

# The fastest way to the job interview

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The fastest way to the job interview  
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# Contents

	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Make a plan!</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1	The job market and job-hunting channels	8
1.2	Template: Preparation list	12
<b>2</b>	<b>Writing your CV</b>	<b>13</b>
2.2	CV - James Smith	19
<b>3</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1	Template: Targeted job hunting	26
<b>4</b>	<b>Worth knowing about applications</b>	<b>27</b>
4.1	Template: Job analysis	35
4.2	Template: Overview of applications submitted (advertised vacancies)	35

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# Introduction

'The fastest way to the job interview' is a step-by-step booklet that helps you to understand what it takes to land a job interview which ultimately will give you a job. We will cover the overall job market and job-hunting channels as well as guide you on how to make a great CV and a professional job application.

Our vision is to make it easier for you and help you find a new job as quickly as possible.

Students that are about to graduate often don't quite know how best to approach job-hunting. Being a jobseeker can be very stressful, because there are so many things you need to do.

Most people approach the task in a fairly disorganised manner and just muddle through.



'The fastest way to the job interview' structures the process from start to finish, so that you approach job-hunting one step at a time.

The process is built up in such a way that once you have completed all of the steps, you'll have the skills to write a professional CV and job application.

At each step, you will acquire the knowledge and tools you need to find a job.

The idea is to help you get off to a good start and the 4 steps to do so are:

- **Step 1** The job market and job-hunting channels
- **Step 2** Writing your CV
- **Step 3** Vacancies
- **Step 4** Writing your application

Each step consists of an explanatory text that provides in-depth information and guidance on how to approach the task at hand.

Once you have studied the text, you'll be all set to carry out each task in practice.



# 1 Make a plan!

If your goal is to get a new job as quickly as possible, it's important that you have an understanding of what the job market looks like and how it works.

This knowledge – combined with your options – can be used to make a plan for finding as many jobs as possible in your area.

You only have a limited number of hours to spend on job hunting each day. The trick is to use your time efficiently by concentrating on things that produce positive results and bring you closer to your goal of finding a new job.

It's important that you scour the whole of the job market and make your search as wide-ranging as possible. There are more – and more effective – ways of looking for a job than just reading the ads.



If you restrict yourself to advertised vacancies in newspapers, online, etc., you'll be just one of the many and it may take months or even years to find a job.

In this step, we will begin with an overview of the whole job market as it stands right now.

The following steps will describe in detail the individual job-hunting channels and how they work:

- Job ad, publicly advertised
- Recruitment and (temporary) employment agencies
- The networking/word-of-mouth method
- Unsolicited applications

You will then learn how to plan your search so that you find as many vacancies as possible in your chosen area.

Finally, after all of that, it will be your turn. With our help, you'll draw up a practical job-hunting plan.

## 1.1 The job market and job-hunting channels

Let's start by looking at the overall job market, so you have an idea of how everything works. It's important that you are aware of the following facts:

**Only 25% of vacancies are advertised**

Only one in four vacancies is advertised publicly in newspapers or on job portals. The remaining three out of four jobs are filled through other channels: The various channels:

- Ads on job portals, e.g. Jobsite, Monster, etc.
- Networking (word-of-mouth)
- Unsolicited applications/company databases of prospective employees
- Recruitment and temporary employment agencies

The reason that only 25% of jobs are advertised is that it is an expensive business. The recruitment process can take a very long time as well as a lot of valuable company resources. Most companies therefore try to find cheaper and faster ways of finding new employees.

It's often also the case that when a company needs a new employee, it's a matter of some urgency.

**It's therefore a good idea to spend a lot of time working with your network and submitting unsolicited applications.**





The advantage of using this approach is that you have far fewer competitors. On the other hand, it places greater demands on you as a jobseeker, since you can't just sit and wait for vacancies to be e-mailed to you. You have to put in a considerable amount of legwork, but it will pay off in the end.

## The job market

When you're looking for work, it's important that you know how the job market works, how new jobs arise and how vacancies are filled.

The overall job market can be subdivided into two distinct parts– visible and invisible.

Let's start by defining the two concepts:

The visible job market comprises vacancies advertised publicly, which are therefore available to all potential applicants. The Net is fantastic for job ads.

The invisible market consists of jobs that are not advertised, and which are filled without being publicly available to all potential applicants.

