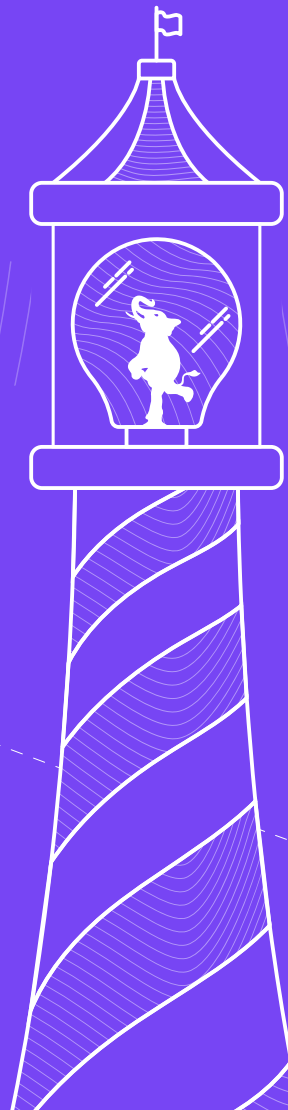


PUTTING YOUR CANDIDATES FIRST

# A best practice guide to careers sites



EXPERIENCES THAT CONNECT



# A best practice guide to **career sites**

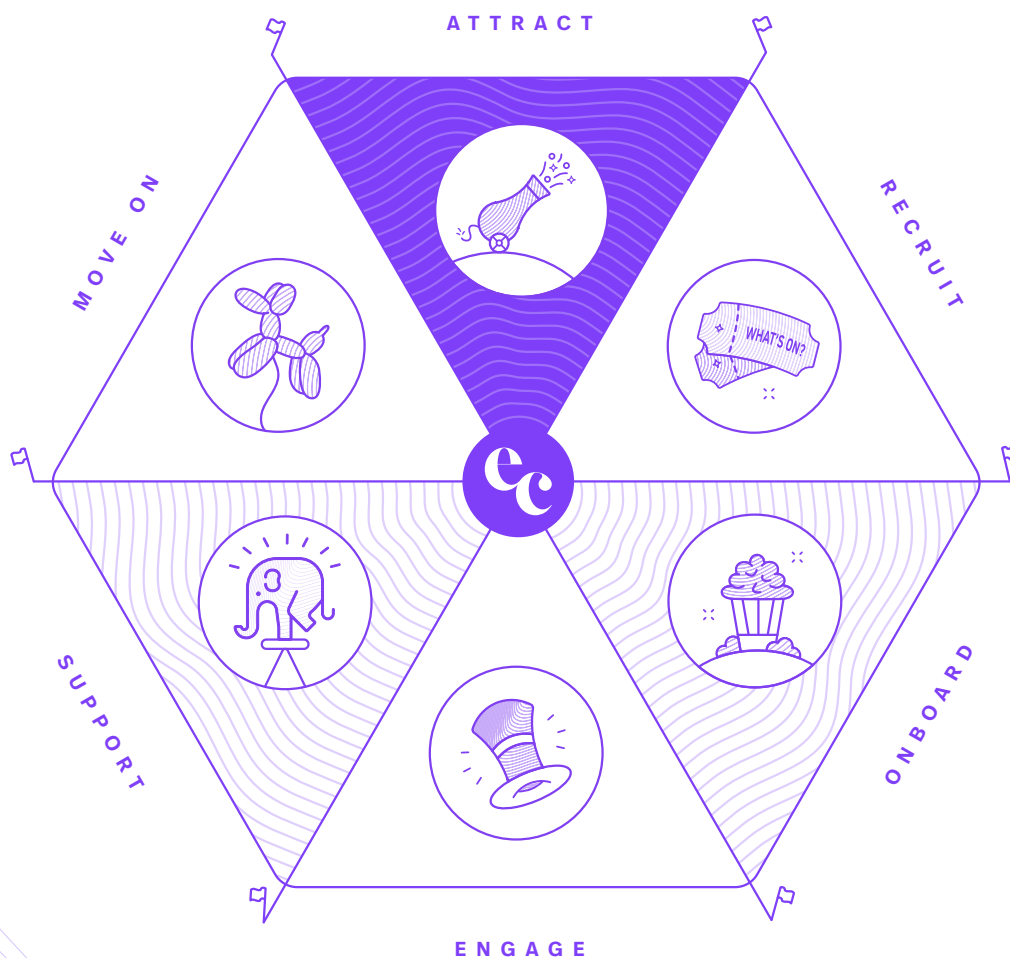
The Covid-19 pandemic may well be behind us – but that doesn't mean recruitment will get any easier in 2022. It will still be tough. In fact, it's never been tougher. Candidates now demand more. They want flexible, hybrid employment and a greater work-life balance. And rightly so. And with every new societal shift to come, there'll be changes in job seekers' behaviour that you'll need to stay on top of to be competitive.

