

GET WORK VANTAA

How to write effective cover letters
- tailor your message and get
noticed!

Riia Hoppania, Career Coach Metropolia UAS



Who's here today?

Nice to meet you!

Let's get to know each other little bit!

Tell shortly your

1. First name and what is your field of expertise
2. Expectations for today?

Today's topics

1

The purpose of a cover letter and how it differs from a CV

2

What makes a great cover letter?

3

How to prepare for writing a cover letter

4

How can you communicate your skills in a way that is interesting to companies?

5

The ideal structure of a cover letter

Share your experiences

Let's warm up!

- Your thoughts about writing a cover letter?
- Your thoughts about using AI tools like Chat GPT?



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The purpose of a cover letter and how it differs from a CV



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The purpose of a cover letter?

- A chance to show and explain your relevant experience
- Your pitch to the employer, why you would be a good fit for the job
- A chance to show your motivation and stand out from other applicants

How does a cover letter differ from a CV?

CV

- Your past career and education in a nutshell
- Shows **the facts** about your education, experience and skills
- Makes your career path visible to the recruiter
- Good CV also highlights the skills needed in the job that you are applying

Cover Letter

- Provides additional information to your resume
- Tells how you are qualified for this specific job you are applying for now
- Tells how you meet the job requirements
- Demonstrates motivation and explains why you are applying for the job.



Examples of a CV and a Cover Letter

NASIRUDDIN HUMAYUN



+358 88 234 3849
nasiruddin.humayun@gmail.com
Oulu, Finland
Nationality: Pakistani
linkedin.com/in/humayun-nasiruddin

PROFILE

- An ambitious MSc working on Digital Twinning at the University Oulu.
- Specialised in R&D of renewable energy at university level.
- Skilled in modelling and simulations of smart grids.
- Have background in management and commercialisation of start-ups.
- Goal orientated and self-motivated individual who is seeking a new position in growing company or organisation.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

UNIVERSITY OF OULU, 03/09/2019-30/06/2021

Master of Science (Environmental Engineering)
Main Subject: Sustainable Energy Systems
Thesis: Digital Twinning of Smart Grids

UNIVERSITY OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY UET LAHORE, PAKISTAN, 16/08/2012-01/06/2016

Bachelor of Science (Material Engineering)
Material Evaluation Techniques, Manufacturing Processes, Advance Materials
Thesis: ZnO Based Solar Cell

WORK EXPERIENCE

RESEARCH ENGINEER
UNIVERSITY OF OULU, FINLAND, 15/02/2021-

In-charge of building and managing Digital Twin OF Microgrid. Part Of EaaSLab Project.

CO-FOUNDER
ASTROPATH TECH, FASIALABAD, PAKISTAN, 15/09/2017-

Block-chain technology for secure communication and document catalog for land registry and tax documents.

- Green Fasalabad
- Researching different modes of Renewable energy and viable products
- Commercializing Plastic to fuel Conversion from Lab to Industrial Scale
- Ensuring Supply of Raw Material
- Operations of Pilot Plant

SKILLS

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Urdu: native
English: fluent
Finnish: basics

DIGITAL SKILLS

PTC CREO / CAMCAD
Excellent

Programming languages
PYTHON / TEM / SEM / C++
Very good

INTERESTS

- Tending to my allotment garden with my friends
- Outdoor cooking
- Strategic games as Civilization

REFERENCES

Available upon request.

LAB ENGINEER

UNIVERSITY OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY (UET), FAISALABAD, PAKISTAN, 08/12/2016-12/09/2017

In-charge of Computational Lab

- Teacher Aid / Assistant
- Teaching Introductory Labs to Students
- Conducting Computational Lab
- Conducting Introduction to Materials Lab

MATERIAL TESTING ENGINEER

PMT LABS, ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN, 04/05/2015-07/12/2016

Completing research project on ZnO made through Hydrothermal route

- Handling Lab equipment: TEM, SEM
- Writing daily reports
- Creating a purpose made hydrothermal reactor Vessel

Application

Trainee position, ReNew Company

I am looking for a trainee position in your company and Smart Energy Program is my first choice. ReNew Company has been successfully developing technologies which are changing the industry on many fronts. During the Virtual Career Fair in December 2021, I met your company representative Ms. Merituuli Adolfsen, and she encouraged me to send an application to you.

