

UGAND MARTYRS UNIVERSITY

MA-EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Human Resource Management in Education

An Analysis of the Strengths and Weaknesses of a Job
Advertisement by African Trade Insurance Agency

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African Trade Insurance Agency

Chief Executive Officer

ATI is seeking to recruit a Chief Executive Officer to be responsible to the Board of Directors for the day-to-day management of the agency, its overall leadership, performance and attainment of its business objectives.

Posted On: Monday, 05 October 2009
Closing On: Sunday, 15 November 2009
Category: Administrative and Support Services

Duration:

Job Description: Established by African States with the financial support from the World Bank, the African Trade Insurance Agency (ATI) is a multilateral development institution dedicated to providing insurance, co-insurance, reinsurance and other financial services to foster trade with and investments into its African Member States for the purposes of promoting trade, investment and other productive activities in Africa. Since writing its first policy in 2003, ATI has supported US\$ 1.2 billion in trade and investments across Africa and expanded its membership from the original 7 countries to 14 countries as well as a number of corporate shareholders. ATI was awarded a stable long term 'A' rating by Standard & Poor's in 2008, which was again re-affirmed in 2009.

ATI has now firmly established itself as Africa's primary trade and investment insurer.

ATI is seeking to recruit a Chief Executive Officer to be responsible to the Board of Directors for the day-to-day management of the agency, its overall leadership, performance and attainment of its business objectives.

The incumbent is expected to play a key leadership role in driving profitability and growth and deciding the strategic direction of the agency.

Preferred Skills: The following technical and behavioral competencies are required

The Chief Executive Officer shall be a person of integrity and of the highest competency with internationally recognized qualifications and extensive practical experience in at least one of the following fields: insurance, banking, or trade finance.

A relevant university degree or equivalent qualifications will be a requirement. A post-graduate degree would be an advantage.

The candidate will in addition possess: a minimum of 10 years track record of success in managerial, commercial and financial leadership; ability to work in a multicultural environment; strong analytical and people management skills; good oral advocacy and writing skills; excellent interpersonal skills and; fluency in written and spoken English.

How to Apply:

1. Submit an application letter, curriculum vitae, details of your current remuneration package and three references by express courier to: ATI, Kenya Re Towers, 5th Floor, Upperhill (off Ragati Road), Nairobi, Kenya 00100. Also submit an electronic copy to recruitmentceo@ati-aca.org
2. Candidates must fill out ATI's Personal History Form which should be obtained at ATI's web-site
3. The closing date for application is 5.00 p.m. 15th November 2009
4. A more detailed position description can be found at www.ati-aca.org/jobs.asp

Introduction

In this paper, I will discuss the meaning of job advertisement, types of job adverts or methods of advertising a job. This will lead me to highlight precisely the characteristics/features of a good advertisement. Then taking the attached advertisement by African Trade Insurance Agency, I will evaluate focusing at the strengths and weakness in the advert. There after, I will give a conclusion which will show my own academic position on job advertisement.

Job Advertisement

Job advertisement is a form of announcement or public notice of the availability of a slot/position of work to be occupied by the most suitable person basing on the requirements this is inline with what Mondy et al (1999) said that advertising is a way of communicating a firm's employment needs to the public through a variety of media like radios, Television and newspapers. According to Eugene (2002), an advertisement is a source of recruitment in most national, provincial and local newspapers or specialist magazines and journals. Therefore, in a precise way, an advert is a selling piece of statement or document for an organization that seeks to elicit good responses from potential applicants to take up vacant job slots in the organization.

There are basically two types of job advertisement; Display and Classified advertisements. Display advertisements are advertisements that are given their own boxes on a page. This allows advertisers to include company logo and some general commend on the job (company) before describing the job and person sought in greater details. This is mainly for managerial, professional and technical jobs. The journal adverts tend towards it and actually to give best examples of display adverts.

