

29 HOT TIPS FOR IMPROVING JOB POSTINGS TO ATTRACT THE BEST TALENT

NOW MORE THAN EVER, IT'S A JOB SEEKER'S MARKET, and you may be competing for quality candidates against not only the private sector but also fellow public sector agencies. Making a great first impression that piques a job seeker's attention from the very beginning will be crucial to ensuring you get the best talent applying to your jobs.

The art of crafting a great job posting isn't as straightforward as it may seem. Plus, tastes and the way people interact with and apply to jobs has evolved with the times. You'll want to use the correct language, right length, and multimedia to stand out in a sea of job postings to candidates who have short attention spans. Below are 29 hot tips for improving your job postings.

1. Analyze the job before you post it.

Get all the relevant stakeholders involved (HR and hiring committee) to discuss what you are hoping to achieve by hiring for this position. If it is a new role, lay out in detail why it is necessary. If it is an existing job that's description hasn't been updated in awhile, take a look at it with fresh eyes.

2. Compare notes with similar departments or agencies.

Take a look at other departments within your agency, or at other agencies of similar size to yours, to see what their job listings look like for jobs like yours. You'll want to know where you compare in terms of compensation and benefits, plus you may get some ideas to include in your own postings.

3. Use the right job title and keywords.

Jobs in the public sector often have technical titles that refer to seniority level or a hyper-specific department code. This is fine for internal reference purposes, but you want to make sure you are ranking for jobseekers' search terms. Similarly, you don't want to dress a title up too much because it likely won't be the first thing a candidate would search for.

4. Be brief.

Start with a short paragraph that covers the highlights of the role. Use bullets when at all possible to discuss qualifications and expectations -- but make sure the list doesn't get too long. Try to combine tasks that are related to each other into one bullet (e.g., "Copywriting" instead of "Writing Emails, Writing Website Copy, Writing Newsletters").

5. Avoid gendered language.

Job postings should always be gender neutral, meaning you should avoid “he” or “she” and also any other language that is typically associated with masculine (e.g., “aggressive”) or feminine (e.g., “passionate”) traits. Instead use words like “motivated” and “competent” that don’t evoke such associations.

6. Minimize third person descriptors.

Instead of “the ideal applicant” or other third person descriptors, instead speak in terms of “we” and “you,” which make the job description sound more personal and engaging.

7. Avoid buzzwords.

“Rock star,” “maven,” “ninja” -- these cutesy descriptors were all the rage several years ago but come across as desperate to job seekers now.

8. Make the ad easy to read.

Pay close attention to things like formatting and font choice and size. If an ad is difficult to read, jobseekers may lose interest.

9. And especially make sure it’s easy to read on a phone.

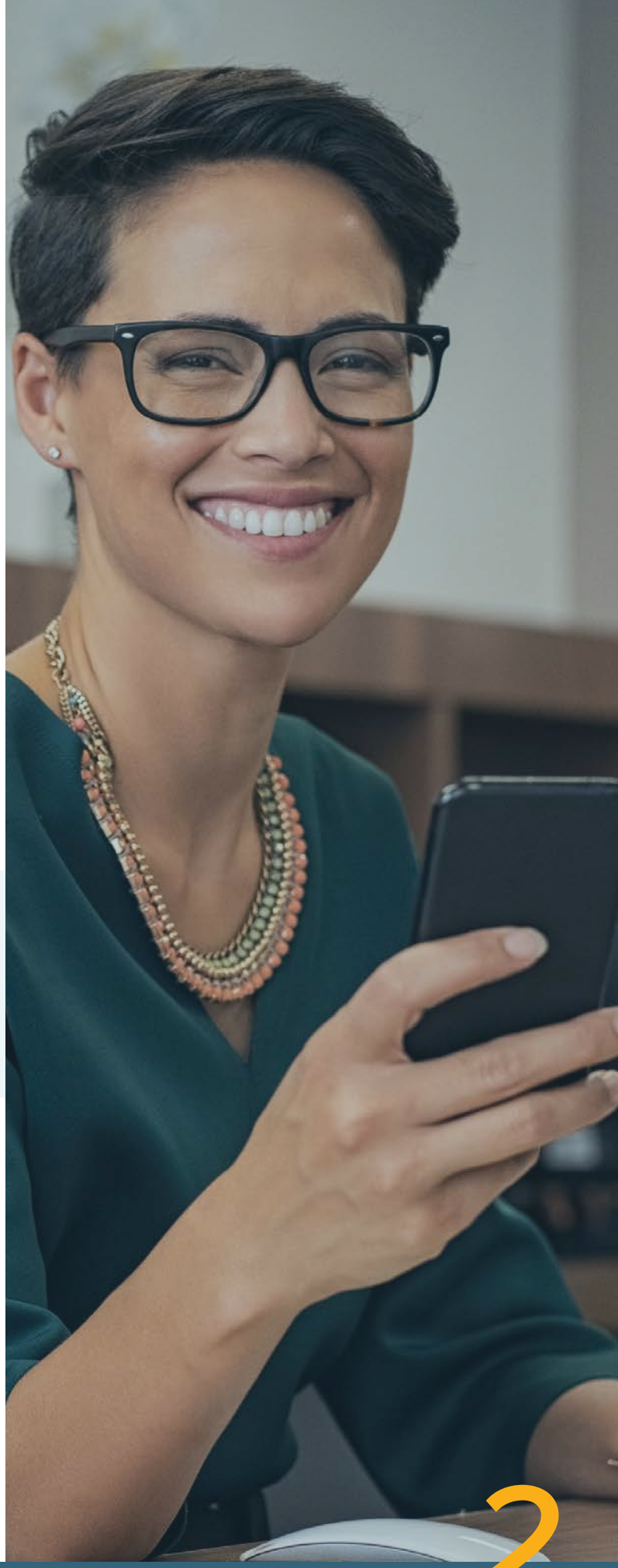
According to HR Dive, 61% of job applications in 2020 came from mobile devices. Ensuring your agency website or at least your careers section is mobile-friendly is crucial.

