

Tips for crafting a stand-out job application

Let your personality shine through.

Companies are usually interested in hiring real people, not machines.

Show them you're interested in their company.

Find out as much as you can about the company's vision and philosophy and use this information in your cover letter. Looking for inspiration? The job posting itself is a good place to start. It will often give you an idea about the tone and style to adopt in your cover letter.

Find the right balance between professional skills and soft skills.

The skills you present should be relevant to the advertised position.

Describe the skills you have in detail.

You could, for example, present your IT skills in the following way: Microsoft Excel (very good), Microsoft Word (good), Typo3 (basic proficiency). Use a similar approach for your language skills, etc.

Try to stand out from the crowd.

Avoid the typical, hollow-sounding phrases that you can find in any cover letter template on the internet.

Make sure your internet presence is consistent with what you include in your application.

The internet never forgets. Ask yourself what a recruiter will find if they google your name. We also recommend that you take another look at your social media accounts to check that you're happy with what's posted there.

Compile your CV systematically and in reverse chronological order.

Don't forget to include periods of voluntary work or stays abroad.

Keep things neat, write names correctly and use a spell-checker.

Make sure that your application is presented in a well organized and reader-friendly way. Avoid spelling mistakes and make sure you write all names correctly, especially the name of the person who will receive your application.

Bear in mind that your application may be processed initially by machine.

More and more companies are using automated application processing and CV ranking software to preselect candidates. Find out what this could mean for your application and what you need to pay attention to (e.g. ranking criteria).

Make a good impression with a professional-looking CV photograph.

A good headshot will help you come across as likeable, motivated and competent. An open posture, a smile and clothing appropriate to the position you're applying for will all help to create the right impression.

Don't make these mistakes...

Don't make promises that you won't be able to keep.

Lies have a habit of coming back to bite you! Be authentic and be honest when talking about your skills and personality.

Don't pack in too much into your CV.

As recruiters only spend around one minute on average reading a CV, your CV shouldn't be more than two pages long. Try to keep things as concise as possible without leaving out anything that is relevant to your application.

Don't make your cover letter into a novel.

Here, too, relevance is key. Keep your cover letter to a single page.

Don't boast or brag.

Writing a job application obviously involves you presenting yourself in the best possible light; just don't go overboard.

Don't submit a one-size-fits-all application.

Even if you are applying for multiple jobs at the same time, make sure your cover letter and CV are always individually tailored to the position and company or organization you are applying to.

Don't make your cover letter all about you.

Try instead to see things from the company's point of view and show the company how it would benefit from hiring you.

Don't submit a sloppy application.

Avoid spelling, formatting and grammatical errors. If you're submitting a paper application, make sure that none of the pages are dog-eared or damaged. Keep the layout and formatting of your CV and cover letter consistent throughout.