

Sport and the Power to Unite

Sport can be a hobby or a competition. Even more, “Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination,” said the late South African activist and politician Nelson Mandela.

Mandela was a lifelong athlete. As a young man, he was an amateur boxer. During his 27 years in prison, he kept in shape through rigorous physical exercise.

The key moment in Mandela’s sporting life, according to *Sports Illustrated* magazine, was the 1995 Rugby World Cup in Johannesburg. Mandela had been sworn in as president of South Africa, the nation’s first black president, just a year earlier. Many of South Africa’s blacks were ambivalent about South Africa’s national team, the Springboks, which were dear to the hearts of South Africa’s white Afrikaners. Blacks saw the team as a symbol of apartheid repression. In addition, the possibility of rioting loomed over the final match between South Africa and New Zealand.

But Mandela convinced the nation to pull together as one and root for the team. South Africa went on to win the match, and South Africans, both black and white, celebrated the victory.

“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to unite in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they can understand,” Mandela said.

Photo credit: AP Images

Dr. Louis Sullivan on Leadership: Part 2

In a recent interview with the *Washington Post* newspaper, Dr. Louis Sullivan shared his perspectives on leadership. The son of a mortician who grew up in rural Georgia during segregation, Sullivan went on to graduate from Boston University School of Medicine in 1958 as the only African-American student in his class. He later became founding dean of the Morehouse School of Medicine and served as U.S. secretary of health and human services. (Morehouse College is the only all-male historically black institution of higher learning in the United States.)

This is the second of two articles adapted from that interview.

Question (Q): What do you see as the biggest leadership and management challenges that hospitals and their administrators face?

Sullivan: These are large organizations that are complex, where tremendous innovation is constantly underway. So you need to have strong leadership to manage all of this and to see that the patient always comes first. It takes strong leadership skills and technical skills to make sure that the

system works effectively. That's a challenge. But it's also a great opportunity to improve ... lives.

Q: What leadership lessons did you take from your experience leading the Department of Health and Human Services?

Sullivan: When I became secretary in 1989, it was my first time in government service. Most of the 124,000 employees in the organization didn't really know me. I had a habit of walking every day for exercise, so I invited the employees to walk with me. It turned out that as I went around the country visiting our regional offices, I would have 25 to 200 of our employees join me. That was a great opportunity to get to know them, to share with them my goals for the department and to hear from them about important issues.

I call this "leadership while walking around." My tenure as secretary was greatly enhanced by building that relationship with employees.

Q: What do you believe?

Sullivan: Well, first of all, I believe in the power of information and in the value of scientific inquiry. We've seen the result of that over the course of the 20th century. We've wiped out smallpox. We've largely eliminated polio. Tuberculosis has been greatly decreased. All of these improvements and many others are the result of understanding more about biology. Knowledge really improves our world and our environment.

Finally, I believe in the fundamental goodness of people. All of us are often stressed in our lives. Not enough time, not enough resources. But when there is a time of great stress in a community, usually we come together.

Q: What's your single best piece of advice?

Sullivan: Have clear goals and work hard toward them. You'd be amazed at what you can achieve.

Photo credit: AP Images

Dr. Louis Sullivan on Leadership: Part 1

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This is the first of two articles adapted from that interview.

Question (Q): What was your first job?

Sullivan: My first job was working in the Bird's Eye frozen food factory in upstate New York after my first year in college, during the summer of 1951. It was a hard job working the night shift. I lasted only a bit, then I went to Atlantic City and worked as a waiter. The full-time waiters there ... had skills and experience that really impressed me tremendously, and that showed me that, regardless of a person's station in life, everyone has talents that can be developed.

Q: Who has most influenced your leadership style and character?

Sullivan: My father was a tremendous role model. My father did a lot to improve the lives of blacks in rural Georgia. He formed a chapter of the NAACP (then known as the National Association of Colored People). He worked against the white primary in Georgia, which excluded blacks from participating; worked to get them registered to vote. He sued the school board to require them to improve the educational facilities for blacks.

So what I learned from my father was a combination of all of those things. That is, to accomplish significant things required vision, perseverance, courage.

I graduated from Morehouse College in 1954. ... I had lived all of my life in a segregated environment, and I decided to apply to medical school in the Northeast and the Midwest, and I was accepted at Boston University. I was the first Morehouse College graduate accepted there, and I was the only black in my class. That was a tremendously satisfying experience, to see that I had the same capabilities that my colleagues had. This led to a larger life experience, and one that gave me tremendous confidence in working to change things along the way.

