

Dover

How to Write Great Job Descriptions

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Job descriptions are the most important aspect of hiring

Table of Contents

- 2 Why job descriptions are the most important aspect of hiring
- 3 What to include
- 4 10 tips to take your job descriptions from good to great
- 8 3 stellar examples from top startups

Picture this: your next great hire is **Googling** “companies hiring [insert role here]” right now. They’re sifting through dozens of job descriptions.

You didn’t spend much time on yours (let’s be honest — you copied and pasted from another ad that looked decent enough). **Your dream candidate** skims through but doesn’t feel excited or inspired by your company or the role. They exit out of your ad and are gone forever.

According to an Indeed survey of over 2,000 job seekers, **more than half** say that the quality of a job description is “very or extremely influential” on their decision to submit an application. And with only **6 seconds** to capture a candidate’s attention, your writing will need to be more effective than ever.

A great job ad won’t just attract qualified candidates – it’ll also ensure they are the right people for your team. With more qualified applicants, you’ll have fewer resumes to sift through, resulting in lower time-to-hire and cost-per-hire, two metrics that your talent team or CFO care most about.



Next - what should you include?



First - what should I include?

The best job descriptions combine a short mission statement about your company, the projects the new hire will work on or day-to-day aspects of the role, necessary skills and competencies, and the organization's culture.

Before we dive into best practices, let's cover the basic questions that every job description needs to answer.

When a candidate finishes reading, they should know:

1. How does this role contribute to making people's lives better, or solve existing business or social problems?
2. Who will they be working with most often?
3. What will the first six months at the company look like? The first year?
4. What are the core responsibilities, and day-to-day activities?
5. How do they fit into the organization?
6. What benefits do you offer?
7. What is the salary range? (more on that below)
8. What problem is your company solving and why?
9. What is your statement on diversity, equity and inclusion?

10 tips to make your job description go from good to great



01.

Don't make it about you. It's not that candidates don't care about your company, culture, or mission — it's just that they can get that info elsewhere. When [LinkedIn](#) showed 450 members an example of a job description and asked them to highlight parts they found helpful and appealing, information about the company was listed last — with mission and culture close behind. Instead, focus more on the specifics of the role, and the kind of impact it could have on the company at large.

02.

Don't shy away from listing compensation. In the same LinkedIn survey, 61% of candidates stated that **salary ranges were the most important aspect of a job description**. While the inclusion of ranges is a personal decision now, many states are beginning to [require them in listings](#).

03.

Keep it short. A job post should be short enough to capture the reader's attention, but long enough to leave them with enough information to apply.

So, what is the sweet spot? The range seems to be somewhere between **300 and 660 words**. On LinkedIn, shorter job posts had significantly [higher-than-average apply rates](#) per view (the number of applications the job post got divided by the number of views). This lines up with the fact that most candidates are viewing job postings on mobile devices, so you have less space to convince them to apply.

Pro tip: Sentence length also plays a factor. Data from [Textio](#), an augmented writing app pulling insights from over 500 million job postings, say the best performers have an average of 13 to 18 words per sentence. For context, this line you're reading is right in the middle of the range.


61%
of job seekers say
compensation is the most
important part of a job
description



04.

Stick to 5 to 7 bullet points. Bullets make job postings concise, mobile-friendly, and easy to skim — but too much of a good thing can also be a problem. According to the National Center for Women in Tech, long lists are difficult to absorb and the minute details tend to mean very little until one is actually in the job. **The ads with the most overall number of applicants make bulleted content less than a quarter of the total post.**

Pro tip: Group 2 to 3 bullets under larger categories of responsibilities (e.g., Technical skills; Management skills; Communication, Presentation, or Relational skills).

05.

Articulate measurable performance goals.

LinkedIn found that **candidates find it extremely helpful to see specific metrics they should hit after one year on the job.** They can assess their past experience against that metric, and it displays thoughtfulness about the role's value and contributions to the team.

06.

Include a DEI statement. Candidates from all demographic groups are significantly less likely to apply to jobs that are missing an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) statement. So strong, in fact, that **job posts with an equal opportunity statement fill 10% more quickly on average.**

07.

