

The Keys to
Selling Your Achievements

Home Study Course
Companion Workbook



Introduction

Welcome to “The Keys to Selling Your Achievements!” This course evolved from my experience coaching clients on how to market themselves for career search, for getting to the next level at their current employer, for gaining visibility, and for marketing their businesses or consulting practices. In this course I will share with you the keys to unlock your own ability to present your achievements in a concise, compelling way that demonstrates what you have accomplished in a way that captures the attention of whoever you are talking with or writing to.

This workbook is a companion to the 3 CD audio course, but can also be used as a standalone course. This includes the material covered in the CD’s, and adds additional samples, exercises and supplementary discussions to help you take the material to the next level. The CD’s and workbook are organized into 3 broad sections:

- **Compelling Accomplishment Stories**

This is the basis for the entire course. You first need to have thought through the essence of your accomplishments, and carefully crafted them to get across the essential elements. **THEN** you can focus on what to say about them in different venues. This section is primarily focused on presenting stories orally, and it is the basis for all of the rest of what you will do.

- **The Killer Résumé**

Now that you have your compelling stories, you need to boil them down to the 1 or 2 lines you should put in your résumé or consulting engagement bio. Then you need to add all of the other critical elements that ensure the résumé or bio communicates what makes you an outstanding candidate. And you need to do it in a style that shows me what a professional you are.

- **Cover Letters Hiring Managers WANT To Read**

Finally, you need to address the cover letter – how to focus your accomplishments (and the rest of the “package” you have to offer) on the needs of the potential employer or client. And you need to add the other critical elements that grab my attention and show me why I should want to talk to you.

The CD's were recorded with an audience, and at certain points I ask them to react to examples or questions. You can listen to the CD's and follow along in this workbook. If so, you will get the most value from the course if you pause at those points and think about your own answers and reactions before listening to what I have to say on the CD. I've noted those points in the workbook accordingly.

I've divided each of the 3 CD's into a number of tracks. To make it easier to follow along, I've noted where each track starts in the Table of Contents on the next page.

I welcome your feedback on this course. Feel free to send me questions, concerns, and other input at:

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Enjoy!

John West Hadley, FSA
Career Search and Career Enhancement Counselor

"Partnering With You In Your Career"

Find Career Resources at www.JHACareers.com

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Cover Letters that Hiring Managers WANT to Read

How important is a cover letter?

This is the first thing the company will see. If the hiring manager isn't interested from your cover letter, he or she probably won't bother to read your résumé. And unlike your résumé, which can include partial sentences and bullet points, this is an essay. This is your chance to really showcase written communication skills to a prospective employer, to demonstrate that you can write persuasively.

Now let's look at it from a marketing perspective.

You should think of a job search as a marketing campaign, where the product you are trying to sell is **YOU**. Within that frame of reference, your résumé is your Sales Brochure. So then what is your Cover Letter and what is its purpose?

It's your marketing letter – its purpose is to generate enough interest in your product that I now want to read your sales brochure / résumé. Or it might even persuade me to take action without ever doing much more than glance at your résumé, and set up a meeting with you right away!

Your résumé is the strong picture of the entire set of skills and critical accomplishments you bring to the table for any job. It should give me a complete picture of everything that might sell you. It may be tailored to a particular **type** of role, but it still needs to show me the range of skills and qualities you bring to the table.

Your cover letter is the place where you tailor your presentation to my specific job or company or needs. It's where you in effect tell me what parts of the picture you are drawing in your résumé to focus on. Just as the Summary section of your résumé helps frame how I read the rest of your résumé, the cover letter helps shape how I look at your résumé as a whole.

Since this is a marketing campaign, try drawing an analogy to other such campaigns. Think of marketing pieces you've received in the mail. How do these variations impact you?

- A brochure with no letter:

This is very impersonal, perhaps even a bit intimidating. The marketer didn't even bother to take the effort to write a letter to go with it, to personalize it in any way to fit my needs, so why should I take the effort to read it? My reaction to these is typically to glance at the sales brochure and then recycle it.

- A brochure with a weak, poorly worded marketing letter:

Since the letter is the first thing I will look at, I'm probably not even going to finish it. I'll have an immediate negative impression of the writer, and likely won't even look at the brochure before it ends up in recycling.

