WRITERECRUIT

How to Write **Recruitment Ads** That Work

www.writerecruit.com

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A MOMENT OF **TRUTH**

Most employers in today's ever evolving talent markets invest serious resources creating recruitment ads aimed at attracting many different skillsets.

These ads are often the first time a potential candidate 'touches' you as an organisation - and it's effectively a make or break situation: the ad either wins the hearts and minds of the audience, or it doesn't.

According to the data, the majority of these ads simply **'don't work'** - with job boards reporting that the average audience time spent reading most ads can be measured in just a few disinterested seconds.

8 Seconds

Source: Total Jobs

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Creating your **Competitive Advantage**

That's a shocking stat – but also a huge opportunity for employers who create recruitment ads that work.

So how do you consistently write ads that **engage and convert** the candidates you really want?

How do you structure your ads to appeal to candidates from **all talent demographics**?

How do you attract the **'right fit'** – engaging people who will enjoy both the role and your working culture?

And how do you craft your ads to **differentiate** your employment offer or employment brand in the marketplace?

This WriteRecruit PlayBook will show you how you can write ads that work on all those levels, every time, for any role, in any sector.

All you have to do is **understand the mind** of your audience – and connect by following **a few straightforward steps!**

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Creating ads that work **is all in the mind**
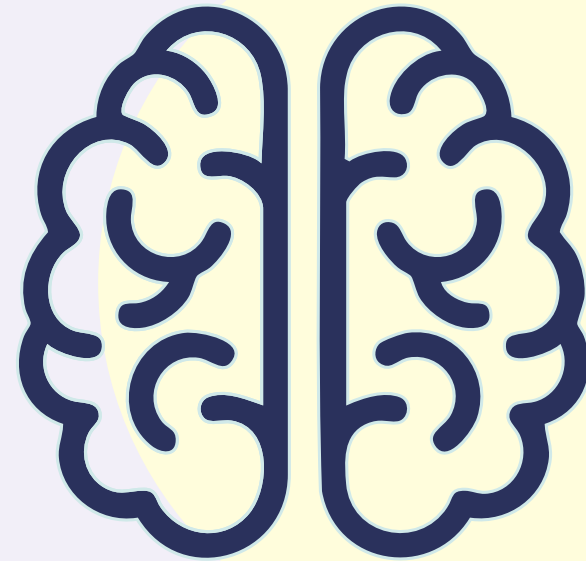
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We know that, subconsciously, the human brain isn't preoccupied with looking out for messages of any particular kind.

People will read what interests them. And sometimes, it's a recruitment ad. So how do you make sure that it's your ad?