Classified advertisement: These are short listing of job vacancies each having small space, giving brief details of job and salary. Such are usually used for manual and clerical jobs. They are normally common on local or regional news papers than national ones.

Sources of Job Advertisement outside the Organization (Media of Advertisement)

McKenna (2002) identifies two major sources of job adverts. That is, print media and electronic media.

Print media: Job adverts are normally identified on both local and national newspapers. Local newspapers: these are print media for example, the newspapers of particular dioceses, kingdoms and cultural groups. National newspapers: these are news papers that are widely read countrywide. For example, ‘The New Vision’ and ‘The Daily Monitor’ in Uganda. National newspapers tend to adopt certain days of the week as their day of advertising (promoting) categories like jobs. For example, the new vision put jobs advertisements on Mondays and the daily monitor display job adverts on Thursdays.

Adverts can also be on technical or professionals journals. For example, NEMA magazine. Posters at public places can also be sources of advertisement. For example, hotels, churches, market entrance and so on. In some cases, job adverts are also put on moving objects like vehicles.

Electronic advertisement: Job adverts can be made via internet: this can be on the employers or organizations’ Website or on the agencies’ Websites this is because there are some agencies who act as job advertisers for some organizations. Adverts can also be played over the radio stations like FMs and Television channels used for job advertisement.

But on a general note, manual and clerical (jobs related to routine work in offices) vacancies are filled by local advertising, whereas managerial and professional vacancies are filled by advertising in the national press and in the specialist journals.

Advertisements are intended to reach out into the labour market with attractive offers of employment aimed at producing adequate response; this means that the ultimate rationale for advertisement in an organization is to elicit best potential candidates with required skills and qualifications for a job position for employment within an organization. This, it does through reaching out to the people who are actively looking for job or thinking about doing so.

The effectiveness of a job advertisement can be judged by the number of enquiries it stimulates, the number of applications submitted and the suitability of the applicants it yields.

STRENGTHS OF THE ATTACHED JOB ADVERTISEMENT: (Job Advertisement by African Trade Insurance Agency)

The organization seeking applicants: McKenna (2002) asserts that a good job advert should identify the organization seeking applicants, here; the advert should state the name of the organization where the job is allocated and its addresses or contacts clearly. This is inline with what Mondy (1999) called for. He said that a firm should provide the accurate picture of the job and organization of the prospective employees. The job advert attached identifies the organization seeking applicants. Employer or recruitment is indicated-that is, African trade Insurance Agency. This gives a picture of the organization clearly to the applicant/reader. Griffin (1999) added that a good job advert should clearly identify the physical Geographical site or area of the organization and the job's geographical area of operation. In the attached advert, this is identified. The organization and job base location is indicated; that is, in Kenya. It is important that the readers distinctly identify it in the job advert to avoid them from ignoring the job advert or leaving it in suspense.

Goals and mission of the organization: The job advert has highlighted some key goals and missions of the organization. This is very important for an applicant to get to the insight of the organization so as to make an informed decision whether to apply for it or not. Once the reader appreciates the job philosophy, his/her actions will be towards them and this avoids the guessing the types of the organization. For example, this job handles basically insurances and finance related issues.

Job title: Job title is an essential element that should appear in a job advertisement.¹ Okumbe (2001) said "...the title of the intended job should be clearly spelt out and consistency in the use of terms should be maintained." When one is advertising, he should make sure that he uses common key words or brief catching titles, use words that identify the key features of the role, statements need to be clear, directed and attention grabbing, list key positive aspects of the position and company. This shows how important the job title is to a

¹ <http://www.businessballs.com/jobadvertiswriting.html> [viewed on 22nd November 2009]

quality advertisement. This is because it states the position being advertised for by the organization. African trade insurance agency has its Job title is clearly stated in the advertisement; this captivates the immediate attention of the reader and the potential applicant. The job title advertised is ‘Chief Executive Office; (CEO)’ It is very important to have a job advert with a job title because it draws the mindset of the reader to the kind of job being advertised.

