



# McKinsey & Company

- How to apply
- Winning applications

April 2010

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# What position is best for you?



Possibility to apply for internships

- 8–12 weeks
- More information at [www.mckinsey.com](http://www.mckinsey.com)

<sup>1</sup> At the end of the Fellow Program (approx. 3 years) you have the opportunity to study for an MBA or a PhD (full-time) while benefiting from financial support. On your return, you will re-start as an Associate

# How to apply

**More information at** [www.mckinsey.com](http://www.mckinsey.com)

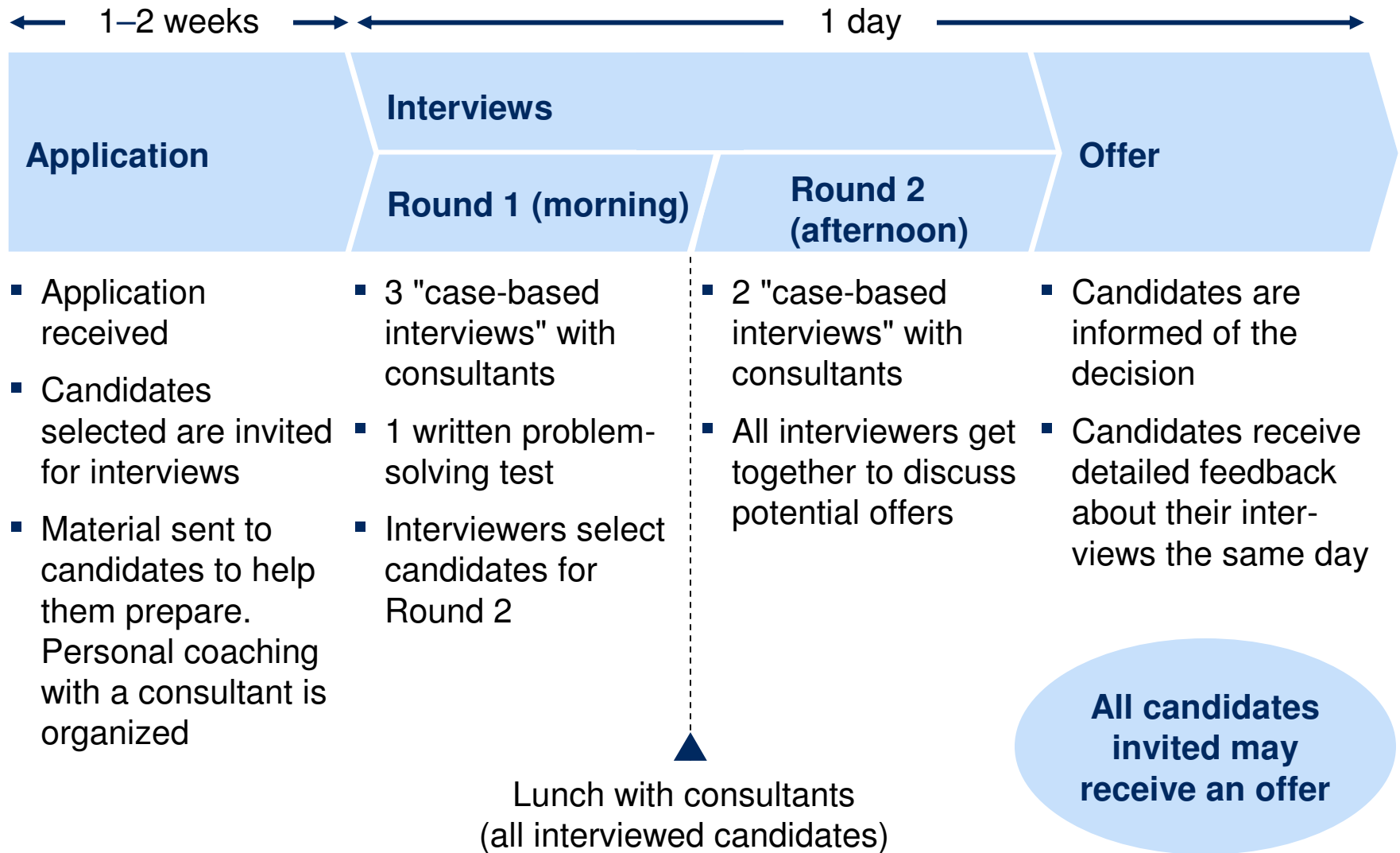
## **Documents to send**

- In French or in English for our Geneva office
- In German or in English for our Zurich office
- Application letter
- Curriculum vitae
- Copy of school-leaving certificate and grade report
- Copy of university degree and grade report (bachelor's and master's)
- Other references (employment certificate, etc.)

