

Decoding IT Job Descriptions: What They're Asking For



Decoding IT Job Descriptions: What They're Asking For



Understanding the IT job market this year feels complex. People are fighting for roles against countless candidates and competing against increasingly sophisticated AI bots.

You might find yourself grappling with applications that ask you to prove that you're "digitally literate", agile, or innovative. If you can't decode what employers are looking for, your application might be swept away by an AI filter before reaching a human being.

The good news? With a proactive approach, you can adapt.



Cracking the Code Words in Job Descriptions



The first step in adapting to this changing IT job market is figuring out what the most common vague statements on job descriptions mean. You might have seen a handful, like “flexibility on work hours” or “ability to resolve problems”. Here are three of the most common culprits for candidate confusion, and what they’re saying.

Fast-Paced Environment

When an IT employer mentions a “**fast-paced**” environment, they say you’ll be in a workplace where priorities and tasks shift quickly. That means you need **adaptability**, **resilience**, **agility**, and the ability to handle multiple projects simultaneously. Ask yourself whether this “fast-paced” environment will give you room to grow fast or lead to burnout.

Strong Communication Skills

Having strong communication skills doesn’t just mean you can speak clearly. You’ll need to be able to connect with colleagues and clients across digital platforms and apps. You should be able to convey ideas effectively to people with different backgrounds and show **emotional intelligence**. **Active listening skills** are probably essential too, as is the ability to participate actively in meetings, whether they’re in-person, remote, or hybrid.



Cracking the Code Words in Job Descriptions



Flexible and Adaptable

Virtually every IT employer seeks these traits, but many candidates don't know what they mean. Flexibility and adaptability mean you can navigate change effectively. You should be open to exploring new technologies, learning from others, and quickly altering your day-to-day processes. Highlighting experiences where you've successfully managed change or taken on diverse tasks can show you're ready for these roles.



The Skills Gap: What Employers Are Desperately Seeking



In today's IT workplace, certificates and traditional credentials aren't nearly as important as demonstrable skills. Many companies are looking for an evolving balance of soft and technical skills, as role responsibilities change.

★ Technical Skills vs. Soft Skills: The Evolving Balance

Some of the IT technical skills listed on a job description might be familiar, like proficiency with a specific tool or software. Others may be new.

However, technical skills aren't the only consideration. Soft skills – particularly durable human skills (communication, collaboration and problem-solving) and transferable skills are more important than ever. You must be prepared to show both before filling out an application.

UP TO
90%
OF JOB LISTINGS

NOW ASK FOR
CANDIDATES WITH
"DIGITAL LITERACY"



The Skills Gap: What Employers Are Desperately Seeking



★ Specialised Knowledge vs Adaptability

Deep expertise in specific IT segments can still be valuable, especially if you're applying for leadership-level roles. However, there's also a growing demand for professionals who can adapt to various roles and challenges. The concept of "T-shaped" skills - combining deep knowledge in one area with the ability to collaborate across disciplines is gaining traction.

Look carefully at job descriptions to identify whether your responsibilities depend more on specialist knowledge or flexibility.

★ Future-Proofing Requirements

You might notice that the list of skills you see on a job description is more vague, focused on highlighting a need for "innovation" or a "growth mindset".

Some job descriptions may "hint" at specific skills you'll need to develop in the future, however. For instance, they might describe "comfort with AI" or "data proficiency."



—
ACCORDING TO THE
WORLD ECONOMIC
FORUM, ABOUT

40%
OF SKILLS

WE THINK ARE CRUCIAL
TODAY WILL BE
IRRELEVANT BY 2030.
—

Reading Between the Lines on Workplace Models

A lot of IT job descriptions might use words like **“flexible”**, **“hybrid,”** or **“remote-friendly,”** but those terms don’t always offer a direct insight into what the workplace is going to be like. A hybrid role could mean you spend one day in the office, or four. “Flexible” could mean adjusting your start time on specific days.

Many companies, particularly those in the finance sector, plan to increase office attendance requirements. If you’re unsure what a “flexible” role entails, the best way to find out is to ask questions – get clarification.

Look for details about required office days, core hours, and any mention of remote work policies. Another complex term to familiarise yourself with is “culture.”

When companies refer to **“culture fit”** today, they’re not always referring to people who match the characteristics or priorities of existing employees. Sometimes, they’re looking for a “cultural add” or specific traits.

Research the organisation’s values, mission statements, and employee testimonials. Consider whether the company's stated values align with your own and if the work environment supports diversity and inclusion.

During interviews, ask about team dynamics, decision-making processes, and how the company promotes professional growth.



