Make Your Cover Letter Count in Your Job Search

Hull Strategies, LLC

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Anne Hull, M.Ed., Career Strategist

Make Your Cover Letter Count in Your Job Search

- …is President of Hull Strategies, LLC
- … established and managed a top-ranked college career resource center and was affiliated with a national outplacement firm for 12 years.
- … co-developed *CareerScope* for AAAS Fellows and *Winning Strategies for Mature Job Seekers* and *PhDs at the Crossroads* for career coaches on CareerPlanningAcademy.com
- … is an invited speaker for six years with APA PsycCareers APA International Conference.
- … worked with NASA/Goddard engineers and scientists for five years and with PhDs in other fields.
- …Served as President of DC American Career Professionals International and is a member of NCDA, Career Directors International, Career Thought Leaders and Maryland Career Development Association.



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Webinar Objectives

- Make a Cover Letter work for you
- Analyze a Job Description
- Write for the right audience
- Recruiters
- Hiring Managers
- Format an enticing letter - Options



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Poll:



Does anyone read a cover letter anymore?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Sometimes



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The stats…

- 74% of recruitment decision-makers prefer cover letters apart from resumes.
- 72% of recruiters still expect cover letters even if the job ad states they're optional.
- 53% of employers feel a resume alone is not enough to get noticed, while 49% of HR managers said that including a cover letter is the second-best way to call attention to your resume, behind customizing that resume for the job.

– CareerBuilder.com



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Poll: When do you need a cover letter?



- When the job application tells you to include a cover letter
- If someone referred you to the job
- When you know the hiring manager by name or have an existing relationship
- If there is a gap in your experience
- All the above

What other times?

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WHAT ARE COVER LETTERS MOST USEFUL FOR, ACCORDING TO RECRUITERS



-survey by OnePoll on behalf of ResumeLab

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Recruiters/Staffing Firms want to know…

- Years of experience
- Core competencies
- Specialization (industry)
- Type of companies that interest you
- Salary expectations
- Availability to begin the new job
- Where you are willing to work



49% of recruiters prefer the cover letter in the email body.
42% prefer a cover letter attached as a separate document.

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Hiring Managers want to know…

- You understand the organization's needs
- Why you want to work with us
- Why you are the best fit for the position
- What unique elements you bring and how that helps their team|organization



Do's and Don'ts

- Send to Recruiter or Hiring manager, not job board
- Keep it focused, short, and personalized
- Research on the company's recent projects and achievements, and briefly describe what stunned you the most and why you want to work exactly there. Show your interest in the position.
- Match your skills and experience with the key words and phrases in the job description
- **Focus on accomplishments and results**
- Ask for what your want—an interview!
- Its not about you, it's about the employer's needs
- Don't list your personal qualities, describe the benefits an employer will get if they hire you
- Don't exaggerate
- Take out ~~all of the~~ superfluous words and phrases; Remove ~~the strings of~~ eye-glazing words

True or False?



- ❑ I can send the same cover letter to many employers.
- ❑ A cover letter is the same as a Letter of Intent.
- ❑ Don’t send a cover letter unless it is specifically requested.
- ❑ Include my photo in my cover letter.

Analyzing a Job Description



Key words:

Noun or noun phrase

Duty or responsibility

Technical and specific to the job

Knowledge, skill or ability

Verbs that describe specific actions

People skills

Employer Job Description

Requirements include a Ph.D. or Psy.D. in Clinical, Counseling, or Forensic Psychology, MO license or license-eligibility, and psychiatric forensic interest and/or experience. The qualified candidate may hold Certification as a Forensic Examiner (CFE) from the DMH or, if not currently certified, willing to obtain certification. The candidate will be provided supervision and training, as needed, for licensure, certification, and/or continuing education. The candidate will be required to complete forensic assessments, which may include any of the following: Competency restoration examinations, Sexual Violent Predator Evaluations, Pretrial mental evaluations, risk assessments for patients charged with a sex offense, and conditional release assessments. The candidate may be expected to provide individual and group therapy, as well as participate in an interdisciplinary treatment team. The candidate may also be involved in providing supervision to practicum students and interns, as well as training to hospital employees. In addition to a competitive salary and Merit System benefits, affordable medical, dental, vision, and retirement benefits are also available. Options are available for tuition reimbursement, loan repayment, relocation repayment, and flexible scheduling. State employees also receive discounts on products and services from various vendors, such as cell phone plans.

