

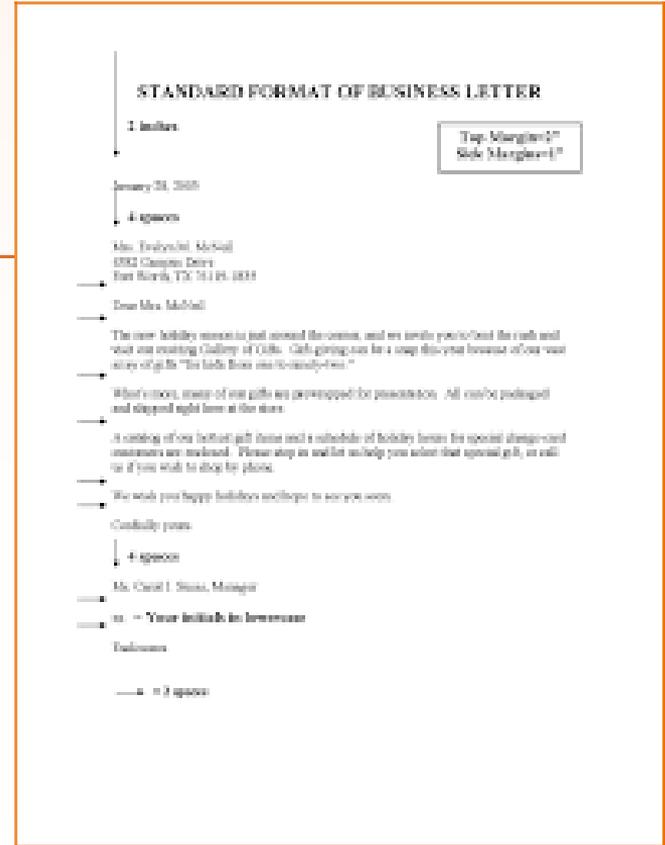
The Legal Cover Letter: Bring Your Skills to Life

*Devra Hermosilla - Assistant Dean
Career & Professional Development*



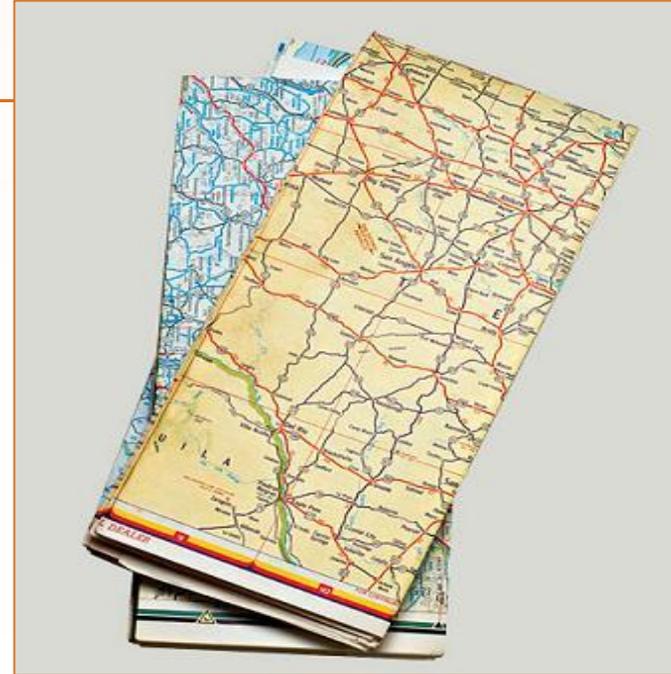
Format is Important

- Business Standard Format
- Match/Coordinate your Cover Letter with your Resume (header/font)
- Make it look attractive, clean, elegant, powerful



Paragraph 1: Introduction & Roadmap

- Who are you?
- Why are you writing this letter?
- Why do you want to work for this employer?
- What makes you a strong candidate for consideration?