Q: You've dedicated a lot of effort over your career to getting more minorities into medicine. What do you see as the biggest remaining barrier to that today?

Sullivan: There are a number of factors, but among them is the cost of medical education. The costs are high. ...

Medicine and the other health professions are science-based, but they're practiced in a social setting, and our society is becoming much more diverse racially and ethnically. This means the ability to communicate, to understand someone's value system and history, plays an important role in the outcome between the health professional and the patient. That's the rationale for having a more diverse workforce.

Opportunities should be available to anyone in our society who has the interest, the capability and the willingness to work hard to become a health professional. The financial barrier should not exist.

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[Youth Will Build Future for Zimbabwe](#)

YALI Network member Charmaine Picardo is a staunch advocate for sexual and reproductive rights. She hopes to establish a think tank in Zimbabwe for youth that addresses topics like women's rights and civic involvement.

"I want the think tank to be comprised of young people because we are going to inherit the country," she said.

Selected as a Washington Fellow, the young Zimbabwean wants to learn how she can raise funds to support projects in her areas of interest, which include the rights of homeless women.

Picardo stresses that she doesn't want to "wait for solutions that come from outside the country or from other people who may not fully be in touch with what is currently going on in Zimbabwe."

During her fellowship studies at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, Picardo also wants to learn how to effectively combine media and arts with advocacy to push for social change and community development.

"I hope to document young people's stories, challenges and solutions," she said. "The media is such a strong communication tool, and now with social media we can reach far and wide."

Currently a second-year student at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare, Picardo became an on-air voice at age 17 on the popular television show *Ndeipi Gen'a*, which focuses on youth activism and development. From 2011 to 2012 she wrote about reproductive rights for the *Herald Cool Lifestyle* newspaper, and in 2012 she worked as a community arts educator for the Arts Lab, a project targeted at youth.

In 2012 and 2013, Picardo was involved in drafting a constitution for Zimbabwe, and in 2013 she served as an election observer.

The youth want to learn "what is happening globally and get a chance to catch up on global trends," she said.

"We [Washington Fellows] will share and apply the knowledge we will acquire with other people in our countries as well as mentor others and actively participate in various areas to foster development."

Photo credit: U.S. Embassy Harare

[Gender Equality Key to Growth](#)

Gender equality is critical to economic growth.

That's the conclusion of the new World Bank report *Voice and Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity*.

The bank estimates that not giving women and girls access to education, ignoring sexual violence and condoning adolescent pregnancy are ways of disempowering women and girls and together can cost a country nearly 4 percent of its annual economy.

According to the Council on Foreign Relations, a think tank, experts acknowledge that social norms have a role in limiting women. Yet, "what one group says is a cultural norm is not necessarily what all the groups will say is the social norm," said World Bank President Jim Kim. Further, he said, norms are often used as "a way of justifying very unequal power relations."

The report says the good news is that "social norms can and do change." It says governments and communities can kick-start that change by providing women and girls with life-skills training, sexual and reproductive health education, mentoring, wages equal to what men are paid and wages for traditionally unpaid work like caregiving.

"Removing constraints and unleashing women's full productive potential can yield enormous dividends that help make whole societies more resilient and more prosperous," the report states.

The report says that when women delay marriage past adolescence, they have greater educational achievement and longer life expectancies that benefit their children's health and education.

It also notes that the number of countries that recognize domestic violence as a crime has risen from close to zero in the mid-1970s to 76 today. "In countries with legislation against domestic violence, women's acceptance of wife beating is lower," it states.

It says that when more women are elected to office, "policy-making increasingly reflects the priorities of families and women." And it says that property ownership can enhance women's capacity to make decisions about their lives, increase their social status, amplify their voices about issues of interest in their communities and increase their bargaining power within households.

The report notes that progressive constitutions and legal reforms can support the transformation of social norms. It states that expanding economic opportunities for women "may be one of the most visible and game-changing events in the life of modern households and all communities."

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Manage Individuals Individually

Management would be easy if everyone you managed were hard working and collaborative, and had

a great attitude and exceptional talent.

