

Job ad creation



Dos

&

Don'ts



What are the ultimate list of dos and don'ts when it comes to writing job adverts?

Most successful hires start with a great job advert.

Unless you've directly sourced a candidate from your CRM or via a referral, a job advert marks the start of your candidate attraction journey.

Without an optimised job ad you'll struggle to find quality candidates at pace and you'll be at a disadvantage at every stage onwards.

However, crafting an advert that is picked up in searches by relevant candidates, engages them instantly, compels them to read to the end and encourages them to apply is no mean feat.

Follow these and you'll be off to a great start!

Job ad creation

 **Dos**

&

Don'ts 

Do publish the salary



Don't publish a huge salary range

Do publish the location, even for a remote role



Don't list the job as remote if in reality it's not

Do include the benefits, plus essential skills and responsibilities



Don't write the entire job description

Do use a personable tone



Don't use quirky job titles in an attempt to grab attention

Do keep the length to 300-350 words



Don't use more than 5 bullet points in a list

Do ensure the language you use is non-discriminatory



Don't use industry jargon

Do include keywords in the title and description



Don't overstuff your copy with keywords

Do publish the salary

-  Pay transparency is fast becoming something that candidates not only expect but is becoming written into law in a number of areas.
-  Research shows that publishing a salary on a job advert can lead to a significant uplift in applications.
-  91% of respondents in a recent LinkedIn survey said that including salary ranges in a job post would affect their decision to apply.
-  82% of respondents in a separate LinkedIn survey said that seeing a salary range in a job advert would give them a more positive impression of a company.
-  Publishing the salary can lead to higher quality applications and build candidate trust.
-  Salary is a significant motivator in the job search and remuneration is an important factor for candidates.

Don't publish a huge salary range

- ✘ Excessively wide salary ranges are a growing trend in the US, where a number of states have mandated that salaries are published on job adverts.
- ✘ Big salary ranges are not illegal but are essentially making a mockery of laws set up to encourage pay equity.
- ✘ Research by Indeed in the US found that, despite 18 states and jurisdictions now having pay transparency laws, only around 10% of job ads published an exact salary.
- ✘ There are no pay transparency laws in the UK but wide salary ranges could be seen as gaming the candidate.
- ✘ Publishing a confusing salary range builds a bad candidate experience from the first stage.

Do publish the location, even for a remote role

- ✓ Most of the big job boards require a location to increase relevancy in searches.
- ✓ Don't enter a location with a wide range - job boards find the central point of big location areas, which could limit the candidates that see your advert.
- ✓ Adding a location helps both Google for Jobs and job board search engines to match that data to keyword searches, leading to more relevant candidates finding it.
- ✓ Data from CV-Library has found that job ads that display a town and county receive nearly 17% more applications than those that don't specify a location.
- ✓ Add a postcode in the location field and applications increase by nearly 30% compared to jobs with no location specified.
- ✓ Location flexibility is now one of the biggest motivators for candidates so if you are advertising a flexible job, add that to the top of your job advert.

Don't list the job as remote if in reality it's not

- ✗ Remote isn't the same as hybrid.
- ✗ If the job requires the candidate to come into the office for part of the week, list it as hybrid.
- ✗ Listing a job as remote may initially attract candidates but it can leave a sour taste in a candidate's mouth and damage the reputation of the employer and the recruiter.
- ✗ If a candidate is looking for a remote role, it is a waste of everyone's time for them to apply to a role that is in reality hybrid.





Do include the benefits, plus essential skills and responsibilities

- ✔ List any benefits that create excitement and desire for the job and give candidates a reason to apply.
- ✔ Benefits can be pay-related but also flexible working options, company culture, wellbeing initiatives, any caring support, extra holiday.
- ✔ Benefits might not just come in the form of 'extras' though, e.g. opportunities for the candidate to make their own mark on the role.
- ✔ Limit responsibilities to a list of 5 so as not to overwhelm the candidate - it doesn't need to be exhaustive.
- ✔ Cover the experience and skills needed for the role but state which are essential and which are nice to have.
- ✔ Limiting the list of requirements helps to keep your job open to as wide a pool of relevant candidates as possible.

Don't write the entire job description

- ✗ A job description is not a job advert so don't copy and paste the job spec and use that as your ad.
- ✗ A job ad is there to sell the job, while a job spec is ultimately an HR document - the two perform very different functions.
- ✗ A job advert should be designed to sell a job to the right candidates and should never be just a list of information.
- ✗ Give people reasons to apply for your job and do it in a compelling way, with engaging copy and a hook.
- ✗ Find the nuance that makes each job interesting and make that the centre of your sales pitch.