Job position on the organization chart: This is about the reporting relationships of the job advertised and other positions in the company (Bratton, 1999). Bratton (1999) says that an advert should state clearly the job position in the organization while advertising. This is to show the reporting relationships of the job and other departments in the organization. This should include their own supervisory roles (if any) as well as who they are subordinate to directly and indirectly. If the employee is to work with other employees or departments include that information as well. It is helpful to include a corporate organizational flow chart that depicts all positions in the company and their hierarchy. In the attached job adverts by African trade insurance agency, the job position on the organizational chart or the organogram is highlighted. It shows that the Chief Executive Officer reports to the board of directors. This is an indication that the job advert is valid, hence its strong point.

Job description: Bratton et al (1999 p. 199) defines job description as “a description that contains job title, department, purpose, overall duties and responsibilities.” This means that job description is derived from job analysis and it defines tasks and responsibilities that make up a job. Dessler (2005 p.167) says that an advert should give an accurate and detailed job description this is because the job description is the summary of task requirement of a job. Taking the case of the attached job advert of African trade Insurance Agency, Key tasks embedded in the job are logically outlined. For example, day to day management, overall leadership and performance attainment among others, this enables the reader or potential applicant to evaluate himself incase he is able to manage them, this in a way sorts out applicants. It has indicated qualifications and experience required which could be incorporated within candidate profile. This specifies the type of competence required which helps to eliminate day dreamers from applying. It appeals only to the people of a particular

class of 'technical know how' hence avoiding/eliminating any body. Job advert statements and descriptions are credible; it does not attract dreamers- Clear skills needed.

Job Specification: Job Specification in some cases is referred to as Person's Specification. Okumbe (2001) describes job specification as the minimum acceptable qualifications that an employee should possess so as to perform a given job successfully. To Okumbe, job specification defines in details the academic and professional qualifications which are required by an employee. This is very important for an effective advertisement as McKenna (2002) says that Job specification or person's specification which gives the summary of worker's qualification should be easily identifiable in any effective advertisement. Bratton (1999) notes that, against each job description, there is the specification of standards of performance which can be summarized in Alex Rodger (1952) format for personnel specification in the seven point plan focusing on;

Physical characteristics (health and appearance)
Attainments (educational experiences and qualifications)
General intelligence (intellectual capacity)
Special aptitudes (facility with hands, numbers and communication skills)
Interest (cultural and sports)
Disposition (likeable, reliable and persuasive)
Special circumstance (prepared for work shifts and excessive travels)²

Alternatively, McKenna (2002) cites Munro Fraser (1958) outlining a format for personnel specification as follows;

Impact on other (through physique, appearance; mode of expression)
Acquired qualification (education, training and experience)
Innate attitudes (quick to grasp things, appetite for learning)
Motivation (set of goals and is determined to achieve them)
Adjustment (stable with high threshold for stress and relates well to others)³

The attached advertisement shows the kind of person that the Company would wish to employ. Here the advert highlighted the educational levels, skills, experiences and personal skills required of the applicant. To Bratton (1999), personnel specification is very important

² McKenna. & Beech, N., (2002). *Human Resource Management: A Concise Analysis*. London: Financial Times Prentice Hall. p 143

³ Ibid p 143

because it is a useful framework within which a number of candidates could be assessed. McKenna (2002) in consonance with Bratton (1999) says that it is essential because it tells the readers or potential applicants about the type of person needed to fill the vacant position. He says that “It provides a bench mark on the desirable qualities needed.” The attached advert defines the person’s specification required. This is one of its major strong points.

