

THE IMPORTANCE OF WRITING A GOOD COVERING LETTER

A covering letter is an essential part of how jobseekers market themselves as this is usually the employer's first encounter with the potential employee, says recruitment specialist PAG.

"The gateway to your CV is in your covering letter," says PAG managing director Lawrence Wordon. "The purpose of the covering letter is to introduce the jobseeker to the potential employer or recruiter and the content should be structured and concise."

Unlike a CV, a covering letter should always be a customised document, which includes an introduction to the candidate, a motivation as to why the candidate is applying for the job and a description of the jobseeker's qualifications, says Wordon. "Ensure that a business-like approach is maintained, while striving to sell yourself by highlighting some of your most relevant achievements," he says.

Wordon suggests taking note of the following basic covering letter guidelines when candidates are sending out their CVs:

- always address the relevant contact in the position advertised;
- when responding to a specific advertisement, include any relevant reference numbers, the date it was posted and the job title;
- the covering letter should briefly outline the jobseeker's current position and illustrate the reason for the desired change;
- jobseekers should provide the potential employer with worthy reasons to set up an interview; and
- the closing paragraph of a covering letter should include convenient contact times and the candidate's telephone number.

"Remember that a well-written covering letter will help you receive a favourable response from your initial contact," says Wordon.