May 24, 2013

**Cover letter addressing screening criteria**

**Re:** Senior Writer/Editor, Communications (J0513-0160)

**Applicant:** Kimberly Lochhead

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great enthusiasm that I apply for this role as Senior Writer/Editor at Canada Post. To date, my work experience has been entirely based around writing, editing, proofreading, communications and editorial/production management. I believe I would be well suited to this position for a variety of reasons. Below, I address how my experience relates to each of the qualifications listed in the job posting.

**University degree or college diploma in a relevant discipline such as Journalism, Communications or the Arts, or a minimum of five years of relevant work experience.**

I hold an honours Bachelor of Journalism (double major in history) from Carleton University. The program’s demanding and rigorous nature fostered in me an excellent ability to write and edit corporate material on a wide range of subjects. The program’s emphasis on meeting deadlines and ensuring high quality, error-free writing prepared me well for a career focused on the written word.

**Experience writing about business strategies or corporate or public finance would be a definite asset.**

Currently I work as a freelance journalist, writing feature stories for Ottawa Life Magazine and Air Canada’s enRoute magazine. Before returning to my journalism roots, I was a Project Manager at Ascribe Marketing Communications Inc, where I worked as a writer and editor, while also managing the production flow of the entire company. There, I tracked project details, liaised with clients, supported the team and managed the company’s social media presences. I produced various branding material including press releases, key messages, brochures and video scripts.

For a wide variety of clients, I wrote, edited and designed corporate documents such as strategic business plans, annual reports and various pamphlets and brochures. My excellent judgment, creative problem solving and strong analytical skills were key to delivering products to clients within tight timelines. Leading a team, I developed and implemented social media campaigns on multiple platforms, increasing brand awareness, site visitors and interactions. Finally, since the majority of Ascribe’s clients are public sector ones (e.g. Canada School of Public Service, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council), I developed a strong understanding of the plans and priorities of the public service.

**Successful, proven experience as a writer and editor.**

As I previously mentioned, during my time at Ascribe I have gained a great deal of experience writing and editing various technical and legal documents for clients in both the public and private sectors. I often consulted corporate style guides, technical manuals, user guides, information documents and the Canadian Press Style Guide. I am also very familiar with the production process (revisions, approvals, translation, etc.).

At Carleton, I learned the fundamentals of writing, grammar, syntax and editing, all while developing excellent written and verbal communication skills. Later, at The EMC Newspaper and Ottawa Life Magazine, I applied these skills in my writing and editing roles, enhancing my ability to create compelling content and sharp eye for detail. I also became proficient with layout, design, graphics and the production process (using tools such as Adobe Acrobat, Illustrator, MS Office, Teamsite and XML markup editors). After properly writing, editing and formatting content, I managed all stages of the print and online production process.

**Superior communication skills.**

In each of my previous roles, I was tasked with multiple duties necessary to complete a final project or publish a final publication, whether it was a newspaper, magazine, report or other document. In each case, accurately following instructions and effective written and verbal communications were crucial to creating a high quality product. As Writer/Editor and Project Manager at Ascribe, I received and carried out instructions from my supervisor (the company’s president), and then delegated instructions, ensured they were followed and that projects remained on track. I also communicated deadlines, meetings, project milestones and any unforeseen challenges to clients to keep them updated and aware of any issues. This required professionalism in my communication in-person, through email and the telephone, as well as a knack for providing prompt responses and excellent service.

Through my journalism degree from Carleton, I learned the foundation of writing, editing and the general art of communicating. The program’s emphasis on accuracy and quality allowed me to develop a strong sense of attention to detail, as well as the ability to work well under very tight deadlines. Most importantly, the program developed my ability to communicate both efficiently and effectively; on a fundamental level, I learned how to make writing accurate, clear and consistent. Through my radio and television courses, I also improved my speaking skills, learning to properly articulate and enunciate script copy.

**Extensive experience preparing content for important stakeholder groups such as the public, senior officers, directors, government officials, and/or employees.**

In my editorial role at Ascribe Marketing Communications Inc., I wrote and edited marketing material, speeches, op-eds, formal statements, white papers, annual reports and other confidential documents for a range of senior executives, government officials and public employees. These public sector clients included the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Royal Canadian Mint, Canada School of Public Service, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. Whether concerning corporate strategic plans or messages targeting the public, these documents were highly technical in language and required referencing corporate style guides as well as large volumes of research material.

