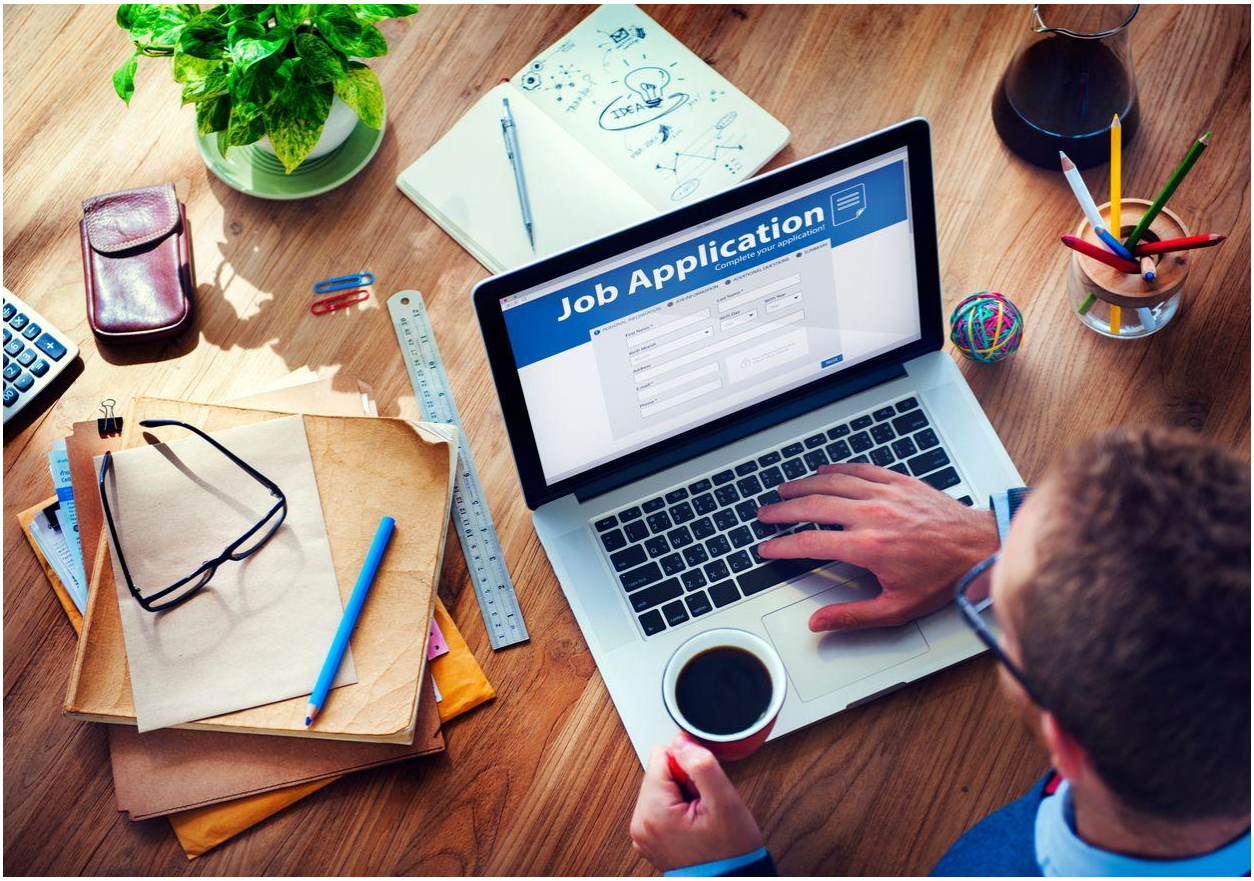
Here’s What Candidates Are Really Looking for in Job Postings

HR Brew | Paige McGlauflin | February 10, 2026

Hint: It isn’t you telling them you’re an “employer of choice.”



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Is your company an “employer of choice?” Does it have a long history that you want to brag about to anyone who’ll listen? Do you think it stands out from competitors?

That’s nice. Job seekers don’t care—or, rather, they don’t care when they’re applying.

Hard truth. Attention spans are as short as ever, leaving employers seemingly struggling to make an impression via their job postings: A November 2025 survey by Indeed found that, in the prior year, 65% of employers were missing the mark on the first try and had to revise its job description. Of those employers, 42% said they had to revise it because they were getting too many unqualified applicants, while another 21% said they weren’t getting enough candidates, period.

Job seekers don't read postings to learn about your company's entire story. They want to know: "What's in it for me?" That was the message shared by several experts at Talent Acquisition Week in San Diego in early February.

"People need to know who we are, but when it comes to how we tell the story and the candidate experience, we need to be answering 'What's in it for me to work here?' and that's the thing that we need to build in the job descriptions," Carrie Corbin, co-founder and managing partner at Hope Leigh Marketing Group, a recruitment marketing and talent attraction firm, told the audience during one panel.

In the same panel, Kerry Noone, Ford's director of global employment branding, shared that the automaker developed a job-posting creator, trained on the company's internal large language model (LLM), to help guide hiring managers.

"We have loaded in some information to help people create a job posting that is not 5,000 words, and the job title, location, everything [is] in there," she said. The challenge has been getting hiring managers to use it, she noted: "They have it in their minds that they want to get everything into their job posting, and it's a lot of training to get them to understand that more does not mean better."

So, what exactly do job seekers want in a job posting? According to an October 2024 survey of more than 1,000 people by UK-based résumé services company Standout CV: qualification and experience requirements, work hours, benefits, and title were among the most sought-out information. (Meanwhile, a lack of salary information and mentioning "winner's mindset" were among the biggest red flags.)

That said… You shouldn't fully abandon touting your employer branding and differentiating your company from competitors. Experts said to introduce it later in the hiring process.

"We do get wrapped up in that, because we do spend so much time on our employer brand, we do spend so much time on our career. They're important to us because we built this thing, and we think that's what the candidate wants to hear," Tim Sackett, president of IT and engineering staffing firm HRU Technical Resources, said in a different panel. In reality, candidates are thinking, "First, just let me know that I actually want to come work, and then sell me on why you were the place I should come work."

That was a challenge experienced by Christy Bodnar, assistant director of talent acquisition and onboarding at XKIG, a vegetation management company.

"People want to know: Are you hiring? Are you going to pay me more? Is it close to where I live? Am I going to like doing it?" she said. "It's not industry standard for vegetation management employees to build a career, or use heavy technology, and that's something that differentiates XKIG, and we wanted to communicate that, but they don't care. They care later."