One challenge that we hear recruiters voicing time and again is this: how do I attract more candidates to my website? And the most effective advice we can give is to create job ads that candidates actually want to click!

The recruitment industry is booming. Unemployment levels are at their lowest since 2009, and new recruitment agencies are popping up left, right and centre to accommodate the rising demand for great talent. So why is it still such a challenge to attract enough qualified applicants to a job?

The good news is that you don't need to drop a fortune on job boards or expensive campaigns to get more candidates to apply to your ads. Search engines are now candidates' first port of call when searching for new job opportunities: According to a 2016 study by Careerbuilder, as much as 75% of job seekers will begin their job hunt through a search engine.

You can increase your job ad engagement massively just by thinking more carefully about the information you provide, the words you use and how you use them. And with Google For Jobs on the horizon, the job ads on your website matter now more than ever.

So read on to find out how to attract more (and better!) candidates to your website by making a few simple changes to your job ads.

READ MORE ⌄

The Anatomy of a Job Ad

No matter how amazing of an opportunity the job is, you'll always have a hard time attracting candidates to apply if your ads are difficult to read or haphazardly constructed. So the first step to improving is take a step back and go back to basics. Sometimes, we need to take a step back and go back to basics so we can see the wood from the trees!

An Irresistible Heading

As much as it will pain you to accept it (since they take the least time to put together), your headings are the most important part of your ad. Think about it: why did you download this guide? The title appealed to you. Candidates view job ads in the same way – no matter how great your ad copy is, if the heading doesn't grab them, it'll tank.

It's a common mistake to think that you can attract more applicants by being vague with your headline. You probably think it makes your job ad more enticing and clickable, but the reality is that most candidates will just assume it's a waste of their time. For example, would you have downloaded this eBook if the title was, 'A Great Resource for Recruiters'? Probably not!

In the same vain, 'Great Opportunity for Developers' is not going to get candidates pouring in. Cut to the chase and tell the candidate exactly what you're looking for so they can decide if it's worth their precious time. What kind of developers are you looking for, and for what kind of role?

The job title is a good place to start, but it's not always going to be irresistible – especially if you're posting to a job board where the title won't be unique. What motivates your ideal candidate? Is it money? Recognition? Responsibility?

Ask yourself this: What would a candidate type into a search engine if they were actively searching for the role you're recruiting for? Make sure that keyword or phrase is in the title, the URL, the header and then again in the body of your ad (at least once, if not more!).

Job Title

The job title should make it immediately apparent what the role is, and if there's likely to be any ambiguity then make sure you clarify this in the heading and the body of your ad. For example, the job title 'Editor' can be a newspaper editor, a website editor or even a video editor.

There's nothing more demotivating than a situation in which a candidate realises half way through reading a job ad that it's a completely different role to what they thought it was, and isn't actually relevant to them at all. The more clear and concise you can be, the better – make sure you clarify exactly what the job title is straight away so as not to waste the candidate's time.

Location

The more specific you can be with the location in your ad, the better. Why say 'Location: UK' when you can say 'Scotland'; 'Scotland' when you can say 'Lanarkshire', or 'Lanarkshire' when you can cut to the chase and just say 'Glasgow'? Again, you might think that being vague with this will spread your net wider and entice even more candidates to apply, but in reality the best candidates won't go near the 'apply now' button unless they know exactly where the role is based. Why would they waste their time on the off chance it suits their situation?

If a job is fantastic, great candidates will apply even if it does involve relocation. But let the candidate make that choice themselves!

Salary

We all know there are some particular situations where you can't advertise the salary for a role. However, if you can state the salary this will have a dramatic impact on the number of views and applications your ads receive and increase the likelihood of receiving suitable candidates.

Salary bracket is the clearest indicator of a job's seniority level, and it's the next piece of information that the candidate will look for after your headline. Stating the salary as 'competitive' is just likely to get you less applications in (many candidates will immediately assume the salary is too low) and make your workload much bigger, as you'll be sifting through lots of CVs from people who aren't the right fit.

So if you can, make everyone's life easier by stating the salary bracket clearly at the top of the ad. This should also be included in the job schema so it shows in Google For Jobs too. You can test your job ads here or find out more about how to do this by reading our blog.

The Text Body

A common approach is to treat the body of your job ad in the same way as you would an internal job description – please don't.

An internal job ad may outline the duties and requirements of the role accurately, but if you use the same formatting and language for an external job ad it's going to come across extremely dry. Remember that internal descriptions are written for internal candidates and/or HR departments to justify approval to hire a new employee, not external candidates who will have no idea what all the four-letter company acronyms are. The way these are written assumes a certain level of understanding (particularly when it comes to industry jargon) and this is likely to intimidate readers and almost certainly turn them off from your ad.

The challenge

One good approach would be to begin the body of your job ad with the 'challenge' you're presenting. If the challenge is to bring in a Marketing Manager who will increase leads by 40% - say so!

This technique should immediately 'sort the wheat from the chaff' as they say: the best candidates will be looking for clearly defined challenges that they can throw themselves into, whereas those who aren't a right fit will find these sorts of challenges intimidating. Including the challenge in your job ad will improve the quality of your candidates overall.

