

Top five tips

How to improve your job ads, and what not to do

Getting job ads right is important; the job ad is likely the first impression a prospective candidate will get about your organisation.

A recently published study by Chatter Communications has looked at over 200 jobs ads from FTSE 100 companies and found that only 5% of these ads were completely gender neutral in their wording.

More than ever, we are aware of how vital inclusivity and diversity is in the workplace, and this study highlights one of the many pitfalls facing HR professionals when preparing job ads.

To help you avoid falling into one of the many traps, here are five top tips on how to improve your job ads (and what not to do):

#1 Avoid gendered language

Often, candidates can be subconsciously put off by the language used in a job ad and will not be able to pinpoint why exactly they did not feel the role was right for them. The Chatter Communications study found that roles in administration, retail and customer service overwhelmingly featured 'feminine' language, whilst roles in science, product development, technology and data typically exhibited 'masculine' language.

Examples of feminine language included *compassion, interpersonal, loyal and pleasant*, whilst masculine language included *active, adventurous, assertive, self-confident and self-sufficient*.

Instead, consider the connotations of the language you are using. Gender-neutral language will maximise the reach of your job ad. Putting diverse recruitment processes in place from the very beginning will help to ensure your organisation's EDI objectives are met in the long run.

#2 Be open-minded about your audience

The study likewise found that just two of the jobs' ads were 'easy to read', whilst over half were deemed 'very difficult'. This meant that a candidate would need to have a degree-level education to be able to understand the ad. If your ad is not for a graduate role,

there is just no reason for it to be worded as such! Make it clear and keep it simple. Remember the reader may not have the same knowledge as you about the role and what it involves.

One easy way to ensure your ads are readable is to avoid jargon and overly corporate language, especially for entry level roles – what might seem like everyday language for you can appear completely alien to someone on the outside.

Your job ads should also avoid using age-related language. Avoid phrases which tend towards certain age groups, such as '*recent graduate*', '*highly experienced*' or '*digital native*'.

Just as important as the language used in the ad, is where the ad is then shown. Consider using specialist publications to target a diverse range of communities, ages, sexes, etc.

#3 Avoid asking about an individual's immigration status in the UK

It's best practice not to state that only those with the right to work in the UK can apply for the job. The reason for this is that there are a variety of routes that may mean an individual can obtain the right to work in the UK – for instance, based on their personal circumstances or you may be able to sponsor them under a work visa.

#4 Job ads in the new ‘world of work’

There are many factors that candidates look out for when considering the attractiveness of a job position, including hybrid working policies, menopause rights, mental health awareness, wellbeing perks, family friendly/ carers leave, and training/development. It's important for HR professionals to keep up with these shifting expectations, or run the risk of losing out on great candidates.

Our *World of work* in 2022 guide has more in-depth information on these factors and how the role of HR professionals will continue to evolve post-pandemic.



#5 Make it clear what you are offering to the candidates

Just as you are letting candidates know what you require of them, make it clear what you can offer them in return.

Job ads are a great way for your organisation to advertise its purpose and values. This in turn makes your organisation more appealing to a greater number of jobseekers, as well as being a fantastic way to ensure your job ad is as inclusive as possible.

For example, numerous studies have shown that transparency around salaries is a crucial tool in fighting the gender pay gap – be open about the salary on offer in the job ad.

But this extends beyond just the financial benefits; for instance, flexible working provisions and compressed hours provisions are hugely appealing to carers and parents of younger children.

Employees today also have increasingly different expectation of their employers – simply put, employees are demanding more of their employers. For instance, many organisations offer climate perks, from board level all the way down to each individual employee. Perks such as these are becoming increasingly valued, and the job ad is great place to advertise these perks.

Use the job ad to really sell your organisation; if you offer something that sets you out from the crowd, tell them!



Get in touch

Should you have any questions or would like to find out how our market-leading team could help you, do not hesitate to get in touch.



Paul Seath

Partner

T: 020 7551 7703

E: p.seath@bateswells.co.uk



Chetal Patel

Partner

T: 020 7551 7741

E: c.patel@bateswells.co.uk