- XXX is a 108-bed adult, inpatient facility that provides intermediate/long-term psychiatric treatment, rehabilitation, and forensic services. It is in … a friendly community with a low cost of living. It is 50 miles north of …City and 34 miles from the … International Airport. …

- If interested, please submit a letter of interest, curriculum vitae, three professional references, and two redacted psychological evaluations (preferably related to a forensic issue) to:

Your Turn... Staffing Firm: Psychologist

- We're seeking Psychologists that are:
- Fully licensed in [State], including a Ph.D. or Psy.D.
- Experienced with caring for adult and/or child and adolescent populations.
- Experienced with testing intakes, planning batteries for assessments, report writing and feedback sessions.
- Some Psychological testing.

About Provider Health Provider is a national provider of behavioral healthcare services focused on evidenced-based, medically driven treatment services for children, adolescents and adults suffering from a variety of mental health issues in an outpatient care setting, both in-person at its 250+ clinics nationwide and through its digital health telemedicine offering. At Provider, patient care is paramount – the driving force in everything we do. Provider is committed to state-of-the-art clinical excellence, to partnership and collaboration with other treating health care providers to ensure continuity of care, to utilization of data to individually tailor services for continual improvement in outcomes, and to empowering patients to make informed choices and help them achieve their goals. This is offered in a compassionate and safe environment that provides education, support, and best practices in integrated care.
Provider employs 3,000+ psychiatrists, psychologists, nurse practitioners, and licensed therapists to provide comprehensive mental health treatment services for patients of all ages. Every Provider team member is dedicated to providing the utmost in compassionate care and treatment to serve the specific needs and concerns of each individual patient. To learn more...

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Using a word cloud, you can see which words are used most frequently in the highlighted text.

Word Clouds:
Tagcrowd.com
Wordclouds.com



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How to Format a Cover Letter/E-mail

- **Subject Line:** Job, Source — *Clinical Psychologist referred by Joy Someone*
- **Your Name and Phone Number** — *Anne Hull 000-000-000*
- **Name of the person you are sending your resume to** — *Dear [Hiring Manager],*
- **Why they should interview you**

  My solid experience in forensic assessments and working with interdisciplinary treatment teams will enable you to add a knowledgeable professional to your team who can begin being productive at once.

  - 2-3 more concise reasons why they should hire you
- **Ask for the interview** — *Best time to reach me is…*
- **Thank the prospective employer for their consideration**
- **"Sincerely,"**

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Follow-up with an e-mail in a week or shortly after the closing date.

Example

Dear Dr. Smith –
Your interview in May 2021 *Canadian Psychology* inspires me to grow my career by bringing therapy to under-served groups. I'm excited to learn that you are expanding your team at XYZ.

I have a Masters degree in Psychology, and five years of family practice experience testing, evaluating and using evidence-based therapy models for a variety of mental health issues. I've worked in an integrated care team providing both inpatient and telemedicine care.

Recently, as a long-term contract therapist, I learned that the clinic was closing. We needed to find new resources for 120 clients where continuity of patient care was paramount. I let them know that I had previously done this and outlined how we could find resources and effectively communicate with both clients and the community. We made data-driven tailored referrals for successful transitions.

For the next step in my career, I would like work with a group that provides compassionate care and treatment to adult and/or child and adolescent populations, while learning from and contributing to the best practices at XYZ.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to talking with you about joining your team. Best times to reach me are in the evenings. [000-000-0000]

Sincerely,

Format your letter with matches

Your requirements

- PhD & Licensed in Iowa
- Forensic experience
- Psychological testing and assessments
- Risk assessment
- Individual & Group Therapy
- Interdisciplinary team member

My Experience

- Psy.D. and IA License 2019
- 2 years with County Detention + Lab
- Certified in battery of 8 assessments
- 100% accuracy in 52 risk assessments
- 4 years in supervised and independent therapy – individual and groups
- 2 years with interdisciplinary team at County hospital.

C.C.A.R. Skills-Based Accomplishment Statement

C - Challenge – State the task, project, challenge.

C - Context – Give the situation, issue or context.

A - Actions/Steps – Describe specific actions you took to address the challenge. Include skills, knowledge and abilities you used. *Did you develop something? Did you mitigate or solve a problem? Did you make recommendations?*

R - Results/Outcomes – Give specific examples of results of your actions and quantify when possible.

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You are telling a story

C.C.A.R. Skills-Based Accomplishment Statement

Examples:

Initiated $75K proposal and managed on-going research study of violence in media on pre-school children. Published in Journal of Criminal Psychology 2017.

Diffused tense situations as on-call manager amid the heightened security after 2020 DC BLM demonstration. Received Leadership Award from Mayor for professional and diplomatic handling of this particularly sensitive event.

Direct 10 Interns in fast-paced clinic environment. Assign and prioritize work, manage productivity, provide timely, constructive feedback and annual reviews.

C.C.A.R. Skills-Based Accomplishment Statement

Results | Impact

- Time - efficiencies
- Costs – saved or revenue generated
- Quality – improvements, satisfaction
- Quantity – frequency, volume
- People – number|level involved, effected
- Collaboration - divisions, levels, agencies, states



"So what?"
"Why did it matter?"

