

position, vacancy, and interview.

- **Avoid overuse of I and writer-focused statements.**

Because the message is designed to sell your services, some use of *I* is natural and expected; but restrict the number of times *I* is used, especially as the first word in a paragraph. Focus on providing specific evidence that you can meet the company's needs. The employer is not interested in reading about your need to earn more income, to be closer to your work, to have more pleasant surroundings, or to gain greater advancement opportunities.

- **Avoid unconvincing generalizations that could sound boastful.**

Self-confidence is commendable, but overconfidence (or worse still, just plain bragging) is objectionable. Overly strong adjectives, self-judgmental terms, and unsupported generalizations damage your credibility. Instead of labeling your performance as "superior" or "excellent," or describing yourself as "an efficient, technically skilled team player," give supporting facts that show the interviewer you can deliver on what you're selling.



of the particular company, job requirements, and field.

- **Provide requested information.** Job listings often request certain information: "Must provide own transportation and be willing to travel. Give educational background, work experience, and salary expected." Discuss these points in your application message. Preferably, the question of salary is left until the interview, allowing you to focus your message on your contributions to the company—not what you want from the company (money). Discussion of salary isn't meaningful until after a mutually successful interview; however, if an ad requests a statement about it, the message should address it. You may give a minimum figure or range, indicate willingness to accept a figure that is customary for work of that type, or indicate a preference for discussing salary at the interview.

- **Communicate knowledge of the company, job requirements, and language of the field.**

Your statements about a company's rapid expansion or competitive advantage show you really are interested in the company, read widely, do more than you are required to do, and gather information before making decisions. However, phrase these statements carefully to avoid the perception of insincere flattery. For example, referring to the employer as "the leader in the field," "the best in the business," or "a great company" could appear as an attempt to get a favorable decision as a reward for making a complimentary statement. To reflect your understanding of the job requirements, use indirect statements that are informative and tactful. Direct statements such as "The requirements of this job are . . ." presents information the employer presumes you already know; "An auditor should be

minology commonly used by the profession to communicate clearly in terms the respondent understands; it also saves space and implies background in the field.

- **Focus on strengths and portray a positive attitude.**

Concentrate on the positive aspects of your education or experience that have prepared you for the particular job. Apologizing for a shortcoming or admitting failure only weakens your position and raises questions about your self-esteem.

Do not discuss your current employer's shortcomings.

Regardless of how negative you perceive your present employer, that perception has little to do with your present employer's needs. A negative employer's needs. A present employer, you can be perceived as someone who would do the same to the employer.

13-5c **Finishing Touches**

To compete with the high volumes of junk mail, daily messages, and fear of computer viruses, you must provide a motive for an interviewer to open an unexpected message from an unknown person.

The importance of proofreading and careful reading of job applications is generally understood. Still, employers frequently

voice concern with the sloppiness and unprofessional appearance and content of electronic submissions. To survive the skeptical eye of an interviewer, allow your application to produce a professional-looking document regardless of the presentation or delivery you've chosen.

In regard to preparing an application message, email submission, career experts recommend treating it as a business letter with the complete address of the company exactly as presented in a letter sent to the company and a formal closing such as "Sincerely." To help reach you, include a full signature block with mailing and email addresses, and phone number. The recipient can easily contact you without your attachments. Although seemingly unnecessary,