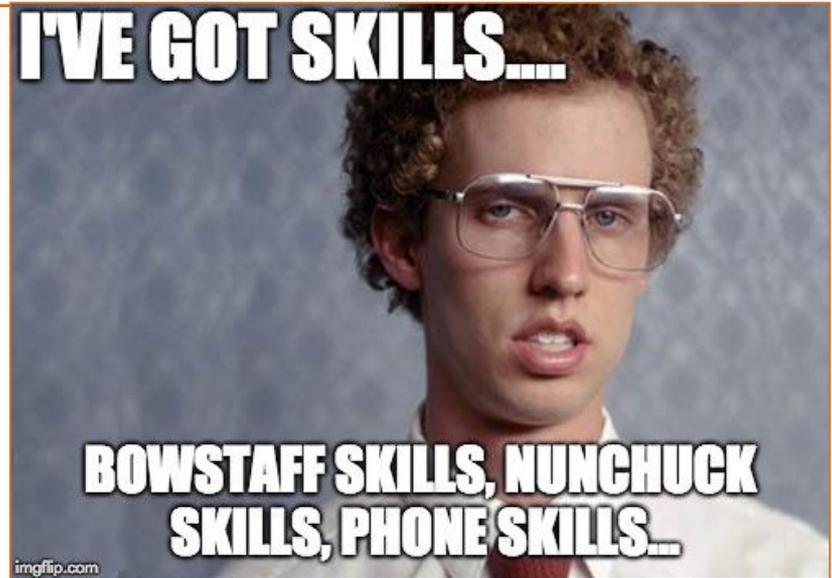


Intro paragraph...

As a first year law student at Lewis & Clark Law School, I am applying for your organization's Summer Law Clerk position for the summer of 2021. Your firm's job posting stood out as a perfect fit because I enjoy working in small collaborative work environments and I am eager to gain more hands-on experience. Your long list of representative clients in business is impressive and an area of law I hope to pursue. I would love to learn from your experienced attorneys. I can add value to your team through (1) the skills I developed earning my MBA, (2) my strong organizational skills, and (3) my commitment to go above and beyond for my clients.

Middle Paragraph(s): Skills Backed by Evidence

- What makes you a strong candidate for their consideration?
(Skills / Passion / Experience)
- Don't *tell* them you're awesome - *show* them



Middle Skills Paragraphs ...

My MBA provides me with a well-rounded view of businesses. When approaching a client matter, I am able to see issues from a wider lens. When I provided I&I Jewelry with their business consultation, I was able to spot their core competencies and weakness. I used this information to help them develop a new business plan moving forward. Similarly, settling cases requires the ability to spot strengths and weakness in client's matters. Through my better understanding of businesses and business strategies, I bring a unique perspective to the negotiating table.

Second, I am exceptionally **organized**. I find organization to be the key to managing a large workload. My organizational skills allowed me to manage two graduate degrees simultaneously, while still allowing time for my mental-health and self-care. My organizational skills allow me to efficiently get more done.

Lastly, **I enjoy serving my clients**. My time at the Small Business Legal Clinic gave me great one-on-one experience with clients. One client's goal was to open an online CBD business. It was a complex matter due to each state's differing regulations regarding CBD. The scope of my work only required me to advise her on the federal and Oregon state laws. However, I went above and beyond and researched each state's regulations in order to provide her with the best quality information. I love providing my clients with most value added.

Exercise 1: Skill Mining (from ed/exp/life/interests)

- Pick one of the 8 Sample Ads
- List the skills the job is looking for
- Bullet list your *education/experience/skills/passion/interest* that fit those skills
- **Identify an experience to bring that skill OR attribute to life**
- Example: Sample Job vs A/N's Resumes

Lewis & Clark
Law School



Example:

Qualifications:

- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills
- Excellent organization skills with the ability to effectively manage multiple priorities
- Proficient in MS Office products, particularly Word, PowerPoint, and Excel
- Studying law at an accredited law school
- Must be a self-starter, work independently, high energy, driven to perform at a high level
- Active listening - giving full attention to the words and body language of others, taking time to understand the points being made and asking questions as appropriate
- Acceptable driving record and a valid driver's license in your state of residence

From N's Resume:

Communication Skills

Written Skills

- Media/Entertainment Interest
- Investigative Journalism legal aspect
- Drafted contracts
- Produced local guidelines – **bring to life?**

