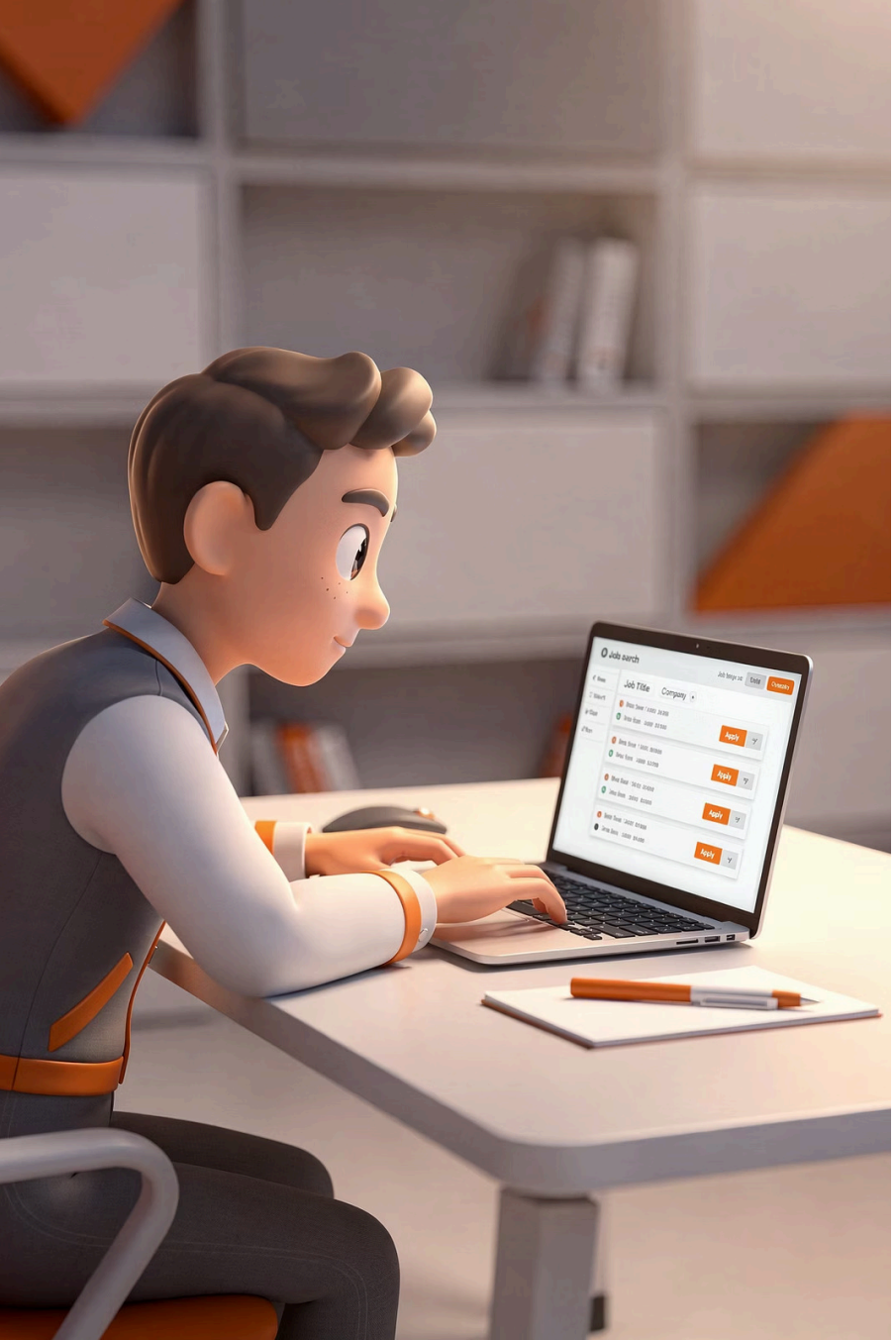


The Complete Guide to Job Listings — And How to Read Them Right

Spot quality listings. Filter out noise. Protect yourself from misleading ads. Find a serious job at a serious company.

Guide 1

The Perfect Job Listing

Guide 2

Spotting "Fluff" Listings

Guide 3

Fake Remote Listings

By Giovanni Lacqua — reciprocalinfluence.com

Introduction

This guide was created from a simple belief: **searching for a job should not be an obstacle course.** Yet every day, thousands of candidates waste hours on vague, misleading, or deliberately opaque job listings.

