

7 job description writing best practices to find the perfect candidate

A job posting is the first step in attracting the right candidate to a position within your company. The job description educates potential candidates about the organization and highlights requirements and preferences for the person who fills the position. That's why, if you wish to attract quality talent, then you must follow best practices when writing job descriptions.

Failing to implement such best practices means you might fail to fully take advantage of the opportunity to communicate with potential candidates. This could result in valuable candidates overlooking the position. Alternatively, if the requirements of the position aren't clear, you could be encouraging unqualified candidates to apply. Either way, this wastes both time and money.

When writing future job descriptions, keep these 7 best practices in mind. You might just be amazed at the difference it can make in attracting quality candidates.

writing job descriptions

Be concise when

Today, the average job post should be between 300-660 words. That gives you just enough space to provide transparent information regarding the company, position, and ideal candidate. However, the post is not so long that candidates don't want to read it thoroughly. Along with keeping the overall job post short, you want to keep the sentences and paragraphs short as well. Make the job listing easy to read from beginning to end.

Also, avoid unnecessary jargon or filler words when possible. In general, try to write as though you're speaking to someone with an 8th-grade reading level. This has nothing to do with the caliber of candidate you will attract and everything to do with basic writing principles. Simple writing is easier to read and more inviting, making it more likely that candidates will engage with your postings.

Avoid using third-person communication

Our work culture is consistently becoming more casual, so it's not surprising that a best practice for writing job descriptions would include one that takes the formality down a notch. When you write in the third person (e.g., the ideal candidate), the posting automatically sounds less personal, however, using the words "we" and "you" sounds more inviting.

Speaking of "we" and "you," your job descriptions should balance the use of both words by speaking to what you want and expect from a candidate while also including where you stand as a company.

Clarify the job requirements

A well-written job description will attract ideal candidates and repel non-ideal candidates. The job requirement section is a significant part of making this happen.

Be sure to include both things that you want and things you don't want from a potential candidate, including skills, education, certification, experience, work habits, personality traits, and background.

Providing this information will allow potential candidates to decide whether to move forward in the application

process.

When writing this section, stay away from glossing over the less appealing parts of the job. If something will turn away many candidates, it's best to be transparent about that upfront. In doing so, some candidates will decide it's not the right position for them. This saves you time and energy throughout the application process.

Share what differentiates your company

Job descriptions aren't solely about you finding the right candidate. They also help job seekers find the right company. That's why your job description should share information on what differentiates your company from others.

Some information to add includes:

- **Company Location.** Where are you located? Can employees work remotely? Is there flexibility in the job location?
- **Company Culture.** How would you describe the culture of the organization? What are some core values?
- **Company Benefits.** What are the traditional benefits and additional benefits others might not offer, such as community discounts, an on-site relaxation room, or other employee perks?
- **Company Awards.** How has the company been recognized locally or nationally for its work? This might include work within the community or industry-related accolades.

Highlight advancement opportunities

Candidates often have more confidence in moving to a new position when they recognize there's room for growth within the company. You don't have to make any promises or guarantees for the person who moves into the new position. However, you can share your viewpoint on promoting within the company. Additionally, you could include information on where past employees in the position have moved within the company upon being promoted.

Showcase your commitment to diversity

Before writing your job description, gain clarity on the company's commitment to diversity so you can incorporate it. Whether you add a simple Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) statement or make a more thoughtful declaration, highlighting your values related to diversity can go a long way in attracting and repelling candidates.

However, be sure not to stretch the truth in this section. If you don't take diversity and inclusion seriously because it hasn't yet been placed as a priority, don't pretend you do. Just be truthful regarding where you stand on this matter.

Another way to share your commitment to diversity is to incorporate reasonable accommodation language and accessibility options throughout the application process and within the workplace.

Finally, be cautious with the language you use and avoid things that may be interpreted poorly by minority applicants. For example, encouraging applicants to have a good sense of humor may seem harmless. However, a minority candidate may interpret that as a requirement to tolerate inappropriate jokes and a toxic work culture.

Write job descriptions search engines in mind

While search engine optimization (SEO) might be the last thing on your mind when you're thinking about writing

a job description, it's something you should consider.

Many job seekers start on Google, so you want your job search to show up in the results.

Here are some SEO tips to incorporate in your next job description:

- Use standard job titles that job seekers are likely to type in the search bar. Enter a few variations of the job title in Google and see what results come up. That can help you identify which phrasing is most common.
- Keep the overall job description under 800 words.
- Add the zip code for the company along with the exact address, even if it's a remote position.
- Refresh older job postings if they're still active.
- Add an EEO statement at the bottom of the job description.

Additional Resource: Improve your hiring process and candidate selection by [incorporating diverse hiring practices](#).