

Constructing a Well-Written, Well-Placed Internet Job Posting

A successful internet job posting depends upon what is written, how it is composed and where the final ad is placed. A well-placed job posting will yield a high volume of candidates, and a well written one will aid in narrowing the results to the genuinely qualified candidates. A poorly written ad may lead qualified prospects to skip over your opportunity because the basic information needed to peak their curiosity wasn't included.

Parts of the Posting:

Title: The title should be informative and eye-catching, causing the candidate to read the ad and learn more. Use multiple words in the title of your ad to increase the odds of it appearing in the results when a candidate searches by title.

Location: Always list the location including city and state. Candidates everywhere will view your ad, so it is a good idea to include the closest major city, if the location is in an unknown small town.

Skills: Use as many descriptive words as possible to increase the chances that your ad appears in a candidates search results. Differentiate between required skills (those that are needed to be considered) and desirable/preferred skills (those that are nice to have). Skills are more readable in a bulleted list.

Job description: Provide enough information to give a clear accurate picture (responsibilities, scope and role of the position). The job description should inform and convince the candidate to apply. It should also touch upon how the candidate can develop and advance in the position.

Experience Required – Clarity helps the candidate decide whether to apply, but don't pack the ad with a lengthy list of requirements, academics, or duties. Long lists may be intimidating, and can exclude even the best candidate from applying.

Work Status: State the status you require of your employees. Do they need to be United States Citizens, or are you willing to hire employees with green cards? Will you assist the right candidate in obtaining a HB-1 Visa?

Contact Information: Provide more than one option for interested candidates to apply: e-mail, phone, fax, or mailing address.

Job ID: For each ad you post use a unique tracking ID#. This will allow you to know which site generated the application, and will provide you with valuable information about which sites yield the best responses.

Some Tips for writing an effective job advertisement:

- Keep it organized and clear – Avoid lengthy paragraphs, and don't mix topics such as skills, contact information, and requirements. Instead, use sub headings, bullets, and different font to clearly communicate your message.
- Provide a company summary – list your company's history, mission, goals and the products or services it provides. Keep in mind that you are not just trying to sell the position, but the organization as well. Convey what makes your company attractive.
- It is okay to modify the job title – It is not necessary to use the exact internal job title. Especially if that title is vague or outdated. Create a descriptive title that conveys what you are looking for. Consider linking the title to a hook, which is an attention grabbing word or phrase that compels the reader to view the rest of the ad. For example –Accountant needed for GROWING company. Administrative Assistant, NO WEEKENDS!

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Some Tips for writing an effective job advertisement (continued):

- Avoid asking for a specific number of year's experience – potentially qualified candidates might decide not to apply.
- Showcase benefits – No need to outline the complete benefit package, but provide enough so that candidates won't pass up the opportunity.
- Provide concise contact information – be clear on how, when and where you wish to be contacted. A prospect won't likely persist if it is difficult to apply for the position.
- Think like a candidate – When writing your ad keep in mind that candidates will find your ad using a search engine. What words would they use to search? Be sure to include these words in your ad, using multiple words that mean the same thing, so that you cover all the bases.
- Think of your perfect candidate: If they had the perfect personality, work ethic and background, which skills are necessary? If personality-fit is more important, think of language that will attract that kind of personality.
- Choose multiple options when posting – Post your ad to your company's website. Post to three or four popular online employment sites that generate high traffic. Also, post your ad to a "mega site" that will distribute your ad to other employment sites increasing the exposure of your posting.
- Leave the posting up for at least 30-45 days – and modify the posting if necessary. On many of the major job sites, the most recently written (or updated) postings appear first in the list of results. Making a few simple changes to "refresh" your posting will improve your placement in a candidate's search results.
- Qualify candidates – close the ad by asking the candidate to submit a one-page summary of their greatest accomplishment. This is a unique way to filter candidates. The quality of the accomplishment is more indicative of success than a degree and experience may be.

Content Counts! What Candidates Look for in a Job Description:

Company Overview, Location, Position Description, Required Capabilities, Relocation, Community Information, Opportunities for Promotion, Work/Life Balance, Legal Information, Branding, Salary, Education Requirements, Preferred Skills, Travel, Benefits, Training Availability, Awards Won, Links to Similar Jobs

These factors determine whether an ad is applied to or simply viewed.

Quick Facts to Consider:

- Studies have shown that online job searching activity rises at the end of quarter one and quarter two, as well as in August. (Note: increases in activity be occupational dependent as well).
- Over 35% of U.S. job seekers have an actively running online job search notification. 97% of these job seekers receive an alert at least once a week.
- Since the majority of online job searches are conducted on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, posting an ad early in the week will allow maximum exposure to candidates actively searching to make a change.
- Job title, bolding, location on page and the first 200 characters of the posting influence whether or not the candidate views your ad.

