

CHRISTOPHER STEPHENS

Eager to develop with new opportunities

c-stephens@ou.edu

Campus Address: 100 South Main Street, Ohio University, Athens, OH 45810 ■ 937.306.1952

Permanent Address: 1864 Seneca Park Drive, Hamilton, OH 45504 ■ 937.306.1948

May 15, 2007

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP
Attention: Richard C. Stover
2080 Madison Tower
Dayton, OH 45423

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Passion: "Boundless enthusiasm."

As a freshman-year computer science major, I learned—too late in the semester to save my cumulative GPA—that this field was not my passion. Although freshman year may look like a disaster on paper, it was responsible for leading to my current major and a subsequent GPA reflective of **the right career choice**. As a result, I am finishing this quarter with a 3.75—the fifth quarter in a row above a 3.0. Because I enjoy Accounting and understand firsthand that **success and fulfillment stem from discovering and working in one's passion**, it is with great interest that I apply for the position of Staff 1 Accountant.

From hands-on internship experience, I understand that success boils down to three important factors in the Accounting industry:

- Structured goals and the implementation of a master plan to achieve those goals,
- Knowledge and skills development—in short, the tools—to be successful, and
- Accurate, principled reporting and top-quality products and services to customers.

Transferable strengths offered to PricewaterhouseCoopers to meet these factors are as follows:

- ☑ **Critical thinking** to gather, analyze, and disseminate decisive information regarding privacy, risk, internal controls, performance, and data analysis.
- ☑ **Positive communication** to foster collaborative working relationships and lend balance and structure to teams. I understand group dynamics, earn respect as a team member, and continuously demonstrate the ability to use **well-honed speaking and listening skills**.
- ☑ **Mental toughness** to handle situations requiring determination and stress tolerance.
- ☑ **Energy** to multi-task in fast-moving environments—structured or unstructured—to be productively competent.

Because proven skills are best explained in person, I look forward to discussing where your personnel needs and my qualifications intersect and can be reached at 937.306.1952 to arrange an interview. With a personal commitment to working with integrity and efficiency, I would relish the prospect of taking responsibility for a role where achievements are highly visible. I am confident you will find me to be versatile and 100% capable of contributing to PricewaterhouseCoopers' mission. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christopher Stephens

Encl: Résumé

CHRISTOPHER STEPHENS

Evaluation of Cover Letter Strategy

Format: Since cover letter is addressed to Big Four firm (instead of Richard Stover), salutation of "Ladies and Gentlemen" is proper. Letter written with persuasive style of business writing — AIDA format (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action).

Challenge: This cover letter was **critical** due to a freshman-year GPA that impacted this college graduate's cumulative GPA (2.85) and would be listed on his transcript. It is nearly impossible for a Big Four accounting firm to consider a candidate with a GPA such as this.

Action: After speaking with Chris on numerous occasions and listening to the passion in his voice about working for a Big Four accounting firm, I decided to focus on his self-discovery process and to speak *straight from his heart*. He was determined to land a position in a Big Four firm ... especially in the Columbus, Ohio area.

Result: Completed résumé in October.
Phone interview over Thanksgiving break.
On-site Ernst & Young interview in January.
Phone call from Ernst & Young January 30 with offer of \$45,000 with benefits (student hired *before* May graduation).

Note:

- Student was told by one of his interviewers that he had not seen a cover letter with an intro like this—it caught his attention.
- Student was told by hiring manager that the cover letter landed him the position.

Comment extracted from student's January 30 e-mail:

"I just wanted you to know that you were right ... it goes to show that a little patience and perseverance go a long way when it comes to the job search. I was extended an offer today from the Ernst & Young office in Columbus. I got the job—my dream job—working in downtown Columbus on the 11th floor of a high-rise building."