Be careful with job title. While using snappy titles might get you points for creativity, it can be detrimental to your hiring goals since **36% of job seekers search by job title.** Use keyword search volume tools (here's a free one) to determine which title will maximize the number of qualified candidates who click on your post. Why is that important? Let's take office assistants and administrative assistants, for example. They have virtually the same responsibilities, but 3,500 people search for the term "office assistant" each month, while 60,000 people search for "administrative assistant". It can also teach you that "Ninja office assistant guru" will get you zero searches. Which would you rather choose?



did you know?

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average



08.

Write directly to the candidate. Listings that use a third-person point of view (e.g., “the ideal candidate”) tend to feel more formal and have been shown to **increase time-to-hire**. Switch up your pronouns to be more personal: “You will collaborate with our Marketing team” addresses candidates directly and helps them visualize working with you.

09.

Use growth-mindset language. Growth-mindset language emphasizes the potential to develop one’s abilities and talents — to learn on the job, so to speak. **Jobs for which women were ultimately hired were twice as likely to contain this type of language.** By contrast, fixed-mindset language stresses skills that are perceived as unchanging or inherent characteristics (think “expert” or “natural talent”). Job descriptions with at least one growth-mindset phrase fill an average of **eight days faster** than one without any such terms. **Include two or more growth-mindset phrases, and the job fills an average of eleven days faster.**

Growth vs. Fixed Mindset Phrases

FIXED	
• "best and brightest"	• "highly intelligent"
• "super smart"	• "top-tier"
• "high performer"	• "effortlessly"
• "natural ability"	
GROWTH	
• "highly determined"	• "forward thinker"
• "commitment to improvement"	• "persevere"
• "highly motivated"	• "strive"
• "love learning"	



10.

Check for gender bias. It’s important to be aware of how certain words in a job description can reflect your culture and imply there is an “ideal” type of candidate. Here are two questions to ask yourself as you scan your post:

1. Are all of my requirements really required?
Research shows that even when highly qualified, **women are less likely than men to apply for a job if they do not have ALL of the required qualifications.** Many job descriptions also include a disclaimer that states candidates don’t have to check every box to apply.

2. Do I use an equal amount of masculine and feminine-coded adjectives? Gender language bias in your job posting can discourage certain gender identifications from applying. The graphic to the right illustrates common adjectives and how they code. To be clear, it’s not you should never use words like “manage,” “resolves,” or “analyzes,” but the overuse of these words, especially when referring to interactions with people, can depersonalize your ad and imply a bias toward a specific gender identity. Once you’ve made your revisions, run your post through a [Gender Decoder](#) to double-check for any potential issues or oversights.

Gender-coded Adjectives

MASCULINE

- Dominant
- Competition
- Boasting
- Superior
- Determined
- Decisive
- Lead
- Independently
- Challenging
- Competitive

FEMININE

- Committed
- Loyal
- Connected
- Responsible
- Collaborative
- Supportive
- Dependable
- Trust
- Interpersonal
- Considerate

Excellent example #1



OnDeck — Chief of Staff

Our grade: B+

What it does well:

- **Discusses the reality of the role in specifics:** They detail day-to-day tasks as well as overall scope.
- **Growth-mindset phrases:** Examples include “this is not a 2 year tenured job”, “career-defining role”, “launch and scale big deas”, “learn something new to level-up your career.”
- **Includes a section on why OnDeck might not be a good fit:** A creative way to weed out bad culture fits before they even apply.

Where it could improve:

- **Heavy with masucline-coding:** While they do a great job of speaking to the “you,” and defining the role as right for the “right person,” the language skews as masculine-coded with words like “lead”, “incubate”, “drive”, and “liasion.”
- **Too repetitive:** Certain bullets and sections repeat what has already been stated.

Role Overview

We're looking for a Chief of Staff to work with our Founder & Chairman, Erik Torenberg. In this role, you'll work closely with Erik to help lead strategic initiatives across the company, incubate new projects, and be a liaison across the broader On Deck team and community.

On any given day, you might find yourself launching new fellowship programs, taking them from 0 to 1, consulting on various projects throughout the company, joining (and sometimes leading) meetings with the CEO and other C-Level executives, expanding our marketing and outreach efforts, and much much more.

This will be a senior role within the company, and a career-defining role for the right person.

