

Totaljobs

The ultimate hiring toolkit: From job ad to onboarding in 5 steps



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Introduction

For a successful business, you first need a successful team – and that starts by making the right hires.

When you bring the right people on board, they bring ideas, vision, experience, and expertise with them – fuelling a business from the inside out. Plus, they can quite simply make work a whole lot more enjoyable.

But finding the right people to hire can be challenging, particularly in a candidate-led market.

With vacancies across the UK surpassing pre-pandemic levels, and competition for new hires heating up, advertising your jobs in the right way has never been more essential.

That's why we've pulled together this toolkit.

Whether you're new to recruitment, or just want to ensure you're giving your job ads the best chance in the market, our guide covers the essentials for hiring right now – from job ad creation through to onboarding.

This means you can feel confident knowing that your job ads – and your hiring process – are doing the hard work to find and land the right hire, and you can focus on your other business priorities.

Step 1

How to write a winning job ad

With increased vacancies and hirers in the market, ensuring your job gets seen by the right people requires a bit more consideration.

That's where your job ad, and how you write it, is key.

A clear, specific and convincing job ad, you'll not only attract candidates with the relevant skills and experience for your business, but you'll get better candidate recommendations from Totaljobs technology too.

Follow our job ad checklist, and apply our expert tips, to write an ad that grabs the attention of the talent you're after and encourages them to click 'apply'.

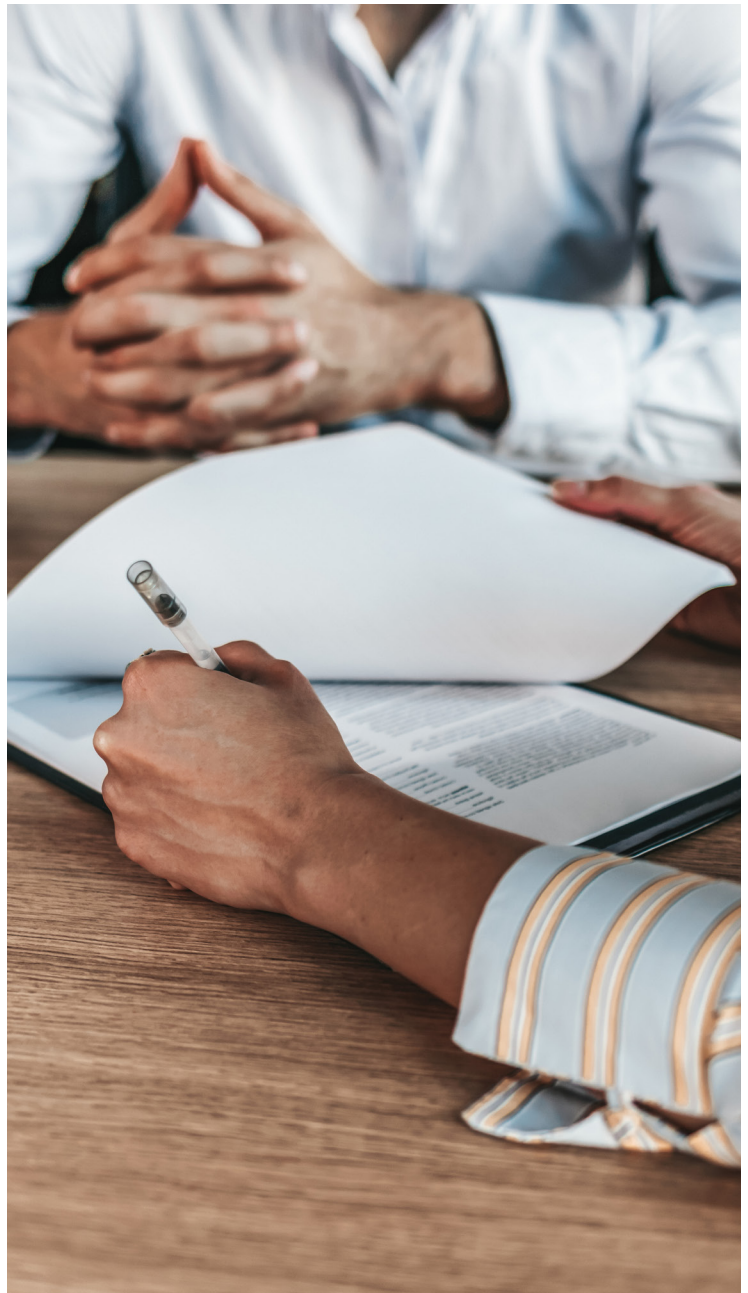
Your job ad checklist

Job title

- ✓ Select a clear job title that jobseekers can easily identify in searches.
- ✓ Avoid abbreviations, jargon, quirky titles or unnecessary information.
- ✓ Don't mix job titles or job levels. e.g. 'Junior/Senior Software Developer/Engineer'.

