

JOHN WILLIAMS

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Denise Rudith, Account Director
XYZ Ad Agency
456 Madison Avenue, Fl. 2
New York, NY 10019

Dear Ms. Rudith:

NOTE: Traditionally, letter recipients are addressed as Mr. or Ms., followed by the last name. However, if it is unclear how the person identifies, or if you know the person is non-binary, start your letter with "Dear Jill Murphy:" (i.e. use first and last without the gendered title).

Letter starts off strong with a reference and uses an "accomplishment statement" to finish the first paragraph. If the writer lacked a reference, starting the letter with the accomplishment statement would have been an engaging way to start things off.

I spoke with James Smith in your media department in January. After our conversation, I know I could be an asset to your graphic design department and I am excited to throw my hat into the ring as an applicant for your summer program. My experiences as a planning intern for a local agency and as the advertising coordinator for my campus newspaper have prepared me well to be strong contributor to your organization.

While at Eric Mower and Associates, I not only contributed ideas to daily meetings with the planning team but handled client queries and administrative duties, such as scheduling simultaneously. Multitasking was an everyday occurrence, and I earned top honors from my managers upon completion of my internship. Also, as advertising coordinator at "The Daily Orange," I head up all advertising outreach for the publication and have single-handedly increased revenue for 2014 by 25 percent. I am familiar with MRI data and am an Excel expert. Creating mock media plans for clients such as Butterfinger and Exxon in my coursework has sharpened my research and data-crunching skills.

I am prepared to hit the ground running if selected for your program. I look forward to speaking with you about my qualifications and will be in touch in the next few weeks to set up a time. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Williams

Excellent, proactive, closing paragraph!

Middle paragraph is concise but gives enough detail to prove that the writer has the qualities he is claiming to possess.

Why This Letter Is Strong

1) CONTACT INFO IS HIGH AND EASY TO FIND

Burying your email address or phone number in the body of the letter will make it difficult for the reader to find it if s/he is looking for it.

2) ADDRESSES READER BY NAME

Letters addressed to “Whom it May Concern” can seem less personal. In addition, they hint to the reader that, a) you didn’t break a sweat to find out to whom you are writing, and b) you might be firing out the same letter to tons of other companies (the dreaded “cookie cutter” letter!). Do your best to find out the hirer’s name. If you come up empty in your search for the specific application reviewer, try to find the name of the president, CEO or head of the department. That will show some effort and can’t hurt your application.

3) LISTS A REFERENCE IN FIRST LINE

Including a mention of a reference (someone at the company you spoke with/know, or who referred you) gives the employer more of a reason to want to read your letter. You immediately establish that though he/she may not know you personally, someone he/she knows does. List a reference if possible. (If you don’t have a reference, an accomplishment statement will do: See the CDC’s other cover letter handouts for examples!)

4) SHORT AND SWEET, BUT PACKED WITH DETAIL

The reader leaves with a clear sense of why this candidate is viable for the internship without having to wade through lots of text. If you detail those things that relate to what the employer is looking for in a clear and concise way, you will demonstrate why you are qualified and that you are savvy about what the position entails. Your cover letter should highlight the things you bring to the table that most relate to the position you’re applying for; it should not be a list of everything that’s on your résumé.

5) SHOWS INSTEAD OF TELLS

If Shaun had just written that he was great at multi-tasking, researching and working in a fast-paced environment, the reader would have no proof that this was true. By giving examples from your experiences that allow the reader to see you exhibiting these skills in his/her head, you will be convincing in your claims.

6) KEEPS THE FOCUS ON THE EMPLOYER

Employers want to hear why you would be of value, not why an internship/job at the company would help your career, fulfill your lifelong dream, etc. Frame ALL your phrasing around what YOU bring to the table.

7) DOESN’T GIVE THE EMPLOYER HOMEWORK

If you want the job so badly, YOU should be the one who puts effort into the follow-up. Closing with proactive language will show the employer how interested you are in the position and will keep the ball in your court so you have reason to be back in touch. Better for you to call to follow up than to sit in your dorm, crossing your fingers and wondering if the employer will get in touch with you. (If the posting states “no phone calls,” though, only then can you be a little more passive. Check out the CDC’s additional cover letter guides for tips on this language.)