

Resume and Cover Letter Writing

A workbook for carers



Introduction

This workbook was created to help you write resumes and cover letters, essential steps in the recruitment process. As a carer you possess many transferable skills. When returning to the paid workforce it is important to consider an area that interests and fulfils you, and to learn how to express your abilities in the job search and application process.

Many carers seeking employment have told us they need guidance to write resumes and cover letters that capture their skills and experience, reflecting their caring role as well as paid work history.

Carers Victoria has created this workbook to assist you in considering your employability and the way you represent yourself as you begin preparing for a return to the paid workforce.

What is Covered in this Workbook

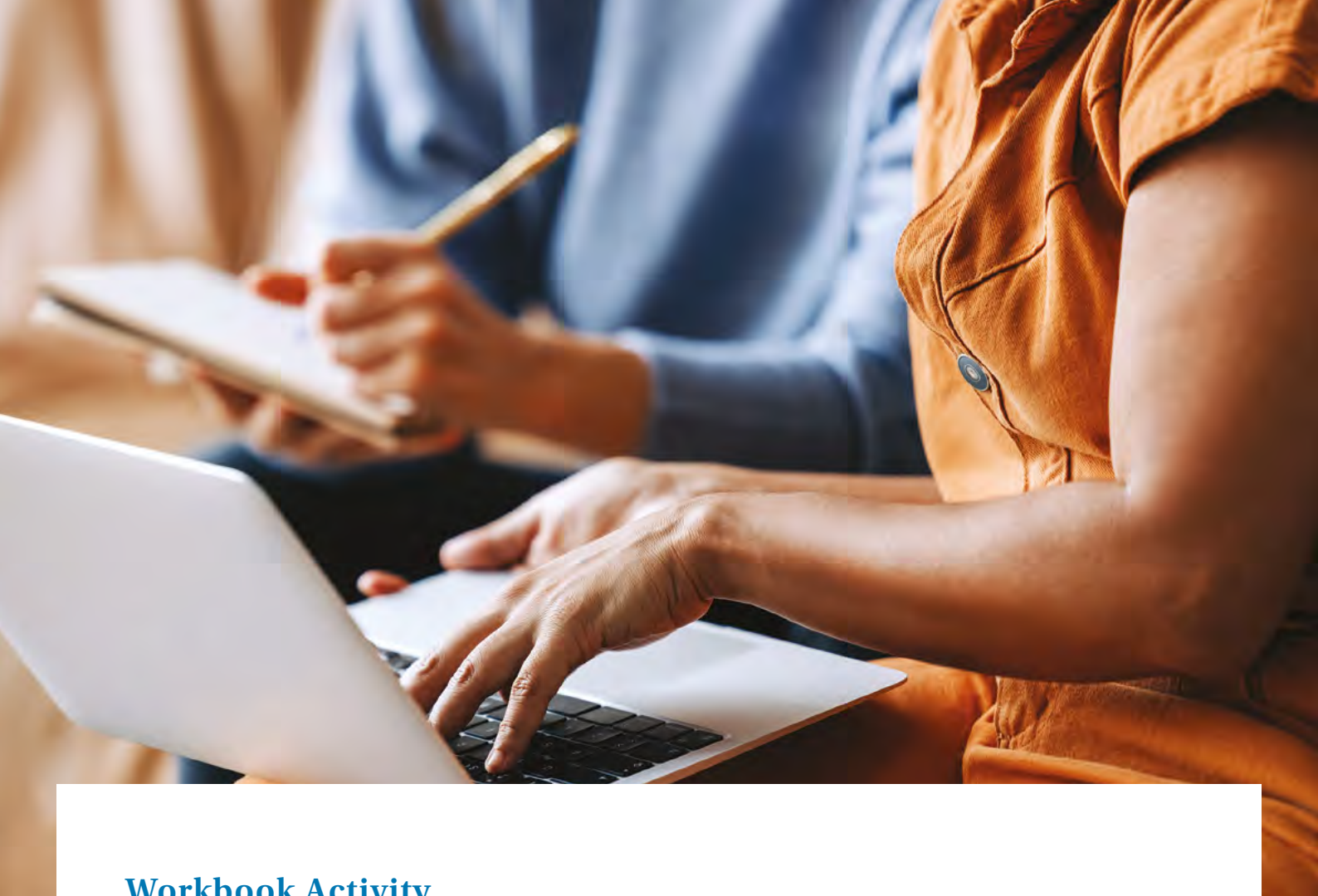
Carers bring so many qualities into the workplace that can positively impact the work environment and enhance the overall experience for both colleagues and clients. It's valuable to outline both your work history and transferable skills in your resume and cover letter.

