

### English Corner



Dr. Mable Chan is a lecturer at the Department of English, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. She was awarded the Faculty Award for Outstanding Teaching in the 2005/06 academic year and has vast experience teaching academic and business English to both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Her new book 「職時上位：名人英語全面睇」, which is about business English, is now available in the market. In this column she advocates using simple and concise English for business writing.

When applying for a job a cover letter should be sent with your resume; a good cover letter can be a powerful tool to draw recruiters' attention to your abilities. In this issue, we use the Bhatia's model (1993) as a framework to analyse job application letter, which is about selling oneself (e.g. one's competence, qualities and suitability to a position).

#### **Bhatia's model (1993)**

The following table lists the different steps ("moves") in preparing a job application letter. Examples of each move are given on the right.

Moves	Examples
<p><b>1. Establishing credentials</b></p>	<p>This is to establish credentials by explaining the purpose of the application, how the applicant has learned about the vacancy, and his / her suitability for the position.</p> <p>a. I am writing to <b>apply for the position</b> advertised in The East Asia Morning Post for an Accountant Executive. I believe that <b>my rich experience</b> in accounting and <b>relevant qualifications</b> make me a qualified candidate.</p> <p>The applicant can also start with compliments. Bhatia (1993) called this "adversary glorification".</p> <p>b. The <b>well-established history and the reputation</b> of the company in the field impress me and have prompted me to apply for the position of Marketing Officer.</p>
<p><b>2. Introducing the offer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offering the candidature (i.e. 'I', the applicant)</li> </ul>	<p>The first part of the following example is to establish credentials by mentioning how the applicant has heard about the opening (implying that you can fulfill the requirements). The second part is to offer candidature using the personal pronoun "I":</p> <p>a. With reference to the job advertisement in the East Asia Morning Post of 29 October 2010 for the position of Interpreter, <b>I</b> would</p>

	like to offer myself as a candidate for your consideration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Essential detailing of the candidature</li> </ul>	<p>In this part of the job application letter, you should include details about yourself, which may include qualifications, work experience and personality attributes.</p> <p>a. I <b>graduated from</b> The Chinese University of Hong Kong majoring in English and Translation in 2009.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Indicating value of the candidature</li> </ul>	<p>This is to address the needs of the position. The applicant has to highlight how he / she is qualified for the position. Instead of being factual, try to tailor this to the needs of the employer / position.</p> <p>a. Although I am a fresh graduate, I gained work experience in marketing through an internship during summer 2008. Through the experience, I have gained <b>valuable experience in promoting a company, organizing events, looking for sponsors, dealing with clients, and so on.</b></p>
<b>3. Offering incentives</b>	<p>The applicant can provide additional information which may be an asset to the application.</p> <p>a. I specialized in Translation and Interpretation but I can also teach language courses such as Spanish and French. My cultural background can also foster better teacher-student relationships.</p>
<b>4. Enclosing documents</b>	<p>A job applicant can attach a resume or other relevant information to the application.</p> <p>a. Please <b>refer to the attached resume</b> for details of my qualifications, experience and research interests.</p>
<b>5. Soliciting response</b>	<p>The applicant has to provide contact information for the potential employer to arrange interviews (if any).</p> <p>a. Please feel free to write to me at the above <b>address</b> or call me on <b>2123 4567.</b></p>
<b>6. Using pressure tactics</b>	<p>This is not about imposing pressure on the potential employer. The following example explains what pressure tactics can be used by a job applicant.</p> <p>a. I have to give <b>one-month's notice to my present employer</b> and I look forward to hearing from you soon.</p>
<b>7. Ending politely</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Situational closing (Closing related to the context of the letter)</li> </ul>	<p>A closing more related to the situation (i.e. job application) is preferable.</p> <p>a. I hope you will find my qualifications and experience useful and I look forward to explaining my suitability to the position to you</p>



in an interview.

**A sample**

30 May, 2009

Mr. Bob Wong  
Marketing Director  
ABC Hotel  
12345 Nathan Road, Mongkok

Dear Mr. Wong

I am writing to apply for the position of Marketing Manager advertised in the North China Morning Post dated 29 May 2009. I am very interested in the position and believe that my qualifications and successful sales record have prepared me well for it.

While working toward my MA degree in Business Administration, I was employed as a Marketing Officer with a famous fashion chain store. With my well-established network and rich marketing experience in the fashion industry, I successfully increased the sales volume and profit margin of the brand significantly, and I would like to attain the same success in the hospitality industry. I have a strong academic background in business administration and communication, and will be able to contribute to your hotel applying both my work experience and knowledge in the field.

My gift being proficient in different languages is also an asset. In addition to my mother tongue, Cantonese, I can speak fluent Putonghua, English, Japanese and Spanish, which could help me communicate and negotiate effectively for whatever marketing purposes your hotel needs.

Please find enclosed my resume which more fully details my qualifications for the position. I look forward to meeting you in person regarding marketing opportunities with your hotel. Please contact me at 2123 4567 or email me via [kelvinwong@mymail.com.hk](mailto:kelvinwong@mymail.com.hk). Within the next week I will contact you to confirm that you received my email and resume and to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely  
[signature]  
Kelvin, Wong Tai Man  
Encl.



**Quiz:**

1. How does the writer establish credentials in the above letter?

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2. How does the writer offer incentives?

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**Key:**

1. The writer establishes credentials through two means: (a) telling how he has learned about the opening; (b) how he finds himself qualified in terms of qualifications and proven track sales record.
2. The writer offers incentives by emphasizing that he is proficient in a number of languages, and how this will be an asset to the company (i.e. for effective communication and negotiation for marketing purposes).

**References:**

陳美寶 (2009). *職時上位: 名人英語全面睇*. 世界出版社