

# It's A Sales Letter, Not A Cover Letter

by Bob Roth

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When college students are instructed to create a cover letter, they are receiving bad advice. Letters that merely cover or accompany a resume are nearly worthless. The letter that all students should develop is a sales letter, a letter that will convince an employer that they are something special.

Sales letters present information that is not already covered in the resume. It clearly demonstrates the student's vocabulary, grammar and writing skills. More importantly, the sales letter offers an insight into the student's goals, personality and operating style.

The best employers want to know what makes you special. At the same time, you want to find a way to differentiate yourself from other candidates. Therefore, your sales letter must fulfill both of those important roles. Here are a few ways for you to accomplish both goals.

- Refer to Professors, Supervisors and Community Leaders who speak well of you.
- Mention several interesting facts that you have learned through research and networking.
- Talk about your most impressive campus, work or community contributions.
- Mention something specific that a respected and influential person has said about you.
- Refer to any problems you have solved or prevented.
- Provide examples of your creativity, work ethic or problem-solving skills.
- Indicate your eagerness to make a contribution with this employer.
- Mention a current employee who has said good things about this employer.
- Show that you are familiar with their products, services, goals, finances and challenges.
- Explain why you are qualified for the position that interests you.
- Talk about your job-related campus, work or community experiences.
- Demonstrate your enthusiasm and interest in the company and the job.

Your sales letter must be carefully crafted and revised several times over the course of time. It is always a work in progress. As things change or you receive useful feedback, your sales letter should be reworked, improved and polished.

Talk with six or eight business professionals, community leaders and professors who know you well. Ask them to tell you what impresses them the most about you. Request that they think in terms of your field of interest, your work performance and your most impressive accomplishments. Once you have the complete list, show it to them. See if any other thoughts can be generated. Then, quote the most impressive statements in your sales letter.

As you craft your letter, make certain that it accomplishes several things. Every sales letter must:

- Effectively sell your attributes.
- Be interesting and creative.
- Flow smoothly and have no errors.
- Contain important information that is not presented in your resume.
- Be written in a way that will motivate the reader to invite you for an interview.

Once you are satisfied with that final version of your letter, give your letter to a number of people with exceptional writing skills. Ask them to provide you with a few words and phrases that will strengthen the message that you are trying to communicate. Then, go back and incorporate some of those words and phrases into your letter. Let it sit for a few days before you look at it again. Then, go ahead and make the final revisions.

Now that you know that a sales letter is necessary to set you apart and give you an edge, never revert back to cover letters. Sales letters tell employers that they have discovered a special candidate, one they are likely to hire.

College students who grasp this letter writing concept and take advantage of it will always come out ahead of those who don't. The most successful candidates understand that they are writing a sales letter, not a cover letter.

Visit Bob's web site: [www.The4Realities.com](http://www.The4Realities.com). Bob Roth is the author

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