This workbook includes:

- › How to tailor your resume and cover letter to the role you are applying for, to create a stand-out job application
- › An overview of an effective resume with sections explained
- › How to highlight accomplishments and key achievements
- › How to integrate keywords into a resume
- › How to design a visually appealing and simple, effective resume and cover letter.

Reflect and Consider

- › You are “selling” yourself to an employer – the employer usually has many options.
- › They are looking for someone with specific skills and attributes as outlined in the Key Selection Criteria.



Workbook Activity

If you have decided upon a role / career direction, think about key skills / experiences or attributes you have (unique to you) that would be good to highlight in your resume:

1.
2.
3.

How will these benefit a workplace?



Researching Market and Opportunities

Before applying for a role, always check the date and relevancy of the position offered. As a rule, unless there is a specific closing date given, apply within a few days of it being advertised.

There are many job advertisement platforms, such as:

- › <https://au.indeed.com>
- › www.ethicaljobs.com.au
- › www.linkedin.com.au
- › www.carecareers.com.au/page/carecareers-in-victoria

The Art of Tailoring

If you tailor your application well, the employer will think: *“That’s exactly who I was looking for!”*

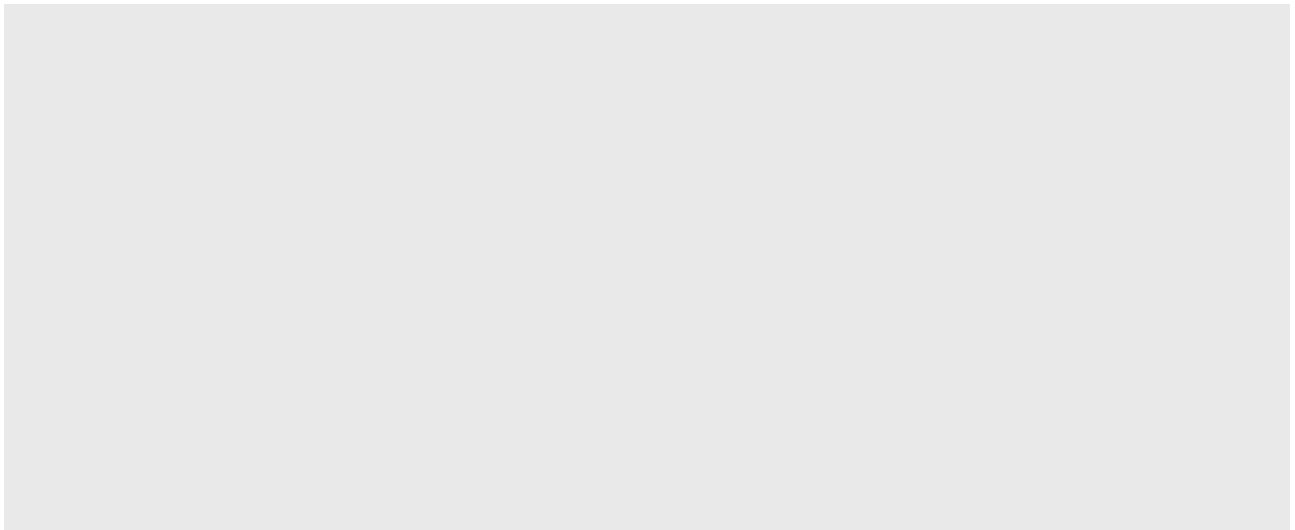
The purpose of your resume and cover letter is to highlight how you fit within the employer’s selection criteria, i.e., how you will be able to tackle the specific business problems of the advertised role.