Compensation and Benefits: Knowing What's Negotiable



Unfortunately, broad terms like "competitive salary" and "comprehensive benefits" are still common in IT job descriptions. Usually, "competitive salary" suggests that an employer offers something comparable to industry standards, but do your research.

Use conversations with recruitment companies to benchmark the salary you should expect. Look for signs that an employer is willing to negotiate. That might include a broad salary range in the job posting, or phrases like **"salary varies based on experience"**. When you're reviewing benefits, take a holistic approach.

Ask yourself whether you're willing to compromise on anything, such as switching one benefit (like more paid time off), for flexible working hours.



Practical Strategies for Tailoring Your Application



One thing is understanding what IT employers are looking for in candidates. Making sure your applications stand out is another. Here's what you should be focusing on.

Keyword Optimisation Without Keyword Stuffing

Applicant Tracking Systems and AI tools are often used to filter applications these days. That means your applications should include **valuable keywords** – the terms that show up most prominently on job descriptions. But don't just stuff your resume and cover letter with those terms.

Integrate the terms naturally, use variations, and back up your statements. For instance, if you say you're "agile and resilient," share examples of how you use those skills.



Demonstrating the "Predictability Factor"

Employers value candidates who can anticipate needs and deliver consistent results. You might not know exactly what every IT employer will need in the future, but you can show you're open to constantly adapting and learning.

Show off how you're constantly **building your skill set** with new courses and experiences, highlight instances of how you've proactively identified challenges and introduced new ways to overcome them. Make it clear that you're **committed to growth**.

Practical Strategies for Tailoring Your Application

Focus on Skills, Not Just Credentials

There's a growing emphasis on skills over formal education. Research indicates that hiring based on skills is five times more predictive of job performance than hiring based on education. So, don't rely exclusively on credentials to get an interview or a job offer.

Highlight the relevant skills you have for the role, and how you've used them in the past, even if a formal certification does not back them up.

Work With Recruitment Companies

Recruiters can be valuable resources in your job search. They can help you identify what employers are looking for and what job descriptions mean. Communicate consistently and clearly with IT recruiters to make the most out of these relationships.

Tell them about your strengths, weaknesses, and career goals. Ask for their advice on adjusting your CV, cover letter, or interview strategies. Take their advice and use it.



Decode with Confidence, Apply with Purpose



The current IT job market can be confusing and complicated. You need to learn how to stand out in an era of AI and automation, show the right skills in a constantly changing marketplace, and decode a new dictionary of jargon.

Fortunately, you can still thrive with a proactive approach and a little help from an IT recruiter. Do your **research**, **read between the lines**, and stay **adaptable**.

If you're unsure about your next steps, reach out to our [recruitment experts](#), for personalised advice on how you can prepare for the future.



Looking for your dream IT job or your next star hire? Look no further than Constant Recruitment!

As a trusted IT recruitment agency, we are committed to matching skilled and talented candidates with top-tier employers across the industry. We take the time to understand your unique needs and preferences, whether you are a job seeker looking for a new opportunity or an employer seeking the perfect candidate to join your team.

Our extensive network and expertise in the field enable us to connect you with the right people and opportunities to achieve your goals. At Constant Recruitment, we pride ourselves on delivering exceptional service and going above and beyond to exceed your expectations.

So why settle for anything less than the best?

Contact Us



01233 538930



hello@constantrecruitment.co.uk



www.constantrecruitment.co.uk



At Constant Recruitment, we are passionate about connecting talented IT professionals with leading organisations across the UK. The right talent can transform organisations and drive innovation and growth, and we are dedicated to matching the right talent with the right opportunity.

Our founder, **Rachel Constant-Taylor**, started in recruitment in 2006, the same year her youngest daughter was born. With a background in the IT industry since leaving school, moving into **IT recruitment** was a natural fit for her, combining her real-world knowledge of working in Tech companies with her love of people. She saw an opportunity in 2012 to create a unique recruitment agency of her own that delivered exceptional service and expertise.

In 2024, **Karen Lansbury** joined to lead our **Legal & Business Services Division**, bringing years of experience in Kent and the Southeast legal market. Together, we now support law firms and in-house teams with the same diligence, integrity, and focus on long-term hires that have defined our work from the start.



What makes us unique is our commitment to delivering a personalised recruitment experience for both our clients and candidates. We understand that every individual and business is unique, and we work closely with each of our clients and candidates to understand their distinctive needs and goals. This allows us to provide tailored solutions that meet their specific requirements, helping them to succeed in a competitive market.

We recruit better than our competitors by providing a seamless and effective recruitment process that consistently supports both our candidates and clients. **We value honesty, integrity, and hard work.**

Taking a pride in our ability to connect the right talent with the right opportunity. We are committed to delivering the highest standards of service and expertise.

To our clients we are the trusted partner for all recruitment needs

