The Job Posting Is Now a Trust Contract

A candidate finds a role with a salary range of $70,000 to $120,000. The advertisement says artificial intelligence may be used, but it doesn’t explain where. The candidate completes four interviews, waits three weeks and receives no update. Every required sentence may be present, yet the experience tells the candidate that the employer’s decisions are vague and its promises are weak.

New hiring disclosure rules give HR a chance to change that conclusion. A job posting can become a clear agreement about what the opportunity is, how the employer will assess people and when candidates can expect an answer. Employers that build those commitments into the recruitment process can reduce avoidable withdrawals, shorten decision cycles and make their employment brand easier to believe.

This approach changes the workflow behind the template. The posting, applicant tracking system, recruiter communication and hiring manager behaviour have to tell the same story. When they don’t, the gap becomes visible to every candidate who moves through the process.

Ontario now regulates more of the candidate journey

Ontario’s public job posting requirements took effect on January 1, 2026. They generally apply to covered employers with at least 25 employees when they advertise a specific external opportunity to the public. Internal postings, general recruitment campaigns and certain work outside Ontario are treated differently, so employers should confirm scope before relying on a standard template.

Covered postings must include expected compensation or a range. A range generally can’t span more than $50,000 unless the expected compensation or upper end exceeds $200,000 annually. If the employer uses artificial intelligence to screen, assess or select applicants, the posting must disclose that use. The posting must also say whether it relates to an existing vacancy, and Canadian experience requirements are prohibited in the posting and associated application form.

The obligation continues after the advertisement. An employer that interviews an applicant must provide an update within 45 days after the last interview stating whether a hiring decision has been made. The employer must also keep specified posting, application and communication records for three years. Ontario says violations can lead to Employment Standards Act enforcement, including monetary penalties or fines.

B.C. has a different model. Its Pay Transparency Act requires provincially regulated employers to include expected salary or wage information in public postings and restricts pay history inquiries. A national employer therefore needs jurisdiction-specific legal checks, while candidates need a consistent experience. The trust standard described here can sit above the minimum rule in each jurisdiction.

Turn each rule into a candidate promise

A compliance checklist answers whether required information appears. A candidate trust standard asks what the information allows a person to understand and whether the employer will behave consistently with it. That second question creates the talent advantage.

Legal signal	**Candidate question**	**Trust building practice**
Compensation disclosure	Is the range real and where might I enter	Publish a credible hiring zone and explain placement factors
Existing vacancy statement	Does this job exist now	State the hiring purpose expected start and status changes
AI disclosure	What will a system decide about me	Explain the use human oversight accessibility and review route
No Canadian experience requirement	Will relevant experience from elsewhere count	Use job related skills and evidence instead of local proxies
Post interview update	When will I hear from you	Promise a shorter decision date and close every interview
Record retention	Can the employer support what happened	Keep one accurate recruitment record with owners and decisions

Candidates already reward useful information

Indeed’s 2025 Canadian survey found that 73 percent of respondents would be more likely to apply when a posting includes a pay range. It also found that 59 percent had withdrawn from an application or interview process after learning the range, including 36 percent who withdrew at or after the interview stage. Upfront information can therefore filter out misaligned applications before recruiters and managers invest hours in them.

The same survey highlights the difference between a legal deadline and a competitive standard. Ontario allows up to 45 days after the last interview for the required hiring-decision update. Fifty-nine percent of survey respondents considered 14 days or less appropriate. An employer can meet the law and still feel slow to the candidate it wants most.

Silence, vague ranges and unexplained automation create friction that HR can measure and remove. The employer should decide what it can promise, build the promise into the workflow and track whether it kept it. Candidates won’t control every recruiting decision, but they can reasonably expect accurate information and timely communication.

Build the candidate trust standard

Confirm the job is real

A vacancy statement should be more useful than a line that says yes or no. Explain whether the employer is replacing someone, adding capacity, hiring several people or building a pool for an anticipated need. If the role is approved but the start date depends on funding, a contract or a project decision, say so in language candidates can understand.

Require an approved requisition owner, budget confirmation and target start date before publication. If business conditions change, update or remove the advertisement promptly. A stale posting is a public signal that HR and operations don’t share one source of truth.

Make the pay range useful

Candidates need to know more than the mathematical boundaries. State whether the range covers base pay, what other compensation may apply and which job-related factors influence placement. If most new hires enter below the midpoint, identify the normal hiring zone rather than using the full career range as a recruiting range.

