

Mike Simpson

5 Comments



## How To Write A Cover Letter (Examples Included)

*By Mike Simpson*

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BELOW:

So you want to learn how to write a cover letter...

But let me ask you this:

**Have you ever been on a blind date?**

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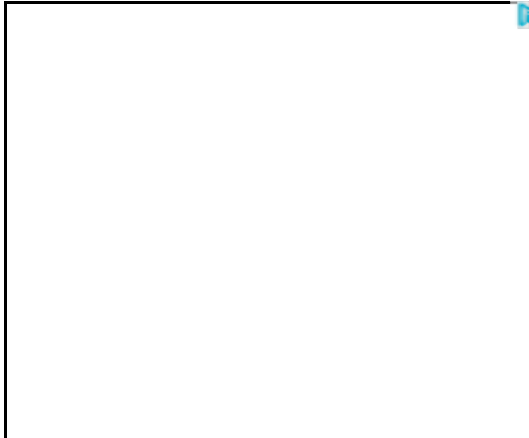
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It can be overwhelmingly nerve wracking.

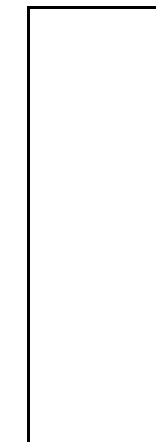
There you are, all dressed up in your finest, ready to sit down across the table from someone you know absolutely nothing about, and hopefully survive the meeting without too much trouble.



At the absolute best, you two hit it off.

Things are great and you discover through your first awkward meeting that you're perfect for each other and destined for years of happy togetherness.

At the worst, you're forced to sit across from someone and suffer through what can feel like absolute eternity, stumbling through awkward starts and stops in the conversation...**or worse.**



[How To Write  
\(Examples Included\)](#)

["Tell Me About  
Included\)](#)

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[How To Negotiate  
Interview Process\)](#)



image via [Chatelaine](#)

### But what if you each had a cheat sheet?

A sort of pre-blind date rundown of who you're going to meet? It would make things so much easier, right?

### Of course!

Now, what if you not only had this cheat sheet, but you got to look at it and decide if you even wanted to go on that date in the first place? Even better, right?

In the business world, interviews are a lot like blind dates. Employers sit down with potential employees and the interview process is a little bit like a blind date...just without the awkward hug/kiss thing at the end...**hopefully.**

But did you know that companies do **'pre-screening'** on potential interview candidates?

### That's right! They do.

Every single piece of information you send a company you're applying to is going to be *thoroughly* looked at to determine your potential for compatibility, starting with your cover letter.

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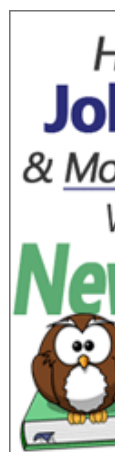
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***“But wait,” you say, “what’s a cover letter, and more importantly, why do I need to send one along with my resume?”***

Before you learn how to write a cover letter, you first need to understand what it is!

## **What Is A Cover Letter Anyway?**



A professional cover letter is a short, single page letter you should include with every application and or resume you send out. It’s a way for you to introduce yourself to an employer and serves a multitude of purposes beyond simply letting them know the proper way to spell your name.

### **The best cover letter is informative.**

It gives potential employers information about you that they wouldn’t get just from looking at your resume.

***“Okay, so I need to write a cover letter for a job application...what makes a good one?”***

Better yet. What does a cover letter look like?

Let’s pretend for a moment you’re the hiring manager and you’ve just gotten this letter:



## ***EXAMPLE OF A BAD COVER LETTER***

*To Whom It May Concern,*

*I recently came across your job post looking for a Production Office Coordinator for the educational television series, "Wonder Kids." I think my skills and experience would be a good match for the position and I am submitting my resume to you in the hopes of obtaining an interview.*

*For the past eight years I have worked as a Production Office Coordinator on a variety of other shows, providing crucial administrative support as well as maintaining and managing the day to day operations of a busy production office. I am familiar with all aspects of production including contracts, budgets, proper paperwork distribution, and travel coordination. I pride myself on my organizational skills as well as my ability to run an efficient staff of over 10 employees.*

*I am attaching my resume which outlines all my past work experiences as well as a detailed listing of my qualifications and skills. I look forward to the possibility of speaking with you about this position.*

*Sincerely,*

*Blanche D. Oatmeal*

**Zzzzzz. Oh, sorry. Was I napping? Ugh what a snoozer!**

Although professional, this is a **generic cover letter** and if you ask me, pretty bland.