- A brochure with a strong, engaging marketing letter:

If the letter engages me, I'll actually read it all the way through. And if I like what I've read, I'll at least flip through the brochure to see what it's all about. And if the brochure also grabs my attention, that's the home run!

Now, am I saying that everyone will read a cover letter? Honestly, no. But for the many who do, it will have a huge influence on whether your résumé gets read, and on whether I pick up the résumé with a positive or a negative mindset. It personalizes your package, and shows that you took your application seriously, that you put in more effort than to just stick a résumé in the mail. If the hiring manager is one who doesn't tend to read cover letters, it hasn't done you any harm to include it. But even in that case, if you are brought in for an interview, that letter will have been passed around to the other interviewers with your résumé, so it will have had a chance to make an impression on them as well.

Although I'm calling these cover letters, they may also be stand-alone letters. Think for a moment about the types of situations in which you might need to write a letter to further your career search.

Pause the CD to write your thoughts here before you flip the page:

There are many situations in which you may write a letter (or email) to further your search. For example:

- To apply for specific job posted in the newspaper, a trade journal, on a company website, on a job search engine like monster.com.
- To seek consideration for a class of job.
- To seek a meeting to talk about possibilities with a particular firm, without any specific job or role defined. Basically, just to get them interested in you.
- To get a contingency recruiter interested in presenting you for open positions.
- To get a retained search firm interested in having you in their database.
- To seek a networking meeting or informational interview.
- To seek an introduction to someone.
- To thank an interviewer, and in the process remind him or her of why you are a great candidate.
- To thank someone for a networking meeting or informational interview, and particularly for any specific advice or contacts they provided.
- To follow up on the status of the interview you had a few weeks ago.

This section of the workbook is going to concentrate on the first 3 possibilities above, but the same techniques I will teach you here apply to all of these. And these apply whether you are using a formal, printed letter, electronic copy, or an email. First I will focus on techniques, then talk a bit about the variations in some of these situations.

What are the important elements of a strong cover letter?

Pause the CD to fill in your thoughts below before you flip the page.

Elements of a Strong Cover Letter

1. A confident opening – why are you writing and why should they read it. This needs to be about what you will do for them. Grab their attention, and remember to answer the **WIIFM** question – What’s in it for me? This is about the results you can produce for **THEM**, not just why the job is important to you.
2. Show your passion. Nothing will lose the reader’s interest more quickly than a passionless recitation of facts.
3. Present the most important skills, qualities & experience you bring to the table **as they relate to the opening and company**. The résumé covers the full range of what you offer; the cover letter focuses on those specifically relevant to their needs.
4. A confident closing, that includes the next step you will take.

You want me as the reader to see that you have the 3 key elements, Qualifications, Results and Self-Confidence. Hence the formula:

“I See Q,R,S”

Q = Qualifications

R = Results

S = Self-Confidence

So let’s start with the confident opening. Here’s the first paragraph from a letter seeking to generate a meeting about opportunities with Mr. Dwyer’s firm.

“Dear Mr. Dwyer: I obtained your name from the Society of Actuaries website and thought I would take the liberty of writing to you. I am interested in pursuing a position with your organization. I am an Associate of the Society of Actuaries with over 20 years of varied actuarial experience, including product development, actuarial software creation and financial reporting roles.”

Pause the CD and fill in your reactions before turning the page.

Let's look at what was written piece by piece.

"I obtained your name from the Society of Actuaries website" It's good to say how you knew to contact the person, but this really isn't adding anything. If he said he was writing because of Mr. Dwyer's extensive involvement with risk management, an area in which he has a great deal of interest and expertise, that would be one thing. Or because Mr. Dwyer is the hiring manager for new actuaries. Or anything that shows he's writing for a better reason than that Mr. Dwyer was a random name he found in the SOA directory!

"thought I would take the liberty of to writing you." This is very weak, almost like he's pleading with Mr. Dwyer, apologizing for even having contacted him in the first place.

"I am interested in pursuing a position with your organization." This isn't giving Mr. Dwyer any real information, any reason why he should be interested in reading further, and doesn't give any idea what position it is that is being sought.