## **You may send your application**

- Online (most practical method) [www.mckinsey.ch](http://www.mckinsey.ch)
- By e-mail: [recruiting@mckinsey.ch](mailto:recruiting@mckinsey.ch)
  
- If you have any questions, contact Laura Beetschen, Recruiting, by phone at +41 22 744 2778 or by e-mail at [laura\\_beetschen@mckinsey.com](mailto:laura_beetschen@mckinsey.com)

# What does our recruiting process look like?



# Contents



How to apply

**CV**

Application letter

# What employers look for in a CV

## Education

- Details of **studies**: dates, title of degree obtained, academic exchanges, etc.
- Subject matter of **academic work**, e.g., for master's or doctorate
- **Standard tests** passed (e.g., GMAT, TOEFL)

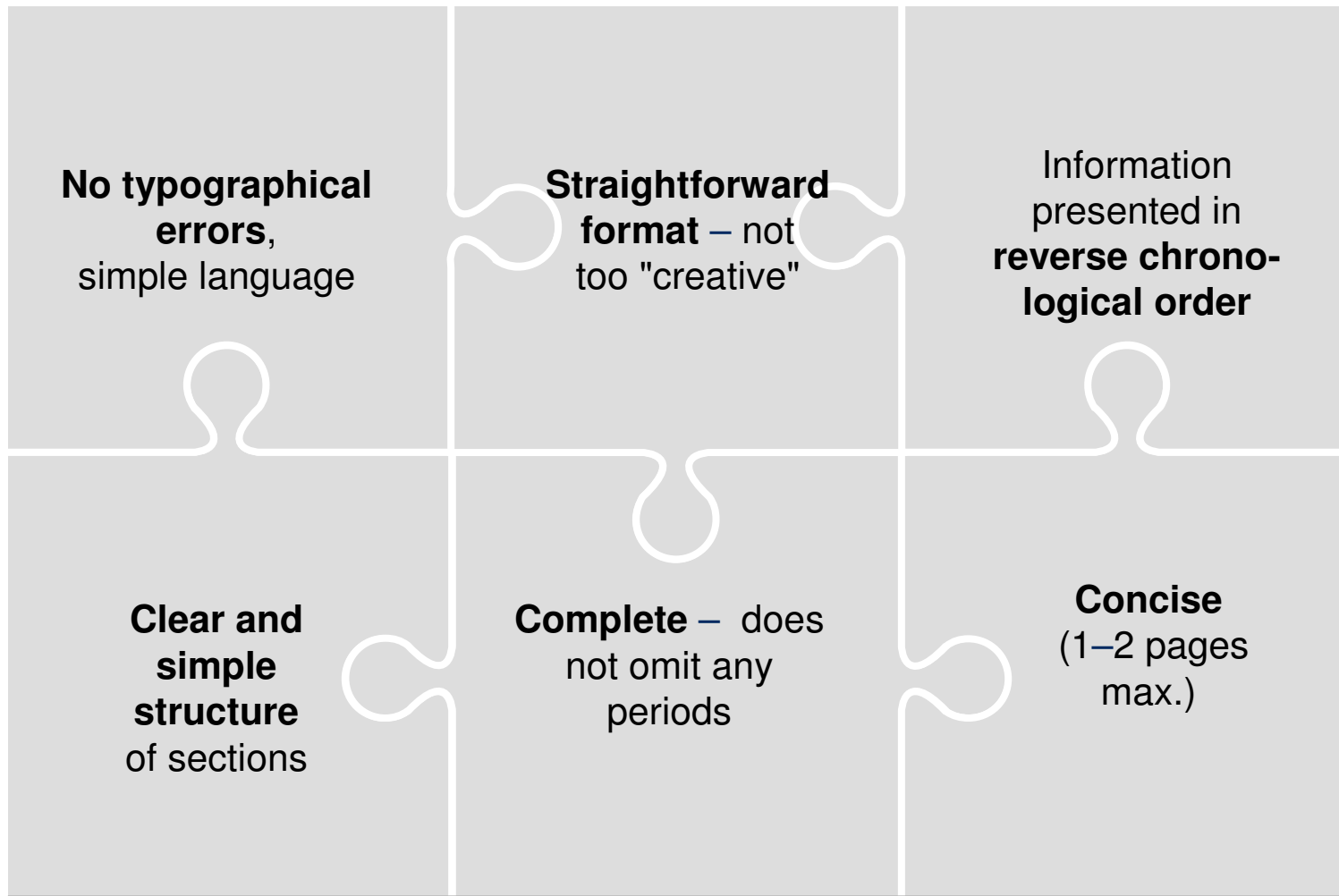
## Professional experience

- Information on **internships** (length, function, activities)
- **Professional activities** outside of studies
- General: an overview of your strengths

