HOW TO CREATE
COMPELLING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

CLAYTON
RECRUITMENT

Hiring amazing talent in any industry starts with attracting the right people.

Unfortunately, following the "Great Resignation" and the transformation of the workplace, capturing the attention of the best candidates isn't easy. According to current industry data, 95% of employers say they find it extremely difficult to fill the gaps in their team, thanks to today's competitive market.

And, with many companies continuing to press ahead with their hiring for the coming year, managing partners need to work harder than ever to make their listings stand out amongst the clutter.

It all starts with writing the most effective job descriptions.

Even as the hiring landscape evolves, candidates still rely on engaging, informative, and powerful job descriptions to determine which company best fits their needs.

The best job descriptions combine critical insights into an available role, with a touch of marketing and a behind-the-scenes look at company culture. It's not enough to list the required skills and experience under a quick summary of what a job entails.

To attract loyal, engaged employees to your teams, you need to highlight information that matters to top talent. Today's job descriptions should focus on the benefits you can offer as an employer, your commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and a clear overview of why candidates should choose your business over dozens of competitors.

Today, we're exploring how employers in the industry can turbocharge their job descriptions and ensure they're attracting the widest selection of talented professionals.

What is a job description's function, and is it still important?

Job descriptions are simple documents outlining the essential responsibilities involved in a role. They highlight the qualifications and experience a candidate needs to excel in a position, describe the type of work they're going to perform, and offer insights into the benefits of a role.

Job descriptions have grown increasingly critical over the years as employers struggle to find the best talent. Today's businesses are now using job descriptions to outline the key components of a role and essentially put their best foot forwards to qualified candidates.

An effective job description ensures your brand can attract candidates and fill crucial skill gaps. In fact, 52% of job seekers in a recent Indeed research report say job descriptions directly influence their decision on whether or not to apply for a role.

Job descriptions help you to outline exactly what you need from a new employee, so you can make the right decision about whom to hire first-time around. These documents also:

- Give candidates a clear idea of what to expect from a role
- Act as a guide when making hiring decisions
- Communicates the expectations aligned with a role
- Form the foundation for interview questions

What are the Core Components of a Good Job Description?

Many companies have a unique process for writing job descriptions. Those responsible for hiring within the company may work with existing employees to build descriptions based on feedback from staff and, importantly, what they need the employee to deliver in that role.

Others leverage the skills of specialist recruitment agencies like ourselves to boost their document's performance. According to Indeed, to write an effective job description, companies must find the right balance between providing concise, straightforward information, and using the right details to engage, excite, and intrigue candidates.

Typically, your job description will include the following information:

A Title & Summary

The first component of a good job description is a role title and a summary of what the position entails. Highlight the nature of the role (whether it's permanent, full-time, or contract) and how you expect your employee to work (in-office, remote, or hybrid). Keep in mind flexible working options could make your job descriptions more attractive. 76% of professionals say they'd like to work fewer traditional hours and want a flexible approach to when and how they work.

Remember to use a specific, easy-to-understand job title to avoid confusing your potential candidates with jargon. Talk to your recruitment agency if you're unsure what your title and summary should be – especially in order to widen the net and attract more suitable candidates.

An "About Us Section

This section is where you can really 'sell' your business and provide an introduction to who you are. Whilst some businesses can rely to some extent on the weight of their brand and reputation in the market, the best talent these days are looking for evidence of an empathetic, inclusive, and reliable employer – so focusing on how you bring this to life is paramount. You can highlight your company culture, vision, and purpose here and give your potential candidates an insight into your values, such as a commitment to innovation, collaboration, and evolution.

The "About Us" section is also a fantastic space to highlight critical DEI information. 50% of employees currently believe their employer isn't doing enough to promote diversity.

If you want to attract talent from all generations and backgrounds, make sure you demonstrate your ability to make every team member feel like part of the family.

The Role and Responsibilities

Your job description is important in setting expectations for your employees. You should outline the core purpose of the role straight away and what your team members will be responsible for in this position. Make sure your list of responsibilities is as clear as possible, with no industry jargon or confusing language.

Be precise and let team members know what kind of systems and software they'll be working with, what caseloads they'll be dealing with, and what the short and long-term objectives of the role might be.

Competencies and Skills

This section of the job description tells your candidates what characteristics you're looking for in an employee. Essentially, it's a checklist of everything a good employee will need to perform well in the role. Avoid listing educational requirements and skills that aren't entirely necessary here, as it could stop potentially good candidates from considering your opportunity.