"I am an Associate of the Society of Actuaries with over 20 years of varied actuarial experience, including product development, actuarial software creation and financial reporting roles." Finally, he's getting to his qualifications. But they are presented more or less independently of what Mr. Dwyer's needs might be, with no relation to any particular type of position. This doesn't show any sign that he has done any research beyond finding Mr. Dwyer's name on the SOA website, nor that he knows anything about him or his company.

Basically, one paragraph into the letter, he still hasn't gotten into any substantive reason why Mr. Dwyer should be interested in him, and hasn't made any strong statement of what he can do for Mr. Dwyer, just provided a laundry list of some skills. The letter is very weak, about the candidate instead of Mr. Dwyer's needs. Frankly, it sounds like a letter that has been sent out to every possible company the candidate can find.

I've often been asked whether it's worth it to pay, say, \$250 to an organization that will blast a letter out on my behalf to every employer in the state in my target industry. In my opinion, no. To the recipient, it looks like a "blasted" letter. I certainly wouldn't be very interested in, and **certainly** not impressed by, something that looks like you've just blasted it to 100 other employers. It says to me that you are too lazy to do any research into my company and my needs, so why should I bother to even read it, much less respond?

Let's look at a revised draft of that first paragraph:

"Dear Mr. Dwyer: I'm interested in a position with Citigroup. I am convinced that my unique combination of actuarial skills and systems expertise would make me an asset to your risk management operation."

This is much more positive, and very confident. It's gotten me more interested – I want to find out **why** he is so confident. This sends a strong psychological message; confidence alone sends a signal that there must be something interesting about you, some reason why you are confident. Now that you've shown me your confidence, you can go on in the rest of the letter to tell me more, and to give me some evidence of your abilities.

This is similar to a technique I've taught clients for getting around objections – instead of saying, "no, you're wrong", find a way to reframe the question, and come back with a confident reason why it might be sensible to meet with the person anyway. "I understand why you might feel that way, but others have found" And then proceed to give a confident reason why that meeting should take place. This can often be very successful in turning the situation around.

The Contents of the Letter

The Opening

This is the critical 1st paragraph, where you want to give the hiring manager a reason to believe that you are a 'product' worthwhile paying attention to; a reason he or she should read the rest of the letter. If you don't grab their attention here, they likely won't bother to read the rest of the letter.

Include exactly what you are writing about. For example, if you are responding to a specific job opportunity, include the title of job opening, and where you heard of the opening or who referred you. Then get into why you believe you are a strong candidate or what it is about the company that interests you. Give specific reasons rather than the BS that you often see in these letters.

Here are some phrases to avoid from letters I received as a hiring manager:

"I want to work with you because you are a leader in the industry."

You could say this to almost anybody, so it's pretty meaningless. This doesn't necessarily tell me you've done any research about my company, and it sounds like a stock phrase from a (poor) manual on cover letters. Even if it's true, and my company is a leader in the industry, it wouldn't have taken you any effort to determine that, so why should I be impressed? And what does that have to do with my needs?

When I was responsible for all actuarial hiring at my company, I often received letters with openings like that, and it would immediately tell me the person had done zero research – there was a specific category in which we were a leader, but no one at that level could possibly know that. As soon as I read that, my initial opinion of the candidate went from neutral to negative.

"I think I would be a good candidate for the job."

This hasn't told me anything I don't know, since you wouldn't be sending me the letter if you weren't trying to convince me you are a good candidate. It's not telling me why I should believe your statement – it includes no evidence. And using "I think" instead of "I Know" suggests you're not even sure you believe it.

So now let's look at another example:

"I have been following QualiStar for some time, and am impressed with the quality of your marketing campaigns. I was particularly struck by your recent Q Star campaign on the Internet, which I would expect to be very effective at reaching customers. I would like to work with a company like yours helping to shape successful marketing initiatives."

This one is very strong. It's to the point, and shows evidence the candidate did some research and has a real interest in that specific company. And it is focused; it shows the area or particular interest – marketing initiatives.

Let's go back to our letter to Mr. Dwyer once more, and see if we can tweak it to be a bit stronger. This is the last version we had.

"Dear Mr. Dwyer: I'm interested in a position with Citigroup. I am convinced that my unique combination of actuarial skills and systems expertise would make me an asset to your risk management operation."

What if we adjusted it to this?

"Dear Mr. Dwyer: My combination of diverse actuarial experience and strong systems knowledge and skills has enabled me to dramatically increase the efficiency of actuarial systems and processes for my past employers. I would like to discuss with you how I can bring similar results to Citigroup's risk management operation."

