

careers advice pack

## 7. Speculative approaches for jobs

(Applying to companies which are not currently advertising vacancies)

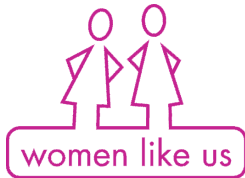


### How to make a speculative approach

Writing to companies that you would like to work for, to enquire whether they are recruiting for roles matching your experience, can sometimes produce results. You might want to target a small number of carefully selected organisations, or you may want to apply to all companies in a certain industry within a reasonable travel distance of home. You may have a named contact to follow up from your networking, or you may be approaching them without a contact.

Whatever the case, speculative approaches do work. To stand the best chance of success, bear in mind the following:

- Identify organisations you want to contact (see the research resources below).
- Always write to a person. Never to 'Dear Sir/Madam'. Identify the right person to contact by identifying the department to approach.
- If the company is small (below £5M turnover per year) contact the managing director or chief executive officer. Don't contact the HR manager only.
- Research the companies/organisations you want to contact, e.g. by looking at their website, Facebook, Twitter, trade press, national press, networking with contacts who have worked there or know of them.
- Contact several organisations (as long as you are genuinely interested in working for them). You won't get a yes from every contact you make by any means. 10 contacts may lead to 1 (very useful) meeting. There is no hard and fast rule to how many contacts are needed to get results, but it's fair to say that the greater the number of targeted approaches, the more chance of success.
- Follow up on any approaches you make. Make a call to discuss your letter or email and CV, say, 7 days after you wrote. Expect to make more than one follow up call. You can also follow up by email, but it may be less effective.



### Research resources

Here are some ideas on useful sources of information, to help you identify contacts and research your target organisations:

- Company websites, Facebook pages, LinkedIn and Twitter.
- General web searches e.g. via Google.
- Local online forums. These contain information about local businesses and what is happening in your area. You may be able to join in a conversation thread and mention that you are looking for a particular type of work, or you might find information about local networking groups.
- Specific interest websites. For example, in the charity sector the site [www.charitychoice.co.uk](http://www.charitychoice.co.uk) allows you to search charities by activity and location.
- Job ads in national, local and trade press could give you a reason to approach a company speculatively about other possible job opportunities. For example, if a company is recruiting new sales staff, they may also need a new sales team administrator.
- Business pages of national press, especially the Financial Times (from the local library or use their website if you would rather not buy) are useful to search for recent articles on a sector or company. [www.thepaperboy.com](http://www.thepaperboy.com) is a useful portal for links to many newspapers and magazines.
- Trade associations and professional bodies can provide lists of members and industry information. Joining any such body will open up a range of contacts in your industry. Many organise networking events. Some offer reduced membership rates for those on a career break. Go to [www.taforum.org](http://www.taforum.org) for a directory of trade associations.



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- Chambers of Commerce represent groups of local businesses in an area and can be a good source for contact names. [www.britishchambers.org.uk](http://www.britishchambers.org.uk)
- Kompass is a directory of which companies produce what products and services. <http://gb.kompass.com/>
- Job fairs, exhibitions and conferences are held frequently all over the country, particularly in London in venues such as Olympia, Earls Court and the Business Design Centre. Information on trade fairs and exhibitions can be found at [www.exhibitions.co.uk](http://www.exhibitions.co.uk)

Sample covering letter for speculative approach

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### Sample covering letter for speculative approach

Your Address  
Your Telephone Number  
Your Email

Employer's Name  
Employer's Title  
Name of the Organisation  
Address  
Post Code

Date

Dear Dr/Prof/Mr/Ms/Mrs (*name of employer*):

*Start with something complimentary about the organisation e.g. You are one of the leading companies/organisations in... say what field... in the UK and I am writing because of my interest in opportunities in the .... project management/marketing/IT ...side of your business.*

*I am.... (Describe the key skills and experience which you offer. Use the profile from your CV as a guide)*

*You will note from my CV that I have worked for... (mention relevant organisations/companies)*

*With these organisations I have had particular experience in.... (mention one or two relevant achievements)*

Thank you for taking the time to consider this enquiry. I would really value the chance to meet you, and understand that such a discussion would not necessarily mean there was any career opportunity in the immediate future.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Your Name  
Enc (enclose CV)