

HOW (AND WHY) TO WRITE A GREAT IT JOB LISTING



We can all agree that many job listings need a serious overhaul. Maybe a company you like was hiring, but their roles weren't described in any specific way. Maybe a job listing sounded great, but the interview was boring, and the job didn't align with its description. And some job descriptions ask for too many requirements, leaving us too scared to apply.

Why does this happen? Why are job listings so repetitive and unhelpful? Most hiring managers get caught up in minutiae, making sure every single tiny piece of a job gets a shoutout in the description. The result: long, wordy descriptions that make your eyes glaze over. Sure, it might be technically accurate, but is it providing a real visual into the job?

The fix is to make your job listings more personal and visual—candidates want to envision what their work days will be like. In this article, we're going to show how and why writing a great job listing is important, and we'll provide you some tips on making your IT job listing stand out from the crowd.

The goal of an IT job listing

Most of us think that the goal of an IT job listing is to get the absolute best hire on the first go-round, but experts say [that's the wrong approach](#). Instead, a job description should simply get candidates **interested enough** to apply. The job listing doesn't have to find the perfect candidate because that's what the interview is for: a chance for both you, the hiring manager, and a candidate to determine if you're the right fit for each other. Because interviews can be nuanced—sharing the highs and lows of a job, getting a vibe for the candidate's ability and attitude—the job listing does not need to be ultra-

specific.

The job listing is simply one opportunity of many for a candidate to meet your company. They've come across your company **before** the job listing, browsing your website, checking your social media, and if they come in for an interview, the candidate is meeting your company **after** the job listing.

Ultimately, the goal of a job listing is to:

- Provide the candidate a sense of the job (Reader's digest, not the unabridged version)
- Sell the open position to a diverse field of candidates
- Promote your company

Benefits of a great job listing

If you're wondering why you need a great job listing, here's the truth: you need to stand out from the crowd. Job seekers spend [less than 1 minute](#) on a company's job listing before deciding whether to skip or apply. And they're looking at dozens of jobs at once—so you have a lot of competition.

A great IT job listing has additional benefits. The best job listings work for you and your company by:

- **[Saving you time.](#)** It gets easier to write job descriptions, and the better those descriptions are, the more efficient and effective they'll be.
- **Attracting people that are the right fit.** This reduces the company's turnover rate.
- **Diversifying your applicant pool.** This diversifies your workplace and makes you strong for it.
- **Filling the position quickly.** This keeps work rolling and rolling in.

Best practices for writing an IT job description

Create a top IT job description with these best practices:

- **Analyze the job.** Before writing any descriptions, look at how your competitors [talk about related roles](#). Whether it's a new or existing job, talk to teammates about what skills an ideal hire would bring: a missing coding language, [DevOps experience](#), success on a similar project. These articles on common IT roles can help you get started:
 - [What is a Technical Support Engineer?](#)
 - [Data Engineer vs Data Scientist](#)
 - [IT Management](#)
 - [IT Director Role and Responsibilities](#)
 - [CIO vs CTO](#)
- **Use a template.** Job listings from your company look and feel the same, but they don't need the same feel as every other company. A strong template should define:
 - The opportunity. This is a quick, macro-level view that describes the team's mission, how it relates to the company's overall business, and why it's a great time to join the team (business growth, career development, etc.)
 - The job. Describe the role using your 30-second elevator pitch, including the new hire's tasks and expected outcomes.
 - The necessary skills. Experience, degrees or certifications, and portfolios. In IT, hands-on experience is often more important than an academic degree.
- **Talk with your company's voice.** Check out your marketing department's style guide and ask

for any recent or unique in-house job descriptions.

- **Mind your words.** Action words, like building, editing, collaborating with, creating, coding, etc., helps paint the picture better than stiff, passive language like “you’ll be responsible for” and “overseeing”.
- **Break up long text with bullets.** Most candidates are scanning for content, not reading word for word, so you don’t need a super formal, paragraph format.
- **Include company culture.** Company culture is often the [#2 decider behind compensation](#) and traditional benefits, so quickly mention extras that can attract an ideal candidate: local transit options, flexible schedules, on-site workout room, happy hours, remote work options, lunchtime running club, etc.
- **Be mobile.** Many job seekers are looking at job listings on their phones and devices, even if they ultimately use desktops to apply.
- **Keep it simple and clear.** If it feels too wonky or unclear, it is. Edit.

What to avoid when writing a job listing

Just as there are plenty of “do’s”, there are common job listing mistakes.

- **Don’t use a vague job title.** Well-known companies like Apple can get away with so-called Technology Evangelists, but most companies need to appear in job search engines, so make sure your job title actually describes the work.
- **Don’t use gendered language.** Gender-neutral job listings get [42% more responses](#) in the same amount of time. IT is particularly masculine-skewing, so you can promote minority and female hires by [substituting certain words](#).
- **Don’t list every single task.** Laying out 10 “areas of responsibility” is overwhelming. Instead, think of the top 3-4 tasks/responsibilities of the role.
- **Don’t list your maximum requirements.** You need to include requirements, like degrees or experience, but too many requirements will deter candidates who have 4 out of 5 of your “requirements”. For IT roles, experience can be more valuable than education, so ask for experience or portfolios instead.
- **Don’t oversell.** Overselling a role to get someone you like is risky: that person might figure it out on the interview or they may onboard, train, and start the task—and leave not long after they realize the job wasn’t how you described it.

With this information, you’re all set to revamp your IT job listings and turn them into great descriptions and promoters of your company.

Additional resources

[Elements of a Successful Job Listing](#) from [Mediabistro](#)