It is interesting to note that a large proportion of all vacancies are filled via the invisible market. Studies show that only about 25% of vacancies are ever advertised. In other words, job ads only represent the tip of the iceberg.

You may well think that the ads you see in the media give a true picture of the overall job market, but that's definitely not the case. A slightly unkind way of putting it would be to say that the visible market consists of all the jobs that companies and institutions have failed to fill by other means.

The reason for this is that it is costly – both financially and in terms of time – to fill a vacancy by advertising it. About 75% of all companies prefer to find the right person from within their own ranks before turning to the last resort: advertising the position.

## How new jobs happen

To give you an understanding of the visible and invisible job market, this step will look more closely at what happens when a job arises and how vacancies occur in a company.

### A gap in the organisation = a vacancy

Vacancies arise all the time in every company. People quit because they've found new challenges outside the company, or they may have been promoted or been given new challenges within the company.

People go on extended leave or maternity leave, they retire, or perhaps sign off long-term sick.

In other words, a "gap" – a job – appears in the organisation.

### The company has a permanent need

In addition, many companies have a permanent need to improve or need emergency help to cover duties. Most companies will at some point decide to do something about a given problem, often by taking on a new member of staff.

### Growth companies

It is also worth noting that when a business is growing and expanding, it will always have new jobs and vacancies that need to be filled. This usually happens very quickly, so it can be difficult for the company to keep up with its own recruitment needs, which in turn is a prerequisite for further expansion.

In short, growth companies always have a great need for new skills, qualifications and employees.

### Recruiting new employees



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When you're looking for a new job, it's important that you know what happens within a company when it needs a new employee:

### **Internal recruitment**

Normally, the company looks to see if the right person can be found within the organisation. If successful, this will in turn create an opening somewhere else in the organisation.

### **Management uses its professional network**

If there is no suitable candidate within the company, the company might try to find the right person via its network.

### **HR department**

If none of the above is successful, HR will be brought in. They can, for example, investigate whether there are potential candidates in their database – either from previous interviews, or from the CVs uploaded by jobseekers via the company website.

### **Advertising the vacancy**

The final option is to initiate a search using consultants and headhunters, or by writing and placing an advertisement.

In about 75% of cases, the company finds a suitable candidate either by internal recruitment, via their professional network or through their database, etc.

In other words, the company will exhaust all of its other options before advertising the post, which is costly in terms of both money and time, and therefore most companies prefer to avoid it.

### **Your job-search plan**

You now know how the job market looks, how new positions emerge, and how vacant posts are filled.

It's time to start your job search. A good way to get started is to do the following:

- write a list of the companies that probably have the kind of job you're looking for
- consider jobs within your current industry, but look at alternatives as well
- make a plan for your job search, so you cover as much of the job market as possible
- devote time to each activity, e.g.:
  - searching for jobs in newspapers and online
  - contacting your network
  - identifying options for unsolicited applications
  - contacting the relevant recruitment/employment agencies
  - devising a system for your correspondence so that you always follow up on individual enquiries.
- be prepared to constantly follow up on the various activities. It's not enough just to initiate an activity – if you want results, you'll need to follow up as well.

## 1.2 Template: Preparation list

### Contact name sought

Company	Activity and status	Next follow-up

### Contact established

Company	Activity and status	Next follow-up

### Recruitment companies

Company	Activity and status	Next follow-up

### Job databases

Company	Activity and status	Next follow-up

## 2 Writing your CV



A vacancy has been advertised. There are 100 applicants. The company wants to interview 5–8 people.

The head of department, HR officer or whoever is responsible for recruitment is faced with a large pile of applications and has to choose the interviewees.

Always remember the golden rule:

**The person responsible for recruitment will only spend 15–20 seconds reading your CV before making a decision.**

It doesn't sound like much time but companies don't pay somebody to spend all day reading applications and CVs. They're only interested in interviewing the most suitable applicants.

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Click on the ad to read more

This means that: **your CV must be easy to read and take in, and the relevant qualifications must be clearly stated.**

### **Put yourself in the reader's place**

It's extremely important that your CV grabs the recipient's attention. It is not enough that you think it is good. The reader has to think so, too.

The art of a good CV lies in highlighting the qualifications that are most relevant to the job concerned. Metaphorically speaking, as time goes by, you acquire a "bag" of all kinds of experiences, qualifications and skills. The trick is only to pull out of the ones that will help you get the job.

