



Elevate

THE STARTUPS GUIDE ON HOW TO
WRITE A COMPELLING JOB SPEC

There's much more to writing a job ad than listing an attractive sum. Startups compete with large established companies to recruit top talent, so a well-structured job ad is an essential part of the startup recruitment process that will help attract the best candidates. We've put together a guide to help you recruit freelancers/contractors that you'll love working with in the long run.

1) GET THE BASICS RIGHT

The first thing you need to remember is that candidates often skim through job ads, and the three basic components – the Salary, the Location and Job Title – need to be easy to find and clear. If you're advertising your job online these factors will determine how easy it is for candidates to find your job, especially if they are signed up for sms or email job alerts. Avoid words like 'superstar' and 'guru', focus on making it easy to understand and remember.

2) CONSIDER THE MEDIUM

The web usability principles apply to all texts published online and job ads are no exception. Avoid chunks of text that are more than 150 words long. If the ad looks difficult to read, or if candidate needs to scroll more than twice to get the end of the job description this will reduce application numbers.

Some tech savvy start-ups have already started experimenting further with new forms of job ads, using Social Media and infographics to make their ad go viral and reach thousands more freelancers. If you want to give infographics a go yourself, then click here for a great resource that summarises and provides links to various graphics tools and apps (including free ones).

3) CHOOSE THE CORRECT TONE

The friendlier, the better. Part of the appeal of working for start-ups is the idea that they're more personable and have a better working atmosphere. Structure your ad as a start of a semi-informal dialogue with a type of contractor you would like to work with. Try to make the candidates feel comfortable applying for the position.

4) KEEP IT SHORT AND SIMPLE

Once they're happy with the three basics, candidates will normally move on to reading the detailed job description, which is where the big mistakes start happening. There's nothing more frustrating for a potential employee than having to read through five hundred words about the ideal candidate's favourite pastimes with no concrete job description. Remember – People can get bored of any written text, including a job ad for a fantastic position. Don't make them do chores before you've hired them.

5) STRUCTURE IT WISELY

Start with an opening of no more than one sentence explaining who you are and what the company does. Then elaborate on the job title and summarize what the person would be doing in a sentence of two.

Make use of subtitles like 'The Project' 'What you'd be doing' or 'Who we're looking for' to help them navigate the ad in case they want to go back to the job specs. Also, write the duties and

desired skills in the form of short lists (not more than five items each, summarize if necessary, unless you need to be very technical and specific). Anything that breaks the routine of the text blocks is good.

6) DESCRIBING THE JOB

Think of why the project is important to the company, how it advances the start-up's mission and what kind of people you want for the job. Imagine the perfect contractor for the job is right across the desk from you and they're really curious to know more. Tell them the story about why you're passionate about what you do. It will show in your ad and really strike a chord with the freelancers who share your vision. Put the list of the tasks the contractor will be performing after this paragraph.

7) DESCRIBING THE CANDIDATE

Be specific with what kind of person that would be great for you. Do you need someone who's experienced and just wants to get on with work or a junior freelancer you can train to do things your way? Do you need someone to work very closely with your permanent staff and if so, what kind of person would fit in? Is it a client facing role? What types of skills will they need? How many years of experience? Should they have a degree?

Build on the persona you structured during the project description and add the desired characteristics, but make sure it's no more than a paragraph long. Again, the short list of required skills comes after this initial paragraph.

8) GIVE THEM A SNEAK PEAK OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Tell them a bit about the next steps – will there be an interview/ phone call/ skype chat? Will you need to see a portfolio? Get in touch with their previous clients to obtain references? It's always good to give some information about the recruitment process, so that the candidates can have all the necessary information and material at hand.

Before you post your ad, make sure you've listed everything that's important. If it's an on-site position, make sure that's clearly stated as well as any equipment, skills or other information that may be important to the person applying. Once you're done you'll be looking at a great ad attracting loads of great candidates. Good luck!

ONE LAST THING!

If you are advertising the job online, then I would advise you to have a quick search and apply for the job yourself. Was it easy to find? Was there anything in the application process that made it particularly cumbersome? You'd be surprised at the number of employers who don't test whether their jobs can even be found despite paying good money to advertise them!

Elevate

Elevate

Elevate Direct
128 Southwark, London
United Kingdom
E1W 3SZ