

GUIDELINES FOR LETTER OF MOTIVATION

Importance this Letter

- It is often the first contact with a prospective employer.
- If poorly written in terms of style or grammar, or poorly presented in terms of neatness and layout, your whole application becomes suitable for the recycling bin.
- If written to communicate an ordered and clear message, it will spark interest and increase the likelihood of the reader moving onto the CV.

Purpose

- To communicate a message in a way that stimulates a positive response from a prospective employer (It takes much thinking and planning, and several drafts).
- To stimulate a call for an interview.

Length

Three paragraphs (on one page) is the ideal length. A much longer letter is unlikely to be read unless you have extensive work- and organisational experiences.

Guidelines to construct an effective Letter

1. Write to a specific individual rather than "Dear Sir/Madam". Spell the person's name correctly. (Call their office to enquire or search their website). When feasible, use networking sources to introduce yourself in the opening paragraph.
2. Show the reader that you've researched the company on their website and elsewhere. Demonstrate a genuine grasp of the organisation's culture, business and requirements of the post.
3. Refer to current newsworthy items about the specific company. Personalise the letter with a sentence or two designed to reflect your sincere interest in the specific employer. Be sincere in your praise - don't overdo it.
4. Use simple language and clear, short sentences. Don't try to impress the reader with unusual vocabulary or complicated sentences.
5. Express your skills, achievements and experiences with confidence – no exaggerating. (Two part-time jobs don't constitute "extensive" management experience.)
6. Let your personality and energy shine through your (action) words.
7. Check and recheck your letter for correctness regarding spelling, punctuation and grammar. Ask someone with good writing skills to review your letter.
8. Use a standard business letter format. Do not insert a border.
9. End the letter with a strong closing which indicates the action you desire. Take the initiative by requesting an interview or stating your intention to call in a week or two to follow up.
10. Keep copies of all letters. Save each document in PDF format before sending it.

FORMAT FOR LETTER OF MOTIVATION

Your Address
City. Postal Code

Date

Your contact details (Tel, Cell & Email)

Name of Recruiter
Job title
Name & Address of Organisation

Dear

APPLICATION: Job title & Reference number (if provided)

First paragraph: Capture the reader's attention. State what post you are applying for. If responding to an advertised post, explain how you heard about it (name of publication and date). If it was through a personal reference, tell the recruiter.

If writing an unsolicited letter (no announced vacancies), be as specific as possible about the type of job you're interested in. Tell why you're particularly interested in the organisation and/or type of work.

E.g. Having majored in Statistics at the University of the Western Cape where I also worked as a research assistant, I am confident that I would make a successful research trainee in your Research and Development Department.

Second paragraph: Present your strengths and most relevant attributes, for example, educational qualifications, work experience, skills, interests, referring the employer to the detail in your CV. Keep the employer's perspective in mind! Use specific examples to demonstrate the value you could bring to the job instead of merely listing skills you have or relevant courses you've taken.

Try making the link between what you can offer in terms of skills and experience, and the organisation's requirements which you have identified. Show that you are the best candidate for the job. Demonstrate knowledge of the organisation by referring to aspects which interest you, for example, products, services and opportunities for staff development.

E.g. In addition to my strong background in Mathematics, I have also gained significant experience in a research organisation, advertising agency and a restaurant. I am attracted to The People Bank by your recent rapid growth, the superior reputation of your research and development department, and your visibility on campus and in the community. I have concluded that The People Bank is in a strong competitive position to benefit from upcoming changes in the industry.

Third paragraph: Close by making a specific request for an interview. State that you will follow up the letter with a call.

E.g. "I will phone you during the week of (month, date) to check that my letter has been received and discuss the possibility of an interview".

Allow at least 2-3 weeks from the day you mail the letter. Don't forget to call! If you are unable to locate any literature on the organisation via their website (did you check the website?), request it at this time. Thank the reader for his/her consideration.