So, it's not enough just to have a careers site. It has to work for you. And work hard. It has to seamlessly guide the candidate through the content and show them exactly what they're looking for – not just what you want to tell them. And it has to make people feel good about engaging with your organisation, from their very first click. Your careers site also has to withstand the rigours of ever-changing algorithms and be a living, evolving, relevant asset that appears in job seekers' search results.



# Why you need this guide and what's in it...

Candidate attraction is the first touchpoint in your employee lifecycle, so to help you get that right, we've created this useful guide. Use it to review your careers site and assess whether it's up to tackling today's tough recruitment market. The guide outlines the core features of an outstanding careers site and explains why you should have them. You'll also find tips on the kind of content candidates really value and when they want to experience it.

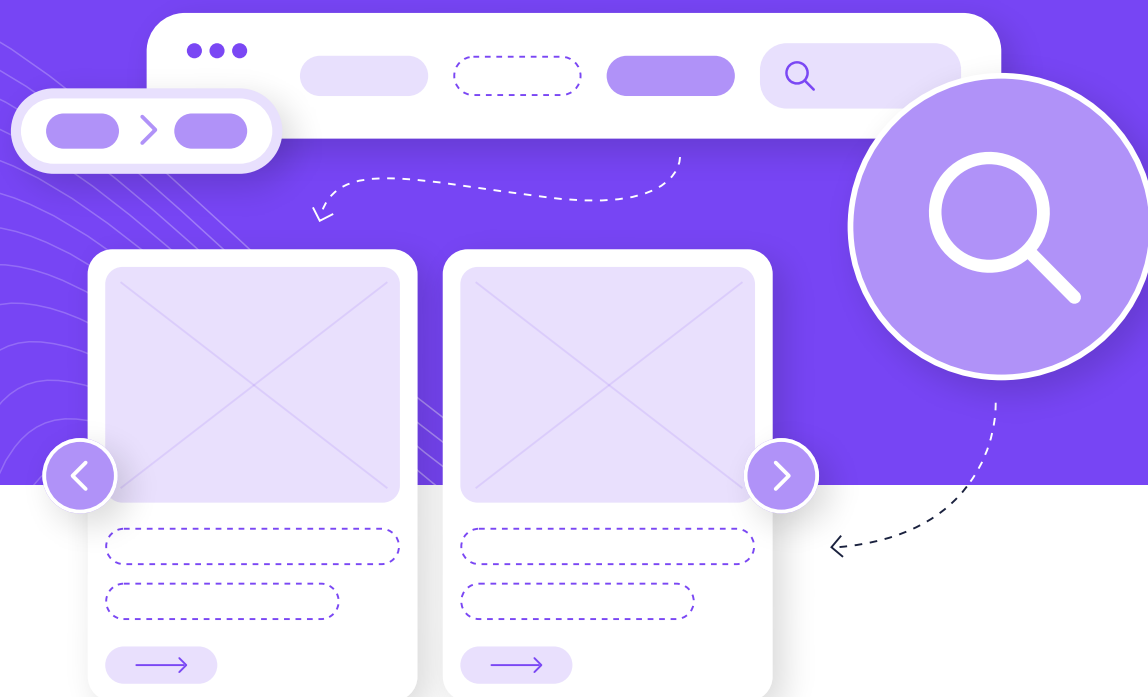


## 01

# Building a solid core structure

It might be seen as a marketing asset by your organisation, but your careers site is a tool for the candidate. It should be designed around their journey and what they want to know, not what your organisation wants to tell them.

