



## **Career Development Office Cover Letter Workshop Outline**

### **What is a cover letter?**

A cover letter is your best sales pitch to a captive audience on why you should be strongly considered for the position.

### **What should the cover letter say?**

A cover letter provides information that supplements and enhances the resume, while incorporating and demonstrating how you possess the essential skills of the desired position. It should be thoughtful, well-written, unique, and free of typographical errors.

A cover letter is not a resume, or resume substitute; rather, the cover letter is your opening and closing argument as to who you are, your particular skills, how they translate to the position applied for, and why you should be interviewed.

### **What should a cover letter not say?**

A cover letter **should not** be a restatement of your resume, as your time before the hiring manager at this stage of the process is limited, and redundancy can lead to a missed opportunity to give context to existing skills, highlight other skills you have, or project similar skills to stated job functions. It should also not contain outlandish or unsubstantiated claims that you cannot readily support with facts, profanity, slang, unexplained industry jargon, or typographical errors. Furthermore, avoid using language that is commonly found on cover letters, as the more canned a cover letter appears, the less impact it will have.

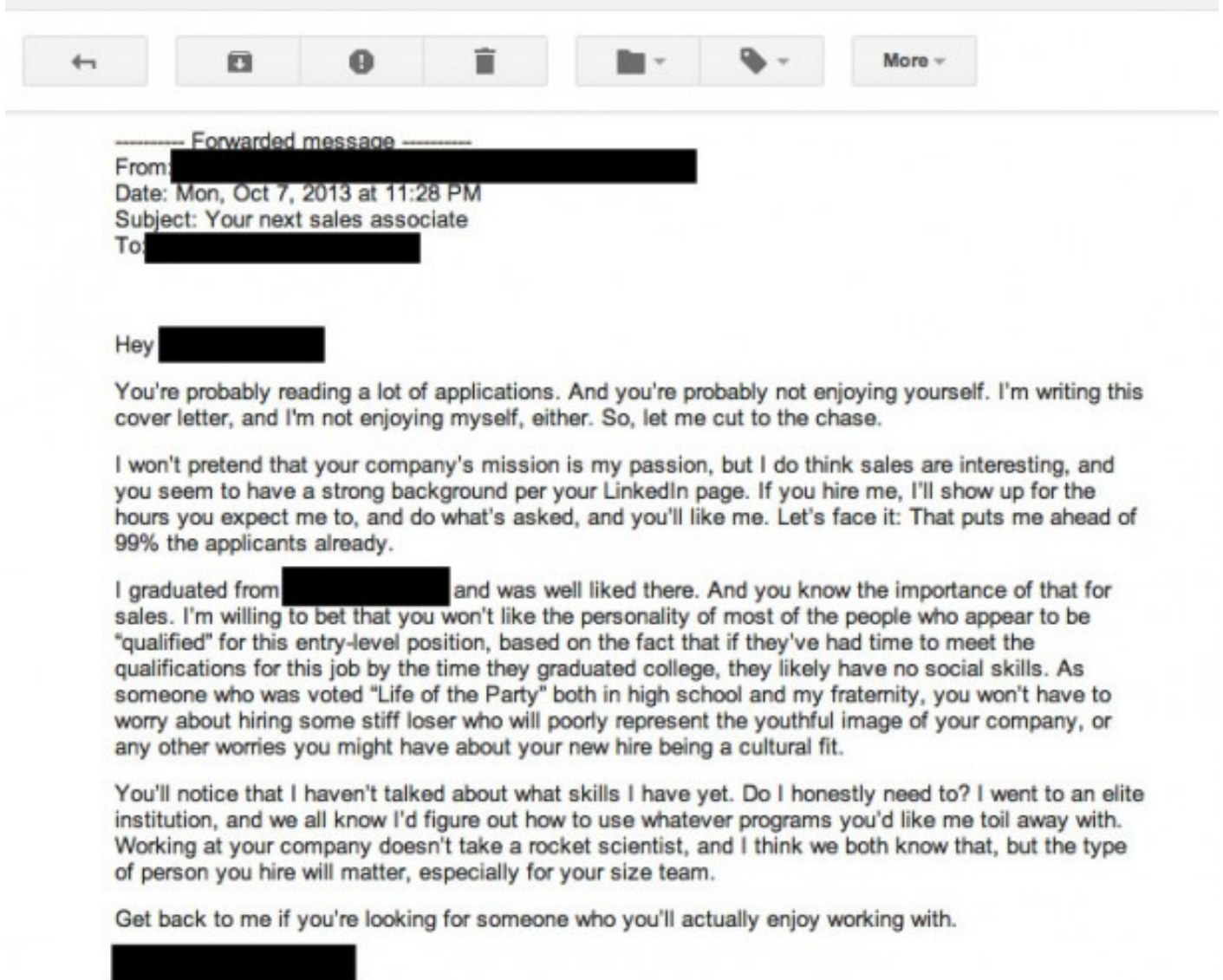
### **What must a cover letter include?**