The reality is far different. Some people are easy to manage and others are hard. Some are talented but not collaborative. Some are collaborative but not too talented. Some are too aggressive and others not aggressive enough. Some are well-intentioned but moody or easily distracted.

Individuals need to be managed individually. Here are six tips for managing people:

1. **Accept that management is a complex and difficult job.** Recognize that frustrations and difficult situations go with the territory. That's why you're being compensated more than if you weren't in management. Approach delicate employee "issues" positively, like a puzzle to solve.
2. **Don't avoid conflict.** Deal with it directly and evenhandedly. You are going to have to continue working with these same people in the future. It's best to work for fair, constructive resolutions.
3. **Try to see things through the eyes of others.** There may be reasons why a certain person is hard to manage. Has he or she always been this way, or are new external factors contributing? Is there anything in your management style that could be triggering an oppositional response? If you look at a problem holistically and gain insights as to why someone acts the way he or she does, that can lead you to a constructive solution.
4. **Get help when you need it.** Ask someone whose judgment you trust for advice. This could be a human resources contact, a mentor, your own manager or a colleague. It isn't a sign of weakness. It's sensible judgment.
5. **Set clear, measurable job objectives.** It makes evaluating performance more concrete and less vague. When an employee isn't achieving goals, you have something totally tangible to discuss.

Think in terms of assets and liabilities. Does a problematic employee still add real value to the organization? Some of the most brilliant people are difficult to manage but the benefits they bring to the company far outweigh the problems they cause, so they are clearly assets. But if they become so disruptive that their accomplishments are outweighed by the problems they cause, then they are liabilities.

There are no light switches you flip for immediate solutions to employee problems. But certain fundamental approaches can make handling difficult situations easier and can have relevance for employees at all levels.

This story was adapted from the article "6 Tips For Managing People Who Are Hard To Manage" by Victor Lipman published in Forbes magazine.

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[NBA's Jason Collins Speaks to the YALI Network](#)

Click [here](#) to download the full audio file [mp3, 12MB].

The following is a transcript of professional basketball player Jason Collins' interview with the YALI Network.

Q: Joining us to talk about the intersection of leadership and sports is professional basketball player Jason Collins. Collins most recently played as a center for the Brooklyn Nets of the National Basketball Association, or NBA, and in 2014 was named one of Time Magazine's Most Influential People in the World. Thank you for coming to speak with the YALI Network, Jason.

J: Thank you. It's an honor to be here.

Q: So the NBA has initiated, or taken part in, several programs to kind of benefit the greater good. NBA Cares and Basketball Without Borders both come to mind. What makes the NBA a force for good?

J: I think basketball is one of those universal sports that it doesn't take too much to play. In golf you need certain equipment, but in basketball you just need a ball and a hoop and some flat land. (chuckles) And I've played with several African teammates, most notably being Dikembe Mutombo, and he talked about playing at a young age, or playing in Africa and then obviously coming to the States and playing for Georgetown.

And I think one of those things about universal sports — it teaches teamwork, it's sort of like soccer in that it's a fun game to play, you're active, you're running around, and it's something to enjoy with your friends.

Q: So you mentioned both basketball and soccer. Is there something about sports in general that kind of lends itself to community empowerment or community engagement?

J: Definitely. When you have a favorite team to cheer for, it's something that, especially with the World Cup coming up soon in Brazil, you're going to see entire nations, the entire world is going to cheer on their respective team, favorite teams. I think there's also something special about team sports, more so than individual sports, because in team you really have to, especially when you have a great coach, blend personalities so that there's one goal.

And in sport it should always be about winning, and having fun, and trying to do things the right way. And you see that with great teams. They all sacrifice a part of themselves for the sake of the team. And I think that's universal, as far as off the court or off the field, in your life, that you know that there's always a greater good that you can sacrifice for.

Q: So you mentioned off the court, and one of my big questions for you is, you know when you were playing at Stanford, where you were an All-American, what were the kind of leadership lessons that you took from sports that you were able to apply off the court and in other aspects of your life?

