

Pre-publish checklist and the ad lines

Publishing the number takes 5 minutes. The work is the audit before it, because the range exposes gaps that already existed on your own team.

Before the number goes public

- ☐ **List everyone at the level you are hiring at**, with base pay. Same level, same location, same currency.
- ☐ **Find the widest gap**. Two people at the same level more than 15% apart for no defensible reason is the problem the published range will make loud.
- ☐ **Write the reason for every gap that stays**. Scope, autonomy, a skill the team is short of. If the only reason is "negotiated harder", fix it before publishing, not after.
- ☐ **Decide the band for this hire from that list**, not from a market report. The market report is the second opinion.
- ☐ **Tell the team the range is going public** before the ad goes up. Someone will do the arithmetic; better they hear it from you.
- ☐ **Agree what moves a person inside the band** and write it in one line. You will say it out loud in every negotiation.

The 3 lines that go in the ad

Line 1, the band with the level attached:

Senior Engineer, 85,000 to 100,000 euro base, Berlin or remote in CET ±2.

Line 2, what moves you inside it:

The top of the range is for someone already operating at the next level: owning a system end to end and the on-call for it.

Line 3, what the number is:

Base, in euro, 12 payments. Equity and the pension contribution are on top and explained in the first call.

Rules the 3 lines follow: the band is no wider than 25% of its floor (60 to 120 thousand is a refusal to answer); it names the level; it says the currency and whether it is base or total; it sits in the ad itself, not behind a screening call.

When someone asks for the top of the range

"The top of the range is for someone already operating at the next level. On this team that means owning a service end to end, including the on-call and the roadmap for it. From what we saw in the loop, you are here: strong on the design round, and the ownership evidence was for part of a system rather than the whole. That places you at [number]. Here is what would move you up within the first year."

Answer with the criteria, never with a yes or no. A placement explained this way survives being repeated to a colleague, which it will be.

Where a range is already required

MARKET	RULE	WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR AD
EU	Pay Transparency Directive, in national law by 7 June 2026	Pay-range information before the interview; salary history questions go.
US, by state	California, Colorado, New York, Washington, Illinois	A range in the posting. Hire one remote engineer in Denver and Colorado's rule applies to your ad.
UK	No band requirement yet; gender pay gap reporting from 250 employees	Candidates expect a number anyway. You publish either way.

The objection that is valid

Publishing bands makes you easier to poach from: a competitor now knows what to beat. That is the real cost. People who leave for money alone are usually leaving for other reasons too, and it is better to find that out early.

SmartHiring by Elman Huseynov · the post behind this file: smarthiring.tech/publish-the-salary-range/ · Use it inside your company as you like; please link the post rather than re-hosting the file.