



CPA Ireland's Guide to Cover Letters

This is the second in a series of articles by CPA Ireland aimed at providing you with a comprehensive guide to improving your job prospects, with advice on your CV, cover letters, networking skills and much more. Here, we continue with the one area people often overlook and are reluctant to really sell themselves in: the cover letter.

Cover Letter

Your CV will give all your experience and skills, but the main objective of the cover letter is to encourage the employer to read the resume. People often forget about a cover letter, especially when they are sending CV's via email and this can often result in the resume being forgotten or overlooked. A good cover letter should sell your best qualities and qualifications that make you an ideal candidate for the job and more importantly, it will make employers want to read your CV.

- Address the cover letter to a particular individual rather than just 'To whom it concerns'. If a job posting doesn't give a name, then ring the company and ask for the hiring name. This guarantees that the letter will reach the right person straight away and you'll display initiative and motivation.
- Tailor your content to the specific requirements of the position you are applying for. You can base this on any details provided in the job posting and link in your skills, work history and greatest career accomplishments as appropriate.
- Remember to keep your letter short and to the point. Robert Half Finance and Recruitment recommend the following: 'The best cover letters are comprehensive, clear, concise and compelling. Write an attention-grabbing introduction, succinctly highlight your top attributes, explain why the job interests you, request an interview and then thank the employer for his or her time.'
- It's never acceptable to lie or even 'stretch the truth' when writing a CV and cover letter. Even if it may only be a minor detail stick to the truth as these minor representations may come back to haunt you, especially if you land the position.

While you must sell yourself in your cover letter and CV, it's important not to come across as too boastful or cocky. Keep it simple, and explain specifically how you can make a positive contribution to their business with examples of your prior achievements.

CPA Ireland is one of the main Irish accountancy bodies, with more than 5,000 members and students in the island of Ireland. The CPA title is the most commonly used designation internationally for professional accountants and the Institute's qualification enjoys worldwide recognition. Its current membership operates in public practice, industry, financial services and the public sector and CPAs work in over 32 countries around the world.

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