



Best Practices in Job Ad Content

UK Edition



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Programmatic recruitment technology helps hiring organisations get their job ads in front of candidates. But reaching a job-seeker audience is only half the battle. Unless your job ad content resonates with job seekers, they aren't likely to apply—especially in a labour market where employment opportunities are plentiful.

It's therefore essential to craft job ads that tell would-be employees what they want to know about the job and your organisation. The emphasis here should be on what they want to know, which might be different from what you want them to know.

We've said this before, and it is worth repeating: When creating job ads, think like a job seeker.

What exactly does this mean?

Share details about the job and your company, using straightforward language that leaves little or no room for interpretation. Tell it like it is, while homing in on what's important to your candidate audience.

Here are key areas to focus on.

The Basics

Job title

Give the job a practical name, one that a person would use when searching for a job. Keep in mind that an internal title isn't always the best choice.

For example, Chief Fun Officer is not a good title for a job ad.

When in doubt, look at job ads for similar positions, or enter a job title on Google and see how many results are returned.

1-3 words

job ads with shorter job titles have higher click rates and higher apply rates

A screenshot of a Google search bar. The Google logo is at the top. Below it is a search bar with the text "Delivery Driver - Hiring Now!" entered. To the right of the search bar is a microphone icon.

[Appcast Research](#) finds that job ads with shorter job titles (1-3 words) have higher click rates and higher apply rates than job ads with longer job titles. This said, job titles with additional information (for example, "hiring now" during periods of high unemployment) perform well, even though the phrase increases the word count.

Location

Let job seekers know where the position is located. In today's environment, this isn't as simple as it sounds.

For example, an employee may have the option of working at one of several company locations, and [remote](#) may be an option as well.

And speaking of remote, as more companies adopt a hybrid work model, it's important to specify if a position allows for such an arrangement – and to provide details. For example, the ad might read: The job will be based in the London office, with the option to work remotely two days per week.

While this is good information, greater detail could prove even more valuable to a job seeker. For example: The job will be based in the London office, with the option to work remotely two days per week, with days to be determined by mutual agreement.

Two More Examples:

"And, we also operate remotely so you can work from the comfort of your own home. We work with your life's schedule. And you never, ever feel like a number. What can we say, people like working here. We're easy-going and we can juggle schedules."

- MQO Research

"Work-From-Home: Training will be conducted virtually and there will be the possibility working onsite."

- Millennium 1 Solutions

Why does this additional information matter?

For one thing, it shows flexibility. And it suggests that at your organisation management and employees work as partners. It also gives the would-be employee some control, which is likely to be reassuring after the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, when people sometimes felt they had little control.

Research from Boston Consulting Group (BCG), The Network, and Appcast finds that 59% of UK workers prefer a combination of remote and on-site, while 28% prefer fully remote, and 13% prefer completely on-site.

Summarise the position

Summarise the position. The key word here is "summarise." Too much information is a turnoff. At the same time, don't assume the job title will tell a job seeker what they need to know. Remember, position responsibilities vary greatly by organisation, and sometimes by department within the same organisation.

Include primary responsibilities as part of the job ad, along with any tasks or duties that may be out of the ordinary for the role.

[Appcast Research](#) finds that the ideal length for a job description—in order to get the most clicks and generate the most applications—is between 300 and 850 words. And that's the entire job description, not the position summary.

Requirements

Before you list requirements in a job ad, decide if they are nice-to-haves or must-haves. Including unnecessary "requirements" will deter job seekers from applying, not to mention they take up valuable job ad space.

[The Definitive Guide to Recruitment Advertising, Second Edition](#) includes a section that will help you analyse job requirements.

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WIIFM Components

The what's-in-it-for-me (WIIFM) components of a job ad are critical. Arguably, the basics listed above have elements of WIIFM, too. The following, though, is make or break WIIFM information.

Compensation

Increasingly, experts recommend that job ads include what the position pays. For hourly jobs, this has become the norm. For salaried roles, the practice isn't as common.

How you decide to address the compensation question will depend on your company and your comfort level with regard to transparency. Regardless, you can't ignore compensation in a job ad.

For hourly positions, it is advisable to include a starting wage. For salaried roles, you may want to include a range. If that makes you uncomfortable, a safer approach is to indicate what constitutes compensation for the role; for example, a base salary, commissions, and bonuses. Elaborate on this information where possible. For example, a generous base salary, commissions, and quarterly bonuses.

Research from BCG, The Network, and Appcast finds that financial compensation is one of the top three considerations of global workforce participants.

Benefits

The benefits section of a job ad offers an opportunity to elaborate on your overall compensation package. Today's savvy job seekers realise that most benefits have a tangible pound value.

