

Job Description

GUIDE

Introduction

Job descriptions lay the foundation of success for your hiring process. Together with the hiring manager, you form a powerful partnership, ensuring that job descriptions not only reflect the needs of the organization but also appeal to candidates who will thrive in the company's culture.

This guide explores best practices for writing inclusive and engaging job descriptions, optimizing them for search engines and social media, and leveraging collaborative efforts to produce compelling narratives that attract a diverse pool of qualified individuals.

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1. The Basics of Job Descriptions

Through job descriptions, companies attract applicants and communicate their selling points to them. As a recruitment professional, you collaborate with hiring managers to create job descriptions that not only attract top talent but also align with the company's strategic goals.

While the hiring manager brings in-depth knowledge of the specific role they seek to fill, from day-to-day responsibilities and required skills to team dynamics, it's your job as a recruiter to translate these hiring needs into clear, appealing language that resonates with potential candidates. To do so, you transform the internal idea of the role into a language that the market understands and that includes relevant keywords so that applicants can easily find your opening.

To get an idea of what “a language that the market understands” is, look up a few idea candidate profiles and see what vocabulary they use in their résumé. You can also ask your hiring manager for examples of relevant keywords or good candidates.



2. Collaborating with the Hiring Team

In order to write a great job description, you need to understand what the role is about. You gain this understanding from your collaboration with the hiring manager, primarily in the job intake meeting, and then translate it into a job description. Additionally, you can talk to team members who are currently working in the role to even better understand what their day-to-day looks like.

Throughout the job intake process, and as you gather information from hiring managers and other employees, pay focused attention to the components outlined on the right side of this page. They will serve as the cornerstone of your job description.

By mastering the intricacies of the job role in this manner, you lay the groundwork for crafting job descriptions that resonate with potential candidates and set the stage for successful recruitment.

Tip 💡

If you're hiring for a role that doesn't exist in the organization yet, you can also reach out to your external network to get a better idea of what the job entails.

JOB TITLE

When defining a job title, look for the most used title to attract the required candidate profile. When posting job openings on digital job boards like LinkedIn Recruiter, stick to their suggestions. Make use of the algorithm and consider the terms candidates might use when searching for this specific position. To get an idea of fitting job titles, you can also evaluate how competitors designate roles with similar responsibilities. Opt for a title that aptly mirrors the role's responsibilities and level within the market. If the hiring manager suggests a job title, ask yourself whether this is only understood within your organization or also outside of it.

For the job description, it's relevant that people outside of the organization understand what the job is about. For example, if you're looking for a head of people at a smaller organization, but your hiring manager suggests the job title "VP of people," consider under which job title you'd rather attract the right candidates. *Note: You can always change the job title later on, it's not a legally binding term.*

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Collaborate with the hiring team on putting together an overview of key responsibilities inherent in the role. Prioritize these responsibilities to enhance clarity and guide candidates through the core expectations associated with the position. Don't try to oversell the role—if a candidate is expected to handle 100 emails a day, state "able to manage large amounts of emails on a daily basis" in the listing of requirements of the role. This way, you ensure that you attract candidates with whom the responsibilities resonate and who are more likely to stay in the role when hired.

QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

Distinguish between essential "must-haves" and desirable "nice-to-haves" when outlining qualifications and skills. Specify both technical proficiencies and soft skills to offer a holistic view of the candidate profile sought for the role. Again, the hiring manager or other employees in the same role or team can support you in this.

3. Must-Haves of a Job Description

When writing a job description, include the following pieces of information:

PITCH

Begin with a captivating pitch that instantly engages the readers, compelling them to continue reading your job description. Showcase your unique selling points (USP) of the role by spotlighting the top three distinguishing aspects.

Example: Are you passionate about building culture? Do you want to create a great employee experience and build our employer brand? Do you want to shape HR strategy and execute it with your team? And does being the head of people at the largest online educator of HR professionals worldwide excite you? Then this is the vacancy for you!

Example: We are driven by excellence, innovation, and hunger to grow in everything we do. As such, we strive to provide high-quality courses and excellent support to our customers while continuously optimizing every aspect of our work. Our team is very international, yet we all share a few traits: We're customer focused, results driven, and very hands on; in addition, we're surprisingly friendly, enthusiastic, and great team players.

COMPANY CULTURE AND VALUES

Incorporate insights about the company culture and align the job description with the organizational values. Again, highlight any aspects that make you stand out. This may be your international team, your office location, or your unique benefits. Consider highlighting different aspects of your culture based on the job you're hiring for.