Now in addition to showing confidence, he gets right to exactly what he thinks he can bring to the table, and even brings in a bit of a result right up front.

The Body

In the next two or three paragraphs, describe your background, skills & achievements, ***as related to that organization's needs***, including at least 1 or 2 statements of results you've been able to produce. **DO NOT** just repeat statements verbatim from your résumé. This is very tempting, because you've spent a lot of time crafting strong bullet points for your résumé, but it is a common trap. Find different results to point out, different ways to say what you are 'lifting', or combine elements of a couple of bullets into a higher level statement.

If you are writing about a specific job for which you have a Position Description, work in something for each important item from it. Often a bullet format is very effective, where you can bring out each point dramatically. You can even try what's sometimes called a "T" format - a table where you explicitly list each item from the description in one column, and your corresponding qualifications for each in the other column, but **ONLY** if you have real qualifications for every item in the list. Otherwise, the omitted areas will stand out as missing.

Must you hit 100% of the items covered in the position description? No, although if you use the "T" format, you have to be very careful about leaving anything out. And however you format your letter, if you aren't addressing some item that the hiring manager considers critical, there will be an immediate assumption that you don't meet all the requirements of the job.

This middle section of your letter is the core of the "Qualifications and Results" portion of the "I See QRS" template. Now let's look at a few examples.

First, let's go back to our friend applying to Mr. Dwyer for an unspecified role at Citigroup:

"This combination of skills has enabled me to:

- function effectively as a liaison between the systems and business areas, facilitating the development and installation of actuarial systems in an efficient manner,
- develop annuity trend studies, leading to the introduction of new options to help reverse unfavorable trends, and
- streamline the financial reporting process for my company's universal life product line, reducing manual intervention."

He has included several results, which is great. He could have made them even more powerful if he provided 1 or 2 metrics – how much more profitable were the new annuity options, or what did this do to the trends

that was measurable? For example, how many person-hours were saved by the reduction in manual intervention? He addressed three very specific aspects of his background that might be of interest: combined systems and actuarial skills, annuity experience, and financial reporting, with results statements for each. He wasn't applying for a specific position, so he wanted to make sure to cover key areas, any of which might be of interest to Mr. Dwyer.

Here's another example, from someone seeking a consulting role in wetlands treatment:

"At the Treatment Authority, I manage and monitor a 90 acre municipal treatment wetland. I am independently responsible for developing, budgeting, and implementing our water quality, vegetation, and flow monitoring program. Results have provided insight into present design and construction of an additional 450 acres. I am also working in partnership with our design team to outline future treatment wetlands for the county.

I have excellent oral and written communication skills, particularly in technical areas. I am skilled at promoting treatment wetlands to a wide range of audiences from children to government officials to regulators. I have negotiated research partnerships that will save the County \$100,000 in laboratory services."

Notice how the numbers give this example more credibility. Don't overwhelm the reader by including too many numbers, but include a few key metrics that help to grab and hold the reader's attention.

The Closing

This is the final paragraph. You've started out with your strong opening to grab my attention, and you've included a couple of paragraphs of qualifications and results. The closing should thank the contact for considering your letter, your application, your qualifications, whatever is appropriate, but in a way that shows you have self-confidence. State again why you are a good candidate or are very interested in the position. (An effective approach can be to do one of these in the introduction and the other in the closing.)

If appropriate, ask for a meeting or interview, and even suggest a range of dates and times you are available. ***Assume you will get what you want - the meeting, the interview, consideration of you for the opening.*** Assume that after reading your letter, they will want to meet with you – this is another way to show self-confidence.

A fundamental rule in sales meetings is that you always leave yourself an assignment or next step that creates the next contact point. Approach the cover letter the same way. Don't leave it open-ended, but tell what your next step will be.

Why do you think that might be a good idea?

By saying I'll call your office in 7 days, they shouldn't be surprised to hear from you again if they haven't called you. Plus, that gives you the chance to stand out as a strong professional, as someone who does what you say you will do. You have said specifically when you will follow up. When you do it, even if I'm not there and just get a voice mail, I will see that you are a person of your word, doing what you say you will do. When you call me back when you said, I will remember that. This is an important quality to bring to most jobs.

