

How to make writing a Cover Letter less painful

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Career Leader



Azzam Bin Aamir

- Career Leader, Workshop Facilitator @ Centre for Career Action
- Physics and Astronomy Student
- Currently on coop as a Data Science Analyst at Purolator
- Fun Fact : I love cold pizza! (sometimes even more than regular pizza)



Whose land are we on?

I respectfully acknowledge that I work on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised and never returned to Six Nations, which includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River.

Support: The Woodland Cultural Centre

Report: TRC Calls to Action, National Inquiry Into MMIWG

Reading: Embers: One Ojibway's Meditations, The Inconvenient Indian, 21 Things You May Not Have Known About the Indian Act,

What land are you on? : native-land.ca

How might we co-create this safe(r) space?



- Take things at your own pace and participate in a way that works for you
- Take what works for you, leave what doesn't.
- Ask questions whenever!
- Listen to each other
- What do you want to add?

(Why) Do I need a Cover Letter?

- Check out the application requirements
- Some recruiters care about cover letters, some do not
- The thing with generic cover letters



HOW TO WRITE A COVER LETTER?

The function of a Cover Letter

- Bridging your experience and the employer's needs
- Demonstrate your **interest in this role**
- Add details
 - Technical Details, Quantitative Values
 - Awards, team-based qualities
- Explain things- if you want to



YOU ALREADY KNOW HOW TO WRITE A COVER LETTER

Write a Cover Letter like a research paper



- Hypothesis: You [y] are perfect for the job, because [x]
- You need to know the two variables
- Show the “correlation” between x and y
- Make the formula yours!

Write a Cover Letter like a creative writing project

- Unique plot & character development
- Get creative (content and visuals)
- Create a story
- Create writing prompts for yourself
- Applicable for all industries!



WHAT TO WRITE IN A COVER LETTER?



Tell them what you bring!



- Show a match between your experience, interests and skills and the employers needs
- Identify your skills & experiences
- Identify the employers needs
- Show don't tell
- Market yourself confidently!!

Organize what you bring

- Be specific
- Who did what?
- Cater to lazy readers
- Prioritize what you are sharing



Questions to ask yourself



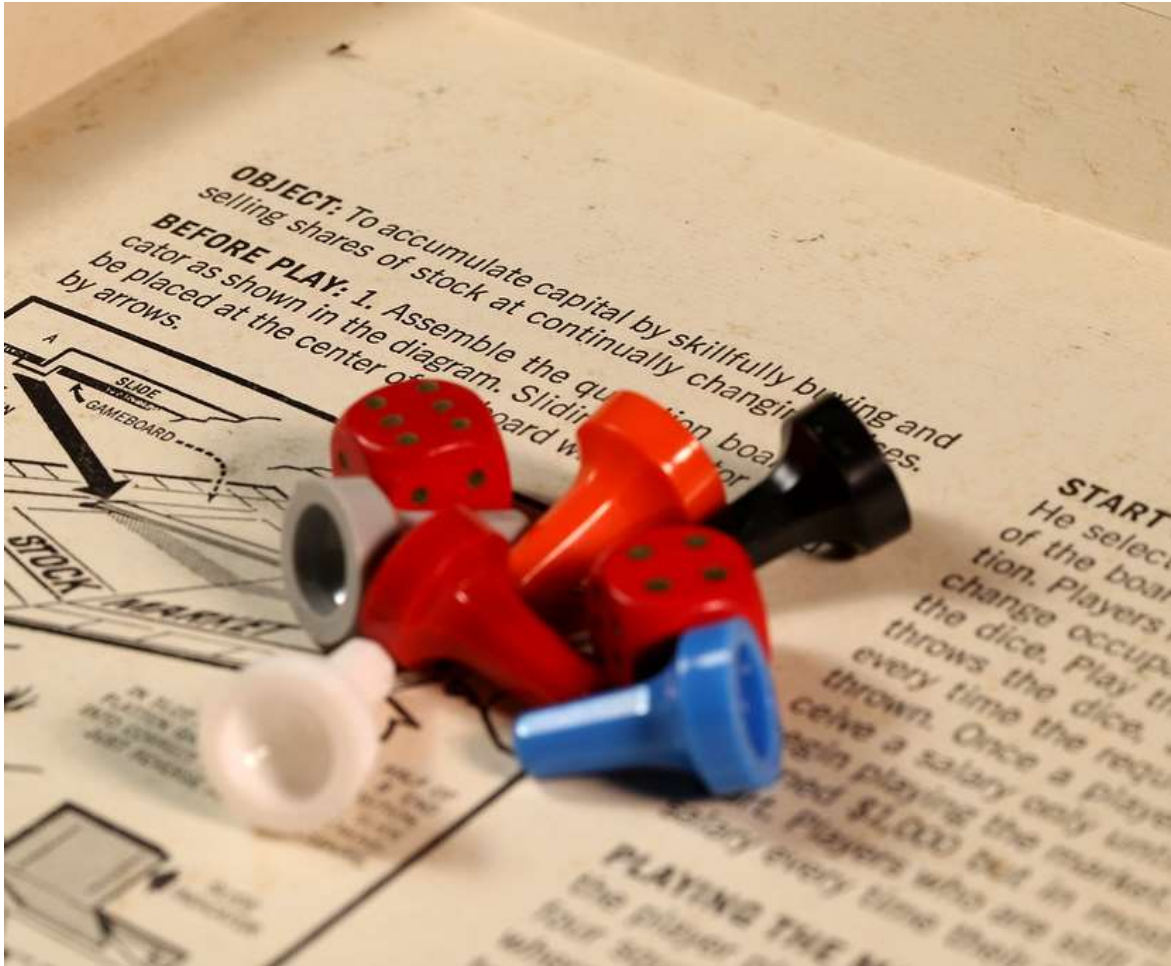
- Why are you sending this Cover Letter?
- Why are you interested in this role/ working for this organization?
- Why do you fit?

