



2026

Why Your Job Description Isn't Attracting the Right People

How To Write a Brief That Attracts Better

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Most businesses don't struggle because there aren't enough applicants.

They struggle because they're attracting the wrong ones.

If you've ever advertised a role and found yourself sifting through dozens of CVs that bear little resemblance to what you were looking for, the problem may not be the market. It could be the advert itself.

A good job description isn't just there to explain the role. It's there to do some of the hard work before a single application lands in your inbox.

Done well, it encourages the right people to apply while gently putting off those who aren't the right fit.

The result? Less time screening unsuitable applications and more time talking to people who genuinely match what you're looking for.

What You Will Learn

In this blog we'll cover:

- Why so many job adverts miss the mark.
- Seven simple ways to attract better-quality applications.
- Why being honest about salary, expectations and company culture pays off.
- How small changes in wording can make a big difference.

Why So Many Adverts Don't Work

Many businesses treat their advert as little more than an administrative task. They list a series of duties, add a handful of requirements, finish with a paragraph about the company and hope for the best.

Unfortunately, that's exactly why so many employers end up overwhelmed with unsuitable applications, or wondering why hardly anyone applied at all.

Research shows many employers end up rewriting their adverts after they've gone live because they're attracting the wrong people, or not attracting enough of the right ones.

The good news is that a few simple changes can make a huge difference.

Seven Ways to Write an Advert That Works Harder

1. Start with a Job Title People Will Actually Search For

It might sound obvious, but your job title is one of the most important parts of the advert.

Creative internal titles might make perfect sense inside your business, but they're not always the words people are typing into job boards.

Keep it clear, familiar and easy to find.

If your business calls the role something unique, consider using the more commonly recognised title instead. You'll instantly improve your chances of being found by the right audience.

2. Tell People Why the Role Matters

One of the biggest mistakes businesses make is opening with a long shopping list of responsibilities.

Most people won't read that far.

Instead, start by explaining why the role exists, what difference it will make and how it contributes to the wider business.

People connect with purpose far more quickly than they connect with bullet points. Once they're interested, they're much more likely to keep reading.

3. Be Clear About What's Essential

Not every requirement carries the same weight.

Some skills are absolutely essential, while others are simply nice to have. Mixing the two together can confuse applicants. Some will apply despite missing key requirements, while others will rule themselves out because they assume they don't tick every box.

A simple distinction between "essential" and "desirable" helps everyone.

It saves you time and gives applicants a much clearer idea of whether the opportunity is right for them.

4. Be Open About Salary

Salary is one of the first things people look for. If it's missing, many won't bother applying – in fact you can expect around 78% fewer applications!

Being upfront about pay helps set expectations from the beginning. It also reduces the number of conversations that end with someone discovering the package isn't what they were hoping for.

Transparency saves everyone time and usually results in better-quality applications too.

5. Be Honest About the Non-Negotiables

Every role has them.

Maybe it's regular travel. Perhaps it's working shifts, being office-based, meeting targets or holding a particular qualification.

Don't hide those details halfway down the advert.

Being upfront about the things that genuinely can't be changed helps people decide whether the role is right for them before they apply. That means fewer surprises later and far fewer people dropping out once they've reached interview stage.

The right applicants won't be put off by honesty. They'll appreciate it.

6. Give People a Feel for Your Business

People aren't just choosing a job.

They're choosing who they'll work with, the environment they'll be part of and whether they can see themselves there long term. That's why it's worth saying a little about your culture, values and the way your business works.

You don't need pages of corporate waffle. Just give people an honest picture. If you offer flexibility, say so.

If you're a fast-paced business where everyone mucks in, say that too. The more authentic you are, the more likely you'll attract people who'll thrive in your business.

7. Read It Back Through Someone Else's Eyes

Before you hit 'publish', stop and read your advert as though you're seeing it for the first time.

Is it welcoming?

Is it clear?

Would someone outside your business understand the language you're using?

Small wording changes can make a surprisingly big difference.

Your Advert Sets the Tone

A good advert does far more than list responsibilities.

It gives people a clear picture of the opportunity, helps them decide whether it's right for them and encourages the right individuals to apply for the right reasons.

When that's done well, everything that follows becomes easier.

You'll spend less time screening unsuitable applications, interviews are more productive and the people you meet already have a realistic understanding of the role. In short, a little extra thought at the beginning can save a lot of time later.

Before You Advertise...

Before your next vacancy goes live, ask yourself one simple question.

If I knew nothing about this business or this role, would this advert make me want to apply?

If the answer isn't an immediate "yes", it's probably worth another look.

Sometimes, the biggest difference isn't where you advertise a role. It's how you describe it in the first place.

That's exactly why we spend time with our clients before a vacancy goes live. A well-written brief doesn't just attract more applications, it attracts better ones. And that's where finding the right person really begins.

If you're about to advertise a role and would like a second pair of eyes on your advert before it goes live, I'd be delighted to help.

Sometimes a few small changes can make a big difference to the quality of applications you receive.

Feel free to get in touch at sarah@recruitrecruit.co.uk or call [01902 763006](tel:01902763006).

A little about Sarah Bishop and Recruit Recruit Ltd



Whether you're a sole trader hiring your first team member, a VC-backed startup needing to scale fast, or a corporate looking for top-tier C-suite talent, one thing stays true:

Your business grows when your people grow.

I help founders, CEOs and business leaders build brilliant teams through:

- **Recruitment:** finding and placing the right people for the right roles or embedding a talent team into growing businesses
- **Sales & Leadership Training:** developing high-performing teams that sell, lead and deliver
- **Speaking & EmCeeing:** energising events and conferences with insight, humour and practical takeaways
- **Coaching:** supporting leaders to grow confidently, communicate better, and build culture that sticks

Over the years, I've supported businesses at every stage, from bedroom startups to scale-ups and established firms navigating change. What they all have in common? A vision to grow and the ambition to get the right people on board to make it happen.

I bring no-nonsense advice, energy, empathy and results, whether I'm:

- Hiring a game-changing leadership role
- Training a founder-led team to sell with confidence
- Speaking on stage about team-building, fearless follow-up, or people strategy
- Coaching a business owner through their first ever hire

So, let's talk if:

- You're ready to grow and want to hire with confidence
- You need training or coaching to get more from your team (or yourself!)
- You're planning an event and want a speaker or EmCee who brings both energy and value

Drop me a message or connect – let's build something brilliant together.

Now – #1 Bestseller on Amazon –

Scale Up!: The Founders' Guide to Accelerating Growth by Building Dream Teams by Sarah Bishop

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