HR should also compare the range with current employees before publication. A range that surprises incumbents can quickly become a retention issue, and recruiters shouldn’t have to defend a number that compensation leaders can’t explain. This is where the candidate trust standard and the salary range credibility test meet.

Show how the process will work

List the expected stages, the people a candidate is likely to meet and the approximate timing. Candidates don’t need every internal detail. They need enough information to plan their time and decide whether the process fits the importance of the role.

A four-stage process might include a recruiter conversation, a structured manager interview, a work sample and a final discussion. If the process changes, tell active candidates why and give them a new date. Repeated surprise interviews often indicate that decision criteria weren’t settled before recruiting began.

Explain what AI does

A sentence saying AI is used may satisfy the disclosure requirement, but it doesn’t tell candidates whether a tool parses resumes, ranks applications, scores an assessment or recommends rejection. HR should be able to explain the function, the data used, the point at which a person reviews the result and how a candidate can request accommodation or raise a concern.

That explanation requires governance behind the scenes. A 2024 Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat privacy impact assessment for an AI-based candidate evaluation pilot identified risks involving inaccurate assessment, algorithmic bias, limited transparency, data security, retention and candidates’ ability to obtain redress. The safeguards included human intervention, access controls, privacy notices, candidate information sessions and technical support.

Accessibility Standards Canada also recommends that AI and applicant tracking tools assess bona fide occupational requirements, undergo fairness review and provide accessible ways to request support. Although the standard's application depends on the organization and jurisdiction, its questions are useful for any HR team purchasing a hiring tool.

Make skills and accessibility visible

Removing a Canadian experience requirement is only the first step. Replace local proxies with the capability the role needs. A posting might ask for experience applying a named accounting standard, managing a unionized team or serving customers under a defined regulatory framework, regardless of where the candidate gained that experience.

Review physical, sensory, communication and technology requirements to determine which are essential. Tell candidates how to request accommodation and identify a contact who understands the process. An accommodation statement has little value if the mailbox isn't monitored or managers treat a request as a complication.

Close every interview

Set an internal response standard that is shorter than the legal maximum and realistic for the organization. Ten business days after the final interview may work for many professional roles, while a regulated or executive process may require a different commitment. The promised date should appear in the applicant tracking system and have a named owner.

Candidates should receive an update even when the decision is delayed. The message can say that the process remains open, explain the revised timing and confirm when the next update will arrive. Automated communication is useful here, but a template shouldn't erase the name of the person responsible for the relationship.

Ask harder questions of AI vendors

Ontario's disclosure requirement will prompt more candidates to ask how AI affects them. HR can't answer credibly if the vendor contract and implementation records are silent. Procurement, Privacy, Legal, Information Security and HR should agree on the evidence required before a tool influences employment decisions.

- What employment decision does the tool influence, and can it reject or deprioritize someone without human review
- Which data and inferred characteristics affect the score, ranking or recommendation
- How has the vendor tested for adverse outcomes across relevant groups and disability experiences
- Can candidates use the assessment with assistive technology or obtain an equivalent alternative
- Where is candidate information stored, how long is it retained and whether it is used to train other systems
- What evidence can HR inspect when a candidate challenges an outcome
- How will the vendor notify the employer when the model, data source or scoring method changes

A contract warranty isn't a substitute for monitoring. Compare selection rates, overrides, accommodation outcomes and complaints over time. If HR can't reconstruct how a recommendation influenced a hiring decision, the organization has accepted a governance risk it may not be able to explain to a candidate, regulator or tribunal.

Create one recruitment record

The job requisition should be the source for every public claim. It should contain the approved range, hiring zone, vacancy status, essential criteria, AI use, assessment stages, accommodation contact, decision owner and target dates. The career site, recruiter brief and applicant tracking workflow should draw from those approved fields.

Ownership needs to be clear. The hiring manager confirms the work and urgency. Compensation approves the range. HR or Talent Acquisition owns the candidate standard and communication. Legal and Privacy review higher-risk requirements and technology. Procurement obtains vendor evidence, while Information Security confirms data protections. The workflow should make missing approval visible before a posting can go live.