Job description

- ✓ Explain the skills and experience you expect the successful applicant to have. Include the soft skills you need and the training on offer, in order to attract applicants from other industries.
- ✓ List the role the successful applicant would play in your business overall.
- ✓ Try a bullet-pointed list of 'must haves' and 'nice to haves'. E.g. they must have a Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) licence, but you'd like them to have 5+ years' experience driving.



A bit about your business

- ✓ Explain what your business is all about and what it's like to work as part of the team. This is your chance to sell yourself to the best candidates.
- ✓ List any key business values – particularly around sustainability and diversity, equity and inclusion. Jobseekers are more likely to apply for companies that align with their values in these areas.
- ✓ Use real photographs of your business and staff, instead of stock imagery, where possible, as it looks more authentic.



Job type

- ✓ Clarify whether it is a permanent, temporary, contract or part-time job.
- ✓ Include if hours are flexible. 2 in 3 jobseekers want more flexibility around when they work.

Salary

- ✓ Try to be as specific as possible, ideally listing the exact salary you are offering.
- ✓ State whether this is an annual, daily or hourly wage.
- ✓ Unsure what to offer? Check similar roles on our site with the [salary calculator](#).

Job location

- ✓ Tell people where you'll expect them to do their job – whether that's in a workplace, working remotely, or a mix of the two. Remember 9 in 10 people expect some level of flexibility in this area.
- ✓ Flag if you're willing to accept CVs from those outside the local area or the UK.

5 trade secrets for a winning job ad

1. Choose a recommended title. At Totaljobs, this ensures your ad appears in related searches, notifications, alerts and recommendations – maximising your reach.
2. Include a full postcode. This increases applications by up to **50%**.
3. List business perks. Our research shows candidates are more likely to apply for jobs where benefits are listed, as it makes the job more appealing.
4. Be exact with your salary. This increases applications by up to **20%**.
5. Use the Totaljobs [Gender Bias Decoder](#) to make your ad more inclusive by flagging words which could hold unconscious gender bias.

Ready to roll?

Kickstart your hiring on Totaljobs. Get started [here](#).

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Step 2

Select the right people to interview

So, you've posted your job ad and started receiving applications – now it's time to choose the people best suited to interview.

37% of employers say this step is one of the biggest challenges in the whole recruitment process. That's why at Totaljobs we've created a Candidate Recommender and relevancy indicators, to quickly highlight candidates who stand out, and best match job requirements.

Plus, if you created a clear job description in Step 1, you already have a head start when it comes to assessing who has the most relevant experience and skills for your vacancy.

Here are four things to look out for when choosing who to shortlist for an interview.

4 things to look out for in a candidate's CV

1 Must-haves

You've written your job description, and have a view of your ideal candidate, but be sure to take the time to outline the skills, competencies or qualifications that you simply cannot do without and keep these at hand when perusing CVs.

Top tip:

On Totaljobs you can filter by 'Top match' and 'Best match' which highlights the applications that we believe are the best suited to the advertised job.





2 Transferable skills

Career changes used to be viewed as a 'red flag' on CVs. Now they're a common – and normal – aspect of our working lives. In fact, 52% of people who change jobs also start in a new industry.

With this in mind, look for the **transferable skills** that matter most for your industry and scrutinise how essential industry experience is for the role you're hiring for.

Sector know-how might enable a new hire to hit the ground running, but it's often the overlooked soft skills that will see them thrive as part of your team for the long term.

3 A one-size-fits-all CV

Does an application mention your company name? Does the language and formatting of their CV mirror your job advert?

These little clues could help you pinpoint a candidate whose application is earnest, as opposed to someone sending quick-fire applications - which could indicate a candidate has not fully bought into what you do.

4 Evidence

Read between the lines of each CV. If they've acted as a team leader - how did the team perform? If they've built websites - where are the links?

A good candidate will share their successes as well as their skills – and this could be a key tool for helping to separate anyone who walks the walk, as well as talking the talk.

Step 3

Interview your shortlisted candidates

A CV usually isn't enough to go by alone, which is why the interview process is so important.