You can do this skilfully by:

1. Matching your skills to those listed in the position description.
2. Listing accomplishments that relate to those responsibilities.
3. Indicating how you understand the needs of the organisation and can meet them.
4. Using the language and keywords in the position description.

You may wish to consult a previous job application if you have a copy of one and see how you matched it to the key selection criteria and reflect on how you may do this differently.

Write down any initial thoughts you have on how to do this:



Resume Writing

Take a look at this resume template and the prompts in each section. As you work through the resume, consider why it is structured this way.

Name
Mobile: XXXX XXX XXX Email: yourname@gmail.com

CANDIDATE SNAPSHOT

Three sentences - Who you are, **the value you add to THIS role**, your career motivation. (= a career snapshot, presenting a branding statement that briefly explains your unique value as well as your skills and qualifications).

KEY SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES

5-7 bullet points of key skills and attributes, aligned to the role - examples below:

- › Customer focused with a consultative approach with a emphasis on Win/Win outcomes
- › Highly effective communicator and coach with excellent interpersonal skills
- › Goal orientated and highly motivated to exceed expectations
- › Strong leadership and collaborative style
- › Proficient in the use of Salesforce CRM platform
- › Experience with full Microsoft Office suite and SAP ERP

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Month Year - Month Year
Company - Role

Responsibilities
A few sentences to summarise responsibilities.

Achievements
2-5 bullets of achievements - examples below:

- › Coach of the Year Award 2016 - Base upon total Team Revenue Growth and exceeding Revenue Target.
- › Successfully implemented new CRM tool with team and ensured team members were trained before CRM launch so that transition to new tool was seamless.
- › Consistently met or exceeded revenue quotas with revenue growth of 23% over 3-year period.
- › Successfully implemented Miller Heiman Strategic Selling training and methodology to Sales Team resulting in an 30% increase in closing rates across the team

Month Year - Month Year
Company - Role

Responsibilities
A few sentences to summarise responsibilities.

Achievements
2-5 bullets of achievements.

Resume of Joseph Blogg Mobile XXXX XXX XXX Page 1 of 2

Month Year - Month Year
Company - Role

Responsibilities

A few sentences to summarise responsibilities.

Achievements

2-5 bullets of achievements.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Month Year - Month Year
Company - Role

EDUCATION / TRAINING / CERTIFICATES

Qualifications, Year Completed

Institute / University

Current Victorian Drivers Licence

REFEREES

Available upon request

In the following section we will go over the typical elements of a resume. These are:

1. Candidate Summary
2. Key Skills and Attributes
3. Employment History / Professional Experience
4. Education
5. Referees

