

Do YOU make this cover letter mistake?

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Dear Job-Hunter:

Everyone enjoys a word of endearment. *Dear* Hiring Manager can be a warm and friendly way to start a cover letter to a prospective employer. However, there is nothing as near and dear to one's ear—and heart—as **the sound of one's name**. So from now on use the personal touch when you greet the person you're writing to. This is the fastest way to bring your cover letter to the top of the mail pile.

Which of the following greetings is most effective?

Example #1:

Dear Ms. Allen
Dear John Smith
Dear Mrs. Preston

Example #2:

Dear Hiring Manager
Dear HR Director
Dear Personnel Supervisor

Example #3:

To whom it may concern

Clearly, the best of the three examples is the one with the individuals' names. But if you don't have a specific name, then address the man or woman by a company title. Example #3 is of no concern because it doesn't concern anyone in particular! *Never* use this greeting. It lacks care, warmth, and professionalism. Take time to find out the name of the employer you wish to reach (call the company or check the web site for that information) and then use this little-known secret—*greeting him or her by a first name*.

One More Secret—To Use In Case Of Emergency!

If you cannot get a specific name, use one of the greetings in Example #2 and add this personal note.

PLEASE NOTE: I apologize for not addressing you by name. I was unable to get this information online or by phone. I'm very interested in the position of [insert job title here] and I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you in person for an interview.

Such a message would surely motivate him or her to call you for an interview. This 'secret' alone turns a negative into a positive that will work for you. So before you write your next cover letter, ask yourself this important question: Who will want to hear what I have to say? Then find out that name and write a great cover letter starting with 'Dear.'

Jimmy Sweeney is the president of CareerJimmy and author of several career related books and writes a monthly article titled, "Job Search Secrets." Visit our friends at Amazing Cover Letters for your "instant cover letter today: <http://www.resumebycprw.com/cover-letter.htm>. "In just 3½ minutes you will have an amazing cover letter guaranteed to cut through YOUR competition like a hot knife through butter!"

