

* Hopefully, no one reading my column this month is unemployed. But since we are in a recession, you probably know someone who is unemployed and if so, please share my column with them.



RUSHMORE

THE ULTIMATE COVER LETTER

It's been said that when you know someone who becomes unemployed, it's a recession. When you become unemployed, it's a depression. Unfortunately, in today's down cycle, too many people are unemployed. In addition, students graduating from schools also face a very difficult job market.

Finding a job can be challenging. It takes drive, perseverance, creativity and luck. What doesn't take luck is putting together a great cover letter and resume that grabs the attention of the reader and leads to an interview.

Since getting into the door for an interview is half the battle, let's look at what goes into a great cover letter. In my position as president of HVS, I receive five to 10 resumes a week from applicants interested in joining my firm. Most resumes are accompanied by a cover letter

ences particularly in areas such as consulting, marketing, interior design, finance or really any hospitality related project where I can be an active participant.

I think the best experience I could get would be working with true professionals from a major consulting group such as HVS.

I strongly believe that working for HVS will provide me an excellent step forward toward my future hospitality career.

Sincerely,
John Doe

Notes on the Worst

- If you don't have an actual name, don't send the resume. If in doubt, send it to the president of the company.
- You need to focus on what you can do for the employer. How can the employer benefit by hiring you.
- The applicant is interested in too many areas and shows no focus, unique expertise or experience.

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introducing the applicant and providing a brief overview of the position being sought and the person's qualifications. Only about one out of 100 cover letters I receive is written in a manner that piques my interest enough to respond. The other 99 are uninteresting, boring, self-serving and provide no meaningful information.

To provide an idea of what I'm talking about, I have gone through my files and found what I consider to be one of the best and one of the worst cover letters I've ever received.

THE WORST

Dear Madam, Dear Sir

My wish to succeed in my future professional career brings me to send you my resume. I am looking for an opportunity where I can apply my academic skills to the day-to-day business issues in the hospitality environment.

I am interested in a consulting position that will give me more exposure to clients and real-world experi-

• There is no way to determine whether the applicant is qualified; no background information on past work experience is included.

• Most importantly, the letter does not convince me the writer has a burning desire to work for HVS.

THE BEST

Dear Mr. Rushmore:

During my last three years of college, I've developed a strong interest in working for HVS. Your Hotel Valuations book is like a bible to me, so I am applying for an analyst position in your New York office.

I have worked as a hotel analyst for one of the largest hotel companies in Thailand. I also was an assistant front-desk manager at a five-star hotel in Dallas. As a result, I have an in-depth knowledge of the hotel industry in both financial and operational aspects. I am hardworking, hands-on, detail oriented and a quick learner with strong analytical skills. I possess the highest degree in integrity and work ethics. I am an exceptional

team player, and at the same time, I can work well independently.

In today's economy you are probably not looking for new analysts, but please give me an opportunity

to demonstrate how my drive and ambition can help HVS. I am flexible; I can work either part-time or on a sub-contracting basis. I believe my qualifications, experiences, capabilities and true passion to be part of HVS will assist you more than you can imagine. If you give me a chance, I will not disappoint you and you will not regret hiring me.

Mr. Rushmore, please take a look at my resume. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,
John Doe

Notes on the Worst

- The applicant obviously did research and successfully caught my attention in the first paragraph with some well directed flattery.
- Provided concise employment history and tied it to the qualifications necessary for the position.
- Good outline of personal skills that would be useful for me: quick learner, analytical, highest degree of integrity, team player.
- The writer ends by showing his willingness to be flexible on his hours and compensation along with showing a burning desire to be part of HVS. The real grabber is the last sentence, "If you give me a chance I will not disappoint you and you will not regret hiring me."

* **Stephen Rushmore** is president and founder of HVS, a global hospitality consulting organization with offices around the world. Steve has provided consultation services for more than 12,000 hotels throughout the world during his 35-year career and specializes in complex issues involving hotel feasibility, valuations, and financing. He can be reached at srushmore@hvs.com or 516 248-8828 ext. 204.