10. Be honest and direct about expectations.

Don’t sugarcoat the job’s more difficult or mundane aspects or make it into something it’s not. This will just waste both your time and the jobseeker’s. Be honest about expectations and qualifications.

11. Review qualifications.

Don’t be too demanding. Make sure you remove any “nice-to-haves” that are not absolute requirements. This will broaden your applicant pool.



12. Focus on skills as opposed to experience.

These might seem interchangeable at first glance, but requirements on experience often disqualify younger applicants who are just as capable of getting the job done and/or learning on the job.

13. Avoid confusing jargon or acronyms.

According to The Muse, 57% of job seekers say posts with these terms make them abandon the application process.

14. Describe how the position fits into the larger organization.

This will give the job seeker a better understanding of how they will be a role player for the larger agency.

15. Include your organization's culture in the mix.

Most public sector job seekers are drawn to the work-life balance when compared to private sector jobs, or they may find a public sector job rewarding because of the service to the community. These should be a huge part of your overall employer brand, and fit into the job description.

16. Be upfront about your commitment to diversity.

This means going beyond your standard EEO legal language. Job seekers today -- especially diverse ones -- are much more likely to respond positively to an employer that respects the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

17. Lay out work location expectations in no uncertain terms.

If you will require the employee to be on-site full-time, make sure you mention that and include the location address. Keep in mind that many employees in today's job market are looking to work remotely at least part of the time. If this is something you will allow, be honest about how frequently.

18. Mention opportunities for growth.

Many job seekers are looking for reasons to work at an organization that go beyond just needing a paycheck. If your organization is able to provide opportunities for upskilling or future growth, make sure to mention it.





19. Address the working environment.

Some public sector jobs require employees to work outdoors or in otherwise non-traditional office settings. Make sure you mention these, including a rough estimate of how much time the employee will spend in any given environment.

20. Include any physical requirements.

Mention any physical activity or capabilities that are required for the job.

21. Address crucial benefits.

Including a salary range is a great way to weed out those who might otherwise apply. Your job opening may not be able to pay as much as a private sector job might, but perhaps you have other perks and benefits that would be interesting to candidates. Don't forget to mention these.

22. Address hour expectations.

If the job is part-time or off standard work hours, make sure to mention it. Even if it's more of a standard time, it's good to mention it and any planned breaks, especially for the benefit of job seekers coming from the private sector.

23. Include a custom photo.

If you have a photo of the team or that represents the organization and/or this particular role well, consider embedding it for a more engaging experience.

24. Include a video.

Job seekers have short attention spans. A quick video (one minute or less) describing the role and the organization might be just the trick to pique their interest, especially if they've looked at dozens of postings already in their job search.

25. Involve other team members in crafting the job posting.

This is a great opportunity for HR and the hiring manager to enlist the help of the people who will be working closest with the new hire.

26. Write in a tone that reflects your agency's brand.

You should always be professional, but small touches that encompass what it's like to work for you can help your job posting stand out from many others job seekers have already seen.

27. Proof the ad.

Just like a typo on a resume might rub the hiring committee the wrong way, a jobseeker may feel the same way. Make sure to check spelling and grammar before posting.

28. Use the job description as a baseline for the employee's success going forward.

Some employees will grow into more responsibility, of course, but a good way to evaluate their success is to refer back to what you were asking for in the first place.

29. Create a template based on the tips you learned here.

This will make it easier to replicate as you create more postings in the future.



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