Interview Tips / Basics

When conducting an interview, remember that you are the “spokesperson” for your organization. The manner in which you interview a candidate becomes their knowledge base for how your organization functions. Remember the Golden Rule - to treat candidates the way you would like to be treated if you were on the other side of your desk, being interviewed. Use the following checklist to enhance your interviewing technique, and secure top talent:

1. Arrive on time for the interview. Being punctual shows that you and your organization value others' time.
2. When meeting the candidate, extend a friendly handshake and greeting, introduce yourself, then ask the candidate to have a seat.
3. Only have one person interviewing at a time. An interview should be a conversation, not an inquisition. Simultaneous interviewers place unnecessary pressure on the candidate.
4. Make priority calls, emails, and text messages before the interview starts. Candidates deserve your complete attention, during their allotted time. If you are expecting a call during the interview that you absolutely must take, make the candidate aware of this at the start of the interview.
5. Review the candidates resume before the interview. Candidates will appreciate that you have taken the time to learn about them, just as you expect that a candidate will have researched your company beforehand.
6. Make sure you have a comprehensive understanding of the position that the candidate is interviewing for. Know the job description, talk to people who best understand the position, and develop a list of the major responsibilities, and skills needed for the position.
7. Be organized. Decide on the criteria you will use in your decision making. Make notes of the questions that you want to ask, and follow the same interview format and similar questions for every candidate. You can make a valid comparison of the candidates you've interviewed.
8. Conduct the interview in private. Candidates should be at ease in knowing that their interview is confidential. Your co-workers should not be able to see or hear what is going on in the interview.
9. Create a positive interviewing climate for both you and the interviewee by arranging seating in a comfortable informal manner.
10. Remember to be friendly. Build rapport with the candidate right from the start of the interview. Create “small talk” or “ice breakers” to put the interviewee at ease.
11. Outline the structure of the interview for the candidate, and explain the goals of the interview process.
12. Explain your role in the organization, and generate the candidate's interest by factually promoting the position, the organization and how the candidate would benefit.
13. Ask the right questions. – Use open ended questions such as what, how, and why that probe for detailed responses. Ask candidates to tell you about real experiences rather than hypothetical ones. For a list of traditional, challenging, behavioral, and illegal questions please refer to our Interview Questions page.
14. Be a good listener. Exhibit signs of interest such as nodding your head, and maintaining eye contact. Periodically paraphrase the candidate's answers to reinforce that you are listening. A simple rule to follow is that the interviewer should be listening for 70% of the interview, and talking for 30% of it.
15. Keep all your questions job related, and avoid discussing personal matters.
16. Be Positive. Don't say anything negative about the person who previously held the position, or about the organization.
17. Close the interview. Answer the candidate's questions and give a realistic timetable for when you expect to make a hiring decision, or at least what the next step in the process is.
18. Conduct a post-interview evaluation by reviewing recorded facts and making notes on impressions, and judgments immediately following the interview, while it is still fresh in your mind.
19. Be Timely. It is in everyone's best interest to move the interview process along smoothly and rapidly. Commit to deciding within a few days of the interview whether you will advance the candidate to the next step in the process.
20. Be courteous. Follow up with all candidates, including those that you decide not to move forward with, as a means of providing closure to the interview process.

Interview Questions

Traditional questions: samples

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
2. What is your greatest accomplishment?
3. What are five adjectives or short phrases that best describe you?
4. What is your greatest weakness?
5. What is the most significant challenge you have faced in the past year?
6. Explain how you would be an asset to this organization.
7. What would you like to be doing five years from now?
8. Why do you want this position?
9. What do you do best in your present position?
10. What motivates and inspires you?
11. What do you like to do outside of work in your spare time? What are your outside interests/hobbies?
12. What have you learned recently?
13. How do you react when you are in stressful situations?
14. How much of your time are you willing to commit to the company?
15. What common denominators are you looking for in a prospective employer?
16. What are you looking for in a position?
17. Have you ever had to discipline an employee?
18. Are you more suited to be a leader or a contributing team member?
19. Describe values that are most important to you.
20. How do you organize your time?