Remember that you should have several different versions of your CV, each emphasising different qualifications and skills, depending on what kind of profile the company is seeking for a specific job.

### **Your CV must be well-structured and easy to read**

It is very important that your CV is well-structured. This makes it quicker to read and easier to take in, and provides a clear impression of your qualifications, skills and background.

### **Everyone should be able to understand your CV**

Your CV has to be written in a way that leaves the right impression on somebody who doesn't know you, somebody from a completely different background who isn't familiar with your field or work.

### **Writing and rewriting your CV**

In order to write a good CV, it's important to rewrite and edit the content several times.

### **Write a draft**

A good way to start is with a draft CV, in which you write down all of the jobs and duties you've ever had.

Try to write about each job and duty as if you're explaining it to a complete outsider who knows nothing about the industries, companies or positions in which you've worked. Include even the most minute details about your work. Make sure you've got everything covered.

At this stage, it doesn't matter how much you write or how you write it. The most important thing is to put as much as possible into words.

This makes a lot of people realise that they have done – and learned – far more than they realised during their careers. This knowledge alone can give you a completely new perspective and improve your self-confidence.



## **Edit your CV**

Once you have finished the first draft, you will have what we call a “rough CV”. Use this as the basis for a new CV each time you apply for a job. The rough version contains all the details about every job you’ve ever had, so it might be very long. For each new version, only include details that are relevant to the job concerned.

## **Highlight qualifications relevant for the type of job you are applying for**

Always list your work experience starting with your current/last job, followed by the previous ones. Your most recent jobs (the ones you’ve had during the past 5–10 years) should be described in detail. Only include the most relevant information for earlier jobs.

In other words, your CV should reflect your current professional status in a precise and understandable way.

## **The language of the CV**

It is important that the information in your CV is presented in a short, precise and easily understandable form.

Always remember to rewrite and edit the CV several times until you are satisfied that it presents you and your profile in the best possible light.

## **Proofread your CV**



After that, it’s time to work on the layout and graphics – and most importantly of all: proofread it! Careless errors are the direct cause of many CVs going straight into the recipients’ bin.

People are often blind to their own mistakes, so we recommend that you get someone who is good at grammar and spelling to proofread what you have written.

## **Lies and CVs**

If an applicant lies in a CV or application, what guarantee does the employer have that he or she won’t also lie at work? And who wants to work with someone who isn’t honest?

The most common lies in CVs are related to:

- past jobs
- education and training
- titles
- responsibilities
- duties
- results.

Often people embellish the truth completely unnecessarily, for example by writing that they were employed somewhere for longer than they were in order to conceal a period of unemployment.

If a company wants to hire someone, they will not necessarily be interested in your previous employment. But they will definitely not accept a fictitious job.

Just be honest. State that you were out of work during that period. Most companies will not see this as a problem.

**Advice on how to describe your qualifications**

Titles are relative, and can cover different tasks depending on the workplace. It's therefore important that you describe your duties briefly and concisely. Clearly describing your duties is also a good way of documenting your qualifications and skills.

Highlight qualifications that are relevant to your future job aspirations.

I joined MITAS because  
I wanted **real responsibility**

The Graduate Programme  
for Engineers and Geoscientists  
[www.discovermitas.com](http://www.discovermitas.com)



**Month 16**

I was a construction supervisor in the North Sea advising and helping foremen solve problems

Real work  
International opportunities  
Three work placements







You may also wish to provide brief descriptions of the companies you have worked for and the industries to which they belong.

### **“Holes” in your CV**

If you quantify your career in years, short-term jobs can be left out. Alternatively, provide a very brief account. Make it clear if you have been served with your notice in your current job. The same applies if you were made redundant.

We suggest the following wording: “Due to downsizing/restructuring, I am being made redundant so would be able to start at short notice.”

That way, you turn it into something positive. And for many companies, being able to start immediately may be of crucial significance, because they need somebody quickly.

This can sometimes make all the difference when it comes to getting the job.

### **Tips for graphics and layout**

A CV can fill several pages, as long as the content is relevant and manageable. Spend time on graphics and layout. This will help make a good overall impression.

### **References**

Indicate that your references may be contacted only by prior agreement with you. This protects them from needless referrals.

It’s a good idea to let your referees know when you do find a job.

### **User-friendly format**

Remember to save your CV (and application) in a format that won’t potentially cause problems for the recipient when they open the file.