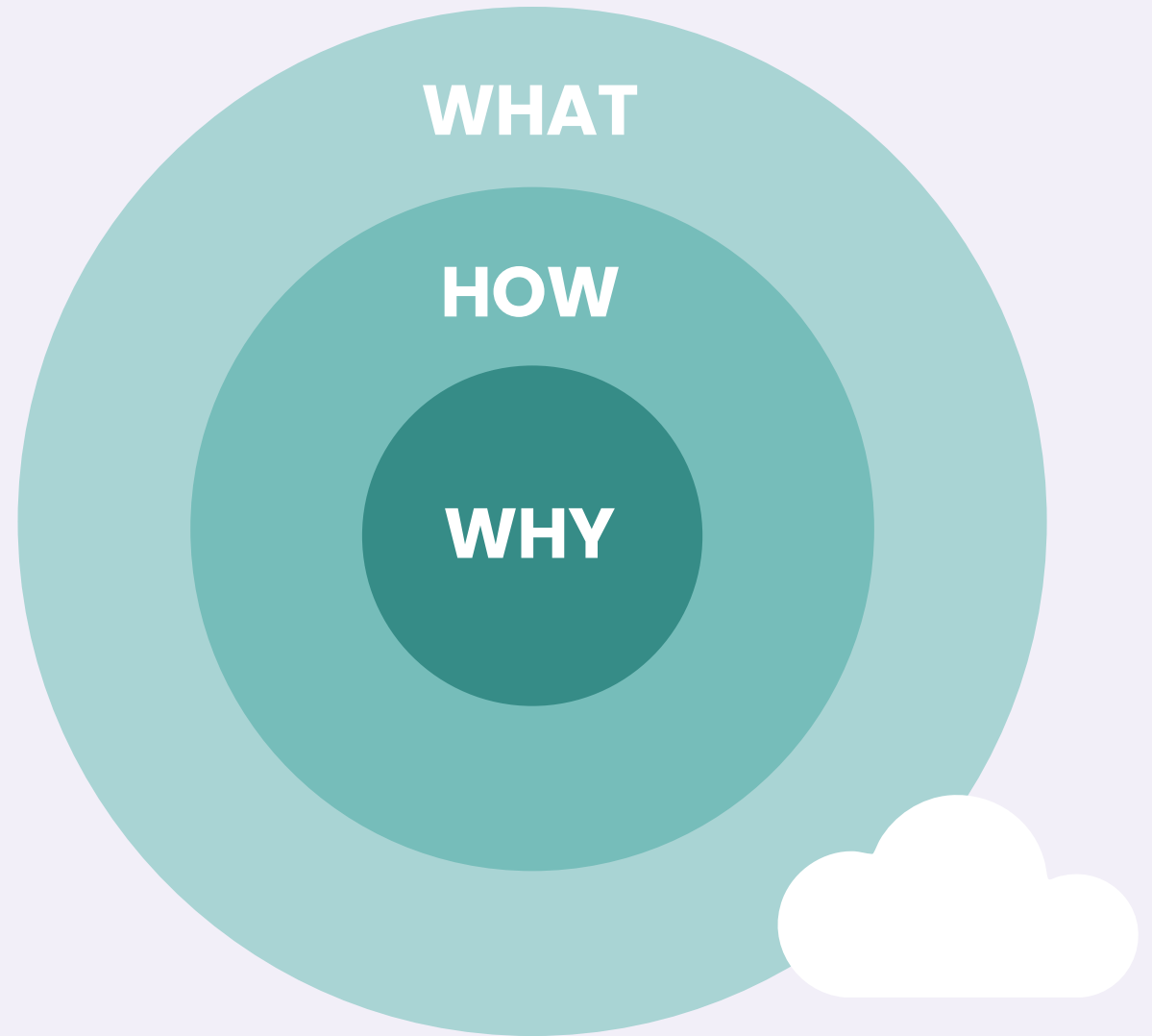The human brain **isn't drawn** to the best products, services, job or careers.

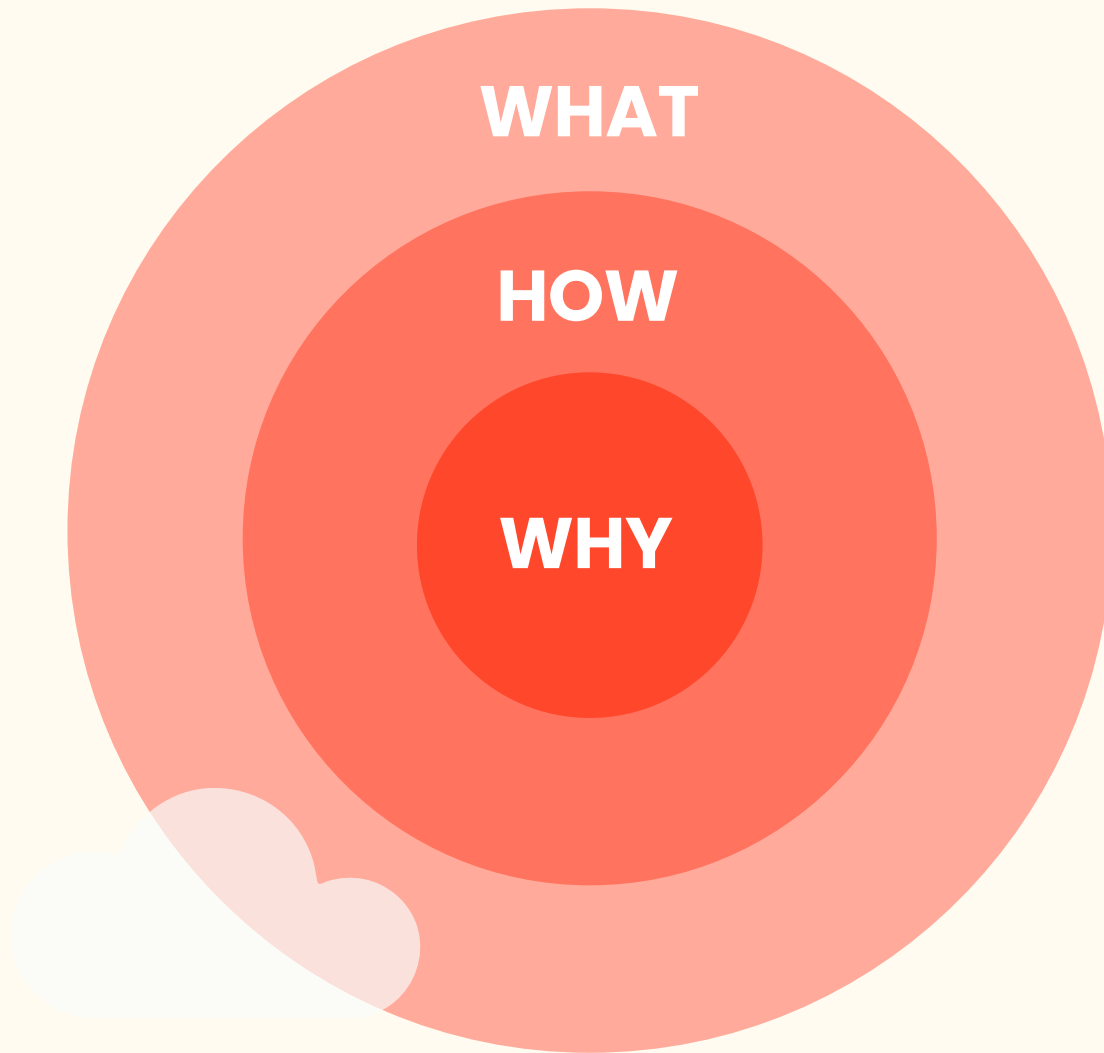The human brain **is drawn** to what it can understand and what it finds engaging.