Challenging questions: samples

1. Tell me about the worst manager you've ever had.
2. Why did you leave your last position?
3. Why were you laid off?
4. What are your salary expectations?
5. Can you share an example of a time when your work was criticized?
6. Why haven't you found a position before now?
7. If you have you ever been fired or terminated from a position, why did this occur?
8. What part of your last job did you like least?
9. What motivates you more, money or job satisfaction?
10. What would your former employer say about you?
11. How good are you at solving conflicts?
12. What role do you take on while working within a team?
13. Do you prefer working alone or in a team?
14. Would you have done anything differently in your life until now?
15. What makes you angry?
16. How long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution to our organization?
17. Are you good at handling several responsibilities simultaneously?
18. What would you like to improve professionally about yourself?
19. What could you have done better in your previous job?
20. Unique/different questions- What is your most prized possession? If you could have dinner with 3 famous people, dead or alive, who would you pick? If you were a tree, what kind would you be? What was the best purchase you ever made?

Interview Questions

Behavioral Questions :samples

1. Give a specific example of a time you sold someone on an idea or concept.
2. Describe the best/worst team of which you have been a member.
3. Tell about a time when you made the wrong decision.
4. Tell about a time when you were creative in solving a problem.
5. Give an example of a time when you had to be quick in coming to a decision.
6. Give an example of a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.
7. Describe a situation in which you were able to have a positive influence on the actions of others.
8. Tell about a situation when you had to be assertive in order to get a point across that was important to you.
9. Describe a recent unpopular decision you made and what the result was.
10. Tell me about something you've done recently to improve your knowledge of the job.
11. How do you decide what gets top priority when scheduling your time?
12. What do you do when your schedule is suddenly interrupted? Give an example.
13. Give an example of a policy you conformed to with which you did not agree.
14. Give an example of an important goal that you had set in the past and tell about your success reaching it.
15. Tell about a time in your career where you had to overcome stress.
16. Tell about a crisis in your life or job and how you responded or recovered from it.
17. Please discuss an important written document /report that you were required to complete.
18. Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split second decision.
19. Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
20. Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.

Inappropriate/Illegal Questions

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 makes it illegal for an employer to discriminate against any individual on the basis of that individual's race, color, religion, sex or national origin. The Civil Rights Act also created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the federal agency given responsibility for enforcement of the Act.

-It is okay to ask if one is a United States Citizen but not okay to ask if one's citizenship is of a national origin.

-It is discriminatory to ask how one learned to read, write, or speak a language, but it is acceptable to ask the language one speaks fluently, and if one speaks a foreign language.

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 prohibits discrimination "because of or on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions shall be treated the same for all employment related purposes, including receipt of benefits under fringe benefit programs, as other persons not so affected but similar in their ability or inability to work, and nothing...shall be interpreted to permit otherwise."

-Avoid asking questions regarding relationships, marriage, children, pregnancy, childcare, marital status or childcare accommodations.

Generally an interviewer should not ask one's age during an interview.

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 makes it illegal to discriminate on the basis of age against anyone over the age of 40. Some states and local governments also have laws that enforce age discrimination.

-With rare exceptions, the only age appropriate question to ask is if a candidate is over the age of 18. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992 protects qualified individuals with a disability against discrimination in hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training or other terms and conditions of employment. It requires that reasonable accommodations be made to the known physical or mental limitations of qualified individuals with a disability, unless to do so would impose an undue hardship on the employer. As a general rule you should not ask about one's use of lawful medication and/or prescription drugs.

Sample questions that may be asked:

- > How do you intend to get to work?
- > Do you have the legal right to remain permanently in the U.S.?
- > Are you willing to relocate?
- > Do you have any family, business or social obligations that would prevent you from working consistently or over time or prevent you from traveling?
- > Can you or are you willing to lift "X" number of pounds?
- > Are there any other names under which your employment may be verified?
- > What foreign language so you speak, read or write?

Sample questions that may not be asked:

- > What is the nationality of your parents or spouse?
- > How did you learn to speak a foreign language?
- > What color is your complexion or skin?
- > What religious holidays do you observe?
- > What parish do you belong to?
- > Did you ever have any other name than the one you are using now?
- > Of what clubs have you been a member?
- > Do you plan to marry?
- > Do you plan to have children?
- > Who will take care of your children?

REFERENCE CHECK – MANAGER LEVEL

Note: please answer all questions and be as detailed as possible in your answers.

Candidate _____ Date _____

Reference Contact _____ Title _____

Company _____ Phone # _____

What was your relationship with _____ ? _____

When and for how long were you employed at the same facility?

What was your function and what was _____'s function?

What were _____'s major responsibilities?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What would you say were _____'s most important contributions (that impacted the organization)?

1. _____

2. _____

How many direct reports did _____ have during this time? _____

How many indirect reports did _____ have during this time?