These three guides are a free, practical resource for anyone looking for a serious role at a serious company — without being misled by empty promises, 'competitive salaries' with no figures, or fake remote positions.

→ Recognise a transparent listing

Know exactly what a quality job ad looks like.

→ Decode 10 red flags

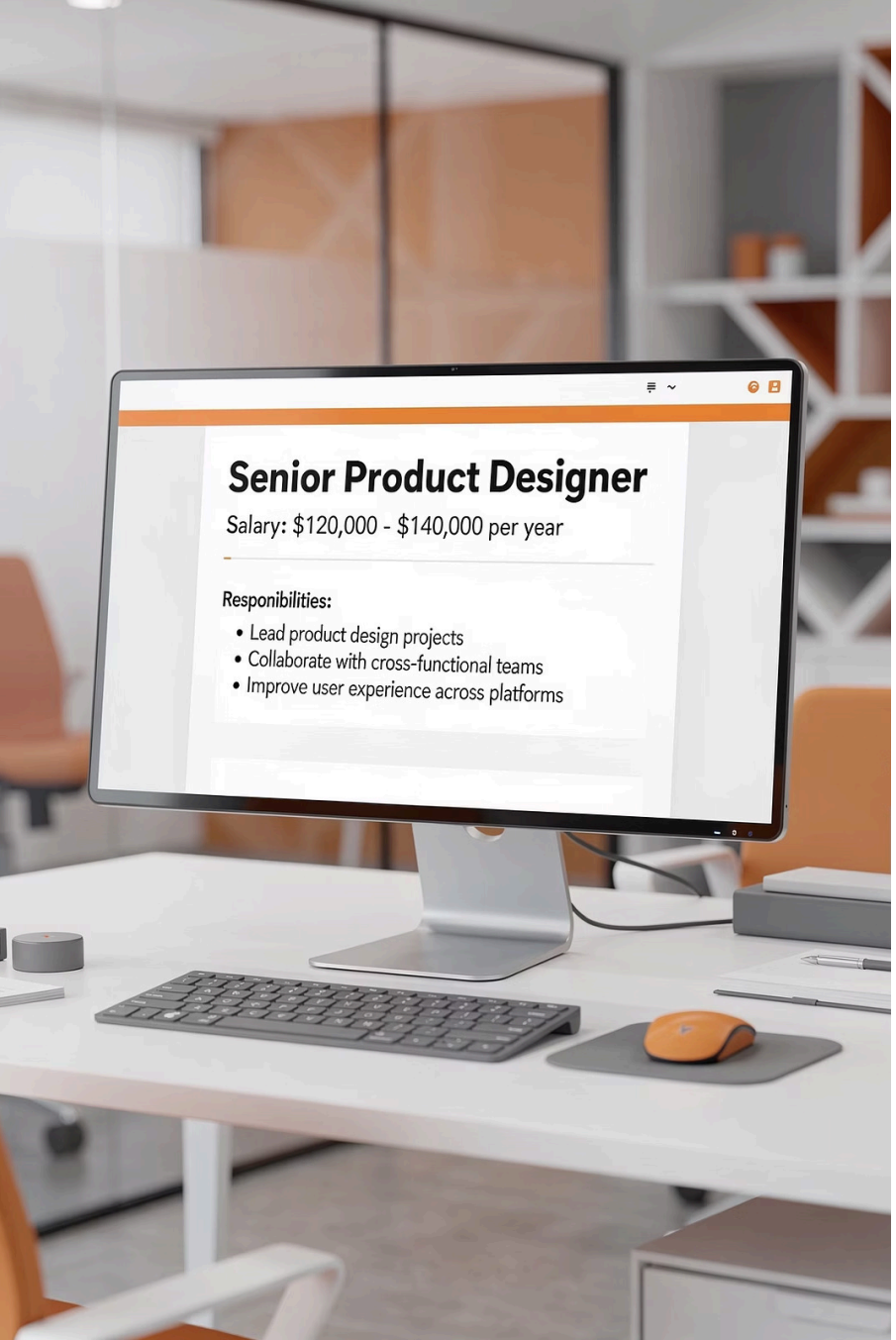
Recruiter-speak translated into plain English.

→ Filter fluff in 3 minutes

A practical checklist before you apply.

→ Defend against remote-washing

Including how to use AI as a smart filter.



GUIDE 1 OF 3

The Perfect Job Listing

How a good job listing is structured, how to read one as a candidate — and how to avoid being misled.