It’s a good idea to save both the CV and the application as PDF files, so you avoid the risk of relevant information not showing up on screen or not appearing when printed out for some reason.

## 2.1 Template: CV

CV – Your Name

### Personal information:

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

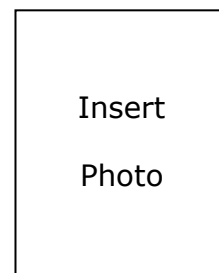
Mobile:

E-mail:

Date and place of birth:

Nationality:

Marital status/children:



### Résumé:

#### Work experience:

2012 - 2010                      **The position, The company**  
Short description of the company

Responsibilities:                -xx

Results achieved:               - xx

#### Educational background:

2009-2012                      **Education, University**  
Specialities

#### Supplementary courses:

**Language(s):**

**IT skills:**

**Leisure interests:**

## Example - CV

### 2.2 CV - James Smith

#### Personal information:

Name: James Smith  
 Address: 451 London Road  
 London SL82 4RT

Telephone: 020 8994 4433  
 Mobile: 0792 221 221  
 E-mail: [js1990@gmail.com](mailto:js1990@gmail.com)

Date and place of birth: 22 November 1990, London  
 Nationality: British  
 Marital status/children: Single, no children



#### Résumé:

I am a highly numerate individual seeking a position as an accounting trainee, with a view to achieving qualified status within three years. I have experience of working in an accounting practice, including direct contact with clients. I am reliable, trustworthy and equally comfortable working alone or as part of a team.

#### Work experience:

**2011–2011**                      **Accounting Clerk, summer job, ABC Chartered Accountants**  
 ABC Chartered Accountants act as advisors to international clients

Duties:

- Helping prepare accounts for small-business owners
- Accompanying senior consultants on company audits
- Preparing accounts on SAGE software
- Written correspondence with clients
- Incoming calls from clients.

Results achieved:

- In-depth understanding of how an accounting company works
- Awarded prize for best intern in 2011

**2010–2010**                      **Audit Clerk, summer job, XYZ Certified Accountants**  
 The company serves larger companies in the IT industry.

- Duties:
- Accompanying accountants on company audits
  - Auditing sales and purchase ledgers
  - Helping to prepare accounts in Microsoft Money
  - Typing letters to customers in Microsoft Word
  - Producing bank reconciliations in Microsoft Excel
  - Producing audit reports for small-business owners
  - Incoming calls from clients.

Results achieved: Very good understanding of accounting practice in the IT industry and the use of different software tools.

### **Educational background:**

2008–2012 BSc in Accounting, expected Result 2:1, University of Manchester

2006–2008 Pure mathematics, grade A; statistics, grade A (A-levels) –  
Manchester College

2004–2006 Mathematics grade A; English language, grade A; physics, grade A; chemistry, grade B  
(GCSEs) – London Secondary School

### **Language(s):**

English: Oral proficiency: Fluent  
Written proficiency: Fluent

German: Oral proficiency: Conversation  
Written proficiency: Knowledge

French: Oral proficiency: Conversation  
Written proficiency: Knowledge

### **IT skills:**

Microsoft office Level: Superuser

Internet and HTML Level: Superuser

SAGE accounting Level: User

Microsoft Money Level: User



**Leisure interests:**

- Qualified PADI diver and school chess champion
- Reading books.

**References:**

Mr Arnold Smithson, Senior Partner, ABC Chartered Accountants  
Tel: 0223 567365

## 3 Vacancies

### Search engines

The easiest way to get an overview of the jobs available in your particular area is to use job search engines, which are programmed to search for all online vacancies based on your choice of criteria.

We have chosen to base our review on the search engine

[www.careerjet.com](http://www.careerjet.com)

The advantage of search engines is that they are very easy to use. All you need to do is enter the type of job you are looking for, and then specify the geographic area.

### Online job databases

Most job portals are accessible via search engines, but you'll also have to search directly on the biggest portals.

The biggest and leading online portals in the UK:

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[www.jobsite.co.uk](http://www.jobsite.co.uk)  
[www.check4jobs.com](http://www.check4jobs.com)  
[www.monster.co.uk](http://www.monster.co.uk)  
[www.jobsearch.co.uk](http://www.jobsearch.co.uk)  
[jobseekers.direct.gov.uk](http://jobseekers.direct.gov.uk)

Try to conduct different types of searches. For example, you can search by local area or by industry/trade.

