

career contessa

E-GUIDE

HOW TO ACTUALLY READ A JOB POSTING

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Let's Read Between the Lines



If you're looking for a new job—even casually—you're probably spending quite a bit of time reading **job postings**. You know, those all-important-but-somehow-totally-confusing **descriptions of the company and role, responsibilities, and qualifications**.

Especially if you're **looking for a new role while still in a full-time position**, the process can feel overwhelming, tedious, and draining. So it's not surprising that after a few weeks of grinding through it, you start to rush, **scanning the descriptions** for buzzy words that seem appealing but **not actually processing** what the company is looking for or what you'd be getting yourself into.

Those speed reads can **land you in over your head** in a new position or—maybe worse—just in one that makes you **actively miserable**.

Fortunately, each section of a job posting **reveals something different** about a role, a company, a team, and more. The trick is to know what to **be on the lookout for** and how to **leverage those clues**.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The Company Description*

OK, let's start with the big one: the company itself. Actually, you don't need to get too hung up here. The main thing you need to pay attention to is **what the company describes as its values**. Those values—particularly what they lead with—can be very telling.

ABOUT US

You can find Bumble in the Android or Apple store, but we're so much more than an app. Bumble believes relationships make us human. **Our core values are kindness, integrity, positivity, equality, confidence, and authenticity.**

Bumble is the destination where you meet your next significant other, best friend, and most valuable business connection. We've created an empowering, safe place for members of modern society to meet the important people in their lives. We're making digital relationships personal again.

IT STARTED WITH AN IDEA

Bumble, born and raised in Austin, Texas, is the brain-child of **Whitney Wolfe**. Whitney's business concept: "Look at what's broken in society, figure out how to make it better, and build a business around that."

Whitney noticed people were treating each other with a lack of respect. In heteronormative relationships, women are told to sit on their hands and wait for men to make the first move, which encourages submissive behavior. Bullying is rampant in social networking. Whitney wanted to change the way people communicate and do it using kindness as the guiding principle. By allowing women to make the first move, and giving men permission to be less aggressive, first connections are beginning with mutual respect.

BUMBLE'S VISION

We started as an app to connect people with future significant others, but Bumble is no longer only a dating app. We firmly believe life is about relationships. Our mission is to provide people with a better way to meet.

In March 2016, we launched Bumble BFF to connect people with friends. Next we're launching Bumble Bizz, where we'll be facilitating connections for business networking.

Facebook is where you connect with the people you know; Bumble will be the place where you're no longer afraid to connect with people you don't know.



Sometimes you'll notice different job postings from departments include different company descriptions. Weird, right? Well, actually not really. The variation shows what's most valued from one job function to another.

Company descriptions don't always explicitly reference "Our core values..." but when they spell them out (like this example) take extra notice.

If the CEO, founder, or any other name is mentioned you *better* be knowledgeable about her background and any personal visions shared on social media. Likewise if the history of a company is included.

When a company spells out its evolution and changes these are key for you to know and understand. But what they share in the job posting is not enough. Do your research. You don't need to know every detail (many may not be public knowledge yet!), but you need to be conversationally versed.



Be sure to reference the job posting before every conversation in the interview process. Since a company description spoon-feeds you what a company's values are, what they stand for, and what they prioritize, you'll want to touch on these during your interview(s).

Now It's Your Turn

As you read this part of a posting it can be tempting to **toggle to the company's website**—don't do that (yet)! Instead **read the whole section**, then **ask yourself if these values are in line with yours**. Does the way the company describes itself sit well with you? If you're not aligned, it might not be the right fit (which, incidentally, is totally OK—you've just saved yourself from wasting time applying for a job that's not right).

If this all feels too squishy to you, consider coming at the values piece from a different angle:

- + Is the description **long** or **short**? (Ask yourself if this **mirrors your own communication style**).
- + Does it focus on the **company** or the **customer**? (Do you, as an employee, want to be prioritized above a customer or do you believe the customer always comes first?)
- + Are there any **metrics** or **accolades** in the description and if there are, which ones? (If the descriptions references winning "Top Place to Work" awards, **for whom is it a top workplace**—working mothers, recent grads, military families? Are you one of these people?)

NOTABLE QUOTES FROM THE COMPANY DESCRIPTION

YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THEM

The Role Description

The role description tells you exactly what the hiring manager **currently expects** out of the open position. Be on the lookout for **keywords** that need to be **included in your resume**. Particularly if you're applying for a role at a large company, you want to be sure your resume will pass any **keyword search**.

ABOUT THE JOB

Do you like working with big data and using it to drive decisions and the direction of products that impact the lives of people every day? As a Data Scientist dedicated to decision support and strategy at Pluralsight, you will have the opportunity to see a direct link between your work and business critical questions, insights, and outcomes. You will be part of an established team of top-notch, collaborative data scientists working on a breadth of challenges across the company and you will be working with a cutting-edge data platform. For senior members of the team, your responsibilities will also include providing leadership and mentoring to teammates and championing data-driven decision making throughout the organization.



You can think of this like the elevator pitch the hiring manager gives when explaining to her family, friends, and colleagues who she's trying to hire. So make this work for you—when asked what you're looking for in your next role during your interview, your response should sound at least a little similar!



