



# The Art of the Job Ad

*How to Craft a Compelling Posting  
to **Attract Qualified Talent***



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# Introduction

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Writing a compelling job ad for an online job board or talent community is essential to recruiting highly qualified applicants. But there is much more to it than describing the open position and listing a few desired candidate skills and qualifications.

Crafting an effective posting requires careful consideration – you'll need to follow an intuitive organizational structure, use clear and concise language, include an enticing call to action, and incorporate the right keywords so your ad can be found by top talent.

This eBook will walk you through the process of creating a winning job ad, helping you attract great new hires time and time again.

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# 8 Components of an Effective Job Ad

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The most successful job ads contain eight distinct sections. While the format may vary slightly depending on which job board or talent community you are using, the same best practices apply.

The following is a step-by-step overview of areas to include in your posting.

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# 1

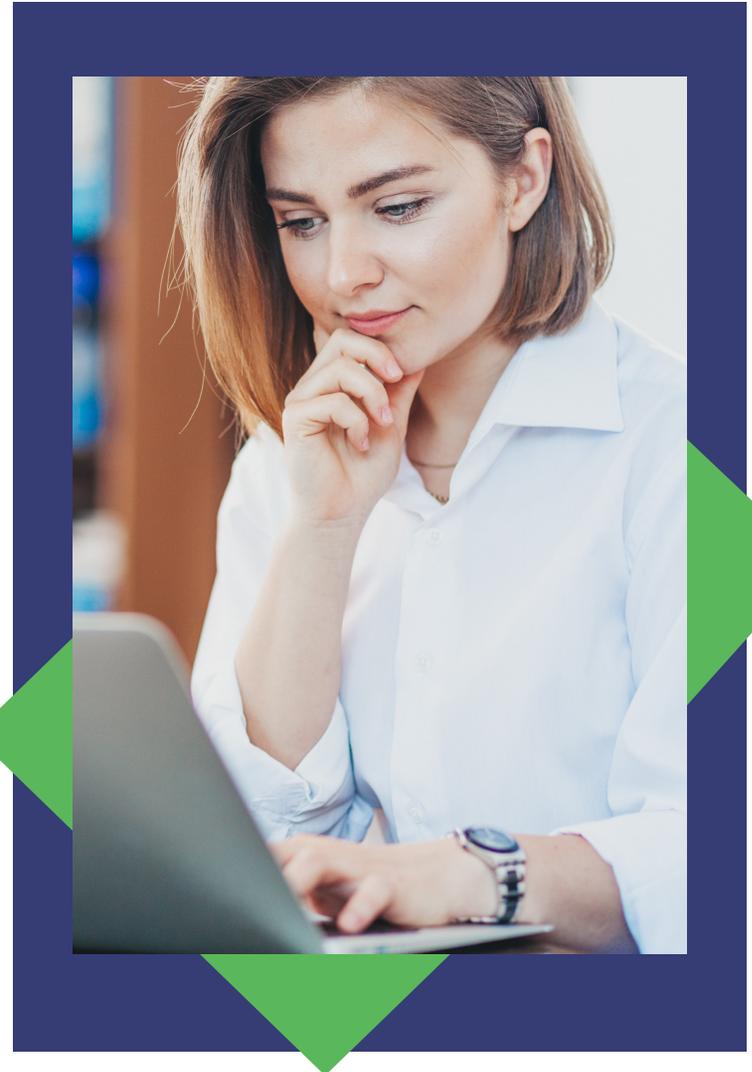
## Title

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Job ad titles should be as short, simple, and straightforward as possible to maximize apply rates.

According to a [2019 Appcast study](#), titles with one to three words have the highest apply rates and the most candidate clicks.

This means that you should avoid overly creative job titles (e.g. “Sales Ninja,” “Chief Happiness Officer,” and “Social Media Guru”). Some employers and recruiters attempt to come up with unique titles to make their job postings distinctive, but this approach can backfire. It can confuse the applicant and hurt your chances of being found in search engines – job seekers are far more likely to search for traditional titles like “Sales Representative” or “Human Resources Officer.”



