

## Network to Work Meeting

March 2018

### ACTIVITY - Cover Letters: the Bad and the Ugly

#### Instructions:

- Break into groups of 2 - 4
- You will have about 7 minutes to read the following **true** examples from bad cover letters and discuss what's wrong with them.
- Be prepared to share a few observations when the full group comes back together.

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#### #1

"Hey:

You're probably reading a lot of applications. And you're probably not enjoying yourself. I'm writing this cover letter, and I'm not enjoying myself, either. So, let me cut to the chase.

I won't pretend that your company's mission is my passion, but I do think sales are interesting and you seem to have a strong background per your LinkedIn page. If you hire me, I'll show up for the hours you expect me to, and do what's asked, and you'll like me. Let's face it: that puts me ahead of 99% of the applicants already.

I graduated from XYZ College and was well like there. And you know the importance of that for sales. I'm willing to bet that you won't like the personality of most of the people who appear to be "qualified" for this entry-level position, based on the fact that if they've had time to meet the qualifications for this job by the time they graduated college, they likely have no social skills. As someone who was voted "life of the party" both in high school and my fraternity, you won't have to worry about hiring some stiff loser who will poorly represent the youthful image of your company, or any other worries you might have about your new hire being a cultural fit.

You'll notice that I haven't talked about what skills I have yet. Do I honestly need to? I went to an elite institution, and we all know I'd figure out how to use whatever programs you'd like to toil away with. Working at your company doesn't take a rocket scientist, and I think we both know that, but the type of person you hire will matter, especially for your size team.

Get back to me if you're looking for someone who you'll actually enjoy working with."

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#### #2

"Dear Ms. Smith:

"It's definitely time for a career change! I'll cut to the chase. What I'm capable of includes trafficking (in publishing, not narcotics – would I be trolling the Web for a job if that were the case??"). I'm only average at

Excel. I'm incapable of HTML. I'm sick of writing these pedestrian cover letters. I won't gush with some sanctimonious speech about your company; I apply to companies only for whom I'm interested in working.

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### #3

Hi Jessica – I guess the only reason I'm applying is because I studied Journalism; originally I am an Engineer. I don't read much of your magazine but I do have an analytical mind. I know I am not tailor made for the job and I just have 3 months before I resume the new school semester. Nevertheless, this looked interesting. It was fun applying!"

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### #4

"Attached please find my resume as I would LOVE to be a lifestyle / wall street intern as both topics fascinate me and I have great experience in both. The only caveat IS I have to do this during non-working hours. Fear not, as I am willing to work well into the night . . ."

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### #5

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is \_\_\_ and I am an interested applicant in the position currently available. My skills consist of being great at multi-tasking, great with computers, patient, and reliable. I am 24 years old which is why I think this position is a great fit for me."

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### #6

"Dear Ms. Smith,

I do not have any relevant work experience but when I went through the roles and responsibilities for this particular position, I realized that though relevant work experience would always be important, people skills, creativity and discipline are THE most important attributes any candidate should possess. I have always been an avid reader and I had my own blog a couple of years ago. I received some feedback from the grandfather of a friend of mind, and it was very positive."

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### #7

Ms. Smith,

I am a writer and artist who recently relocated to New York to actually work in one of my fields, only to put a lot of time into cover letters and resumes that never get acknowledged. This really surprise me, because I have a variety of work experience behind me, I have excellent references, and I clearly want to work and stay busy. Moreover, since I moved here solely for career purposes, I don't really have any friends yet, and am very driven. I'm in a perfect position to make work "my life".

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## #8

“To Whom it May Concern:

This letter is to introduce myself and to let you know of my interest in becoming a part of your company. The enclosed resume will furnish you with information concerning my overall employment background, training, education and skills.

My work abilities are backed up with experiences and knowledge. I assure you that I can successfully fulfill any obligation associated with any responsibility in your company. In each of my previous job experiences, I have performed my assignments with a high degree of skill and professionalism.

My current objective is to obtain a position that will fully utilize my skills and offer an opportunity for continued professional growth. I believe in excellence and have always dedicated myself, my talents and my creative abilities to assure the successful accomplishment of any company goals. My positive attitude and willingness to work diligently makes me a valuable asset to any organization that would employ me. I am confident that my skills will be an asset and have a favorable impact in your organization.

I look forward to hearing from you and hopefully schedule an interview in which I hope to learn more about your company.

Thank you for your time.”