J: Well, I've been very fortunate to have some great coaches. You mentioned Stanford, Mike

Montgomery was my coach there. It started — my dad, when I was a little guy, always tried to teach. I have a twin brother named Jarron, and as most siblings there's a little bit of sibling rivalry, but we always played on the same team so that I learned at an early age that it's about the team. It's not about going up against my brother or going up against —

When you're on the team, that dynamic of coming together. And when I got to the pros, played for some tremendous coaches. Doc Rivers, who coached me when I was playing for the Boston Celtics and now he's the coach of the Los Angeles Clippers, he had a lot of great lines. And I remember in a meeting he said, "If you want to go quick, go by yourself. If you want to go farther then you have to go in a group."

And he also said that leadership sometimes is hard. It's about making — when you're the leader of a team, you have to sacrifice even that much more for the sake of the team. And he talked about sometimes leadership can be lonely. You have to be that much more dedicated to the team when you are the leader of the team.

Q: So you're talking about Doc Rivers, one of my favorites, and the leadership lessons that he taught you. What is the best overall leadership advice that you've ever received?

J: The best overall leadership advice? It goes back to what Doc Rivers says, that "making the hard choices." Because as a leader sometimes your perspective is different than someone who isn't. The everyday person might not see, have the same perspective on — I'll take it to, the coach has a different perspective than the guy sitting at the end of the bench. They have the same goal as far as what it takes to win, but the coach sees things, has to see things from multiple perspectives, 00:05:36 and has to get that person on the end of the bench to buy in and really come together. And so that there's only one voice really, you really want your leaders to be strong, to be vocal. And to make, sometimes make the hard choice for the sake of the team.

The one thing I learned from Doc Rivers was sometimes you just have to be brave and make the tough decision, tough, and have hope and faith that you're making the right decision.

Q: Thank you. You're named one of Time Magazine's Most Influential People in the World.

J: Yes.

Q: Your jersey, number 98, became a top seller at NBA, the NBA Store.com.

J: Yes.

Q: How did all of that make you feel?

J: (Sighs) It (laughs) Humble. It was — I'm extremely humbled and grateful for the opportunity that the Nets, from the ownership to the coaches, to my teammates, that they gave me. And I worked my butt off to stay in shape and to stay ready, and when the opportunity came I was ready for it. And I think that's something that the listeners out there also can take away from hearing me speak, as far as there will be an opportunity down the road, sometime in your life, you just have to be ready for it. And it goes into your preparation.

Q: So if you're just joining us we're speaking with professional basketball player Jason Collins about sports and leadership. So when you watch players like Dwyane Wade and LeBron James, what kind of leadership skills are they showing out on the court? And what of those skills can young Africans apply to their own lives, and they might not raise to the level of professional athlete, but certainly

community leader. How can they kind of take those on and apply those to their daily lives?

J: Well, with regards to LeBron James and Dwyane Wade, again they're superstars, and they could score 50 points a game sometimes if they wanted to, but for the benefit of the team they know that they have to do it together. And we see that also with the San Antonio Spurs with Tim Duncan and Manu Ginobili. They have so many different pieces — Tony Parker from France — there are so many different pieces on a team, components that make it special.

But it takes that one goal of — to bring everybody together and everybody buying in. So for community leaders, I think the goal should always be empowering the next generation, or making it easier for people to live their authentic lives or, whether that be to get better education services, health services, to try to make life easier.

Because as we all know, sometimes in life it can throw us a curveball and things can be very difficult, so why not try to support each other and be a good teammate and be a good, be a good person and try to preach love and support. Those I think are lessons and ideals that I learned from sports and also my faith, being a Christian, that it's important to love your neighbor and support regardless of circumstances.

Q: So you've been mentioning a lot about teamwork and support. So for young Africans who want to be, who aspire to become community leaders, what sorts of activities should they be engaging in to develop these leadership skills, to develop these team-building skills?

J: I think you learn the most about yourself and also others through adversity. Challenge yourself, challenge yourself. When you're playing a tough — in sports, I always go back (unintelligible) to sports — but when you're in a tough game or a tough competition against a really good opponent, I think that is when you really reveal the most about your character and also your team's character.

When the game gets tough, do you start fraying at the edges? Do you start bickering with one another, or do you pull together and is someone going to rally everyone? Because in a game there will be ebbs and flows, there will be highs and lows, and it really takes a strong leadership to sort of right the ship if something goes off kilter, and when you have adversity you have to tackle it, you have to find that team to overcome it.

When you're in sports you might lose the big game but you're going to want to learn from it. When you're off the court and you're tackling whatever issue that you have, you have to find those people that have common ground with you, or even great minds, or someone that will make the team stronger.

