

# GET THE JOB

## Personalize Your Cover Letter

The last thing you want to do with a cover letter is to start it with “To Whom It Concerns” or “Dear Hiring Manager.” It is impersonal, archaic and shows a lack of research. If you cannot find a name, it is better to leave off the salutation, especially when sending your cover letter as an email.

Be formal in your cover letter unless you know that the company’s culture is casual. When possible, use a courtesy title such as “Mr.,” “Ms.” (not Miss or Mrs.) or Dr. However, if you aren’t sure of the person’s gender, it is better to use just a first and last name than to misgender a person.

If the job posting contains a name, that is the one you will want to use. However, sometimes an organization will not include a name to protect their employees from spam. The best person to address a cover letter to is a hiring manager. However, if you cannot find the name of that person, look



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for the head of the department for the position you are applying for. You are always better off addressing a letter higher up than necessary.

### **SEARCH THE WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

Start with a company’s web-

site. Look for the “About Us,” “Staff” or “Directory” pages and search those for the appropriate person’s name.

If you cannot find it there, try searching social media. LinkedIn is usually your best resource. Search for the company and it will return a list of

people who have that company in their profile. Look for the appropriate title and make sure that they are still with the company you are applying for.

Other social media may also help you find the information you need. Try searching for the company or using hashtags to

find people who make posts as a member of the organization.

If you cannot find the person you are looking for, consider sending a short, polite message to someone who is with the company and asking them the name of the hiring manager. It may also open an opportunity to network with them and learn more about the company.

### **CALL THE ORGANIZATION**

In the days before the internet, people would learn names by calling the organization directly. If you can get through to a person, a receptionist or secretary can often provide you with the name that you need. Be sure to ask how the person’s name is spelled and what pronouns the person uses so you can properly address your cover letter.

### **READ NEWS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION**

You’ll want to research an organization before you apply for a job so use that research to also try to find the name of the hiring manager or department manager. Google the name of the organization and read news about them. You may find articles in mainstream media, trade publications or in press release sites. If it is a local organization with its headquarters in your town, check out the archives of your local newspaper.