

The good application letter

101 Bristol Gardens
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5 August 2002

Chris Wilson
Wilson Associates
45 Frederick Street
Edinburgh
EH2 1EP

Dear Ms Wilson

I was very interested to read your advertisement in the Daily Mail of 8 June 2002 for a Personal Assistant with the Royal Mail, as I am confident that I have the experience and skills being sought.

As you will see from my enclosed CV, I have extensive experience of operating as a Senior Secretary/PA, serving high levels of management in varied customer orientated industries. In my most recent post as Secretary/PA to the Chairman of the ABC Company I have led a team of six staff in providing support to the Board of Directors. It was my responsibility to recruit, train and motivate this group into a tight knit and efficient team. Their motivation was a key issue in the building up of this successful operation. As a result, I was also able to reorganise team functions so that a retiring member did not need to be replaced.

This personal assistant role would broaden my career and enable me to tackle new challenges in a revitalised organisation such as Royal Mail. I feel that my experience, youthful approach and managerial skills, together with my secretarial abilities, could be used to excellent effect.

I would be delighted to attend an interview and would be happy to discuss how we may benefit each other. My previous salary with ABC Company was £15,000 with additional benefits. My telephone number, whilst being on my CV, is (0181) 123 4567; an answerphone is in operation if I am not able to answer the call. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Norma Hooper (Mrs)

Why this letter is more likely to achieve an interview

- 1 Applicant's address includes postcode and she has taken the trouble to find out the sex of the consultant.
- 2 She is saying 'I have what you need – I can do this job'.
- 3 There is no wishing to apply – she is direct.
- 4 It is immediately clear which position is being applied for.
- 5 The applicant has not fallen into the trap of expecting the accompanying CV to do all the work. It is understood that the application letter complements the CV and is highlighting those aspects of her career, which are relevant to the job.
- 6 The details of a specific role have been quoted with evidence. Potential employers like to see the benefits to the company e.g. reduction in headcount.
- 7 Although not mentioned in the advertisement, she had read between the lines and picked out factors that will be of interest to Royal Mail, e.g. Experience of 'customer orientated industries'.
- 8 The applicant understands that the purpose of the letter is to achieve an interview. Therefore, the letter is kept brief and does not tell the whole story. It provides a taster.
- 9 The advertisement has been studied, she concentrates on her managerial skills as stressed in the advertisement, and given an example, with passing reference to secretarial abilities.
- 10 Achievements and responsibilities are quantified where possible.
- 11 The emphasis throughout is mainly on the benefit to the employer rather than to the applicant (only one sentence refers).
- 12 Optimistic positive words are used; 'confident', 'successful', etc.
- 13 There is strong evidence of 'blowing your own trumpet'.
- 14 The applicant asks for an interview and gives a number.
- 15 The ending of the letter is very positive in that it indicates the next stage of the process and her keenness to pursue her application.
- 16 It is recognised that the applicant is the product, the employer is the customer and the letter and CV are the sales literature. The latter is all that the customer has to go on to decide whether the product might be worth seeing.

Selling Points

Remember, in your letters and during your discussions, employers like to hear from people who can:

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| Cut costs | Preserve competitive advantage |
| Make it look better | Improve the packaging |
| Get it done quickly | Avoid potential problems |
| Improve appearance | Organise it |
| Expedite the workflow | Use old things in a new way |
| Increase sales/profit/turnover | Cut down time |
| Provide more information | Provide a tax advantage |
| Cut staff costs | Reduce inventories |
| Turn around a bad situation | Develop staff performance |
| Improve teamwork and relationships | |