Verbal Skills

- Best Oral Advocate Award – **bring to life?**
- Teaching

Organization

- TA Work, Teaching

Self-starter / High Energy

- Leadership – organizations
- Forward thinking content
- Lots of volunteer work

Active Listening

- TA Work, Teaching – **bring to life?**
- Volunteer Law Judge

From A's Resume:

Communication Skills

Written Skills

- Animal Law Review
- Grant work –Humane Society - **bring to life?**
- Drafting legal pleadings

Verbal Skills

- TA Work
- Collaboration Work
- Presentations in vet work

Organization

- TA Work
- Prepared for trial - **bring to life?**
- Worked while in school

Self-starter / High Energy

- Leadership – organizations
- Dancer

Active Listening

- TA Work
- Client consultations as law clerk & as vet tech – **bring to life?**

Exercise 2: Bringing Your Skills to Life

- Pick one major skill from Sample Job Ad that you have
- Bring that skill to life
 - Draft a brief description of a project you worked on or experience you had that demonstrates that skill or attribute in action
- For the breakout rooms:
 - Each report on the project they will bring to life – how they anticipate doing this
 - Feel free to ask each other questions & give advice (ie, if a K-JD doesn't have experience, help them find something to write about)

Lewis & Clark
Law School



Let's do some together first ... N's Resume

I have outstanding written and verbal communication skills.

////

I value **communication** skills, as demonstrated by my deep interest in supporting the performing arts through *pro bono* and volunteer work over the past four years. Through my work with the Oregon Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, I took on a project to produce guidelines for local nonprofits to gain tax exempt status. This required me to conduct extensive **research** into local tax codes and **write a usable document** for the organizations that explained the law to a non-lawyer audience with starter forms the organizations could use to complete and file in order to obtain the desired status. I met with each organization **to learn about their needs** and to explain whether and how a tax exempt status might help them. My **background in economics** came into play and I enjoyed using my education in conjunction with my current legal training to help my clients in a tangible way.

Let's do some together first ... A's Resume

I have strong **organization** and **time-management** skills.

////

Even prior to law school, I needed to rely upon my **organization** and **time-management** skills in order to earn my undergraduate degree while working full-time as a Veterinary Technician. Those skills have served me well during my legal internships now that I am in law school. While working at the Alaska Department of Law's Criminal Division last summer, I had the opportunity to prepare homicide cases for trial. It was my responsibility to **organize** and compile trial binders, which required that I knew the case files inside and out, and that I ensured each document – police report, witness statement, discovery document, and all evidence with the anticipated evidentiary objections – were included and easy for the trial attorneys to find and use. These projects took a great deal of **attention to detail** and I was honored to be included in such important work.

PASSION/INTEREST IN TOPIC:

I am **passionate about data privacy** and started the data privacy group at Lewis & Clark Law School where I helped organize a forum event.

////

... After founding the **Data Privacy Group**, I initiated the planning process for Lewis & Clark Law School's first Data Privacy Forum. The Forum was a half day event at the law school meant to bring practitioners, students, and legal professionals together to discuss pertinent issues in privacy. Together with five other students, two professionals, and the school, we put together three panels of speakers (security, vendor management, and blockchain) and hosted over 100 attendees. This event was a manifestation of my passion for privacy law. It gave me the opportunity to bring people together to learn this exciting area of law. The conference was a huge hit and gave me the opportunity to meet John Smith. He recommended that I apply for the Privacy Counsel role at CompanyA.

IN SCHOOL CLINIC:

I enjoy **servicing my clients** and was able to work with real world clients at the Small Business Legal Clinic at Lewis & Clark Law School.

///

Lastly, I enjoy **servicing my clients**. My time at the Small Business Legal Clinic gave me great one-on-one experience with clients. One client's goal was to open an online CBD business. It was a complex matter due to each state's differing regulations regarding CBD. The scope of my work only required me to advise her on the federal and Oregon state laws. However, I went above and beyond and researched each state's regulations in order to provide her with the best quality information as she had asked about expanding outside of the Pacific Northwest.

USING UNDERGRAD OR OTHER DEGREE:

I also have an **MBA**, which helps me understand my business clients.

