



Writing Job Descriptions

Wondering how to write a truly inclusive job description?

Companies seeking to build and maintain diverse teams should be purposeful about the language they use right from the starting gate. These best practices have the intention of improving your job descriptions on the PowerToFly website, specifically through a lens of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). Please feel free to take and leave behind what makes sense for you.

Ditch Superficial Requirements and Be More Intentional

Revisiting job descriptions is about more than altering their language. It's also about evaluating the listed skills and requirements of the position. Remember: Every requirement line in your job description has the potential to be another line of exclusion.

If you ask for skills, experiences, degrees, and levels of seniority that aren't actually necessary for success, you'll be reducing your candidate pool and missing out on talented people that could excel in the role. Instead, focus your description on concrete performance objectives and what a person needs to be able to do and achieve. By doing this, you'll attract candidates with diverse backgrounds and skills that will become assets to your business.





Emphasize Your Commitment to Creating a Workplace of Belonging

Candidates want to know where companies stand in light of social and racial injustice. Companies who actively communicate their stance, support, and commitment to being an ally to BIPOC communities, women, LGBTQIA+ folks, neurodiverse and disabled professionals, and veterans, to name a few underrepresented groups, will attract candidates with similar values.

Companies should be open with sharing their community efforts and the causes in which they invest their time and money. Highlight current employees from these identity groups (in a way that doesn't tokenize them!), and show your commitment to workplace DEIB.

Lastly, companies should be transparent about their perks and benefit offerings to demonstrate how inclusive their workplace is for all employees.

Some benefits companies should consider are:

- Paid parental leave
- Adoption, IVF, and surrogacy coverage
- Childcare allowances
- Mental health and wellness programs
- Flexible working hours & PTO
- Remote work
- Paid sick time
- Paid volunteer days
- Community work with BIPOC organizations
- Generous health insurance contributions
- Gender-affirming, trans-inclusive medical benefits
- Financial planning services
- Home-buying assistance

Suggestions on How to Write More Inclusive Job Descriptions:

Watch your naming.

Applicants like things that are clear, straightforward, and easy to understand.

That preference should be reflected in how we name things. Candidates don't go for razzle-dazzle, allusive names that offer few clues as to what the role or product at hand actually entails. That's why your core products — Designer, CMS, Editor, and Hosting — should all just tell you what the product is, without trying too hard. Keep this standard in mind when you're trying to name a new product or feature as well as when naming roles and writing job descriptions.

Avoid gender bias.

- Do not include gender-specific pronouns (he/she) in your job description.
- Promote equality and diversity: Consider the wide spectrum of lifestyles your potential applicants could follow and highlight the elements of your work culture that would appeal to many.
- Be mindful of gender-neutral job titles.
- Avoid biased language: You should always look through your job description to replace words that can portray an overall masculine culture and ensure you're attracting women-identifying and nonbinary candidates as well as men-identifying candidates. To avoid off-putting wording, focus on skills and your company culture, values, and benefits instead.

Be conscious with qualifications.

- Eliminate any requirements that are not essential to the job function.
- Keep them short. An exhaustive list may keep applicants at bay.
- Don't ask for experience with a specific software if a hire can easily be trained on it
- Generalize areas where transferable skills would be acceptable.
- Clearly outline which qualifications are required (must-haves) and preferred (nice to have).

Include the percentage of diverse employees on your team.

Highlight training and mentorship opportunities as well as specific career path possibilities. Sharing your efforts and stats in the DEIB space can especially resonate with marginalized and underrepresented audiences.

Win over experienced workers.

And while we all know that you should not set age ranges or limits for job applicants — which includes asking for "years of experience" — watch out for subtler ageist words like: "Youthful," "Dynamic," "Energetic," or "Mature." This implies that only a particular age is preferred and can deter anyone outside of those parameters from applying.

Be inclusive of workers with disabilities.

Make sure your job postings are welcoming to workers of all abilities by advertising when there are accommodations like flexible hours or tele-work policies that would appeal to workers with disabilities. Also, highlight access, accommodations, and flexibility to let disabled applicants know that your workplace values them.

DON'T

"must be able to lift 50 pounds"



DO

"can move equipment weighing up to 50 pounds with or without assistance"



Highlight your DEIB efforts.

Be upfront and transparent about parental leave, flexible working practices and accommodations, and other benefits. If you have initiatives to support creating and fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace, make it known. Placing these types of benefits and core values in plain sight will make you a much more attractive option for job seekers. They'll better understand how your values align with their own and feel more comfortable exploring your company. Also, tell candidates that you're an equal opportunity employer, with pride and toward the start of your job description. A tiny, italicized EEO "disclaimer" buried at the bottom of your job description isn't sending the right message.

Inclusive Job Description Example

A snippet of an inclusive job description for illustrative purposes only – the following image isn't posted anywhere and not all the information on display may reflect currently.



What Exotanium Has to Offer:

Enjoy a culture where your voice is valued and start contributing to our team of passionate professionals who are appreciative of the pain points our clients face in their cloud computing services, and how to deliver a product that will make their lives significantly easier.

We take pride in creating purposeful work and allowing our employees to grow and achieve their goals every day. With our competitive pay and comprehensive benefits, we have the right opportunities to fit your life and launch your career today.

The health and safety of our employees and their families is a top priority. With the continuing impacts of COVID-19 around the world, we are taking action to protect the health and well-being of our colleagues and maintain the safety of the communities where we operate.

Prioritizing People is one of our core values and has been key to a healthy work-life balance and a great sense of fulfillment and inclusion. We employ a true people first – hybrid model. Live and work where you feel the most productive, whether that is in our home, in an office, or a combination of both. Our company has offices in Ithaca, NY, and Santa Clara, CA, and we also offer remote positions across the United States and Canada.

About Exotanium

We are a startup created by two professors and one graduated Ph.D. student from the Department of Computer Science at Cornell University, is a cloud resource optimization and management platform that uses Machine Learning (ML) to help enterprises reduce spending in the cloud by up to 90%, while enhancing both operational security and performance.

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PowerToFly was founded by Milena Berry and Katharine Zaleski in 2014 to fast-track economic equity by upskilling and connecting underrepresented talent to roles in highly visible sectors. As an end-to-end diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) recruiting and retention platform, PowerToFly is focused on empowering underrepresented talent across all races, ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, abilities, veteran statuses, and gender identities. Read more about our [origin story](#) and [see which companies](#) are partnering with us to reach their DEIB goals.