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MAXWELL STEPHENS GUIDES

FOR CANDIDATES

# How to Market Yourself as an Interim

Practical guidance for interim managers on defining your offer, choosing a target market and reaching the people who buy.

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# How to Market Yourself as an Interim


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# 01
# Introduction

Strong skills and a solid track record do not, on their own, make a successful interim career. Interim work is won through relationships and visibility, and the professionals who stay in demand are the ones who make it easy for the right people to understand what they offer.

This guide sets out a practical approach to marketing yourself as an interim: defining the problems you solve, choosing a target market and reaching the decision-makers who buy. It is written for interim managers at any stage, whether you are new to the market or looking to shorten the gaps between assignments.

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# Clients buy solutions, not job titles.

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# 02
# Skills Alone Are No Guarantee of Success

A great product will not succeed without proper marketing. In the same way, strong skills, experience and a solid track record do not guarantee success as an interim.

This is where many aspiring interims go wrong. They assume it is enough to update their CV and send it to a few interim providers. It is not.

Interim work is heavily relationship-led, and many opportunities never go near an agency. A large share of assignments are secured directly with clients rather than through service providers, so if you rely on agencies alone, you automatically limit your chances.

### Think of Yourself as a Service

To succeed, think of yourself as a service rather than simply a candidate. You are effectively running your own business, and that demands a level of visibility, positioning and consistency that many people underestimate.

This is not about sending your CV everywhere. It is about being clear on what you offer and who you help, and making sure the right people know you exist.

Many providers also tend to prioritise proven interims, which makes it harder to break in if you are new to the market. That is why building your own network, staying visible and actively promoting your value matter so much. The more people who understand what you do and trust you to deliver, the more likely you are to be brought in when the right opportunity arises.

# 03
# Why Marketing Yourself Is Critical to Success

For many people, this part feels uncomfortable. If you have never had to market yourself, it is easy to feel out of your depth or unsure where to start. Most professionals are used to being judged on their work, not on how well they position themselves.

It does not need to be complicated. You are not trying to become a marketing expert. You are simply making it easier for the right people to understand what you do, where you add value and why they should bring you in.

At its core, effective self-marketing is about consistency and clarity: showing up in the right places, staying visible and making sure your message is easy to understand. The time you invest pays off quickly, not only in winning work but in the quality and consistency of the opportunities that come your way.

### What It Changes

Done properly, it has a direct effect on your interim career:

1. **Less unwanted downtime.** You reduce the gaps between assignments because you are consistently in front of the right people.
2. **More control and confidence.** You can start to enjoy the time between roles, knowing you can generate opportunities when you need them.
3. **Better-quality assignments.** You are no longer forced to take the first role that comes up. You can be more selective and focus on the right fit.

Over time, this shift is what separates reactive interims from those who build long-term, sustainable careers.

# 04

# Marketing Your Company, Not Yourself

Even if you are the only person in your limited company, you still wear several hats. One of them is marketing.

A simple shift helps many interims: think of it as marketing your company, not yourself. It sounds minor, but it changes your mindset. You become more objective and more focused, and ultimately more effective in how you position what you offer.

**WRITE IT AS A BUSINESS**

Draft your positioning as if you were describing a firm you had been asked to promote. Most people find it far easier to be clear and specific about a service than about themselves.

# 05

# Defining Your Product

Many interim managers describe themselves by their previous job title: "I'm an Interim Finance Director." Others list their qualities and experience: "I'm a results-focused project manager with strong commercial awareness."

That works up to a point, particularly with service providers or on a CV. But it is not what grabs a client's attention.

## Clients Buy Solutions, Not Titles

Clients are not looking for a title. They are looking for a solution. The interims who stand out position themselves clearly around the problems they solve: problems the client already recognises and wants fixed.

For example, you might specialise in helping organisations relocate operations to lower-cost locations, or in supporting a business through outsourcing or insourcing an IT function. That is far more compelling than a generic title, because most people prefer to buy from a specialist rather than someone who does a bit of everything.

Think of it this way. If you had severe back pain and faced a shelf full of painkillers, you would not spend long choosing. You would reach for the one that clearly says it targets back pain. Clients think in exactly the same way.

