



THE WRITE WAY TO FILL MORE JOBS

Advertising - love it or hate it, it's often the very first impression a candidate has of your organisation. Why? Because most candidates, when looking for a new job will start browsing the job boards. But amazingly, many recruitment consultancies really let themselves down through poor external communication - and that's not only a bad reflection on the brand - but it also means that response rates will be low or irrelevant. And in turn that means your money is going to be wasted!

How many of you really think carefully about how an advertisement will sell most effectively and therefore attract targeted candidates? How many of your advertisements have tired stock phrases such as 'our client' and 'the successful candidate'? How many of you see advertising as a chore rather than a tool to increase your chances of earning more revenue?

And it is a way of earning more revenue - in fact it's your life blood. As recruitment advertising copywriter we were talking to recently said: "Get it right and not only do you get a better quality of candidate, you also impress the casual browser, the potential client, the person who may not be quite right for that role but who may then bookmark your site for future reference."

Let's look at a couple of regular objections I've heard from recruiters about ads:

- It's not my job - why can't the marketing department do it?

Well, who knows your client best? The consultant who has just returned from a client meeting or your marketing manager? By the time you have briefed the marketing manager, you could have the ad written! Your consultants are at the front line and are therefore the best people to 'sell' the job. And that also means making sure that consultants are not taking a job brief that isn't going to produce decent candidates - after all you are consultants who know your markets so educate your clients!

- But I haven't got time!

Ok - we all know that consultants don't like being taken away from revenue earning activities but they need to see advertisements as just that- the potential to earn more revenue! The easiest way to make time is to ask your consultants to draft an advertisement at the point that the job brief is taken - in fact make it part of the job brief requirement. The vacancy will be fresh in the consultant's mind and this way you will have a large bank of advertisements on file and ready to be used at any time.

- But we don't know anything about SEO - isn't that important?

Of course it is and if you do have a marketing department make sure that they are interacting with your job board and understanding the way to maximise advertisement positioning in search. More of which later for those of you who don't have that luxury!

- The best candidates don't apply for jobs on job boards anyway?

We think that's a myth - but then we would say that wouldn't we? However, to quote a consultant we were engaging with recently: "The reason why good candidates don't respond to adverts is because they look like they've been written by dyslexic ten year old or because they are saying nothing different than the hundreds of other job ads out there." Surely there's an opportunity for differentiation here?

So how should it be done? Let's look at the structure of the ad both from an SEO **and** a candidate attraction point of view.

SEO

Search engine optimisation is the art of ensuring that a web page appears within results when a user is searching on a particular keyword or phrase. So you need to think about what particular keywords your potential applicants will be searching on. That means that you need to follow a few simple rules if you want to make sure your advertisement is ranked highly on www.recruitersite.co.uk

Headlines

You need to think of this from a search engine point of view. It's what we call the "Ronseal School of Advertising" - because search engines need an ad that does 'exactly what it says on the tin'. If you are advertising a job for a lorry driver then make sure lorry driver is in the title. The headline 'A job on the open road' may grab attention in the print media but it won't work online. The headline needs to be clear, to the point and non-cryptic. **Don't** include the location in the job title field as it will interfere with your results.

Location

When prompted to tell us where your vacancy is located, to improve your SEO you should provide the **postcode** and the **nearest city or town**.

The ad itself

The first 150 characters of your advertisement are crucial to your job posting. You'll need a short overview repeating the job title once, the location once and a couple of other related key points. If you can also fit in another instance of the words that make up your job title then you should see a benefit in your ranking. It is also important that this forms a coherent sentence - not just a string of search terms as search engines reward well constructed opening content.

Example: A Finance Director Role based in Reading

*Outstanding opportunity for an **FMCG finance** specialist to join this **Reading** based corporate head office. As **Director of Finance** you'll head up an **international** team covering the group's global operations.*

The remainder of your job description should contain keywords and key phrases that your ideal candidate may be searching on in a variety of ways. Taking the job title as most important, make sure it appears at least three times (but no more than six). Featuring benefits and talking about responsibilities will enable you to use keywords and key phrases in a number of different ways. So for example:

You'll be based in **Reading** for around 50% of the time as the **Finance Director** has an international role and will consequently have the opportunity to travel to the group's other **finance** functions around the world. You'll have had significant exposure to international **financial** reporting standards at **Director** or Controller level ideally in an **fmcg** environment.....

As a general rule aim for keywords and keyphrases to make up between 5 and 10% of your advert and you should have a well optimised page.

Candidate Attraction

As well as optimising your advertisements, you also need to make sure that they actually inspire the candidate to want to apply for the job!

Take a decent job brief

The key to a good job ad starts before the writing stage - it has to start with the job brief. You cannot possibly write a good ad without a full job spec. You can't sell an opportunity if you don't have all the benefits and you can't sell a company if you don't have all the co information

Talk to your applicants

You may have noticed in the examples above that the phrases 'our client' and 'the successful candidate will..' are conspicuous by their absence. Who else's client is it going to be - and what other type of candidate is going to get the job? It really isn't necessary to use these tired stock phrases. Why not just talk to the reader and use 'you'?

Sell benefits

Think about how is this move going to benefit the candidate and feature those benefits rather than just listing requirements. Obviously you do need to feature the experience needed but make sure that this is balanced with what the applicant will actually get out of the job move. Think about how you would sell a role to a candidate on the phone or face to face - it's the same with an ad - and this will also appeal to passive as well as active jobseekers.

Look at how you look

Before you press that button take a good long hard look at how your organisation will be viewed by the outside world. We've lost count of how many times we have looked at online recruitment ads and found spelling mistakes and poor grammar. What impression is your ad going to give?