

CAREER Magic

Cover Letter Magic by Tracy Laswell ★ CAREER-Magic.com

★ How to get a tailored, smart letter out the door in under an hour

1. Find the right person to write to & drop names
2. Overcome writer's block with a simple recipe for cover letter success
3. Avoid the "I... I... I..." syndrome
4. Quickly research the company
5. Develop a letter that highlights the core qualifications of the opportunity
6. Quickly customize your resume to support the job title and those core qualifications
7. Open the door for your follow-up phone call
8. Proofread
9. Send the letter via email so that it actually gets read
10. Send by fax or snail mail so that it gets read

★ Write A Letter About Something to Someone

1. **Do make every effort to identify the hiring manager, copy the HR manager.** This way the hiring manager gets to see you and knows it's okay to keep the info since the HR person also has your resume. If you have already done an online application, let them know that too. Call the company to verify the suspected hiring manager if you are not sure. It's always a great idea to call first and gather more info.
2. **If you know anyone in the company,** do drop that name in the opening paragraph. If you have any direct experience with the company, whether as a vendor, customer (b2b or b2c), competitor, former employee, mention that as well.
3. **Don't write a "generic" cover letter that is merely a narrative rehash** of what's already in your resume. Also, don't forget to tweak your resume to make it specifically focused on the opportunity at hand (primarily job titles, but also summary content can be groomed in the right direction.
4. **Keep it positive,** no mention of poor economy, layoffs, deaths in the family, or any other dreary items.
5. **Don't include reasons for your present unemployment. Don't talk about the economy.**
6. **If you're relocating to the employer's part of the world, do explain your plans to visit, to move, etc.** Make it clear if you are willing to take care of the related expenses.
7. **Don't talk about salary requirements.**

★ Write Like You Talk

- Don't get overly formal, flowery, stiff, or lawyer-like with your letter. Write like you talk when you're excited. Think shorter, more emphatic sentences.
- Avoid exclamation points, or you'll come across like a teenage girl. OMG!
- Respond to the core requirements of the job ad and - improve on what they offered up, making it smart and to the point.
- Mix up your word choice while still emphasizing key words, phrases, and concepts.
- **Don't start each sentence with I or my.**



★ Proofread

- To proofread, save, print, and let it sit for a while.
- **Come back, pick it up, then slowly read out loud.**
- And or send to a friend who's a sharp proofreader, as long as you can still get it out the door in a timely fashion.

★ Make it beautiful

- **Header and font should MATCH your resume**
- **White Space** – Don't try to cram too much in
- **Bullets** – A couple in the middle of your letter, emphasizing key qualifications, could be useful to attract attention.
- **One space after a period** is the standard desktop publishing. I hope you're not using a fixed-width typewriter-ish font like Courier.
- **Don't use 'enclosure'** or other antiquated references.
- **Don't go over one page.**

★ Getting it there

1. Copy the central portion of the letter (no date or address) into the message body of the email. Be sure to reference the attachment as well as any online applications you have completed.
2. Attach ONE Word file with cover letter as page one and resume on following pages. Be sure to reference the fact that the resume follows the cover letter.
3. Many clients have reported getting results by faxing. You could also send by priority mail. **If they've asked for an online submission, make sure you do that as well, with faxing or snail mailing as a backup, not a replacement for the onerous online forms.**

★ The Template

(Your resume letterhead goes here)

Date

Company Name

Address

City, ST ZIP

Attention: First Name and Last Name of Hiring Manager, That person's Job Title

CC: First Name and Last Name of Recruiter or HR contact, That person's Job Title

RE: The Job Title for Which You Are Applying
(follow-up to online job application)

Dear Mr. Lastname:

Introductory paragraph – What prompted you to write to them? **Name Drop** – Know someone in the company? Do share!

Next paragraph - About them – Why would you be excited to interview there?

Next paragraph - About you (only the positive!) – Why should they be interested in you? What real benefits can you bring? What problems can you solve?

- **You can certainly, in this paragraph**
- **Bullet point a few key qualifications**
- **Or do a "T" letter with two columns "you need" and "I offer" if you like. I think a few bullets are sufficient.**

Closing – Open the door for your follow-up call by saying you're going to call.

Best regards, (better than Sincerely or Very Truly Yours)

Your name. (If emailing, no need to 'sign')



Examples...

JOHN SMITH

1122 Boogie Woogie Avenue, Denver, CO 80201 | 303-424-1700

August 1, 2011

Century Link
1801 California Street 19th Floor
Denver, CO 80202

Attention: Blaine Jones, Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing

Cc: Sandra Smithers, Recruiter

Re: VP of Sales position

Dear Mr. Jones:

Recently our mutual colleague, Sam Summers contacted me to tell me about the VP of Sales position currently open within Qwest. You may recall that we met a few months ago to discuss another opportunity within your department that was filled from within.

