

Addressing Correspondence in Your Job Search

Here are some simple rules to follow as you're writing letters in your job search:

1. Whenever a name is given, use the name rather than a generic "Dear Hiring Manager".
2. If you know the person holds a doctorate, use the salutation "Dr."
Name: John Smith Ph.D.
Your salutation should read "Dear Dr. Smith".
3. If you know the person is a woman, but you don't know whether or not she holds a doctorate, use the Salutation "Ms."
4. Do not ever use Miss or Mrs. in business correspondence unless you know beyond a doubt that the person prefers that salutation. Both these salutations make assumptions about a woman's marital status, which presumably you don't know and isn't a factor in a work environment. Many women find it offensive to be addressed as either in a business setting. So, err on the side of caution and use "Ms." (or "Dr." if the person has a Ph.D., Ed.D., or some other doctoral designation after her name).
5. If you know the person is a man, but you don't know whether or not he holds a doctorate, use the salutation "Mr."
6. If you don't know what gender the person is, use both the first and last names.
Name: Pat Jones
Your salutation should read "Dear Pat Jones:"
Why? Men can be named Lynn, Tracy, and Marion. Devon, Jamie, and Morgan can be women. When in doubt, use the full name.
7. If you have no name to address your correspondence to, AND you've tried without success to find one, address the letter to "Dear hiring manager:", "Dear internship Coordinator:", or the like. Don't use "Dear Sir or Madam:" and definitely stay away from "Dear Sir:".
8. Use a colon if you don't know the person; use a comma if you do. Also, triple check for correct spelling of the person's name.