Even if you don't end up landing the job (or you decide you don't want to apply) job descriptions are a great place to get inspiration for how you talk about your work. Especially if you're transitioning industries, often you can start to learn the terminology your desired industry uses from various job descriptions and start implementing that in your own resume and cover letters.

When a job description has a question in it, use that! Turn it around and make it a statement somewhere in your application materials—in your cover letter, in an objective statement if you have one, or simply in the way you position yourself in conversation.

Now It's Your Turn

Your application materials should **parallel the language** used in the **role description**. When it makes sense, **use the same words and phrases**—but don't overdo it! The hiring manager shouldn't think to herself, "Hmm, where have I heard that before?" Instead, your objective is to **frame your work** so that she thinks, "Wow, it's a little uncanny just how perfect of a fit this woman is!"

**KEYWORDS, PHRASES, AND LANGUAGE
FROM THE JOB POSTING**

**YOUR TAKE ON IT (THINK: RESUME
BULLET POINTS, COVER LETTER,
INTERVIEW ANSWERS)**

The Responsibilities

This is the meat of a posting and what you should focus on as you **tailor your cover letter and resume** for the role. It's **everything the role will be responsible for**—from budget to people management, to administrative duties to communication style.

This is the part of a posting that is easy to rush through. Maybe you've experienced this: you get through the company and job description, and you're already excited—this is a company you've admired for years or one that sounds absolutely ideal. You read the first two bullet points of the job posting and think, "Sure, that's easy," or "That's something I've technically been doing for years," then end up convincing yourself before finishing reading that this job is perfect for you.

Don't do that. That's what leads someone to start a job only to find out that it's 80% administrative work when they thought it was going to be 100% creative. **Read the whole posting slowly and critically.** It may feel painfully slow, but maybe it should be. Pretend it's a set of instructions for an Ikea shelf or a complex recipe you want to nail for a dinner party. Whatever it takes, make yourself read it.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- + Implement merchandising plans to achieve performance goals for a specific merchandise category
- + Support merchandising strategy for the division, including alignment of brand portfolio and product line
- + Participate in developing private label strategy (initiate, grow and retire) for multiple categories and/or brands
- + **Ensure successful product line presentations**
- + Oversee day-to-day activities for product delivery
- + Prepare accurate forecast of merchandise plan
- + Deliver product performance results based on strategic goals and budget expectations
- + Hire and supervise an efficient and effective team that meets the needs of each functional area
- + **Collaborate with Brand Manager, Designers and other groups and leaders to achieve brand expectations**



Check in with yourself after each bullet and ask yourself, "Have I done this?" but also the all-important, "Do I want to do this?"

As you read, take notes on what questions you can ask in an interview. For instance, what is the company's definition of success?

If the job posting notes other team members you'll work closely with, ask questions about them. Note if you have worked with these roles in the past.



Sometimes roles and responsibilities change but largely the bulk of a job is included in a job posting. The best way to avoid the challenging thought of, "This job is not at all what I thought it would be," is to critically read the posting and consider whether that's the job you really want.

Now It's Your Turn

RESPONSIBILITIES LISTED

YOUR EXPERIENCE

DO YOU WANT TO BE DOING THIS WORK?

IF YES, HOW CAN YOU TAILOR YOUR APPLICATION MATERIALS TO THE JOB?

The Minimum + Preferred Qualifications

You should possess about **80% of these skills** and experiences to be a **competitive candidate**. That's a good rule of thumb, but **don't let it stress you out too much**. If you have a high majority, go ahead and apply (particularly if you're applying through a connection or referral).

Sometimes it can be confusing to delineate between the **job responsibilities** and **job requirements**, especially if you're reading a posting after a long workday—or if it's simply full of bullets that seemingly bleed into each other. But these are **two distinct sections** with very different information.

QUALIFICATIONS

- + Proven excellence in outbound sales
- + 2+ years experience B to B selling, preferably in business services, or market research sectors
- + Strong experience building a pipeline, qualifying leads, and identifying closeable deals
- + Proven track record of achieving and exceeding sales and revenue goals
- + Demonstrated strength in building and managing relationships along with presenting to a diverse audience from business champion to C-level executives
- + Successful experience selling into diverse companies including web services, enterprise or mid-market accounts
- + Strong and demonstrated written and verbal communications skills. Must be able to communicate effectively both internally and externally and adjust to a diverse audience, including C-level executives, Developers, Account Executives, Product Managers, etc.



The job responsibilities are what the employee will be doing, and the qualifications are the skills the employee will use to get the work done.



It can become overwhelming to think that you have to reference each and every one of these on your resume. You don't per se. When it comes to your resume, make your focus weaving in the job description and company values. With skills and requirements, just add the essentials to the Expertise section of your resume and weave them in wherever they fit organically.

Now It's Your Turn

QUALIFICATIONS THE JOB LISTS

QUALIFICATIONS YOU HAVE

QUALIFICATIONS YOU DON'T HAVE—AND HOW YOU'LL DEAL

Go Get 'Em!

While a job posting doesn't tell you everything you need to know about a company or a role (not even close!) it does offer a **good initial overview**. Learning how to **read them correctly**—and knowing what to look out for—can help you **nail an application or interview**, or equally important, **decide to pass** on spending the time applying when it just isn't a fit.