Candidates visit a careers site with intentions, whether it's to look for a job to apply for, or to research the company before an interview. Use these motivations to serve up your content in a meaningful way. You'll need to get the following core features right to ensure you have a fit-for-purpose careers site.



# Navigation

Is your site logically mapped out and is it easy to find your way around? People need to have a great experience when they use it. So it's critical to ensure candidates find the information they want as quickly as possible. The journey should be seamless and easy, every step of the way.

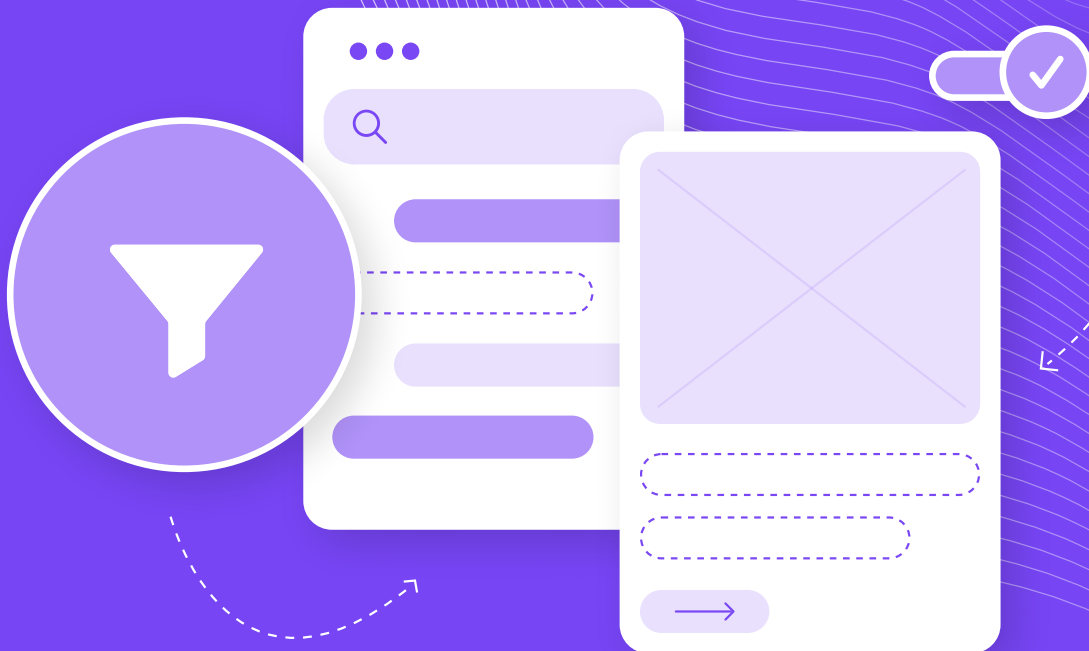
When a site is easy to use and fulfils people's needs, they are more likely to stay longer, have a positive experience and gain a good impression of you as an employer. Inadequate signposting, missing links and unfathomable menus – and they'll click off.

These are our tips to help you create a great user experience:

- Use simple navigation that's designed around the user's wants.
- Make it natural and easy to get back to where they were if they take a wrong turn.
- Ensure the user interface (UI) is designed for the user's journey and motivations.
- Intuitive navigation will give the user a positive experience.

# Searchability

Does your site come up in Google searches? People need to be able to find your site, either when they're looking for you or the jobs you have. Unless you have bottomless pockets, you shouldn't rely on advertising every time you need to attract candidates.



Use well written code, keywords, page descriptions and search-related content so your site is optimised for Google. Research to get this right is undervalued and often overlooked. By understanding what terms people are using to search for jobs, to find your careers site – and your competitors' – can have a staggering impact on the number of relevant visitors you can drive to your site.



# Responsive on all devices

Can your site be used on desktops, laptops, phones, tablets and watches? It needs to function properly no matter what device people are using. When links don't work or pages aren't displayed properly, users will get frustrated and leave. By ignoring certain devices, you're excluding certain demographics.

Ensuring your site works brilliantly on all devices may mean creating subtly different experiences for mobile, tablet and desktop. Yes, this does mean more time and effort, but it will improve diversity in your talent pool, so it's almost non-negotiable.





