

Stop describing jobs and start promoting them



We love job descriptions. Accurate, updated job descriptions are an important best practice that supports compliance, planning, diversity and equity, among other things... But there's one thing job descriptions really don't help with and that's recruiting.

Let's face it, even the most exquisite job description is long, boring, full of technical jargon and doesn't do much to tell a prospective employee what it's like to work in your organization and why they should choose you over all the other employers. In fact, it may send great candidates straight out of the recruiting funnel.

It's surprising to see how many job listings on recruiting sites, like Indeed or on organization career pages still link to a long, boring job description instead of a punchy, positive, exciting overview of a great role.

Let's put that job description in the HRIS where it belongs, and consider what you could be using to catch the attention of scarce talent.

Ten ways to rock your postings

- 1 Keep it short!** Today's candidates will decide in about three seconds whether or not the role is worth looking at so make it easy for them to see the key points. (Pro Tip: Use bullet points as much as you can to make the posting scannable).
- 2 Point to purpose.** Start your post with a sentence that ties the role to something larger – like safety, sustainability or customer satisfaction
- 3 Describe the day.** Include a small number of bullet points that describe the job's core daily activities, using the first person. For example you will help us make the finest quality widgets in the industry.
- 4 Cut the qualifications.** List the fewest, most basic requirements possible for the role. What is the least amount of experience? What is the minimum education level? What are the absolutely essential certifications?
- 5 Dazzle with differences.** List the top two or three talent attractors that set you apart from the competition, such as unlimited vacation, product discounts or onsite daycare. (Hint: if you're not sure, do a quick survey or focus group with your employees)
- 6 Forget formality.** Sentences that start with "the incumbent will undertake..." are a talent turnoff. Use friendly, everyday language to describe the role.
- 7 Cue the culture.** Help candidates understand what it's really like to work at your organization by describing your culture and values. Stay away from vague descriptions such as fast-paced, dynamic and collaborative.
- 8 Avoid attributes.** Everyone's looking for curious, creative, results-oriented self-starters who thrive in a busy environment. Keep your posting focused on the hard skills. What technical skills or experiences are needed? What equipment or technology will they use? You can assess personal attributes and fit during the interview process.
- 9 Offer opportunity.** One of the top things today's candidates are looking for is a clear career path. Make sure your posting includes information about career progression, along with opportunities for learning and development.
- 10 Make it mobile.** Ninety percent of candidates[1] are looking at your post on their phones. Make sure it's easy to scroll and easy to follow. Pro Tip: Ask some of your employees to review your current postings on their mobile devices to make sure they are loading properly.

In a competitive labour market, your job postings have to work harder than ever to attract the right candidates, while helping the people who aren't a great fit to self-select out of the process.

Here's a quick test to see if your job postings are standing out. Cut and paste postings from two or three competitors into a document with a similar posting for a role that you are trying to fill. Now remove all company names and branding. Could a candidate tell the difference between the organizations? If not, it's time to take it up a notch.

Of course, a great posting is just the beginning. Make sure your application process is quick, easy and transparent, and that your website is updated with all the information your next hire needs to make their decision.

[1] <https://www.hrdive.com/news/mobile-job-applications-surpassed-desktop-in-2020-report-says/595891/>

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