Owner	Decision	Evidence retained
Hiring manager	Role need criteria and interview availability	Approved requisition and interview plan
Compensation	Range hiring zone and exception rules	Market reference and internal comparison
HR or Talent Acquisition	Posting accuracy candidate timeline and closure	Posting communications and decision dates
Legal and Privacy	Higher risk language data use and escalation	Review notes privacy assessment and advice
Procurement and Security	Vendor controls access and change obligations	Contract due diligence and security records

Run a candidate journey simulation

At least quarterly, test the recruitment experience through a controlled simulation or an approved test requisition. Don’t publish a fake vacancy. Use a staging environment, a clearly labelled test role or a live process that can be observed without creating misleading applications.

Review the posting on a phone, complete the application with assistive technology where possible, inspect every automated message and measure the time between stages. Confirm that the salary, vacancy and AI statements remain intact when a third-party job board republishes the advertisement. Send a test accommodation request and verify that a trained person responds.

The simulation should end with candidate closure and record retention. Many process failures happen after the preferred candidate accepts because everyone assumes the recruitment is finished. The remaining interviewees still experience the employer, and their unanswered applications still create legal and reputational risk.

Put a dollar value on recruitment friction

A vague posting can look harmless because the cost appears later in recruiter workload and vacancy time. HR can make the expense visible by tracking where candidates withdraw and estimating the work that must be repeated. Use internal salary and time data wherever possible.

Recruitment friction cost equals repeated recruiter time plus repeated manager interview time plus assessment and administration expense plus additional vacancy days plus the cost of reneged offers and early turnover. Keep legal penalties and reputational exposure separate so the operating estimate remains credible.

Consider an illustrative employer that loses four qualified candidates each year after late-stage pay discussions. For each withdrawal, the employer estimates eight recruiter hours at $50 per hour, seven combined panel hours at $85 per hour, three administrative hours at $40 per hour and 12 additional vacancy days using a conservative $350 daily wage-cost proxy. The estimated cost is $5,315 per failed cycle, or $21,260 across four roles, before lost output or customer effects are included.

The organization won’t prevent every withdrawal, and it shouldn’t try to persuade candidates to accept unsuitable pay. The savings come from learning about the mismatch before interviews begin. If a clearer range and process prevent two late-stage restarts, the redesign can recover more than $10,000 in this example while giving managers back time.

Measure trust as an operating result

Candidate sentiment surveys can help, but HR should also track observable results. Compare outcomes before and after introducing the trust standard, and separate roles by level, location and recruiting channel so one high-volume job family doesn’t hide a problem elsewhere.

Measure	**Decision it supports**
Qualified application rate	Whether clearer information attracts a more relevant pool
Pay related withdrawal stage	Whether compensation is disclosed early enough and credibly
Interview to decision time	Whether approvals and selection criteria are slowing the process
Candidate closure by promised date	Whether the employer keeps its communication commitment
Offer acceptance and reneged offers	Whether the posting and interviews set accurate expectations
AI review and override rate	Whether automated recommendations require frequent human correction
Accommodation response time	Whether the stated support route works in practice
New hire turnover within 90 days	Whether the opportunity matched what the posting promised

A lower application count can be a positive result if qualified applications, interview conversion and offer acceptance improve. Volume is useful only when it moves suitable candidates toward a decision. HR should report the cost per qualified applicant and cost per accepted offer, not celebrate more resumes by default.

A 30 day implementation plan

Week 1

Audit active postings, templates, application forms, recruiter messages and applicant tracking rules. Identify every tool that screens, assesses, ranks or recommends candidates, including features embedded in platforms that managers may not recognize as AI. Confirm legal scope by jurisdiction.

Week 2

Build the approved requisition fields and candidate trust template. Set standards for range quality, vacancy language, AI explanation, accessibility, interview stages and response dates. Assign an owner to each field and define when an exception requires Legal, Privacy or Compensation review.

Week 3

Train recruiters and hiring managers with real scenarios. Practise explaining range placement, responding to AI questions, handling accommodation requests and updating candidates when a decision slips. Configure reminders and prevent publication when required approvals are missing.

Week 4

Run the candidate journey simulation, correct the failures and establish the dashboard baseline. Sample closed files to confirm that records can be reconstructed. Report the legal gaps, operating waste and first improvement targets to the executive team.

Make every public promise operational

Legislation is making recruitment more visible. Salary, vacancy status, AI use and follow-up are no longer details that can live in separate conversations. Candidates can compare the posting with what happens next, and they'll decide whether the organization is credible long before their first day of work.

HR gains a talent advantage when it turns required disclosures into a dependable operating standard. A real job, a useful range, a fair assessment, a visible accommodation route and a decision update on the promised date all reduce uncertainty. The job posting becomes trustworthy because the organization can keep what it says.