

NJ Chapter

NEWS

FOURTH QUARTER 2005

Avoid the Three Top Cover Letter Mistakes!

by Deborah Walker, CCMC

As a career coach and professional resume writer, I'm often asked: "How important are cover letters to my job search?" My answer is, "It depends on how long you want to search for your next job." If you are in no hurry to get interviews, then don't worry about your cover letter.

The whole point of sending out resumes is to get multiple interviews as quickly as possible. But many job seekers unwittingly sabotage their efforts by neglecting to use a cover letter or using a standard one. Here are the three cover letter mistakes that trigger a long search:

1. Not understanding the hiring motives of your resume audiences:

There are three basic audiences with their own search agenda:

- **Executive decision-makers:** Seek candidates who will have had a significant impact on bottom-line (i.e. revenue generators)
- **Resume screeners:** Seek candidates who directly match the qualifications in the job description.
- **Third-party recruiters:** Seek selling points in your resume that will help them position you as a top candidate.

By knowing these motives you can craft your cover letter accordingly, create an immediate bond with the reader thereby strengthening your candidacy.



2. Repeating, rather than introducing your resume

No one wants to read the same thing twice. Your cover letter should sell the reader on your skills and encourage them to read more. Take the time to identify those skills, determine what you can do for the company, and craft statements that you can incorporate in to your letter.

3. Overuse of the word "I"

A cover letter that begins nearly every sentence with "I" is as boring as a conversation with someone who only talks about himself. From the employer's perspective it can reflect lack of interest in the company or in the job you're applying for.

Try to rewrite sentences that start with "I," "me," or "my," to start with "You," or "Your." Show how you are not just interested in getting the job, but making a difference for them should you be hired.

A cover letter that is poorly written may cause your resume to be ignored. But a well-crafted cover one will invite and encourage the reader to take a closer look at your resume. Upside is that you'll make a positive first impression before your resume is even opened.

Similarly, if your resume isn't winning you job interviews, consider hiring a professional resume writer to help. Remember that you never get a second chance to make a good first impression.

For resume examples visit www.AlphaAdvantage.com. To reach Deborah, or get copies of the article, write to email: Deb@AlphaAdvantage.com



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Good Wine, Good Food, Good Friends and a Good Cause

by Jeff Sampson



For those brave souls who ventured out in torrential rains on September 9 to sample the unique fine wines of one of the very few black-owned vineyards in Napa Valley, CA. the evening was well worth the trip. The more than seventy wine lovers (and teetotalers) who attended the Black MBA New Jersey Chapter's 5th Annual Wine Tasting at the Montclair Museum, had an opportunity to mingle with friends and colleagues while sampling select wine and food pairings... all for a good cause.

Several thousand dollars was raised to support the student scholarship fund through ticket sales and a portion of the wine sales made during the evening. The NJ Chapter distributes scholarships each year to a handful of deserving high school students planning to attend college.

This year's event was unique because the tasting focused solely on the select wines from the Brown Estate; a black owned vineyard in Napa Valley, California. "The wine tasting event has always been one our premier fund raisers," said Melody Carter, Events Chairman of the NJ Chapter. "This year we wanted to expose our members to a successful black-owned vineyard and the Brown Estate is one of the finest vineyards in all of Napa."

Special thanks to event sponsors Verizon Wireless, CR Bard and The New York Times for lending support to this worthy event. Select Wines, LLC, presented the evening's featured wines.

For information about upcoming NJ Chapter Events, visit www.nbmbaa-newjersey.org

Are you a business professional or student? Then you would benefit from membership!

Here's how to join:

- **Fill out an application online at:** www.nbmbaa-newjersey.org or
- **Call our Hotline: 732-246-2878 (mailbox #2), or**
- **Come to an event and speak to Brad Neilley, Membership Chair, or another NJ Chapter member**

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Financial Advice with a Fashion Flair

Reported by Cathy McBarnette-Neilley

The finery at Short Hills provided a powerful incentive to set up a financial plan when the NJ Chapter held its October Professional Development meeting at Neiman Marcus on October 19. The program included an investment seminar with an offer for a free personal investment assessment, followed by a fashion show of the latest men's and women's apparel and accessories.

Catch an upcoming Professional Development Meeting. Visit the Chapter web site at www.nbmbaa-newjersey.org



From Left: Jim Hunt and Jerald Chambers of Northwestern Mutual with Perter Moroni of the Russell Financial Group.

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