What do people want to read in Cover Letters?

- We cannot control what people want to read in Cover Letters
- How do we gauge what stands out?
- There are things that we can control
 - What stories we have
 - What experiences we highlight



The paradox of standing out and fitting in



- You know your skills best
- You know how comfortable you are in following or breaking rules and conventions
- Narrative of specific experiences

STRUCTURE OF A COVER LETTER

Your Name & Contact Information

 **John Doe**
 VP, Finance & Operations

john.doe@gmail.com
 416-821-9879
 Toronto, Canada

Doris Johnson
 Human Resources Manager
 Optimal Workplace Inc. 321
 Employment Avenue. Toronto,
 Canada
 21 September, 2018

linkedin.com/in/john.doe
 john.doe

Name & Address of Recipient

Date

Salutation

Dear Ms. Johnson,

Opening

As the Vice-President of Finance and Operations at a national food chain, I bring proven success in enhancing productivity and gaining an advantage when it comes to profit margins. My work spans companies and business units at varying stages of growth, from start-up to multinational organizations.

Body

With over 20 years of achieving profitability and long-term growth, I seek to monitor budgets and sales numbers closely to identify areas for improvement. I am known for enhancing performance through technology upgrades, implementing best practices, improving employee training protocols.

Examples of my achievements include:

- Drove successful launch of start-up organization through contemporary hiring practices, defining product implementation, and developing go-to-market strategies to achieve 50% margins and \$15M+ revenue within my first three years.
- Managed daily operations of a \$100M+ consumer goods department that introduced complete line of products to the U.S. and Canada, improving profit margins by 14%
- Proved a vital team member that conducted a complete leadership reorganization resulted in a 10% improvement in productivity within the sales department and a 1 improvement within the technical team.

Closing

As a skilled professional with a CPA degree and a background in analyzing and improving sales numbers, I am confident I will prove an asset to your company and respectfully submit my application for your review. I would like to request a meeting to discuss how I can help meet your goals. I am available at your convenience and hope to hear from you soon.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
 John Doe

Respects & Your Name

268 Phillip Street
Waterloo, ON 12345

4th September 2019

Humber College
205 Humber College Blvd
Toronto, Ontario

Dear Recruiter,

As a student who one day aspires to be a professor, coming across a job posting to be a Math Tutor at an esteemed establishment was like a dream come true. I would like to take this letter to illustrate how my experiences in science outreach and my passion for academia, have given me the necessary skills to be a perfect fit for this opportunity.

