TITLE BASICS

SESSION 2: JOB DESCRIPTION SELF-PACE SERIES

SESSION 2: TITLE BASICS

TITLES: CLICK BAIT OF TALENT AQUISITION

Before candidates decide if they are going to click apply, before they grow excited reading the job description, before their interest is sparked with that fantastic opening paragraph, they first glance at the job title.

The job title is what draws candidates in. It's what makes the job stand out among the crowd as something worth investigating or not. It's what's used to determine if the candidate ever sees or receives the job from a job board, recruiter, candidate management system, etc.

It all starts with the title.

Get the title wrong and the chain of events never has an opportunity to begin. And if that weren't enough, bad titles won't just limit the overall number of candidates that click, they can also limit who clicks.

That's a lot of pressure for so few words. Therefore, it's worth the effort to get those words right.

Effective, inclusive job **TITLES** (and descriptions) are:

1) **CLEAR**: the 'what' and 'why' of the job – it's function and responsibilities.

2) **COMPELLING**: who would want the job and why.

3) **CONSISTENT**: alignment to the industry, the organization, and stated purpose and nature of the job.

4) **ACCURATE**: the realistic expectations of the nature of the job.

5) **INCLUSIVE**: Ability for all viable candidates (i.e. those who would qualify) to find the job or be found.

CLEAR TITLES

Job titles must **clearly** and **concisely** convey the job and its responsibilities. There should be no ambiguity with what the job entails and how it fits within the organization.

This means:

1) **Use common language**. Use titles that will be widely recognized and leave the fancy organization or industry-specific titles for email signature lines.

2) **Include detail**. When appropriate, add a few words to describe the job such as the focus or region.

   For example:

   - *"Software Engineer for Mobile Applications"*

   - *"Business Development Partner managing Northeast Retail Sales Partners."*

   - *"Marketing Manager, Social Media and Online Ad Campaigns."*

COMPELLING TITLES

Job titles should excite qualified candidates, compelling them to not just apply, but to strive to be selected for the position.

To do this, job titles must resonate and preferably stand out for viable candidates who would likely thrive in the position. Think of titles as honest 'click-bait' where the right candidates can't help but click to learn more. This can be a combination of rank, purpose, focus, etc.

Keep in mind, while you want compelling titles, it is not at the expense of clarity.

For example:

DON'T*: use generic non-descriptive language.*
"Sales Manager."

DO*: use specific, informative language that makes it stand out.*
"Sales Executive managing large retail as part of the foodNEXT launch team."

CONSISTENT TITLES

Title Consistency is critical for avoiding confusion and conveying a sense of genuineness.

Consistency includes:

1) **Consistency of expectation of industry.** Inconsistencies with the nomenclature of the industry will feel out of place and could end up being impossible to find as candidates and matching algorithms fail to correlate the title with the role.

   For example, consider a role called 'coordinator' where the rest of the industry calls it 'product manager' or 'director of product'. What is the likelihood a product director will look for a 'coordinator' job?

2) **Consistency of role.** Rank and discipline must match the description. Engineers design, managers manage, sales sells. This sounds obvious because it is. Breaking these obvious rules will lead to confusion and could attract the wrong talent which wastes everyone's time.

   For example, consider a high-ranking title for a single-contributor role without power or budget such as 'Director of Diversity and Inclusion" with no direct reports, no budget, and no clear area of authority.

> **TIP**
> **Match the keywords**
>
> Whether it's a potential candidate searching through a job board, or the job algorithm recommending jobs of interest, or the recruiter searching a database, keywords hold a lot of weight.
>
> Identify the terms candidates and recruiters are using and match them – at least with one of the titles.

ACCURATE TITLES

Have you ever clicked on 'click-bait' just to have the 'bait and switch'? The content is nothing like the headline, or it's so diluted with an ulterior motive (such as an ad pretending to be an article), you end up closing the window in disgust?

Don't do that to your candidates.

CREATE INCLUSIVE TITLES & DESCRIPTIONS

Job titles (and descriptions) exist for a single purpose – to enable hiring. Attracting the best, most perfect talent has no value if the organization can't hire or retain that talent. Therefore, job titles (and descriptions) are only useful It if they convey accurate depictions of the roles. Otherwise, the clicks will, at best, become a disappointed abandon as the candidate realizes the title was misleading, and at worst will leave the candidate bitter and tarnish the organization brand.

For example, a title of "Director of Sales" leading to a description of a lead generation specialist responsible for dialing through lead lists and passing prospects to the sales team.

INCLUSIVE TITLES

Job **TITLES** must attract and resonate with all qualified candidates, independent of demographics, background, or other differences. All qualified candidates should have the sense that they are welcome and encouraged to apply for the job.

There are two big notes for inclusion to keep in mind:

1) **It's all about QUALIFIED candidates**. Inclusion does not include resonating with candidates who are not qualified or won't thrive. Accuracy and required capabilities should never be sacrificed in the name of "inclusion". The only thing sacrificing qualifications does is set everyone – candidates, new hires, and the organization – up for failure.

> **TIP**
>
> Need some tips for creating inclusive titles? We have you covered.
>
> Check out these tips for inclusive job titles.

2) **Inclusion is in PERCEPTION not just intent**. When drafting inclusive job titles, what matters is how candidates perceive the titles, not just the intention of the words. Even if the intentions are nothing but good, when evaluating for inclusion, evaluate the content through the eyes of the candidates.