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My study projects at LUT University and my internship period in Costa Rica have proved I can work effectively in international teams and working environments. I am fluent in my native language French. Additionally, I have good knowledge of Spanish and speak conversational Finnish. I have played football for over 8 years which has helped me to build my people skills. On my own time, hiking is a hobby that helps me to relax and hiking trips abroad have also improved my language skills and cultural understanding.

I would be happy to relocate in Finland and I will be available to start work by the end of May 2022.

I look forward to an opportunity to discuss with you personally on the possibility of a traineeship in your company. I will contact you again next week.

Best regards,
Basile Monet
basile.monet@student.lut.fi
+358 341 230 876

Examples are taken from: [TEK Workbook](#)*

What makes a great **Cover Letter**?



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A great Cover Letter 1/2:

- Is written for one specific job (always start from a blank page)
- Shows motivation
- Shows that you are applying to this specific job
- Explains how your experience, skills and competencies match the job requirements

RE: CUSTOMER SERVICE EMPLOYEE: CITYKANGAROO

I am interested in applying for the position of a customer service employee at the CityKangaroo city bike service. In this job, I would be able to utilise my previous experience in customer service and have the opportunity to use new technology - the city bike mobile application. I value the environmental consciousness and high-quality customer service of CityKangaroo. Therefore, I am keen to develop my skills and knowledge in eco-friendly technologies and further develop my customer services skills.

I am currently studying industrial management at Lappeenranta University of Technology and my interests lie in the use of the latest technology in services. I used CityKangaroo's city bikes last summer and, therefore, I am already familiar with the products and service. I will be able to help customers in a clear and calm manner in Finnish, English or German if they have any problems using the city bike service. I also have hands-on experience in repair work, since I have repaired my own and my family members' bicycles in the past number of years.

I have been regarded as prompt and careful in my approach to work in my previous jobs, both as an assistant in a cafe and as a production line worker at Laatikko & Loota. I am a reliable worker who learns quickly and can be trusted. For example, I was responsible for cash reconciliation in my cafe job and was praised for my performance and accuracy. As an employee, CityKangaroo would gain a responsible and motivated employee who is always cooperative and customer focused.

I hope to meet you soon for an interview.

Best regards,

Noa Nordman
noa.nordman@lut.fi
+358-30-456 9877

A great Cover Letter 2/2:

- Has the same **keywords** than the ad on it (ATS applicant tracking system)
- Also shows your personality (be careful with the AI usage)
- Is max 1 page long
- Is written in the same language that the ad

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How to prepare for writing a Cover Letter



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1. Read and analyse the job ad carefully!

- What do you know about the role, tasks and responsibilities?
- What are the job specific requirements? Skills, education, work history?
- What kind of person is the company looking for? Personality and character strengths?

2. Search for more information

- Look at company website and social media channels. What information can you find about the company and its culture? Values? Projects? Clients?
- What information are you missing? Call the recruiter **before** writing the Cover Letter!
- Do you already know someone working in this company? Can you get some insights? LinkedIn?

3. How would you fit the job?

1. Pick out the competences and strengths required from the advertisement.
2. Separate the required skills from the "nice to have" skills.
3. How does your background and skills match what the company is looking for? What skills do you have?
4. Think of concrete examples of how you have used or developed each of these skills.
5. Would you be ready to learn the skills you do not have yet?

Analysing the Job Ad

Let's practice!

- Pick one job ad that's most interesting to you
- Start with reading the ad carefully
- Highlight all the requirements, skills and expectations
- If you would apply for this position, what should be mentioned in the cover letter?
- What kind of person would suit this job?

Discuss in small groups/pairs 15 min.

How to communicate your skills in a way that is interesting to companies?



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What the recruiters are looking for?