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Answering the Golden Question: 'Why?'

WHAT
HOW
WHY

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Students of behaviourologist Simon Sinek know that engaging with anyone means connecting with their Limbic brain.

And that means grabbing their attention and igniting their interest – **immediately**.

The human brain is being bombarded with thousands of messages every day.

It will only give your advertisement permission to be read if your ad answers the question:

WHY should I read this ad?

And then it needs to keep the audience interested by making sure every word satisfies the following challenge:

WHY should I keep reading this ad?

And then, finally:

WHY should I respond to this ad?

WHAT
Activity or offering

HOW
Unique method, competitive advantage

WHY
Inspiration, driving purpose, fuelled by core values and benefits.

Look at most recruitment ads - and perhaps your own - and you'll see that they go heavy on the 'How' and the 'What' … describing in detail what the job is, and what the person will be doing.

But what the human brain craves is **'Why'** they should do this job; and why should they do it **with you** as an employer, rather than elsewhere.

So your ads should be full of the 'Why', with **just enough** of the 'How' and the 'What'!
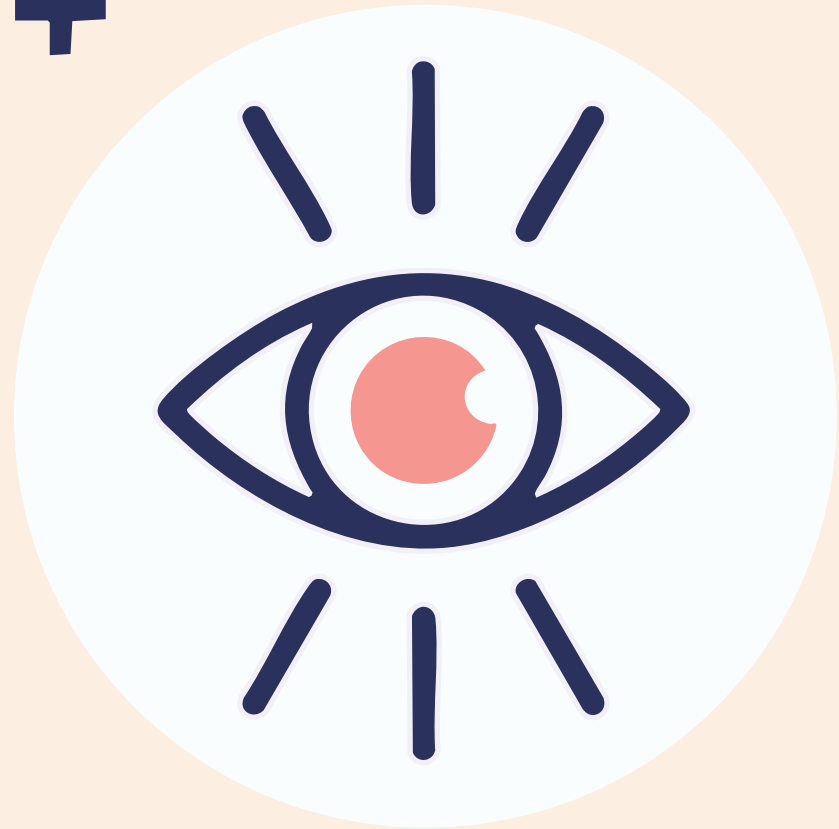
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Writing for
different eyeballs