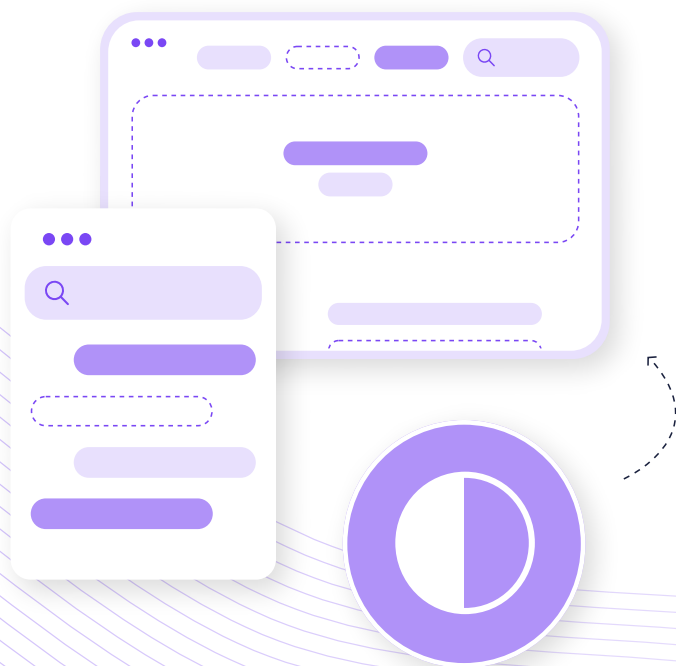


# Accessibility

Does your site meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)?

People with additional needs or neuro-diverse characteristics should have equal access to your content – and have the same great experience. If they can't read it, navigate it or cope with the sensory stimulation, they'll get frustrated and leave your site. To ensure your site is accessible, you'll need:

- Clear graphics
- Easy-to-read and easy-to-understand text
- Proper typography settings
- Optimal contrast
- Optimal readability level
- No flashy animations
- No radiant colour palettes
- Assigned aria areas and alts







# Speed

Does your site load quickly? It's what people expect. They won't want to wait for images or video to load. And when navigating their way around, every slow loading page will lead to increasing frustration, resulting in users leaving the site. Here are some ways to ensure this doesn't happen:

- Reduce the file sizes of videos and images.
- Minify code files.
- Use lazy page loading to only download the content being viewed on the screen.
- Use third party services to reduce server load or improve your server technologies.



# Creating engaging content

Organise your content around what the candidate is looking to do on your site. Where they are in their journey with you will determine what information they want to see. For example, they may be doing a quick job search, researching the benefits you offer or looking for tips on interview prep. It's so important to reflect the culture and environment they'll be working in if they join you, and the people they'll be working with.

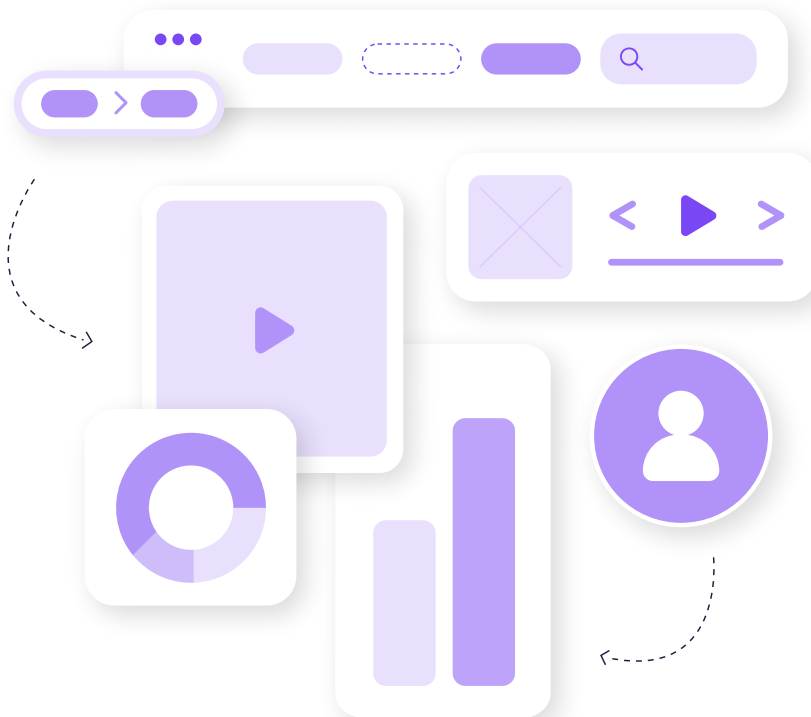


# Visual content

Social media has impacted on people's attention span, the length of time they spend reading and their preferences for imagery and video. For many, it's easier and quicker to consume and retain information through imagery. It allows you to communicate your employer brand, culture and people much more effectively. Dynamic features using imagery see a 200% improvement in engagement.