### **Newspaper portals**

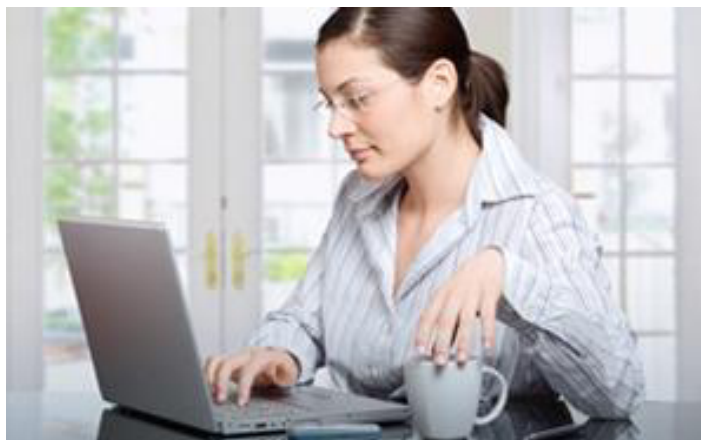
In the past, newspapers only had a printed job section. Nowadays, they also have online job sections. Just go to the newspapers' websites to find vacancies e.g. for UK:

The Times: [jobs.thetimes.co.uk](http://jobs.thetimes.co.uk)

The Times: The Sun: [jobs.thesun.co.uk](http://jobs.thesun.co.uk)

The Guardian: [jobs.guardian.co.uk](http://jobs.guardian.co.uk)

### **Union databases**



Some trade unions also have databases of vacancies in the relevant industries. If you are a member, check your union's website.

### **Getting started**

We recommend that you start by using Google to find all of the relevant job portals. This will quickly give you an idea of which ones have the most vacancies in your particular area. You needn't submit your CV to portals that do not cover your sector.

## E-mail service

When you submit your CV to the relevant databases, you can also sign up for their e-mail service/search agents. You will then automatically receive notification of new vacancies in your area. You can usually choose how often you want to receive these e-mails.

### Registering is easy:

For example, go to [www.jobsite.co.uk](http://www.jobsite.co.uk) and try it. On the front page, at the menu at the top, is the header “Job Alerts”. On other portals, this might, for example, be called “E-mail service” or “Jobs by e-mail”. Click on it and go to the next page, where you’ll register as a new user. Type in your name and e-mail address, pick your country from the drop-down menu, and then choose a password. Choose the industries/sectors in which you are interested, and click on “Next Step”. On the second page, specify what kind of jobs you’re looking for and then click “Register”. You will then receive an e-mail welcoming you to Jobsite.

The mail contains a link to your profile, where you can change your preferences. It also has a link for setting you up on the CV database. You are now registered and will receive new job opportunities on a regular basis.

## CV databases

The job portals also invite you to submit your CV to their databases. Companies use CV databases to recruit new employees. When they have a vacancy, they look through the CV database to see if there are jobseekers with the exact skills they are looking for.

They get in touch with suitable people without advertising the position, which saves them a great deal of time. For the company, it’s faster, easier and cheaper

If you register with CV databases, there is a possibility that a company will contact you because they have a vacancy that matches your profile. We strongly recommend that you spend time submitting your CV to various databases. It takes some time, but on the other hand you’ll only have to do it once for each portal.

We recommend submitting your CV to multiple databases.

### **To submit your CV to Jobsite:**

On the front page of [www.jobsite.co.uk](http://www.jobsite.co.uk) there is a menu bar at the top. Click on “Upload CV”. Then click “Add your CV now” and follow the instructions.

Remember, you need to make yourself interesting enough for a company to want to contact you.

Once they have a general impression of you, it is easier for companies to ignore the fact that you might not meet absolutely all of the requirements for the position – you can always explain yourself more fully in an interview.

Some CV databases also let you enter a more in-depth explanatory text, which improves the search options for companies.

Start by completing the various sections about yourself, including the type of job you want, your education/training, etc. You'll then reach the most important section at the end of the form:

**Your text**

Headline

Presentation

Keywords

This is important because it's the first thing companies see when they search the database.

Before you fill it in online, we recommend that you spend a little time drafting the content – either on paper or in a Word document.