It's okay to have someone on the team that you might not necessarily see eye to eye, as long as both of you come into the room, or anyone who, with that common ground, with that — we're trying to accomplish the same thing, that goal of winning or solving some problem.

Because sometimes you learn the most when you are challenged, and when, when you're uncomfortable, because it brings out, it brings out the best in me when I'm uncomfortable, and it also brings out the best I think in others when you really have to rise to the occasion. And sometimes if you see a teammate that isn't necessarily doing their best, pull them up.

And tell them it's okay, and tell them to keep going, because you have that belief in them, that we're all in this together as human beings on this planet. We're all — we should be here to encourage support, love, and push each other to be the best people that we possibly can be.

Q: And then I think you've mentioned a lot about having one goal as a team, and having everybody come around one goal. Can you talk more about why it's important that everyone get behind that one goal?

J: Yes, because it's important to have that one goal because sometimes, especially when adversity strikes, if someone has an ulterior motive it's easier for them to go off the path for whatever ulterior motive or ulterior goal that they have. But it's important, especially for a leader of a group, to focus, to have everyone focus on one goal, and if you see someone that isn't on the same path as the team, to speak up, because we all have to have accountability.

And we're accountable to each other, we're accountable to the team and to that goal. And again, that goes back to sometimes leadership is hard because it's not always easy to hold someone else accountable, to have that moment, because it might be a confrontational event. But there are ways that you talk to people. Sometimes you might, if a teammate, depending on the circumstance you might take them aside, as opposed to calling them out in front of the entire team.

You give them that opportunity to correct the ship on their own and get back on the right path. But sometimes they might need that public, in front of the entire team, so that it is for the benefit of the team, of the goal.

And I think the great leaders know the difference, because we're all not the same. We're not all the same, and sometimes some people can take aggressive tactics, and some people need a little more of a softer touch. And I think that's the beauty of a great leader is that he knows what personalities can handle what motivation and criticism, and how to talk to people the right way.

And how to talk to each individual person the right way, to send the right message that we're all on the same team and this is the goal. And this is how we deal with adversity and hold each other accountable.

Q: Can you give us an example of maybe a time Doc Rivers or Jason Kidd had to hold one of your teammates or you accountable and how they did that?

J: In basketball we have a saying, "The tape doesn't lie." What that means is, after each game, the majority of games, we will breakdown the game on a videotape, in a video session, where we will see, especially on the defensive end, where the breakdowns happened. And if someone's not in the right position or someone isn't doing the right thing, we're in front of the entire team and that's a great time, because you're not necessarily, yes, you're calling out on the videotape the example of someone not being in the right position, so that person knows, but then also it's great for the entire team, because everyone will learn that, okay, we need to be in this position when this happens on the court.

That's a great team building and also a great way to hold each other accountable, because you're watching the videotape, you can see the mistakes, everyone in the room, it's blatant, it's right there on film, and again, it'll help the team grow because you'll learn from your mistakes. Now if that

happens multiple times, if we keep breaking down tape and the coach keeps seeing the same player in the wrong position, then ultimately the coach will make a change.

And that player will probably not play because you're not — the message has been delivered and you're not receiving it. And as a leader the coach of a team will say for the benefit of the team, when you're out on the court and you're not in the right position you're hurting us.

So we have to put someone else in there who will do the right thing. And it goes back to trust. The coach has to trust, teammates have to trust, especially on defense in a team sport, everything's on a string and if one person is out of position it affects us all. And you'll see that if you're watching the NBA Finals, two great defensive teams, San Antonio I think more than Miami, but where they cover so much court because they're able to, they have a great system in place and they know where each other is going to be on the court.

And so that's a great way, I think, that's a great example for people to learn from.

Q: Well, thank you so much for speaking with the YALI Network, Jason. We've been talking to Jason Collins, a professional basketball player with the National Basketball Association's Brooklyn Nets. If you'd like to learn more about the YALI Network's Sports and Leadership series, including how you can interact with former NBA player Dikembe Mutombo, visit our website at yali.state.gov. That's Y-A-L-I.state.gov.

J: And if I can add one more thing. If you have a chance to interact with Dikembe Mutombo, you have to take advantage of that. He is one of the funniest people on the planet. He is a great, great human being.

Q: Great, thank you.

