

THE NO BULL\$H!T GUIDE TO WRITING COVER LETTERS

How To Write Drool Worthy Cover Letters
That Will Impress Hiring Managers

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 GET IT READ
- 3 COVER LETTER DON'TS
- 4 INSTEAD, DO THIS
- 5 HOOKS THAT WORKED
- 6 GRAB THE FREE TEMPLATE
- 7 THAT'S IT

The No Bull\$hit Guide To Writing Cover Letters by Samantha Sanders

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Cover by Samantha Sanders.

INTRODUCTION

Cover letters are not dead.

The people who think cover letters are dead are the people who just **don't know how to write them.**

You may be thinking, "what makes you qualified?" or maybe "why isn't this something I already know?"

The thing is, **we're not taught how to find a job**, just that we need one...and a good paying one at that.

I've been the job-hopper and career switcher, so I've learned a thing or two. And as a current recruiter who uses these search strategies every day to locate top talent, I want to share my knowledge.

This no-fluff, no-bull\$h!t guide contains all the information needed to create drool-worthy cover letter that will help a hiring manager choose you over another candidate.

Everything I'm going to teach you is completely based on my opinions and what I look for in a cover letter. Anyone who tries to sell you a "this is how it should be" pitch is blowing smoke up your...ehem.

There is NO right or wrong way; there's just preference. So grab your computer and buckle up because we're going to dive deep.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SAMANTHA SANDERS

Sr. Full Desk IT Recruiter | Mission Box Solutions

After job hopping for 11 years as a military spouse, I found myself being burnt out, clueless, and indecisive in my goals.

With a highly successful background in marketing and sales - I finally found my calling in IT recruiting.

When I was on the search for a new career, I dusted off my LinkedIn page with no followers and hardly any connections.

I utilized my social media strategy experience to optimize and grow my LinkedIn page to:

- ◆ Get a dream job at Mission Box Solutions (who actually found me)
- ◆ Create meaningful relationships
- ◆ Help other job-seekers
- ◆ Become a "thought leader" in my industry

All within just 2.5 months.

My goal is to be 100% transparent with job-seekers so they can gain the valuable lessons that I learned the hard way.

I also partner with companies to help culture fit, hire, and retain new IT employees. Matching the company and talent together using Mission Box Solutions' holistic innovation recruitment strategy to increase morale, transparency, and retention on both sides.



GET IT READ

Cover letters are more important than ever.

Nowadays, **storytelling and personal branding are king**, so your cover letter needs to be killer!

Hiring Managers go back to the cover letter when they are stuck between two candidates to remember the original reasons why the candidate applied.

THE CHALLENGE IS GETTING IT READ!

What's the big difference between a cover letter that gets read and one that doesn't? The hook!

Your cover letter opener is the very first thing they read.

Honestly, a recruiter can't stand it when it comes to cover letter opening paragraphs that are vague, generic, or downright arrogant. It's so off-putting, and totally kills your chances of getting an interview.

So let's make sure that's not you!

COVER LETTER DONT'S

These are the worst types of cover letter hooks.

1

No effort

A hook with nothing specific about it, it could be applied to any business, at any level, and recruiters will smell the laziness. It's obvious when you're just re-using the same cover letter over and over and just replacing the company name and role title.

2

Super vague

You tell us about your "extensive experience" and claim to have the "skills and motivation to excel at this job." As a recruiter, this doesn't tell me anything. Be specific, otherwise it means nothing to me.

3

Being desperate

It makes you look desperate if you say things like "if you give me the chance" or "you won't be disappointed". Don't put yourself down 5 levels.

4

Being conceited

"If you're looking for a successful [Job Title], look no further" just makes you sound arrogant. Let your evidence speak for itself.

INSTEAD, DO THIS

Make the company feel like there's a connection.

Tell them something REAL.

I know we're all guilty of it, but don't just get the generic information off the company's website - they work there, they know all of that stuff already.

Self-assessment questions to ask

- ◆ Have you ever worked for a competitor?
- ◆ Did the founder also start out as a graduate?
- ◆ Have you ever been a customer?
- ◆ Does their story/mission have a strong emotional connection to your own story?
- ◆ Do you have a life experience that aligns with their values or beliefs?

This kind of info shows you what'll get you moving in the role, not just salary or development.

When things get tough, what will motivate you to push forward with your teammates?



Pro Tip

NEVER go over 1 page for a cover letter.

It can also give a leg up in personal brand design to use one of the company's colors in both your resume and cover letter. Make sure whatever design or color you use, it looks the same on both documents.

THE FRAMEWORK

The best marketing follows AIDA.

Advertisements use the AIDA framework to sell you products. Even though you're not a product, you need to sell yourself to the recruiting team.

AWARENESS

Use imagery and create an emotional connection with the reader.

Who are you and why should they be interested?



INTEREST

Why should they keep reading?

Sell potential employers on what your talents could do for them.



ACTION

Use a call to action like offering a time or phone number to get in touch with you if they're interested in an interview.

DESIRE

What's in it for them?

Clarify the advantages of having you on the team based on the job description and show proof.

