



## Cover letters that get you in the 'A' pile

**Are cover letters important? This is a debatable issue within recruitment, as some consultants prefer applicants to include a cover letter and some ignore them, and skip straight to the resumé. It is a very individual preference...**

It is better to err on the side of caution and include a cover letter to maximise your chances, rather than potentially miss an opportunity.

### Why is a cover letter important?

A cover letter is used to demonstrate an understanding of the job requirements and your ability to match your skills and experience to these requirements. It is also an important means to demonstrate you are genuinely interested in this specific role, and are not just taking a spray gun approach to finding a new position.

As a guide, your cover letter should be no longer than one page – you can use bullet points to demonstrate your relevant skills and experience. It is an overview of your suitability for a specific role, be careful not just to rehash your resumé. Follow the KISS principle (Keep It Simple Stupid) and be careful not to use words that are obstreperous in nature... if you know what I mean!

As per your resumé, the cover letter should target the role specifically. Your aim is to express your interest and to demonstrate how you would be able to make a significant contribution to the organisation in this role by identifying your relevant strengths.

Writing a cover letter is like writing a one-page essay, although not as hard, as you know the subject matter (you) inside out. It should include an introduction, a body and a closing statement. A lot of consultants will use your cover letter to test your written communication skills, so it should be treated seriously, as it could make or break your application. The best cover letter sparks a recruiters' interest and creates an impression of competence. And that is very exciting to us!

Broken down, a cover letter should answer the following four questions:

1. Why are you writing?
2. Why are you interested in the job?
3. Why would the company be interested in you?
4. What is your next step?

You should also cover off any situational issues that may be relevant to your application. For example, if you are applying from interstate you need to explain that you are willing to relocate and your availability to attend interview. It may be a small issue, but it is one where you could potentially be overlooked for a position if you have not adequately communicated your situation.

Finally, pay attention to the finer details. For example, have you got the recruiter's name right, or did you accidentally leave the name on for the last position you applied for? Little things such as this highlight poor attention to detail and a one size fits all approach.

**Sending an application without a cover letter is like starting an interview without a handshake – can you imagine that?**