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At the neurological level, your ad also needs to engage two very different types of audience.

The **50.7%** who are wired to read every. single. word.

And the **49.3%** who habitually 'scan' an ad, in either a 'P' or 'F' pattern.

You need to write in such a way that engages and converts both the **readers** and the **scanners** - or you'll potentially lose half of your audience!

Readers 50.7%   **Scanners'P' pattern**   **Scanners'f' pattern**

Build on **one core message**

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The more messages you try and communicate, the lower the likelihood of communicating any ==single message==.

Advertising professionals have always known that a **single main proposition** always wins when creating an ad - and the latest data from LinkedIn backs this up strongly.

1 Messages	2 Messages	3 Messages	4 Messages	
100	65	62	43	Messages 1
	65	43	35	Messages 2
		30	27	Messages 3
			24	Messages 4

→
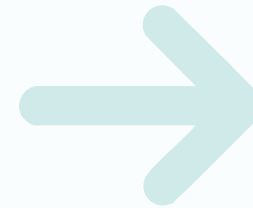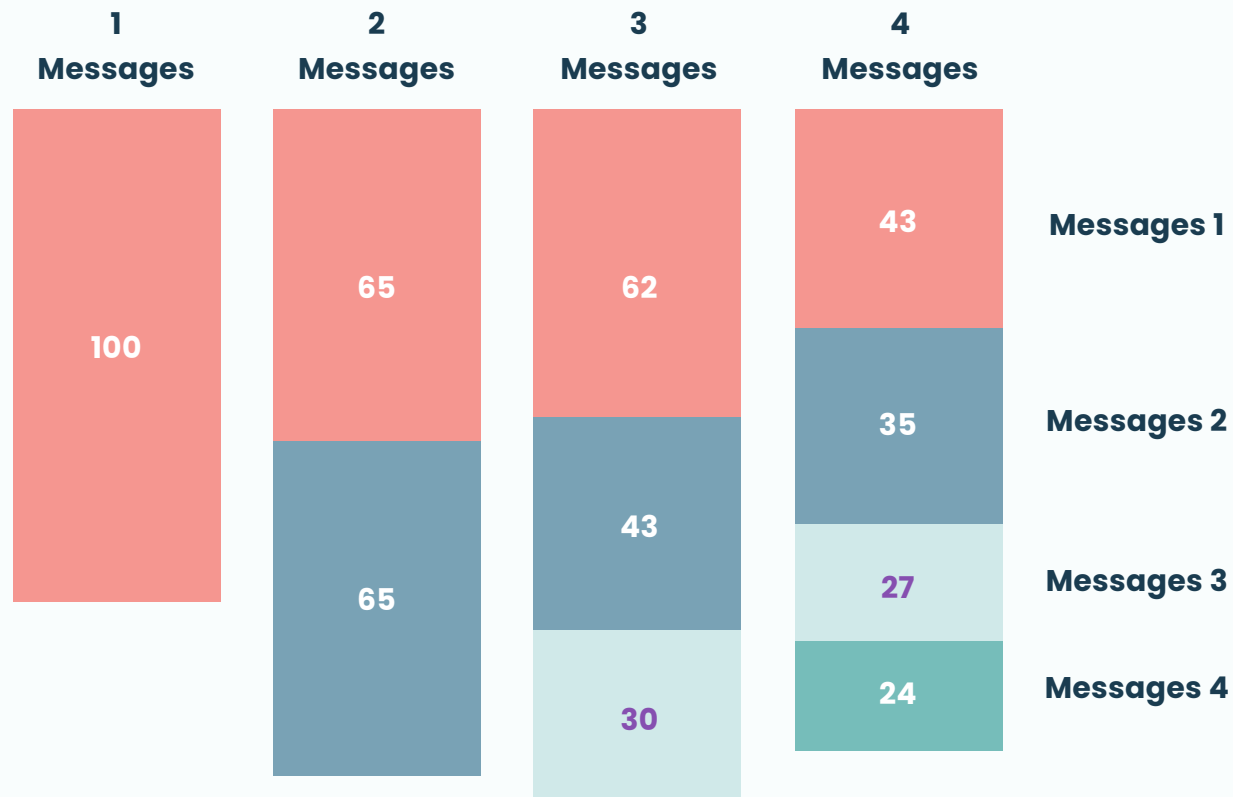
The Link™ database shows that the more messages an ad attempts to communicate the lower the likelihood of any single message actually being communicated.