It also reduces the psychological pressure on you. Instead of worrying about when you might hear back, and wondering when it's appropriate to follow up, you just mark your calendar for your action step and move on to other actions you can take to further your cause.

Not:

"I hope that after reading my letter, you will decide to bring me in for a meeting."

This is too open. It's not confident: "I hope...you will decide"

Instead:

“I would like to meet with you to discuss further the contributions I can make to your operation. I am available the week of the 20th, and will call you on Monday to schedule an appointment.”

Sometimes people ask me, is that over the top? No. It comes across very confidently. Even if I as the reader say to myself, “why’s he assuming I’ll meet with him?”, it still sends that confident signal that makes me more likely to take the meeting. It shows your confidence that there is a reason to meet, and makes me more interested in hearing your rationale in person.

Other times I’m asked, what about with a large company? They probably get so many calls, they might resent it. After all, if they are interested, they’ll call you.

I don’t see much difference between a small and large company, except in the formality of procedures and the number of potential gatekeepers between you and the hiring manager. If the job posting says “no calls,” you don’t have much choice. If it doesn’t specifically say that, then do your best to track down a specific person. If I have 100 résumés, 95 of the candidates probably won’t bother to call. I will remember the 5 who do. After all, it shows you have put in more effort than the other 90, and shows more interest in the role. You will always earn some brownie points, **IF** you can find a person to call.

One of my first clients told me what had happened when he applied for an internship at CISCO systems the year before. He took the time to track down the HR person responsible for the program, and that person had no problem with him calling. They had a pleasant conversation, out of which he found out that his was one of 3,000 applications, and that they couldn’t even find his application, so he should resubmit it!

Anytime you are writing to a specific person, set things up for you to take the next step. You can’t rely on the fact that someone will call you back. If you call them, you probably double your hit rate!

Letters Without Résumé Attachments

We talked earlier about receiving brochures in the mail with or without cover letters. Now think about another option. What if you receive a strong marketing letter with **NO SALES BROCHURE INCLUDED**? Actually, aren't you even more inclined to read the letter? After all, when a sales brochure is included, you have an immediate impression of what the letter will be about.

Similarly, what message do you get if you open a letter and find a résumé attached to it? What might you be inclined to do with it? I would automatically assume it is someone who's looking for a job, and my reaction is likely to be – "unsolicited job application, put it back in the envelope and send it to HR." That's if it even gets to my desk. I may very well have an administrative assistant with instructions to forward to HR all letters that arrive with résumés attached. On the other hand, if I receive a letter with no résumé attached, I'm probably going to at least read the first couple of lines to find out what it's about. And if it grabs my attention, I may keep going.

Obviously, if you are sending in a letter in response to a job posting, you are going to include your résumé. But in other situations, another option is to simply send a very strong letter, and leave the person wanting to see your résumé! Or if you've made a strong enough case, deciding to meet with you without ever seeing it!

This is a particularly good practice if you are writing a letter or email simply to set up a networking meeting. What message do you send that networking contact if you include a résumé? You are assuming I want to take the time to read your résumé in the first place, and you are getting our meeting off on the wrong foot even before we've sat down – now it's a meeting to "help you find a job" instead of a networking meeting. Let me specifically request a résumé if I want to see it.

A Few Other Points

Length

Typically, a cover letter shouldn't be longer than 1 page. You don't want it to look intimidating, or to lose my interest. You are trying to make this persuasive, and the longer the letter, the more likely you are to blunt your case.

Keeping to 1 page is not a hard and fast rule. If you have some important things to communicate that are going to go beyond a page, do so. But always make sure it's because the points are really important to make.

The Look

Just like the résumé, you need a strong, professional image. This is the first work product you are showing the hiring manager, and also the first example of your written communication skills. Even more so than with the résumé, grammar and spelling must be perfect – and you must use full sentences, unlike the résumé! I am going to be judging your letter very closely for evidence of your written communications skills. Have someone else proofread it for you before you send it out to make sure it's the best quality product it can be.

Cut and paste the top of your résumé – the name and address section – to create a "letterhead", and send it in on the same quality stock and color paper as your résumé, so that they look like a matched set. Never print a stock of résumés on plain copy paper – you are just throwing away money to create a product that looks cheap.