EXAMPLE:

ATTENTION

Zaps have been an **integral part of my work style** for the past three years, and without them, I would be lost.

Previously, I had to switch between ten different websites to get a task done, but now I only use one and automation takes care of the rest. Hence, when a role at Zapier was available based on my expertise, I knew I had to apply. In spite of this, I am most excited about your role as a Sales Development Representative because being part of a mission to help all businesses succeed faster, no matter how big or how small.

In this paragraph we are using our hook to grab attention that's different from, "I'm applying to this role because"... and expressing enthusiasm about their mission and how it relates to our story.

INTEREST

Over the past six years, I have developed and maintained relationships with Fortune 200 companies. Through creating an open and transparent line of communication and feedback, I have continually looked for ways to improve my role, my team, and my clients by using my intellectual curiosity. It has been said by those I work with that I "focus on simplicity and evolving action to assist everyone in reaching their full potential."

I would relish the opportunity to be part of a company whose products have directly impacted the way I complete my work.

Here we are giving a brief overview of our history and how we achieve our goals in a storytelling format while complimenting the company to peak their interest.

DESIRE

8+ years of initiating business development in the IT industry

- Designed a multi-million-dollar product strategy for 50+ clients, increasing sales by 80% through strategic advertising and targeted email campaigns
- Implemented a systematized external sales development program within 60 days as a result of training feedback that increased the company's return on investment and exceeded sales quotas by 500%.

Transparent communicator with excellent social fluency

- Built and maintained strong relationships with 50+ local & national vendors (including Meta and Calendly) to create software enhancement for North American users.
- Recruited internal employees to spend 20% of their work hours on my project by providing a creative and engaging platform for self-expression and an enjoyable work environment (including creative team-building events).

This is where you'll showcase your accomplishments relevant to the position AND directly what the job description was looking for. Do NOT use the same accomplishments from your resume, give them something new!

ACTION

I believe in doing great work and building great relationships. I love that Zapier is all about creating an environment where team members can shine and create long-term business value. I

I'd love the opportunity to discuss this more in detail. You can reach me at (555) 234-0123 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays between 2-3 pm EST.

One more expression of enthusiasm and a compliment doesn't hurt! Then close out with an offer to interview you.

HOOKS THAT WORKED

These examples have successfully landed jobs.

Personal Connection to Industry

Being French, I have grown up with a deep cultural appreciation of aesthetics, beauty rituals, and the use of cosmetics as a form of self-expression. So much more than how you look, I believe the quest for beauty is an essential part of being human, found woven in the history books throughout the ages and across civilizations.

This, alongside my background in Digital Marketing and ECommerce, is why I am highly motivated to apply for your client's E-Commerce Marketing position and help shape the future of the Beauty industry.

Connection to Life Story

As a native of New South Wales, I grew up seeing countless families and animals be affected by Australia's summer bushfires. I would often wonder how we could do more to prevent and contain them, volunteering regularly for the local fire service.

With this personal connection to your work and mission, I would be proud to serve as your next Events & Marketing Coordinator with the National Fire and Emergency Service.

Similar Passions and Mission

A self-confessed Excel geek, I've always gotten a kick out of creating beautiful spreadsheets and dashboards that cut through the complexity and allow teams to take action. When I stumbled across Graphy, I knew that I had found people who share similar passions.

However, while everyone agrees on the fact that data, measurement and monitoring are the secret sauce behind excellent business decisions, most people are either a little data-phobic, or very much used to working away in their own corner without seeing the bigger picture.

This is why I want to make it my personal mission as Graphy's Content Marketer to raise the visibility of this game-changing product and allow your ideal customers to imagine all the ways in which Graphy could revolutionise their work lives.

Solving a Problem They Have

There is something incredibly inspiring about the power of education. As a legal professional specializing in human rights and policy issues, I have seen first-hand that in order to make a real impact on people and communities, we need to start with education.

This is why I am leaping at the chance to apply my 8 years of policy experience, alongside my analytical, problem-solving, and relationship-building skills, to help shape the future of education with the Ministry of Education.

Sharing a Mission

I am excited to apply for the role of Project Manager with Example as it is a natural next step in my career which I've built around my core strengths in communication, organization and relationship management. With 5 years of experience in the public sector, including with one of your clients at Example City Council, I have an immediate understanding of your mission, services, and what sets you apart. I am highly driven by the idea of providing a strong project management backbone to the wider team so that they can focus on what they do best - providing outstanding advice and guidance to your clients.

Complimenting their Innovation

What an exciting time to be working at L'Oreal right now. With your fierce commitment to Research & Innovation, you face the challenge of delighting the next billion customers through innovative products and services while improving their health, well-being and livelihoods.

With a BSc in Pharmaceutical Science from the University of Example, I too am a big believer in leveraging science to improve personal wellbeing. I am especially drawn to embedding researchbased health & wellbeing practices into simple everyday rituals, such as the skin-care routine of your consumers. I would love to bring this curiosity, as well as the skills acquired from 2 years of hands-on work experience in the Beauty and Fashion industries, to your 2020 Management Trainee programme.