Create a list of specific skills and qualifications your team member will require. Highlight whether they need experience working with certain programs, and draw attention to any on-the-job training you can offer. You may also want to outline some basic traits you're looking for, such as punctuality and pro-activity.

The Benefits and Salary

Finally, you'll need to show your candidates what's "in it for them" if they decide to join your team. Provide an insight into the kind of salary your candidate can expect. You can choose a salary "range" if you're open to negotiations. Just make sure it's in line with the average for that job role in that particular region.

Don't forget to draw attention to benefits too. Many employees find benefits to be just as attractive as a good level of remuneration. For instance, maybe you can offer flexible and remote work, a four-day work-week, or access to in-house therapy and mental health support.

A good way to make your benefits more attractive is to write them in a way that helps your candidates envision what it might be like to work with you. For instance, instead of writing "4-day work week", write, "Start your weekend early every week with a four-day schedule, so you have more time for family and friends."

Remember to discuss your decisions with the recruitment agency working with you on the role. They speak to candidates daily, so they can tell you exactly what the candidate you are looking for wants in a role.

Top Tips for More Compelling Job Descriptions

Writing effective job descriptions for candidates in the current landscape isn't just about ensuring you include all the right information. In competitive markets, it's important to look for ways of making your job descriptions more compelling and actively 'sell' the role to jobseekers.

Here are some quick tips to help you attract more candidates.

1) Improve the Opening Section

It's becoming extremely difficult to make job descriptions stand out these days. Your potential candidates will be scanning through job listings daily. That's why it's important to make sure you instantly grab your talent's attention.

A good way to make your descriptions more compelling is to focus on the benefits the candidate can expect immediately. Rather than starting with a phrase like "The ideal candidate will", talk about what your employees will get from you. For instance, "This role gives you a unique opportunity to work with a world-class business on a flexible schedule." Focus therefore on 'what's in it for them' rather than your list of stipulations and requirements.

2) Communicate Your Compelling Culture Clearly

Candidates are a lot pickier about where they work in today's jobs market. With that in mind, it's important to highlight the culture of your business straight away, so talent can determine whether your company really fits their needs. Introduce your brand's vision and mission, values, and commitment to building a diverse workforce.

Discuss the company culture employees can expect, introducing concepts like remote work opportunities, flexible schedules, and team-building exercises. Consider including genuine insights and quotes from your existing employees. This is a great way to demonstrate your company's credibility and authenticity.

3) Make Information Easily Accessible

Job descriptions need to be informative, but candidates don't want to be overwhelmed with huge amounts of text and complicated words. Consider cutting down on lengthy sentences and switching to bullet points where possible. This will help your candidates scan your content and find the necessary information to determine whether they should apply.

Experimenting with different kinds of content is a good way to make your job descriptions a little more engaging. Alongside paragraphs and bullet points, you could consider using short videos to provide insight into your company with statements and stories from current employees. Show candidates the office space, and let them hear the hiring manager's voice to make your content more memorable.

4) Double-Check Your Content is Inclusive

As demand for diverse, equitable, and inclusive employers continues to rise, it's more important than ever to double-check that your content doesn't include any evidence of bias. Unconscious bias can easily creep into job descriptions and prevent crucial talent from applying.

For instance, you may use words like "young go-getter" or "experienced veteran" without malicious intent, but these terms alienate whole age groups within your candidate pool. When writing your job descriptions, watch out for any language which might make your description less appealing to a specific gender, age group, or ethnic group.

If you're worried your diversity message isn't clear enough, talk to your recruitment consultant, who will be able to advise you on how to include your commitment to DEI.

5) Be Transparent About the Candidate Experience

Setting expectations in the job description is an excellent way to save time for your team and your potential candidates. Being open and clear in your job description about what the interview will entail and how decisions will be made shows your candidates that they can expect a straightforward hiring journey with you.

Highlight whether there are likely to be any post-interview tests your candidates will need to complete, and let your potential employees know if interviews will happen in person or virtually. It may also be worth introducing some basic information about the onboarding experience for successful candidates.

(It's also worth reading our blog on 'ethical recruitment' here to ensure that all your recruitment practices ensure the highest standards of professionalism, fairness, and transparency).

6) Ask for Feedback

As employee and candidate expectations change, it can be difficult to consistently update your job descriptions in a way that generates real results without a little help. Fortunately, there are various places where you can cultivate feedback. Ask your existing team members for help in making your job descriptions stand out. They can tell you what benefits make your role more compelling and what information you might have missed.

