
Motivation letter



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Tips & Tricks

If you are applying for a new job, you only have a few chances to convince the employer why you are the right candidate.

That is why a relevant curriculum vitae (CV) and a clear and convincing motivation letter are important.

Make sure your motivation letter supports your CV and highlights relevant information about your competences and experience. Before you start writing the motivation letter, analyze the vacancy and check what the organization needs and how you fit the requirements.

Also make sure you are well informed on the organization and the vacancy to write a good and compelling motivation letter. In case you lack information, contact the contact person listed on the vacancy. Keep your letter short but powerful, with a maximum of 1 A4 sized page.

General tips

- Use short, active sentences - get to the point.
- Make sure your letter is in line with your CV but avoid identical overlap. In your CV you can mention certain aspects which are further addressed in your motivation letter.
- Avoid negative/denying words.
- Carefully check the name and job position of the addressee.
- Write convincingly, but not obtrusively. Don't draw conclusions in your text, but rather formulate your arguments in such a way that the addressee can reach the desired conclusion.
- Try to imagine the perspective of the addressee. He or she wants to know: 'what's in it for me?'. So don't focus on what the company and/or the job position means to you.
- Customize and tune your motivation letter for every application; delete, move or clarify items.
- Avoid abbreviations and technical jargon.
- Make sure there are no spelling and grammatical errors in your letter.
- A letter should be a maximum of 1 A4 sized page, about 2/3 filled with text.
- Always send your letter in PDF format and put your name in the title of your CV, motivation letter and e-mail.
- Ask someone else to check your letter before you send it.

Framework of your motivation letter

A few items should always be addressed in your motivation letter. The most important aspects will be discussed below.

Structure

Your name and address information

Company details

Name of contact person

Place and date

Subject

Salutation

Salutation (Dear Sir X/ Madam Y, find out the contact person). Pay attention to the capital letters: 'Dear Mr. Jones'.

Paragraph with the introduction/motivation

Choose a neutral introduction or choose to be characteristic with a real distinctive, compelling phrase if you feel inspired. Be sure to use wording that is right for you and is appropriate for the job position.

In the introduction it is important to draw the attention of the addressee right away. For some job applies, employers receive dozens of letters, so make sure the addressee of the letter immediately understands why you wrote it. The objective of your motivation letter should be clear in the introduction. Let your personality shine through, and try to stand out, so that the addressee has a full picture of you.

Clearly describe why you want to work for this employer specifically, what makes this job perfect for you? Think of the benefits of a small or big organization, the strategy of the company and working conditions.

Example 1:

I would like to respond to the ... vacancy which I found on the website This vacancy caught my eye because I recognize a lot of similarities in the demands for the job and my own experiences.

I would like to refer to the earlier phone call/e-mail contact that we had.

Example 2:

I would like to respond to the ... vacancy which I found on the website Our phone call on [date] raised my interest in the vacancy and has made me very enthusiastic about fulfilling this exciting job position.

Paragraph(s) about yourself

Convince the addressee that you are the right candidate for the job. In this paragraph you will focus on your personality, what you will contribute to the company and what your ambitions are. Shortly introduce yourself and describe your personality. Try to be formal, but do not repeat your CV. Writing these paragraphs is easiest if you have made a list of the most important requirements of the job position along with a list of your own characteristics, experiences and skills. Try to use examples. You can point out your ambitions: 'what do you want to learn in this function or internship?'. You can also mention what skills you would like to develop, make sure you substantiate why.

Attention: it can be the case that you do not need to add a letter to the addressee. They might just ask for a short motivation. If this happens, you can use the information in 'paragraphs about yourself'.

Letter closing

In the end you can thank the addressee for his/her time. Here, you can also either choose for a neutral conclusion or a distinctive and compelling phrase. Just make sure your style matches the rest of the letter.

More information?

Would you like more information or do you want to check your CV/LinkedIn-profile? Check our website or make an appointment with the Career Service. The Career Service is available every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday for career advice. On request, it is also possible on Mondays and Fridays.

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