

Definition of a job advertisement

Before you write your job ad, complete a job profile and/or job description. They will help you write an ad that will attract candidates to your company and are the best way to avoid wasting time on interviewing people who do not meet your needs.

To be successful your advertisement must attract highly qualified candidates and should be based on simple marketing techniques that are easy to use.

Your advertisement is directly competing against others for the same pool of candidates. If you want to attract the best candidates you must make sure it draws candidates in and excites them about the job and working for your company.

You should write a job advertisement as if you were writing sales copy for a direct marketing advert. The job is the product you are trying to sell and the applicants are the customers you are trying to reach.

How to write a job ad

The **job title** is the first thing candidates see when they scan the list of situations vacant. It is therefore the most important part of a great job advertisement. It is like writing a headline for a classified ad in a newspaper. Titles that are exciting and call people to action will stand out and make people want to read your ad. The actual content of a job advert is irrelevant if no one is attracted to read the ad.

Job seekers want to know what is in it for them. To attract top talent, remember that "it is not what a job seeker can do for your company but what your company can do for the job seeker!" Include a brief description of your company and its products or services. Define the culture and why it is a good place to work. What sort of training and career path is available?

Describe the position including an overview of the responsibilities and general scope of work. Will the role be part of a team, managing a team, or working independently? Explain why the position is vacant.

Outline the skills you require such as work experience, education, computer skills, organisation skills, leadership and communications skills. If travel will be necessary remember to mention this.

Lastly, include methods for reply such as email, fax or phone. Remember to put these on the bottom of your advert.

Try not to write more than 500 words per ad. Adverts that are too long may bore the reader with too many details. Using an outline format with bullets to highlight the specific points makes it easier for candidates to read.

Even if you don't think there is anyone in the company capable of fulfilling the role, you should advertise the position internally. Either place detail on the communal notice board or send a memo to all staff explaining the position, what skills are required, the person to contact and the cut off date for applications. It is desirable to give your existing team four weeks to reply.

Avoiding Discrimination

You are not allowed to use phrases in advertising that may indicate an intention to discriminate on the grounds of age. For example you cannot advertise for "a minimum of ten years experience" as this effectively excludes applicants under a certain age. An alternative could be, "The successful applicant will have sufficient experience to be independent and operate at a responsible level", or simply "Experience preferred".

Ambiguous terms such as "senior", "junior", "mature" could be assumed to indicate an intention to discriminate and may attract complaints. The terms "principal" and "advanced" should be considered. Similarly the term "junior" is unsuitable. "Office Junior" indicates a younger person and could be replaced with "Office Assistant". The term "mature" is often used in general conversation to indicate age. It is best avoided. Use instead, "responsible", "capable", and/or "possessing initiative".

It is unlawful to use language that has a gender bias, such as Draughtsman, Fireman, Girl Friday, Salesman, Storeman, Warehouseman. Where historic or longstanding usage prevents the use of an alternative, the words "male" or "female" should follow the term in question.