

How to Write Job Ads

Do you sometimes get so many replies to a job ad that you dread the task of reading them all?

And when you finally get the pile of CVs down to a manageable level, do you sometimes find there are *very few applicants worth considering?*

There is a better way to do this.

But if you answered “yes” to either of the first two questions at the beginning of this article, you are probably getting *too many non-performers answering your ads.*

In an ideal world, you would receive *fewer* replies, but with a *higher percentage of decent candidates.* How much easier *that* would be!

The Traditional Approach

Look at how recruitment ads are normally put together.

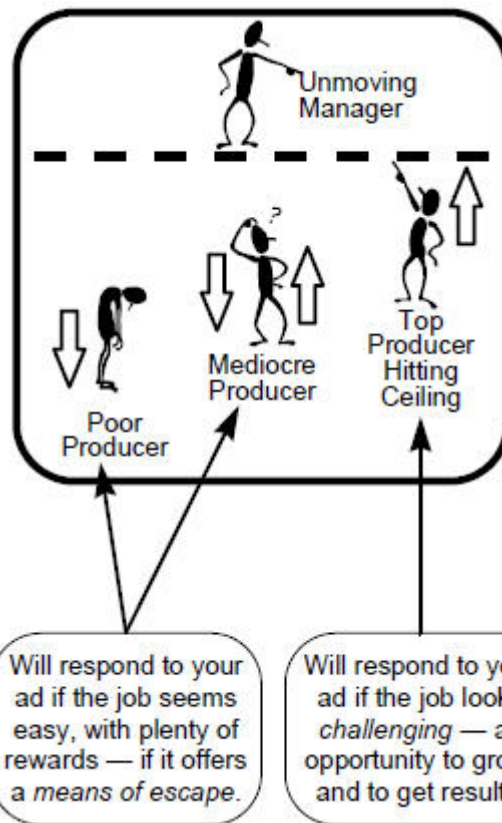
- They promise a job with status, good compensation and additional benefits.
- They sometimes point out how conveniently the office is located.
- They often describe the assignments as being “interesting”, “fun”, or even “easy”.

The main point here is that the picture the applicant usually gets is of how “nice”, “easy” and “pleasant” this position is, and how well they will be compensated.

The ad might also say things like: “we really need a highly motivated person with drive”. But this vital point is often lost in the main message, which is still an effort to *sell the position* in order to attract the best possible applicants.

Who Will Answer Your Ad?

You want to employ a top performer in this new position. And, presumably, you want more than one or two applicants to choose from.



Let us be over-simple here, to make a point:-

Q. What is a *non-performer* looking for?

A. Less work, more money, and an easy life!

Q. What is a *top performer* looking for? Why will *they* respond to your job ad?

A. More challenge, a bigger game, more responsibility!

Q. Will a top performer shy away from a job which looks easier and less challenging than their current assignment?

A. YES!

Q. Will a non-performer shy away from a job that seems too much like hard work?

A. YES!!

Let’s face it. Most jobs are not “nice”, or “interesting” or even “easy”. In truth, most positions require an employee to *work hard* to be successful. There are usually many situations that require continual attention, and sometimes they are not at all “easy”, or even pleasant, to deal with.

Most managers, however, when they compose a job ad, feel that if they told the truth, they would get *very few applicants responding.* U-MAN has proven (time and time again), that **this is a false assumption.**

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Performers Want....

Good performers *are* good performers because they *like* the truth. Not only that, they are seeking — more than anything else — **a real challenge**. They are not at all interested in an “easy” job, no matter how well paid it is, or how many perks there are.

Another thing you should know about top performers is that they are usually *already working*. They are rarely unemployed, sitting around waiting for “the right opportunity” to come along. If they ever leave a job, they will normally receive numerous offers from others in their industry who know how valuable they are.

Top performers are more effective in handling their lives. If they *are* looking for work, they want to get that new assignment *fast*. They prefer to be working.

When a productive person looks for a new job, it is *rarely* because he or she wants more money. No — it is more likely that they are seeking a **bigger challenge**. *That* is what will draw these peoples’ attention in your ad.

They may be doing fine in their present job, but they may be bored. Alternately, they may have concluded they have hit some sort of ceiling. They know there is nowhere else for them to go in their current position, and *they want to move on*.

Non-Performers?

They are either out of work, or they are in a job they are not handling very well. Consequently, they are not comfortable in what they are doing.

