

Deciphering Job Ads

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Not all jobs ads are created equally. You can read an entire job description concluding you do not know what the position's responsibilities are, or you conclude you are too overwhelmed by the information to apply. Now the internet is used so frequently for posting jobs and applying that there are endless amounts of job descriptions out there.

At True North we believe your time during your job search is precious. You do not want to waste time applying for a job that you probably would not even enjoy in the long run. The goal is not to apply for as many jobs in your industry that you can find, we call this the shotgun approach. The goal is to apply for the ones that are the best fit for you and are most likely to result in a hire. So, deciphering this in a job ad will allow for a more focused search, and a more focused job seeker. Here are some tips to weed through the thousands of job posts out there and find the one that works best for you.

Searching

Searching through all the job posting websites out there can be overwhelming. You can spend hours looking through all of these, let us help:

- Use the websites that aggregate job postings. They pull all the jobs into one place and this makes it easier. Try this one, [Indeed](#).
- Use the advance search option and be specific. If you are not willing to move because it is the middle of the school year for your children, then do not even look at jobs in other cities. The more specific your search the more likely the job will fit into what you are looking for.
- Do keyword searches not searches by titles. If you search by title you may miss some jobs that you would be interested in. Companies are getting more creative with titles, and depending on your industry companies may have many titles for the similar roles.
- Set up alerts. Most of these job board sites allow you to program alerts. This way they email you when they have new postings that meet your search needs.
- If you are not interested in working for a large company or a certain industry then skip over these jobs initially.

Reading

Now that you have your search narrowed, how do you read the 20 job descriptions and decide what to apply for?

- Focus on skills, experience, and education first. These are usually bullets that are easy to read, and decipher if you meet what they are requesting. If you do then you can spend more time reading the responsibilities and company culture.
- Vague job descriptions may mean the position or role is not defined clearly, or that the company is not aware of what they need. Proceed with caution.
- All job descriptions have skills listed like: interpersonal communication, detail oriented, and organized. These are not the skills you need to focus on. Focus on hard skills like programming, software, and behavioral experience. Be sure you take the time to read and research a position before you take all the time necessary to apply. You want to spend the time applying for jobs you are really interested in having.

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