My interest in Qwest remains as strong as ever – the new spirit of service is not just a clever marketing concept, I truly believe that the company is reorganizing and revitalizing itself around this customer service statement. And the company's renewed efforts in new product development are sure to get market attention, because I'm already seeing the change...I know quite a few business owners who are switching back to Qwest because they like the products, see the value, and have faith that they'll receive excellent service.

So yes, count me in! I'd love to be considered a top contender for the VP of Sales position. I have always had great success studying new products and then introducing them and generating strong sales. Qwest should hire me because I am passionate about new product development and customer service excellence. Currently I'm developing subject matter expertise in Voice Over IP (VoIP) products, and would enjoy helping Qwest become a major provider of this "next step" technology.

My approach to sales is all about building strong, consultative relationships with my customers, understanding their business goals and technology requirements, and then delivering an unbeatable solution. I have direct experience in all the major roles and responsibility listed in your ad, including:

- The ability to manage and optimize numerous national accounts, effectively servicing the customer with the right combination of products and services;
- The ability to orchestrate strategic business planning initiatives as well as service delivery projects among internal and external customer groups to ensure total customer satisfaction;
- A demonstrated track record of meeting and exceeding revenue targets through a comprehensive, proactive approach to account development;
- A strong thirst for knowledge as well as an ability to rapidly acquire and share product knowledge through independent and structured learning opportunities.

My resume follows this letter and offers specific examples of the qualifications I've outlined above. **I look forward to the opportunity of meeting with you again, so I will follow up with you soon.**

Best regards,

John Smith

SALLY WINNER

1122 Main Street, Denver, CO 80201 | 303-424-1700

January 12, 2011

Sun Microsystems
11122 Business Park Centre
Broomfield, CO 80111

Attention: Jane Sanderson, Sales & Marketing Director

CC: Annie Taylor, Human Resources

Re: Marketing Program Manager position

Dear Jane:

I don't believe we've met. As a former Sun employee who is interested in rejoining the team, I was thrilled when a former Sun manager of mine, Jim Smith, emailed me the Marketing Program Manager job description with this remark:

"This is a big focus area for the company, and a great fit for your program management and operational experience."

In my previous role at Sun Microsystems, I led a program to research, document, streamline, and communicate an integrated product launch process. This included extensive research, a thorough understanding of launch deliverables and requirements, and collaboration with other launch teams. In other positions at Sun, I developed and implemented communication and marketing programs to educate, inform, and strengthen partner participation. Other experiences included serving as liaison to Field Operations for communicating corporate direction and global program updates.

During my 10-year career with Sun, I developed extensive experience in Sun products and business processes. Specific to your position, my qualifications include:

- In-depth knowledge of Sun solutions as well as a strong understanding of Sun's market;
- Proven results in roll-out and enhancement of newly created processes;
- Development of training materials, user manuals, and toolkits;
- Content development for interactive intranet sites;
- Ability to orchestrate multiple remote contributors / virtual team management;
- Extensive experience in field marketing, partner marketing, e-mail marketing, and communications.

Jane, I would absolutely relish the opportunity to become a key contributor in Sun's Marketing Division once again. And best of all, I can hit the ground running, immediately contributing beyond expectations. A meeting with me will assure you that I am the ideal candidate for the job. I look forward to having that opportunity soon!

All the best,
Sally Winner

December 19, 2010

Room & Board
4600 Olson Memorial Highway
Minneapolis, MN 55422

Attention: **Becky Jones, Recruitment Manager**

RE: **Design Associate** position – Washington, D.C., Denver, or Chicago locations

Dear Ms. Jones:

Recently I learned that **Room & Board** is seeking a Design Associate in the D.C. location. **Room & Board** has long been one of my favorite retailers. I love the product selection, making it easy for any customer to incorporate mid-century modern design into their homes. I also think Room & Board must be an excellent employer – every time I visit your stores, I'm greeted by Associates who are truly happy and inspired in their work.

With this letter and resume I would love to be considered as an enthusiastic and well-prepared candidate for this exciting opportunity at a world-class organization.

The Design Associate job description is exciting to me – it absolutely reflects my skills, experiences, and passions. I offer 8+ years of consulting with customers to create homes they love. I truly enjoy the detailed process of building relationships with customers of all backgrounds and cultures, identifying customer wants, needs, and personal style to help them create solutions that are beyond their expectations. With Room & Board's outstanding product selection, it will be a pleasure to leverage the assortment in creative ways, developing portfolios to guide clients in purchasing decisions.

I also look forward to sharing with Room & Board's retail and operations teams, supporting ongoing development of product assortment, cultivating awareness of mid-century design, and sharing knowledge with colleagues.

My resume follows this page and provides more detail on my attributes and background. My references, provided on request, will be glad to share with you their insights about my work ethic and communication skills.

Thank you for considering me one of your most qualified and enthusiastic candidates. I look forward to the possibility of speaking with you soon!

Best regards,

Elena Smith