# 2

## Lead-In

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The lead-in area of a job posting picks up where the title line left off. It is a simple, but powerful, three- to four-line introduction that gives the applicant a quick overview of your job opening, location, and benefits. The goal is to highlight information that will compel job seekers to apply for the position.

Example:

*Join a rapidly expanding advertising agency located in sunny San Diego. Current clients include five Fortune 100 corporations and several Silicon Valley startups. Enjoy a great team environment with anticipated compensation of \$60K–\$80K per year.*

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# 3

## Job Description

The job description is the meat of your ad. Here, you should provide ample details about what the day-to-day job entails, but you don't need to write a manifesto about every minor task the individual will perform.

Prepare a two- to four-sentence overview about the position. The purpose of this paragraph is to tell the reader what their life will be like if they work for your company. Write this section so that the reader can envision themselves doing the job, explaining specific activities, opportunities, and challenges rather than general responsibilities. Be clear about why this position is important and how they'll be able to contribute to your company's success.

Follow this brief summary with a short, bulleted list (no more than five bullets) of specific duties that you want to highlight. Make sure each bullet follows a parallel sentence structure that uses the same tense.

Example:

*The copywriter will oversee the creation of compelling content for a range of promotional materials. You will work directly with clients to identify their needs and devise a messaging strategy that will drive the advancement of their brand and its products.*

*Key responsibilities include:*

- *Write copy for clients' ads, brochures, TV spots, radio, and other forms of advertising.*
- *Research the technical properties of products.*
- *Identify what makes products appealing to consumers.*
- *Conceive, develop, and produce effective advertising campaigns and unique concepts.*
- *Work with account executives to determine project scope and partner with art directors to formulate captivating ideas.*

# 4

## Culture

This area provides another opportunity to draw in potential candidates. Here, briefly describe your company's unique culture and tell the reader what makes it a great place to work. Try to keep your description to three to four sentences, maximum.

Remember, you are trying to convince the candidate to apply. A compelling job ad is persuasive, not merely descriptive. Consider what sets your company apart from others – for example, a relaxed environment or opportunity for advancement. And, clearly communicate your company's mission so candidates can envision their values aligning with yours.

Example:

*Our company believes in investing in our greatest resource: our employees. We encourage our staff to take advantage of opportunities for professional development and support personnel in their efforts to improve their skills. Plus, we have happy hours every Friday afternoon.*

According to iHire's [2019 State of Online Recruiting Report](#), 62.2% of job seekers said they were more likely to apply to a job if the ad included information about the company's culture.



# 5

## Requirements, Skills & Qualifications

The length of this section will depend on the amount of “basic” and “preferred” qualifications the opening demands. If the requirements list has fewer than five items, you can organize it as a bulleted list. But if it is longer, consider putting qualifications in a short paragraph and present preferred skills in bulleted form.

Note that generalities are likely to cause an influx of unqualified candidates. Effective job ads list requirements concisely, and clearly state if a particular certification or license is necessary to be considered for the position.

On the other hand, avoid using the word “must” whenever possible and emphasize that the right candidate will have the opportunity to grow and learn new skills in addition to what they’ll already be bringing to the table.

Example:

- *4-year marketing degree or concentration in creative writing or English is preferred*
- *10+ years in an agency setting or 6+ years of related experience*
- *Strong experience copywriting and testing for online communications*
- *Ability to juggle multiple projects while meeting demanding deadlines, producing high-quality work, and projecting a positive attitude*