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So take the time to think carefully about the audience and **what you have to offer** them.

If you're unsure, ask the Hiring Manager - or see if your latest employee survey has revealed a strong reason why people have joined and stayed in that role or that team.

Getting this 'right' may well be the single biggest reason why your ad will succeed, or not.
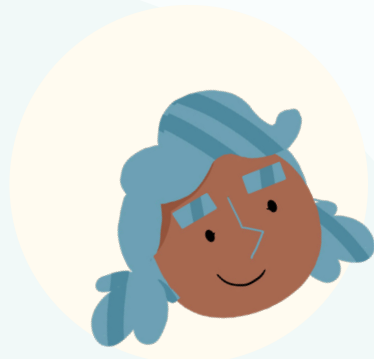
Turn your message into **a story**

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Writing a great recruitment ad means telling a **good story**.

And those stories can create the most amazing response in the mind of reader - thanks to immensely powerful neurochemicals that we all naturally produce when we engage with an arresting narrative.

" Tell me the facts and I'll learn.
Tell me the truth and I'll believe you.
But tell me a story and it will
live in my heart forever. "

An old Native American proverb.

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Modern-day neuroscience has shown that this love for storytelling is deeply rooted in the human brain - that native Indian proverb, found on the walls of a cave in Arizona, is at least 5,000 years old.

When we read a story, neurons in our brain fire in similar ways to those of the storyteller - a process known as "neural coupling".

Essentially, the reader's brain waves synchronise with the story - enabling the audience to imagine themselves in the narrative, there and then.

What triggers this leap from reading an engaging story to feeling part of it?

Take a bow **dopamine, cortisol, oxytocin** and **endorphins**: the four chemicals that can instantly capture your audience's attention, quickly evolve their empathy, and make them feel part of something wholesome, exciting, purposeful - or any other 'employment story' you're looking to convey.

So it's a scientific fact that there's a tried and tested structure to storytelling.

And you're about to discover how that method will empower you to structure great ads that work every time ...

The ad structure
that's proven
to work

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There's a proven method for creating ads that are dripping with 'The Why' ... ads that are built around a single overarching message ... ads that are written as a story, engaging all eyeballs,

And that method is **AIDA:**

So let's look at each step of AIDA - and what you need to do to engage and convert your candidates using this structure ...

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The **Aida model**

The AIDA model is widely used in marketing and advertising to describe the steps or stages that occur from the time a consumer (or candidate) first becomes aware of a product or brand (or job offering), through to when they trial a product or make a purchase decision (or apply for a job interview). The AI DA model consists of four key components:

Attention

The most important part of telling your story is capturing your audience's attention. So you need to think carefully about the main 'Story Proposition' for the role that you're advertising. Is it a professional challenge? Is it the people the person will be working with? Is it the work environment? Is it the training and development? Get this right and you should attract the audience that you want to read your story. Then you can develop their Interest.

Interest

Once you have captured the applicant's attention, you need to quickly develop the interest further. Some key facts and figures which are used to promote your organisation always help.

