

## Manager's guide to advertising

### What is advertising?

Advertising is a means of attracting your target audience into buying into your product or service. With recruitment, we are still 'selling' a product; our product is our brand and our community. We are looking for the perfect person; the perfect fit to join our family, someone we know will be a credit to our community that will help us develop going forward. As we aren't just looking for anyone, we need to consider how we go about reaching our ideal candidate.

To do this, it's a good idea to think backwards. We want to tailor our advertisements to our ideal candidate, so it's best to start thinking first, not of the job, but of the person we would ideally have join us.

We refer to this as our 'Pen Portrait'.

It's important to note that having a pen portrait isn't discriminatory, aiming for an ideal candidate, and the perfect fit doesn't mean that we are stating that certain groups aren't what we are looking for, but instead it's a means of honing in on a particular audience. If the potential candidate was unspecified, it would be near impossible to scale down or know where to begin advertising. Without having a pen portrait is like trying to fish without any specific bait.

### How to define a Pen Portrait?

From here, we can start to think of our audience and identify our ideal candidate. For our purposes, we are 'selling' jobs, so for our targeted individual, where would be the best place to get their attention? Do they use Social Media? If so, what platforms do they use? Here is where the hiring manager's expertise becomes so valuable. As a manager, you know the ins and outs of the role, for example, an economics professor would know of many of the media outlets that someone who is invested in the Economics community would frequent. We can also assume that someone who is looking for a position at Wivenhoe House for example, is less likely to frequent job sites like Nature.com or ResearchGate.net, for example. Knowing who we are looking for will help the Resourcing Team to know where to look for them.

The types of things you may consider are:

- Who is the subject group?
- What media do they consume?
- What are their interests?
- Where do they live?
- What social media platforms do they use?
- Where might they network?

However, advertising for the ideal candidate is not just on our part, the candidate must read the advertisement and think that the post being advertised is for someone like them.

For a successful advertising campaign, our candidate needs to think when reading the advertisement "I'm that person they're speaking about!" The advertisement needs to speak to the audience, to capture their interest, not only in the position, but their interest as us as a brand, and that begins when the candidate believes they are the perfect candidate for the job.

Before a potential candidate can begin associating with the advertisement, they need to be drawn in. This begins with the job title. The job title should be brief and accurately describe the job, whilst retaining consistency with University norms. It should not include the Department/Section name. For example state "School Administrator" and not "School of XYZ Administrator" (any new job title must be checked with your People & Culture contact first). It should be clear enough for someone well suited to the role would understand what it entails and if it's worth looking into further.

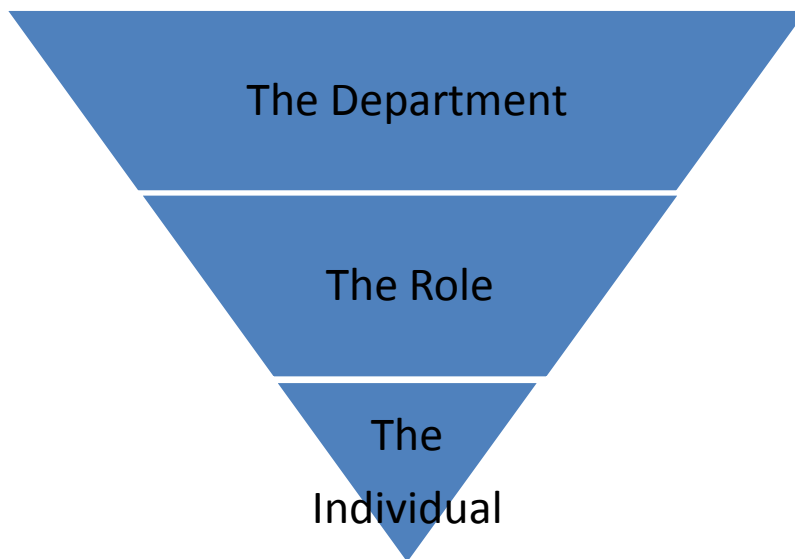
### Deciding where to advertise

When posting an advert it is also highly important to make sure that you consider the audience and the type of candidate. This is one of the benefits of a Pen Portrait approach, you can work out who is it your looking for and where they may look for a job. At the University we work primarily with online

advertisements, with print being a very rare occurrence due to its smaller reach, smaller audience and its high financial cost. (Unless specifically asked and paid for by the department, we do not use print) As a University we use our website, Jobs.ac.uk, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn as standard and we can use more other websites on request. The cost of the first paid for advert will be covered by People & Culture and any additional advertising will be covered by Departmental cost centres.