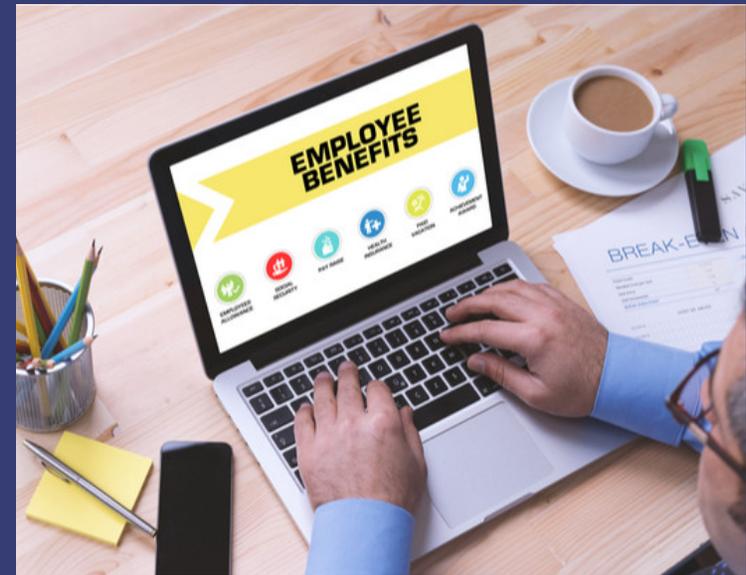
# 6

## Benefits

The benefits area should come at the end of the job posting. This will ensure that the candidate has taken the time to read through the rest of the information instead of simply seeing something like “tuition reimbursement” and deciding to apply. You may organize this area as another bulleted list, but it shouldn't be longer than five items.

Make sure to reference both salary (or salary range) and other opportunities in “benefits.” Many job seekers are looking to make a specific amount or receive certain benefits. In fact, [job seekers rank “salary range”](#) as the most important piece of information in a job ad.

Being transparent and upfront about what you are offering will allow candidates to determine whether your position is a possibility for them before an application even reaches your inbox.



Example:

- *Cost-effective healthcare coverage*
- *401(k) savings plan with employer match*
- *Tuition reimbursement*
- *Paid vacations and holidays*

# 7

## Call to Action



Near the end of your ad, provide specific instructions on how to apply, but keep your application process as simple as possible. Studies have shown that application processes **longer than five minutes** have a negative impact on the number of applicants.

Examples:

*Please submit your resume and cover letter to John Smith at [hire@email@company.com](mailto:hire@email@company.com). No phone calls from recruiting firms please.*

OR

*Please submit your resume and cover letter by clicking “Apply Now” below. You may also send two writing samples to John Smith at [hire@email@company.com](mailto:hire@email@company.com).*

# 8

## Closing

Keep the closing short and sweet and be sure to provide insight regarding next steps. This will combat the “candidate black hole” problem (when job seekers apply and never hear back from the employer or recruiter) and ensure the applicant knows what to expect.

Example:

*Thank you very much for your interest in working for [Company Name]. We appreciate your time and review each resume that is submitted to our HR department. You will receive an email within 24 hours that confirms your application has been accepted by our applicant tracking system. If you are selected to participate in the interview process, you will receive an email within two weeks from intervieweremail@company.com.*



# SEO Considerations

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If you ask savvy recruiters and HR pros how to write a great job posting, it won't be long before they begin talking about keywords and search engine optimization (SEO). For the uninitiated, implementing SEO for job posts can be a bit intimidating, but it comes down to properly utilizing keywords in a job description and paying attention to some of the structural elements detailed in the previous sections of this eBook.

SEO for job posts is no different than any other SEO initiative. Likewise, you'll need to do some research before diving in headfirst. Here's a great place to start:

1. Review competitors' ads, noting keywords, suggested skills, and job descriptions. What fits with the expectations you have for your position? What might you adapt for your own purposes?
2. Make a list of some of the most common keywords used by competitors and add some of your own.
3. Find out which of these terms are most frequently searched. There are plenty of free tools to help, such as [Google Trends](#), which allows you to create customized comparisons of search term popularity.



# SEO Considerations (continued)

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As you review your findings and prepare to write your job posting, keep the following types of keywords in mind:



- **Job Title:** As previously mentioned, when it comes to job posting SEO, avoid overly creative titles because very few people actually search for them.
- **Location:** Keep the focus local. Most people search for job openings in a specific city or geographic region. Include that information in a prominent section of your ad.
- **Industry-Specific Terms/Phrases:** Are you looking for candidates with a particular skill or credential? Make sure you mention it, especially if it's rare or in high demand.
- **Abbreviations/Acronyms:** Does your industry or company use shortened terms and initials? Improve your job ad SEO by spelling out those words in addition to using the abbreviated versions.