Job roles: Job roles are the specific duties and responsibilities that a job holder is to perform. McKenna (2002) says that a good job advertisement should provide brief but sufficient details about the salient features of the job. This should cater for the duties and responsibilities that are expected of the job applicants and responsibilities in the job. There is the outline of job role and purpose. Torrington (2005) says that job roles should be clearly listed in any job advert so as to attract the right candidates. This attached job advert caters for the job roles and also indicates the size, responsibility, timescale, and territory of role outline of ideal candidate profile - expressed in 'second-person.' The job role helps to appeal to the

Easy reading: McKenna (2002) says that a good advert should present items precisely, concisely and in attractive forms. This makes it easy to read. They have used simple language without jargon words and it attracts the eyes. The language used is familiar to readers, besides it used a common medium of communication. That is, a common newspaper. It is reaching to people of all ages conveniently. It used short sentences in the description of the business or organization, job roles and job description. This attracts attention of the readers because the words are few and to the point.

Relevant language: Language is the most commonly used medium of communication. In the sense of advertisement, the language used should be applicable to the target group and also be appealing to them. In the words of Cole (2002 p 180), “a good advertisement should have a language which is intrinsically appealing.” This means that the language to be used in a job advertisement should be friendly to all kinds of people, be it children, adults, women and of every race and it should conform to the legal requirements. And above all, it should captivate the attention of the potential applicants.

Contact information: one of the qualities of a good job advert according to Mondy (1999) is that an advert should indicate how an applicant is to respond to the job advertisement. For

example, applying in person, making a telephone call and sending Resume (curriculum vitae) through email or fax among other things. This calls for the necessary contacts of the organization to be indicated in the job advertisement. The advertisement by African trade insurance agency prompts an action and provides a clear instruction for the next action or response. Contact details necessary are well displayed. For example, address, phone, fax, email and website address; it calls upon interested candidate to call a telephone number or write to an email addresses which is attached. This does not leave the interested applicant in dilemma. Response and application instructions details are availed.

Diversity in the society: We live in a world or social, political and economic differences cutting across gender, race, culture, religion among others. With few exceptional cases, jobs should be open to all irrespective of gender and race. Mondy (1999) says that a good job advert should have contents that support diversity, that is, no preference for race, gender as qualification for the job. McKenna (2002) commends that job adverts should elicit applications from all qualified people. The job advert by African trade insurance agency has clearly stated the shown that quality of openness to all qualified applicants irrespective of race and gender. This is a very strong point that stands out from the job advert because only job related issues are indicated in it.

Application instruction: This is the mode of response required from the potential applicants. McKenna (2002) comments that mode of application should be identified by the potential applicants in the job adverts. This should appear in the job advert because it directs the readers on how to apply. The attached job advert has clearly shown this. It has given the address and for submitting their curriculum vitae and additional instruction to them on how to fill ATI's personal history form. This does not leave the potential applicants in dilemma.

In summary, the job advert bears what Dessler (2005) calls the classical AIDA selling format encompassing Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action. Attracts attention from appropriate job-seekers to the advert so that they don't miss it out or ignore it. This is because the banner or the headline is impressive enough, that is, well organized and aesthetic. It also attracts relevant interest by establishing relevance in the minds of the ideal candidates. It creates the desire to pursue the job because it presents it as what looks like a great opportunity which is

appeals and rewarding. The job advertisement spotlights the job's interest. Dessler (2005) says that a good job advert should keep the target audience in mind. Mondy (1999) furthers this idea by saying that a good job advertisement should appeal to the self interest of the prospective employees by emphasizing the unique qualities and show why they should be interested in the job advertised.

WEAKNESSES OF THE JOB ADVERTISEMENT ATTACHED

The following are some of the weaknesses that have been identified in the advertisement of African Trade Insurance Agency.