However, while a third of employers say that candidates are more prepared for interviews than ever before, **70%** of employers admit they spend less than one hour preparing for interviews themselves.

So, to help you plan ahead - and ensure both you and candidates find the interview structured and helpful - here's a list of key questions you can't afford to ignore.

The best interview questions to ask candidates

Easier questions

"Tell me about yourself..."

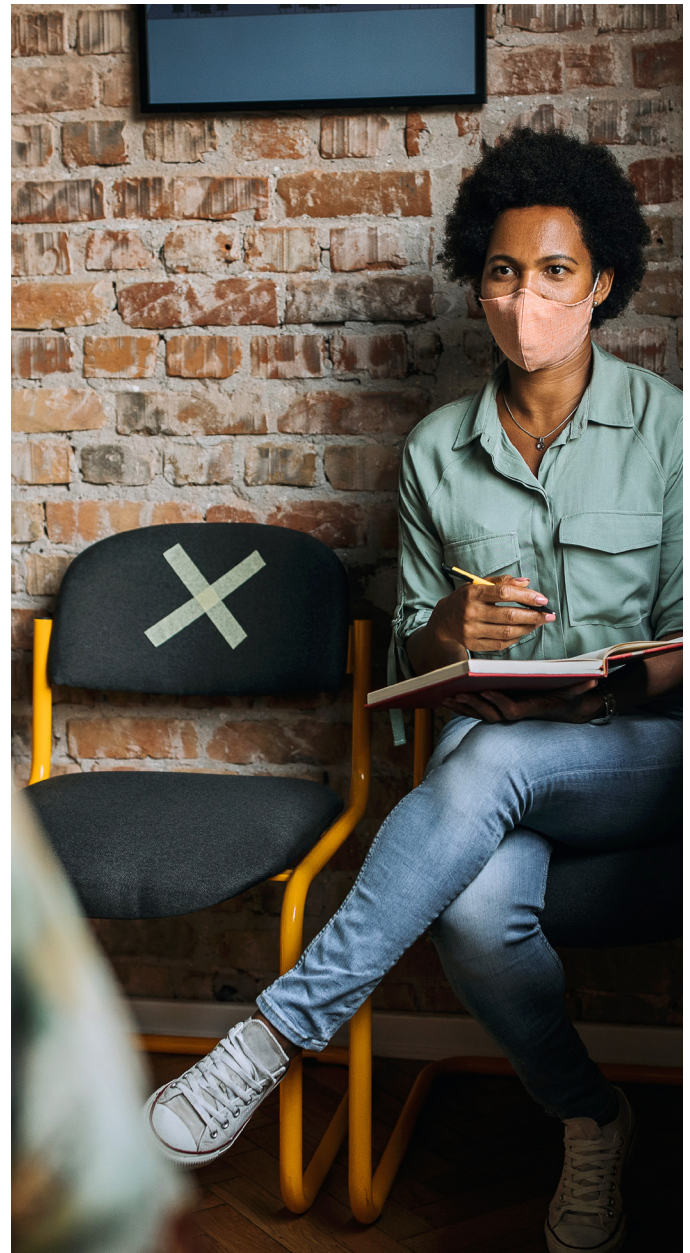
Well-versed candidates should be able to succinctly sell their best qualities, skills and experience in a brief summary.

This is also a good opportunity for you to find out about the person behind the CV - what are their hobbies and approaches to working? This can be crucial when deciding who to hire.

"Why do you want the job?"

This basic question can quite easily throw candidates, as it will shine a light on how committed they are to your role.

Often, this is more a case of what you don't want to hear, as opposed to what you do. Do they mention salary or the working hours? These may be red flags over their commitment.



Intermediate questions



What do you know about our company and our competitors?"

A detailed knowledge of your company and the struggles and challenges you face is very impressive. It shows research and dedication, and this insight will help them hit the ground running should you give them the nod.



Where does this job fit into your career path?"

Use this simple question to check their ambitions line up with what your company can offer. You want someone on an upward trajectory, with ambition and drive – but you don't want a short-term hire.

Advance questions



Why do want to leave your current job?"

Our first curve-ball – this will give you a clue as to what motivates them in a role. Are they leaving after many years' service, and having gained a great amount of experience – or do they immediately criticise management and teammates, or declare themselves "bored" or "overworked"?



Tell me about a time you've turned a negative into a positive"

Here is another curve-ball, whereby you can find out how good they are at problem solving, thinking on their feet and securing a positive outcome.