Speak to your recruitment agency for advice on how to make your job listings stand out. After all, these professionals have years of experience reviewing and communicating job descriptions to the market in order to help businesses attract top talent.

The Mistakes to Avoid in Your Job Descriptions

Writing the most compelling job descriptions can be a complex process, particularly in today's competitive hiring landscape. It's easy to stumble into several potential mistakes, which could mean you miss out on the most valuable talent for your team.

Aside from following the steps above to make your descriptions more compelling, it's also worth ensuring you don't fall victim to any of the following common errors:

1) Using the Wrong Job Title

As companies continue to rely on "marketing" strategies to attract new talent to their team, recent trends have emerged among organisations trying to make their descriptions more compelling. For instance, some companies try to showcase their unique personality and culture by switching out job titles with more inventive but unusual ones. You may have already seen listings for various "superstars" or "rockstars".

While weird and unusual job titles can be fun, they're also highly confusing. Most people in today's digital landscape are actively looking for job descriptions which include specific keywords. And in any sector, this can make your efforts counterproductive as using unusual job titles prevents candidates from finding your posts. Additionally, complex job titles can make it harder for employees to determine whether they're applying for the right roles. It's worth sticking with titles you know your current employees are familiar with.

2) Using Hyperbolic Language

In an age where candidates are looking for more genuine, honest, and empathetic employers, they're increasingly less likely to apply for roles where companies use a lot of superlative and hyperbolic language. Telling your candidates that working with you gives them a chance to be part of the "best company in the world" won't increase your chances of attracting talent.

Instead, focus on the clear, authentic benefits you can offer. Don't just tell your candidates your company is the best in the world. Highlight what makes your job offer special. Can you provide flexible working schedules, consistent education and training, and access to unique benefits no other employer can offer?

3) Failing to Include Relevant Information

While candidates in today's fast-paced environment have less time to browse through job listings, this doesn't mean you can "skip" parts of the job description. Failing to include important information means you're less likely to attract candidates because they won't know what to expect from your role.

Make sure you highlight all of the position's key responsibilities, the benefits on offer, and any other information that might be necessary for candidates. Include details where relevant too. For instance, what makes it flexible if you're listing a "flexible" role? Can team members work from home whenever they like, or will they be able to change their schedule easily?

4) Alienating Crucial Talent

In a competitive market, you cannot afford to accidentally alienate qualified people from your role. With this in mind, it's worth double-checking that you're not driving possible candidates away. For instance, it might be a good idea to remove any requests for a specific number of years of experience from your job descriptions.

Experience is great, but it's not the only factor determining whether potential employees will thrive in your role. Adding requests to your job descriptions for an employee with five years of experience in a specific practice area can prevent qualified candidates from applying.

A candidate with an excellent growth mindset and two years of experience may be better for your business than someone with ten years of experience and a laid-back attitude. Focus on the skills you need your employees to have and the results you want them to achieve instead.

5) Failing to Get the Right Help

As the current market continues to suffer from significant changes, it's harder than ever for companies to find the talent they need without a little extra help. Ultimately, going it alone isn't an option if you want to attract the right talent as quickly as possible. No matter how big or small, every company should consider working with an expert.

Working alongside recruitment specialists will help you to enhance your job descriptions, build your talent pipeline, and increase your access to talent. Not only can their team of consultants give you tips on improving your job listings based on their extensive experience, but they can also ensure your listings reach the right people by promoting them on the correct channels.

Final thoughts

Designing the ideal job descriptions is one of the most important things you can do as an employer trying to attract the very best talent. In such a competitive market, it's crucial to ensure your job descriptions not only show your would-be employees what they can expect from your role but also give them insight into culture and benefits.

If you struggle to update and enhance ineffective job descriptions, contact your recruitment agency for help. They'll be able to provide behind-the-scenes insights based on years of experience working with similar brands.

CLAYTON RECRUITMENT

We understand that while talent is your greatest asset – it can also be your scarcest resource - which is why you need a recruitment partner with the market expertise, insight and network to deliver the right people at the right time.

Clayton Recruitment has been partnering with organisations across the local, regional and national market for over three decades and during that time has built up an enviable reputation for trust and reliability. We provide an experienced and credible voice in the market by being able to demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the talent agenda.

Talent is all about people, and just like you, our consultants are true experts in their field with a real drive for excellence which informs everything they do.

With specialist divisions covering Commercial, Financial, Industrial and Engineering appointments, on both a permanent and temporary basis, Clayton Recruitment is the only name you'll ever need, and what's more – we are nice people to do business with!

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