At the university of Waterloo, I am currently a member of the "Let's Talk Science" out reach program, wherein my main duty is to excite the next generation about the wonders the world of math, physics and engineering have to offer. I have guided classes of middle-schoolers through their first lab experiment and have also explained perplexing physics concepts to high-schoolers. The latter is particularly beneficial, as it has taught me to how to break down vague and non-intuitive topics, into easy to understand steps.

In addition to the above, I also have excellent leadership and teamwork abilities, developed through years of volunteer work in a range of areas. In math class, I am the go-to person for help with assignments, due to my policy that you do not completely understand a concept until you can explain it to someone else.

I firmly believe my skills, passion and creativity will be a great asset to this college and look forward to inspiring and educating the future batch of scientists and leaders. Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

Making a less generic Cover Letter

- Advantages & disadvantages of personalized Cover Letters
- Making a less generic cover letter the lazy way- finding patterns
- Ways to personalize it: name of recruiter, name of company, projects, specifying job applied to
- Re-using and up-cycling Cover Letters



GOOD TO KNOW

Good to know

- ATS- Applicant Tracking Systems
- Check employer requirements
- Scannable Resumes (OCR-coded)

The screenshot displays an ATS interface for a job posting. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Job Posting' and an 'APPLY' button. Below this, the 'Job Posting Status' is 'Approved' and the 'Internal Status' is 'Open for Applications'. The main content area is divided into three sections, each highlighted with a yellow border:

- APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:** This section lists the documents required for the application package: 'University of Waterloo Co-op Work History', 'Résumé', and 'Grade Report'.
- SUBMIT APPLICATION:** This section contains a radio button option to 'CREATE A CUSTOMIZED APPLICATION PACKAGE' and 'Submit Application' and 'Cancel' buttons.
- SUBMIT APPLICATION:** This section is identical to the one above, showing the 'CREATE A CUSTOMIZED APPLICATION PACKAGE' option and submission buttons.