***There is no perfect cover letter.*** Different people and employers have different tastes, so the pursuit of the perfect cover letter is an exercise in futility. Rather, do your homework (researching the employer, hiring manager, position, and potential interviewers), know your audience, and write the strongest cover letter you can with the information at your disposal, following the rubric below as a guide:

- List the date, and in the addressee section of a cover letter, include as much information about the employer as is readily available, including the recipient's name, title, department, employer, and address.
- Begin with, "Dear" either specific name of the intended recipient, or "Sir or Madam"; do not use, "To whom it may concern," as that is too vague and too disinterested of an opening.
- You must also state the exact name of the position for which you wish to apply, again to avoid the resume appearing to be a one-size-fits-all.
- In the first paragraph, you should introduce yourself, specifically identify the position for which you are applying, how you learned of the job, and a quick summation of why you are a great fit.
- The second paragraph should include your strongest argument as to how you meet or exceed the requirements of the position – lead with your strongest punch! Detailing on-point experience, telling a compelling personal (but not too personal) story, or highlighting a strong academic record are great ways to achieve this objective.

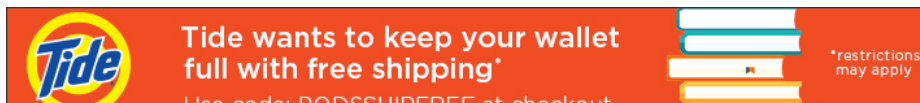
- The third paragraph of the cover letter can include additional details regarding your overall preparedness for the position, describe your relevant education and training, or simply provide greater depth on certain areas of your resume.
- The final paragraph should summarize the cover letter, reiterate your confidence in your ability to perform the functions of the position, and request an interview.
- Skip two lines from the last paragraph, end the cover letter with “Sincerely,” skip four lines, and type your name. Just above your typed name, sign the cover letter!

Below is a funny example of what ***NOT to do*** when writing a cover letter:



Below is an example of what ***to do*** when writing a cover letter:

Career Development Office  
 Atlanta's John Marshall Law School  
 1422 W Peachtree Street NW  
 Atlanta, Georgia 30309  
 Phone: (678) 916-2611  
 Email: njones@johnmarshall.edu



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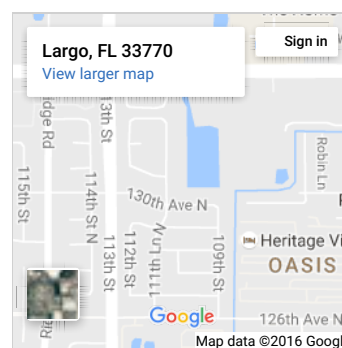
**Legal Intern**  
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### Legal Intern

Weylie Centonzio PLLC  
8240 118th Avenue North  
Largo, FL  
Posted: June 23 2016



**Application Deadline:** Available Year-round  
**Position:** Part-time, Unpaid

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### Description

Weylie Centonzio, PLLC is a full service law firm with its main office in Largo, Florida. We are seeking a part-time intern to assist in the areas of Immigration Law, Personal Injury Law, Estate Planning, Probate, Elder Law and Real Estate Law. Qualified applicants should have an interest in the legal profession and be reliable and hard working.