Benefits to highlight include:

- ✓ Health insurance
- ✓ Dental insurance
- ✓ Paid time off (PTO)
- ✓ Additional compensation
(for example, bonuses and/or profit sharing)
- ✓ Tuition reimbursement program
- ✓ Education and training programs
- ✓ Sabbatical opportunities
- ✓ Flexible work arrangements

each benefit you include
in a job ad increases the
apply rate by

1-5%

Even if you think you've already addressed flexible work arrangements in connection with location (i.e., remote work), don't overlook other aspects of flexible work, such as flexible schedules or job sharing. If you offer these benefits, include them in your job ad.

[Appcast Research](#) finds that each benefit you include in a job ad increases the apply rate by 1% to 5%.

Career development

It's not enough to list tuition reimbursement and/or education and training in a benefits section. Job seekers want to know more when it comes to career development. Is the company a place where they can learn and grow? Are there clear-cut career paths or can someone basically chart their own direction?

How you articulate this will depend on the opportunities themselves, as well as your company. One organisation might indicate that it has a practice of promoting from within, and that several senior executives began their careers as entry-level employees. Another organisation might speak to an entrepreneurial environment, where innovation and rapid growth creates countless opportunities for learning and advancement.

Whatever your career development story is, share it. Job seekers are hungry for this information.

For example, in a recent [survey](#) of U.S.-based professionals, 74% of respondents ranked career development as “important” or “extremely important” when deciding on a new job.

About You

After you’ve covered the key WIIFM bases, it’s time to talk about your company—without losing sight of your audience and the purpose of sharing this information.

The purpose, in case you’ve forgotten, is to find candidates who are a fit for the job and your organisation.

Because you may be inclined to talk too much about your company, keep this objective in mind when creating this section of the job ad. Aim for informative yet succinct messaging, that addresses the following areas.

Who you are and what you do

If you’ve already included an introductory sentence about your company at the beginning of the job ad, now is the time to elaborate. If you haven’t included this information, it’s time for a full-on elevator pitch.

Among the points you may want to cover are:

- The business you’re in. For example, ABC Company is a leading provider of widgets.
- Market(s) you serve. ABC widgets are used by the aerospace and automotive industries.
- Geographic reach. ABC is a global company; we support manufacturers in 35 countries.
- Location of company headquarter(s). ABC Company is based in London, UK, and has 12 satellite offices worldwide.

For Example:

“We’re the best at what we do. We’re the global leader in programmatic recruitment advertising. With advanced technology, unmatched market data and a team of the industry’s best recruitment marketers, Appcast’ technology and services manage over half a billion dollars in job advertising annually on behalf of more than 1,500 clients.”

- Appcast

“We ensure our merchants have the right products in the right place at the right time, and our nodes have the right plans in place to ship it quickly. When you think that our total merchant base now counts over 1.7 million merchants in over 175 countries, you get an idea of just how complex this problem set is.”

- DHL

Why is this level of detail important?

It immediately provides a snapshot of the organisation, and helps you attract the right candidates. For example, if a job seeker wants to work for a startup, they know ABC isn't for them.

[Ongig](#) shares two completely different approaches to the "About company" section, one from The Walt Disney Company and the other from Bark, a subscription-based company for dog products.

Corporate culture

Similarly, statements related to corporate culture will help job seekers decide if they are interested in working for your company.

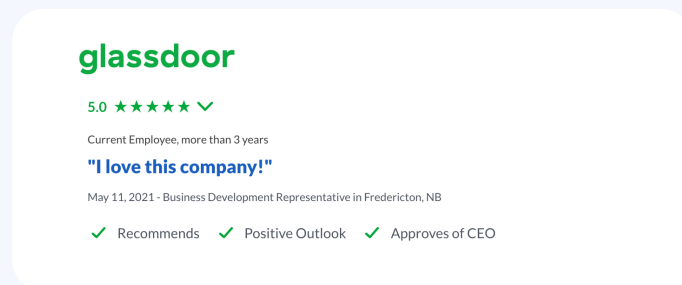
"Corporate culture" is a broad term that covers everything from ways in which your organisation contributes to the community and philanthropic causes, your commitment to [diversity, equity, and inclusion](#), and information about the workplace itself, where dogs may be welcome. Determine what is most relevant to your employer brand and include it in your job ad.

For a deeper dive into corporate culture, and help defining your company's culture, check out [The Definitive Guide to Company Culture](#) from BambooHR.

Glassdoor rating and workplace awards

If you have a great employer brand, flaunt it. Mention your Glassdoor rating, if it's exceptional, along with any workplace awards you've won.