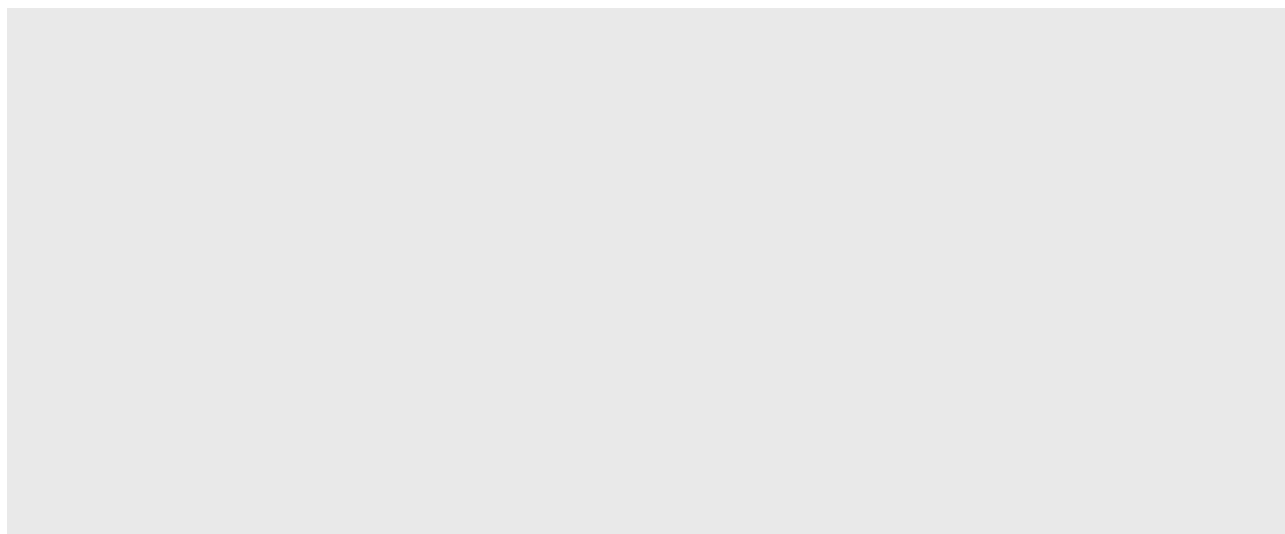
1. Candidate Summary

This is your “elevator pitch” – an executive summary of the skills, experience and personal attributes you bring to this particular role. You must tailor this to each role you apply for, to make your application effective.

Example: *Highly empathetic and experienced customer service professional with three years of hands-on experience in direct customer service roles and one year in a call centre environment. Proven ability to connect with customers, understand their needs, and resolve issues efficiently. Skilled in conflict resolution and adept at handling challenging situations with patience and professionalism. Committed to delivering exceptional service and fostering positive customer relationships.*

Workbook Activity

Write a candidate summary tailored to one of the roles you are planning to apply for:



2. Key Skills and Attributes

This section on your resume lists about five to seven skills and attributes relevant to the job. Be sure to read the selection criteria carefully and match accordingly. You must tailor this to each job you apply for. Avoid vague, generic attributes, and instead include as many hard skills the employer has requested for the role.

Additional Tips

- › Use action words to highlight the way you do each one successfully.
- › List one or two relevant personal attributes.
- › Where possible use numbers to quantify competence level.

Example

- › Three years of direct customer service experience.
- › One year of experience in a call centre environment.
- › Strong empathy and interpersonal skills.
- › Excellent conflict resolution abilities.
- › Effective communication skills, including active listening.
- › Ability to remain calm under pressure.
- › Dedicated to providing outstanding customer support.
- › Proven track record of exceeding customer expectations.

3. Employment History / Professional Experience

This section should provide a snapshot of your relevant employment summary on the first page of your resume. If you have had many jobs that are all relevant, they may also appear on page 2.

- › Include both paid and unpaid workplace experience as long as it's relevant to this job.
- › List your most recent experience first and work backwards, e.g. [month and year employed from - to] [Job Title] - [Company Name], [Overview of role in 1-2 lines] [Key Responsibilities – Activities – Accomplishments].
- › Show the key skills of each job relevant to the current role - this will catch the recruiter's attention and will make them want to read more.

Examples:

[Dates] - [Private] - Personal Carer

- › Provided personalised care and assistance tailored to the individual needs of elderly parents.
- › Assisted with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, grooming, and toileting.
- › Administered medications according to prescribed schedules and ensured compliance with medical treatment plans.
- › Prepared nutritious meals and assisted with feeding if necessary, adhering to any dietary restrictions or preferences.
- › Liaised with health care teams, coordinated appointments and made sure appointments were attended to on time.
- › Communicated regularly with family members and healthcare professionals to provide updates on the client's condition and collaborate on care plans.
- › Managed Aged Care package and navigated the aged care system to access services and rebates.
- › Assisted parents to engage in social activities within their community.
- › Offered emotional support to alleviate feelings of loneliness and anxiety.

[Dates] - [Company Name] - Customer Service Representative

- › Provided exemplary service to customers across multiple channels, including in-person, phone, and email.
- › Effectively addressed inquiries, resolved issues, and processed orders with efficiency and accuracy.
- › Demonstrated empathetic and patient communication to handle customer concerns and complaints.
- › Maintained meticulous records of interactions and followed up to ensure customer satisfaction.

