



“My loss is your gain! Jason took more initiative, as a communications intern, than many of my full-time employees!”

“I could count on Lisa to get her assigned tasks done, on time and in the manner I wanted. I’m sure you’ll quickly come to value her follow-through as much as I did. I’d hire her back in a heartbeat!”

“She’s the best! It’s rare to find someone with Jennifer’s combination of professionalism, enthusiasm and reliability.”

“Todd became an integral part of my office in the first month he was here. His sense of humor added much to office morale. He was the only intern for whom we gave a going-away party.”

Letters of recommendation from former/current employers can be very helpful in your search for a job/internship. How can they help? **By adding some pizzazz!** Consider them as the spice that makes your sales pitch more effective.

Cover letters are frequently boring to employers since they often state the obvious. One common line is “I’m looking for a challenging position,” yet how many applicants are seeking a dull position? Using a **hot** quote from a former/current employer in your cover letter can add zest. (If you can’t get someone to speak highly of you, are you sure you are putting forth enough effort in your work?) Bad hiring decisions cost the employer time and money. A former employer who speaks glowingly about you can provide a future employer with the assurance that you are the one who will do the job effectively.

Specific comments about the accomplishments, skills, knowledge, and attitudes that you have proven already and that are likely to be of great interest to the future employer are extremely valuable. Face it, if a friend of yours speaks glowingly about a particular model of car he bought, you’re much more likely to have a favorable opinion than if you just listen to the advertising of the dealership. Relevant examples to illustrate your features are critically important in ensuring the employers have a good grasp of, and remember, your best features.

Tips for Requesting the Letter of Recommendation:

- Give the writer a brief list of the skills or qualities that you would like them to focus on in the letter. You can dramatically increase the chance of getting hot quotes from a letter of recommendation by asking the letter writer to focus on those features you want to emphasize.
- Don’t ask someone for a reference if you don’t believe he or she will say good things about you.
- Your former or current supervisor might ask *you* to write the letter that he or she will put on letterhead and sign. While this is more work for you, it can be a useful exercise for you to help you assess and emphasize your skills and your contribution to the organization.
- Proof the original copy of the letter of recommendation in case you are asked to supply proof.
- Always send a thank you card to the writer of the letter of recommendation.

How to Integrate a Quote from a Letter of Recommendation:

Use a quote in your cover letter...

- *in your introductory paragraph* to quickly capture the reader’s attention
- *within the body of your cover letter* to prove one of your qualities
- *in your concluding paragraph* as an emphatic summarizing statement

Using Quotes from Letters of Recommendation in the Interview:

“So...tell me about yourself” is the most common way that interviewers begin. Quotes can be a key ingredient in your response: mentioning what a former employer said about you becomes a personal testimonial to your positive qualities. Take along your letters of recommendation to your interview as a powerful tool in getting the employer’s attention and/or proving the accomplishments, skills, knowledge, and attitudes you claim.