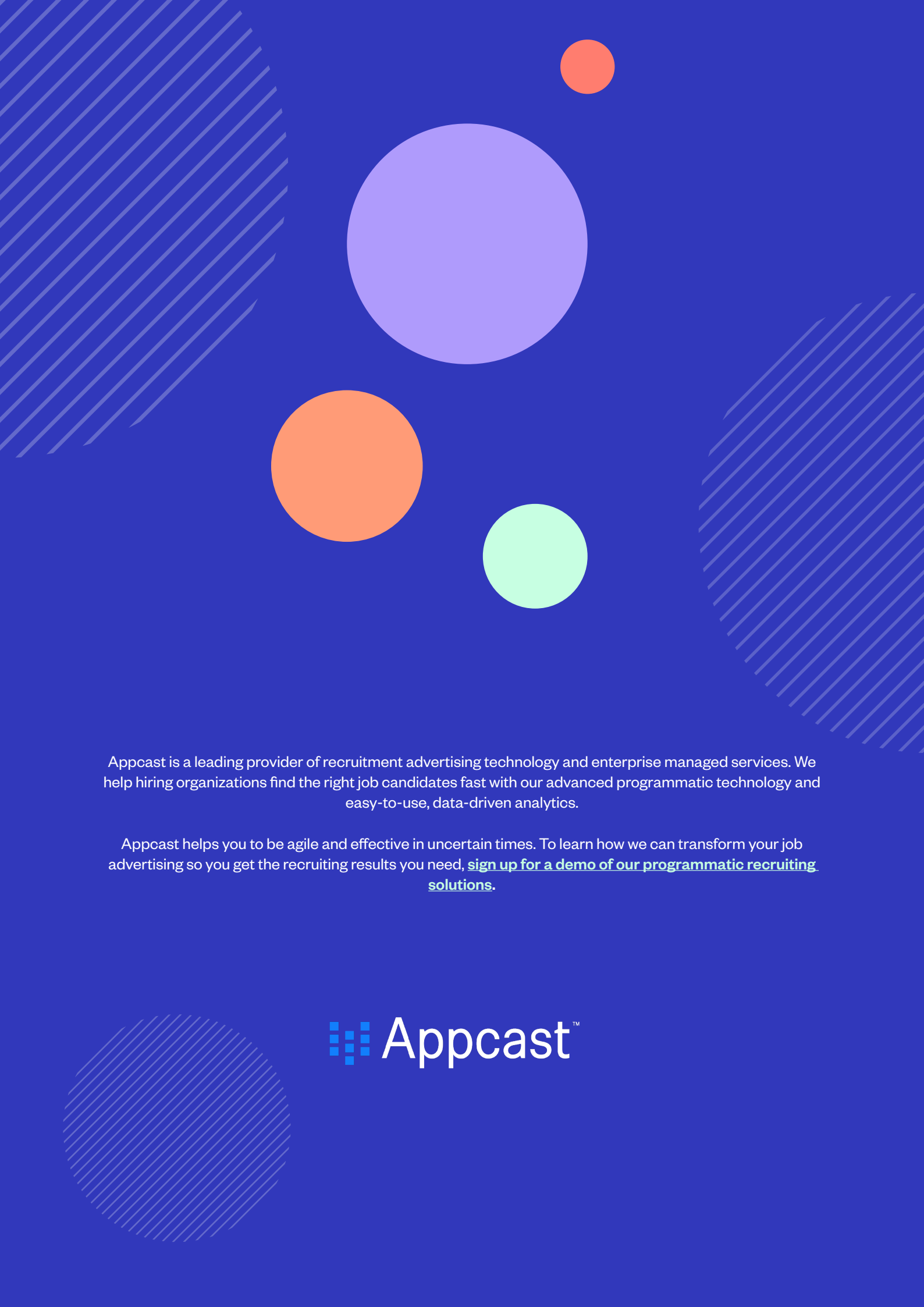
Shameless plug: Appcast has a Glassdoor rating of 4.8 and has been named to Inc. magazine's [Best Workplaces 2021](#) list.



Summary

As you create job ad content, don't lose sight of the fact that you are creating advertisements, aimed at an audience. That audience, it should go without saying, is comprised of job seekers.

With this in mind, it's worth repeating one final time: When creating job ads, think like a job seeker.



Appcast is a leading provider of recruitment advertising technology and enterprise managed services. We help hiring organizations find the right job candidates fast with our advanced programmatic technology and easy-to-use, data-driven analytics.

Appcast helps you to be agile and effective in uncertain times. To learn how we can transform your job advertising so you get the recruiting results you need, [sign up for a demo of our programmatic recruiting solutions.](#)