## Does Specialising Limit You?

A common concern is that specialising narrows your opportunities. In practice, it tends to do the opposite. Your target market becomes more focused, but your chances of winning work within it rise significantly, because your value is clearer and easier to understand.

You can still have more than one specialism. Keep each one clearly defined and position them separately. Otherwise, you risk coming across as too general.

> *Clients rarely hire a title. They hire someone who has already solved their problem.*

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# Be known for something, not everything.

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# 06

# How to Define Your Product

To get clear on your positioning, work through three questions and answer each one honestly.

**What problems have you actually solved?**

Look beyond job responsibilities to real problems. What was happening before you came in? What changed afterwards? What did you actually do that made the difference?

**Who has those problems?**

Identify the types of organisation that face them. Are there enough of them to form a market? And just as important, do they see solving that problem as urgent or important?

**What do you enjoy solving?**

Look for where your strengths and your interests overlap. The best positioning usually sits where you are both good at something and genuinely enjoy doing it.

**TEST IT IN ONE SENTENCE**

If you cannot describe the problem you solve, and who you solve it for, in a single sentence, a client will struggle to remember it. Keep refining until you can.

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# Visibility is built through consistency, not volume.

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# 07
# Identifying Your Market

People cannot bring you in if they do not know you exist. That is the starting point.

For interim managers, one of the biggest challenges is simply creating enough visibility in the market. You are not the only one trying. Plenty of others are competing for the same attention, so it is easy to get lost unless you are deliberate about how you position yourself.

## Consistency Beats a Single Message

You may have heard of the "Rule of 7" in marketing: the idea that someone needs to see or hear your message several times before it sticks. Whether the number is seven is not the point. The point is consistency.

A single message, sent once, achieves very little. You need to show up more than once, in more than one place, before people start to recognise and remember you.

## Focus Your Effort

Most interims do not have large marketing budgets or teams behind them. So rather than trying to reach everyone, you are far better off focusing your effort, and that means being clear about who your market actually is.

There is another reason this matters. People do not only buy specialists in what they do. They buy specialists in who they do it for.

If a practice manager at a large accountancy firm is looking to grow the business, they are far more likely to engage someone who understands that environment: someone who has done it before, in similar firms, with similar challenges. That relevance is what makes the difference.

## Avoid Keeping It Too Broad

A common mistake is keeping things broad so as not to miss out on opportunities. In reality, it usually has the opposite effect. When your market is too wide, your message becomes vague, and when your message is vague, people do not remember you.

When you narrow your focus, everything becomes clearer. Your messaging improves, your visibility increases and you are more likely to be recognised as the right person when a need arises.

You can have more than one target market or specialism. Keep them distinct and position them separately. Otherwise, you risk blending into the crowd as someone who does a bit of everything but is not known for anything in particular.

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# Market your company, not just your CV.

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# 08

# Factors to Consider When Selecting Your Target Market

You are most likely to succeed in a market where three things are clear:

- **Competence:** you know what you are talking about.
- **Credibility:** you have done it before, or something very similar.
- **Compatibility:** you understand how they operate, speak their language and fit their culture.

If you have all three, you are already in a strong position. From there, it is about narrowing things down. There are many ways to define a target market, but some of the most useful are:

- **Size:** turnover, headcount or level of complexity
- **Industry:** the sector they operate in
- **Stage:** start-up, growth, turnaround or maturity
- **Location:** regional, national or international
- **Typical challenges:** growth, restructuring, regulatory pressure, outsourcing or transformation

The key is to be specific enough that your message feels relevant, but not so narrow that you limit yourself unnecessarily.

## The Question Most People Skip

One factor is overlooked more than any other: do you actually want to work in that market?

You can tick every box on paper, but if the interest is not there, it shows. And when it shows, it becomes harder to build relationships, stay consistent and, ultimately, win work.

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# The best interims are remembered before the need arises.

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# 09
# Routes to Market

Once you are clear on your message and your market, the next step is getting in front of the right people. This is the part many interims avoid, mainly because it feels like selling.

There is no way around it. If people do not see you, hear from you or come across you in the right places, you will not be considered.