Invest in matching stationery and envelopes. And stick to light colors like off-white, beige, or light grey, unless you are applying for a highly creative position where something more 'funky' might be appropriate. Standing out is a good thing, but not if it gives an unprofessional image!

The Opening

If the letter is to apply for a specific job, instead of wasting valuable real estate in the first paragraph telling me what job it is, put that in a RE: statement above the "Dear John:"

Never open with "To Whom It May Concern" or "Dear Sir/Madam". Track down the specific person wherever possible, or address it to the position, like "Dear Human Resources Director:"

Delivery Methods

Should you send your letter via email? It depends. If you are applying to a specific position, always look at their specifications and do what they say. And if you are applying in an area where there's a clear expectation of submitting everything electronically, do so. Otherwise, I believe paper is more effective – it stands out a bit more, especially when so much communication is electronic, and looks like you've put more effort into your letter. And most importantly, you can make it look exactly the way you want them to, with bullet points, indentations, bolding, on quality paper, etc.

If you are sending something electronically, think about whether you need to put it in the body of the email vs. as an attachment. Attachments let you keep the formatting the way you want it, in a Word file or a pdf, but some companies will screen out attachments, so you need to find out their practices. And don't send your letter (or résumé) saved via Works or WordPerfect or any other word processing package, unless you know that is the package the recipient uses!

Another approach is to copy your letter as text into an email. If so, make sure to convert bullet points to, say, dashes. And in your résumé you can include a line of underline characters or equal signs to create a professional-looking section divider. Bolding or italics can be converted to all capital letters.

If you are using attachments, consider what happens when you attach both the letter and résumé as attachments. This gives up any control over whether the recipient actually opens (or prints) the letter. You could attach your résumé, and include the letter as the body of the email. Another option would be to combine the 2 documents into one electronic file, with the letter as the 1st page.

Finally, if you are sending documents out electronically, consider sending test copies to some of your friends, and have them open and print them to see if they come out the way you intend. You may need to go back and tinker with hard page breaks where you relied on blank lines to break at the right places. Often people are surprised to find that the default Word settings have created unexpected page breaks or unusual margins that spoil any professional image you are trying to create.

What If They Say – No Cover Letters?

You don't have much choice here. Unless you can find out some other way to reach out to that company or person, you are going to need to rely on your résumé to do the selling.

The Critical Thank You

You should **ALWAYS** send thank you letters or notes. This will set you apart from all those candidates who don't do that. This is your chance to put in one last sample of your work product, and to make a strong case for why you should be offered the job, or brought back for the next round.

Apply the same techniques I've discussed above, but in these you don't necessarily need to include as much "QR" as in the original cover letter. You need to have some, but you can summarize more. For a thank you after an interview, use the letter as an opportunity to mention something you forgot to talk about in the interview, or don't think was emphasized enough, in addition to reminding the interviewer why you are a strong candidate for the position. Try to include something specific to each person you interviewed with – something they emphasized more than other interviewers, or that relates to their particular area of expertise or job responsibilities, or that you discussed only with them, or a personal connection you made with them.

People sometimes ask me if it's necessary to send a thank you to all of the people they met with during the interview. Obviously, the most critical person to thank is the hiring manager. You could take an approach of writing just to him or her. By what do you risk if you do that? Presumably everyone you met with is going to have input to the decision, so don't you want all of them to have the best possible impression of you? Do you want to risk sending a signal to some of them that you are playing politics, and they weren't important enough to bother with? You could vary the length of the letters – the higher the level of the person, the more important it is that you lay out your "I See QRS" in more depth. Just be sure that when you do send them all letters, they don't look like you've just changed the name at the top of each one. Personalize them as discussed above.

And it's OK to send a thank you letter electronically when you are in a time sensitive situation – such as when they've told you they expect to make a decision in the next few days. I find that paper letters create an impression of having put in more effort, and can look more professional, so that when you can, particularly for interview situations, my strong preference is for paper.

Some people prefer to use handwritten notes. That's fine, too, **as long as you have legible, professional-looking handwriting!** Just make sure you do as described above, which may require a few drafts before you commit the thank you to your note card or stationery.

Sample Letters

Here are some sample letters for different situations. First, we have an initial cover letter in response to a job posting. I've changed some of the personal details, but this letter and résumé got Jiminy the interview.