Desire

This means conveying the most positive parts of the role, opportunity, training

or culture, in as coherent and convincing way as you can. Emphasising the three main reasons why this role is so attractive maintains the momentum of the ad, and gives the reader a good overall view of the job itself (which also helps in selfselection). Once you have achieved that, it's time to get them to act.

Action

The 'Call to Action' is very important. You are still selling your story to the audience so avoid a simple: 'Please contact us'. Make the most of every single word such as 'Find out more about this outstanding role and everything else we offer .. .'

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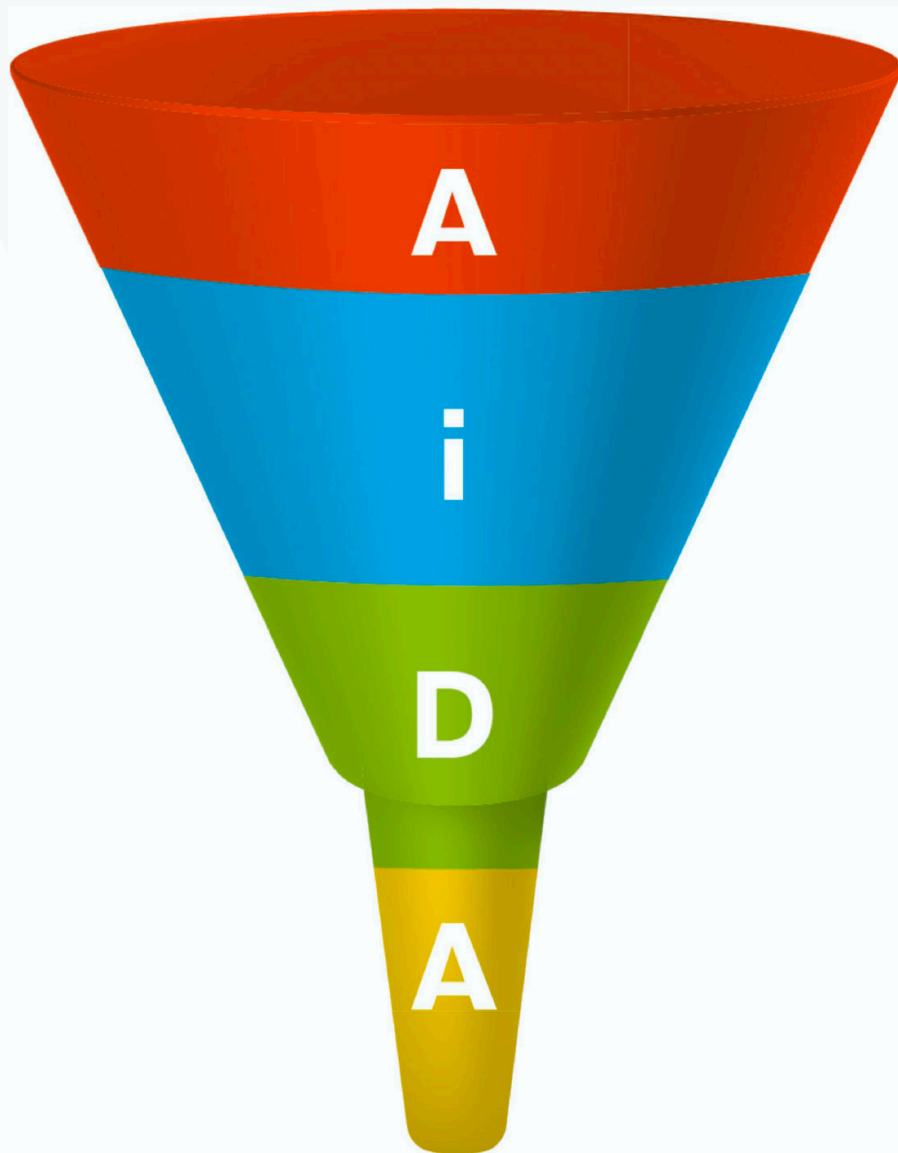
Grab their
Attention

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Since the dawn of the digital era, marketeers have understood that we live in the age of the 'permission model' - where our brain takes somewhere between **0.4 and 0.7 of a second** to give permission to engage (or not) with a message.

So how you 'open' your 'conversation' is a critical moment - and that makes

The Headline

such a vital part of any ad, more than ever before.