They may also be under a great deal of pressure to get results — which they are *not capable of producing*.

What is a *non-performer* looking for?

- They want a job that does not require too much work, strain or effort. They want it “easy”.

- They would love to have a job which pays lots of money.
- And they are often looking for a job with “status”.



So, what happens if you place an ad that *really* promotes what the person would *receive*, without mentioning what it really takes to get that job done? The result is that you will actually *lure* the non-performers. They think your job may be just what they are looking for — an easy, no hassle life!

On top of that, such an ad will cause fewer *high* performers to respond. They will not see enough **interest** or **challenge**.

The Job Ad Liability

The main liability in “selling” a job position with too much sweet “PR” (or attention on money), is that you will get *too many applicants* sending in their CVs. This gives you the following headaches:

- A lot of paperwork for you to handle.
- Not enough *real performers* applying, as they respond better to more challenging ads.
- The hard task of finding the best performers amongst that *huge pile* of responses.

The Challenging Ad

You want to hire that fire breathing executive who really *can* get people in your organisation to perform.

Or you want that “mythical” secretary who will anticipate your needs and make it easier for *you* to get on with the real actions of an executive.

Or, perhaps you want that elusive sales person who can get the sales figures up sky high, and keep them there on a sustained basis.

OK, then you have to attract a top performer, and the *challenging* style of ad will achieve that.

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A challenging ad has the following attributes:

- It is directed towards a person who wants to work hard.
- It states what the main purpose of the job is, and what the expected results should be.
- It focuses on responsibilities.
- It does not *avoid* pointing out what barriers there may be.
- It does not make a big issue of the money or compensation.
- The content of the ad is truthful.
- It asks for a written production record, including figures.
- It **challenges!** For example, it could point out the fact that not many people can do this job in the way you want it performed.

The benefits of this kind of ad are:

- 1 The *right* applicants will be more interested.
- 2 Non-performers will shy away.
- 3 It gives a better image to your present and future *customers* (yes, they do read your job ads).
- 4 The applicant does not pick up any wrong expectations about the position. You may later lose good people if that happens.
- 5 There is less work for you.

This is the underlying theory on writing successful recruitment ads.

The basic concept is — **make the ad challenging**. Only in this way will you attract the right calibre of applicant — **the top performer!**

How to Write a Challenging Ad

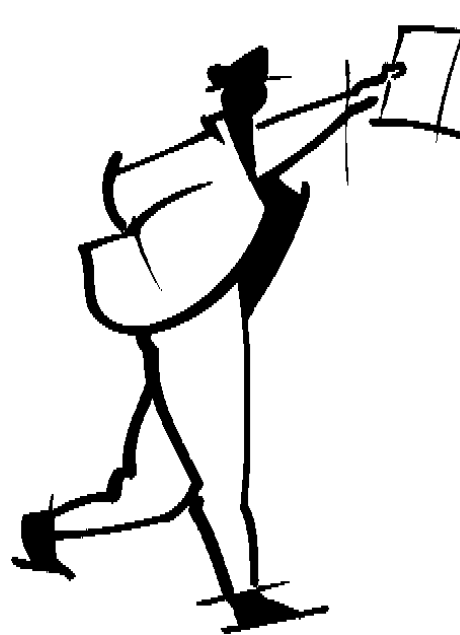
If not already done, work out the job description. This will crystallise your thoughts so you can focus on the important aspects of the position.

Do not make the ad too restrictive. Some special skills can be omitted, as you can use these things to shorten your list during the selection process. This does not apply, of course, to a highly technical job where specific skills are vital.

The following writing rules will help sharpen the focus and power of your ad:-

- Keep all sentences short. People usually scan ads quickly. Long sentences get skipped.
- Avoid words of more than two syllables where possible (for the same reason).
- Ask questions that make people stop and respond — at least to themselves.
- Be “you” oriented, and be personal and direct in your style.

Do not try to “sell” the job too much. Present it much more as a challenge than an “asset”.



Ineffective people are first and foremost looking for a *safe* job with a *safe* salary. You do *not* want these people. The productive applicant is looking for a challenge! Sell this, rather than the job! If anything, **undersell the job**, rather than overselling it.

Write strongly about how *challenging* it is for the right person. Do not be afraid to stress this point too hard. But also write about the potential the job has for future promotion, and/or technical development, etc.

Encourage the applicants to call you. State it directly in the wording of the ad itself. This way they know they can get fast answers over the phone to clarify the details of the position.