[Dates] - [Company Name] - Call Center Representative

- › Managed high call volumes in a fast-paced environment, assisting customers with diverse needs.
- › Responded to product inquiries, provided technical support, and managed accounts effectively.
- › Utilised active listening techniques to understand customer needs and provide tailored solutions.
- › Successfully resolved conflicts and escalated issues to ensure timely resolution and customer satisfaction.

Key Achievements / Accomplishments

These can be included in your employment history, where relevant and appropriate, under each role.

Depending on the job you're applying for, key achievements don't have to be statements, such as:

- › "Won best salesperson of the month three times in a year",
- › "Negotiated with suppliers and reduced manufacturing costs by 10% over an 18-month period" or
- › "Implemented an IT system, which saved staff two hours a day in repetitive administration tasks."

Think about the role you're applying for carefully. What achievements can you include to give you an edge in this role?

For example: If you are applying for a job in aged care, an accomplishment such as "created the most well-attended weekly activity for residents" may make a huge impact, as it demonstrates you have brought something to the role which made a difference to the client group. We challenge you to try to name at least three accomplishments, however small or big, in each of your paid and/or voluntary roles.

4. Education

In this section list anything relevant to the job, or foundational degrees.

Include:

- › Names of degrees and courses or course codes to demonstrate competencies [subjects] which can be easily checked.
- › The name and location of the institution.
- › The year you graduated.

Don't include:

- › Anything that is considered outdated in the industry or not relevant to the role.

5. References

Often job seekers are unsure if they should say “available upon request” or list referees in their initial application. There is no right or wrong answer, but some online platforms require you to supply referee details at the time of application. Sometimes you can change those details later if needed. Ideally a referee should be a supervisor, manager, business owner or human resources representative.

Before listing anyone as a referee make sure to ask them if they are willing to give you a verbal reference. And if they agree, advise that you are including them in your application.

Closer to the time of a reference check, brief each referee on the role applied for, provide them with a job description and discuss any relevant projects or aspects of your past employment as it relates to the current job application.

List each referee’s full name, title, phone number and email address. It is common practice to supply two referees. Typically, a minimum of two professional referees and a third can be a character reference (this is optional).

Cover Letter Writing

The purpose of a cover letter is to:

- › Support your resume.
- › Address the role directly (unique for each job).
- › Highlight relevant parts of your resume and fill in any gaps that the resume doesn't explain adequately.
- › Demonstrate personality traits, passion for the role and how non-job-related experiences may have equipped you with relevant life skills (life skills = work skills).
- › Give a sense of who you are and demonstrate your writing ability and character.

