

## SMFA Writing About Yourself

Please see page 149 (the chapter on **Your Bio and Cover Letter**) in the 4th edition of *Self-Management for Actors: Getting Down to (Show) Business* for information on how to rock an on-brand bio and craft a non-sucky cover letter, every time. This is your preflight checklist before sending anything out into the world! Remember, these goodies you're spending so much time and energy and care and love creating are going to be representatives of BRAND YOU, out there. Send them out to do a good job after you've made them strong enough to really do that. :)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Feels like me. Sounds like me. Represents BRAND ME.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Highlights where the recipient and I intersect—or should—and how that benefits the recipient.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is specific, without getting too dang long. Seriously. You can always lose a sentence or two.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shows where I'm headed more than where I've been, but uses my history as a foundation for the next tier.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does not contain any of the following clichés: "from the tender age of," "literally since birth," "born to act," "the stage was calling," "received glowing reviews," "passion for theatre," "Hollywood beckoned," "to name a few (credits)," "projects like (and then a list of credits)," "take my career to new heights," or even, "I'm seeking representation," since—of course—that would be why you're approaching an agent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Isn't cutesy, precious, formal, overly quirky, or anything else that isn't on brand for YOU.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Includes contact information—at the very least, that URL where the reader can go for more information.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contains minimal links, and ideally ONE, which sends folks to a space you control (your website, a URL you redirect to your IMDb page or Actors Access profile, a page highlighting your latest award win, big news, etc.). Since few folks will actually go all over the web to learn more about you, keeping it simple will help you—and them—with brand awareness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If being emailed (bio, cover letter, anything that starts out in Word or another word-processing form), was generated using "print to PDF" to retain formatting. Further, the file name is "YourNameBio.pdf" so that its description has value when saved on the recipient's computer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Minimizes "the name drop" while still including anything really remarkable (an award-winning performance opposite a legend, a hot industry referral).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is written in either first-person or third-person, but not both. All issues of grammar, voice, consistency, capitalization, spelling, and punctuation are consistent and double-checked by another person.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Comes from your WHY, but doesn't detail your WHY. Instead, it details why aligning with you is a brilliant idea for the reader.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Has been read aloud—multiple times—and still feels both on-brand and like something you would absolutely say, verbatim, in a face-to-face encounter.

All right! Feeling good about your ability to bring together a non-sucky bio and cover letter? Take a stab at it. Right now. Even if you don't need one right now, do it. And remember to continue working on your tools so that they are always better, always better, always better. Ninja on!

For updates to this doc, quarterly phone calls, convos at our ninja message boards, and other support, visit [smfa4.com](http://smfa4.com).

Bonnie Gillespie