There are literally hundreds of different ways to write a headline - but here are **three 'surefire' formats** proven to work:

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Sell the big employment proposition

You should always explore transforming the main selling proposition of the role into a headline. It stands the best chance of engaging with the right audience and getting them to respond. If you struggle with this kind of headline, it may be that you need to think a bit more about the role and its particular employment proposition.

"Influence. Inspire. In Here."

"Let's shape the world, together."

"Experience. The Difference."

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Simply tell it as it is

The direct headline is a simple, straight-to-the point format that makes a clear, no-nonsense but engagingly targeted employment promise. It works particularly well if your brand name is well known or the job title does what it says on the tin.

"The Software Role Designed For You."

"Welcome to the team you have been looking for."

"You & Us."

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Pose a <mark>provocative</mark> question

Asking a question directly involves your audience. However, your question cannot be random or clever. It must relate directly and clearly to the major benefit of the role. It must also provoke the potential candidate to answer "yes" or at least "I'm not sure, but I want to know more."

"Got what it takes to go higher, further, faster?"

"Ready to move to the next level? Read on."

"World-class. Market-leading. Guess Who?"

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Develop their
Interest

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A single word has the power to pull us together or push us apart - so what you say 'next' in your very **first paragraph** is as vital as the initial attention grabbing headline.

You need to develop interest in **an instant** - and your words should ideally flow from the sentiment or proposition being made in your headline.

There is a vociferous view in some quarters that this 'Interest' section of the ad should be **all about the candidate** and not about the employer - and this '100% Candidate-Centric' approach should be followed throughout the ad.

We disagree. The 'Interest' stage of your ad should be about **the employment promise** - which may involve what you as an employer are doing right now (and perhaps your future vision), or it may be about why the role is so important ... or indeed, it may be exclusively about what's in it for the candidate.

In reality, it will probably be **a balance**: marrying what you are doing as an employer with why the role is such a great opportunity for the candidate - and beginning to introduce what's 'in it for them' (which is enlarged upon in the 'Desire' section).

Employer   **Candidate**
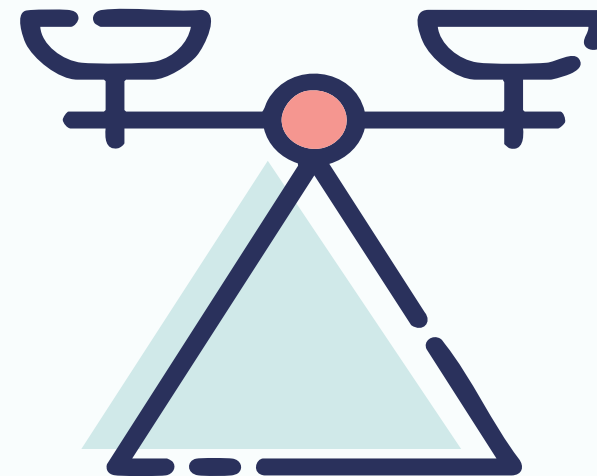
Create **Desire**

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The 'Desire' section of your ad means exactly that - creating **DESIRE!**

You're looking to evoke one of the strongest emotions known to humanity - adrenaline and endorphin-laden feelings of "OMG, I must apply for that job."

And to do that, you need to choose **the minimum** and **most important** points about the job and the skills needed - and knit them together in the most compelling way possible.

The key attributes of **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs** -

- *Safety & Physiological Needs*
- *Love & Belonging*
- *Esteem*
- *Self-Actualisation*

- give you a very useful story framework for this part of your ad.

You can use the spirit of these attributes at the **beginning of each sentence**, to breathe life into some of the more dry and technical points taken from your job description and person specification.
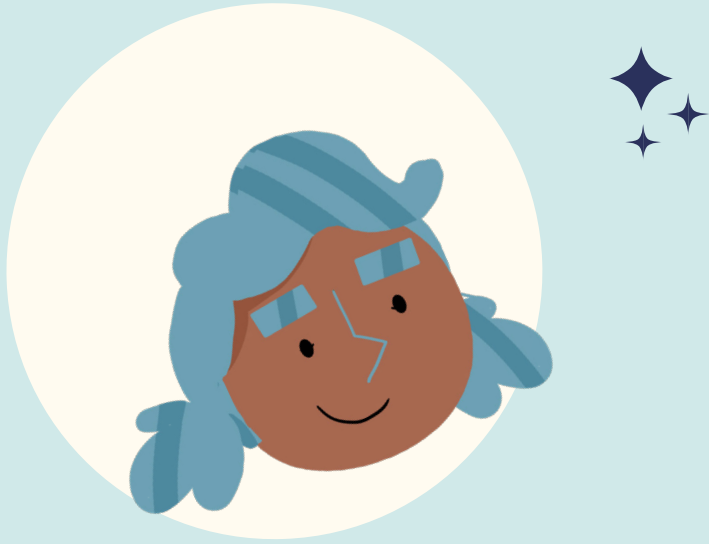
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Here are some examples, with the Maslow-like sentiments in italics:

Enjoy a role where you'll be valued for who you are, working in a multi-disciplinary team, designing software that is breaking boundaries across many industries.

You'll be a trusted voice working at the heart of a market-leading team, providing the best advice and guidance to your customers, both over the phone and through the written word.

This is a place where you belong, if you can bring your experience of managing multi-site locations, building positive relationships with people at all levels of an organisation.

Make a call to **Action**

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It's amazing how many otherwise strong ads finish by tailing off into something weak and unengaging.

Don't make that mistake - weave your magic spell to the **very end** of your ads!

Having created a compelling story that's gripped your audience, get them to apply (or at least bookmark) there and then.

When we read a story, neurons in our brain fire in similar ways to those of the storyteller - a process known as "neural coupling".

Essentially, the reader's brain waves synchronise with the story - enabling the audience to imagine themselves in the narrative, **there and then.**

Key technique

There's a simple technique for this - by repeating your Headline at the end of your ad.

See the possibilities. Realise your **potential.**

So if your Headline reads:

Now you have seen the possibilities, come and realise your potential. **Click here.**

your Call to Action can say:

Be confident and commanding until the very end of the ad - and make a call to action that provokes an immediate response!

OUR 10 TOP TIPS

1 Ideally, give yourself up to **75 minutes** to write your ad - 25 minutes to prep, and 50 mins to write.

2 Spend 5 minutes thinking about a **Candidate Persona**. Literally imagine the person you are talking to - then plan to write your ad 'to' them. A good recruitment ad is a good piece of 1-2-1 communication - engaging a candidate's hopes, dreams and ambitions.

3 Spend 10 minutes identifying the **absolute key points** that need to be included. Remember that the fewer points you include, the more 'space' you have to tell a story. If you're unsure about including a certain point, go by the mantra "If in doubt, leave it out!"

4 Finish your prep with 10 minutes of honest thought about the **single core message** you want to convey in your ad. What is the single biggest reason why your candidates should choose this job - and you as an employer? What is **'The Why'**?

5 After No.4, **just start!** The beauty of AIDA is that you can start anywhere. If you're struggling with the attention grabber, then start with the 'Interest' paragraph. If that's not 'working', start with the 'Desire' paragraph, knitting together the key points from your JD. As you write, your brain will begin to connect with the bigger picture.

6 Avoid **'internal language' and excessive jargon** - assume that if you can't understand it, neither will your audience.

7 **Avoid repeating** the same point in your ad. Nothing jars quite like repetition, nor indeed repetition.

8 Avoid excessive **cut and paste**. Not just because it's 'lazy' - but because the new Google search algorithm increasingly penalises 'C+P' and one day may not even index it!

9 Once you have finished (or think you've finished), **read your ad out loud**. You'll be listening to the story for the very first time - and it's amazing how many small tweaks come to mind that will improve the ad by quite a few percentage points.

10 Sweat this newly created asset - incorporate threads of its story into your employment narrative (websites, emails, candidate pitchbooks, etc) - remembering that every ad you create should help **build your employment reputation**.

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Learn more about creating great recruitment ads ...

If you want to learn more, sign up for our FREE **two-hour recruitment copywriting masterclass** - at www.writerecruit.com - and watch all this playbook in action, including taking one of your JD's and turning it into a compelling ad!

Or if you would prefer, harness the power of the world's most advanced and easy-to-use **recruitment copywriting platform**: empowering everyone in your team to write amazingly authentic job ads - in 10-15 minutes ... every time, forever. Just go to www.writerecruit.com and book a demo.