### **What is in a job advert?**

It's worth picturing the advert as a funnel process. Once the potential candidate has been brought in by the job title, it is key to keep their attention. The information needs to be concise but informative. At the University, we approach this by opening the advert with a statement about the department that the role is housed within, we then discuss the role and duties, and then finally the skills and qualifications required. We are becoming more specific as the advert goes on, and for a potential candidate, this process should be galvanising more interest as the candidate reads through the text.



From this point, the interest of the candidate should be captured, so further details are necessary to complete the application.

- Contact details
- 'Call to Action'

### **Call to Action**

A call to action is an aspect of the advertising process that often gets overlooked, but it is a crucial component. A call to action is a 'What to do next' for the candidate. An advertisement without a next stage gives the candidate no clear idea of how to proceed, and often enough this can be the turn off that the majority of candidates need to begin looking elsewhere. At the University we have an 'Apply now' button at the end of an advert, along with numerous contact details in case any issues arise.

### **Advertising Standards and the Equality Act**

When we are advertising, there are a number of criteria that we must adhere to, including Advertising Standard's [Code of Conduct](#) and the [Equality Act](#) being the main two. As the University is a brand, we must ensure that our advertisements are as clear and inclusive as possible, but still individual and thought provoking enough to ensure a response.

The main points to adhere to within the Advertising Standards Code of Conduct are:

- Not containing misleading claims (e.g. we are the #1 ranked University in the world when we do not have evidence to back it up)

- Our adverts do not cause harm or widespread offence
- If we include images of children there are certain criteria to adhere to
- We must only advertise genuine vacancies

There are 9 protected characteristics as stated by the Equality Act 2010

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We must adhere to these factors when creating advertisements, as we can be penalised for not being inclusive if we use certain language that may put people off of applying. While in the Pen Portrait, we may have visualised a person of a certain set of characteristics, we must aim to ensure that all potential candidates of all walks of life are accounted for. It is not against the equality act to pursue a person of specific characteristics, for example by advertising in a particular forum that women may frequent more often than men, as this is only targeting an audience, it isn't preventing anyone or stating certain people shouldn't apply.

#### **Direct discrimination / indirect discrimination**

Direct discrimination is the legal term that refers to a person if they treat someone less favourably than they would another individual because of a protected characteristic they have, or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic. This is also regardless of the initial intention.

Indirect discrimination on the other hand is when a general rule that is designed to impact upon everyone, has a negative impact upon yourself or a group. For example, if a general rule was set in an office that women needed to wear a knee high skirt, this could discriminate against women of some religious backgrounds.

#### **Other forms of discrimination**

Discrimination by association - Being discriminated against based on one's assumed association with someone whom may or may have a protected characteristic

Discrimination by perception – When discrimination occurs when someone isn't considered for a job role based on perception of characteristics. For example, if someone wasn't hired because they assumed they were pregnant or had a disability, regardless if this is the case or not.

Discrimination by victimisation – a candidate isn't considered (or is treated detrimentally) for an internal role or a promotion, due to assumptions of them issuing a complaint earlier in their career, regardless if it had impact upon the recruitment process.

#### **Re-advertising**

If you have been unable to recruit following advertising your vacancy you will want to re-advertise it. You should discuss with the Resourcing Adviser alternative advertising platforms rather than re-advertise in exactly the same places again.

**As a hiring manager - How can I help?**

If you are a member of any professional networks or mailing lists you should share the details of your vacancy with your contacts. Where the Resourcing Adviser has placed your post on a social media site, we would encourage you to share this with your connections. You can follow the Resourcing Team on [Twitter](#) (@UoE\_Vacancies) and [LinkedIn](#) (University of Essex) or like our [Facebook](#) page (University of Essex Vacancies).

## Example Pen Portrait

Post	
Who are my ideal candidates?	
Where do they live?	
What are their interests, likes and dislikes?	
What websites do they frequent?	
Where do they read the news?	
What social media sites may they visit?	
What are their hobbies?	
What language would they use?	
What devices would they access the internet on?	
Any other useful information?	