

Inside Leadership



Advertising and the Laws of Attraction.

Niamh Grist of HRM shared services talks direct recruitment and gives five tips on how to get the best candidates to jump to your attention.



If you are battling for talent, with no budget and even less resources in your HR team to manage applications, here are 5 tips to make sure the best candidates read your job ads and ignore those of your competitors.

We live in an instant world. Five minutes after posting a new job online, we begin to receive responses. A far cry from the days of submitting hard copy artwork to newspapers a week ahead of the publishing date and waiting a week for the first CV's to arrive in the post.

But convenience can make us lazy when we prepare recruitment advertisements for posting online.

We also seem to be more inclined to “tell” in our online ads rather than “sell” as the large graphic print ads, used to do quite effectively.

Text, as you will know, is more difficult to read on screen than in print. As a result, we read 25% more slowly on screen. With so much information available online, we are programmed to read-to-reject. We scan, rather than scour for, detail. All of which means, as an online recruitment advertiser, you have between just 10 to 15 seconds to capture the interest of the potential applicant.

Online can be a relatively low cost solution to recruitment. But to really

leverage value, there are two important distinctions to make. Firstly, “Job Seekers” who, depending on their level of anxiety around their employment status, will be discerning about ads they look at or will apply to everything they see. However, the candidate you probably seek is a “Job Browser”. This person is generally comfortable about their current job status and when looking at jobs online, they are simply keeping in touch with their options, only ready to engage if they feel genuinely stimulated by your proposition.

The second distinction to make, is the difference between hard copy and online advertising. Online job boards,

much like search engine results, will often initially show a job summary, from where the “Job Browser” can decide whether or not to read further. This is the most valuable space in your ad, so make sure you don’t waste it. The following five tips will make sure you maximise your online investment and get quality candidates to read and respond to your jobs.

1. Use your job summary to grab the person’s attention. Sell the “personal opportunity” available and don’t make the mistake of using the summary to ask for what you want in a candidate. Tell the reader what they can achieve and how they will be contributing to your organisation. This is about getting the best to apply.

2. Write your ad copy through the eyes of your target audience. High quality candidates are excited by challenges. Your ad is not a job description, write it in a conversational style that seeks to connect with your target. This helps discerning candidates relate to your organisation more easily. Engage potential candidates by outlining what they would get to do in the role. Highlight how is the role key to the organisation’s mission, customers or performance? Explain briefly what they get to do, who they would interact with, what they would learn and what they would get to achieve.

3. Use well known and familiar job titles that applicants can easily relate to. Titles that are unique to your organisation or are generally vague can

mislead the potential applicant. Think about the terms a quality candidate would use themselves when searching.

4. Be concise. Make your points quickly or the “Job Browser” will move on to the next posting. As a general guide, when writing the body of the ad, remember the 6x6 rule. 6 bullet points each with 6 words. Use action verbs, which sell more effectively.

5. Personalise your organisation by putting in the name of the person who is managing the application process. Resist the temptation to hide behind a wall of anonymous technology. Quality candidates have choice. And often, they choose not to send their CV to a generic address backed up by an impersonal, automated recruitment system.

While online advertising has its limitations, it can be effective for certain role types. As with any form of communication that is seeking to influence an outcome, it has to sell and the message has to get to the right targets. It has to convince the “Job Browser” that this change is in their career interests.

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