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Format your letter with Personality

A "Disruptive" Cover Letter, WorkItDaily.com

- **Start With a Passion**
  I've always been curious as to why and how people choose their professions.
- **Start With Your Love of the Company**
  I grew up hearing (and feeling!) the static testing of the Apollo rocket engines at Marshall Space Flight Center. My father, uncle and aunt all worked for NASA, so I feel like I'm part of the NASA family.
- **Start With an Attribute or an Accomplishment**
  In addition to setting up a college career center from scratch, I'm most proud of the program I co-developed for 200 AAAS for science and engineering PhDs.
- **Start With Humor or Creativity – carefully!**



https://www.themuse.com/advice/31-attentiongrabbing-cover-letter-examples

How a cover letter helps you get hired

- It shows you're serious about the job
- It can help you connect with the person
- It shows some of your personality
- It always makes a good impression
- It can be a tie-breaker

The ResumeLab survey of 200 hiring managers also found that, 83% of the time, a great cover letter was enough to sway them to extend a job interview to a candidate with a less-than-perfect resume.



Poll: Mark all that apply



The most helpful part of this webinar for me was:

- ❑ What to include in a cover letter
- ❑ How to analyze a job description for key words
- ❑ Several options for formatting my letters
- ❑ Other (write in chat)



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Audience Questions

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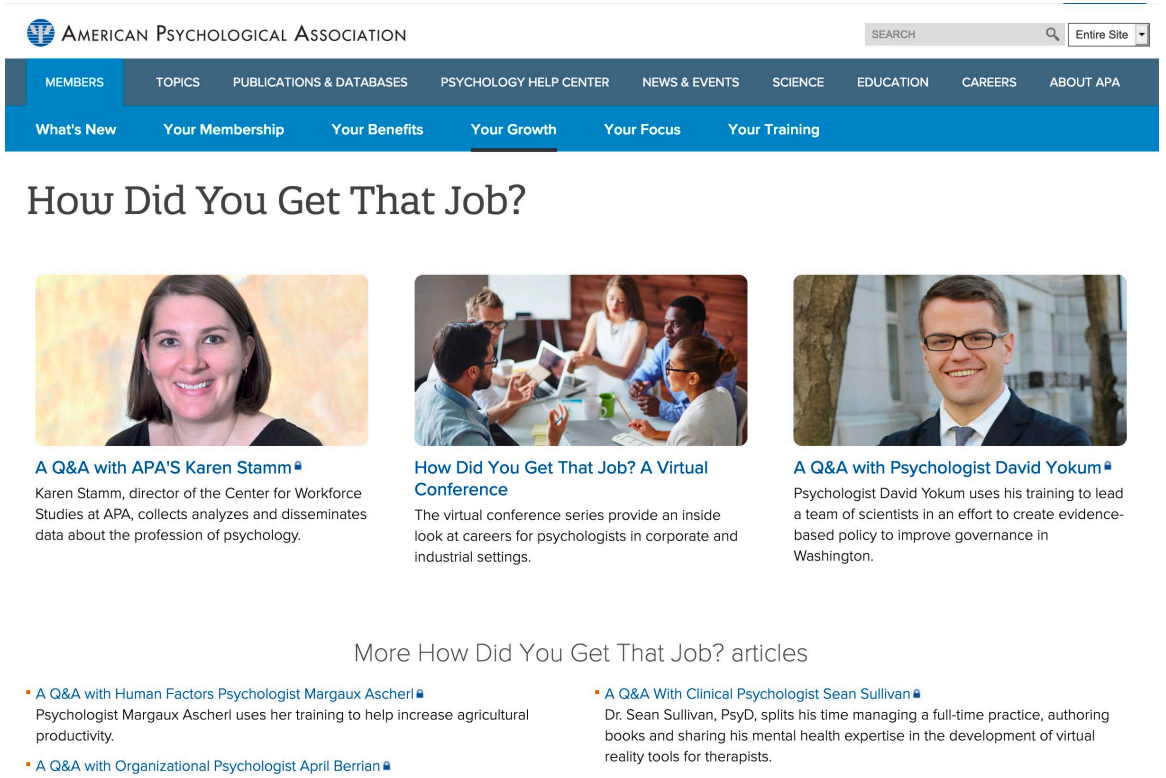


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How Did You Get That Job? Webinar Series

APA's webinar series where we interview individuals with psychology degrees and learn what skills they use on a daily basis in their job, and how they got to their current position.

Learn more: https://www.apa.org/members/your-growth/career-development/how-did-you-get-that-job/index



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To learn more and register, visit:
on.apa.org/leadership-training

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