

MAKE THE FIRST MOVE WITH SPECULATIVE APPLICATIONS

OPTIMISE YOUR JOB HUNT BY TAPPING INTO THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET. YOU CAN INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF GETTING THE ROLE YOU WANT BY CONTACTING EMPLOYERS DIRECTLY.



If you only wait until you see a job vacancy advertised before you apply, it's likely that the huge number of opportunities that are unadvertised will pass you by.

Making speculative applications involves sending your CV and cover letter to a company, even though a vacancy hasn't been advertised, to see if they have any opportunities for you to work for them. While this might not be the quickest method of job hunting, done carefully it can certainly deliver positive results particularly with smaller organisations and in industries such as the arts, media and charities. For employers this is a quicker and cheaper way to recruit, plus – it proves the candidate's drive, initiative and willingness to go the extra mile.

If you are interested in working in the arts or media, another way of identifying potential employers is to list your favourite arts venues, museums or the production companies that produce your favourite programmes, for example.

Take time to get it right

Remember any communication you have with an employer will define their first impression of you. Take time to find out about the organisation, so you can clearly state *what* you know about them and *why* you are particularly interested in working for them. Targeting your CV and cover letter is vital. Although there is no person specification to tailor your application to, think about the skills and qualities this organisation is likely to need, and demonstrate how you match them. It may help to look at job adverts for similar roles elsewhere, or for other roles in that organisation, for ideas on what they may be looking for.

Increase your chances of making an impact by sending your application directly to a person who you have already made a connection with. This could be someone you met at a careers event, have previously worked with, or contacted on LinkedIn or Twitter for example.

Although it is easier said than done, don't be disheartened if you don't get a response. Follow up your application with a phone call a couple of weeks later to check whether they have received your application and gauge the likelihood of any opportunities. This approach won't work every time, but with persistence you never know when you might find yourself in 'the right place at the right time'. **L**

See our articles on how to write an effective CV and cover letter PAGES 30–33

See 'Making connections' on page 21 for more on identifying potential employers

A speculative approach

'I managed to get my PR work experience placement by sending a speculative CV and letter. After long hours of browsing the internet, I discovered www.prweekjobs.co.uk and saw an interesting profile for a PR agency, so I decided to apply. A little time later, I received a call from a member of the staff asking me when I was available for an informal interview and they offered me the placement.'

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