Yours sincerely

(Your signature)

Your typewritten name

Enclosures: (i.e. resume)

Useful websites for more information on Cover Letters, CV and Job Interview:

<http://www.careerssa.net/>
www.pacecareers.com/careercentre/
www.gradsonthemove.org.za
<http://www.rileyguide.com>
<http://www.wowcv.net/cover-letters/>
<http://www.resume-cover-letter.info>
<http://www.jobsearching.co.za>
<http://www.eresumewriting.com>

<http://www.careers24.com>
<https://za.gradconnection.com/>
<http://puffandpass.co.za/templates>
<http://www.careerlab.com>
<http://www.10minuteswith.com/>
<http://www.123-jobs.com>
<http://www.collegegrad.com>

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Tel (021) 900 6543 (work)
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Ms Pat Lundall
Manager: Human Resources
Amy Corporation
1140 Main Street, Cape Town. 8001

Dear Ms Lundall

Application: Trainee Sales Representative, Ref. No. 2016/03/8

With reference to the abovementioned position, the attached CV is submitted for your consideration. I am a B Com Management graduate of the University of the Western Cape (UWC). My academic studies and work experience have given me a good understanding of the sales and marketing field and an opportunity to consolidate theory and practice.

My CV provides insight into my strengths, attributes and experiences. My part-time employment has included jobs in retail sales and hospitality, positions that relied heavily on my ability to provide quality service to customers. In addition, I have been trained in various computer programmes while working as a student assistant in the computer labs at UWC. My academic studies, combined with a strong interest in working in the sales environment, have prepared me well to serve your company as a trainee sales representative.

Kindly contact me to arrange a mutually convenient time for a meeting, during which we can further discuss your current or anticipated openings. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith

Encl. resume



UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE



KEY ACTION VERBS

Make your letters stimulating by using action verbs such as "designed," "implemented," and "increased," rather than passive verbs like "was" and "did." Use simple, common language and avoid abbreviations and slang. Also steer clear of language that is too technical or jargon-heavy. Keep in mind that the first person reading your letter of motivation may not possess the same breadth of knowledge as your future boss.

In the course of a job search, it is tempting to use catch phrases that you may have picked up from various job-search reference materials, phrases that sound as though they should go in a letter. Be assured that almost every person who applies for the position presents him- or herself as a "self-starter" with "excellent interpersonal skills."

Improve upon these self-descriptions wherever possible by listing actual projects and goals. "I am a determined achiever with proven leadership skills" can be rephrased "While at MoneyLib, I successfully increased the number of projects completed before deadline, while supervising a staff of fifteen." Once you begin working, employers will discover your personal attributes. While still under consideration for a position, concrete experiences are more valuable than vague phrases or obscure promises. Action verbs make your letter come alive. Choose the ones appropriate for your letter.

Management Skills	Communication Skills	Technical Skills	Research Skills	Helping Skills	Creative Skills
accelerated	addressed	Assembled	clarified	assessed	acted
accomplished	arbitrated	built	collected	assisted	conceptualised
achieved	arranged	calculated	critiqued	clarified	created
administered	authored	computed	diagnosed	coached	customised
advised	collaborated	designed	evaluated	counselled	designed
analysed	convinced	engineered	examined	demonstrated	designed
appointed	corresponded	fabricated	extracted	diagnosed	developed
arranged	developed	maintained	identified	educated	directed
assisted	directed	operated	inspected	expedited	established
assigned	drafted	overhauled	interpreted	facilitated	fashioned
chaired	edited	programmed	interviewed	familiarised	founded
consolidated	enlisted	remodeled	investigated	guided	illustrated
constructed	formulated	repaired	organised	motivated	initiated
coordinated	influenced	solved	reviewed	referred	instituted
delegated	interpreted	upgraded	summarised	rehabilitated	integrated
developed	lectured	Teaching Skills	surveyed	represented	introduced
directed	mediated	adapted	systematized	achieved	invented
evaluated	moderated	advised	Financial Skills	expanded	originated
executed	negotiated	clarified	administered	improved	performed
improved	persuaded	coached	allocated	pioneered	planned
increased	promoted	communicated	analysed	reduced	revitalised
organised	publicised	coordinated	appraised	(losses)	shaped
oversaw	reconciled	demythified	audited	resolved	
planned	recruited	developed	balanced	(problems)	
prioritised	spoke	enabled	budgeted	restored	
produced	translated	encouraged	calculated	spearheaded	
recommended	wrote	evaluated	computed	transformed	
reviewed		explained	developed		
scheduled		facilitated	forecasted		
strengthened		guided	managed		
supervised		informed	marketed		
		instructed	planned		
		persuaded	projected		
		set goals	researched		
		stimulated			
		trained			

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