

How to write a speculative job application

A great way to tap into the hidden jobs market and find an opportunity that would have normally passed you by, speculative job applications can be your fast-track into your dream job.

The least you'll get out of this method is that you're forced to think carefully about your relevant skills and experience, and really sell yourself. And the best outcome? Employers will see you're a committed, driven and dedicated individual, and ask you in for an interview.

So, how do you go about writing one? Take a look at our top tips on making your application the best it can be, and start creating your own career path.

Think about yourself

Unlike the normal recruitment process, a speculative job application is going to an employer completely out of the blue – you're the cold-caller of the jobs market. So you need to know exactly what you're selling.

Before you approach any employers think carefully about what exactly you have to offer them and why they should ask you in for an interview.

As with any job application, think about your strengths and weaknesses, and previous professional achievements. The difference here is that you'll need to be more concise, so an employer can see quickly why they should consider you.

Do your research

Once you've thought about yourself, it's time to start thinking about the employers you want to target. And we mean *really* think about them. Before sending your CV and cover letter, research the company thoroughly and use the information to tailor your application – no one-size-fits-all cover letter and CV!

Find out everything you can, from the company's history, to its aims and values, to its future plans for growth. It's also important to find out the best person to send your application to; often someone in HR is best for larger companies, while for smaller businesses it can be best to target the MD or even the CEO directly.

Craft and send your application

Use your research of the company to tweak your CV and form your cover letter. It's the cover letter that will be most crucial initially, so it needs to be spot-on.

Make sure you write a unique cover letter for each application you make, making it as bespoke to that employer as possible, and remember that the person reading is not expecting a job application and is likely to only scan the letter at first.

It needs to be sharp, direct and concise, letting the reader know immediately that you're someone worth their time and attention. You might also want to think about sending your application in the post; a traditional letter is almost certain to be opened and read, and could make your application really stand out.

Don't forget to follow up

Once you've sent your application, whether it's via email or snail mail, you could be waiting a while for a response – if the employer remembers to respond at all. So if you haven't heard anything after

a week or so, don't be afraid to send a follow-up email or even a telephone call to get their thoughts on your application.

Although a speculative job application might sound like a long shot, it's merely a way of gaining access to jobs that simply haven't been advertised. These jobs exist, and employers won't judge you for enquiring. And if it results in the job of your dreams, any embarrassment will have been worth it.