

# How to Make Your Cover Letter Stand-Out

Traditional cover letter wisdom tells you to start a cover letter with something to the effect of:

*Dear Sir or Madam,*

*I am writing to apply for the position of Marketing Manager with the Thomas Company.*

**We say: The days of cookie-cutter cover letter intros are long gone.**

Here's the thing:

Your cover letter is the best way to introduce to the hiring manager who you are, what you have to offer, and why you want the job—but you have an extremely limited amount of time to do all of those things. So, if you really want to get noticed, you've got to start right off the bat with something that grabs your reader's attention.

*What do we mean?*

Well, we won't just tell you, we'll show you—with 31 examples of original cover letter introductions. We don't recommend copying and pasting them because, well, your cover letter should be unique to your stories, background, and interests, but you can most definitely use them to get inspired for your next application.

## Examples 1-6: Start With a Passion

- **#1:** If truly loving data is wrong, I don't want to be right. It seems like the rest of the team at Chartbeat feels the same way—and that's just one of the reasons why I think I'd be the perfect next hire for your sales team.
- **#2:** I've been giving my friends and family free style advice since I was 10, and recently decided it's time I get paid for it. That's why I couldn't believe it when I found a personal stylist position at J. Hilburn.
- **#3:** After about three years of trying out different roles at early-stage startups around San Francisco, watching more "find your passion" keynotes than I'd like to admit, and assuring my parents that, yes, I really do have a real job, I'm starting to come to terms with the fact that I'm only really good at two things: writing great content and getting it out into the world.

- **#4:** When I was growing up, all I wanted to be was one of those people who pretend to be statues on the street. Thankfully, my career goals have become a little more aspirational over the years, but I love to draw a crowd and entertain the masses—passions that make me the perfect community manager.
- **#5:** When I graduated from Ohio State last May, my career counselor gave me what I consider to be some pretty bad advice: “Just get any job, and figure the rest out later.” While I think I could have gained good transferrable skills and on-the-job experience anywhere, I wanted to make sure my first step gave me opportunities for professional development, mentorship, and rotations through different departments. Enter: Verizon.
- **#6:** The other day, I took a career assessment, which told me I should be a maritime merchant. I’m not quite sure what that is, but it did get me thinking: A role that combines my skills in business development with my lifelong passion for the ocean would be my absolute dream. Which is how I found this role at Royal Caribbean.

## Examples 7-15: Start With Your Love of the Company

Similarly, many companies want to hire people who already know, love, eat, and sleep their brand. And in these cases, what better to kick off your cover letter than a little flattery? Bonus points if you can tell a story—studies show that stories are up to 22 times more memorable than facts alone.

Of course, remember when you’re telling a company why you love it to be specific and genuine. Because, um, no one likes an overly crazed fangirl.

- **#7:** I pretty much spent my childhood in the cheap seats at Cubs games, snacking on popcorn and cheering on the team with my grandfather. It’s that passion that’s shaped my career—from helping to establish the sports marketing major at my university to leading a college baseball team to an undefeated season as assistant coach—and what led me to apply for this position at the Chicago Cubs.
- **#8:** Most candidates are drawn to startups for the free food, bean bag chairs, and loose dress code. And while all of those things sound awesome coming from my all-too-corporate cubicle, what really attracted me to Factual is the collaborative, international team.
- **#9:** It was Rudy, my Golden Retriever, who first found the operations assistant opening (he’s really excited about the prospect of coming to work with me every day). But as I learned more about Zoosk and what it is doing to transform the mobile dating space, I couldn’t help but get excited to be part of the team, too.

- **#10:** When I was seven, I wanted to be the GEICO gecko when I grew up. I eventually realized that wasn't an option, but you can imagine my excitement when I came across the events manager position, which would have me working side by side with my favorite company mascot.
- **#11:** When I attended SXSW for the first time last month, I didn't want to leave. So I decided I shouldn't—and immediately went to check out job openings at the company.
- **#12:** If I could make the NYC apartment rental process better for just one person, I would feel like the horrors of my recent search would all be worth it. So, a customer service role at RentHop, where I could do it every day? I can't think of anything more fulfilling.
- **#13:** Having grown up with the Cincinnati Zoo (literally) in my backyard, I understand firsthand how you've earned your reputation as one of the most family-friendly venues in the State of Ohio. For 20 years, I've been impressed as your customer; now I want to impress visitors in the same way your team has so graciously done for me.
- **#14:** I was an hour out from my first big dinner party when I realized I had forgotten to pick up the white wine. In a panic, I started Googling grocery delivery services, and that's when I first stumbled across Instacart. I've been hooked ever since, so I couldn't help but get excited by the idea of bringing the amazingsness of Instacart to shoddy planners like me as your next social media and community manager.
- **#15:** Though I'm happily employed as a marketing manager for OHC, seeing the job description for Warby Parker's PR director stopped me in my tracks. I've been a Warby glasses wearer for many years, and have always been impressed by the way the company treats its customers, employees, and the community at large.