Solving their Problems

All the pixels and all the code in the world can't save a website from a bad user experience. When your website literally is your business, with 6+ million customers worldwide relying on your interface to be all different flavours of awesome, it is a matter of survival. So how can we take Deezer's website from really good to really great, having customers scream "yay" along the way?

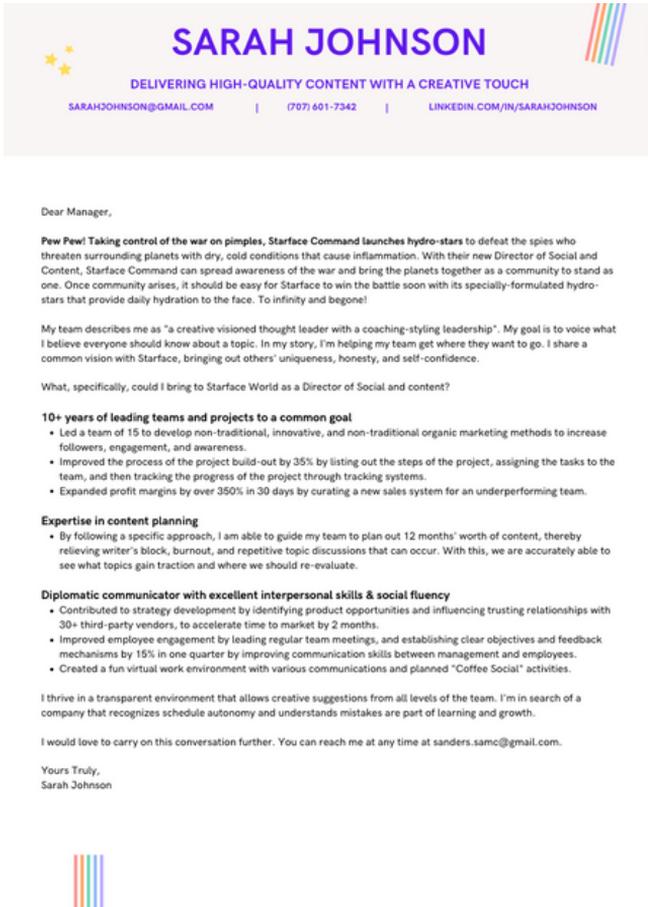
As a UX & Graphic designer with 9 years of experience in designing new website functionalities, I pride myself on getting measurable results and elevating the customer experience across all platforms and devices. Most recently, I designed a new website interface for a \$1 mil. monthly revenue e-commerce client that resulted in a 3.6% increase in customer retention. Always seeking to optimize workflow, I also convinced our Head of Design to switch to a different UX design tool, which increased our team productivity by 40%. I'd love to bring similar results to Deezer as the VP UX & Design.

Been a Customer

I'll never forget the first time I read a Cosmopolitan magazine. School camp, 14 years old, giggling about dating advice with my girlfriends in our tent. Today, it is my go-to pick me up, empowering me to show up as the best version of myself in work and relationships, coaching me in everything from skincare to finances to networking. We truly grew up together.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO USE IMAGES!

Elements can present some flare! They're great eye-catchers and showcase your personality.



GRAB THE FREE TEMPLATE

Ready to start telling your story? Grab the Google Doc template to make it your own!

SARAH JOHNSON

DEVELOPING MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR APPLICATIONS WITH INGENUITY

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CUSTOMIZED SALUTATION: [Dear First and Last Name]

A - INTRODUCTION: Start with a strong hook that exhibits your passion for the position and the company. You only have a few seconds to engage your reader, so avoid generic statements like, "Please accept this letter as an application for the Digital Marketing Manager position." Rather, mention why you want to work for the company and what makes the company unique.

I - YOU ARE THE SOLUTION: Explain how your skills and expertise are the perfect match for the position or organization. Pinpoint your most relevant qualifications and important career accomplishments and discuss them in detail. Research the company's pain points, carefully review the job posting, research the company website and review their activity on social media. Remember to place keywords and phrases from the posting into your cover letter.

D - YOUR KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Now is the time to explain your skills and talents in action. To stand out from other candidates, give clear and direct examples of your accomplishments that are **RELEVANT** to the role you're applying for. Today, more than ever, it's important to show your reader who you really are.

Ex. What, specifically, could I bring to Zapier as a Lead, Mobile App Developer?

8+ years of designing state of the art health improvement apps

- Led a team of 15 to implement a design strategy, initiating 30,000 downloads in the first 60 days, increasing sales by 80% through strategic upgrade features
- Another relevant quantified key accomplishment
- Another relevant quantified key accomplishment

Expertise in agile software development

- Relevant quantified key accomplishment
- Relevant quantified key accomplishment

Describe in 1 sentence what type of team environment you thrive in.

A - CALL TO ACTION: I would love to carry on this conversation further. You can reach me at any time on sarahjohnson@gmail.com or (555) 234-0123.

Warm Regards,

[Your first and last name]

DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE

THAT'S IT!



Congratulations! You're officially on your way to being an amazing cover letter writer!

Read our other "The No Bull\$h!t Guide" series:

Writing a Resume that Actually Gets Seen

Mastering the Interview to Get the Callback

Career Pivoting Like a Pro

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