



RECRUTIMENT

TOOL 3: CREATING ACCESSIBLE JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1** Accessible Job Ads Boost Your Hiring
- 2** The Importance of Using Inclusive Language
- 3** Taking Your Job Advertisements Further
- 4** Guidelines for Creating an Accessible Job Advertisement
- 5** Job Ad Example
- 6** Intersectionality Avatar
- 7** References

TOOL 3: CREATING ACCESSIBLE JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

Who is this for

High priority

- Hiring Managers
- Recruiters

Practical Information

- Direct Line Managers

Useful to Know

- DEI and HR Professionals

What guidance does it provide?

- How to write an accessible job advertisement

Take-home points

- When a job posting is created in a way that all candidates can apply for the job without feeling excluded or uncomfortable, employers can attract candidates with diverse backgrounds and experiences
- Special attention should be given to the language used in the job description. Avoid using gender specific words and jargon, consider describing the work environment, and capturing why the position exists and its importance.
- An inclusive job description is primarily competency-based, recognizing that the most critical information is not “how the job will be completed” rather, “if the employee can achieve the outcomes required.”

ACCESSIBLE JOB ADVERTISEMENTS BOOST YOUR HIRING

Job advertisements are a critical first point of contact between an applicant and an organization. The information described here to boost accessibility and inclusivity of the job advertisement can be the key driver to attract applicants with disabilities. The more thought put into this process on the front end, the easier your search and selection process will be on the back end.

“Job seekers spend an average 49.7 seconds reading a job ad before dismissing a position, so first impressions really count” – Weber, 2017 [5]

What are bona fide occupational requirements?

Bona fide occupational requirements are considered essential to the job. An employer must differentiate between the essential or absolute job requirements, and the optional or flexible job tasks. Accommodations can support candidates with disabilities in their performance of bona fide occupational requirements. [1]

For instance, workers such as armoured guards are tasked with securely transporting funds and valuables. To be able to fulfil essential requirements of the job, armoured guards must be able to monitor the goods which they are moving. Glasses or contact lenses are an appropriate accommodation for interested applicants with lower vision.

Including job requirements that are not essential prevent otherwise qualified applicants from applying to a job that they would be capable of doing.

As well, having a clearly defined job description and an understanding of the essential requirements of the job provides a solid basis for designing rules and standards, providing accommodation, assessing the performance of applicants and employees, and making decisions on hiring, promotions, discipline, and termination.



ACCESSIBLE JOB ADVERTISEMENTS BOOST YOUR HIRING

Reviewing Job Requirements on the Advertisement

Before you initiate the recruitment process for any position, it is imperative that you write or update a job description that accurately captures the bona fide job requirements for an applicant to be successful in the role. At this stage, consider working through the following questions: [2]

- ☐ Is the job description current or does it need to be updated?
- ☐ Does the job description accurately reflect the needs and expectations of the employer?
- ☐ Which are essential requirements, and which are non-essential?

When assessing whether a particular task or duty is essential, an employer can consider: [2]

- ☐ How often is the duty performed?
- ☐ How much time is spent on each duty?
- ☐ How does the duty fit with the others performed in the job?
- ☐ How would the job change if the duty were removed?

THE IMPORTANCE OF USING INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

The Importance of Using Inclusive Language

Words matter. When writing a job advertisement, the details used to describe the job requirements should not exclude someone with a disability. For instance, listing physical demands that are not essential to perform the job can immediately exclude someone with a disability from the recruiting process.

Here are some other common examples of how employers can inadvertently create barriers for people with disabilities within job advertisements. Each example is paired with a suggestion for inclusive language that encourages applicants with different abilities to apply for the job: [1]

Language that may create barriers to employment:	Alternative language that is more inclusive
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10+ years' experience in medical administration in a medical specialist's office• Valid driver's license required• Three years' experience as an insurance auditor• A bachelor's degree in Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience working as a medical administrator, including managing patient appointments and requests, and communication with healthcare partners• The ability to travel and provide own transportation• Experience in insurance auditing involving a variety of industries, including several complex audits• Experience in Economics (preferred)• Relevant areas such as Business, Accounting and work experience are acceptable

Many union members and representatives have ground level job tasks, which do not always match the job descriptions. As many members are intimately familiar with actual job tasks, not just job descriptions, unions can assist with developing job ads that only include bona fide occupational requirements to better represent the role.

