

## ENC 3250 | Professional Writing

### Writing Assignment Four (Letter of Interest)

#### Scenario

##### Gulf Coast Careers

You are the owner of Gulf Coast Careers (GCC). You started the firm three years ago with your good friend Chris Swanson. Together, you specialize in helping professionals navigate the job market and develop strategies to land a career they love.

Both you and Chris are pros at identifying opportunities for your clients and preparing them with strong application documents and interview skills. You have a BA and MA in English, and before starting GCC with Chris, you spent a few years teaching college writing. You eventually took on an additional part-time job at the university placing students in internships, and that turned into a full-time gig with the Career Services Department, where you learned to love helping students find jobs after graduation. You strive to continue growing in your field and recently earned your certification from Gallup as a Strengths and Career Development Coach.

Chris's background is in Human Resources. He started out as a Benefits Coordinator and didn't love it, but he worked his way through the ranks of a few different companies until he became a recruiter. Chris came up with the idea to start a private firm when he realized he enjoyed working with potential job candidates more than dealing with corporate bigwigs.

Chris has also gained some expertise in coaching along the way; he's especially savvy at helping clients develop their personal brand and turn social media conversations into job opportunities. In the past few years, he's amassed a large network of well-placed contacts in local companies and non-profit organizations, and together, you've built a great presence for your firm on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. In addition, you and Chris co-created and host a career podcast. Your most popular episode was recently nominated for a Webby award.

As always, you are looking to attract new clients and raise the profile of your firm. While searching online for opportunities to do that, you came across the following Request for Proposals:

#### **RFP: CareerCon 2020**

The SWFL Chamber of Commerce (SWFLCC) is accepting proposals for presentations for its upcoming virtual CareerCon 2020; this year's theme is "Adapting to the Virtual Job Market." Our attendees are largely busy, young professionals who are trying to stand out in a competitive market. Ideal presentations will give them an overview of how the internet has changed the job hunt process and give them skills and practices they can incorporate right away.

Please submit a letter of interest that includes a **brief overview of your credentials, a summary of your proposed presentation, and explanation of how your presentation will benefit those navigating today's job market.**

There are no speaker fees associated with our event; however, speakers are able to attend the conference free of charge. Your bio and company contact information will be featured prominently in the program. Additionally, speakers will be given a digital list of the names and addresses of conference attendees.

You see an opportunity here: conferences are a great way to learn more about your craft, establish contacts within the local community, and meet potential new clients. Especially enticing is the list of contact information for attendees.

Chris is a little less excited. The conference doesn't pay speakers, and he's worried they'll prefer proposals from older, more established career experts. In the past, you've only responded to RFPs when you believe that one of your core strengths will be a competitive advantage. Still, you convince Chris that you can craft a unique presentation based on the expertise you've both acquired separately and while growing your firm together.

You and Chris decide to craft a presentation that combines your expertise in writing and relationship-building, showing the audience how those factors are essential for a successful job search in the internet age. The two of you will give the presentation together. Chris wisely suggests that you identify your strengths and competitive advantages in this situation. You come up with the following:

- We understand the challenges of finding the right career, as demonstrated by our journey to becoming small business owners.
- We have years of experience helping clients explore and create meaningful, satisfying careers.
- Our presentation will be beneficial because it incorporates two crucial strategies to a successful job search: online networking and strong communication skills.

## Assignment

Write a 2 to 3-page proposal (what the RFP is calling a "letter of interest") in response to the RFP from the SWFL Chamber of Commerce. **Make certain you include all information called for in the RFP, in the order in which it is requested.**

Open with goodwill and a statement of the problem. In this case, the problem can be viewed as either the chamber's problem – they need high quality presentations – or the problem of their conference attendees – they need to find and appeal to potential employers.

Organize the body into three main sections based on what is asked for in the RFP. Each section should have an informative heading, and each heading should be parallel.

End with a closing paragraph that builds goodwill and motivates action.

Choose carefully the information that you include. Some of the information in this scenario is provided for your benefit, but not all of it will necessarily be important to the Chamber. **Do not copy the language from the scenario word for word in your letter. Students that plagiarize the assignment instructions will be reported to the Dean of Students Office.**

Your letter will be graded on correct use of language and overall professionalism as well as on the use of the strategies listed on the next page. Please review them before writing and then use them as a checklist for revision.

### Red Level Strategies

- Establish purpose and audience
- Use simple, concrete, and direct language -- align language and purpose
- Use the direct organization
- Ensure completeness and accuracy
- Write informative and purposeful subject lines

### Orange Level Strategies

- Use goodwill-building techniques
- Emphasize reader benefits
- Write with a positive emphasis
- Write with a reader-based emphasis

### Yellow Level Strategies

- Refine information to make it more useful
- Design information using SSPD
- Use lists
- Write with parallel structure
- Craft informative headings

### Green Level Strategies

- Establish a clear objective
- Align objectives and account for differences
- Identify & emphasize competitive advantages and meaningful strengths
- Create concrete images
- Motivate action

Assignments that use strategies well, but that do not exhibit appropriate professional use of the language will be given a grade of zero. You will have one week to meet with the Instructor to solve the problem, and a new deadline will be given for a resubmission with reduced grade.