Examples of these are:

- Videos
- Animation
- Infographics
- People
- Environment



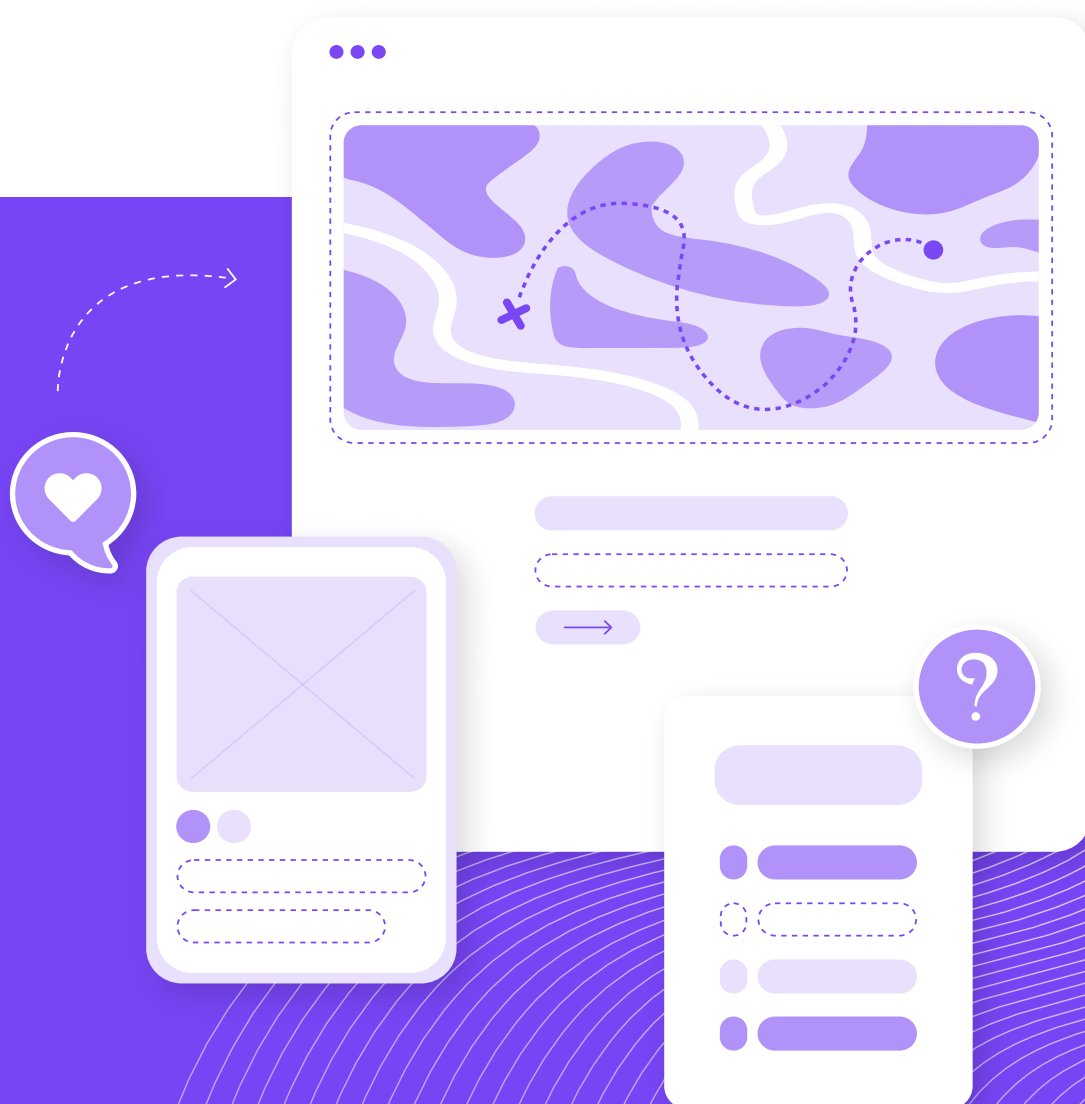
## How to effectively use images, videos and dynamic functions:

- Sprinkle engaging videos and animations throughout your site to help tell your story.
- Feature your people, their experiences and their workplaces wherever possible.
- Convert dry information such as recruitment processes or corporate policies into creative visualisations such as infographics.
- Use components like animated gifs, dynamic effects, sliders, galleries and interactive features to save space.
- Use rollover effects to serve up more helpful information on the spot.



# Interactive features

There are plenty of interactive features that can deliver information in a more engaging way, increase 'stickiness' (users staying longer on your site) and encourage people to decide if they'd be a good fit for the business before they apply. Incorporating multimedia options like podcasts and video walk-throughs of your premises provides greater accessibility and enables people to choose the format they learn best in or have time for. Let's take a look at some good examples:





## Quizzes and games

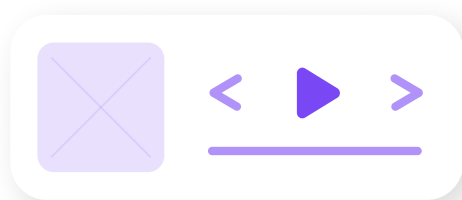
People learn in different ways and interactive elements like games help people absorb information better. They can also help bring your employer brand to life and start to build the type of engagement with your audience that will turn them into a motivated candidate.

## Employee recognition

Making your employee recognition externally available (rather than sitting on the intranet) is a way to build up your own 'Glassdoor' style rating system. People usually write online reviews once they've left an organisation, so seeing colleagues praising each other is a more effective way to get reviews – from current rather than former employees. We helped our client Cygnet Health Care incorporate a recognition scheme into their careers site and it's actively used by employees to acknowledge and commend their colleagues.

## Podcasts

These are also a great way to bring your employer brand to life via sound – and are particularly useful when candidates have little time to browse written/visual content, or if their personal preference is audio. We incorporated a podcast into the Cygnet Health Care careers site, which brings Cygnet colleagues' experiences to life. These podcasts are some of the most popular content on the site.





## Virtual tours

A big hit during the pandemic, virtual tours allowed people to explore their potential new workplace without visiting in-person. Now, they're here to stay. They let people experience your environment and glimpse into your culture before deciding to apply.

## Maps

When you have multiple locations, it's useful to allow users to click a map, choose the destination and find out more. It also helps when people are coming for an interview to have the correct address information on your site. Google maps listings can't be relied on and result in late and lost candidates.

## Social proof

Video testimonials and real employee reviews bring to life your employer brand through your people rather than your marketing team. They are more trusted by candidates and allow for a greater connection with the culture.

## Social wall

This is a live or filtered feed of posts from social media such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. It can help consolidate your social accounts and tell your employer story through all your content in one place.







# Must-see content

All potential employees will want to know certain things about your business and working for you. Some will be more important than others, and different candidates will have different priorities in what they're seeking from an employer. However you choose to serve up this content, it must be present in one format or other:

- Values
- Behaviours
- Ethics and corporate social responsibility
- Learning and career development
- Training
- Benefits
- Team
- Diversity and inclusion commitments
- People stories
- What happens when you join

Your company's mission statement, purpose and values are almost always on your corporate site, but should be included on your careers site too. Along with your full benefits package, training and development opportunities. Your policies for diversity and inclusion, holidays, corporate social responsibility and the environment are also increasingly important for some candidates.

People stories sell. But they can be a lot of work to collate. And even more difficult to produce in an engaging way, especially if your employees are remote. But it's worth investing the time and effort to create these.