TAKING YOUR JOB ADVERTISEMENTS FURTHER

Taking Your Job Advertisements Further [1], [3]

A clear job title: The job title is an important recruitment tool that can make an applicant's decision to apply.

Short introduction about the day-to-day of the job: 4x as many people read the introduction than the ad itself to decide whether to apply to not

Include essential company details: A study from 200 job seekers found a company's reputation is as important as the work and pay.

Define the work with role responsibilities: This will tell job-seekers what they will need to accomplish to deliver key results if employed.

Describe your ideal employee with a person specification: Job seekers will match their skills to decide if they can apply.

Reel applicants in with salary and benefits: A study found that when job ads include a salary range, they got over 30% more applicants.

Describe and include location details: 57% of people said location is more important than salary

Don't forget to tell job-seekers how to apply: Your application process reflects your company's culture - so its important to get it right.

You can use the following checklist to highlight the key advantages of working with your company: [4] *Keep in mind this list is not exhaustive. Each company will be different in what they can offer. Be realistic, do not promise what you can't deliver.

- ☐ Opportunity to learn on the job
- ☐ Exciting and rewarding work
- ☐ Flexible working arrangements
- ☐ Environment of mutual respect and support
- ☐ Innovative and creative work culture
- ☐ Involvement in company strategy and decision-making
- ☐ Training and development opportunities
- ☐ Benefits: health, mental health, dental, childcare, paid vacation, life insurance, retirement accounts, spending and savings accounts, paid medical leave, assessments if required etc.
- ☐ Exceptional rewards: celebrations, events, paid gym memberships, a day off on birthday, etc.

GUIDELINES FOR CREATING AN ACCESSIBLE JOB ADVERTISEMENT

1. Clear and Inclusive Language

- Use Simple, Precise Language: Avoid jargon, ambiguous terms, or internal acronyms. Use clear, direct language to describe job duties and expectations.
- Avoid Gendered Language: Use gender-neutral terms to ensure the ad is inclusive to all applicants.
- Descriptive Job Titles: Choose job titles that are specific and clearly reflect the role and its seniority level (e.g., "Senior Data Analyst" instead of just "Analyst").

2. Job Responsibilities and Requirements

- Focus on Essential Duties: Clearly outline the core responsibilities and requirements of the job. Avoid vague statements; instead, use action verbs and describe how tasks are performed.
- Highlight Work Environment: Provide details about whether the position is remote, hybrid, or in-person, and note any travel or physical requirements. Mention if flexible hours are an option.
- Specify Physical and Technical Requirements: If there are physical demands (e.g., lifting, standing), describe them clearly, including range of motion, frequency, and required strength. If special equipment or specific software is used, include this information.

3. Accessibility and Accommodations

- Accessibility Statement: Include a statement about the company's commitment to providing accommodations during the application process and employment. Provide contact information for accessibility support.
- Encourage Use of Assistive Technology: Invite applicants to use aids and assistive technology to showcase their skills and potential.

4. Job Advertisement Structure

- Font and Formatting: Use accessible fonts like Arial or Verdana, at a minimum of 12-point size, with high contrast between text and background. Avoid using long paragraphs; opt for bullet points for clarity.
- Avoid Overloading Information: Only include essential soft skills and educational requirements. Emphasize that company-specific knowledge can be learned on the job.

5. Inclusive Culture and Commitment

- Showcase Inclusivity: Highlight the company's dedication to creating an inclusive workplace where diversity is valued.
- Avoid Discriminatory Requirements: Ensure the job ad does not unintentionally exclude people with disabilities, such as requiring unnecessary qualifications (e.g., owning a vehicle, specific education levels) unless absolutely essential for the role.

JOB AD EXAMPLE

The following job ad contains several elements that make it **inaccessible and difficult for many potential applicants to understand or engage with**. Below, we will list and explain the specific flaws in this example to illustrate why it may discourage or exclude qualified candidates.

