Job advert analysis

Job ad overview

The purpose of a job ad is to attract candidates to apply for job opportunities. In recent years, employers have posted more and more job ads to online job boards; a move away from more expensive newspaper advertising. Despite moving online, job ads have not changed much. Most ads are still generic and do not provide a clear picture of exactly what the company is looking for. Job ads are also a leading indicator of labour market conditions used by economists to gauge changes in labour demand, which in turn signals changes in economic activity.

Look for clues
Be on the lookout for these important clues when reading and analysing a job ad:

Job title
⬚ A job ad title is indicative only and may not reflect the true title. Some titles may be quite confusing due to company specific terminology. Make sure that you understand the difference between an Assistant Editor and an Editorial Assistant. For one job you need to be a qualified journalist, the other you can get by with secondary education.

Headings
⬚ Good ads have sub-headings and summary teasers which help to attract applicants. They also help to describe the purpose of the role.

Industry
⬚ Ads are brief. Often it is not clear what type of business or industry the role is in. Ensure the role fits your target industries; otherwise you'll be wasting your time.

Level
⬚ Look carefully for clues about the level of responsibility. A role as head of marketing at a small company is not the same as marketing manager with a well-known brand. Seek to understand the challenges of the role and match these to your achievements when preparing your application.

Essential and desirable criteria
⬚ Look for filters used to eliminate applicants. Good job ads will specify both 'desirable' and 'essential' requirements. Ensure that your CV addresses all the 'essential' competencies and requirements sought.

⬚ In your cover letter, explain how you meet the 'desirable' requirements and maximise your chances of joining the 'to interview' group!

Keywords
⬚ Identify key words in the job ad and structure your cover letter around them. You can use these key words as a basis for your discussions about the role with the recruiter or employer.