

POST LIKE A PRO

**Best practices for writing a better
Job Posting**



Never underestimate the power of a Job Posting

Have you ever cursed the job board that failed to deliver any quality candidates? Or wished you'd gone with your gut instinct and placed the ad with the other job board which was just a little more expensive?

There are many reasons why online job ads don't work as well as you'd hoped, or simply fail completely. And it's not necessarily anything to do with the job boards, or timings or availability of candidates with the right qualities. The answer may be much closer to home. Perhaps it's the ad itself.

When you've written your ad, imagine that you are in the candidate's shoes, read it back and ask yourself some questions: Has it grabbed your interest? Does the company come across as welcoming? Does it share your values? Do you understand what the role is about? Are you being sold something that you really want?

A well-balanced online job ad needs to contain a number of elements.



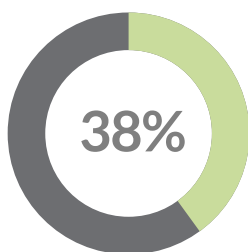
The specifics

Describe briefly your company and its position in the marketplace. Mention key features of the role and the skills and qualities needed to succeed in it. Always include a town or postcode as the location which will produce a greater response than if you don't. And definitely include a salary range. Salary details can still be hidden from the final ad, but this will optimise the ad further and prevents potential applicants from viewing the ad suspiciously.

The sell

Include reasons as to why someone would want to apply, such as an opportunity to acquire more skills, excellent management potential, world-class training and career development, or the importance of the role to the success of the department and company. Maybe you just do offer the best salary package in your market. Say it if you do.

A good question to ask yourself is "What would my ideal candidate be looking for in a career move and what does this role offer?" If you can tie the two together you have a great proposition.



Hirers ranked a “fun, engaging, company culture” as the most attractive quality of a business.

Length

Be careful of ending up with War and Peace though. People tend to spend far less time reading ad copy on a screen, computer, mobile, laptop or otherwise, than they would in a newspaper or magazine. You need just enough information to really grab a candidate's interest and encourage them to go to your career site, read the full ad and make a formal application. Listing too many skills and qualifications, even if they're not all essential, could restrict response too much.

So, around 3-400 words should be enough to get your message across.

Language

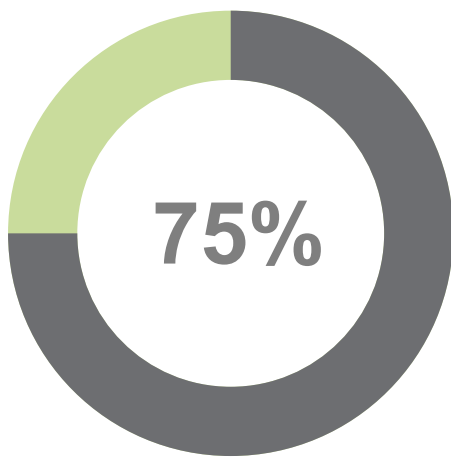
Candidates form an impression of you as an employer from the language you use in the ad. This includes style and tone.

Holds a conversation

It's always better to talk to candidates rather than talk about them, so use the second person rather than the third. "You will be..." rather than "The job holder will be...". Try not to describe aspects of the role as "Duties" or "Responsibilities". "Key features" sounds less staid and more progressive for example. Your choice of words should really big up your company and the opportunity. Don't overdo it though. Too much hyperbole and the candidate will start to question your sincerity.

Plain English

Importantly, don't just post your internal job description. This is bound to contain much too much information, long lists of bullet points and probably couched in terms and phrases that only existing employees would properly understand. Ask yourself "Would I understand what this job is all about if I didn't already work for the company?"



Job seekers say the look and feel of a job posting has influenced their decision to apply.

Maintain the pace

Use short, punchy sentences. This keeps the ad flowing and with more energy. If your sentences go on too long, the good points you are making lose their impact, assuming the candidate hasn't already lost interest.

Searchability

So you've written a fantastic job ad, perfect length, which sells the company, sells the opportunity and gives quality candidates every reason why they should apply for it.

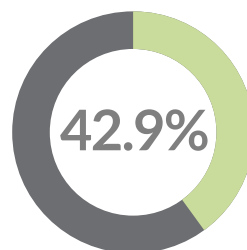
What a waste of effort this would be if no one actually sees it. To stop this happening, it is vital to understand how candidates search for jobs, how search results are delivered to candidates and how to better optimise your ad.

Keywords

Almost all online search results are determined by keywords. Most job seekers will Google the job title they are looking for. Many will go to a specific job board that caters for their skills and qualifications, whilst others will prefer to stick with generalist sites. In all cases, they will enter keywords that most commonly describe their role such as an obvious job title (or the one they are looking for) and/or the classic skills the role would need, such as an official qualification or a programming language.

Again, looking at things from the candidate's point of view is really important.

At the job board end of things, the way their search engines operate is to analyse how frequently these keywords are used, and how early on in the copy they appear.



Job seekers search by job board

Structure

Once the actual content and language of the ad have been sorted, it is now absolutely vital to get the structure right.

A big mistake in online rec ads is to first describe, in chapter and verse, how amazingly wonderful your company is. Do this at some point, but not just yet. It's the opening paragraph (or maybe the first 2) that most job board search engines look at.

So this is where you make a few references to the job title and the skills needed. The latter is particularly important for technical roles such as in IT or engineering for example. In fact, it is a good idea to include one or two skill sets in the job title itself: NET Developer/Analyst Programmer - C#/ASP.NET/SQL Server is perfect.

Optimising your ad in this way will also bring it higher up in the list of search results – particularly important if the role is quite a common one, where there is a danger of being relegated to the second page of results within a matter of hours. If you are searching generally on the web, how many times do you bother to go beyond the fold line, let alone the next page?

Then you can go on to describe the company, more about the role, the key features and the skills/qualities needed, followed by the benefits and clear application instructions.

Accuracy

A final word on attention to detail. Sounds a bit school teacher this, but please give your ad one last read through before you send it. Spelling mistakes (manger instead of manager is a popular one), poor use of grammar (apostrophes and commas can cause endless confusion), and inconsistent use of such things as abbreviations and capital letters are all turn offs. They create a poor impression of your company and its (not it's) professionalism.

Happy writing and successful recruiting!

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