✓ Clear Salary Range

✓ Precise Responsibilities

✓ Defined Selection Process

✓ KPIs and Tools Specified

Anatomy of a Strong Listing

1

Clear Title

Exact role, seniority level, context. Good: *'Full-time Customer Support'*. Vague: *'Dynamic person for various activities'*.

2

Real Responsibilities

Concrete points: what you will do, tools used (CRM, Excel), rhythms and context (shifts, seasonal peaks).

3

Requirements Split

Must-have: few, clear, realistic. Nice-to-have: useful but not blocking. 18 'essential' requirements = they want a unicorn at pony prices.

4

Salary and Contract

RAL range, contract type, bonus rules, real benefits. If all of this is missing, it is not an oversight — it is a strategy.

5

Hours and Remote Policy

'Remote available' means nothing. You need: remote days, precise hours, travel (how often and where).

6

Selection Process

How many stages (HR + technical + test), indicative timelines, duration and format of any practical task.

GUIDE 1 — RED FLAGS

10 Red Flags — No Filter

Common recruiter-speak phrases decoded into plain English. If you spot these, ask the hard questions.

Multitasking / jack-of-all-trades

"You will manage social media, website, newsletter, customer support…" → 4 jobs in 1, paid as half.

We don't clock-watch

"We work by objectives, flexibility required." → Normalised overtime, often unpaid.

Internship with senior duties

"Intern: manage advertising, budget, strategy, suppliers." → Real work at internship cost.

Young and dynamic environment

"Fast pace, lots of energy!" → Likely pressure and high turnover.

Salary commensurate with experience

"Competitive pay, to be discussed." → They won't write it because it does not work in their favour.

Fast career growth

"Opportunities for rapid advancement." → A nice promise, often empty. Ask for a concrete example.

Unpaid trial

"One week on trial and then we decide." → Free work. If you generate value, it should be paid. Full stop.

Immediate urgency

"Immediate start, looking right now." → Emergency or zero planning. Ask: replacement or new hire?

Stress management required

"High stress tolerance required." → Stress is not the exception — it is the norm.

Self-employed with fixed hours

"Freelance collaboration, on-site 9–6." → Employee without protections.

GUIDE 1 — COMPARISON

Poor Listing vs. Strong Listing

Two real examples of the same B2B Sales role — one that fails candidates, one that respects them.

☒ Poor Listing

> *"Dynamic sales professional sought. Total autonomy required, stress management, important targets. Competitive compensation."*

- No salary range or contract type
- No KPIs, no tools, no process
- You will self-generate all leads
- 'Stress' is the baseline, not an exception
- 'Competitive' = figure withheld deliberately

✓ Strong Listing

"B2B Sales Account (Mid-Level)"

- KPI: 12 appointments/month
- Base salary: £32–38k + variable up to 20%
- Variable scheme: written and agreed upfront
- Remote: 2 days/week
- Travel: ~2 days/month
- Selection: 2 interviews + 30-min role-play

GUIDE 1 — TOOLS

7 Killer Questions at Your First Interview

01

What is the #1 priority of this role?

02

How is success measured after 60–90 days?

03

Who do I report to and work with daily?

04

What tools and processes do you use?

05

What does a typical week look like? Real hours and average workload?

06

Why is this position open: replacement or new headcount?

07

What is the salary range and how is the variable structured?

Clarity is a sign of respect. Expect it. If a listing is vague, it is rarely a mystery — it is a deliberate choice.

GUIDE 2 OF 3

Spotting "Fluff" Job Listings

On platforms like Indeed and LinkedIn, thousands of listings are published every day. Checking each one individually would cost too much. **Your best defence is your own checklist.**