That does not mean doing everything. You could easily fill your week with networking events, online groups and conversations that go nowhere. The focus should always be quality over volume. An activity is only worth your time if it puts you in front of:

- Decision-makers who need, or are likely to need, your services
- People who influence those decision-makers

## Find the Routes Your Market Already Uses

Some markets have very clear routes that work. There may be specific conferences everyone attends, publications they all read, or communities where conversations genuinely lead to work. Understanding your market properly helps you identify these quickly and avoid wasting time elsewhere.

## Play to How You Work Best

It is also worth being honest about how you prefer to operate. The client comes first, but your approach still needs to be something you can sustain consistently.

Some people are strong at direct outreach. Others are better in person, speaking at events or building visibility through content. There is no single right way. What matters is that you choose a few routes that work, and stick with them.

> *Visibility is earned by showing up consistently in the right places.*

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# Specialists win the work generalists chase.

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# 10
# Example Routes to Market

These are some of the most common routes interims use:

- Direct outreach by email or phone
- Referrals from past clients, contacts and partners
- Industry and professional associations
- Conferences and events
- Other interims operating in the same space
- Interim service providers
- Alumni networks, such as universities and business schools
- Investors and venture capital networks
- Management consultancies

You do not need to use all of them. Pick the ones that align with your market and play to your strengths, then focus on doing them well.

**KEEP PROVIDERS IN THE MIX**

Interim service providers remain a valuable route, particularly for specialist assignments. Treat them as one channel within a wider plan, not as the whole strategy.

# 11
# Building a Sustainable Interim Career

Marketing yourself as an interim is not a one-off exercise. Define the problems you solve, choose a market where you have competence, credibility and compatibility, and show up consistently through a small number of routes that reach the people who buy.

Done well, it reduces downtime, gives you more control and leads to better assignments. If you work in facilities, estates or workplace management and are considering interim assignments, we would be glad to talk. Call us on 0207 118 4848, email info@maxwellstephens.com or visit maxwellstephens.com.

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# Choose fewer routes and work them well.

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THE EVIDENCE

# What the Data Says

What UK data shows about interim and contract work and the value of staying visible.

**872,000**

On any given day in 2024, 872,000 temporary or contract workers were on assignment through UK recruiters.

Source: Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC), Recruitment sector contributes more than £40 billion a year to the UK economy despite tough job market, 2025

**7x**

Globally, Glassdoor job seekers are seven times more likely to apply after seeing a company's brand ten times or more.

Source: Glassdoor, The essential employer branding statistics you need to know, 2025

**30%**

30% of UK organisations that recruited rated recruitment/search consultants among their most effective attraction methods.

Source: CIPD, Resourcing and talent planning report 2024

**10**

Gartner research found the average employee experienced 10 planned enterprise changes in 2022, up from two in 2016.

Source: Harvard Business Review (Gartner research), Employees Are Losing Patience with Change Initiatives, 2023

**11%**

About one in nine (11%) of the FM vacancies Maxwell Stephens advertised from 2023 to 2026 were interim or contract roles.

Source: Maxwell Stephens analysis of 497 advertised vacancies, May 2023 – September 2026

Sources were checked in September 2026. Select a source to open the original research. Maxwell Stephens figures are drawn from our own published vacancies and placement records.

CASE STUDY

# See It in Practice

## Supporting Babylon Health Through a Complex Workplace Relocation

Babylon Health needed an experienced Interim Facilities Manager to provide immediate operational leadership during a major relocation and restack programme across its Head Office locations. Maxwell Stephens focused the search on interim facilities managers with proven relocation and restack expertise, multi-site experience and the composure to perform in a fast-paced, high-growth environment. The appointed interim integrated quickly, took responsibility for both facilities operations and the relocation programme, and kept day-to-day services running with minimal disruption to the business. Health, safety and compliance standards were maintained throughout the transition.

It shows the value of positioning around a recognisable problem: the client was looking for someone who had run a relocation before, not simply a job title.

Read the full case study · Browse all case studies

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FROM THE BLOG

### Related Reading

- How to Succeed as an Interim Manager
- Freelancing and Contract Work: Benefits, Risks and Trends
- Breaking Out of the Comfort Zone: Networking for Introverts

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### Continue Reading

- Facilities Management Salary Guide UK 2026
- The FM Salary and Hiring Trends Report 2026
- Facilities Management Career Guide

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