## Other competencies and potential

- **Extracurricular activities** (e.g., membership of clubs, associations, other networks, military service)
- **Sports** activities (hobbies, competitions)
- **Language** abilities (do you speak "a little, comfortably, or fluently"?)
- General: overview of your **strengths and abilities to take initiatives**

## Characteristics of a good CV



# Contents of a good CV

## Personal information

Name (in capital letters), address, phone and e-mail, at top of page 1 (if necessary, attach photo at top right)

## Education

- Start with last completed studies; mention the title and major(s)/minor(s) obtained at each university. Period of study is placed left in margin; each year since the end of your studies must be covered; indicate month and year
- Start with university name, followed by the study course title
- Mention all distinctions and other awards

## Experience

Internships, full-/part-time professional activity and/or military service

- Names of societies
- Functions or positions involved
- Responsibilities/tasks
- Results and achievements

## Various/extra-curricular activities

- Activities beyond professional experience or studies
- Interests
- Foreign languages
- Publications
- Etc.

## General comments

- Mention in the margin the month and the year relating to each entry
- Set all section headers (e.g., Education, Professional Experience) in bold. Never underline!
- Personal information (e.g., age, civil status, children) is recommended
- References, if requested explicitly
- Don't use a format that is too creative, avoid using logos

# Structure of a good CV: example

Ideally, the CV should be one to two pages

**First name, last name** **Optional: passport-type picture**  
**Nationality**  
**Optional: date of birth and civil status**  
**Contact details (mobile phone and e-mail address)**  
**Address**

## PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVES (OPTIONAL)

- Briefly describe your professional objectives

## EDUCATION

- Start with your most recent studies
- Mention precise dates
- Mention the name of the university, the diplomas obtained as well as prizes and distinctions
- Mention the subject of your thesis and eventually grade
- Possibly mention the final results of your BA and MSc
- Also insert here further education such as GMAT, CFA, etc.

### Examples:

June 04: **GMAT** (score: xx)

Jun. 03 – Mar. 04 **UNIVERSITY OF ST. GALLEN** for Business Administration, Economics, Law and Social Studies (Switzerland); **MSc** in Business Administration, specialization in strategic management (Final grade: xx)

**Masters thesis** in the field of strategic management - "Building portfolios of strategic initiatives": The Case of the Financial Industry (Grade: xx)

Dec. 02 – May 03 **STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS** (Sweden)  
Exchange term as part of the CEMS Master Programme

Oct. 99 – Oct. 02 **UNIVERSITY OF ST. GALLEN** for Business Administration, Economics, Law and Social Studies (Switzerland); undergraduate studies (Final grade: xx)

Aug. 92 – May 99 **SECONDARY SCHOOL**, Zurich, (Switzerland)  
"Matur" in business and economics  
Award for excellence in mathematics (June 93)

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Start with your most recent work experience
- Mention relevant professional experience only
- Indicate internships and professional experience besides studies
- Indicate company, precise dates, position held and briefly describe the main tasks

### Examples:

Jan 07 – Mar. 07 **MARKETING COMPANY, INC.** (Scandinavia)  
Practical training in the marketing department of the cosmetics and shampoo divisions  
- Assistant to the marketing manager in the strategic business unit Bodycare  
- Prepared several internal reports  
- Conducted comparisons and market studies in the Nordic bodycare sector  
- Analyzed the packaging of the main competitors in the Nordic bodycare sector

Oct. 06 – Dec. 06 **BANK XYZ**, (Switzerland)  
Practical training in the brokerage line research department  
- Assistant to the Head Analyst for food and beverage  
- Contributed to a study on the European food & beverage industry  
- Conducted comparison studies in the food & beverage sector  
- Analyzed the foreign currency exposure of Swiss Market Index (SMI) companies

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- E.g., involvement in associations or other networks, military service, sports clubs, volunteering
- In general, show ability to drive projects and to lead

### Examples:

Oct. 02 – Jul. 03 **Student Union of the UNIVERSITY OF ST. GALLEN** (Switzerland)  
Member of the board responsible for international affairs and head of the International Committee  
- Represented the student union at international events  
- Cultivated and established international contacts  
- Led a team of 35 people taking care of guest students and organizing international students exchanges  
- Coordinated these projects, especially the sponsorship  
- Supervised all organizational and administrative tasks

Dec. 01 – Jan. 02 **Association for poor children in Ghana** (Ghana)  
Volunteering, helped to build a school for poor children

1995 – 1998 **Tennis Club**, Zurich, (Switzerland)  
Active player (competition)

## LANGUAGES

- Languages (indicate proficiency level)
- Indicate language tests and Certificates such as Cambridge Certificate, TOEFL, etc.