## Examples 16-24: Start With an Attribute or an Accomplishment

The unfortunate reality of the job hunting process is that, for any given job, you're going to be competing with a lot of other people—presumably, a lot of other similarly qualified people.

So, a great way to stand out in your cover letter is to highlight something about yourself—a character trait, an accomplishment, a really impressive skill—that'll quickly show how you stand out among other applications.

- **#16:** My last boss once told me that my phone manner could probably defuse an international hostage situation. I've always had a knack for communicating with people—the easygoing and the difficult alike—and I'd love to bring that skill to the office manager position at Shutterstock.

- **#17:** Among my colleagues, I'm known as the one who can pick up the pieces, no matter what amount of you-know-what hits the fan. Which is why I think there's no one better to fill Birchbox's customer service leader position.
- **#18:** Last December, I ousted our company's top salesperson from his spot—and he hasn't seen it since. Which means, I'm ready for my next big challenge, and the sales manager role at LivingSocial just might be it.
- **#19:** After spending three years managing the internal communications for a 2,000-person company, I could plan a quarterly town hall or draft an inter-office memo in my sleep. What I want to do next? Put that experience to work consulting executives on their communications strategy.
- **#20:** While you won't find the title "community manager" listed on my resume, I've actually been bringing people together online and off for three years while running my own blog and series of Meetups.
- **#21:** If you're looking for someone who can follow orders to the T and doesn't like to rock the boat, I'm probably not the right candidate. But if you need someone who can dig in to data, see what's working (and what's not), and challenge the status quo, let's talk.
- **#22:** Ever since my first job at Dairy Queen (yes, they DO let you eat the ice cream!) I've been career-focused. I completed my first internship with a professional football team while I was still in college. I was hired full-time as soon as I graduated, and within six months I was promoted into a brand new department. I thought I knew it all. But as I've progressed in my career, I finally realized...I absolutely do not. Shocker, right? Enter The Muse. (Via @Kararuns729).
- **#23:** You might be wondering what a 15-year veteran of the accounting world is doing applying to an operations role at a food startup like ZeroCater. While I agree the shift is a little strange, I know you're looking for someone who's equal parts foodie and financial guru, and I think that means I'm your guy.
- **#24:** Over the last 10 years, I've built my career on one simple principle: Work smarter. I'm the person who looks for inefficient procedures, finds ways to streamline them, and consistently strives to boost the productivity of everyone around me. It's what's earned me three promotions in the supply chain department at my current company, and it's what I know I can do as the new operations analyst for SevOne.

## Examples 25-31 - Start With Humor or Creativity

OK, before you read any of these, we feel we have to stamp them with a big disclaimer: Do your homework before trying anything like this—learning everything you can about the company, the hiring manager, and whether or not they'll appreciate some sass or snark. If they do, it's a great way to make them smile (then call you). If they don't? Well, better luck next time.

- **#25:** I'm interested in the freelance writer position. But before I blow you away with all the reasons I'm going to be your next writer, I would like to tell you a little about myself: I didn't grow hair until I was about five years old, which made everyone who crossed my stroller's path believe me to be a boy (my name is Casey, which definitely didn't help). Hope I got your attention.
- **#26:** Have you ever had your mom call five times a day asking for a status update on how your job search is going, and then sounding incredulous that not more progress has been made since the last phone call? That's my life right now. But I'm hoping that soon my life will revolve around being your full-time social media manager. The good news is, I bring more to the table than just an overbearing mom. Let me tell you more.
- **#27:** Thank you so much for offering me the marketing manager position at Airbnb! I wholeheartedly accept. OK, I know we're not quite there yet. But if we were, here are just a few ideas of what I would do once in the role.
- **#28:** You've slept on it. You've made lists of pros and cons. You've talked to your life coach, your hairdresser, and every barista on your block. So why haven't you made your decision yet? When you're looking for advice, what you need is not more, but better. If you're constantly plagued with tough career decisions and presentation-day butterflies, you need an advocate, a listener, and sometimes, a kick in the pants. You need...me!
- **#29:** I considered submitting my latest credit card statement as proof of just how much I love online shopping, but I thought a safer approach might be writing this cover letter, describing all the reasons why I'm the girl who can take STYLIGHT's business to the next level.
- **#30:** I never thought that accidentally dropping my iPhone out of a second story window would change my life (it's a funny story—ask me about it). But thanks to my misfortune, I discovered iCracked—and found my dream job as an expansion associate.
- **#31:** If we were playing "Two Truths and a Lie," I'd say the following: I've exceeded my sales quotas by at least 20% every quarter this year, I once won an international

pie-eating contest, and I have [an amazing job at Yext. The last, of course, is the lie.  
For now.