Photo credit: AP Images

[World Bank President on Leadership](#)

In a recent interview with the *Washington Post* newspaper, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim shared his perspectives on leadership. Kim is a physician, anthropologist, former president of Dartmouth College and past director of the World Health Organization's HIV/AIDS department.

Here are some excerpts:

Question (Q): "What was your very first job?"

Kim: “I was a waiter at the Octagon House restaurant in Muscatine, Iowa.”

Q: “How have you personally come to define leadership?”

Kim: “One of the most important things about leadership is that you have to have the kind of humility that will allow you to be coached.

“Marshall Goldsmith has coached me free of charge now for about five years. He also coaches Alan Mulally of Ford Motor Company and he coached Mike Duke at Walmart.”

“The things you find when the coach talks to all the people you work with is always incredibly humbling. No matter how good you think you are as a leader, my goodness, the people around you will have all kinds of ideas for how you can get better. So for me, the most fundamental thing about leadership is to have the humility to continue to get feedback and to try to get better.”

Q: “What’s one change you’ve noticed in yourself and your leadership style?”

Kim: “When you’re the leader of an organization, people look at the expression on your face. Your mood has a lot to do with how people think the whole organization is doing.”

“I and my friend Mark Tercek from the Nature Conservancy went to get coaching from Alan Mulally. His last words were: ‘Mark, Jim, both of you have very nice smiles. I want you to use them more.

‘You really need to express your joy in having the job. You need to express your optimism about what is to come. And you need to express your appreciation and warmth for the people who are every day trying to do their work.’ It’s something I work on.”

Q: “Given your very different background, how much have you tried to adapt to [the World Bank] culture versus how much have you tried to get the culture to adapt to something new brought by you?”

Kim: “One of the lessons of leadership worth emphasizing is that you want to get to know other great leaders and take their advice. At some point in your development, it’s only people who’ve been in the seat of having to be leaders who can help you in a deep way.”

“I’m a physician and an anthropologist, but I share with my staff this passion for ending poverty. So I’ve come to deeply appreciate the fact that we have a thousand economists, because on any given issue I can go to my own team and say, ‘Tell me about water and sanitation in India.’ And not only will they be able to tell me about the chemistry of the problem, they can tell me about it in the context of the overall budget of India. They can tell me about it in the context of any given project compared to others. I have come to deeply, deeply appreciate this kind of analytic capacity.”

Photo credit: AP Images

The Crucial Job Interview

Forbes magazine writer Susan Adams, in her column “How to Ace Your Job Interview,” advises applicants to research the company before the interview.

She says that before the interview, applicants should write a few notes to help them remember their best stories that describe their experience and three questions to ask the interviewer. When the interview starts they should ask if they can take notes.

After that, she said, the most crucial part of an interview is to convince the hiring manager that they truly want the job. Interviewers don't just look at candidates who have the required skills for the job. They also want candidates who want them.

“Any job requires a full commitment,” California shop owner Cynthia Bragdon advises. “If they are aloof in an interview, they will probably be aloof to my customers.”

Adams notes that job counselor Win Sheffield advises applicants to prepare stories that illustrate their skills, strengths and accomplishments. Don't brag but do describe specific experiences that show how you put your skills to work. Talk about the pleasure and pride you experienced overcoming obstacles, he advises.

Adams advises applicants to tell the interviewer how thrilled they would be to work for their organization. Tell the interviewer that of the other offers you are considering, this is your first choice.

Toward the end of the interview, ask where you stand compared with the company's ideal candidate. This reinforces how much you want the job. Then write an enthusiastic follow-up note, Adams says.

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The Importance of the Cover Letter

After putting together a concise resume, the job seeker needs to sit down and write a cover letter.

“Cover letters make a difference, even short ones,” Susan Adams writes in “How to Write a Cover Letter,” an article published in *Forbes* magazine. “Don't ever send a boilerplate.”

Adams advises applicants to use the first line of the cover letter to mention a mutual contact. She advises applicants to use a more formal style of writing instead of abbreviations and acronyms, and to proofread the letter carefully.

Adams says experts like cover letters in which the applicant names the job he wants early on and

provides a brief summary of his career and accomplishments. The letter should end with a request for a meeting and when the applicant plans to get in touch.

And, importantly, Adams says, cover letters of less than one page — or about four paragraphs — are best.

Photo credit: AP Images
