



## Career change

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There are many reasons you may wish to change your choice of career. However, no matter what the reason is, a key part of your success will be convincing employers you're the right fit for your new role - even if your previous experience in the industry is limited.

### 1. Opening the letter

Keep your opening simple and straightforward. State what job it is you're applying for, and where you found the vacancy.

Feel free to mention your source by name (e.g. as advertised on reed.co.uk) or, if someone referred you to the contact, you may also wish to mention them by name in the opening.

**Example:**

*I wish to apply for the role of Events Manager, currently being advertised on www.Jobmonster.com*

### Second paragraph - Why are you suitable for the job?

Briefly describe your most relevant professional and academic achievements to help sell your suitability.

Generally this will be related your previous work experience, although you could also include any professional or academic achievements which could be a testament to your character. They may also demonstrate skills that are relevant to the industry you're looking to move into. For a career change, you can also use this paragraph to suggest why you see this opportunity as the right role to switch disciplines.

**Example:**

*As you can see from my attached CV, I have over eight years' experience in the sales industry. Having worked my way up to Regional Sales Manager, I'm ready for a new challenge in the Marketing industry, and see this position as the perfect role to help me achieve this.*

### 2. Third paragraph – Why you're looking to make a change

Once you reach this stage, it's time to expand upon why you're looking for a change of career.

Above all else, the main thing you want to put across to an employer is why you see this industry, and to be more precise, this position, as the perfect role and change for you.

Feel free to keep your reasons relatively concise, but make sure you can justify the change of direction before you decide to move on. If the recruiter can see that the decision has been well thought out, they will have much more trust when it comes to reviewing the rest of your application.

**Example:**

*I'm particularly interested in working in Marketing because of my passion for organising and managing events, something I've had extensive experience of during my time in Sales. Further, I feel that I have achieved all that I can in my current industry.*

**3. Fourth/Fifth paragraph – What can you do for the company?**

Once you've briefly explained the reasons for your potential move, use practical examples to emphasise what you can do for the business - and place prominence back on the positives.

The key to success in this section is to major on your transferable skills. Think of any attributes you've built in your current role, and try and apply them to your new role.

Although not everything will translate, you'll be surprised how many of the same skills are applicable for a number of different roles. Problem solving, customer service, analytics and adaptability are all good examples. If you're struggling for inspiration, the job description should be able to give you a little direction as to what they're looking for.

You could also choose some quantifiable examples to demonstrate your success. 'Increased revenue by x%', for instance, will be impressive to most hiring managers. Again, try and choose transferrable skills, wherever possible.

**Example:**

*Throughout my previous positions I organised events ranging from small product launches for a select group of clients, through to end-of-year awards events for over 200 professionals within the sector. I believe that this experience, coupled with my excellent interpersonal and organisational skills, make me the perfect candidate for building a long-term career in this role.*

*In my previous role as a Regional Sales Manager at Sales Company Ltd, I was responsible for managing relationships with big brands, such as X, Y and Z, and my account management resulted in an 18% increase in business renewals achieved. Despite being in a different industry, I am confident that I can bring this level of success with me to your organisation and help Marketing Company PLC build upon their reputation as one of the biggest names in the SA events industry.*

**4. Closing the letter**

Thank the employer for their time, and sign off politely.

In terms of terminology, use 'Yours sincerely' (if you know the name of the hiring manager)/'Yours faithfully' (if you do not), and your name.

**Example:**

*Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my application further.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*[Your name]*

**Final thoughts**

Remember: This is not a ready-made cover letter. Just as with any other part of your application, it requires a good level of research and your ability to tailor what you write to the role will dramatically improve your chances of success.

The most important thing to remember here is to explain your reasons for wanting a change, and to convince employers you're unlikely to change your mind if things don't work out.

Major on your transferable skills, and you'll alleviate many of these fears. Follow your cover letter up with a well-written CV, and you'll leave no doubt in a recruiter's mind.

To help you go beyond the basics of how to write a cover letter, here's a cover letter template specifically designed for people looking for a career change.

## EXAMPLE

Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms **[Hiring managers name – if not known, simply Sir/Madam]**

I wish to apply for the role of **[Job Title]**, currently being advertised on jobs.co.za.

As you can see from my attached CV, I have over **[time period]** experience in the **[old sector]** industry. Having worked my way up to **[position]**, I'm ready for a new challenge in the **[new sector]** industry, and see this position as the perfect role to help me achieve this.

I'm particularly interested in working in **[new sector]** because **[reason for change e.g. my passion for X/I've always had a keen interest in X]**, and I feel that I have achieved all that I can in my current industry.

Throughout my previous positions I have always enjoyed **[duties which could be related to the new role]**. I believe that this interest, coupled with my **[transferrable skills]** built up during my career, make me the perfect candidate for building a long-term career in this role.

In my previous role as a **[job title]** at **[employer name]**, I was responsible for **[Insert a quantifiable and notable achievement/s - e.g. a x% increase in revenue]**, and despite being in a different industry, I am confident that I can bring this level of success with me to your organisation and help **[company name]** build upon their reputation as **[state their position in market – learned through your research]**.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my application further.

Yours sincerely/Yours faithfully,

[Your name]

[contact phone number]

[Signature - if desired]