

Marketing Yourself

Phase 2: How to apply for and get an interview

Phase 1 of your marketing campaign was to produce a great CV. A great CV is a concise catalogue of your experience, qualifications, talents - and achievements. But on its own it won't persuade anyone to see you, because that's all it is - a catalogue. So it's not enough to send just a CV to a recruiter. You need to send an explanation of why you are applying and what you are offering.

In marketing terms, your CV sets out only your features. You also need to set out your benefits. That is the job of the covering letter, or application letter.

Recruiters who receive covering letters usually read them carefully. So a good letter can be your first opportunity to make a positive impact. Some recruiters decide to invite candidates for interview on the strength of the covering letter alone. They then merely flick through the CV to confirm details and put it aside to read later.

However, before you even attempt to write a covering letter, **find out as much as you can about the company and the job**. You will be then able to prepare reasons why you are a good match for the job. This is market research, and you need to do it. Most professional recruiters are pleased to spend time helping you with information that you need.

The message in your covering letter will have to:

- command **Attention** quickly
- get and maintain **Interest**
- provide necessary **Details**
- persuade the reader to **Act** on your application

(Ever heard of AIDA?)

The best way to achieve these objectives is to write a concise letter in which each paragraph does a specific job:

- make your letter brief and to-the-point: not more than one page. And, whenever possible, address it to a named person. 'Dear Sir' letters have no place in a marketing campaign in which you are the product. Write a draft letter first so that you know what you want to say.
- address the specific issues in the advertisement and highlight where your previous experience meets the requirements. It is usually a good idea to play back some of the phrases used in the advertisement. The person who wrote the ad took a lot of trouble doing so and will find such a replay pleasing.
- ideally, your letter should have only four concise paragraphs.

First paragraph - is an introduction that will explain why you are writing. Avoid stock phrases, like *"I am writing to apply for ..."* It is much better if you can open with something like: *"Thank you for your time on the telephone the other day and for giving me more information about the job of Marketing Manager at ..."*

You should also mention the documentation you have enclosed to support your application, such as a CV.

Second paragraph - will explain your motivation in seeking the job. You should try to get across what appeals to you about the job - why you want it. For example, *"This job appeals to me because it seems to offer the opportunity to build on the expertise I have developed in ..."* and *"It seems to be the next logical step in my career in marketing."*

Third paragraph - is where you explain why the employer would want to employ you. You should try to get across what you think you have to offer and how you can benefit the organisation. This is the most important paragraph. You can use bullet points in this paragraph if you want. They help make your marketing message strong and powerful and they make it easy to read. For example: *"I can offer Synpharm -*

- *Five years experience in selling and marketing pharmaceuticals*
- *Two years product management experience in oncology products*
- *experience of two successful product launches*
- *etc., etc."*

Avoid exaggerating or understating your achievements. You don't need to go into all the details here. They are in your CV. *Aren't they?*

Fourth paragraph - is the conclusion and should ask, either directly or indirectly, for the interview. After all, that is your objective; without an interview, you can't hope to get the job.

And that's all!

Now all you have to do is present it well and check it thoroughly. Check that you have included all your contact details, including mobile phone numbers and e-mail addresses. Then make sure you enclose a copy of your CV before sending the letter!

Good luck.