Experience

Outline the skills, qualifications, and personality traits that you see as required to achieve the goal or challenge you've outlined above. However, be careful not to make this look simply like a checklist of skills that the employer is looking for: It's important to ensure the wording isn't all about what the employer wants, but focusses on what the right candidate will gain from this opportunity too.

Of course, it's still very useful to provide context of both the 'essential' and 'ideal' background experience that the candidate will have been involved with in order to be a right fit for the role.

Benefits

This is your chance to showcase benefits like health care, pensions, and bonuses to pull in the masses! Benefits are a really important element of a job ad, as they can also tell a candidate a lot about company culture.

For example, flexible working hours, social activities, and office environment all have the power to attract the right sort of person to a role. These factors indicate the sort of work-life balance that the job or company is offering, and if these values suit the desire of the candidate applying, you're on to a winner.

Your challenge, experience and benefits should make up the majority of your ad, and try to keep this part below 200 words: the longer the ad, the less likely it'll be that candidates will reach the 'apply' button before taking their attention somewhere else!
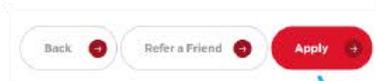
How to apply

This might sound glaringly obvious, but the end of your ad must give candidates an indication of how and when to apply. Preferably, this will be something along the lines of a visually clear 'apply' or 'I'm interested' button at the bottom of the page, an email address to reach out to or a link to an application form at the very least.

The aim is to make it as easy as possible for the candidate to take the next steps. If it's not immediately clear, or if you give the candidate too many options the will either lose patience or get confused!

A bad job ad example

Fantastic Opportunity for Senior C# Developer → *Avoid clichés like 'fantastic opportunity' in your headline.*

Salary: Competitive → *A senior developer is going to assume the salary won't be worth their time.*

Location: Wales → *Wales is a big place! Name a city so the candidate has a clear idea of what they're applying for.*

Senior C# developer required for immediate start with software company.

The company was founded in 2010 and is one of the world's leading providers of POD (proof of delivery) software systems. Our dedication to customer service and efficiency is what sets us apart from the competition. Our board members are long-term industry experts with no less than fifteen years' experience, spanning a wide cross-section of the business technology sector.

This is promotional content and tells the canidate nothing about the role.

The candidate must have 5 years applied PHP experience and will work well under pressure. Experience with PHP, CSS, MySQL, and Javascript are ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL!

Don't use capitals for emphasis – they look unprofessional and give the impression you're SHOUTING at the candidate.

Candidate must be flexible as some evening and weekend work will be required, as well as visits to clients across the UK.

Where are the benefits of the role? Need to balance drawbacks out by including perks.

To apply, email ifno@awardwinning-software.com.

Typo alert! And it's also unclear what the candidate's next steps should be? Do you want a CV? A covering letter? A two-line email saying why you want the job?

Example two (The good example)

C# Developer – Join an award-winning software team and learn Angular

Headline focusses on what's in it for the candidate

£30 - £35k - Cardiff, Wales.

Clear indication of salary

If you're a C# Developer interested in becoming part of an award-winning software business, we'd love to hear from you. This is an excellent opportunity to play a vital decision-making role, developing a software that's consistently evolving and which continues to double its customer base, year on year.

Selling the job to the candidate by still focussing on what will benefit them instead of what the company wants.

You'll enjoy developing in a fast-paced agile environment, delivering weekly results. The business is also about to rewrite part of its application in Angular, so a keen aptitude to learning new skills is a must!

The culture:

A fast-track company with solid ethics, there's no need to worry about company politics – they're a friendly bunch!

Boasting a flat, collaborative organisational culture, you'll have your say in how the software is shaped and contribute to provide a valuable contribution to problem solving.

Excellent staff retention rate with a low turnover - people genuinely love working there.

The benefits:

- Relaxed working environment (with casual dress code)
- Health cover
- Flexitime
- Team lunches
- A fully-stocked beer fridge.

For more information on this role, contact **Derek on Derek@awardwinningsoftware.com** or call **0191 582 0000.**

Otherwise, cut to the crunch by hitting the 'apply' button below!

APPLY

Sections on culture and benefits tell the candidate a lot about how the company operates, and help them decide whether it's the sort of working environment they're interested in.

Clear next steps – call for more info, or click to apply

Conclusion

Hopefully this eBook has armed you with some inspiration to get creative with your job ads. If you only take one thing away from this guide, make it this: The key to an excellent, highly compelling job ad is to create it purely with the candidate's interests in mind.

Put whatever you and your client think is important about the job aside for a moment and focus on what would make a candidate want to click through and apply for the role. Make this your job ad mantra, and you can't go wrong!

firefish
SOFTWARE

Firefish Software is a sales and marketing platform that helps recruiters reach, engage, and recruit top candidates ahead of the competition.

1 in 3 recruitment agencies have a database where only 15% of their candidate data is up to date. Firefish recruitment software can increase this figure to 85% in just 6 months - we'll even show you a 'before and after' to prove it!

Our software gives recruiters they tools they need to...

• Convert 45% more candidates directly through your website and recruitment marketing channels

• Bring your dead data back to life; increase your candidate engagement by over 200%

• Recruit smarter, and place 25% more candidates

To book a demo, give us a call on 0141 648 8520 or drop us an email to info@firefishsoftware.com and we'll be happy to help. Otherwise, click the button below to leave your details and we'll drop you a line!

Want a swim around Firefish? Book a demo