Once you've written your draft text, we recommend that you get someone else to look at it. You don't have much room to play with, so choose your words carefully. The content must be easily understood, and the messages must stand out clearly. It is important that the text is snappy, as it will be in among hundreds of other job seekers. If the text does not catch the eye, the company will just move on to the next candidate, so it's important that you make the most of it.

**no.1**  
nine years in a row

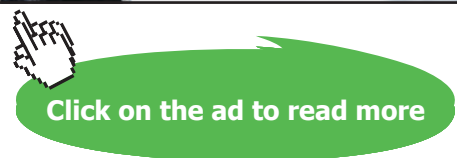
Sweden  
Stockholm

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When you write it, try putting yourself in the company’s shoes; imagine what they might want to hear about you. Always bear in mind that they only spend 15–20 seconds reading your text before deciding whether to invite you to an interview. You have to grab their attention right away.

**Submit your CV**

As mentioned previously, another option is that you submit your full CV. The advantage here is that the company can look directly at your CV and see your contact details – to arrange an interview with you, all they have to do is pick up the phone and call.

Another advantage of this method is that you can sometimes include a picture, making your CV more personal.

When you enter your information, remember to highlight only the most up-to-date and important information. The idea is to make the company interested enough to contact you. They don’t need your whole life story.

You can choose to make your CV anonymous, but because only companies and professional recruiters see it, this is probably of little benefit.

**3.1 Template: Targeted job hunting**

Jobs relevant to my qualifications and ambitions		
Job ID, incl. job requirements	Justification (match with “What I want” from the task in Step 3)	What do I intend to do about it? When?

List of companies that probably have the type of job(s) I am looking for		
Company name/type of job	Justification (match with “What I want” from the task in Step 3)	What do I intend to do about it? When?

List of alternative industries and companies		
Industry	Companies identified	What do I intend to do about it? When?



# 4 Worth knowing about applications

Before we start explaining how you write a good application, there are some things you should bear in mind.

Imagine that your application will be in a pile of at least 100 others, many from people just as well qualified as you. The manager or a personnel officer sits down with the pile of applications and goes through them.

He or she may only have a single day in which to select suitable candidates for an interview. That doesn't leave many seconds to read each of the 100 applications. They have to be skimmed or read very quickly.

**The person responsible for recruitment in a company often only spends 15–20 seconds reading each application**



After that they are put in the rejection pile, the maybe pile or the candidates-for-interview pile. Normally, 5–8 people are interviewed out of approx. 100 applicants.

Perhaps 40 are rejected right away, and another 55 will join them as the process continues.

These are the maybes – applicants who have the qualifications for the job, but who don't get invited to an interview in the first instance because their application didn't particularly catch the eye during that 15–20-second window.

They are put to one side, so if the company does not find the right employee in the first pile, one of the 55 “maybes” might be invited to an interview – but this rarely happens.

## **Getting into the interview pile**

If you often end up in the rejection or maybe piles, you still have to learn the secret behind a good application.

The sole purpose of your application is to open the door to an interview. So let's look at how the company reads an application

As mentioned earlier, a manager or personnel officer will quickly “read” the whole pile of applications. The company is only interested in identifying the applicants who are best qualified for the vacancy.

**The trick, therefore, is to only write about qualifications that are relevant to the position. This is what the company is looking for. This is what will get you an interview.**

### **Draw attention to yourself**

It may seem like an obvious mistake, but 99% of all applicants write about what they themselves find interesting. You have to put yourself in the company’s shoes. You do this by researching the duties you will be expected to perform for the company. This increases your chances of writing an application that catches the recipient’s eye and gets you selected for an interview.

There are a lot of applicants for the various jobs, so it pays to make an extra effort. You’re better off spending your time and resources writing one good job application rather than ten half-hearted ones that will most likely be rejected.

Before writing your application, you may want to call the company and ask a few questions so that you establish a dialogue with the recipient of your application. During this conversation, it is important that you draw attention to your qualifications for the job. You can use the information you glean to write an application that is more targeted than one merely based on your own unfounded assumptions.

When they receive your application, the company will feel that they already know you, which should increase your chances of an interview.

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Once you have submitted your application, you can also follow up by calling the company and asking for an update, e.g. “When do you expect to hold the interviews?”, “How many applicants do you expect to interview?”, “When do you expect to have completed the interviews?”, “When do you want the successful applicant to start?”

In short, throughout the entire process you have to make an extra effort to draw attention to yourself.