It reveals little about Blanche beyond the fact that she thinks she's qualified for the job and that she's been in the industry for over 8 years. A letter like this is the bare minimum when applying for a job...**and you're not the bare minimum.**

Don't forget, you're the perfect candidate, and a good cover letter is a great first way to let potential employers know that!

## **How To Write a Good Cover Letter For Your Company and Position**

If you've spent any amount of time reading our other blog posts or watching our videos, you're probably familiar with our world-famous "Tailoring Method" (If not, head over to our article [Job Interview](#)

[Questions and Answers](#)

[101](#) to learn more, but make sure you come back to learn how it applies to cover letters!).



**Use the "Tailoring Method"**

Now what you might not know, is that the Tailoring Method can actually apply to other parts of your interview as well, including how to write a great cover letter.

You see, there's a tremendous amount of power in identifying what the company's desired strengths and characteristics are for the employee they want to hire.

## Why?

Because demonstrating that you have these **Qualities** is going to put you in the drivers seat in terms of getting an offer from your interview.

So you need to identify what those “**Qualities**” are, and infuse them into your cover letter and support them with a real example from your past (and where necessary, a [success story](#)).

This is done by taking the time to **do careful research of the company and the position.**

Here, let’s spice up Blanche’s letter a bit...starting with paragraph one.

First thing you want to keep in mind is, those poor hiring managers are reading tens of hundreds of cover letters and after a while, they’re all going to start blending together...make your stand out...in a good way!

*Dear Hiring Manager:*

*When I saw the job posting looking for a Production Office Coordinator for the educational television series, “Wonder Kids,” I knew I had to submit my resume. I am a hard-working and enthusiastic Production Office Coordinator with over eight years of practical hands on experience and am ready for my next adventure! I am currently looking for an opportunity to continue working within the industry and know my skills and experiences would be a good fit for the position and the “Wonder Kids”*

*team overall.*

Nice, right?

Now this is how to start a cover letter! First off it shows that the applicant is **excited to be applying for the job** and secondly, **they're not just looking for a job, but that they're looking to be a part of a team.**

Also, try to address the letter to who is actually reading it. "To Whom It May Concern," and "Dear Sir or Madam" are too generic.

Remember, you want to stand out!

In some instances you can completely forgo the opening salutation and just start with a subject line. If you feel you have to include a salutation, "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Hiring Professional" is a safer bet. **You can also call the company directly to ask to whom you should address your letter.**



*As a Production Office Coordinator, my skills include scheduling, contracts, paperwork distribution, and budgeting. I'm also comfortable dealing with vendors, hiring and managing staff, and ensuring the smooth day to day operations of a busy office. My experience has included both small and large budget companies, and as a result, I am familiar with the need to be adaptable and find myself excited by the prospect of a challenge.*

Again, **personal**, **engaging**, and **dynamic**. This letter helps the hiring manager know that the applicant is ready for any challenge and that they're adaptable.

Now we get into the meat of the letter and where you can brag a bit about what you bring to the table. Let's say that through her research, Blanche discovered that the company she's interviewing with really values someone who excels in (has the "Quality") "attention to detail."

Well, she better darn make sure she highlights that Quality and supports it with an example or examples from her past.

*I am proud of my attention to detail and as a result of my experiences with companies of different sizes and budgets, have been able to develop skills not normally associated with the more traditional Production Office Coordinator role, including graphic design, managing social media and web development. I enjoy working with a wide variety of people and am a multitasker, diligent self-starter and eager*

*team player.*

Great!

