

Writing a Pain Letter: How to Craft a Solid Cover Letter

A Pain Letter is the modern answer to a cover letter. A cover letter is a simple, concise and formal letter that you send with your resume when applying for a job. It can help your resume to get noticed, is vital in creating a good first impression and can be a key factor in getting you invited to a job interview.

Its aim is to build on the information you provide in your resume, and it must make sufficient impact on the reader to make them want to know more about you. It is a socially acceptable way of introducing yourself and explaining which vacancy you're applying for or which area you are enquiring about.

It gives a personal touch to your job application which your resume cannot do, and is an ideal opportunity to match your skills and experience to those on the job specification. In essence a cover letter gives you the chance to express all those things that do not comfortably fit into a resume's rigid structure. Therefore it should express a high level of interest and knowledge about the position, and be used to promote you as a person, your achievements and your personal qualities.

Apart from demonstrating your communication skills and thereby setting you apart from other applicants, they can be used to:

- Highlight information that is not given in your CV.
- Convince the employer of your enthusiasm.
- Explain special circumstances as to why you are suitable for the role.
- Reaffirm your Unique Selling Point.
- Explain any anomalies, like career gaps in your resume and application.
- Compliment a potential employer on their brand or reputation or perhaps on the launching of a new product or service that has greatly impressed you.

When you write a pain letter you are talking to the hiring manager about his or her Business Pain. If there were no pain, there wouldn't be a job opening! You can typically find the hiring manager's name on LinkedIn, the employer's own website or even Google. If you can't find it anywhere it is fine to simply begin your letter with "Dear Hiring Manager." Your letter should be no more than one page in length.

There are four parts to a Pain Letter: the Hook, the Pain Hypothesis, the Dragon-Slaying Story and the Closing.

The Hook: Congratulate the company on a recent achievement, award, or expansion. Show you've done some research on the company. Acknowledge any noteworthy work the company does and how important what they offer is to the community.

The Pain Hypothesis: Identify what challenges the company might be facing by not having someone working in the position your applying for.

The Dragon-Slaying Story: Explain how you've faced challenges like the ones the company you're applying to might face and how you overcame them. This is the time to show how skills from a current or previous job have helped you in situations similar to what you might encounter with the company you're writing to.

The Closing: Reiterate the bottom line of what you bring to the table and finish off with the indication of wanting to meet with them and learn more about the organization.

Here's a sample Pain Letter:

Dear Margaret,

Congratulations to you and the team at Acme Explosives on winning SoCal Business's Fastest-Growing Companies award! That's a feather in your cap, and tremendous affirmation from the marketplace. *(That's the hook – short and sweet.)*

I can only imagine that given Acme's rate of growth, your Marketing team is right up against the wall. *(There's your Pain Hypothesis!)*

When I ran Marketing projects for Angry Chocolates during its run-up from \$10M to \$45M in sales, just before its acquisition by Nestle, we were in a similar spot. We had to keep our loyal domestic customers happy while launching an international sales effort and an ecommerce business at the same time. We made it work somehow and grew sales from \$10M to \$27M in one year. *(That's your Dragon-Slaying Story. It shows how you've solved a similar Business Pain in the past.)*

If you've got a need for marketing project management and a minute to chat I'd love to learn more about Acme and share a bit of my story with you. *(That's your Closing.)*

Best Regards,

Phil Brooks

Sample Pain Letter 2:

Jane Doe

123 Sunny Dr. Place, TX 45678
123.456.7890 ♦ janedoe@email.com

Date

John Woods
Senior Manager
North Park Mall
987 Mall Rd.
Place, TX 90123

Dear Mr. Woods,

Congratulations on opening a store in the North Park Mall. Although the expansion of xxx is exciting, it must be challenging to hire and train the staff in Dallas. (*The Hook and Pain Hypothesis*)

When I was hired and trained as a member of the staff that opened the xxx store in Marlton, I learned the products and options so quickly that I became a reference for the other trainees. I am currently a FT sales associate in that store reporting to xx and xx. (*The Dragon-Slaying Story*)

I would like to bring my tremendous product knowledge, strong operational abilities, and passion for selling to the new Dallas store. If this warrants a conversation, my contact details are on my resume. (*The Closing*)

Kind Regards,

Jane Doe

Sample Pain Letter 3:

Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone Number
Email

Date

Name of Hiring Manager (if you have it)
Job Title (if you have it)
Company
Company Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Hiring Manager,

It is with great enthusiasm that I submit my application for the position of Sales Coordinator for the Westeros Castle Project. As an administrative professional with over ten years' experience, I know my diverse skills and qualifications will make me an asset to the Westeros project team.

As you will see from the attached resume, I've built my career in a variety of roles and industries, mostly in small companies where I was not just the admin but also gatekeeper, technology whiz, bookkeeper and marketing guru. I'm not only used to wearing many hats, I sincerely enjoy it; I thrive in an environment where no two work days are exactly the same.

In addition to being flexible and responsive, I'm also a fanatic for details – particularly when it comes to presentation. One of my recent projects involved coordinating a 200-page grant proposal: I proofed and edited the narratives provided by the division head, formatted spreadsheets, and generally made sure every line was letter-perfect and that the entire finished product conformed to the specific guidelines of the RFP. (The result? A five-year, \$1.5 million grant award.) I believe in applying this same level of attention to detail to tasks as visible as prepping the materials for a top-level meeting and as mundane as making sure the copier never runs out of paper. (*The Dragon-Slaying Story*)

Last but certainly not least, I want you to know that I'm a passionate Westeros fan and a longtime supporter of the new castle. I've been following the new castle movement since the earliest days of the original "Save the Tombs" campaign, and I am so excited to see this vision becoming a reality. I've already checked out the new castle website, and the renderings of the new throne and great hall are stunning, to say the least – I particularly love the vintage murals and art featured throughout the building. Nice touch! (*The Hook*)

In closing, I am thrilled at the possibility of being involved in the new castle almost literally from the ground up, and would love the opportunity to meet with you and discuss the value that I can

bring to the Targaryen organization and the Westeros Castle Project. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to hearing from you. (*The Closing*)

Warmest regards,

Your Name