**Comfortable producing content suitable for multi-media platforms and varied venues including speeches, annual reports, op-ed styled pieces, blogs, formal planning documents, statements or submissions to government and/or creative briefs.**

I am very comfortable producing content for multi-media platforms and varied venues. At Ascribe and Ottawa Life, I wrote tweets, blog posts and Facebook posts about corporate news as well as posts promoting contests and company initiatives. For Ascribe’s high-profile public sector clients, I wrote and edited speeches announcing government funding and year-end results, op-eds about contentious issues relevant to a corporation’s mandate, blogs on current events and trends and strategic business plans. For Ascribe’s contract work, I completed formal technical and financial proposals in response to RFPs. To direct Ascribe’s writing team, I wrote creative briefs based on client consultation to provide project guidance.

**Experience reviewing corporate materials and planning/executing strategies.**

In my capacity at Ascribe, I gained a great deal of experience editing and proofreading various corporate, technical and legal documents for clients in both the public and private sectors (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, DFAIT, Bell Canada, Alcatel-Lucent, etc). When required, I consulted corporate style guides, technical codes and documents, as well as the Canadian Press Style Guide. I am very familiar with the production process, which can involve many rounds of feedback, revisions, edits and translations before layout, approvals and publication.

With a reputation for excellence and producing work of the highest quality, Ascribe’s seamless and efficient workflow allowed for consistent quality checks at every step of the production process. The company’s strategy for any project included a team approach, where the prime writers were identified and then participated in a brain storming session with the Editorial Director before beginning content development. I was responsible for choosing writers based on their skill, experience and knowledge of the subject material. Using my strong organizational skills, I planned and scheduled all internal and external meetings for each project, managing my own time as well as that of each team member. I managed all the writers and editors, prioritizing their workloads by keeping them aware of upcoming deadlines and shifting assignments if necessary. Depending on the project (e.g. website, annual report, brochure, etc.), I tracked interim steps and kept the client updated until the finished project completely satisfied the client and received approval.

At Ottawa Life, I planned and executed the magazine’s social media strategy from the ground up, leading the editorial team in successfully implementing Facebook and Twitter presences. Through running contests, quizzes and interacting with followers, we increased visitors to the publication’s website while dramatically raising ‘likes’, ‘retweets’ and overall social media engagement.

**Excellent writing and editing skills.**

From the roles outlined above, my writing and editing skills in both print media and marketing are excellent, based on over five-years of working experience. Accuracy and precision are essential traits that have fueled my career as a writer, editor and proofreader. With a sharp eye and great attention to detail, I highlight spelling and grammatical errors, poor sentence/paragraph structure and factual inaccuracies. My strong journalism background has allowed me to develop these skills as well as a keen sense of judgment in extracting key messages and following ethical guidelines.

**Familiarity with research methodologies.**

My former roles in both journalism and marketing have enhanced my strong judgment, analytical skills and ability to provide strategic advice to support decision-making. Research plays a crucial role in providing me with the skill to make informed judgments and decisions – it is the backbone to good journalism and solid writing. At Ascribe, I digested large volumes of research produced by clients and my through my own methodologies of using the Internet and corporate style guides. My journalistic experiences at Ottawa Life and The EMC Newspaper relied heavily on my excellent research skills to produce accurate, fair and balanced feature articles and accounts of news events. Consulting primary and secondary sources, I also verified facts and information to ensure consistency.

**The demonstrated ability to work in a dynamic environment with fellow writers and editors would be an asset.**

Throughout my career I have worked in dynamic and fast-paced editorial and production environments with seasoned writers and editors. From being part of the writing staff to managing an entire team, I am well-versed in all aspects of writing and editing and feel most comfortable collaborating with fellow writers and editors.

In summary, I firmly believe that my education, work experience, strong editorial background and knowledge of construction issues and the online/print production process would render me a choice candidate for this English Editor position.

Many thanks for your time and consideration,

Kimberly Lochhead

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