A little bit of subtle bragging while showcasing something the applicant is proud of accomplishing for the company overall.

The next paragraph is where you can engage the company on a one on one level and show how much research you've done on them and their current projects.

*I also wanted to take this opportunity to let you know that my interest in working for you extends beyond my desire to simply be a Production Office Coordinator. I grew up on the show "Wonder Kids" and consider them to be a huge part of my early education. I am a strong believer in quality children's programming and have always felt that "Wonder Kids" provided not only entertainment, but educational value as well. If hired, I would be proud to be a part of the "Wonder Kid" family and help continue that legacy for future generations.*

Nice.

The applicant is letting the hiring manager know that they're not just blindly applying to the company but that they **genuinely know a bit about them and that they have a passion for what the company does.**

## MIKE'S TIP

While it's wonderful to show your knowledge and appreciation of the brand, or say how much of a fan you are, you really want to be careful not to take this too far. Firstly, everyone who is interviewed is going to say "I'm a fan!". More importantly, the company is not hiring you to be a fan, but to get a job done. Keep it focused on how you are **going to satisfy the company's needs** and not just about being a fanboy/girl.

*Thank you for taking the time to review my resume and consider me for this position. You can contact me with any questions by emailing me at [email@address.com](mailto:email@address.com) or by calling me at 555-555-5555. I look forward to the possibility of discussing this exciting opportunity with you.*

By wrapping up your letter this way, you're outlining the next steps you hope the company will take (contacting you for an interview) and ensuring that the information they need to do that is right there in front of them.

By making it easy for them and including your phone number and other contact information, you're empowering them to take the action you want.

Whatever you do, don't push too hard in this paragraph. You don't want to appear manipulative or controlling.

Remember, you want a job interview...not a restraining order



*Warmest regards,*

*Blanche D. Oatmeal*

Now that is a great example of a cover letter that will get a hiring managers attention!

By keeping it short and sweet, you're not overwhelming them with a ton to read...but at the same time by making it engaging, **tailored**, and personal, you're ensuring that it stands out and highlights you in a positive way.

In our opinion this a wonderful example of how to end a cover letter that you should take into consideration when working on yours.

A good cover letter closing will leave a great taste in the hiring manager's mouth and will go a long way to securing an interview.

If after sending your cover letter and your resume you don't hear from the company in a couple of days, a quick "wanted to be sure you had received my application" email is an entirely appropriate follow-up, even without telling them that you will be following up first.

If you do end up needing to write a follow-up note, you absolutely should slip in a line like **"I really think my (skills and talents that are relevant to the job) would be great for (the company), and want to make sure my application didn't get lost or submitted incorrectly."**

You can also throw in something again about why you want to work at that company – mention some company values or exciting projects to show that you’ve done your research and are really interested in them specifically.

## Downloads



### Cover Letter Template Word



Here is the complete cover letter as written above if you would like to download it...



## Cover Letter Tips: What NOT To Put In Your Cover Letter

We’ve covered what what should be in a cover letter, but what should you **NOT** put in your cover letter?

- Rule number one of cover letters is...proofread. Proofread. Proofread. Oh, and then proofread it again. We don’t care if you’re writing the cover letter to end all cover letters. If you’re serious about a job you’re applying for...take the time to read your letter before you send it off. This includes making sure that not only

are you spelling things correctly and that your grammar and punctuation is spot on, but that you're also double checking the basics like the **company name** and the **position you're applying for**.

- **Lying about your past experiences or over inflating what you've done.** Everyone's allowed to brag a bit in their cover letter...as long as it's true. Don't lie to the company or yourself. If a company has nothing that appeals to you, you wouldn't enjoy working there – and they'd rather not have you – so why bother applying?

- **Talking about why you quit your last job.** Remember, this is sort of like a blind date. Nobody wants to hear about your ex...and absolutely **DO NOT TRASH YOUR PAST EMPLOYERS**.

- **Salary requirements.** Save that for the interview.

