

Cover Letter/E-Note

Your cover letter or E-note is often the first thing an executive recruiter or potential employer sees from your marketing toolkit. If it isn't targeted and impactful, they're unlikely to look at your resume/CV. It's obvious that cover letters and E-notes are essential, but in today's modern job market, some question the need for a cover letter at all. Due to changing technology, E-notes have surpassed cover letters in many job applications, but there are still some employers who prefer to read a traditional cover letter. Therefore, you must have both documents prepared in your marketing toolkit.

In general, a traditional cover letter is formatted like an official business letter and should use the same letterhead as the accompanying resume/CV. In contrast, an E-note is the message written in the body of an email that you send with your resume/CV attached (with no cover letter included). E-notes may also differ in that they are usually shorter and are easier to speed-read—shorter paragraphs, often with concise lists to format the material into content that is very easy to consume.

Use a traditional cover letter:

1. When the job ad specifies that you should include it.
2. When you have been asked to send in your resume/CV.
3. For internal hiring or when selection is conducted through a hiring committee.
4. If the job ad is exceedingly specific and there are crucial requirements, all of which you must address in the letter.

Use an E-note format:

1. When sending your resume/CV via email.
2. When applying to a job through an online application requiring plain text format.
3. When sending messages on LinkedIn to prospective employers.
4. When your resume/CV is being sent unsolicited.

Formatting Your Cover Letter/E-Note

Your cover letter/E-note not only highlights your experience and value, it also demonstrates whether or not you have exceptional writing skills. Including an impactful, well-edited cover letter/E-note, even if it's not requested, can help you stand out from your competition. Each version you create of these documents should include an introduction, body, and closing.

Introduction

Write directly to the recruiter or hiring manager, addressing him or her by name, to show that you have done your research. This is much more effective than the generic "Sir or Madam" and will help your introduction seem unique. If you're not sure what the correct person's name is, look them up on LinkedIn or through a search engine.

This is also the time to show why you want to work at that specific organization, so be sure to directly mention the organization's name and what interests you about them. At the end of your introduction, tell the employer some key details about your background that will entice them to want to read your attached resume/CV.

Body

In this section, you need to emphasize the value you would bring to the company. Do some research and use that as a basis to describe how you plan to expand or improve the company's current initiatives and point out any opportunities you see for future initiatives. When applicable, cite your background, accomplishments, and any performance metrics that relate to the plans and ideas you're describing to the hiring manager.

Closing

This is your chance to drive home your candidacy and make sure your resume/CV is opened. Discuss your key strengths and how they've contributed to your success. End this section with a positive call to action asking for an interview or directing them to read your resume/CV.

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