Do use a personable tone

-  The job advert will often be a candidate's first contact with you so this will be the entry point to establishing a relationship.
-  The exact tone will depend on the role and the organisation but you can always come across as friendly and approachable in your tone.
-  The tone helps to give a sense of the kind of business the role is in, representing the wider employer brand.
-  Always address the copy directly to the reader - use 'you' and 'you're' so that the candidate can imagine themselves doing the role that is being advertised.

Don't use quirky job titles in an attempt to grab attention

- ✗ Getting the job title right is key to your advert being found by the most relevant candidates.
- ✗ Always use standardised job titles that are well used in your industry as those are the keywords that candidates will search for.
- ✗ Merchandising Ninja will never be searched for, Retail Assistant will be, so use that job title - save your creativity for the main copy.
- ✗ Start typing the job title you are considering into the search bar on a job board – if it appears as you begin to type, the recommendation already has candidates searching for it.
- ✗ When entering the title into the job title field, don't use special characters or attempt to sell the job.

Do keep the length to 300-350 words



The right word length for job adverts is that sweet spot that offers enough detail to understand the role, its benefits and its requirements but not bore the candidate.



Recent Wave data shows that, on average, the word length that attracts the highest percentage of applications is between 300-350.







This length is a trend we have seen for a few years - long enough to impart enough information to detail what the job involves and what it offers but short enough not to lose the interest of its readers.



Applications severely drop off for adverts shorter than 200 words and longer than 500 words.

Don't use more than 5 bullet points in a list

-  Bullet pointed lists are great for clearly and concisely detailing skills and qualifications needed, benefits and role activities.
-  Lists make job adverts skimmable but too long and interest will be lost.
-  A long list of 'essential' skills, experience or qualifications can deter many, especially diverse candidates, thereby shrinking your talent pool.
-  Pin-point what the real essentials are and list those - it's highly unlikely there will be more than 5 per list.

Do ensure the language you use is non-discriminatory

- ✓ Discriminatory language, even if unintentional, can deter a wide range of candidates.
- ✓ In order to appeal to all candidates, regardless of gender, age, disability, or background, it is essential to optimise your job ad copy, which means ensuring that all language used is inclusive.
- ✓ Avoid any gender references in the job title - not only will it alienate candidates based on gender, it could have serious legal implications, e.g. 'Foreperson,' rather than 'Foreman.'
- ✓ De-gender the language in job ads and you are likely to receive an increase of applications from both men and women and your clients can start to build a more diverse workforce.
- ✓ Avoid phrases such as 'recent graduate' (age discrimination) or 'native English speaker' (race discrimination).
- ✓ Some words or phrases are unlawfully discriminatory, while some may not put you in legal hot water but could cut your talent pool in half - both will do you harm as a recruiter.

Don't use industry jargon

- ✘ Using jargon in your job adverts can be discriminatory and deter candidates from applying, especially younger candidates and those from underprivileged backgrounds.
- ✘ A Milkround study of 2,000 recent graduates found that 71% would be discouraged from applying for jobs because of jargon.
- ✘ All job ads should be transparent and engage the reader - using language that not everyone understands is the opposite of that.
- ✘ Using corporate babble will not elicit a positive first impression from the candidate.
- ✘ Using plain English to communicate what the job entails will lead to higher quality applications as candidates will fully understand the requirements.

Do include keywords in the title, description and company description



Including keywords in the right places in your job ad copy helps relevant candidates to find your jobs.



Using the right keywords and keyword phrases in your job title and description will help your advert to be picked up by search engines and the job boards' own internal search engines and shown to candidates searching for jobs like yours.



The most important keyword should appear in the job title and 3-5 secondary or related keywords should be integrated into the main body of the advert.



Utilise free keyword research tools such as the Google AdWords Keyword Tool to work out what phrases are relevant to your job and most searched for by relevant candidates.



Research what keywords competitors are using.

Don't overstuff your copy with keywords

- ✘ Keyword stuffing will make your job advert harder to read, less compelling and less human.
- ✘ Forcibly inserting too many keywords into the copy will make the ad sound unnatural and spammy - not a great first impression.
- ✘ Certain search engines, including Google, can detect deliberate keyword stuffing and will penalise such content by giving it a lower ranking.
- ✘ Stick to around 5 keywords/keyword phrases to optimise your job ad copy.

Using these dos and don'ts as a guide when creating your job adverts should help you to craft adverts that relevant, high calibre candidates find, engage with and want to apply for.

And always remember - as a recruiter, you're an expert at selling jobs so use that to help you to write job adverts that convert!