

# **7 Cover Letter Mistakes You Don't Want To Make**

# WELCOME!



So, you have decided to apply for your dream job. You have already followed my advice and jazzed up your resume - that baby is ready to be seen! In all of your excitement, you hit 'APPLY', attach your resume and with one more click of your mouse, your resume has been whooshed away to your potential employer. Congratulations! But did you forget something?

Over half of the job applications I have received in the past 12 months have not included a cover letter. When I said that, you probably had one of two reactions:

1. "What's the big deal? I never send a cover letter!" OR 2. Shock. Pure shock.

Either way, this book is for you.

I hope you enjoy the 7 Cover Letter Mistakes You Don't Want To Make!

# 1. IT IS MISSING



**(Um... I think  
your cover letter  
has gone AWOL)**

Okay, so I already alluded to this, but let me be clear. Not including a cover letter with your job application is the biggest cover letter mistake you can make.

In *The 7 Most Common Resume Mistakes*, we talked about your resume being a sales document and in *The 5 Signs Your Resume Drives Like a Red Sports car* I told you that your resume was your vehicle for a first impression.

If you had one more chance to influence that first impression AND promote yourself, why would you not take it? If you do not include a cover letter it is a missed opportunity to properly introduce yourself.

More so, if you don't include a cover letter, the first thing that springs to my mind is that you couldn't be bothered.

## **2. SPELLING & GRAMMAR**

**.....**  
**(I know I keep harping on about this but it is so important!)**

I know, I know. You probably think I have done this one to death, but it really is so important!

Poor spelling and grammar leads a potential employer to believe the following:

- \* You have underdeveloped written skills.
- \* You have low attention to detail.
- \* You did not believe your job application was important enough to get it proof read.

I have previously recommended [fiverr.com](https://www.fiverr.com) and I stand by this recommendation for hiring a resume editor for a minimal investment.

Another tool I love to use is [grammarly.com](https://www.grammarly.com). There are add-ins for Microsoft Office and Chrome and it is brilliant for picking up grammatical mistakes that often go unnoticed. And its FREE!

### **3. ONE SIZE FITS ALL**



**(Just like shoes.  
Just squish your  
toes together and  
you'll be fine)**

I'm just gonna be blunt. One size never fits all.

One thing I see a lot is something like this:  
"I am applying for the Administration Assistant  
Position you have advertised" - well that's  
great, but I advertised for a Retail Assistant.

Or this:

"I am looking for an opportunity to enter the  
public service where I feel my skills would...." -  
Good luck with that, the role you have applied  
for is in private industry.

Every time you send a cover letter to an  
employer, you should save it as a new  
document (e.g. Cover-Letter-Admin-Assistant-  
McDonalds.doc). Make sure your letter provides  
correct information AND addresses the  
requirements in the advertisement.

## **4. DEAR SIR**

**(I'm a freakin'  
woman!)**

In the grand scheme of things, this is probably not a deal-breaker, but it is one of those niggling things that gets under my skin.

Your cover letter starts with "Dear Sir". Last time I checked, I was a woman! Or how about "Dear Sir/Madam" - well you are just covering all your bases now aren't you?

Here are a few tips for you to make your cover letter stand out from the "Dear Sirs". It might take you a little extra time, but for a personalised approach, it is absolutely worth it!

- \* If there is a name on the ad, use it!
- \* If there is no name, but a phone number, call up and ask who you should address your application to.
- \* If in doubt, I always prefer "To Whom It May Concern"

## **5. YOU'RE SO VAGUE**



**(You maybe think  
this book is  
about you)**

"I have good computer skills, I am a team player and I am very organised"

Each of these things is great. But what do they mean? A cover letter that is filled with these sorts of baseless claims will not stand out from the others.

Whilst I am looking for a "team player", the term itself is very vague. I am not suggesting that you remove all descriptive words from your resume, but you could try upgrading them by giving them some context.

Focus more on your achievements as they are measurable - "In my current role, I work closely with members of the marketing team to ensure that..." or "Our project team focused on brainstorming solutions to..."

Details support your claims!

## **6. THE EASY ROUTE**

.....  
**(A few words  
in the form field  
should do  
the trick!)**

Most job websites have three options for your cover letter:

- a. Don't include one (I know you won't be making that mistake again!)
- b. Write your cover letter in a form field.
- c. Attach a cover letter document.

The correct answer is always C! What you may not realise about those form field cover letters is that when they reach your potential employer, they look absolutely terrible. I am not joking.

Form field documents arrive in a .txt file, with absolutely no formatting. If you haven't included paragraph breaks, your cover letter will show as one really long sentence. Eww.

Not the kind of first impression you want to make, I promise.

## **7. IT'S GOOD FOR YOU**



**(Ask not what the employer can do for you, but what you can do for them!)**

Too many cover letters focus on what is good for you. Now don't get me wrong, I always want to make sure that a new recruit is a good fit and that the opportunity is right for them, but my main priority is finding the perfect candidate for my organisation!

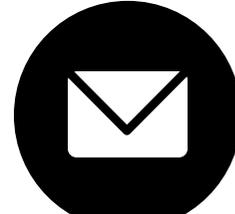
I absolutely encourage you to include something in your cover letter about why you want the job but remember that a cover letter is part of your sales pitch. The main goal of any job application is to encourage a potential employer to meet with you.

Instead of "I am interested in this position because I have strong experience in XYZ" try "I am confident that my experience in XYZ would be a great asset to your company". Make it all about what you bring to the table.



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**HI, I'M BECCA.  
I HOPE YOU  
ENJOYED THIS  
MINI EBOOK!**



My name is Becca and I am the creator of Pop Your Career, a website dedicated to providing the freshest career advice that won't bore your socks off!

I am a passionate coach, writer and facilitator with a gift for helping people find, win and love their dream careers.

If you want some information about my blog, my products and services or you just feel like saying "G'day", please connect with me via the links below - I would love to hear from you!

Becca xo

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**your**  
**CAREER**

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