

Covering Letter

Whilst providing a covering letter is optional, for senior positions it is often desirable, certainly if responding to an advert.

If you do so, your CV is half your marketing literature... the covering letter is the other half and merits just as much attention and careful consideration. Alongside your CV, the covering letter is your opportunity to control and influence the impression which the reader will form when it is either quickly scanned or carefully digested.

This includes all email applications. Many CVs are received by Starbuck James that have no covering letter at all, or even worse, one that relates to an entirely different application! Always avoid generic covering letters; they stand out very clearly as such and you are missing an opportunity to sell yourself.

Your aim is to make sure you receive a positive response to your initial contact. In order to create a favourable impression, note the following points:

- Pay very careful attention to the appearance and layout of the letter.
- Ensure that it has a clearly defined structure.
- Try to make the content concise, interesting, relevant and imaginative wherever possible. It should *never* be longer than one page.

Think about some of the subjects that you may wish to cover in your letter. Here are a selection of possibilities:

- Show the specific match or fit between what the role requires, and what you can provide.
- Give a brief snapshot of your wide ranging and extensive experience, and how this can be translated into specific and tangible benefits for the targeted organisation. Here you should emphasise your skills and achievements, indicating their transferability and versatility. Managerial and professional competencies are your key assets.
- Refer to some of your personality traits and how these can be used to good effect. Perhaps you could stress your degree of commitment, level of conscientiousness, maturity, toughness under pressure, dependability, or level of energy.

- If at a reasonably early stage in your career, you may wish to highlight your particular qualifications and specialised training and its relevance within a particular targeted organisation. E.g. if you have an MBA from LBS or Insead, say so.