Reference Check - Manager Level

Describe _____'s:

Communication skills: _____

Management skills: _____

Leadership skills: _____

Work ethic: _____

Ability to adapt to change: _____

Ability to think strategically: _____

Spoken commitment vs. actual performance: _____

Ability to handle stress/pressure: _____

Creativity/originating new ideas: _____

Level of integrity: _____

How would you say _____ is at:

Policy Formulation: _____

Selling his/her ideas: _____

Leading teams: _____

Working in a team: _____

Inspiring people: _____

Multi-tasking: _____

Reference Check - Manager Level

What kind of example did _____ set for his/her direct reports? _____

On a scale of 1 to 9, how would you rate _____'s performance? _____

How does _____ compare to other people in his/her capacity (Rate on a scale of 1 to 4 – 4 being the best)? _____

What are _____'s three strengths?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What are _____'s weaknesses?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Would you hire (re-hire) _____ if you had the opportunity?

Any last comments that would reflect on _____, or any thoughts on his/her abilities.

REFERENCE CHECK – STAFF LEVEL

Candidate _____ Date _____
Company _____ Phone # _____
Contact _____ Title _____

I have received authorization from _____ to contact you.
What was your relationship with _____

Employment Verification

_____ stated he/she was employed from _____ to _____

(mo/yr) (mo/yr)

Is that correct? _____ yes _____ no

Who did _____ report to?

What were _____'s major responsibilities?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Performance

What were _____'s strongest points?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

On a scale of 1 to 9, how would you rate _____'s performance?

What were _____'s most memorable achievements?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Does _____ have the ability to inspire at peer level?

Describe _____'s stamina level.

How is _____'s ability for wearing multiple hats?

Reference Check - Staff Level

Does _____ have the creativity to originate ideas? _____

What outside influences affected _____'s ability to do his/her job?

What is _____'s integrity level? _____

Please rate _____'s interaction with his/her peers and supervisors. _____

Please rate _____'s communication skills, both written and verbal. _____

Did _____ report to work on time? _____

Did _____ have good attendance? _____

Did _____ have any problems that interfered with his/her performance?

What areas of improvement were needed? _____

Was _____'s departure from the company voluntary or involuntary?

Reasons?

Would you rehire this individual? _____

Any last comments that would reflect on _____ and thoughts on his/her abilities. _____

Offer Letter: Executives

Month, Day, Year

Mary A. Jones
123 Main Street
Town, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms. Jones,

This letter is to confirm your acceptance of employment with ABC Corporation as discussed with you during your recent interviews. You will assume the role as Senior Vice President/Chief Operating Officer beginning on January 12, 2009.

The terms of your employment are highlighted below:

Annual Salary: Your base annual salary will be \$151,500, which will be paid to you in biweekly increments. Future adjustments in your salary will be based on review of compensation trends in the market for similar positions and your overall performance. Such future increases must be approved by ABC Corporation's Board of Directors, Executive Compensation Committee.

Compensation Enhancements: You will participate in various approved executive compensation enhancements including employer paid life insurance at 3 times salary, Long Term Disability Benefits at 70% level, free wireless phone plan, automobile allowance, gas credit card, home or lap-top computer, free annual physical, deferred compensation plan, employer paid spouse travel for designated events, relocation package (moving expenses and temporary housing) and incentive bonus.

Benefits: Participation as a full time employee in Health, Dental, Vision Care, Pension, Match Savings Plan, and all other benefits as offered to ABC Corporation employees of similar professional status; such benefits being subject to change from time-to-time and standard eligibility requirements. (Based on your hire date, your Health, Dental and Vision benefits will become effective 4/01/09.)

Paid Leave: 20 days of vacation per year, 7 holiday and 4 personal leave days per year, 10 sick leave days per year accumulating to 65 days (90 calendar days of wage continuation)

Since all paid leave benefits above are calculated on a full calendar year basis, you will be immediately entitled to prorated leave for the period of January 12, 2009 – December 31, 2009. Also upon employment you will be covered, of course, by all state and federal mandated benefits such as Workers' Compensation, Unemployment Compensation and Social Security Benefits.

With regards to executive relocation assistance, ABC Corporation will pay for up to two round trips to the _____ area for you and your spouse for the purpose of establishing permanent residence. We will also pay for you to visit home every other weekend during the first months of employment for a maximum of six trips to ease the burden of family separation and transition.

For the three months you are required to pay COBRA benefits with your current employer for Health, Dental and Vision benefits, ABC Corporation will pay you the sum of \$1,632.30 net of payroll taxes. This represents our costs to provide similar benefits for three months. ABC Corporation will also be willing to reimburse you for reasonable costs to purchase transitional Long Term Disability benefits and Term Life Insurance for yourself for the gap in coverage created by transition of employment to ABC Hospital.