Second interview

Want advice on how to conduct a second interview? We've got you covered:

[Go to the guide.](#)



Step 4

How to make an attractive job offer

You've made it through the interview process, and identified who's the best fit for the job by asking targeted questions. Now it's time for the fun part – making an offer.

Time is of the essence here, as you want to ensure your first pick isn't scooped up by another business. Here are 5 things to consider as you get the ball rolling, and pull together an attractive offer.



Top tips for making a job offer

1 If you've made your pick, make your move.

Aim to contact your ideal candidate within two days of the interview.

A long waiting period can leave candidates second-guessing the interview, feeling insecure, or prompt them to explore other options while they wait.

2 Pick up the phone

Why risk a candidate losing your offer in their inbox? Or declining an offer after you've gone to the effort of creating a formal letter?

A quick phone call is not more direct and personable, plus it can save you time in the long run should a candidate bail out.

3 Flattery is your friend

If you've selected someone who demonstrated genuine eagerness at the prospect of working for your business – don't be afraid to show a little enthusiasm too.

Telling a candidate why they stood out during the interview process, and why you think they'd be a great addition to the team, can give them the encouragement they need to accept – plus make them extra excited to start.

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4 Put your best offer on the table

The candidate's salary expectations should already be roughly aligned with those of your business, thanks to your clear job ad and interview conversations.

Put a generous compensation package on the table and detail any additional benefits. You can reiterate non-financial perks too, like a flexible or relaxed working culture.

While you might see this as an opportunity to win back a few pennies, lowballing on the offered salary could undermine the trust you've established with the applicant so far, and reflect poorly on your business.

If all goes to plan, this person will shortly be working with you – so let it be a positive, professional start to the working relationship.

5 Put it all in writing

A formal, written job offer provides security to both you and the candidate.

Once you've received a verbal acceptance over the phone, follow up with a written offer.

Make sure you include everything from the specific job title to the reporting manager, holiday leave and compensation package etc.

A thorough offer, that pre-emptively addresses any of the candidate's questions, can streamline the time it takes to get a 'yes'.

Top tip:

Find scripts and templates for making a job offer in our [online guide](#).

Step 5

Successfully onboard your new starter

You've done the hard work and made a successful hire – now it's about setting your new employee up for success.

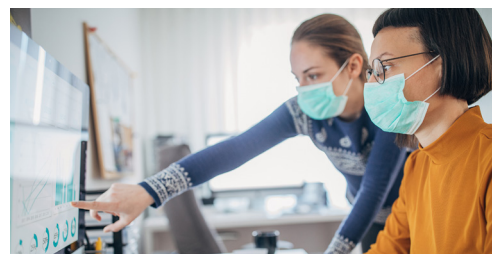
It's important that your new starter not only feels welcomed as part of the team, but that they have the right tools, information and contacts to get stuck into their new role.

Make sure you help your new starter reach their full potential, with our onboarding guide below:



1. Before a new starter begins

- Documentation
- Company software and tools
- Arrange team introductions
- Keep in touch



2. On the first day

- Workplace tour
- Team introductions
- Expectations of the role
- Team lunch (or virtual lunch)



3. During the first week

- Brief in first project
- Outline upcoming projects or tasks
- Outline probation requirements
- Gather their feedback



1. Before a new starter begins

- **Documentation**

Package up essential HR resources and share them with your new employee. This could include company perks and benefits (including how to apply for them), company policies, plus contact information for any essential team members, if applicable.
- **Company software and tools**

Get your new starter's workspace, tools or laptop (if appropriate for the job) ready for when they start. This might be a case of reaching out to your IT team, who can make sure relevant log ins are set up.
- **Arrange team introductions**

Include an overview of what each person does ahead of time, so your new hire has some context when they arrive for their first meet up.
- **Keep in touch**

Communicate with your new hire and give them an idea of what to expect on their first day. Will you meet them outside the building, or is there a reception area? Do they need to sign into the building? Be clear about any practicalities they should think about.