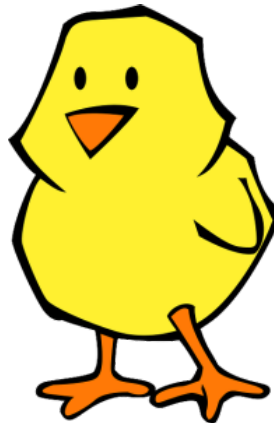
- **Getting too personal.** The letter is a great way to introduce yourself, but remember...keep it about the position and keep it professional. The paragraph where you talk about the company can contain tidbits about you (*I grew up watching the "Wonder Kids"*) but don't let it get **too** personal (*After my alcoholic parents divorced and my father left the country to join the Amsterdam Travelling Cat and Flea Circus, the "Wonder Kids" were the only steady and constant positive in my life.*) Save that for your therapist.

## How To Make a Cover Letter When You Have No Experience

*But what if I don't have any experience? How do you write a*

### ***cover letter for that?***

Not to worry! If you're just starting out in the job market or a recent graduate, it's still absolutely essential to send out a cover letter...we just have to tailor it a bit differently.



When you are applying for an entry level position, or to a job you have no experience in, it's perfectly fine to highlight your non-employment related experiences...IF they are relevant to the job.

For recent graduates, make sure to include where you went to school and how what you've studied relates directly to the job you are applying for.

**Volunteer experiences, internships, related classes, projects, leadership experiences, extracurricular activities** and your skills that pertain to the position you're applying for all can and should be **mentioned in your cover letter**.

A lack of experience doesn't mean you're allowed to have a lack of knowledge about what you're applying for and the company you're applying to.

### **Do your research!**

Make sure you know everything you can about the company first.

Visit their website. Read their blog. Get inside their corporate heads and figure out how you and what you bring are the perfect fit!

If the job posting has buzzwords, be sure to include those in your letter and make sure they relate to the skills you've got.

Finally, as with any and all cover letters, be honest, be succinct, be professional.

And don't forget to study as many cover letter examples as you can! Especially the cover letter example that we laid out for you in detail in this article.

## How To Supercharge Your Cover Letter

Now that you have a perfect cover letter written, you're probably ready to "hit send" on your email and forward it to the hiring manager asap.

### **WAIT!!!**

There is one final step you *need* to take if you want to stand out against all of the other job seekers that are fighting for the same job as you.

How badly do you want this job? I imagine that if you've found this article... you want it pretty darn bad!

Then take it from me. In 2015, you need to include a link to your "personal website".



"But Mike, I don't have a personal website."

Don't worry, because Jeff shows you why you need one AND how you can start your own in less than 10 minutes.

[Check out his blog post now](#) so you don't get automatically put in the "no pile" by the hiring manager.



Good luck!

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## 5 Comments

Comments

Trackbacks

**Karen MacKinnon**

March 27, 2015

← Reply

I shot myself in the foot when I sent a cover letter the other day and the first line had the wrong year by two years!

I sent it via e-mail and don't know if it was received or not.

No knowing what to do about it, I sent the original via snail mail with the corrected date.

As you can imagine, I was horrified!

**Hira**

*December 29, 2015*

← **Reply**

I am unsure about whether or not to include my blog in my cover letter, because it is not related to the industry that I am looking to work in. I can always use it to highlight skills such as being adaptable and a quick learner, but would that be pushing it?

**Mike Simpson**

*January 7, 2016*

← **Reply**

Hira,

In this case, I would highlight the blog in the skills section of your resume and discuss it during your interview. Having said that, there is nothing wrong with including your blog with the contact information on your cover letter but you don't need to emphasize it in the body of the letter.

Mike

**Brad**

*January 27, 2016*

← **Reply**

What do you suggest when companies ask for 'Salary expectations' in your cover letter? What is the best way to address (word) these expectations in your letter?

**Mike Simpson**

*February 2, 2016*

← **Reply**

Hey Brad,

I suggest you check out this article, and apply the principles to your cover letter:

<http://theinterviewguys.com/job-interview-salary/>

Hope this helps!

Mike

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