Gabriel deGrood Bendt is an advertising agency in Minneapolis, MN. Like most agencies, GdB is broken down into three parts: Accounts, Creative, and Media. All three of these branches work together to take an idea from start to finish and ensure the most effective advertisement is created within a given budget. The client will be in direct contact with a representative from accounts throughout the process, and it is the account representative’s responsibility to act as the liaison between the client and the other two branches. I spent my first three weeks working in the accounts department, and did competitor audits, social media comparisons, and focus group evaluations. These responsibilities allowed me to gain a greater understanding of the life of an advertisement from start to finish, and put the end product in perspective as a sum of many parts. My competitive audits of Crystal Farms Cheese and Simply Potatoes’ rival companies’ websites revealed a great deal about what it takes to sell each type of product, and informed the subsequent decisions regarding which niches the two companies should try to fill given their competition. My social media comparison investigated the ways in which competitors of Chuck and Don’s use sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to sell pet supplies so that the company could determine how to better establish itself online. My work with focus groups revolved around editing hours of video down to two minutes by identifying the most salient points. These focus groups were part of Bailey Nurseries’ market research, and will be used to create a brand strategy for their new line of roses.

I spent the second three weeks in the creative department working on a number of different campaigns. My first task was to come up with a list of headlines for Black Forest Inn billboards. Black Forest Inn is a German restaurant in Minneapolis, and GdB
has held their account for 16 years, running a billboard campaign for all 16 of those years. This informed my work in two ways: I had a strong background of creative headlines to guide my copywriting, but by that same token, I was limited in what I could do because so many avenues had already been explored. This forced me to think in ways I’d never considered, and the results were better for it. I was also fortunate enough to attend a voiceover recording session during my time at GdB, and learned a lot about how advertisers interact with talent to create an end product. We were recording instructional fishing videos for Zebco, and each was promoting a product sold on their site. It was valuable because it allowed me to experience the particulars of voice talent, the importance of video as a medium, and I was able to watch a senior copywriter get the most out of an actor so that each sound bite matched his original intention. My final project in the creative department brought everything I’d been learning together. I worked with a senior copywriter and an art director on a campaign for 3M, creating a series of ads for their patient warming products. I was able to see the process all the way from the creative brief to rough execution. Unfortunately, I was unable to participate in the second round of revision after the meeting with the client, as my time at GdB was over, but I saw my ideas transformed into concrete advertisements. It was truly rewarding and I was fortunate to have been given so much freedom as a novice. I developed a greater capacity for branding strategy, honed my creative skills, and left with a portfolio for future advertising jobs.

I come away from this internship with both a greater appreciation for the amount of work it takes to create an advertisement and a greater interest in pursuing a career in
the field. It forced me to become an even clearer and more succinct writer and challenged me to develop ideas beyond what is immediately obvious. I also have a greater appreciation for the subtle complexities of advertisements—especially those that appear simple. The best and worst parts of my experience were informed by each other: the worst was the day in which I didn’t come up with a single idea worth sharing, and the best was when I came up with a flood of ideas the next day by simply changing my approach to the issue. This experience forced me outside of my comfort zone and made me a better and more creative thinker as a result.