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# HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

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A successful, well-written job description is more than a document to attract qualified candidates. It's a useful tool that allows you to simplify the CV review process, re-evaluate your team structure and job responsibilities, and measure the performance of employees.



When working with your recruitment consultant or HR department, writing a concise job description will help attract top talent. Think of it as a window into your company brand, almost a marketing tool for both employer and candidate.

## Give Yourself An Advantage In The Recruitment Process

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- Writing a detailed job description allows you to concentrate on the exact scope of the role and candidate. This provides a more focused approach to the employee search, particularly at CV review and interview stages.  
  
A poorly-worded and vague job description will only lead to irrelevant applications to sift through, taking you longer to find the right candidate. also be unpredictable.
- Narrow the search and give candidates a strong idea of what you're looking for. They might be suitable on paper, but you don't want to get to interview stage and find out the role isn't actually what they want.
- Organisations move quickly so use it as an opportunity to re-evaluate your team structure. Maybe there's a way you could move responsibilities around to maximise efficiency. This will also provide renewed focus on the job requirements and allow you to write the job description more specifically.
- Use it as an ongoing document. Being able to refer back to a job description helps employees during appraisals and aids new managers understand the scope of the role. It's also useful for measuring performance and can be vital in the event of disciplinarys.



# An Effective Job Description

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In order to attract quality candidates, a job description should include:

- **Job Title.** If you're posting on a recruiter's site, ensure the title contains keywords but also provide a hook, like included benefits, to make the role appear more enticing.
- **Indicate where the role sits within the team and wider business.** Candidates want to know how they're going to impact the organisation. Include who they'll be reporting into as well.
- **Key areas of responsibility. Be honest and don't exaggerate or underplay responsibilities.** Be as specific as possible - it shouldn't be a wishlist of every skill and personality trait you could ever want your candidate to have.
- **Possibilities for progression.** Including things like training can attract top talent who are specifically looking for career progression and development.
- **A typical day or project.** You want to ensure employees will enjoy their day-to-day responsibilities. For example, if a job requires 40% travel, mention it so the candidate knows what the role entails.
- **Location and travel requirements.**
- **Convey the organisation's style and culture.** This could include an overview of employee benefits, salary and other perks.



# Important Points To Consider

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As well as the essentials, when considering how to write a job description, it's important not to alienate potential candidates or risk hiring ineffectively. Take note of the following:

- **Avoid internal terminology.** You might have names or abbreviations for internal software but, unless the candidate has worked in the business before, it's unlikely they'll understand what you're referring to. To avoid alienating potential candidates, stick to industry terms and you won't narrow your search unnecessarily.
- **Be specific.** Being vague not only leads to inappropriate applications but also creates problems once the employee starts the role. If job requirements aren't fully understood from the beginning, candidates may leave prematurely if the role doesn't match their expectations. Or, you may end up feeling frustrated that the job isn't being carried out as you expect.
- **Include all stakeholders.** As you would with a project or review, include relevant colleagues to gain the best input. Ask the HR department, line managers and team members to contribute or read through the job description to encompass a well-rounded approach.
- **Be aware of discriminatory language.** To ensure a diverse applicant group, be careful with words based on gender, ethnicity, age, sexuality or health. For example, words such as, 'mature,' could be construed as discriminatory against age. Similarly, only use phrases like, 'highly experienced,' if absolutely essential for the role.
- **Review regularly.** Organisations evolve and develop continuously which can mean changes to objectives and team structure or even departmental changes. Ensure job descriptions are reviewed on an annual basis as well as every time they're used for new vacancies.



*A well-written and thought out job description may take time to complete, but it's a vital document in the employment lifecycle. Put in maximum effort to create an accurate job description and person specification, and it can be invaluable for the attraction, hiring and retention of employees. For more help on attracting top talent, contact one of our recruitment specialists.*