



The most common mistakes made in cover letters

Before you send your cover letter off, take time to do a final check. Don't let yourself fall into the trap others do with these common cover letter mistakes.

1. You don't grab their attention at the start

The opening sentences of your cover letter may be all the hiring manager has time to read, so don't forget the power of first impressions. Start your introduction with a statement that makes them want to read on: "Your advertisement for a top performing sales executive is an excellent match for my ability having been awarded National Top Performer status for the past two years."

2. You fail to get to the point

Don't lose focus. If your cover letter is four pages long you have a problem. Stop and take a breath then go back to basics. Think of the key 4 or 5 points you want the employer to know and focus on those and leave all the other stuff out. Remember the 'less is more' approach. Get the cover letter content right and you can mention all the other fabulous stuff when you get called in for interview!

3. Your letter is not interesting

Read your cover letter over. Is it full of long, drawn out sentences? Is it predictable? Is it clear? Try to vary the structure and approach of your sentences. Not all sentences should start with "I". Try to vary the sentence length; short sentence followed by long, etc. Don't forget to express your personality in your cover letter; you're not a robot, so do what you can to show your awesome personality.

4. You are misleading

Be careful not to embellish your achievements. If you suggest you singlehandedly achieved something that quite clearly would have required a team effort, it suggests dishonesty to the employer. Go ahead and take credit for the project, but make it clear which part of the brilliance was personal to you and what outcomes were collaborative.

5. You mix up the company details

Job hunting is certainly tricky and it can be hard to keep track when you are writing a number of individual cover letters for what are usually similar types of positions. It's important that you are careful not to confuse one role with another and include the wrong information, or worse still, type the wrong company name or position title. If you are applying for more than one job at once, lay out some notes on all the roles and the key factors of each to ensure you are on track and relevant.