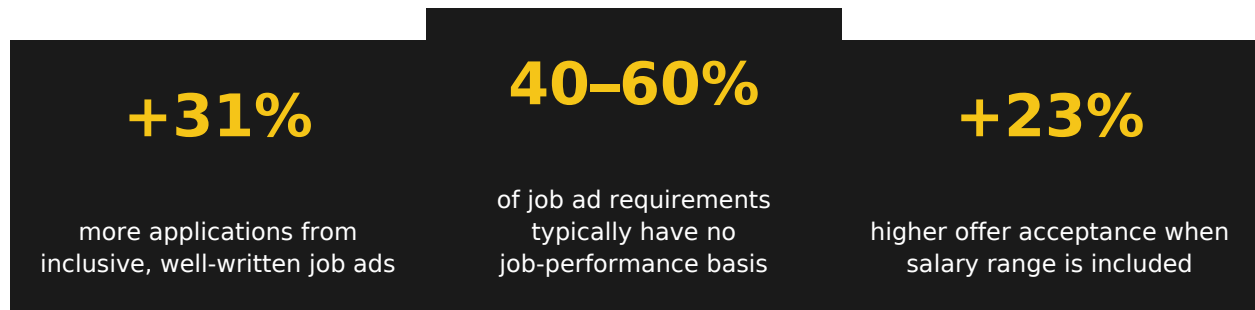


HR RESEARCH SERIES 2026 - REPORT R07 OF 10 (EXTENDED)

Job Ad Writing That Converts 2026

The evidence-based framework for job ads that attract more, more diverse and more qualified applicants.

A job advertisement is the first impression your organisation makes on every potential candidate. It determines who applies, how many apply, and whether they arrive with accurate expectations. Yet most European job ads are written quickly, by people without training in persuasive or inclusive writing.



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The good news: the evidence on what makes job ads effective is clear and actionable. Small, evidence-based changes produce measurable improvements in application volume, diversity and quality.

The anatomy of a high-converting job ad

- **Title**, specific seniority signal (Senior, Lead, Principal), no internal codes, no clever names.
- **Hook**, one-paragraph statement of why this role matters and what the team is solving.
- **Outcomes, not tasks**, what success looks like at 6 and 12 months.
- **Requirements**, 4–6 must-haves only, separated clearly from nice-to-haves.
- **Compensation**, full salary range, level, benefits and equity if relevant.
- **Process**, exactly what stages the candidate will go through and a realistic timeline.

Title optimisation

Job titles with specific seniority signals receive 28% more targeted applications than generic titles like 'Engineer' or 'Manager'. Avoid internal job codes, avoid 'rockstar' or 'ninja' (associated with 18% lower female application rate) and match the title that candidates actually search for in your market.

Requirement rationalisation

Ads with more than 8 required qualifications see 42% lower application rates, with disproportionate deterrent effect on women and underrepresented minorities. The discipline is to ask of every requirement: would we reject a strong candidate for missing this, and is it observable in the first 3 months on the job.

Requirement count	Application rate impact	Diversity impact
1–4 required	Baseline	Baseline
5–7 required	–15%	–12%
8–12 required	–42%	–34%
13+ required	–61%	–48%

Inclusive language and the masculine-coded trap

Masculine-coded language (aggressive, competitive, dominant, ninja, rockstar) reduces female applications by an average of 24% with no improvement in male application quality. AI language analysers (Textio-class tools) flag these patterns automatically and produce a 24% diversity improvement in applications.

Salary range disclosure

Including salary range increases applications by 23% and diversity of applicants by 18%, the single highest-ROI change to any job ad. Candidates increasingly filter their search by disclosed range, omitting it pushes you below their threshold of consideration regardless of how compelling the ad otherwise is.

If you can only change one thing in your job ads this quarter, add the salary range. Nothing else comes close on ROI.

Format, length and structure

Ads under 400 words with bullet-point requirements convert 34% better than long-form prose descriptions of equivalent roles. Mobile-first formatting matters: 64% of European candidates first encounter job ads on mobile, dense paragraphs collapse engagement.

Forward outlook 2026–2030

AI-assisted JD optimisation will become a baseline expectation, with platforms scoring inclusivity, requirement realism and salary competitiveness before publication. Companies that publish raw, unanalysed job ads will see them under-perform consistently.

Built for what's next.

tenperzent.com is the AI-native ATS designed for European hiring in 2026 - GDPR by default, EU AI Act compliant, free to start, €79/month to scale.

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