

## ADD SOME SIZZLE TO YOUR COVER LETTERS

Anything being sent to a decision-maker should sell you, not just state facts. When conducting a job search, your cover letter and résumé are in a pile for the decision-maker to review, one by one, along with a vast number of other documents submitted by other hopeful individuals. The odds that YOUR document is the very first ones on the pile are about a zillion to one! This means the decision-maker has probably read X number of cover letters (and résumés) before reaching your set of documents. With that in mind, I *never* recommend you start the cover letter with the sentence used in so many other letters: "*Pursuant to your recent advertisement in the New York Times for the position of Staff Accountant, I am enclosing my resume for your review.*"

**B-O-R-I-N-G!!** Plus, the decision-maker probably just read this same (or very similar) sentence about five dozen times. Remember, you want to GRAB the decision-maker's attention and SELL yourself to them.

Since the cover letter is designed to market you to potential employers, don't state the obvious. If the cover letter does not create a sense of excitement and entice the reader, it is a waste of your time for writing it and a waste of time for the reader reading it.

Keep track of how many times you use the words "I" and/or "my". After you write the letter, take a pen and circle all the I's and my's in the letter: more than five? Time to re-write some of the sentences because that many (or more screams "ME ME ME!!!") So instead of sounding **self-centered**, make sure that you sound **EMPLOYER ORIENTED!**

Here's an illustration of how to do that: instead of writing "I am looking for an opportunity for advancement with a new employer. My background is in retail management and I feel well-qualified for the Store Manager position with your company" you can write, "A background in retail management and proven record of obtaining results as a Store Manager are key elements in qualifying me for consideration as part of your team."

Remember the PURPOSE of the cover letter: to highlight your background in the right light, sell your skills, and show the potential employer you are worthy of an interview. Explaining what you WANT throughout the letter doesn't tell the reader the BENEFIT of what you can offer, which is imperative for you to be successful. {REMEMBER: All Employers Listen To Radio Station 'W I F M' which stands for : What's In it For Me?}

One of the techniques I like to use in cover letters is to pull out the top 4 or 5 achievements and mention them in bullet form within the letter. It serves as a

wonderful focus point for readers' eyes and draws their attention immediately to your strengths. Here's a brief highlight in what would naturally be a longer cover letter:

...Recognized as a top-performer and dedicated professional, my record of achievements include:

- Generating a 58% increase in new business during tenure as Regional Advertising Manager
- Boosting client media coverage 50% and developing partnerships with previously unsecured media contacts

There are many ways to say things but, as you can see, some words have a stronger impact on readers than others. In cover letters, e-résumés, and traditional résumés, you can change the reader's perception in a heartbeat by substituting various words or phrases for more traditional (and boringly-outdated) verbiage. See the outline below:

**NAV** = Non-Aggressive Verbiage

**AGV** = Aggressive Verbiage

NAV: Set up entire department from scratch.

AGV: Established department from inception through successful operation.

NAV: Worked closely with department heads.

AGV: Fostered relationships with department heads.

NAV: Helped produce \$3 million in sales.

AGV: Instrumental in generating \$3 million in sales.

NAV: Helped new employees.

AGV: Recognized for innovative on-boarding program yielding vastly improved job readiness and performance in new hires

NAV: In-depth knowledge of capital markets and corporate finance.

AGV: Expertise in capital markets and corporate finance.

NAV: Assisted marketing department in strategies and bids.

AGV: Actively participated in formulating marketing strategies.

NAV: Reduced expenses by 10%.

AGV: Slashed (or cut) expenses by 10%.

In short, aggressive writing makes you SIZZLE, while passive writing tells your "story." Remember your goal is to effectively market yourself, not to author your employment biography.

Mark Berkowitz is the owner and President of **CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES, LLC**.

Revolutionizing careers since 1985, Mark provides one-on-one career consulting services, résumé

building assistance and guidance to help each client achieve not only job advancement, but lasting and meaningful success in their career path as well. A distinguished figure in his field, Berkowitz is one of the top career builders in the country and has been quoted in nearly two dozen books and publications on the topic of career advancement.

Passionate about empowering others to realize their dreams, Mark served as an executive board member of the PROFESSIONAL ASSN. OF RÉSUMÉ WRITERS & CAREER COACHES. He has been helping clients successfully advance in, and/or change their careers for over 36 years. With a Master's Degree in Career Development and four specialized certifications ([National Certified Career Counselor](#), [Certified Professional Résumé Writer](#), [Int'l Certified Job & Career Transition Coach](#), and [Certified Employment Interview Professional](#)), he is uniquely qualified to help you improve your career situation. A recognized expert in the field, he had not only taught in Graduate Schools and led workshops and seminars, but also trained other counselors. Mark served as chairman of the Certification Board for the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches and was a founding member of the Career Management Alliance (fkn Career Masters Institute). Additionally, he has shared his expertise in effectively utilizing career assessment tools with graduate counseling students from nearby Fordham University, helping to prepare them for their future counseling careers.

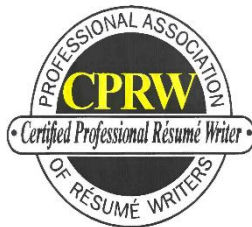
Mark connects with clients locally as well as international clients via the internet. He also provides outreach to high school and college students, presenting career planning and job search strategy workshops.

- Highly regarded with résumés, cover letters, and interview strategies showcased in nearly two dozen books.
- Enjoys an INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION as a “Résumé Guru” by members of the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches.

His work appears in nearly two dozen books on résumé /cover letter writing and winning interview strategies. He has been spotlighted on WCBS television in “*Acing The Interview*” and has been named as the “*Professional of the Year 2024*” by the [PODCAST BUSINESS NEWS NETWORK](#).



Berkowitz has been recognized as “... *one of the leading résumé writers in the U.S. today*” in Professional Résumés for Executives, Managers, and Other Administrators. Wendy Enelow, President of the Career Masters Institute has acknowledged Mark as “... *one of the most talented career counselors I have ever met.*”



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*See how you can benefit from professional expertise  
instead of suffering from your career mistakes.*