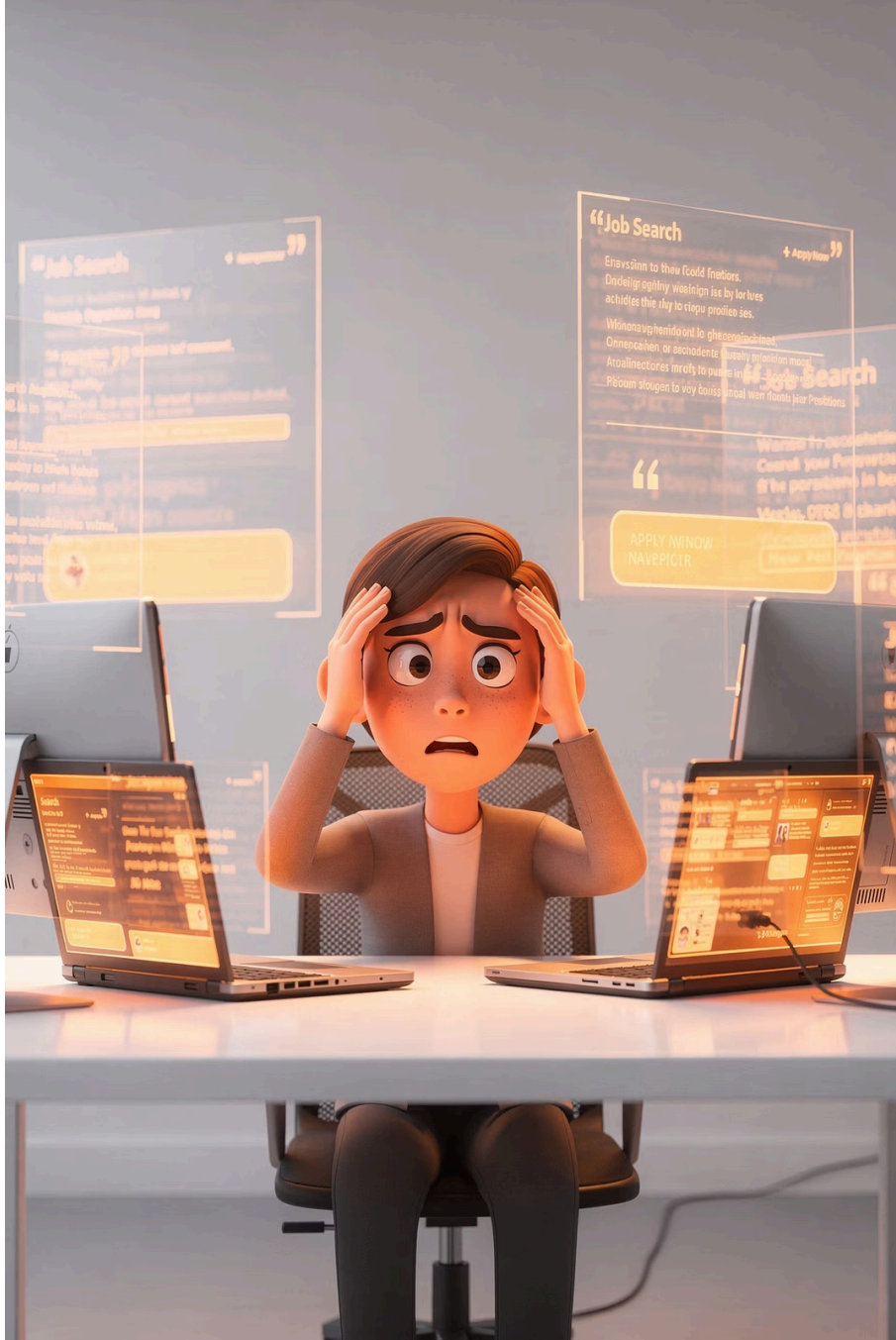
A serious listing includes:

- Concrete responsibilities
- A verifiable, findable company
- Clear location / remote explanation
- Real working hours
- Contract type and salary range

Fluff listings talk about:

- 'Extraordinary opportunity'
- 'Rapid growth'
- 'High earnings'
- 'Work from the beach'

If you cannot understand 'what' and 'on what terms' — it's fluff.



GUIDE 2 — 3-MINUTE CHECKLIST

How to Filter Fluff in 3 Minutes

1

Is the company verifiable?

Does it have a website with contact details, address, company number? If not — usually not worth your time.

2

Is the listing concrete?

Must include at least 3 of: specific responsibilities, contract type, salary range, hours/shifts, remote policy. If all is vague — skip it.

3

Are they taking you off-platform?

Watch out for: 'Message me on WhatsApp/Telegram', suspicious links, no official company contact details.

Instant Disqualifiers

☒ No contract or salary

Only vague promises, zero concrete detail.

☒ 'Guaranteed earnings'

High figures with no explanation or conditions.

☒ They ask you for money

Course fee, kit, membership: you pay to work.

☒ Documents upfront

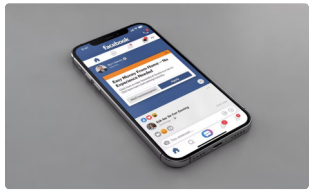
Sensitive data requested before any interview.

☒ Immediate WhatsApp push

They take you off-platform right away.