The advertisement is non interactive with the potential applicants: A good job advert is always characterized by the nature of getting the reader involved. Refer to the reader as 'you' and use the second person ('you', 'your' and 'yours' etc) in the description of the requirements and expectations of the candidate and the job role. This helps people to visualize themselves in the role. It involves them. The job advert of African Trade insurance agency attached, to a great extent appears non interactive with the potential applicants; It does not appear to get the readers involved because it did not refer to the reader as 'you' but rather 'the candidate.' Even the outline of job roles and purpose are not expressed in the 'second-person'. For example, it states that "the candidate must fill in the ATI personal form..." To bring closer the readers, I would have Instead of said "You will be required to fill in the ATI personal history form..." This pushes away the potential candidate aside.

Equal opportunity: This is the provision of an environment of free and fair judgment and selection of the job applicants. Mondy (1999) says that a good job advert should encourage the potential applicants of job justice through phrases like 'there is equal employment opportunity for all.' This should appear in the job advert. McKenna (2002) says that job applicants should be given a chance to demonstrate their ability irrespective of their sex, race, religion and disability. Therefore assurance of these should be highlighted in the job advert. This motivates qualified persons to apply because they feel that Equal opportunity for all applicants in analysis of applications (that is, during short listing and interviews) is

guaranteed in the job advertisement statement. In the job advertisement by African trade and insurance agency however, this assurance to the potential applicants that justice or fairness will be the rule during the analysis of the applicants is not indicated. This leaves a room of doubt and reservation to the potential applicants. Besides that above, the job advert does not give Explanation of recruitment process; Items like short listing and interviews are not numerated

Salary: Salary or salary guide is not indicated in the job advert. Griffin (1999) asserts that every job advert should at least have salary range listing the starting salary scale for the position. Information about how employees may be eligible for additional compensation. For example, sales commissions, performance bonuses, annual raises should be included. This makes it less impressive to the potential candidates/readers to apply. Cole (2002) says that a good advert as I noted in characteristics should show the salary or if it is negotiable, it should at least show a salary guide. This advert could have deliberately chosen not to put the salary because of the organization's salary secrecy policy. But research has shown that it is better to include it always as Barber (1998) asserts that a good indication of salary is essential if employers are to attract a useful number of appropriate replies.

Additional benefits from the job: Other package details or guide are missing on the job adverts.⁴ For example, pension, cars and other benefits that the applicant should know before making a move to apply for the job. This limits the goodness of the job advert hence its weakness.

Job conditions: Koontz (1990) says that selecting an employee effectively, requires a clear understanding of the nature and purpose of the position which is to be filled. An objective analysis of the position, requirements must be made and as far as possible, the job must be designed to meet the organizational and individual needs, the job must be evaluated and compared so that the incumbents(problems) can be treated equitably. Job Watch (2005) not only calls for the existence of clear terms and conditions, but, it also prohibits any company

⁴ <http://www.businessballs.com/jobadvertiswriting.html> [viewed on 22nd November 2009]

from giving misleading terms and conditions in the job advertisement. This implies that the job conditions should be clearly outlined. Conditions of the job are not clearly presented in the advert. For example, whether the role is full-time or permanent or a short-term contract, whether it presents with a lot of traveling or it is within a difficult or hazardous surrounding. This which is a necessity for an effective advertisement is not explicitly stated in the advert. This makes the job advert inadequate to yield the desired responses for the potential job applicants.

Performance oriented words: This are words which create into the applicant the idea of self less service and maximum performance. McKenna (2002) says that a good advert should match recent development in the human resource management. In the job description and person's specification, the job advert missed out to reflect the recent cultural shift in Human Resource Management; that is, creative management of change and performance oriented words like to 'initiate', achieve, stimulate and others have missed out.

Conclusion

The job advertisement by African Trade Insurance Agency that is attached bears a considerable number of strengths which makes it a realistic job and advert. However, the weaknesses identified in it should be looked at critically in case of future job advertisement to elicit the best applicants/candidates for the job advertised. McKenna and beech (2002), asserts that in the mind of the recruiter, it should be clear that the potential applicant has a choice to apply or not to apply. Therefore, the advertisement should assist rather than to hinder the applicant in deciding whether or not they are interested in joining the organization.

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