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## CollegeRecruiter.com Insights by Career Counselors Blog

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## Stand Out from the Crowd

We've already learned that most employers and recruiters want to see a cover letter with a candidate's resume. We also learned that they want an original, attention-grabbing introduction to the recent college graduate looking who's looking for an [entry-level job](#).

So, what stands out for them, you'd like to know? When I posed that question to my eclectic group of career experts, here's what they had to say:

"Accomplishments using quantitative and qualitative information stand out to me," says Carly Drum, managing director for [Drum Associates](#). "It draws the reader's eye to those areas and sells the candidate."

"The opening line," says Michelle Tillis Lederman, founder of [Executive Essentials](#). "How are they grabbing my attention? Those that indicate a true passion, personality, or connection often are the most memorable. I also notice the quality of the writing."

Tom Ruff, founder of the [Tom Ruff Company](#), wants to see "uniqueness, creativity, and someone that is truly different than everyone else. I love renegades." **Note:** Ruff doesn't read cover letters as a rule, so if he takes the time to read yours, you'll want to make sure it's a good read.

[Spherion](#) branch manager, Carol McLaughlin looks for "informational statements which are short, clear and to-the-point."

"The more closely candidates can identify and address the needs of the 'target audience' (the hiring company)," says HR expert, [Linda Pophal](#), "and write a 'cover letter' and resume to specifically address those needs, the more they'll stand out as a viable candidate."

What stands out for [WAVES for Success](#) creator, Ken Whiting? Besides the usual interest in practical experience gained through work, [internships](#) and extracurricular activities like clubs and volunteer work, Whiting also looks for evidence of the candidates "leadership skills and increased responsibility within these activities. So many young people do not have practical work experience or understand work ethics," Whiting laments.

For [Susan Peppercom](#), founder and CEO of Inspiring Career, a cover letter that conveys "how the applicant can contribute to the company/position they are applying for," really stands out in a positive way.

Steven Himmelrich of [Himmelrich Public Relations](#), who "won't even consider a candidate who does not include a cover letter" with his/her resume, wants to see that the candidate can indicate in the letter that "he/she knows what we do and makes a connection to his/her experience. I am quicker to dismiss a candidate if the letter is clearly 'canned' and sent with every resume."

And finally, Dr. Rachele Canter, president of [RJC Associates](#) offers two tips for [job seekers](#) who really want their resumes to get noticed.

"Tip #1: The centerpiece of a strong resume at any age is quantified contributions or results. Since the best predictor of future performance is past performance, accomplishments give a prospective employer a good way to differentiate candidates. For example, I worked with one new college grad who had been a business manager at his fraternity and oversaw a small building project. He'd also worked as a summer camp counselor and had taught classes in sailing to over 100 kids in a summer. Both were rich sources of accomplishment that helped him land his first [job](#)."

Tip #2: Specific quantified accomplishments, from [part-time jobs to summer jobs](#) to [internships](#) -- even club or extracurricular accomplishments -- are the most powerful way to create your first (or any!) resume. For example, [internships](#) give college students a rich source of quantified contributions and accomplishments to showcase in their resumes, another way to differentiate themselves from the competition. Workplace experience shows that a college student can work successfully out of the classroom and is a better bet as a new hire."

Again, we have learned that there's some consistency in what recruiters and hiring managers want from the recent college graduates applying for [entry-level employment](#) with their companies. For the most part, they want to see cover letters; and they want those letters to say something meaningful about the candidates and what they have to offer the companies and the positions. More than one career expert has said that looking for a job is a [job](#) in itself. Well, writing a dynamite resume and cover letter is part of your job description.

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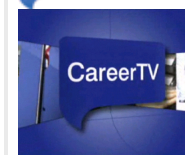
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