### Responsibilities

- Drafting memoranda addressing the merits of a case
- Scan and File Legal Documents
- Respond to Discovery
- Organize Files
- Organize Demand Packages
- Perform Legal Research
- Set Hearings

### Requirements

- Computer proficiency with Westlaw, Microsoft Office, Microsoft Outlook and Microsoft - Excel.
- Strong research and writing skills.
- Excellent organization skills and attention to detail orientation.
- Demonstrated work ethic and goal-oriented.
- Ability to prioritize and complete multiple projects in a timely manner.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, critical thinker, leader, team player, and self-managed learner.

- Ability to maintain confidential company information in the strictest of confidence.

## Skills

**Required** - Microsoft Word, Microsoft Office, Microsoft Outlook  
**Preferred** - Bilingual-Spanish

## How To Apply

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December 5, 2017

Javier Centonzo, Esq.  
Partner  
Weylie Centonzo PLLC  
8240 118th Avenue North  
Largo, Florida 33770

Dear Attorney Centonzo:

Please accept this cover letter and enclosed resume in application for the part-time intern position I viewed on internships.com. I am currently a third-year student at the University College of Law, and am enthused about the prospect of interning with your office. This position represents an excellent opportunity to expand my practical legal knowledge while meaningfully contributing to the continued success of your firm.

Last summer, I interned with a solo practitioner in New York City, and her first words of advice to me were that while good things may come to those who wait, better things lie in store for those who act. Because the position immersed me into an environment where I was required to be an independent self-starter who managed projects with minimal supervision, her words resounded with me, and I have since adopted them as my own. Throughout the course of the summer, I improved my legal research and writing skills by assisting with the drafting of documents submitted to the New York Court System on the trial and appellate levels, and gained increased confidence in my abilities to work independently, and as a collective unit.

Prior to the internship described above, I served as a paralegal at a busy boutique law firm in Miami, Florida. There, I gained extensive experience with client file and case management, drafting and filing pleadings, correspondence with court personnel and opposing counsel, and the operation of various data management systems. I became adept at receiving, reviewing, and timely responding to discovery requests, in addition to coordinating and setting hearings with opposing counsel and judicial assistants. Being the only Spanish speaker in the office allowed me to translate documents from Spanish to English, in addition to facilitating in-person and telephonic interactions between the attorneys and our clients. Ultimately, the position fostered my development of strong skills in interpersonal communication, research, writing, prioritization of tasks, organization, and attention to detail. The attorneys delegated some supervisory responsibilities to me, which increased my comfort with giving directives and taking the lead on projects.

I am confident that the breadth of my experience portends a mild learning curve to the nuances of your office, while I provide immediate returns on your investment in me.

In light of the above, I would like to request an interview to further discuss my qualifications for this position. Should additional information be required, please feel free to contact me by telephone at (404) 111-1111, or email at [stuart1.dent@student.edu](mailto:stuart1.dent@student.edu).

Thank you for your time and consideration, Attorney Centonzo.

Sincerely,

/s/ Stu Dent  
Stu Dent

Career Development Office Atlanta's John Marshall Law School 1422 W Peachtree Street NW Atlanta, Georgia 30309 Phone: (678) 916-2611 Email: <a href="mailto:njones@johnmarshall.edu">njones@johnmarshall.edu</a>
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The Career Development Office is always happy to assist students and alumni with cover letter and resume editing and writing, so please contact us for additional assistance!

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Atlanta's John Marshall Law School  
1422 W Peachtree Street NW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309  
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