### **How to write good applications**



Experience shows that if you write good applications, you will get positive feedback and be called for interviews. It sounds very simple – and it is. But how do you actually do it in practice?

Start by analysing the vacancy. Read the ad carefully, paying particular attention to the qualifications needed. There are typically specific requirements for training, previous employment in a similar job or sector, experience of the duties outlined, etc.

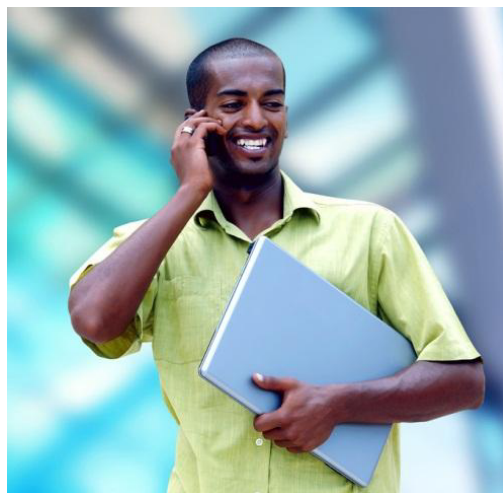
Contrast the specific job requirements with your own qualifications.

**Your application should focus on the overlap between your qualifications and those listed in the advertisement.**

You should also consider in what way the company will benefit from employing you, and include that too. If you have questions about the job, pick up the phone and call the company. Ask specific questions about the things you're not sure about. This will also allow you to draw attention to yourself and start a dialogue with the company.

### **How do I prepare for the phone call to the company?**

Before calling, a jobseeker should consider the following:



- Think of the receptionist and secretary as your friends and helpers
- Present yourself and your purpose in a friendly and natural manner
- Remember that you wish to generate interest. If appropriate, refer to an e-mail or other point of reference
- Your purpose should be well considered in advance. You must know what you want to say (see the following checklist)
- You must make your message simple and appeal for advice/guidance/assistance [id495332149](#)
- Take breaks and listen
- Prepare what you will say if any objections are raised or if you meet resistance
- To an appropriate extent, use the person's name and exhibit knowledge of and interest in the company
- The purpose of the telephone conversation is to achieve a positive outcome – i.e. an interview.
- When you bring the conversation to an end, remember, if appropriate, to confirm the date and venue for the interview.

### **How to do analyse a job posting**

When you read an application, the trick is to identify the qualifications the company is looking for, and then write about your own qualifications in the way that most closely reflects their requirements. The more your application explains why you meet their requirements, the greater the chance of being asked to an interview.

Sometimes, finding out what is required is fairly straightforward – in other cases, you'll have to spend some more time analysing the ad. You should start with the "hard" qualifications, such as requirements for education, training and experience with specific duties.

### **What about my soft qualifications?**

Does this mean that the company doesn't care about your personal qualities? Yes, they certainly do care – but this will come later in the recruiting process.

The reason for this is that your application is not a very reliable indicator of who you are as a person. When you describe your personal qualities, you could, in theory, write anything. It may be that you believe your own description, but maybe the outside world has an entirely different image of you. Whether you are independent, committed, etc., are subjective assessments.

In addition, you can be very sympathetic and a really great colleague but this doesn't matter if you don't have the minimum qualifications for the job. In other words, your professional skills will get you invited to an interview, but it's the soft qualifications that will land you the job.

The company starts to look more closely at your personal qualities during the actual job interview, where recruiters can ask questions and automatically form an impression of who you are as a person.

As the recruitment process progresses, your personal qualities will weigh heavier and heavier, because you need to fit into a team and a particular workplace culture. This is also why, further along in the process, the company will test candidates' personality and motivation.

So when you write an application, focus on your professional qualifications. This is what will get you called in for an interview.

### When should you apply for a job?

**The golden rule is: If you have 60–70% or more of the listed requirements, then you can safely apply.** If you are below this percentage, you don't have enough qualifications for the job. If you are above, you may be considered overqualified.



"I studied English for 16 years but...  
...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons"  
Jane, Chinese architect

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### Things NOT to write

“I am applying for this post because I am unemployed/looking for a job.”

“I am applying for this post because I live nearby and would like a shorter commute to work.”

“I am applying for this post because I think the job sounds really exciting and challenging.”

The error here is that the applicant has based the application on his or her own interests, rather than those of the recruiter. The person responsible for recruitment probably doesn't care whether you are unemployed/looking for a job, have too long a commute, or think the job sounds exciting.