# 5 Mistakes to Avoid

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You think you've crafted the perfect job ad. You've published it on several different job boards as well as on your own website. You wait a couple days and haven't gotten the interest you've expected. While seasonality and business cycles play a role here, it is always worth taking a step back to make sure you've followed best practices when developing your job ad. Here are five common mistakes that may keep you from attracting applicants:

1

**You've made a typo.** Double-check the details in your job ad. Do you have the correct title, location, contact information, and URLs? Something seemingly minuscule like a misspelled keyword or invalid hyperlink could be the culprit.

2

**You've included unnecessary URLs in the job description.** You want interested job seekers to finish their applications, right? Don't include links that take them to another site where they may get distracted and completely abandon the application process.

# 5 Mistakes to Avoid (continued)

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3

**You've included multiple and/or conflicting application instructions.** Don't make the applicant process harder than it needs to be by having multiple calls to action (CTAs) in your ad. Include clear application instructions so job seekers know exactly what they need to do to be considered for the role.

4

**You're descriptive but not persuasive.** Enticing applicants (especially those who are already employed/passively seeking a job) requires you to "sell" your company and the open position. Why is your company a great place to work? What makes your culture unique? What will the person in this role be doing, who will they be working with, what will they be able to accomplish, and how will they be recognized? In short, why is this position their dream job?

5

**You don't use the right keywords.** Speak the same language job seekers do and include relevant keywords. This will help search engines and qualified candidates find your posting.

# Conclusion

Your job ad is exactly that – an advertisement. But instead of selling a product or service, you’re selling your company and your open position.

By taking the time to develop an enticing, well-organized, clear, and concise ad, you’ll increase your chances of finding and hiring top talent.

Ready to put what you learned into action?  
Learn how iHire's industry-focused recruiting solutions can help you meet your hiring goals.

Need more help crafting the perfect ad?  
[Download your free job ad template.](#)

The screenshot shows a document titled "JOB AD TEMPLATE" with the iHire logo. It contains three main sections with instructions and input fields:

- Title:** Start your job ad with an effective title line. This area must include a simple job title that will show up in candidate searches (think industry specific, not company specific). If your company calls copywriters "Content Explorers," that's fine, but for the purposes of drawing in potential applicants, use "Copywriter" in the job ad. Keep titles as short, simple, and straightforward as possible to maximize your apply rates. According to a 2019 Appcast study, titles with 1-3 words had the highest apply rates and the most candidate clicks. Below this is an empty text box.
- Lead-in:** The lead-in area of a job posting picks up where the title line left off, appealing to the reader by including information about the company and opening that will make the job seeker want to apply for the position. Below this is an empty text box. An example is provided: "Example: Join a rapidly expanding advertising agency located in sunny San Diego. Current clients include five Fortune 100 corporations and several Silicon Valley startups. Enjoy a great team environment with anticipated compensation of \$60k-\$80k per year."
- Job Description:** Now we get to the meat of the ad: the job description. You want to provide ample details about what the day-to-day job entails, but you don't need to write a manifesto about every minor task the individual will perform. Prepare a 2-4 sentence overview about the position. The purpose of this paragraph is to tell the reader what their life will be like if they work for your company. You should follow this brief summary with a short bulleted list (3-5 bullets) of specific duties that you want to highlight. Below this is a text box containing a bulleted list:
  - Job duty #1
  - Job duty #2
  - Job duty #3
  - Job duty #4
  - Job duty #5

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### About iHire

iHire is a leading career-oriented platform that brings candidates and employers together in 56 industry-focused communities. We believe that by narrowing job seekers' and employers' searches within a specific industry, we can connect high-quality talent with the right opportunities faster, easier, and more effectively than a general job board. Everyone deserves to find work that is fulfilling, inspiring, and meaningful. Since 1999, we've combined cutting-edge technology with our expertise in the recruitment space and the invaluable insights of our members to achieve just that. Visit [www.ihire.com](http://www.ihire.com) for more information.