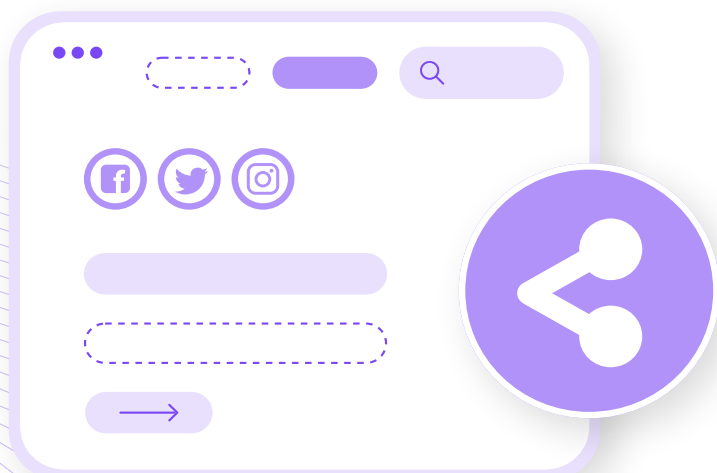
# Job search

It should be easy for candidates to find a suitable role in your business. You've gone to great lengths to get them to your site, don't let the job search lose them. Keep them there by ensuring you have:

- Meaningful search filters
- A solid job alert feature
- Talent pool CRM

## Search filters

These need to be relevant to how the candidate looks for a job – rather than how your organisation categorises your roles. Use logical criteria for a job seeker, whether they are a highly qualified professional or a local entry-level candidate. Ensure users can filter usefully too, for example, by profession, job title, seniority and town, rather than how the business is structured.





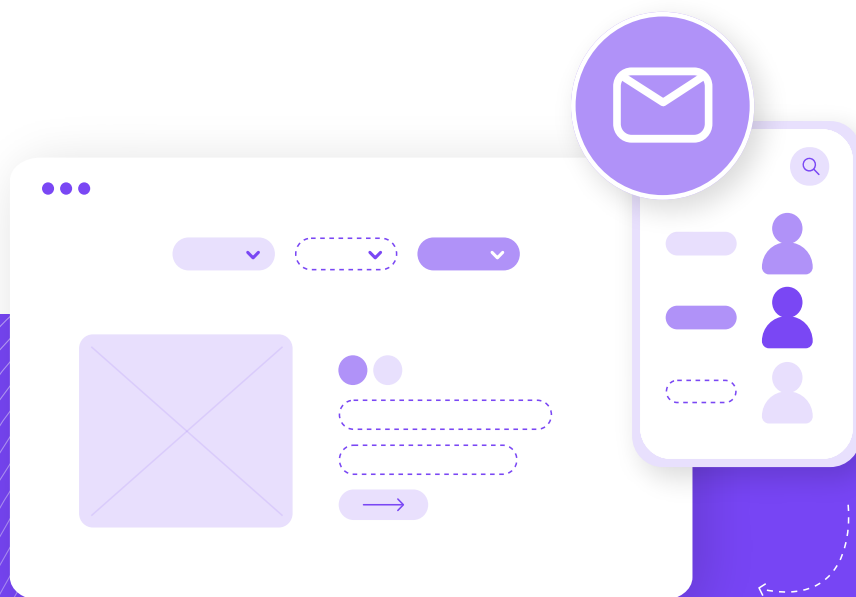
## Job alerts

Most ATS providers offer a job alert sign-up feature, but structuring your alert triggers requires more thought than you might expect. Job alerts go hand in hand with logical and relevant search filters. Get those right and you won't annoy your candidates with irrelevant or intrusive job alerts.

## CRM feature

This has to be more than a 'job alert' sign up that sends automated emails when new jobs become available. You want to be able to send people relevant and timely communications that build your reputation and engage them with your culture. So when a job becomes available, they're raring to go, eager to work for you and are more likely to do better at interview.

This approach will often require segmentation questions to tailor the emails you send out – backed up with a solid communications plan. This will ensure you are regularly communicating with candidates, sending them relevant, interesting content that helps build your reputation and addresses any recruitment or retention issues you commonly have. The process can be automated, but should be owned and managed by a dedicated person.