The only thing that interests recruiters is whether you have the qualifications for the post. Use your introduction to convey the specific skills that make you the right candidate

### Suggestions for good introductions:

“I am applying for this post because I have experience of similar work.”

“I am applying for this post because I have several years' experience in similar positions.”

“I am applying for this post because I have several years' experience in the industry.”

“I have XX years' experience as xxxx, and therefore I have what it takes to do this job.”

This will make the recruiter sit up and think: “Aha, here's a candidate that sounds interesting” and look more closely at the rest of your application.

### Show interest in the company

It's also a good idea to show interest in the company. You can do this at the end of your application. It tells the recruiter that you're a serious applicant who isn't looking for just any old job, and that you have seriously thought about why you want to work for this particular company.

### Do NOT use standard applications

An experienced recruiter can spot a standard application right away. It says something about the candidate that he or she hasn't even bothered to spend time to drawing up an application, but went for the easy option. This suggests that the applicant will most likely have a similar approach to work. This type of applicant has no chance and will be rejected immediately

Another problem with standard applications is that, in terms of communication, they completely miss the point of the advert, i.e. the qualifications required, and instead talk about different qualifications.



**NEVER** use standard applications. Customise each application to the job. Once you've learned how to do this, it won't take much time.

### **Proofread**



Proofread the application before you send it to avoid typos and other silly mistakes. If you know anybody who is good at English, ask him or her to check your application before sending it.

### **Once the application has been submitted**

The typical procedure is that the company will acknowledge receipt of your application with a short letter/e-mail after three to five days. Invitations to the first round of interviews will be sent approx. 14 days after the ad appears. Three or four weeks after the ad appears, selected candidates will be called to the second round of interviews. The successful applicant will then be offered the job.

Other applicants will receive a rejection 4-6 weeks after the advertisement date. In some cases, the reasons will be stipulated.

Don't be afraid to follow up on your applications. If you receive a rejection, contact the company and ask why you were rejected, and what they think you could do to increase your chances of being interviewed in the future.



If you are rejected, don't take it personally – instead, try to handle it professionally and see if you can learn something from it. Look at whether your application was good enough, or if there is anything that could be improved. For example, are you applying for the right type of jobs? Is your CV detailed/focused enough? What worked well and what do you need to improve for next time?

**Example - Application**

**FLEX Production Ltd**  
**317 Park Road, Homewood Industrial Estate**  
**London SL60 4PT**

**Att. Accounting Manager Thomas Hanson**

James Smith  
451 London Road  
London SL82 4RT  
0792 221 221  
[js1990@gmail.com](mailto:js1990@gmail.com)

London, 26 May 2011

**Your new associate accountant**

With reference to your advertisement on Monster.co.uk, I would like to apply for the post as associate accountant. Having researched your company's values and products, as well as the competences listed for the role, I believe FLEX Production would be the ideal place in which to begin my career.

I will shortly finish my honours degree in accounting at the University of Manchester, and expect a final grade of 2:1.

I have already had the opportunity to apply in practice some of the theory acquired at University. I have spent the last two summers working as an accounting intern, which has given me a solid understanding of the tasks and responsibilities that the job entails. My duties included:

- accompanying accountants on company audits
- helping to prepare accounts for small-business owners
- producing audit reports for small-business owners
- preparing accounts using SAGE and Microsoft Money
- understanding customers' needs.

My focus is on delivering great results as part of a dynamic team, in an environment that fosters professional development.

I look forward to hearing from you. I hope that you will consider me for an interview so that I can introduce myself in person and learn more about the job.

Kind regards,  
James Smith

Appendix: CV

### 4.1 Template: Job analysis

<b>Position</b>		
<b>Advertised in/contacted via:</b>		
<b>Company:</b>		
<b>Date:</b>		
<b>Job requirements</b>	<b>My qualifications</b>	<b>Pros/cons?</b>
<i>Enter the core tasks associated with the job</i>	<i>Enter your qualifications for the job</i>	<i>Enter the difference between the requirements and your qualifications. Be realistic!</i>
<b>Conclusion</b>		

### 4.2 Template: Overview of applications submitted (advertised vacancies)

Company	Position/reference	Contact person	Phone/e-mail	Application sent (date)	Results (contacts, interviews, etc.)	Follow-up (date)