

# How to take the next step



By Juliette Attwell

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This week we look at some ideas on how to gain experience as well as making an impact with your cover letter.



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***I am currently working at a call centre and have a degree in Communication Science. I have been struggling to get into the communication field for the last 2.5 years. The biggest challenge is the experience that comes up with every post, there is always 3-5 years' experience to fill the position of a communication or marketing officer. I would like to know how do I go about gaining experience on my own front seeing that no one is willing to employ me without the experience? Please help. - Anonymous***

Hi,

Thank you for your question. I am sure it is very frustrating being in a job that is not in line with your aspirations, but well done for sticking it out and gaining the necessary experience.

With regards to gaining experience, the first option is to approach your current company and see whether they have any posts in their marketing/communications team. Even if they don't, perhaps volunteer to write some content for them, either for brochures, website etc to make you stand out. When there is an overflow of work, they may approach you again and eventually when a post becomes available you could be the first person they consider for the role.

Secondly, you could apply for internships with various media and advertising companies. These can be found on the various job portals, and perhaps once you have completed your internship you will be asked to stay on? The only downside to an internship is the minimal pay involved, so if it's at all an option, try to put away some savings so that you can do this for three or so months. This is quite a bold step as it means giving up your current stable job so it depends on how comfortable you are, and whether you can afford to do this.

If it's not an option then perhaps you can look at doing some freelance work. The communications industry specifically is a great area in which to do this. You could approach magazines and community websites to write articles for them. This will help you to build a name for yourself and will help you to network in the industry. You could also approach independent companies as to whether they need help with their marketing communications such as brochures, flyers etc and build up a portfolio of communications material.

All of the above will help to create more bulk in your CV and give you that necessary edge.

Lastly, perhaps the posts you have been applying for are too senior; try starting off with positions such as communications assistant, marketing coordinator or even just an assistant in any communications company. This could open the initial door for you and your career can grow from there.

I wish you the best of luck in your endeavours! Please let me know how it goes.

### ***How do I write a cover letter? - Joseph***

Hi Joseph,

Thanks for your question, and although it may seem simple, many people don't know at all what to write in their cover letter.

The main reason for a cover letter is to introduce yourself and highlight why you would be an exceptional person to employ. Although you may think that your passion for biking and exceptional Game of Thrones knowledge makes you popular amongst friends, these won't be qualities an employer looks for.

Remember to keep it simple and to the point. Use the Rule of Threes; divide the cover letter into three sections, and write about three sentences for each section.

### **For example:**

- 1. About me** - give details of your formal education and experience as well as qualities you have that you think would be appealing for example high attention to detail, strong managerial skills or a good team player.
- 2. Why I am great for your company** - give details of your overall capabilities, what you have done for similar companies in the past and what assets you bring to the table.
- 3. Why I am great for this role** - give details about what qualities and experience you have that match the role as well as how you could build on these.

End off with something like, "Thank you for taking the time to look at my CV. I look forward to your feedback and if necessary, I will follow up again in two weeks' time before the (state date in two weeks time) to get your valuable input."

I hope this helps and I wish you all the best.

**Remember to always love what you do!**

**Juliette**

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## ABOUT JULIETTE ATTWELL

Juliette Attwell is Head of Marketing & Operations at Recruitgroup. Recruitgroup has won Careerjunction Recruiter of the Year in 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2014 as well as Fast Growth Business of the Year at the National Business Awards 2014. Juliette holds a Bcom Honours in Marketing Management and is the resident "agony aunt" on the BizCareers Column, she was also a finalist in the Top Young Executive at the National Business Awards 2014.  
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