JIMINY CRICKET

1788 White House Lane, Orlando, FL 33333
Jiminy@yahoo.com
(908) 555-1212

Human Resources Department
Treatment Consultants, Inc.
111 Water Street
Watertown, NY 11111

May 13, 2004

Dear Director of Human Resources:

I am writing to apply for the opening of Wetlands Process Engineer. I believe my experience as Wetlands Coordinator for a municipal treatment wetlands makes me an excellent fit for this position.

At the Treatment Authority I manage and monitor a 90 acre municipal treatment wetland. I am independently responsible for developing, budgeting, and implementing our water quality, vegetation, and flow monitoring program. Results have provided insight into present design and construction of an additional 450 acres. I am also working in partnership with our design team to design future treatment wetlands for the county.

I have the rigorous interdisciplinary foundation necessary for treatment wetlands engineering:

- M.S. in Environmental Engineering and B.S. in Earth Systems with a focus in Biology
- Training in design of wastewater treatment plants as well as ecology
- Extensive research experience in biogeochemistry
- Varied field and laboratory experience including Antarctica, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and UCSD.

I have excellent oral and written communication skills, particularly in technical areas. I am skilled at promoting treatment wetlands to a wide range of audiences from children to government officials to regulators. I have negotiated research partnerships that will save the County \$100,000 in laboratory services.

I am eager to join your team, and am excited about the opportunity to work with new types of treatment wetlands. Thank you for taking time to review my qualifications. I will contact you at the end of the week to discuss the next step.

Sincerely,

A thank you letter to follow up the interview for that position. Jiminy got the offer!

JIMINY CRICKET

1788 White House Lane, Orlando, FL 33333

Jiminy@yahoo.com

(908) 555-1212

Drew Barrymore
Treatment Consultants, Inc.
111 Water Street
Watertown, NY 11111

May 13, 2004

Dear Drew:

I enjoyed meeting with you on Monday. I have attached a writing sample. I also am sending this sample to Chelsea. I have a variety of writing samples of different styles if you would like to see more.

Many of the things I do in my present position are closely related to what I would be doing at Treatment Consultants:

- collecting, analyzing data and generating monthly reports.
- calculating removal efficiencies and mass loading rates and track water losses.
- planning and leading our organics sampling program throughout our potable reuse system. In this effort I have developed a research partnership with the Northwestern Indiana Water Authority. I also coordinate a research project with the CDC.

Some things I may only have touched on in our meeting are that I have experience in operations, research in our land application systems and training in GIS, PLC's and SCADA systems. I am a Florida Certified Wastewater Operator, and work in coordination with our wastewater department to monitor trends through the wastewater treatment plants and wetland facilities.

I have an extensive educational background to support my work, including an emphasis in chemistry and biogeochemistry. I have a breadth of field, laboratory, and research experiences working with nutrients, trace organics, stable isotopes, and biomarkers. I have excellent writing and oral presentation skills. I am accustomed to promoting treatment wetlands to a wide range of audiences from children to government officials to regulators.

I really enjoyed our conversations and could see myself fitting in very well with Treatment Consultants. Thank you again for your time on Monday.

Sincerely,

A 'cold call' cover letter. Jane sent this to 9 Senior Analysts, out of which she got 3 formal interviews and 2 informational interviews. And one of those resulted in the job offer she wanted!

Jane Researcher

25 Home Way, Somerville, NJ 08876

Jane@yahoo.com

(908) 555-1212

Laura Analyst
Senior Analyst
Goldman Sachs
New York, NY 10021

June 15, 2005

Dear Ms. Analyst:

I have been following your team's research and participating in XYZ's quarterly earnings calls for some time and I am impressed with the quality of your work. My objective is to transition into a mid-level research role in your team, focusing on the IT Hardware sector. I believe that my depth of experience in financial modeling, M&A analysis and execution, and deep understanding of the overall IT market landscape position me to hit the ground running in Goldman Sachs' research team.