You must complete ABC Corporation standard documents upon employment including an I-9 Form, W-4 Form, and standard application form and others as may be required by law or policy.

This offer of employment is contingent upon your successful passing a pre-placement physical exam, which includes a standard drug screening, through our Employee Health Office. I have asked a representative of the Employee Health Office to contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time for your pre-placement physical. Also, this offer of employment is contingent upon obtaining satisfactory references from those individuals who you have authorized us to contact directly.

On behalf of your new professional family at ABC Corporation, I am delighted to welcome you and your family to our beautiful community.

Please do not hesitate to call if any questions arise.

Sincerely,

John B. Smith
President/Chief Executive Officer

Offer Letter: Manager

Month, Day, Year

Mary A. Jones
123 Main Street
Town, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms. Jones,

I am very pleased to confirm this offer of employment to you for the position of Director in the Corporate Services Department within ABC Organization.

The terms of your employment are highlighted below:

- Your target start date is January 12th, 2009 at 9:00 am (if possible.) In accordance with ABC Organization's Flex-time Policy, you and I will determine your regular start time upon your arrival.
- A bi-weekly salary of \$5000.00 pursuant to our regular payroll practices will compensate you for all hours worked, unless otherwise provided in a written policy issued by Corporate Compensation.
- An introductory bonus of \$15,000.00 less withholdings, subject to the terms and conditions of the enclosed Introductory Bonus Agreement.
- Contingent upon your meeting ABC Organization's performance expectations and being an active, fulltime employee of ABC Organization at the time of payment, you may be eligible for a discretionary, year-end performance bonus payable in 2010.
- The cost of your relocation to the ___ area in accordance with ABC Organization's relocation policy.
- Two weeks of vacation for the year of 2009 and three weeks of vacation per year beginning in the year 2010 accruing in accordance with the terms set forth in the Employee Handbook.
- Parking Fees: ABC Organization will pay for half of your monthly parking fee and you will be responsible for the other half through payroll deduction. The current monthly parking rate is \$81.80. Alternatively, as part of our transportation program, we currently offer a \$50.00 monthly rebate to employees seeking other means of commuting.
- Benefits as outlined in the Employee handbook and Plan Documents.

This offer of employment is contingent upon the successful results of a background investigation. As a condition of employment, you will be required to present documents to verify your employment eligibility. You will also need to present prior to your start date a paycheck stub from your prior employer to verify prior salary.

This offer letter is not a guarantee of employment for a fixed term. You will be employed at will with the privilege of terminating your employment at any time and for any reason; ABC Organization will have the same privilege. Together with the employment application this offer letter constitutes the only commitment relating to the offer of employment and supersedes any previous communications, oral or written, from or behalf of ABC organization or any of its affiliates.

Please acknowledge your acceptance of this offer by signing below and returning this letter as soon as possible to ABC Organization, Human Resource Department.

On behalf of the Leadership Team, we were very impressed with your experience, knowledge and professionalism and sincerely hope that you will accept our offer of employment. If you have any questions, and would like to discuss these terms, please call me at 555-555-5555. I look forward to seeing you on the 12th to welcome you in person.

Sincerely,

John B. Smith
Executive Vice President

ACCEPTANCE:

Signature

Date

Offer Letter: Staff

Month, Day, Year

Mary A. Jones
123 Main Street
Town, State, Zip

Dear Mary,

On behalf of ABC Hospital, I am pleased to offer you the full time position of Director, Education/Workforce Development. Tentatively, your start date is scheduled for Monday, January 12, 2009.

In this position your salary, less regular deductions and withholdings, will be paid weekly at the rate of \$44.24 per hour, annualized rate of \$92,000. Also included in this offer is a sign on bonus of \$3,000 payable in two installments of \$1500.00. The first installment paid with your first payroll check and the second six months after your starting date.

At ABC Hospital your total pay is more than just your salary. You will be eligible to participate in a comprehensive benefits package.

Prior to your start date, you will be scheduled for a pre-employment examination at XYZ Medical Center, 123 Center Street, Town, State.

You will be required to attend New Employee Orientation, Monday, January 12, 2009. The program begins at 8:0AM in the Human Resources Office, classroom 5, located on the 3rd floor. Suitable business attire is expected.

As is customary, our offer is contingent upon a review of your background investigation and pre-employment medical examination.

Please acknowledge your acceptance of this offer by signing below and returning it to Human Resources. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 573-6266.

Sincerely,

John B. Smith, MBA
Director, Human Resources

I Accept _____
Signature Date

I Decline _____
Signature Date