's well known that we are often able to remember the first and last items in a sequence more so than the content in the middle. Ensure that your cover letter quickly engages the reader and draws them in to understand your suitability for the role you are applying for. Similarly, make sure the end of your letter encourages a 'call-to-action', whether that be a follow-up interview, phone call etc.




**TOP TIP #8:
ENSURE YOUR DETAILS
ARE PROFESSIONAL**

The email address you set-up years ago as your social media login may not be the best contact detail to include in your cover letter. Avoid any embarrassment by ensuring your email address includes your name with as little other information or embellishments as possible. If necessary, take a few minutes to set up new email account using any of the major online providers. This will give you a professional address you'll be able to use for all future applications.



**TOP TIP #9:
KEEP THE
PRESENTATION SIMPLE**

Don't let your cover letter's fantastic content be undermined by garish fonts, colours and unnecessary imagery. Your CV should use an easily legible font, of an appropriate size with sufficient spacing and breathing space providing by good formatting. A minimal aesthetic will allow the content of your cover letter to shine through. Well thought-out formatting and spacing can also be sufficient by itself to enable your cover letter to look elegant, smart and contemporary.



**TOP TIP #10:
ONLINE
CONSIDERATIONS**

If sent digitally, your cover letter may need to be read by people using different operating systems and applications. PDF formats are great for ensuring a high level of compatibility. Documents saved in 'Pages' on a Mac can cause issues for those running Windows but this tends to be less of an issue the other way round. You can follow up to ensure the document was successfully received and it can be a good idea to have the document prepared in a few formats.