

Peyton Johnson

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Dear Hiring Professional,

I refreshed my email and once again, wasn't surprised: no companies had responded to me.

As the director of professional development for the James Madison University (JMU) chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), I used a list that had been provided to contact public relations professionals from dozens of companies in New York to plan for our chapter visits. Emails, phone calls, voicemails – nothing seemed to work.

Then, I took a different approach. I realized the contact list I was given was probably outdated and that was why emails bounced back or phone numbers were no longer in service, so I scrapped the document and reached out to my network. Since I had led our chapter on two previous trips to Washington, D.C. and Indianapolis, Indiana, and had interned at a Washington, D.C. public relations agency this past summer, I connected with various professionals who provided me with current contact information which allowed me to reach the right people in the right places. Where I still didn't have contact information, I took to LinkedIn to message JMU alumni that worked at companies ranging from *Forbes* to *BuzzFeed* to BMI to plan visits.

Three months later, I led 16 students and professors to six companies in New York for briefings and hosted an alumni networking event for over 40 people. My name is Peyton Johnson, and I want to be your next **Daniel J. Edelman and PRSSA Award recipient**. I know public relations and communications marketing are tough games, but I enjoy the chance to win over even the most trying situation.

As I read about the award and Edelman, I learned a lot about your commitment to leadership. It is so important to work to develop the range, relevance and reach that today's marketing demands, and doing so with a diverse array of clients takes a combination of commitment and diligence to find continued success. Through my research, I also understand Edelman emphasizes tapping into communities and conversations that are happening around the world every day. It is vital to stay on top of trends to drive the future of our ever-changing world.

Above all, I want to apply my communications, marketing and media relations experiences in a meaningful way and would enjoy working alongside people who think differently from competitors, remaining true to an entrepreneurial heritage. I am passionate about communications marketing and learned so much from representing clients as an intern at an agency and in-house at an international nonprofit organization. In addition to my internships, I have visited 14 agencies with PRSSA and individually to grow my knowledge of the industry. I also like to develop performance reports, assist with preparation of press kits, update media lists, pitch reporters, conduct and compile research and participate in creative brainstorming sessions. I am a self-starter, hungry to develop and execute creative ideas to foster my commitment to the field.

The New York experience proved, with enough relevant research and quick-thinking, I can accomplish what needs to be done. I would like the chance to bring my skill set and work ethic to your team.

Thanks so much, and I hope to hear from you soon.

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