

Creating a cover letter to get you noticed

First things first, have you properly read the selection criteria for the job you're applying for? If you haven't taken the time to read the criteria, you may miss something, or address something that's irrelevant to the job. There's no point in emphasising your excellent CIMA exam results if the role requires a proficiency in French, for example.

For help creating a cover letter to get you noticed, follow our simple four-step guide:

1 Show you've done your research

Your letter will stand out if the employer recognises that you've really researched the role and the company. So, spend some time looking at the current situation of the business, and the industry. Don't go into facts and figures here, as it takes up valuable space, but demonstrating some knowledge may be what separates you from the crowd. Address the contact name given

in the job spec, it will show you are tailoring your cover letter for each role you apply for, rather than sending out multiple copies of a standard one.

2 Use sections Trying to address all the criteria in a letter can be tricky, so break your letter down into smaller parts. Try not to list too many examples though; employers don't want to read a record of everything you've ever done, even if it is relevant. Choose three or four of the requirements to address. Don't forget to mention any relevant personal attributes as well, if you're good at working under pressure, highlight this in one of your examples of past experience.

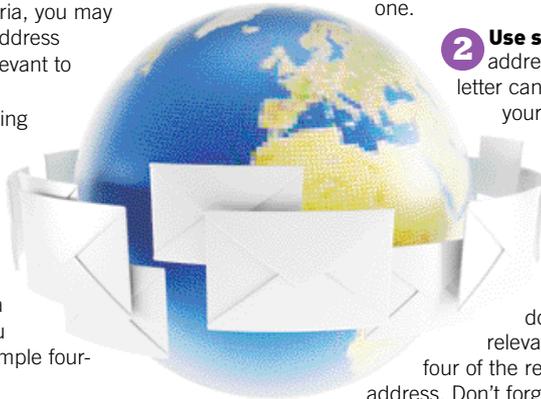
3 Match your competencies Don't just list what you've done in previous roles; employers want to see real life examples. So if you assisted with P&L report preparation in your last job, state exactly how. If you're struggling to put it in a cohesive order, use the STAR

technique: Situation (what job were you given to complete?), Task (what was required of you?), Action (what did you do to achieve result?) and Result (how was it a positive outcome?).

4 Present it properly Make your cover letter concise, it shouldn't be longer than an A4 page, chances are it will be scanned for the relevant highlights before it's read in great detail. Check for typos and spelling mistakes, and re-read the finished letter to ensure it makes sense and there are no rambling sentences. Before you send it off, have a look at the way it looks on the page, properly paragraphing will make it look neat. Be positive in your letter. You can briefly explain why you're leaving your current job but don't rant and rave; concentrate on what attracts you to the new role and organisation.

Remember, your cover letter isn't just snippets of your CV cut and pasted. Select what you consider the key requirements from the criteria and when addressing these, always back it up with examples from your own experience. **PG**

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