1. Motivation for the job
2. A person's potential and ability to develop
3. Fit with the workplace culture (culture fit)

"In their hiring decisions, employers often prioritise motivation and potential than on previous work experience and skills"

Source: Duunitori Rekrytointitutkimus 2023 **



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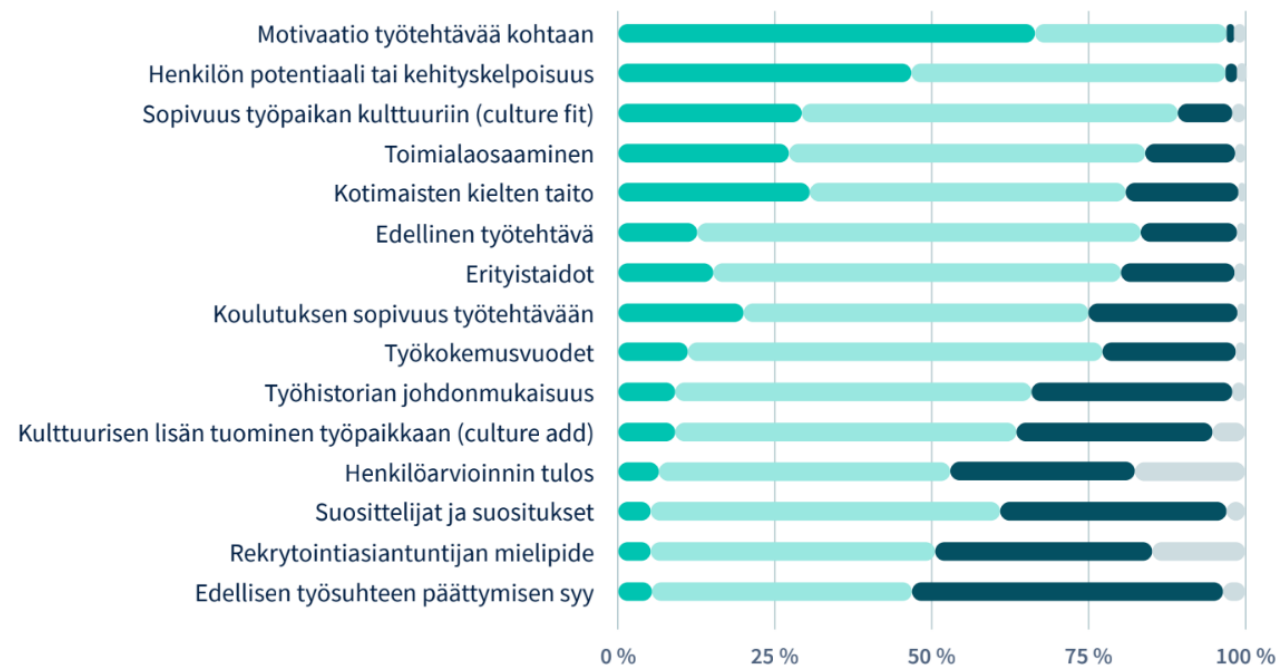
What are the key factors in a recruitment decision?



REKRYTOINTI & EHDOKASKOKEMUS

MIKÄ PAINAA REKRYTOINTIPÄÄTÖKSESSÄ

Miten koet, että seuraavat ehdokkaaseen liittyvät tekijät ovat vaikuttaneet rekrytointipäätökseen?



Motivaatiolle ja potentiaalille annetaan päätöksissä enemmän painoarvoa kuin osaamiselle.

- Tärkeä tai erittäin tärkeä
- Jonkin verran tärkeä
- Ei juurikaan tai lainkaan tärkeä
- Ei osaa sanoa

Source: [Duunitori Rekrytointitutkimus 2023](#)



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Let's discuss!

How to show motivation in a Cover Letter?



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How to show motivation in a Cover Letter?

- The application is tailored for this specific job and company.
- You understand the requirements of the job and how your skills match them.
- You can give examples on similar projects or tasks you've done before.
- You've done your homework and read the company website and can use that information in your cover letter.
- You call the recruiter, **before writing the cover letter**, and ask for more information.



Let's discuss!

How to talk about your potential and ability to develop in a Cover Letter?



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How to talk about your potential and ability to develop in a Cover Letter?

- Express enthusiasm for learning new skills
- Highlight relevant achievements
- Tell how you plan to develop your skills in the future
- Mention relevant trainings, courses and certificates

Let's discuss!

How to consider cultural fit in a Cover Letter?



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How to consider cultural fit in a Cover Letter?

- Demonstrate that you have researched and understand the company's culture
- Discuss how your personal and professional values align with the company's mission, vision, or principles.
- Mention any company-specific initiatives, projects, or events that resonate with you
- Share aspects of your personality or work style that align with the company's cultural expectations



Let's take a short break

15 min

We'll continue at ..

