

Writing Job Descriptions to Attract Marketing Mavens

Does this sound familiar? Come join our exciting (or growing) team! We are seeking a dynamic product manager with 5+ years' experience in _____ (Medical Devices, Software, Digital Health, etc.) to join our fast-growing team. Yadda, Yadda, Yadda..... This is often followed by some combination of company description, basic qualifications and how to apply.

This rather uninspiring job description is altogether too common. And of course, while it is no doubt factually correct, what high performer is going to go out of their way to pursue the opportunity based upon it?

All functions are guilty of crafting less than compelling, but I would submit that Marketers should do a much better job. After all, would you want your marketing collateral to read like a spec sheet? Of course not. You would want your customers to know what your product is going to do for them. How it is differentiated from the competition. And why they should buy it. The same should be true of your job descriptions.

When I am conducting a search intake call with a hiring manager, I dig deep into what is it specifically that they want the candidate to be able to do. We then go deep into types of candidates and why this work would be interesting to them. Furthermore, I like to dig into what this might mean for the candidate's future career growth.

First Things First:

Let us start with the first question. What is it you really want the candidate to do? Do you have a big new launch coming up that they would lead? Are you seeking for them to build out a comprehensive product roadmap? Is there a large upcoming advertising campaign?

Now of course these are internally focused, but this would catch the attention of the right candidate for each scenario. Leading a big product launch would be interesting to someone who has done smaller launches or maybe has a product line that has not had a launch in some time. Building out a product roadmap is all kinds of fun for those upstream marketers that want to envision new products and services. The thrill of putting your stamp on a new advertising campaign is irresistible for a marketing manager.

So put these exciting activities first in your job description. Compare these 2 examples:

- Come join our growing team! We are seeking a product manager with 5+ years' experience in Medical Devices. Yadda, Yadda, Yadda.

Versus

- Are you a product management maven that is seeking the challenge and rewards of building the future of a Fast-growing Medical Device company? If so, we want to talk to you! We are



building the next generation of devices to treat (insert disease state here). We want you to use your creativity, experience, and expertise to craft our future product roadmap.

The difference is between these 2 is that one focuses on what the company wants and needs. The other focuses on what the candidate wants and needs. A candidate that sees themselves as a “maven” will lean into this opportunity because it is validating to their self-perception and has the kind of work that they love to do. And let us face facts, not every product manager wants to be the person championing new products and solutions. It is tough work that requires not only the ability to build a plan but also the ability to obtain buy-in from what may be reluctant internal customers.

Ok, I’m curious but what’s in it for me?

So often job descriptions lack any kind of specificity about what experiences the candidate will have in the role. Seriously, just read 90% of the job descriptions and other than some generic language about the role, the candidate has no clue what they will be doing. This is hardly a way to motivate those top talents to engage with your company. I encourage my clients to think about is what it may mean for someone to take this new role. Will the successful candidate be able to work on cutting edge technology? Will they lead a company’s marketing efforts in a new direction? In short, how will taking on this role help the marketing maven grow in their career?

Top performers want challenges and opportunities to grow in their career. Many of them will say to me “I’m doing great here, and I am expecting a promotion soon. Why would I want to go someplace else?” This is where I share with them how the role will advance their career and what that will mean for their future prospects.

Now granted, this is quite different when I am speaking directly with the candidate versus when they see a job posting. But if you put on that marketing hat and think about this candidate as a customer, you will pretty quickly get to the juicy parts of the role and what that will mean for the marketing maven. You may even want to do a little survey of those that are in similar roles within your company to get their thoughts on why they were compelled to take their roles.

Forecasting the Future:

This is one of the tougher challenges that hiring managers face. They never want to overpromise future opportunity much less put it in writing. That said, if you can state something that is really interesting and an expectation for the successful candidate, you absolutely should unless it is confidential. For example, “The successful candidate will be responsible for build a team of x marketers”. Or “This marketer will be a key member of our leadership team and”.

If the really exciting part is confidential, a well-placed hint that there is something big afoot goes a very long way. Here is how I have addressed that in the past. I would say something like “This role will play a huge part in our future growth plans which are highly confidential. We will share more details with our finalists after assuring the information will be kept confidential.” This approach generally gets attention because “C’mon, who doesn’t like to know secrets?”.



These are just some of the means that I pursue with my clients to get them to think about what will make for a compelling job description that attracts the right kind of marketing maven. Of course there's always more we can dig into and the "nuts and bolts" of the role always should be in the job description if you feel that they are not evident from the job title and are critical to its success. That said, just as your promotional materials probably don't scream less interesting product attributes like "It comes in a box" or "We have ample supply", you shouldn't obscure the really interesting parts of a job description with items like "Produce presentations for senior leadership" or "Creating reports in Excel".

If you have further questions on how to make your job descriptions more compelling to marketing mavens, schedule a no obligation call with us. We are committed to your success in obtaining those rare marketing mavens!