Cover Letter Structure

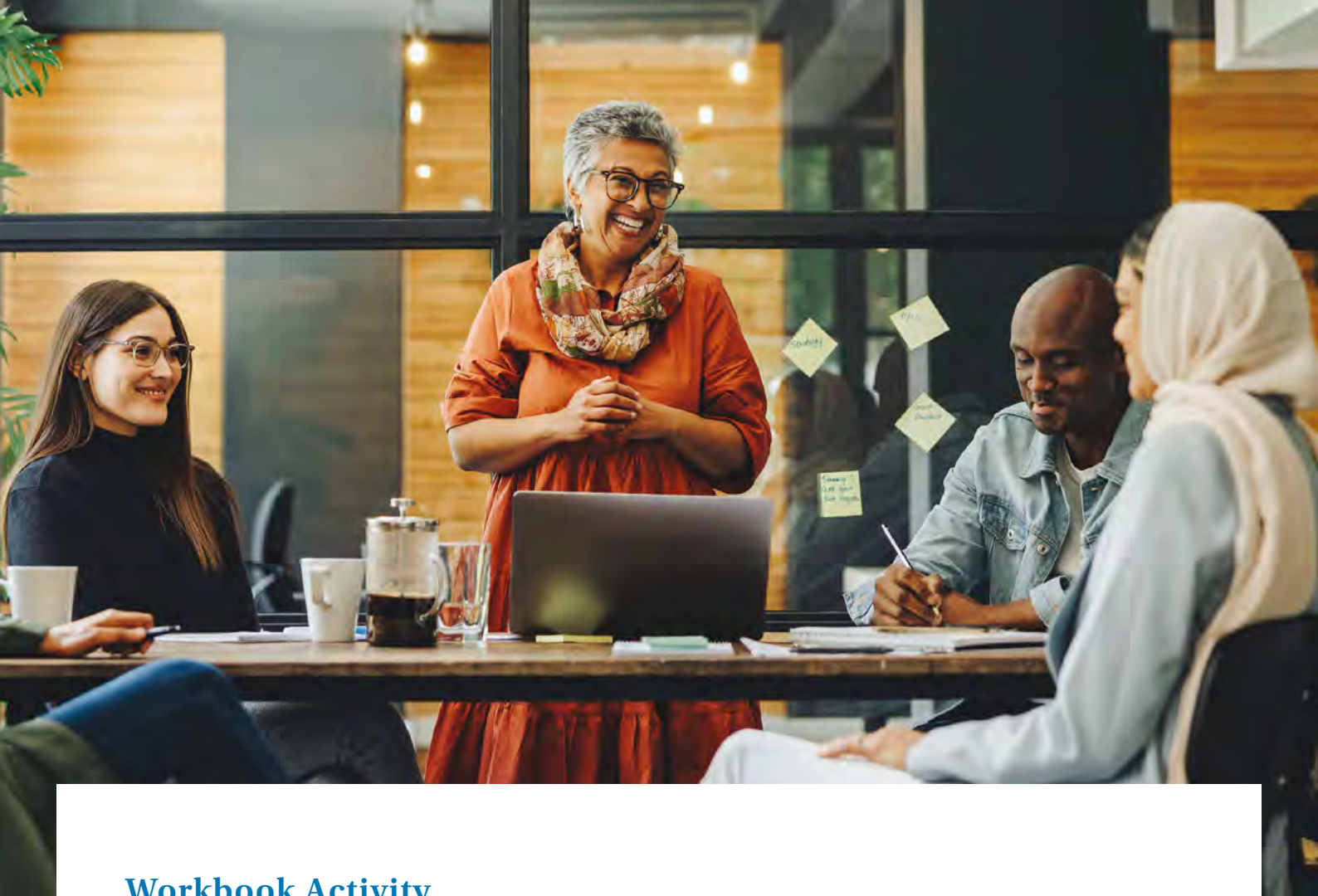
Although the cover letter is to connect the dots in your career journey and provide more of a story, it is still a formal document and follows a certain "success formula" and logic:

- › **Introduction/Opening** - What is your purpose (e.g., why you're applying for the role) and motivation?
- › **Why they should hire you** - Why are you the ideal candidate? Skills, experience, personality.
- › **Your motivations** - What do you like about the role/company? Link this to the above.
- › **Anything else about you** - For example, why a part-time role appeals to you.
- › **Conclusion** - Summary, when are you available for an interview, and contact number.

Cover Letter Etiquette

- › Write no more than one page whenever possible.
- › Use plain font i.e., Arial, Calibri or Times New Roman.
- › Use font size 11pt or 12pt.
- › Format it correctly with no spelling or grammatical errors – use a platform such as www.grammarly.com to check.
- › Save the file with an appropriate name.
- › Tailor your cover letter to suit each individual job application.
- › Only highlight anything relevant to the job.

Remember: the person knows nothing about you, so what you don't talk about doesn't exist for them.



Workbook Activity

What are three things I need support with to write a resume and cover letter?

1.
2.
3.

Concluding Comments

The job market can be very competitive, and it may take some time for you to master the game of job applications if you've been absent from the job market for a while.

Remember too, that if you don't get a job it may be for many reasons. It is not a direct reflection of you! For example, sometimes the employer may already have someone in mind they wish to hire. Don't give up.

Utilise your networks to find potential job opportunities.

Re-connecting with paid work is a process. You will be changed and shaped by your caring role, and it can take some imagining, identity shifts and can feel emotional to see yourself in the paid employment world again.

Remember to take things one step at a time and to care for yourself. Good luck!

Notes

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PO Box 13305 Law Courts VIC 8010

T 1800 514 845

E reception@carersvictoria.org.au

Social Media @CarersVictoria

www.carersvictoria.org.au

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