

Case Study 13:

Ask Not What the Company Can Do for You

Background

ABC Media is a publisher of newsletters and periodicals for several professions. They have two six-month copy-editing internships available for those who have finished or are finishing a journalism program. The interns' responsibilities include copy editing, proofreading. The internship pays an honorarium of \$2,000; there is also the possibility of a \$3,000 incentive bonus for outstanding performance.

Current Situation

ABC Media is having trouble finding anyone willing to take the internship. Even though the position is part-time, no one seems to be interested in working for very little pay, despite the valuable experience to be gained. The human resources staff members are considering whether they should relax some of their strict standards and allow someone who is not in a journalism program to be interviewed. The position also requires excellent grammatical and communication skills, attention to detail, an ability to work somewhat independently, and knowledge of a specific style sheet.

Coincidentally, at the same time, a student not in a journalism program took note of the internships and decided to apply, even though he knew he didn't meet the qualifications set out in the job description.

Exhibit A

1212 Lilly Lane
Saskatoon, SK S4B 1R8

Ms. Robin Bird
ABC Media
1685 Preston Avenue, Unit 210
Saskatoon, SK S7N 4V2

Dear Ms. Bird:

Subject: Copy Editing Internship

I would like to apply for the Copy Editing Internship program offered by ABC Media. My degree, an Honours BA in English from the University of Saskatchewan, suggests that I am qualified in the areas of grammatical and communication skills; as an Arts student, I always worked independently at my own projects and essays; my familiarity with the MLA style guide could, I believe, readily translate to whatever style guide you prefer. Therefore, even though I am not a journalism student, my education, experience, and skills do qualify me for the position.

The unique program in English at the University of Saskatchewan provides courses in language and non-academic writing. Two courses which I particularly enjoyed and did well in were Legal Writing and Medical Discourse; from them I have a basic understanding of the genres used by both professions and I would feel quite comfortable with either discourse. ABC provides communications for both these professions.

While I feel that my skills and knowledge will be beneficial to ABC Media, I would also welcome the opportunity the internship provides to hone my skills within the publishing industry. My resumé provides more details about my qualifications. Please call me at 306-663-5555 to arrange an interview if you feel my education and experience qualify me for this position.

Sincerely,

Mutaz Ahmed

Activities and Discussion

1. How effectively does Mutaz Ahmed present his qualifications?
2. Given that this is a type of unsolicited application letter (there is a position available but Mutaz is missing one of the key requirements), could he have approached the letter in any other way?
3. Could Mutaz have added anything to the letter to make his case more persuasive?
4. How well does Mutaz promote his competencies as they relate to the position?