

CREATE A DISRUPTIVE COVER LETTER



How to Write a Cover Letter in 2018

Want to WOW the employer? Make sure you do this ...

By J.T. O'Donnell
Founder and CEO, WorkItDaily.com@jtodonnell

Many job seekers assume writing a cover letter is a waste of their time. I've been told, "nobody reads it." That's actually not true. Hiring managers usually open the cover letter and glance at it, BUT the moment they realize it's a boring regurgitation of your resume, they stop reading. While there are a host of things that make recruiters cringe when reading cover letters, it's when you start going on and on about all your accomplishments that makes them toss it.

So, what should go in your cover letter?

One of the biggest trends in cover letters right now is the concept of "**disrupting**" the reader. When you surprise them, or as we like to say, get them at "hello," you create a connection that sparks greater interest in you as a candidate. In the marketing world, this technique is called "storytelling." And, it's how companies get us to go from knowing nothing about them, to falling in love with them. Tell them about a time when...

At my company, we offer cover letter reviews as part of our service. We literally read hundreds of cover letters each week, offering advice on how to tweak them to be more disruptive. More than a few of our members deal with initial writer's block. So, when our clients are stumped on what to write, I tell them to do the following:

- 1) Identify what the company does that is different, special, and unique.
- 2) Think about the job you are applying for and how you've come to learn its importance.
- 3) Ask yourself what life experiences have taught you how the work the company does makes a difference.

When you find the answers to the questions above, you can start to connect the dots between your values and beliefs and those of the employer. This is the story you should tell. This is the story they really want to hear.

Example: "Your hospital equipment made my grandma's final days peaceful."

Let me give you an example of how this works...

One of our members wants to apply for a business development role at a medical equipment supplier. When I asked him the questions above, he shared a moving story about his grandmother's final days of life in the local hospital. Several of the pieces of equipment in her room had the logo of the company on it. So, in his cover letter, he shared this story and how he knew their products made a difference in the lives of the patients AND the loved ones watching them suffer. By showcasing his personal connection to the mission of the company, he proved he'd be a good candidate for the role. (In case you're wondering, yes, he got the interview.)

P.S. - It helps to get the cover letter in someone's hands.

While this storytelling technique can improve the chances you get an interview, it doesn't help you get through the company's online ATS. That's why if you take the time to write one, you should also go the extra step and do what you can to network into the company so you can get your disruptive cover letter in someone's hands. Or, at least directly in their email inbox. ATS systems are designed to weed you out and have no way to tell a good cover letter from a lousy one. Besides, with most jobs being gotten via referral today, it's in your best interest to go around the online system and try to get your credentials to a human being!

10 January 2018

XXXXXXX

XXXXXXX

XXXXXXX

Dear Hiring Team,

I am going to share a secret...I have been *intimately* linked to KRAFT for over 10 years!

I have a passion for food - KRAFT food. I realize everyone tells you that, so let me prove it to you:

When I was studying in London and had no idea what to cook, I trusted the KRAFT brand so much that I turned to

the recipes at www.kraftrecipes.com! Not only the recipes were delicious, but also they were HEALTHY too!

How

did I know KRAFT would take care of me? They have been doing it for years.

5 Pieces of Original Oreo & A Glass of Milk

That was my nourishment at softball practices back in high school every day! As KRAFT says it best, "Oreo. Milk's

Favorite Cookie." Nobody can relate to that better than me. And it was not just Oreo. I shared my love with plenty of other KRAFT products. Ritz Bits, is another favorite of mine. They are so crispy and crunchy, and yet, the moment I chew one, it immediately melts in my mouth. It is simply, heaven.

So, what can be greater than being a marketer of products I consume all the time? Yes, we (KRAFT and I) have

been linked for over a decade and now I would like to take our relationship to the next level.

It is More Than the Food – It is Who is Behind It

A very good very of mine, XXXXXX, used to work at KRAFT. I have heard first-hand about the family-like work environment. And, having studied American culture and knowing its reputation, it would be an honor to work for the most respected company in America.

I am Obsessed With Trend-Spotting!

Through my research, I know that KRAFT places consumers at its center, dedicating itself to innovation via spotting and acting on future trends within the food and beverage industry. By recognizing untapped consumer needs (i.e. people's changing behaviors, consumption habits, and purchasing habits), KRAFT learns about key emerging trends. In particular, I love how KRAFT reformulated Oreo in China. From a round chocolate cookie that did not fare too well to a four-layers- crispy-wafer filled with vanilla and chocolate cream, and coated in chocolate, that became the best selling biscuit in China. And the wafer rolls? That is a great innovation! I tried it over the holiday and I literally sipped milk through the Oreo "straw"!

I Embrace KRAFT's Commitment to Focusing on Consumers

I have a product design degree and a principle that has been rooted in me when designing products is that I do not design for myself – I design for others. There is no value if the product does not work for the intended users. As a marketer for KRAFT, I know this principle would serve me well.

I once did a client project for Sprite, South Africa. Sprite South Africa wanted to tap into the South African youngsters. To my amazement, through my study, I found that just like youngsters in the other parts of the world, South African youngsters also want something cool and different that they can show off to their friends.

The conclusion is they want a self-identity. Subsequently, I discovered that people love to mix Sprite with other things to make cocktails, shooters or punch! Thus, to market Sprite to South African youngsters, I came up with an innovative bottle cover, called *Sprite Fruit Button*. It goes on top of a Sprite bottle glass (Sprite is sold in recyclable bottle glass in South Africa). And when you press the protruding button on top, it instantly releases the fruity flavor, that is contained in the button, into Sprite's lime soda liquid.

I also proposed for Sprite South Africa to modify their bottle colors from green to clear. Imagine a South African kid walking on the street in the hot simmering sun with a bottle of Sprite in one hand. As he presses the *Sprite Fruit Button*, bright magical color oozes into the clear Sprite lime soda, swirling like the Milky Way. And as he swings about the bottle while walking, the fruit flavor slowly fuses with the lime soda drink. The Sprite team in South Africa loved the idea!

How Can I Take My Relationship with KRAFT to the Next Level?

For all of the reasons above and many more, I would be grateful for the opportunity to be considered at your company. I thank you for your time and consideration and hope to hear from you soon. As a loyal consumer of KRAFT products and a passionate consumer-focused marketer, I would love the chance to support the company's future endeavors.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXX

DATE
XXXXXXX
XXXXXXX
XXXXXXX

RE: Job Code XXXX

Dear Hiring Team,

BOLDED STATEMENT

Share your story.....

BOLDED SUBTITLE

(Articulate a Belief)

Share how you came to acquire this belief as it relates to the company.

BOLDED SUBTITLE

(Articulate a Connection)

Share an example of how you feel connected to their work, mission, etc.

BOLDED SUBTITLE

(Ask to Move Relationship Forward)

Share your desire to serve them and express interest in the position you are applying to.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope to hear from you.

Sincerely,

NAME
Email
Phone