GUIDE 2 — SPECIAL CASES

Facebook Listings, Video Pitches & Commission-Only



Avoid Facebook Job Listings

Publishing is easy and verification nearly impossible. If a listing interests you, find the same offer on the company's official website before taking any action.

Unsolicited Video Pitch

Requests for a 60–90 second video before any human conversation signal volume recruitment. Avoid when contract type, salary, and a verifiable company are missing. **Ready reply:** *'Before sending a video, could you confirm the salary range and contract type?'*

'10–12% Commission': Handle with Care

Usually means commission-only sales — almost all the risk is yours. Ask immediately: Is there a base salary? 10–12% of what? When is commission paid? Do you provide leads? Are expenses covered?

Final rule: A serious listing tells you what you will do and on what terms. Fluff sells a dream and asks for your time and data before telling you anything important.

GUIDE 3 OF 3

Fake Remote Job Listings

More and more listings claim to be 'Remote', but then reveal requirements incompatible with working from home: company car, field work, assigned territory, frequent travel. The result: **wasted time for candidates, recruiters, and serious companies alike.**

Field Roles

Positions requiring physical presence misclassified as remote.

Hidden Travel

High mobility required but not highlighted in the listing.

Vague Listings

Promotional language with no concrete operational details.

Opaque Pay

Ambiguous figures or ranges with no fixed/variable breakdown.

Ghost Salaries & Remote-Washing

'Ghost Salary': Figures That Mean Nothing

'Salary commensurate with experience'

No concrete data. The actual figure is withheld because it would not attract good candidates.

'Up to £5,000/month'

A bait figure with no real conditions. Does this include commission? Is it achievable?

'£1,500–£2,500/month — NO base salary'

This is commission-only freelance, not a salary. The range is meaningless.

Remote-Washing: Red Flag Language

When these phrases **replace** essential information (responsibilities, KPIs, contract, pay), the listing becomes impossible to evaluate seriously.

> *"Full-remote: work from home or on the beach — the important thing is you meet your weekly objectives."*

> *"Flexible hours: you decide how much to work — we care about results, not hours."*

Practical rule: If the listing is more 'motivational' than informative → category: TO VERIFY or DISCARD.

GUIDE 3 — YOUR DEFENCE

Non-Negotiable Criteria & AI as a Smart Filter

Define Your Criteria First

1 Fixed base salary or credible range

Only accept listings with a clear, verifiable compensation figure.

2 Zero mandatory on-site presence

'Remote' = no weekly office attendance required.

3 Quantified travel

Explicit percentage: 10%, 30%, 60% — not generic 'occasional travel'.

4 Transparent contract

Fixed/variable clearly explained. Discard 'up to X' without real conditions.

Using AI as a Smart Filter

Copy and paste any listing into Claude (or another AI) with this prompt — it takes 30 seconds:

> Analyse this job listing:
> 1. Genuinely remote, hybrid or field-based?
> 2. Highlight contradictions (remote but requires car/area visits).
> 3. Extract: location, travel, hours, contract, compensation, KPIs.
> 4. Flag salary as NON-TRANSPARENT if unclear.
> 5. Assess compatibility with my criteria: [paste here].
> 6. Final verdict: OK / TO VERIFY / DISCARD — in 5 lines.

GUIDE 3 — LOOKING AHEAD

EU Directive 2023/970 — Will It Be Enough?

A Step Forward

EU Directive 2023/970 on pay transparency requires companies to disclose salary information in job listings. It is an important step towards more honest listings.

The Real Risk

Without real enforcement and effective penalties, companies may circumvent the rules by publishing ranges so wide as to be useless, or by shifting salary information to later stages of selection.

Until enforcement catches up, your personal checklist and AI filtering remain your best tools.

Final Checklist — For Writers and Readers

✍️ If You Are Writing the Listing

- Role and seniority clearly stated
- Concrete activities listed
- Must-have / nice-to-have separated
- Salary range + contract type included
- Hours + remote policy + travel specified
- Selection process (stages and timelines) explained
- KPIs and tools mentioned (for sales/marketing roles)

■ If You Are Reading the Listing

- Do I understand what I will actually do?
- Is this one role or a 'catch-all' role?
- Are there numbers (salary / hours / KPIs)?
- Are there hard red flags? (unpaid trial, fake freelance, normalised overtime)
- Do I have 3 questions ready to probe ambiguities?

The perfect listing is not the 'motivational' one. It is the transparent one: it tells you what you will do, what it pays, and on what terms. Clarity is a sign of respect. Expect it.