### Examples:

German	Native language
French	Advanced
English	Advanced (Cambridge Certificate, June 2006)
Spanish	Conversational

## COMPUTER SKILLS

### Examples:

MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), Lotus Notes, etc.

## INTERESTS

- Hobbies: sports and other interests

### Examples:

Travelling (backpacking in India, Vietnam and Cambodia), jogging, reading

St. Gallen, July 2005

## Most frequent errors in a CV

- Missing content, e.g., extracurricular activities, hobbies, outstanding performance
- Incomplete chronology, periods not covered in CV
- Insufficiently detailed indications, especially giving the year without the month
- Information not properly ordered, chronology or sequence of individual sections lacks structure
- Too long (more than 2 pages)
- Unprofessional appearance, e.g., typographical errors, hard-to-read fonts, unstructured layout, poor print quality

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How to apply

CV

**Application letter**

## What is the goal of an application letter?



- It explains to an employer why the position and the company interest you
- It helps to highlight some of your experience and competencies that would be useful in the position: why should the employer recruit you in particular?  
→ It's a complement to your CV, not a summary of your CV!
- It has to grab the attention of a potential employer and make him/her want to meet you

## Key points in writing an application letter

- Do your research on the company
- Address your letter to an actual person, whenever possible. If not, use "Dear Sir or Madam" and avoid outmoded phrases like "Messrs."
- First paragraph should be short and state clearly the position you are applying for or the position/department that interests you
- Be specific: what are the competencies you could bring to the firm/position; give brief examples of situations in which you have put into practice/demonstrated these competencies
- Show you are sure of your abilities without appearing arrogant
- Be brief: never more than 1 page
- Avoid typographical and grammatical errors at all costs!
  - Generally, try to put yourself in the employer's shoes, e.g., by asking yourself:
    - Why you?
    - Without knowing your CV, would your proposition appear clear to you?
    - What key competencies is the employer looking for? (Note: often mentioned in the job advertisement or on the company website)

# Avoid

- Sending a photocopy that looks like part of a mass mail-shot! Send an original to each potential employer
- Errors in the person's or company's name
- Being too vague or getting lost in too much detail
- Using jargon from application manuals or repeating what you find on the internet. Make your letter personal!
- Letting the potential employer decide the post for which you'd be best suited
- Forgetting to follow up if you specifically mention you will do so

# Example

Daisy Duck  
Chemin du Stand 26  
1110 Morges  
079 / 456 99 99

McKinsey & Company  
Recruiting  
Av. Louis-Casai 13  
1209 Geneva

Morges, October 18, 2005

Dear Ms Brunner,

I am writing to you to explore the possibility of pursuing a career with McKinsey & Company. With a PhD in Medicinal Chemistry and a strong academic background, I am very keen to use both my scientific knowledge and my personal skills to succeed in a new and challenging position, and as such, I am very interested in a career in consultancy.

An Irish national, and a native English speaker who is also proficient in French, I obtained both my undergraduate degree and my PhD from Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. My PhD in Medicinal Chemistry focused on the preparation of prodrugs of an anti-cancer drug, which is currently in clinical trials. This work was complemented by a postdoctoral stint at the University of Geneva, where I obtained eight publications in a number of international journals.

I am naturally analytical and have a strong capacity for problem-solving. My academic career has given me the opportunity to work successfully both as an individual and as a team player, and has proven my ability to efficiently manage projects, including those relating to industry.

In addition, I am an excellent communicator with much experience in presenting material both verbally and in the form of written reports. My strong interpersonal skills have benefited greatly from a number of temporary positions taken to finance both my under- and postgraduate studies.

I am a creative and enthusiastic individual who strives to achieve, and as such, I know I have a lot to offer McKinsey & Company.

Please find enclosed copies of my curriculum vitae and university diplomas.

Should my background be of interest to your company I would be delighted to have the opportunity to discuss my application with you.

Yours sincerely,

Daisy Duck, PhD

## Where can you go to learn more?

- ✓ Home pages of company websites; the internet in general
- ✓ Other academic events
- ✓ Your university career center
- ✓ Publications and brochures