
A specific, clear and actionable job ad.

The ad I've used to find a personal assistant, more than once.
Very specific about the person and the work, so the right people
recognise themselves and the wrong ones don't apply.

Why I'm sharing this.

I've used this job ad a few times to recruit staff. I'm sharing it because it might help you attract the right person, particularly for a personal assistant or technical role. It's very specific and quite operational, and that's why it works: the right people recognise themselves in it, and the wrong ones don't apply.

Feel free to adapt it for your own use if you're recruiting for a similar role, or get in touch at any time if you'd like more advice.

A note on dates. I wrote this ad some years ago, so a few of the tools have moved on. Skype is now Teams or Zoom, eLance is now Upwork, and Infusionsoft is now Keap. Swap in the tools, the pay and the details that fit your role.

The ad.

Wanted: an organised, detail-oriented personal assistant, organiser and implementer. A great opportunity for the right person.

Hi there,

I have a branding and marketing business and I need someone to work with me on a variety of tasks and projects. It's detail-oriented work, but in a marketing and branding environment.

I've put a lot of information below so you have a very clear idea of what I'm looking for. Overall, there are three key things that will make you a good fit for this role.

Three key things

1 **Attention to detail**

You are highly organised, detail-oriented and serious about organisation and getting things completed. You have probably been a personal assistant, organised events or done bookkeeping, because you are good at logistics and details, and you like to write lists and work from a checklist at all times. But you are also able to deal with people and help them get what they need. You like solving problems and being efficient.

2 **Common sense, initiative and accountability**

You need to be able to make decisions and not rely on me for everything. You need to be "street smart". At first I will spend a lot of time explaining things and making sure you have the knowledge you need, but then you will have the autonomy to make things happen. If I say, "I need to be in North Sydney between 10am and 2pm next Tuesday", I want you to organise it and have the details ready for me. What I don't want is questions about what time the plane should leave, whether I need a car booked, which credit card to use and so on. We will spend time at the start talking about the general rules that will guide you, then it's up to you to deliver.

3 Takes pride in the work, works hard, but enjoys the journey

I don't want to work with people who are not committed or who are hard work to be around. I want to work with someone who likes their work and wants to learn and grow. Ideally, we will work together for a number of years, and there will be good opportunities for you to learn, grow and become more successful.

More about the person I'm looking for

1 Enjoys working alone

You enjoy working alone and independently most of the time, with some phone or Skype contact some of the time. You'll work on your own, or in my office from time to time (we can decide this later). I work in a couple of different places, so some flexibility is needed. I'm very open to you working from home or another location if that suits you better, but we will need to meet face to face at least a couple of times a week.

2 Personable, but not a chatterbox

If you enjoy chit-chat with people and friends a lot, this probably isn't the role for you. Having said that, you will need to deal with people by email, and sometimes by phone or Skype. You will need to be personable and able to engage with them. They will often be my clients, so it's important you are professional and efficient. At times you will need to attend meetings with clients, so you'll need to be flexible about that. I'm happy to schedule them at times that suit us both.

3 Comfortable online

You are competent with the internet and savvy with social media, apps and doing business online. I will provide the content for social media and other programs, but you would use these programs, post information and keep them up to date. You would also monitor information and do some market research. I won't ask you to do anything creative, just to implement using systems that already exist or that you build to get these jobs done.

4 Well equipped

You have a really reliable computer with a fast internet connection, so you can work online and be available for emails and Skype calls. I'm happy to pay for any reasonable expenses you incur while doing your work.

5 Tech-savvy

You understand the online environment. Ideally you will have experience with a CRM database, such as Infusionsoft. Nothing is too advanced, but you must know things like Google Docs, setting up and using email, ordering online, booking flights, cars and hotels online, Excel and Word. Ideally you would also be a Mac user, but this is not critical.

6 Dependable

I'm talking about very dependable. Not the "this usually doesn't happen, but it happened again" type. I'd prefer you were the person at school who got the award for perfect attendance every year. As you'll see below, I'm happy with someone who needs flexibility with their time, but there will also be times when I need something done quickly, and I'll expect it to be done. I'm very fair about accommodating flexibility, and I'll expect the same in return.

7 Doesn't take things personally

You don't have your feelings hurt easily or get offended, you stay objective, and you like to use logic to make decisions. I will try to give direct and honest feedback, and sometimes this may seem harsh. It's important you don't take it personally. I'd expect you to be just as honest (and harsh) in your feedback to me :-)

8 Cool and relaxed, but always pushing

You are cool and relaxed, but always pushing to get things done. You like to take responsibility, and your main focus is always delivering results.

9 Usually available

You are usually available by email, Skype or phone. Over time we will schedule specific times to speak and meet online, but at first I'd like to be able to contact you more regularly.

10 Open to all circumstances

You might be a parent coming back into the workforce, or have other circumstances that make it harder for you to find work. That's fine with me. I'm asking a lot (with all the information I've provided here), so I'm willing to be very flexible about the kind of person and their circumstances. If traditional employment isn't for you, this may be perfect.

The main parts of the work

1 My calendar and email

Managing my calendar, finding information online and dealing with requests I get by email. I'll provide a set of rules to follow when answering email, and your knowledge of the way I work will grow over time. There will be some decision-making in this, and we'll refine it based on my feedback to you. Ultimately, you will manage most of my email and make all meeting appointments and bookings in my calendar.