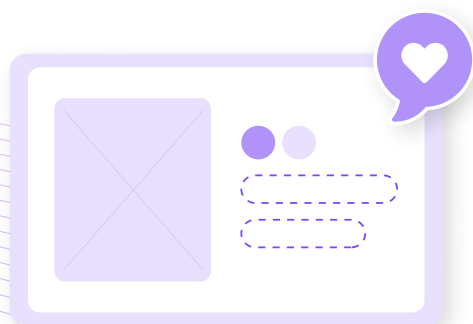
## Job listings

Search behaviour and the rise of job-specific algorithms mean many people will bypass the whole careers site when searching for roles. So all the carefully crafted content on your site potentially won't be seen by candidates. Incorporating the most relevant information into your job listings, as well as imagery of the team and environment, will mean it's more likely to be seen. Be sure to include:

- Benefits
- Behaviours
- Team/environment pictures
- Social sharing buttons
- Email job function
- Save job feature
- Video job advert or department/team video

## Job adverts not job descriptions

Encourage your recruiters to post adverts, not job descriptions, when uploading roles onto your site or ATS. There is a difference. Creating a job advert template to follow will guide them to only include the most relevant information. Avoid internal jargon and unnecessary information an external candidate wouldn't understand.



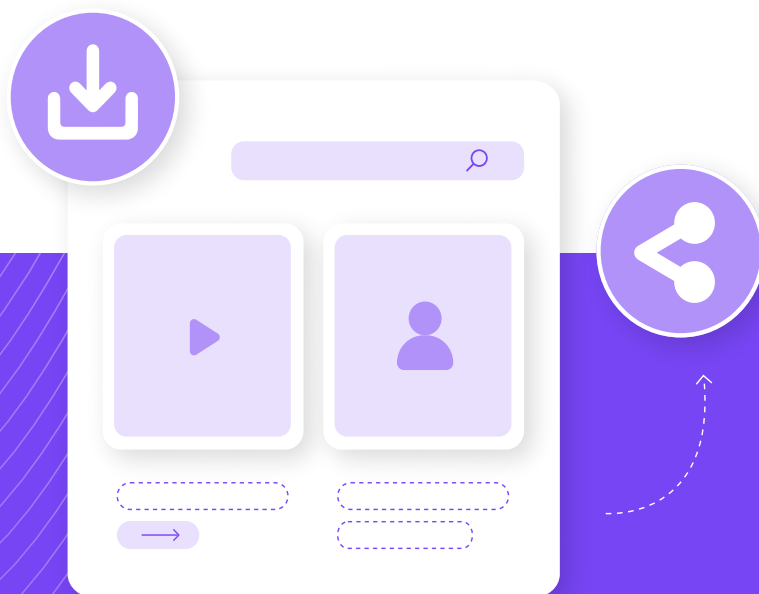
## Save and share

Being able to save and share the job means candidates can apply more easily at a later time or date and help you seed the role out to others. People want to do things quickly and effortlessly, and this includes applying for jobs too. If they have to search again, they may not remember where or how they found you.

## Video job adverts

These help bring the role to life and make the advert more accessible to people who may need an alternative way of consuming content. They also allow you to involve your employees and let candidates feel your culture and brand personality through your people.

Incorporating most of these elements should be straight forward – and standard features of most ATS providers, although some development may be required to incorporate video and imagery into job page templates. It's definitely worth the investment because it results in higher quality candidates and greater understanding of the roles and the business during the recruitment process.





# Feedback

## Measuring site usability and candidate satisfaction

Incorporating a feature to measure how satisfied visitors have been with the site experience, or to collect recommendations from them will give you valuable feedback on how you can improve your site. And it will save on research exercises further down the line to measure site effectiveness.

Hosting a feedback form and/or satisfaction questionnaire is straight-forward to incorporate into a careers site. This will give you a mixture of results from candidates at different stages of their application journey.

Measuring candidate satisfaction on the application process can also be done online but in a protected environment, only accessible to candidates who have gone through the application process. This will give you valuable information about their experiences once they have applied. For any research, you will need a dedicated resource to monitor, collate and analyse the results, then feed these into the relevant teams to continually improve the candidate experience. Alternatively, you can outsource this element to a digital partner.



# Need help?

At Electric Circus we're an experience-led team. We understand the challenges of recruiting, retaining and developing talent. And we're digital specialists who can advise and guide you on designing a careers site that will give candidates the best experience.

Our expertise blends creativity, digital solutions and communications strategy to create experiences that engage and connect with job seekers, candidates and employees at every phase of the talent lifecycle. Get in touch to find out how we might help you.

[www.electriccircus.co.uk](http://www.electriccircus.co.uk)





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