///

My **MBA** provides me with a well-rounded view of businesses. When approaching a client matter, I am able to see issues from a wider lens. When I provided I&I Jewelry with their business consultation, I was able to spot their core competencies and weakness. I used this information to help them develop a new business plan moving forward. Similarly, settling cases requires the ability to spot strengths and weakness in client's matters. Through my better understanding of businesses and business strategies, I bring a unique perspective to the negotiating table.

EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE:

I have **prior experience** working as a research analyst in the energy industry.

///

Prior to law school, I spent three years supporting a nation-leading residential energy efficiency program. In my role as a research analyst, I managed client reporting and was responsible for project management, aggregating energy savings data, and compiling and copyediting narrative on energy savings projects from over 30 team members. For one major project, I conducted two document reviews, prepared memoranda on the findings of my research, and contacted state authorities to obtain documents in search of historic insurance records for a toxic tort claim. I am action-oriented and always willing support any project that needs my energy. In 2018, I found that there was a communication gap within our team of 100, so I spearheaded the development of a monthly newsletter to help improve access to program information on our team.

I am able to communicate with a broad group of people.

///

Before law school, I worked as a high school English teacher in a Title 1 district for four years. **I am no stranger to difficult conversations, difficult people, or difficult situations.** That experience has blessed me with the maturity to confront critical issues with grace and care. It also taught me how to **communicate effectively** to a range of audiences, to manage administrative as well as substantive workloads, and treat people with professionalism and respect. One of the greatest compliments I ever received as a teacher is that I have a way of making people feel seen. Now, as a law student, I hope to bring those skills to bear in making meaningful change.

I have **prior experience** working in government permitting.

///

My background in administrative law will be an asset in obtaining project permits from municipal and state bodies. During my time at Company, I supported staff in preparing for litigation before the Oregon Public Utility Commission by creating checklists for arguments and motion hearing notebooks containing key documents with citation references. I handled many complaints by renewable developers issued under the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA). Additionally, I conducted extensive research on the eminent domain authority of utilities and electric coops/municipalities. My background in administrative law, including my familiarity with public notice and comment procedures, will allow me to effectively apply for and defend municipal and state permits.

ACADEMIC WRITING:

I am a good **writer**.

///

My academic performance and professional background give me the technical skills necessary to be a thoughtful, resourceful, and effective clerk. In Lawyering (legal writing), during my 1L year, I earned a High Pass and then an Honors Pass – the highest grades offered for that course. After completing the required courses during the first year in law school, I purposefully chose courses requiring an **intensive writing** component that will bolster my writing skills and allow me to apply the law to a broad range of topics. My academic accomplishments during my first year also opened the door to *Lewis & Clark Law Review* where I contributed as a Member this past year. This experience further refined my ability to properly cite, edit, and appreciate legal writing. I expect that my skills in the technical aspect of legal writing will only grow as I take on the responsibility of Lead Article Editor next school year.

SMALL PROJECT FROM INTERNSHIP:

I **researched and drafted** various memoranda at my prior internship.

///

At Prior Internship, I enjoyed seeing the intersection of constitutional and environmental law in **researching and writing** a memorandum that explored the legal limits of executive power. I particularly appreciated the thoughtful feedback I received from my supervising attorney on my writing and felt appreciative when I could incorporate his comments into other writing projects. I also was excited to learn that my **research** for another memorandum I **wrote** on challenging the new NEPA regulations became a claim in the opening complaint.

TA/RESEARCH ASSISTANT DURING SCHOOL:

I was a **research assistant** this summer and researched various legal issues.

///

At the same time, I have been fortunate to serve as a **research assistant** to Professor Johnson—an expert on wildlife, salmon and legal issues surrounding the Columbia River Basin. In that role, I examined the evolution of key terms and definitions in the ESA through my research of agency rulemakings, scientific papers and case law—research which will contribute to a forthcoming journal article.

Final Paragraph: The Close

- Restate what you told them
- Make the ask: Tell them you want to work for them, want to meet with them
- Thank them for their consideration
- Salutation and Signature



closing paragraph...

With my abilities acquired through my MBA, my organizational skills, and my eagerness to provide the best work possible, I would be a great benefit with your firm. Thank you for taking the time to consider my application. It would be an honor to work with your organization and I look forward to meeting you at the upcoming Spring Recruitment Career Fair.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith