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Gearred2Lead

**Youth Leadership Development Programme
with ASHREF ISMAIL**

Week 5 - Session 1 (8 August 2020)

WEEK 5 - Sat, 8 August 2020



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Session 1	10h00 - 12h00	How to Dissect a Job Advert	How to Write a Killer Cover Letter	How to Prepare a CV/Resume
Session 2	14h00 - 16h00	Preparing for the Interview	Coping with the Interview	Dealing with The Top 40 Interview Questions

How to Dissect a Job Advert



- Match the job requirements to your skills, experiences, qualifications, qualities, eg:

Requirements	Me	Remarks
Matric	Yes	2008
Diploma: Finance or Equivalent	Yes	Damelin 3-Year Diploma: Finance Management
Computer literate	Word, PowerPoint	Learning Excel
Driving License	No, Learners' License	Appointment 15 Aug 2020
Three year's experience	5 years	Plus two at an NGO
Budgeting and Book-keeping	4 years	Barlow Motors
Conflict Resolution Skills	Yes	(Give example)
Ability to travel	Yes	No domestic challenges
Work under pressure/long hours	Yes	Have done it often

Successful Cover Letter Tips & Advice



- **These tips for cover letters will include:**
 - Tips on how to write a cover letter that gets the job done.
 - Understanding what should be included in a cover letter for a job application.
 - Good cover letter tips and examples on writing a compelling story.
 - The best cover letter advice that you can put to work immediately.

1. Understand What Must be Included to Not Miss Any Opportunity



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- Write a tailored cover letter for each position you're applying to.
- Include your name, address, and the date.
- Add the hiring manager's name and the company's name and address.
- Use a proper cover letter greeting/salutation, Write a killer opening statement
- Showcase your skills and experience and explain what you can do for the company in a short body paragraph (or two)
- Highlight your achievements in a closing statement
- Add complimentary close (e.g., *Regards*, *Sincerely*) and your name/signature at the bottom as well as any cover letter enclosures

2. Research the Company to Be Their Perfect Candidate



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- Read the job description, and **then reread it.**
- Make sure you understand the perfect candidate which the recruiter has in mind.
- Research the company (try Glassdoor, for example) to understand their values, their goals, and what they want in a candidate.
- This will not only give you ammunition for writing a great cover letter, but it will also serve as great talking points for the interview.

3. Choose the Right Cover Letter Format to Make the Best Impression



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- The basic cover letter format, or the cover letter template, is the foundation upon which you'll structure your cover letter.
- The format of cover letters includes the information you include, how you lay out that information (cover letter layout), and the design or template in which you'll deliver it.

4. Don't Include Your Social Links



- You repeat your name, address, phone number, and email address in your cover letter, but there is no reason to add the rest of your social links, profile URLs, and portfolio information with your contact details.
- Save this for your resume.
- However, if the styling of your resume suggests that your social media accounts and icons be included on your cover letter as well as your resume, by all means!
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5. Customize Your Cover Letter For Each Job - Here's Why



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- Do you have a resume with cover letter already made from the last job you applied for?
- **Crumple it up, and throw that generic cover letter for any resume out.**
 - You see, writing the best cover letter means to customize it for each job you apply to.
 - You need to tailor your cover letter to the employer.
 - Sure, there are going to be some parts from the last cover letter that you can reuse, but I'd say about 75% of it deserves to be redone.

6. Don't Echo Your Resume



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- Though you'll choose a cover letter format that complements your resume, you want to make sure that you **don't echo exactly what you put inside your resume.**
- Your cover letter should not reiterate the information from your resume, but rather add to it.
- The purpose of a cover letter is to introduce yourself, like a master of ceremonies to your resume's main act.
- Remember not to include all the same information and facts which you listed on your resume. You've already said a lot of this stuff, and a cover letter is not meant to be read *instead* of your resume.
- Make it complement your resume by including extra details and really making the case for your employment. **This is one of the most important tips on writing a cover letter**

7. Don't Be Too Formal - Show Your Human Side



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- Though we advise that your cover letter format or cover letter template should be structured like a formal business letter, don't be too formal with the actual words you choose to include on your cover letter.
- Use the first person on your cover letter (though not on your resume). Convey your enthusiasm for the job in colloquial, everyday language.
- Use your cover letter to show off your human side before they get to the point-by-point breakdown of your resume.

8. Choose the Perfect Font - One They'll be Sure to Read



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- There are a lot of great fonts out there. Choosing the best font for your cover letter is important.
- Avoid cursive fonts or anything too fancy or weird on your cover letter.
- The best font according to our cover letter guidelines? The one that you chose for your resume! Keep it consistent.

9. Use a Cover Letter to Explain An Employment Gap



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- Your resume might show that you have a **gap in your work history** between Job A and Job B. So guess what? Your cover letter is a great place to explain that!
- You don't necessarily need to bring it to the employer's attention, but if you feel it is obvious, you could take the initiative, especially if you know that you have a solid reason behind the gap, such as a volunteering stint or a newborn child.

10. Don't Start With Your Name - Here's Why That's Lame



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- You can add your name at the very top, where your address, phone number, and email address are, but what I mean is this:
- They know your name from your email, from your cover letter details above, and from the resume. This is a benefit-free addition, at best.

11. Open Strong - Use a Powerful Opening Sentence



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- Get off on the right foot.
- A strong opening statement on a cover letter and an equally strong introductory paragraph will compel the hiring manager to keep reading - and hopefully move on to the resume.

12. Call the Recruiter by Name to Grab Their Attention Immediately



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- One of the most successful cover letter tips I've come across is to call the recruiter (hiring manager) by name.
- **Why?**
- It's simple. Naming the person that will read your cover letter and glance at your resume gives them a jolt of familiarity, and it's more likely to make your cover letter stand out for them.
- It also makes them feel that you care about the job more, as you couldn't have sent this out to other companies.

13. Call the Company by Name - Here's Why It's a Must



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- Just like with the last cover letter tips, naming the company is a surefire way to let the hiring manager know that you are serious about this particular job.
- Where do you call the company by name? You should do it twice, at least: once in the address (we'll talk more about that soon), and once or more in the body of your cover letter.

14. Address Your Cover Letter the Right Way



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- Learning how to address a cover letter is the key to beginning on the right foot. These are cover letter basics.
- The addresses are located at the top, as with most letters, after all.
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- Your name and address should go on the very top, and it can be left-, right-, or center-oriented. Include your phone number and email address.
- Follow that with the company address, left-aligned above your salutation of the cover letter: first the recruiter's name (if you have it), then the company's name, and then the company's address.

15. Address Your Cover Letter to Specific Person (if you have name)



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- You already (hopefully) found out the name of the hiring manager so that you can call them by name in the greeting/salutation of your cover letter. Avoid *To Whom It May Concern* like the plague.
- But, don't stop there.
- When you're adding an address, post it through to that hiring manager's department or exact office, so that it gets into the right hands right off the bat.
- However, don't do this if they instructed you to address it elsewhere in the job description, of course.

16. Here's the Right Way to Address a Cover Letter If You Don't Have a Name



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- If you don't know the hiring manager's name, all hope is not lost.
- In this case, there are generic salutations and greetings that work better than others. Choose something like ***Dear Hiring Manager***

17. Make Your Cover Letter More About Them, Less About You



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- To build on the last cover letter tips, one of the most important points you need to remember is that you must **make your cover letter about them.**
- Sure, **you** want the job. You'll tell them why **you** are the best person for it. And **your** address is listed at the top of the page.
-
- These are all fine, but what I mean is that you need to list those things about you that are of consequence to them. If you are unsure about something you are thinking about putting in your cover letter, ask yourself: "Is this relevant to this company?"

18.Show Them Why You Are Interested



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- You're interested in the position they are offering, but convey just how enthusiastic and excited you are about **this exact company**.
- Finish that sentence you just started in the last cover letter tip by building on it and addressing something that is particular to this job
- Make your positive attitude transcend the page and let them feel that you want it.
- Make them excited and enthusiastic at the prospect of hiring you by showing them that you know them.
- This will make a fine cover letter introduction.

19. Don't Forget to Include a Date - One Formality You Need to Keep



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- Cover letters for employment are professional and formal letters, so the structure of a cover letter should follow similar rules.
- A date is an integral part, and that's true with those informal ones, too, like birthday cards
- Add the date that you are sending the email, including month, day, and year.
- Most appropriately, choose to spell out the full month name rather than abbreviating it or giving its numeric equivalent.
- Add it near the top, above the greeting or salutation.

20. Use Keywords to Pass the ATS Gatekeeper



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- Any list of tips on resumes and cover letters has to mention resume keywords Not sure what we mean? Refresh your memory with our resume keywords article [here](#).
- Both the hiring manager and the ATS are searching for keywords as they look at each cover letter and resume.
- The **ATS**, or **Applicant Tracking System**, is software that larger recruiters employ specifically to parse for these keywords, reducing their workload and narrowing down the applicant pool to those who more-closely match their needs.

Here's an example of resume keywords on a job description:



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Qualifications:

- Experience using IT Service Management systems (BMC Service Desk Express, SupportWorks, Magic, Remedy, ServiceNow)
- Solid hardware troubleshooting skills (laptop, desktop, printer, Cisco, mobile devices)
- Working knowledge of computer software (Windows 7/8/10, MAC OS X, Active Directory, Microsoft Office 2010, SCCM, WebEx, Go-to-Meeting, Adobe Acrobat, Bomgar, Citrix XenDesktop, VPN, RSA SecurID, MDM)
- Exceptional customer service skills
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills

There are good descriptive keywords to include (blue-highlighted), as well as some great employer-specific ones (yellow-highlighted).

21. Tell a Story - But Keep It Short and Sweet



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- Use a cover letter as a short story about your candidacy.
- Unlike your resume, which follows more rigid structuring, a cover letter is a great way to narrate where you come from, where you stand now, and where you hope to be.
- The key word here is *short*. Keep the entirety of your cover letter to about three or four paragraphs, using the middle paragraph or two for a brief story.
- Show the recruiter that your past experience and present knowledge would be a perfect match for their company's future. Make it easy for them to imagine that your story and theirs can merge together, like the Avengers.
- Your cover letter should serve as a brief, compelling introduction to your resume and your candidacy. The company and the hiring manager can learn more about you in the interview - that's what it's for!

22. Convey Your Enthusiasm - Here's Why



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- While you're telling your short story, make sure to convey your enthusiasm.
- Employers don't just want someone *willing* to do the job; employers prefer candidates who would be enthusiastic to work at the company.
- Every applicant is willing to do the job, the resumes say that, but it's up to that story you tell within your cover letter to convey your enthusiasm.

23.Be Logical & Chronological



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- Don't jump around from past to present back to past on your cover letter.
- Structure your cover letter so that it shows a logical progression in your employment and skill story.

Keep it chronologically in order, like we talked about in telling your story:

- **Past** history
- **Present** state of affairs
- How you will be perfect for the company's **future**

24.Explain Why You're the Best for the Job



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- Use the body of your cover letter to explain to the hiring manager what value you will add to the company should they hire you.
- Just like the achievements of your resume's experience section, use quantifiable accomplishments from your previous work experience to show them that you are more than capable.

25. Don't You Dare Lie - You'll Get Caught



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- You might feel the need to jazz up your cover letter a bit by embellishment of some minor details or a little exaggeration.
- Some of the braver people out there may go all out and make up some alternate reality.
- **Don't lie.**
- This won't work, and it won't get you work.
- **Lying on your cover letter** will be found out sooner or later, and that could hurt your future. Even if you managed to get hired and work years, when the truth comes out, it will do great harm to your career, contacts in the industry, and your future prospects.

26. Don't Go Overboard



- You should tell a compelling story, one that is unique and human in nature.
- However, don't go overboard - with your jokes, your flattery, or with begging for the job.
- Show interest but don't turn them off - this is one of life's many dances, like dating.
- Also, most people don't like braggers, but your resume and cover letter are designed to showcase the best you have to offer.
- Get over your distaste for bragging by including your achievements and wins - just don't go too far. Stay humble while portraying how great you are, something like:

27.Show You're a Cultural Fit for Their Team



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- You've now explained why you're the best for the job, but that was with numbers and experience and knowledge.
- What you need to do now is to convince them that you are a cultural fit - that you have similar values as the company and that you will be a good match with your future coworkers and management team.
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28.Be Yourself - Don't Pretend to be Something You're Not



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- Though we are giving you advice on what to put in a cover letter, don't feel as it is the only way.
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- Be honest, especially to who you are as a person.
- If you are **creative**, and especially if you are applying for a position that celebrates creativity, find your own unique way to deliver the best cover letter.
- Feel free to have a little fun with your cover letter without going too far. What's too far? Well, that's up to you and the recruiter to decide, ultimately. Many modern employers will reward your creativity.

29. Choose Active Voice and Avoid Buzzwords



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- Just like when **writing your resume**, don't use over-the-top jargon, clichés, or meaningless **buzzwords** that are too specific. A **study from Princeton** says that you're probably overcompensating.
- The only exception is when there are buzzwords in the job description, which effectively turn them into cover letter keywords. Also, don't use passive voice on cover letters. It feels evasive and unclear.

30. Call the Recruiter by Name (Again)



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- I've told you the importance of calling the recruiter by name, both in the address and in your greeting/salutation.
- However, one of my favorite cover letter writing tips is to call them by name once more.
- This grabs their attention one last time before you close, and it doubles the benefit by really making it feel personalized.
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- **But be careful!** Doing this means you have one more word to find and replace if you decide you want to copy this cover letter on over to the next internship or job application.

31.Close Strong: How to End a Cover Letter



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- You came out of the gate with gusto, and you maintained that momentum throughout the body of your cover letter.
- Now, end your cover letter on a strong note so that you leave a pleasant aftertaste.

For example:

I welcome the opportunity to discuss more with you about how my past achievements at Carson Logistics, Inc. can translate into similar successes at Argo Drones. Thank you very much for your time and consideration of my application. I look forward to hearing back from you soon!

Sincerely,

Angela Tackett

32.Edit Your Cover Letter the Right Way - Here's How



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- This might go without saying, but if you are following these job cover letter tips as you are working on yours, a helpful reminder won't do any harm.
- **When you are finished writing your cover letter:**
 - Edit it down to make your **cover letter** it the proper length.
 - Proofread it by using a tool like **Grammarly**.
 - Omit any unclear statements, such as jargon or run-on sentences.
 - Replace overused words.
- Ask a friend or relative to look over what you consider to be your final draft. Have them make sure that the logic is sound and that you are not missing anything important. They'll also check for grammar or spelling mistakes while they're at it.

33.The P.S. Rule - One of the Best Tips for a Great Cover Letter



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- One final cover letter tip for the very bottom: **always end a cover letter with a P.S.**
- This is a great cover letter hack, as a P.S. (postscript) at the bottom of your cover letter always draws the attention of the reader.

All the best!



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•Good luck and best wishes!