



## **Best Practices for Job Postings**

What to know. What to do — and not do. Why it matters.

## Job postings: The good, the bad, the ugly and the not so ugly.

Job postings continue to play an important role in the recruitment of candidates for all industries and labor sectors. Virtually everyone has access to a computer, tablet or smartphone. Everyone is checking online for new and better opportunities. (Even a company's best employees are looking on a regular basis.)

With the right posting placed in the right media, employers can generate satisfying results. That's the good news. The not so good news: every other employer is doing the same thing. And they may be doing it better than you.

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### The recruiter's dilemma.

When it comes to job postings, how much time should be devoted to them? That's a question more and more HR professionals are asking. The answer is not quite so clear.

Devoting considerable time to job postings means: properly writing the posting, researching media, negotiating media buys and job board packages, tracking the posting's performance, tweaking the posting to optimize results, managing candidate responses and beyond — for each position you need to fill.



## Is your job posting work taking you away from other key responsibilities?

Recruiters have plenty to do, like sourcing and interviewing top job candidates ... onboarding newly hired employees ... communicating with the current employee population ... talking with hiring managers to learn their pipeline needs ... and more. (There is always more.)

## Some recruiters are re-thinking their approach to job postings.

Some see the need to have a staff position solely focused on the task. Others see high value in outsourcing online postings and all it entails to experts who are well versed in all its nuances.

## How can you help maximize the performance of job postings?

Whether you are keeping your company's posting work in-house or outsourcing the task, one place to start is to make sure your job postings reflect accepted best practices in how they are developed and optimized.

## Some best practices for job postings.

### Before you post, have a media plan in mind.

As with any task that has several moving parts, starting with a plan is the best strategy. When tackling your job postings, it's best to know where your posting should appear. That means doing research to learn a site's advertising opportunities, readership demographics, readership volume, media specials and more.

One decision to make first is deciding what approach you are going to take. Are you going to cast a wide net for candidates and rely on a high volume of response? Are you narrowing your focus to only reach the most highly qualified and experienced candidates? Or, are you going to do a little of both.

### Negotiate your media buys.

When you do your research, you will learn all about a site's advertising rates through its media kit. Read the information carefully to determine the buy that makes the most sense for your particular hiring situation. See the set prices. Then, negotiate anyway. Ask about special packages. Learn what volume buys trigger which discounts. The more you ask, the more you'll learn and possibly, the more you'll save.

## Keep job titles clear and precise.

When job candidates search for career openings, they usually begin by typing in the job title they're interested in. Keeping this fact in mind is critical when crafting your company's job postings. If you are seeking a software engineering manager, it's best to use that title. Getting creative with a job title like "Maestro of Software Talent" may be fun, but it is not among the searchable titles candidates will use, and it will not achieve the results you are looking for.

Application rates of job postings increase by as much as 500% by using common, recognizable job titles.

## Be careful about using jargon and abbreviations.

Your company may use some jargon that is unique to its culture and/or operations. If it's an 'inside' term, it's best not to use it in your job description and certainly not in the job title. Also, unless an abbreviated job title is universally accepted (like 'RN,' for example), it's best to stay away from it. Most seekers don't use abbreviations when typing in the job search box.

## Make sure the position title of your job appears throughout your posting.

Mentioning the position title within the body of your post at least a few times can help reinforce the accuracy and stickiness of your posting. It also helps rank your job higher than postings that do not apply this strategy.

## Use research-proven keywords when developing the description of your job posting.

When candidates search for a job, certain keywords will appear in bold. Applying these keywords in the title and text of your own job posting will help your message stand out and contribute to its SEO value.



## Make search engines your friends.

Online job boards use relevancy searching to return and rank the results that users see. There are two prime methods for increasing your job's relevancy and therefore its search rankings — keywords and criteria.

**Keywords** — Best practices suggest trying to identify at least 5 to 10 words that candidates are most likely to use when searching for your job. Next, find synonyms or similar words for each of the keywords in your list. Now, you have a master keyword list. Use these words as much as possible in the text of your posting — without having your posting sound unnatural or forced.