How to communicate your skills in a way that is interesting to companies?



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Levels of communicating competences

Level 1: Identifying and acknowledging competency

Level 2: Identifying and acknowledging competency and providing examples of how you have applied it

Level 3: Identifying and acknowledging competency and its added value to the company

Level 1: Identifying and acknowledging competency

I am a skilled communicator

I demonstrate strong leadership skills in various team settings

I am proficient in time management

I have strong analytical skills

I excel in problem-solving and critical thinking



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Level 2: Identifying and acknowledging competency and providing examples of how you have applied it

"In my previous roles, I was responsible for implementing the company's communication plan, stakeholder communication, and enhancing internal communication in line with the company strategy."

"I have led teams on projects, making sure everyone worked well together. I helped team members grow and promoted values like honesty and new ideas. By setting clear goals and sharing tasks, I achieved results that matched what the company wanted."

Level 3: Identifying and acknowledging competency and its added value to the company

"Thanks to my great communication skills, the company's communication processes became clearer, which reflected in the overall efficiency and job satisfaction within the company."

"With my strong leadership skills, I've improved team collaboration and motivation, resulting in smoother project execution and higher employee morale. This has translated into increased productivity and job satisfaction across the company."



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Verbalising your skills

Let's practice!

Level 1: Identify a skill you have

Level 2: Think few examples on how you have applied it in your work

Level 3: How did you add value to the company you worked by using this skill?

Individual work 10 min. Share your skills with the person sitting next to you 5 min.



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The ideal structure of a cover letter



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First part – Wake up the interest

- Why are you applying for his organization or a company and this position?
 - Does the job match your previous skills and experience?
 - Does the job match what you want to do in the future?
 - Do you share companies' values etc.
- Introduce yourself (professionally)
- Demonstrate that you are applying for this specific role and company.

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Middle part – where you convince the employer of your skills and potential

- Find the key tasks and responsibilities from the job ad. How do you fit into the requirements?
- Write examples of how you have done similar tasks in the past and how you have developed the skills needed in this job.
- Try to use level2/level3 when talking about your skills
- Do not write about non-relevant skills here!
- Use the same keywords that they have used in the ad.

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Last part – Wrap it up

- Your personal strengths, the way you work, how you are as a team member and colleague. Use the feedback you have gotten! (culture fit)
- Why you would be a good match to this job?
- What would you bring to the company?
- When can you start, salary request IF it was requested, a greeting that refers to you being open for an interview.

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Read and comment on cover letters

Let's practice!

- Do you understand her/his motivation for the job?
- How does she/he talk about her experience and skills? Can you see examples?
- Do you understand what kind of colleague she/he would be?
- What is good in this cover letter?
- Is something missing?

Discuss in small groups/pairs 15 min. Prepare to share your thoughts!

Traffic Light Exercise

Let's practice!

- Take your phone and go to LinkedIn, for example
- Find a vacancy that interests you
- Read the requirements for the job and divide them into three categories
 - "Green" - I've got this!
 - "Yellow" - I know something about this and want to learn more
 - "Red" - I have no skills

Go back to the "Green" requirements. Pick one and think about concrete examples on how you have used that skill in your previous work.

Please, give us feedback!

How did we do today?



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REFERENCES:

Duunitori. (2023). *Rekrytointitutkimus 2023*. Retrieved March 14, 2025, from https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nVe2OITpmmODzKhrXk4lnDtU35s_03vJ/view

TEK. (n.d.). *06 Toolkit*. Retrieved March 14, 2025, from <https://www.tek.fi/en/workbook/06-toolkit>

*TEK is the organisation for academic engineers and architects in Finland

**Duunitori is a Finnish job search platform and a working life media outlet



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Kiitos!



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Elinkeino-, liikenne- ja
ympäristökeskus



Get Work Vantaa -hanke

Kaksivuotisen [Get Work Vantaa -hankkeen](#) päätoteuttaja on Vantaan kaupunki. Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulu ja Metropolia Ammattikorkeakoulu ovat hankkeen osatoteuttajia. Hankkeen toteutusaika on 1.6.2023–31.5.2025. Get Work Vantaa on Euroopan sosiaalirahaston osarahoittama.