2 Clients and reports

Meeting clients and writing reports and other information. If you're good at creative writing (brochures, blogs and so on), that would be great. I often need help in this area, so if you can do this type of work it would be wonderful.

3 The CRM database

Keeping my CRM database clean and making sure it works properly all the time. This includes entering information and setting up systems that save time in the long run. Ideally, you would also be able to go into the CRM database and set up marketing sequences. I can teach you how, but I'm looking for someone who is tech-minded and likes systems and processes.

4 Customers and suppliers

Dealing with customers and answering their questions. Where you can't answer without talking to me, you'd make a list and we'd go through it once a day. You'll need good writing and people skills to do this. We will develop specific follow-up systems for different types of customers, and you'll be expected to follow them and get the required outcome.

You would also work with other suppliers doing things like website development, video editing and graphic design. You'd need to keep projects moving and make sure deadlines are met. I use eLance and freelancer.com, so you'd need to use these systems. They're easy to use, but it would be an advantage if you already know them.

5 The details in my life

Organising the details in my life. This could include a wide variety of things, such as setting up appointments, getting information about people or companies, researching markets for potential joint venture partners and much more. It could also involve odd requests I can't think of right now, but in general I'll ask you to do more and more as your skills and your knowledge of the way I work grow.

6 Getting things done

Getting things done that I don't have time to do myself. You may need to organise couriers to collect and drop off items, follow up on work my suppliers are completing, and other similar jobs. This will require you to think on your feet and make decisions. I expect you to make some mistakes, and that's fine, as long as you learn from them.

7 Bookkeeping

Using my cloud-based accounting system to enter my expenses into the right accounts. This needs some bookkeeping knowledge (or a willingness to learn it). I'd email you receipts as I get them, and you'd enter them into the system so my accountant in Australia can use the information.

8 Travel

Booking flights, hotels and cars when I travel. This includes getting the best deal and doing it independently, without asking me questions all the time. I'll provide a set of rules for you to follow. You'd put the details into my calendar and make sure I have the information at hand when I need it. It also includes things like confirming details in advance, and generally making sure I have everything I need when I need it.

Is this you?

If you're the sort of person who likes to chat and deal with people all the time, this role is not right for you. This is organiser-type work, and you'll need to keep and develop checklists and work from them.

On the other hand, if you love organising things, operating effectively, using checklists and getting better and better at running through a pre-planned system, this might be perfect for you.

I really am looking for someone who is incredibly organised in their work and personal life, and who really doesn't like being disorganised or messy. Since there will be travel details and possibly work with my clients involved, it's important to me to find someone who is particularly meticulous about making sure every detail is sorted out, every time.

Look around your house. Is it so clean and organised that your friends tell you you're too uptight and a clean freak? Perfect. By the way, the reason I need someone clean and organised is that I'm kind of a mess. If you're a mess and you try to convince me you're organised, I'll find out, so don't waste your time.

I'm looking for a self-motivated, organised person who would like a stable role helping me keep my business organised. Just so you know, I try to do too many things at once, I sometimes turn up late for meetings, and I don't always send things I say I'll send on time (or at all). I'm forgetful, and I can be frustrating to deal with for someone like you. I have a habit of biting off more than I can chew, and I'm constantly creating new ideas and winning new clients, so it's important you're not freaked out by me doing lots of different things. You need to be organised but pragmatic. The most important thing is getting lots done effectively and efficiently.

However, I also understand myself very well, and I know that finding the right person to help in these areas will be extremely helpful for me. I'm a good person and I'm very approachable. I think this will be a very fulfilling role for the right person. I want someone who is committed, so they can grow in the role and enjoy doing it.

I'm also very good at what I do, and nearly everyone I work with says they learn a lot from me. I'm a problem solver and I love to teach others what I know. You will definitely have the chance to learn a lot from me, and I want you to grow in the role. If we're successful, we will employ other people who could work under your direction. I've been deliberately very direct, and a bit overbearing, about my requirements in this ad, but when you meet me you'll find I'm very friendly, easy-going and fun to be around. I have a close family and lots of good friends, and I like people. I'm also well connected in business and sport, and you're likely to meet other interesting people.

If you're good at doing what I need done, you'll enjoy your work and find it fulfilling. I have a total of [your budget] for this role, including wages, superannuation and so on. The salary is negotiable, and you can work as a contractor if you like. If you'd prefer to work four days a week, or on weekends instead of during the week, I'm open to that.

How to apply

Please send me an email that includes:

- Your career history: the jobs you've had, what your responsibilities were and who your boss was. Add what each of your previous employers would say were your strengths and weaknesses, and contact details for your previous bosses so I can check your references.
- A resume, if you have one.
- Confirmation that you meet each of the requirements listed above, including technical ability, computer and internet connection, time flexibility and the other items.

It's important that you tell me why you think you're a good match for what I've listed, with a particular focus on the organisational side and time flexibility.

I'll review every response personally, and I'll contact you if I think you're a good fit.

Thank you,
Ned Coten

Make it yours.

The ad works because it is honest about the role and about the boss. Keep that, and change everything else to fit your business. A Word version you can edit is at nedcoten.com/presentations/.

NED COTEN

**Don't seek to be a person of
Importance.
Seek to be a person of Value.**

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Ned Coten AM is an investor, board chair, and passionate volunteer in basketball & other sports. He has over 30 years of experience at every level of business, sport & technology within Australia and globally, based in Melbourne, Australia.

nedcoten.com