Example: As a head of people at [company name], you will play a pivotal role in shaping our organizational culture and driving HR strategy. You'll report directly to the CEO and lead a dynamic team of four to create an exceptional employee experience and enhance our employer brand. Your responsibilities will span from talent acquisition and development to foster a positive workplace environment. This is a unique opportunity to be at the forefront of HR innovation in the largest online educator of HR professionals worldwide.

Key responsibilities

- **Culture and employee experience:** Drive initiatives to build and sustain a positive and inclusive culture. Develop programs that enhance employee engagement, wellbeing, and professional growth.
- **Talent acquisition:** Lead the recruitment strategy, ensuring we attract top-tier talent globally. Collaborate with department heads to understand hiring needs and implement effective talent acquisition processes.
- **HR strategy and execution:** Work closely with leadership to formulate HR strategies aligned with organizational goals. Implement and execute HR programs, policies, and initiatives to drive employee satisfaction and business success.
- **Employer branding:** Craft and implement strategies to enhance our employer brand. Showcase the unique aspects of working at [company name] to attract and retain top talent.
- **Team leadership:** Manage and mentor a high-performing HR team. Foster a collaborative and innovative work environment, empowering team members to excel in their roles.

JOB SUMMARY

Summarize the core responsibilities of the role. Provide a snapshot that realistically outlines key duties and expectations.

4. Crafting Compelling Job Descriptions

To make your job descriptions more engaging, consider the following points:

Use storytelling to set the stage

Use storytelling to make your job description more compelling. It's best suited for setting the stage for why the job exists and what it contains on a high level. By using storytelling, you can ignite the reader's enthusiasm.

Example: *This year, we doubled the team in size, and due to our growth, we need extra hands on deck. You'll be joining a team of five, and you will each own your own area. Your area of responsibility will be handling customer requests. (...)*

Use bullet points for key information

As you progress to the key responsibilities of the role, use bullet points to enhance readability. This facilitates quick comprehension for candidates.

Set realistic expectations

Set realistic candidate expectations by clearly defining the responsibilities as well as the required skills for the role. Don't make the role sound more exciting than it actually is. Again, you depend on your hiring team to validate what the role looks like realistically.

End with a call to action

Conclude your job description with a compelling call to action, urging candidates to apply or learn more.

Example: *Are you excited to become our head of people? Then we'd love to hear from you! Apply via this link by March 30.*

Match the tone to your company's style

The tone of your job description should be representative of your company's culture. If you're hiring for a start-up where people use memes in work chats on a daily basis, feel free to include a meme in your job description. However, if you're hiring for a more corporate organization, use plain, descriptive, and action-oriented language.

Use inclusive language

Use clear, accessible language in your job descriptions. Moreover, use inclusive, gender-neutral language. Instead of "salesman," say "sales professional." This way, you're setting the foundation for a diverse workforce.

Don't say: *We need a sales superstar who can crush targets and dominate the competition. The ideal candidate is a go-getter and a hunter, closing deals left and right. Must be a natural leader with a killer instinct for sales.*

Instead, state: *Join our sales team as an ambitious professional who excels at meeting targets and thrives in a competitive environment. We value candidates with strong leadership qualities and a proven track record in sales.*

Tip 💡

To check your job descriptions for inclusive language, you can use tools like [Gender Decoder](#), [Ongig](#), or [Textio](#).

5. Optimizing Job Descriptions for Recruiters

There are a few more tips to master the art of job descriptions to attract top talent. From navigating LinkedIn algorithms to tailoring content for mobile accessibility, recruiters can significantly enhance their strategies by focusing on the five key aspects outlined on the right side of this page.

Keeping these in mind, recruiters can optimize job descriptions effectively, increasing their visibility and engagement among potential candidates.

① LinkedIn algorithm mastery

- Understand and leverage LinkedIn algorithms for increased visibility.
 - Utilize keywords, hashtags, and multimedia elements to enhance job posting reach.
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② Localized customization

- Tailor job descriptions to specific regions, considering cultural nuances and industry terms.
 - Ensure alignment with local preferences and regulations, especially in international recruitment.
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③ SEO fundamentals

- Identify and integrate relevant keywords to enhance organic search results.
 - Use tools like Google Trends to stay informed about popular search terms in your industry.
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④ Mobile-friendly content

- Optimize job descriptions for mobile viewing and simplify application processes.
 - Acknowledge the prevalence of mobile job searches and cater to on-the-go candidates.
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⑤ Metrics tracking and continuous improvement

- Track key metrics such as views, clicks, and applicant conversions.
- Use data to guide refinements, ensuring ongoing improvement in attracting top talent.