

Create Inspiring Job Announcements:

Why Stories Trump Statistics

By Laura Renton

Times have changed. To encourage a passive job candidate to apply for a position in your organization, you need an inspiring job announcement - one that stirs emotion, piques curiosity, prompts wonder, and triggers surprise. Here are five principles for creating inspiring job announcements:

1) Arouse Emotion

It doesn't matter how sophisticated science gets - stories will always trump statistics. That's because stories arouse emotion. We crave stories of virtue, triumph, connection, and compassion. Here is a great example. Read the following lead statements from this example job announcement and see if the images and emotions stir up in you:

Powerful Voices: A Place to Dream and Succeed

In every corner of Canada, there is will and wonder in young girls. A 12-year-old daughter asks why we go to war. A niece in the eighth grade dreams of becoming a pediatrician. A girl down the street wants to end domestic violence. Girls are dauntless in their intentions to change the world and are steadfast in their hopes to succeed. With powerful voices, they can.

2) Stress Strengths

Everyone wants to work for a winner. We like organizations that had a great year, change with the times, and are solid. Ferret out the strengths of your company and incorporate them into your announcements. Does your organization's culture encourage deep discussions like those found in college courses? Are afternoon meetings as lively as a party? Is your company a stable ship that can navigate rough waters when the market sways? Here is a sample statement from a job announcement that conveys strength:

Caring Organizational Culture. Staff members are drawn to Cancer Lifeline because of their commitment to the mission; they stay because of the organization's commitment to them. The organization's executive director has served the agency for 22 years; its associate program director has been there for 20 years; and several others have stayed for more than a decade.

3) Emphasize Opportunity

No matter what the color of our collar, we all seek similar qualities in our work. We want to make a decent living, to create and achieve something, to earn respect, and to contribute. Most of us also want to learn from our work and to make friends. The qualities a job offers are its selling points. Before mentioning duties or qualifications, weave in your job's selling points, such as:

Lead Us into the Future. The executive director of Social Justice Fund is an excellent opportunity for a leader with an unyielding commitment to social justice and human rights. The organization has all of the necessary ingredients for growth and success: a

timely mission, a 30-year track record, a large pool of individual donors, an excellent reputation, a committed staff, and an active board.

4) Be Optimistic

Every organization has warts, but warts only attract toads. To attract great candidates, sound an optimistic tone. A dip in sales is an opportunity to innovate. A discovery of bad side effects can be a chance to learn and improve. An inaccurate public statement can fuel a new policy to get the facts right.

5) Keep it Short

While the trend in recruiting is to post full announcements with lengthy lists of qualifications and responsibilities, nothing can make a passive candidate click away faster than an announcement that drones on like an absent-minded professor. Make job announcements 2-3 pages. If you feel the need to include a complete list of duties or required skills and experience, consider a second pop-up box linked into the job announcement.

To sum up, there's no substitute for a strong attraction when hiring. And, while current employees can court candidates during interviews, an inspiring job announcement makes great candidates say "yes" to the first date.

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