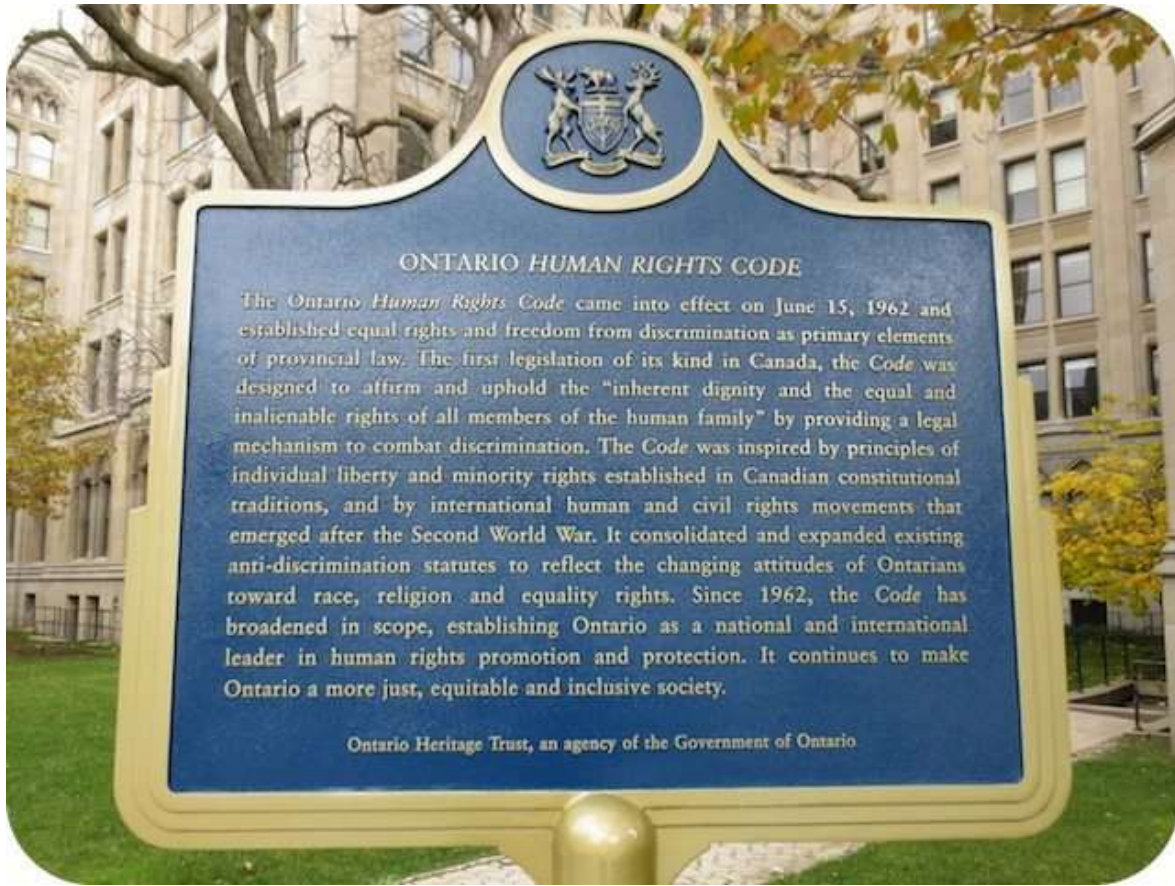
DISCLOSURE AND SAFETY

Disclosure

- Social safety: You can share, but you do not have to share
- Emotional safety: What is coming up when writing the Cover Letter?
- Accommodations: Can be requested through the companies Human Resources



Ontario Human Rights Code



- Protected grounds: “Age, Acenstry, Colour, Race, Citizenship, Ethnic Origin, Place of Origin, Creed, Disability, Family Status, Marital Status, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Receipt of public Assistance, Record of Offences, Sex, Sexual Orientation” [The Ontario Human Rights Code | Ontario Human Rights Commission \(ohrc.on.ca\)](#)

Where to find support:

- Empower ME
 - KW Counselling Services
 - OK2BME
 - Counselling Services and Embedded Wellness Counselors
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- WUSA: Student Legal Protection Program
 - Conflict Management & Human Resources at Uwaterloo
 - Human Rights Legal Support Centre

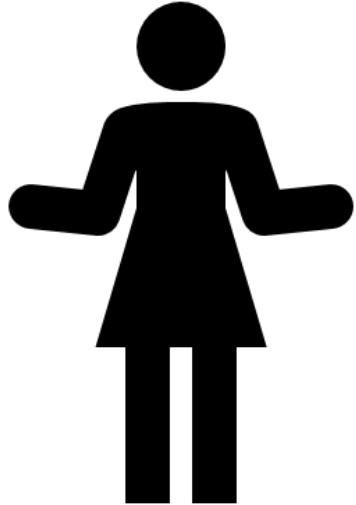
CCA Career Advisors

- Book an appointment with a Career Advisor to discuss Resumes, Cover Letters, Interviews and Work-Search
- Book an appointment through WaterlooWorks

[Home | Centre for Career Action | University of Waterloo \(uwaterloo.ca\)](#)



Harassment advisors: role & responsibilities



Harassment advisors:

- Will do their best to provide you with a safe space to chat and share. Their job is to make you feel comfortable!
- Will listen, advise, and share options.
- They do not provide legal advice.
- They do not act without consent of student (unless someone is in danger).

To contact a harassment advisor, you can call in to the Centre for Career Action via our Live Chat or call 519-888-4047.

Harassment advisors: who are they?

Harassment advisors:

Eden Mekonen – eden.mekonen@uwaterloo.ca

Graeme Beaton - graeme.beaton@uwaterloo.ca

To contact a harassment advisor, you can call in to the Centre for Career Action via our Live Chat or call 519-888-4047.

HOW DID WE DO?

We are always looking for ways to improve and your feedback is important. Complete the feedback survey delivered to your inbox at the end of this week.

Our mission is to educate and motivate all members of the University of Waterloo community to develop and take action to achieve current and future career goals.



Q&A

