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Make your Application Stand Out

Your letter of application is perhaps the most vital tool that you will utilise in the initial application process when hunting for your new job. In many cases, you will not have spoken to someone prior to submission of your "paperwork" - so this introduction must make you shine and stand apart from the pack!

There are three simple rules that can apply to either your letter of application or resume. These are: Keep It Simple, Keep It Balanced and Keep It Honest.

The First Step

Read the job advertisement carefully and ensure that you understand it. Highlight key criteria, competencies and required qualifications and then play devils advocate with yourself or enlist the help of a friend in this process. Do you really have the abilities, skills, experience and personal attributes to successfully carry out this job role? If yes, then continue with your application. If you can't "tick all the boxes" in that checklist, don't worry!

Carefully consider if the role may still be right for you if the employer is able to accommodate some learning and growth on the job. Remember, nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Keep It Simple

Always use plain good quality paper if you are submitting a hard copy of your application and whether you email, fax or post your application, ensure that full contact details are included with correct title and spelling. Identify and refer to the position you are enquiring about using reference numbers as stated in the advertised position.

Don't forget to include your own details at the top of the letter of application. Provide contact numbers where you can be reached on during the day and in the evenings, 7 days a week (you don't want to miss out on a job opportunity because you were only available during business hours!) In a few sentences, provide a snapshot of your past experience and/or achievements, outlining your academic qualifications and the reasons for your commitment to that level of study. Continue with a summary of your current employment and academic status and complete the brief synopsis by commenting on your future aspirations to apply your qualifications, experience and knowledge to the job role, in line with the corporate commitment of the potential employer.



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In this way you have already painted the benefits and features of employing you! The next paragraph should comment on your knowledge of the employer company and the job role you are applying for.

Don't overstate your knowledge - you should have researched them on the Internet to gain an understanding of the company but you should display a balance of knowledge and a desire to want to know more.

Ensure that you conclude with a clear idea of how to contact you and when you could start the job.

Keep It Honest

When outlining your past relevant experience to the advertised position, remember that what you state in your letter is what the employer will ask you to expand on at interview. You will also be asked for referees so any overstatements of tasks, duties or responsibilities will be discussed in detail.

This letter is one of your only opportunities to present yourself to potential employers, so remember to follow the A.I.D.A principle:

- Attention: You must grab the reader's attention with relevant information.
- Interest: You must hold the readers' interest for the duration of the letter.
- Desire: You must create a desire for the reader to meet you.
- Action: You must give the reader enough information to springboard them into action - that is to contact you for an interview!

Keep It Balanced

Maintain a degree of balance between selling yourself in the best possible light and remaining humble in your achievements and successes. Whilst selling yourself in a letter may not come naturally to many people, "selling yourself short" will not result in an interview. The balance must also extend to what you know about the company - displaying knowledge of background and core business demonstrates that you have actively researched the employer. However, making assumptions that you understand the company culture and intimate business strategies is presumptuous.