JUNIOR UX DESIGNER NEEDED

Position: Jr. UX Designer (NOC 2175)

Location: Vancouver, BC

Type: Full-Time

Description:

Our cutting-edge tech company is seeking a Jr. UX Designer to join our agile and fast-paced team. We need a rockstar who is ready to hit the ground running and make a real impact in the digital space. If you're a go-getter with a passion for UX/UI, this is the job for you!

Key Responsibilities:

As a Jr. UX Designer, you must have the ability to conceptualize innovative designs and implement them using industry-standard design software. You will conduct heuristic evaluations to identify UX pain points across various platforms, providing actionable insights for improving the overall user experience. Collaboration with cross-functional teams, including but not limited to DevOps, PMO, and SME stakeholders, is crucial to align design objectives with project deliverables. Additionally, you are required to produce high-fidelity wireframes, prototypes, and other design artifacts with a quick turnaround time. You must also perform A/B testing and analyze quantitative data to validate design decisions, ensuring optimal user engagement metrics. Staying up-to-date with the latest industry trends and best practices is essential, as all designs must adhere to WCAG 2.1 guidelines. Furthermore, you will engage in ideation sessions with the product team, contributing to the overall vision and roadmap of our digital products.

Qualifications:

Must have 3-5 years of experience in UX design, with a strong portfolio demonstrating expertise in creating intuitive user interfaces. Required: Proficiency in tools such as Figma, Sketch, Adobe XD, and other design software. Familiarity with Lean UX methodologies and Agile development environments is important. You must possess excellent communication skills, with the ability to articulate design concepts to non-design stakeholders. Required: Knowledge of HTML, CSS, and JavaScript is a plus.

Additional Info:

Our office is located in a vibrant part of Vancouver, where you'll be surrounded by an eclectic mix of cafes, shops, and public art. We offer a competitive salary package, health benefits, and a fun work culture that includes regular team outings, yoga sessions, and free snacks.



JOB AD EXAMPLES

Identified Flaws in the Inaccessible Job Ad

Decorative font and inaccessible text

The job title is presented in a decorative serif font that is hard to read. The title and description do not meet the minimum accessibility standard of 12pt size font

No salary and job format information

The job ad fails to state a salary or salary range as well as omits whether the position is remote, on-site, or hybrid which can discourage potential applicants who may feel unsure about whether the position meets their financial and/or transportation needs

Overuse of Jargon and Acronyms

The ad includes industry-specific jargon and acronyms (e.g., NOC, UX, PMO, SME) that may confuse or exclude applicants unfamiliar with these terms

Culturally Specific References

Phrases like "rockstar," "hit the ground running," and references to a "vibrant" office location with cafes and shops may not resonate with or be understood by everyone

Demanding Language

The frequent use of words like "MUST" and "Required" are not inclusive and create a high-pressure tone that could intimidate potential applicants

Long and Complex Sentences

The job responsibilities and qualifications are described in lengthy, complex sentences, making the ad harder to read and understand.

Vague Job Duties

Responsibilities such as "contribute to the overall vision" are vague and lack specific details, leaving applicants unsure of what the role actually entails.

Paragraph Format for Key Details

Presenting the key responsibilities in a dense paragraph format rather than bullet points makes it difficult for readers to quickly scan and understand the job's requirements.

No Accessibility Statement or Contact Info

The outro lacks an accessibility statement and doesn't provide contact info for potential candidates to inquire about alternate formats, accommodations, and accessibility

INTERSECTIONALITY AVATARS

New Message



To Salima_G@emails.com

Subject Missed Job Opportunities?

Hi Salima,

Thank you for giving me a chance to talk about this important subject. I am a non-binary, trans-person. I have struggled all my childhood with gender dysphoria. Growing up, I never knew how to fit in: should I act like a girl or a boy when neither made sense to me. This caused a lot of anxiety for me. **Now, when I look in job ads, and only see he or she pronouns, I cannot be sure if I will be welcome.** Will I be accepted for who I am, or will I be ridiculed? Since asking employers can be too much of a risk to take, I simply move on with my job search. I wonder if I have missed out on great job opportunities because of this?

Warm Regards,
Taylor

Send



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