Why you might *not* be excited:

- We are still a fairly young company with a couple hundred people, so if you like more established companies, this role isn't for you. You'll help create our company's culture.
- We're an early stage startup. Projects and priorities are likely to shift.
- Everyone on the team is extremely mission-driven, and works incredibly hard to push towards our lofty ambitions. Most people won't be cut out for it.
- You should be comfortable with just a dash of chaos. This is not the kind of job where you show up and we tell you exactly what to do every day.
- On Deck is an unabashedly pro-startup, pro-tech organization. If that's not your thing, this isn't the place for you.

Excellent example #2



Pearmill — Growth Manager

Our grade: A

What it does well:

- **Clear mission statement:** A two-sentence statement on what Pearmill does in simple, jargonless language.
- **Discusses the reality of the role in specifics:** This includes day-to-day tasks, and what teams they'll collaborate with most frequently.
- **Length:** At 550 words, this job post is smack dab in the middle of the ideal length (even including their DEI statement!)
- **Gender-neutral coding:** A good balance of masculine and feminine-coded adjectives like "trusting", "champion", "responsible", "leading".

Where it could improve:

- **More specificity when detailing requirements:** "Implement strategy" make sense in theory, but why is it important to the company? Which channels should they be proficient in? What is the size of the budget?

Pearmill was founded in 2018 as an agency structured to excel at digital performance marketing. Our goal is to shift advertising towards a more trustworthy industry by producing beautiful, honest, and high-performing ads, while creating a healthier and more transparent environment for our people.

About the role

The Growth Manager role will report directly to our CEO, Karim El Rabiey. You will be responsible for the success of accounts on performance marketing channels, leading strategy, and be the key point of contact for clients. On a day-to-day basis, you can expect to work with the team to build account strategies, run experiments on paid social and search channels, and ultimately ensure Pearmill is running a high quality growth process that delivers success to our clients.

We're a small, growing team. Your responsibilities will grow and change with the company and you'll have an enormous impact on the business.

What you'll do as a Growth Manager:

- Work with the Paid Social & Search teams to implement strategy
- Be the champion of the experimentation process to drive account learnings
- Identify key opportunities for growth as well as potential blockers
- Be the key point of contact with clients, building strong and trusting relationships
- Build the vision for what Growth Management at Pearmill looks like directly with the founders
- Align the team on messaging and goals for weekly client meetings
- Have an ongoing awareness of the dynamics of performance marketing and provide insight on how to leverage it

Excellent example #3



Cardless — Backend Engineer

Our grade: A+

What it does well:

- **Distinct paragraph about gender-coding:** This also doubles as a DEI statement. While you should double-check for gender-coding before posting your ad, being direct is a great way to cover your bases.
- **Next steps:** A section detailing every part of their interview process offers transparency for candidates.

Where it could improve:

- **Length:** It's a bit long - at 1,100 words, your candidates probably won't read all the way through. Our suggestions for edits would be to cut down on the role summary - their bullets do a great job of explaining that already!

The requirements

Research has shown that women & underrepresented minorities read lists of requirements and consider themselves unqualified if they don't meet every single one. This list represents what we're ideally looking for, but we encourage you to apply even if you don't meet everything 100%. Everyone has unique strengths & weaknesses, and we hire for strength & potential, not lack of weakness.

Next steps

If you think we might be a good fit for each other, we encourage you to apply! You have nothing to lose, and we'll get back to you within a week.

If we move forward, here's our typical process if all goes well:

1. A 30-minute video call with a recruiter to understand your high-level background and cover logistics & expectations.
2. A 30-minute video call with an engineering manager to dig more into your background & values.
3. A one-hour live coding exercise with an engineer (over Zoom & CoderPad) on a data structures & algorithms problem. We don't do fancy or tricky algorithms; this problem is intended to be real-world.
4. A "virtual on-site" final round! A typical interview panel covers system design/architecture, cross-functional collaboration, and values alignment — no whiteboard coding.

Want help writing great job descriptions?

Dover can automate all aspects of your recruiting process: from sourcing to outreach, to scheduling, and yes, even in writing job descriptions.

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to learn more.

“

“Working with Dover has meant we get support on all fronts, and from every angle of recruiting including sourcing, optimal channel usage, and interview best practices.”



Sofi Pechner
Head of People Operations
Mozart Data

Helping some of the
world's best startups
recruit top talent

stripe



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INSTABASE

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