2. On the first day

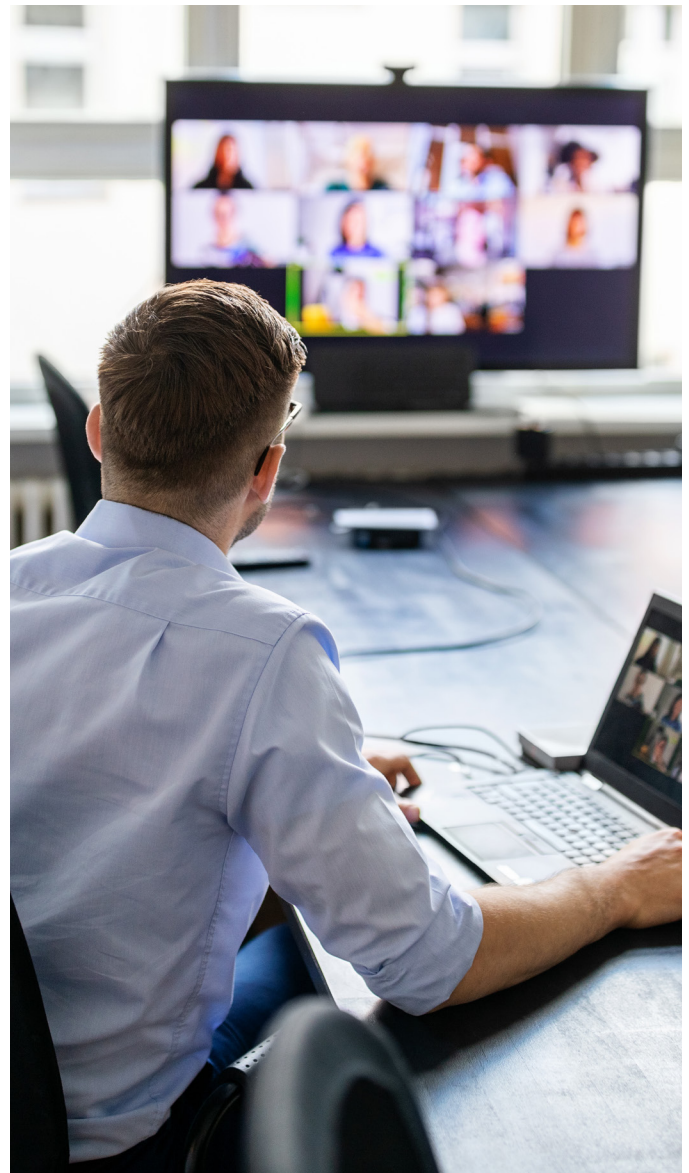
- **Workplace tour**

Think about the little things that your new hire won't have any knowledge of yet – like where the bathrooms are and where they can get good coffee.
- **Team introductions**

A good structure to get colleagues to follow is: an outline of their role, how they work with others in the team, current projects, and how they will work alongside the new hire.
- **Expectations of the role**

Running through the job description again and contextualising it against wider business goals can help a new starter to understand the bigger picture and how they can contribute to it.
- **Team lunch (or virtual lunch)**

While your new starter will get to know their new colleagues during scheduled meetings, giving them the opportunity to socialise with the team in a more informal environment is also essential.



3. During the first week

- **Brief in first project**

Once they've settled in a little, the best way for a new starter to learn is to get working on something. Give them clear direction and your recommended approach for the task, but otherwise let them use their initiative.

- **Outline upcoming projects or tasks**

Even if they don't start working on a project straight away, you can ask them to get clued up on the task by doing any relevant reading.

- **Outline probation requirements**

If you choose to place your new hire on probation, make sure you take the first week first to explain the process, and outline any particular objectives they will need to hit to be successful in the first few months of their new role.

- **Gather their feedback**

Finding out how your new employee feels about their first week and, by extension, the business, means that you can apply any learnings to future hires.

Well done – you've successfully gone from job ad to onboarding.

Plus, you've equipped your new employee with the tools and knowledge along the way to not only help them grow in their role, but hopefully grow your business down the track too.

For more hiring insights and insider tips, head over to our [advice library](#).

Why not kickstart your hiring today on Totaljobs?

[Get started here.](#)





About Totaljobs

Totaljobs offers employers of all shapes and sizes access to the Totaljobs network. With a mix of generalist and specialist job boards, crossing the breadth and depth of the UK workforce, the Totaljobs network consists of Totaljobs, CareerStructure, City Jobs, eMedCareers, Jobsite, Just Engineers and RetailChoice. These brands provide access to over 19 million searchable candidate profiles, and record over 4 million applications from qualified jobseekers every month.

With a head office in London and offices in Birmingham, Havant, Cardiff, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham and Glasgow, Totaljobs Group also consists of Caterer.com, CatererGlobal, CWJobs and Milkround. Together these brands are the UK division of StepStone Group, one of the world's largest e-recruitment businesses.

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