**Criteria** — When completing the job posting entry form, make every effort to insert information into extra fields like Job Type, Industries, Full-time, Part-time, Manages Others, etc. When you are more descriptive about your open job, you enable search engines to more easily and effectively match your job to potential candidates.

## Different views about writing effective job posting copy.

There are two main schools of thought when it comes to writing online job descriptions. One school reveres the traditional approach of using text from the internal job description to succinctly spell out the duties and requirements of the position. The other school says dare to be different. Use descriptive and emotion-based words to capture the hearts of candidates, not just their brains. What school is better? It often depends on where your online job posting is to appear.



If you are using one of the major job boards (Monster, CareerBuilder, etc.), it may be best to go the traditional route. Using a broad-based job board means you are attracting a fair number of new or less experienced candidates. Being clear with your messaging comes first. That's not to say that you cannot infuse your unique employer brand into the posting. But for the 'meat' of the job description, be businesslike.

On the other hand, if you are posting to a niche site, you are likely to attract candidates who already have a comprehensive knowledge of the position at hand. In this case, you can be more targeted with your messaging which will help you to stand out.

Here are more rules of thumb:

### Refrain from using clichés.

Doing a little work to make your messaging sound unique and personal can go a long way. Don't rely on the buzzwords of the day, however. Using clichés tends to paint an employer as an organization that follows trends.

### Write copy that focuses on the appeal of the position and 'what's in it' for the candidate.

Often, employers devote precious ad copy space to describing their company: how large they are, employee size, etc. Instead, focus on the open position. Develop ad copy that conveys what would attract a quality candidate to the vacancy. If you do that well, readers will naturally want to know more about your company and will click on your ad.

### Follow a logical job posting format.

- Employer branding elements: branded headline and introduction
- Brief overview of the position – impact, direct reports, etc.
- Position duties and responsibilities
- Unusual responsibilities
- What makes the position different
- Requirements – must haves, then what is preferred
- Action to respond

63%

of candidates said job descriptions were the most important content they look for when researching a job.



## A word about position qualifications.

When conveying your position's qualifications, tread lightly. List those qualifications that are absolutely required (certification, degree, second language, etc.). This will deter unqualified respondents. But don't get carried away when listing your "highly desired" qualities. Being too demanding can turn away some very highly qualified candidates.

## Write a pamphlet, not a book.

One of the reasons online job postings are so effective is that they are easy for candidates to find and navigate. Take away that ease of use and you take away a major advantage of a job posting in the first place. When writing your posting, think about your candidates. They don't want to read a book. They want to scan a well-thought-out listing. They want relevant details that can influence their next decision. Be brief. And be smart in how you put together your posting.

Try to keep your total online job posting to 400-800 words. That's the recommended length for best results.

The debate continues. Should recruiters outsource their growing job posting needs? Or should they dedicate more company resources, more staff and more of their own time to the task? At The David Group, we would be happy to have that discussion with you.

## In summary.

Properly developing and placing your job postings takes a bit of work, but the results can be highly rewarding. Most of all, it involves applying a marketing mindset.

Whether you are a product marketer or a recruiter, the goals are similar. You both are tasked with selling a product or opportunity. You both are seeking to target and engage a defined audience. And you both want to apply the best methods to elicit the best results.

With a little research and hard work beforehand, your job postings can stand out in an increasingly busy and competitive online landscape.

## About us.

We are experts in recruitment marketing, retention and workforce communications. Our agency's focus is to help organizations find, attract, engage and keep talent.

Learn how our Comprehensive Job Posting Services or other recruitment marketing services can help you increase your talent pipeline.

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## Source Links.

### Monster

[monster.com](http://monster.com)

### Career Builder

[careerbuilder.com](http://careerbuilder.com)

### INC.Com

Crafting the Perfect Job Posting, Julie Strickland

### The Talent Board

[thetalentboard.org](http://thetalentboard.org)