

# Treena Elliott

## RÉSUMÉ TRANSFORMATIONS

### COVER LETTER TIPS

#### 1. DO I NEED ONE?

If you are applying for a role and it doesn't ask for a cover letter AND it is very obvious you're qualified for the role then you can leave out a cover letter. And if you know with absolute certainty that cover letters are NEVER used in your industry then you can forgo a cover letter. If you want to add context to your resume and share a story or two about your experience that is relevant, then you should write a cover letter. When written with intention they can be an excellent complement to your resume.

#### 2. DON'T START WITH YOU

Before you start talking about yourself and why you're great. Acknowledge to the reader that this cover letter is for them at their company. I love the quote by Dale Carnegie "Remember that a person's name is to that person, the sweetest and most important sound in any language".

#### 3. WHY

A cover letter is a great opportunity to explain why you're applying to this particular role at this particular point in your career. Connect the dots that might not be obvious on your resume. Explain to the reader why you're applying to the role if you live in another city, province, or country. Take the guesswork out.

#### 4. LENGTH

Under no circumstances should your cover letter be over a page (unless you've been instructed to write an essay of a particular length but then that's not a cover letter 😊). It should fit nicely on the page with white space and paragraphs, so the reader isn't slapped in the face with an uninviting brick wall of text.

#### 5. CONTENT

A cover letter should be thought of as a storytelling tool. The bulk of the cover letter, roughly 3 paragraphs, should discuss a couple of interesting anecdotes from your professional career that highlight what you bring to the table. The most effective and direct way of doing this is by applying the STAR method which is an acronym for Situation, Task, Activity, and Result.

#### 6. DON'T RETELL YOUR RESUME

A lot of cover letters I read are just a letter version of a resume.

*You'll see on my resume I was with employer x for y years in role z and then went on to ABC to do EFG. I graduated from the university of HIJ, etc.*

Don't do this. Take this opportunity to illustrate the mechanics of how you and your team reached an achievement you mentioned on your resume.

#### 7. THANK YOU

Write this like a true letter and thank the person for reading it at the top and end of the letter. And remember to call them to action. For example: *Thank you so much for taking the time to read this cover letter and review my accompanying resume. I look forward to learning more about this opportunity and discussing how my skills might add to your team and its success.*

#### 8. AUTHENTICITY

Every once and a while, I have a client that thinks I'm going to write their entire cover letter for them. But this is impossible. I need to know the story you want to tell, and it needs to sound like you. I can help with all of it. But it still needs to feel authentic. Authenticity is key across all documents. If a cover letter is a generic regurgitation of your resume, it just won't get read.