In my 5 years in the XYZ Finance organization, I have:

- Identified various acquisition and divestiture targets
- Projected the future profit and loss, balance sheet, and cash flow from potential acquisitions
- Executed transactions ranging in size from \$10M to \$2B
- Developed my expertise in operations and management serving as a controller of expenses
- Increased the Server Group's bottom-line by conducting ad-hoc analyses and advising the division CFO

I have been recognized for my ability to consistently deliver strong results and go beyond my job responsibilities to contribute to the team. For example, while monitoring the performance of XYZ's business partners, I noticed a trend where the partners' stock price moved up following the partnership. In order to prove this theory, I performed a regression analysis on the stock prices of 30 of XYZ's partners and concluded that a partnership with XYZ leads to a 12% sustained stock price increase. I proposed to management that we capitalize on this phenomenon by asking for stock when negotiating future partnership agreements. Since then, XYZ has been receiving stock for almost every partnership deal. The sale of these stocks generates extra value for the corporation.

I would like to meet you in person to discuss what I can add to your operations. I will contact you at the end of the week to set up an appointment. Thank you for taking time to review my qualifications.

Sincerely,

A thank you letter for a successful networking meeting, where the contact offered to check into opportunities.

Jim Actuary

325 Commons Way, Somerville, MA 02377

Jim@aol.com

(345) 555-1212

Hi Officer
Executive Vice President
Leading Life Insurance Company
Boston, MA 03333

August 8, 2005

Dear Hi,

Thanks for your time on Monday.

As we discussed, in addition to my deep experience in RBC and reserving, I have a breadth of experience in a variety of functions ranging from pricing and product development to financial reporting and Asset Adequacy Analysis. My experience spans life, annuity, and long-term care products. A project that I am particularly proud of is the work I did to re-design the company-wide Pricing Manual. This became a critical tool for guiding the pricing in all product areas and included recommendations on how to apply up-to-date Risk Based Capital formulas. The places where I think I could add the most value are:

- A senior corporate role providing strategic analysis and detailed guidance on financial product and pricing issues, or
- A direct contributor in a pricing/product development operation.

I have attached my résumé and I appreciate your effort to make some calls on my behalf. I will follow up with you at the end of next week.

Regards,

Jim

And finally, an interview follow up "Why not just hire me?" letter.

Bruce Gates

225 Lonely Lady Ave., Seattle, WA 01122

(312) 545-3212 Bruce@msn.com

Joe Joseph
Director of Operations
Prime Operators, Inc.
15 Windy Willow Way
Seattle, WA 01222

Dear Joe:

I understand you are seeking candidates with current ITIL experience. What I don't think you will find is the broad and diverse background that I can bring to this role; this isn't something typical in candidates with a traditional IT career.

I have taken on a wide array of high-tech consulting assignments and senior management positions, in sales, engineering and operations, and have a track record of moving organizations to the next level. For example:

(Include example bullets here)

I would expect to produce similar results for the Enterprise Operation Center.

Jim indicated he has struggled with inadequate handoffs from the service development organization, both from missing operational features in the software and from undocumented methods and procedures. Having QA within your organization may help, but I consider that a band aid. The only lasting remedy is to make these operational (and customer service) requirements an integral part of the service development process going forward. I speak the language of the software developers and I can help make this happen.

I also bring some "extras" should prove valuable for the future. First, I excel at helping cross-organizational, multi-location (and sometimes multi-national) teams to collaborate in achieving profitable results. Second, I know how to navigate international operations and cultures, having lived in Japan and done business in countries around the world.

Joe, I am excited about this role. I will bring a fresh point of view and make things happen. Why don't we save you some trouble by signing me up tomorrow?

Sincerely,

In Closing

You have learned in this workbook how to:

- Create a compelling accomplishment story that grab the listener's attention, and creates visibility and influence,
- Prepare a killer résumé that clearly answers the 3 key questions in a hiring manager's mind, and
- Craft a powerful cover letter that gets people interested in reading your résumé, in meeting with you, or in making you the job offer.

I would love to hear from you about your successes in applying the principles in this course. I also welcome any feedback about how I might enhance this product for future editions, other resources I might provide, questions, etc. You can contact me at:

John Hadley Associates
8 Lori Drive, Somerville, NJ 08876
(908) 725-2437 John@JHACareers.com

And don't forget to visit my website from time to time for additional resources. I update it regularly to include additional articles, and to announce upcoming tele-classes and other new resources I'm offering.



John West Hadley, FSA

Career Search and Career Enhancement Counselor

"Partnering With You In Your Career"

Find Career Resources at www.JHACareers.com

October, 2005