

WRITING EFFECTIVE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

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JOB DESCRIPTIONS 101: DISCUSSION

What is the purpose of a job description?

- Accurate, consistent job descriptions are foundational to performance, transparency and employee engagement.

IMPORTANCE OF JOB DOCUMENTATION

Hiring & Recruiting	Employee Retention & Engagement	Performance Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attracts the right candidates• Ask the right interview questions• Effective onboarding• Better responsiveness to market changes• Make attractive offers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Defines career paths, opportunities• More visible career opportunities• Clear understanding of job requirements• Uncover inefficiencies in jobs/roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accurately evaluate performance based on job requirements• Identify appropriate training needs

DISSECTING THE JOB DESCRIPTION

- ✓ Job Title
- ✓ Summary
- ✓ Primary Duties
- ✓ Required Knowledge, Skills & Abilities
- ✓ Preferred Knowledge, Skills & Abilities
- ✓ Working Conditions

DISSECTING THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Titles

Job titles should...

- Be market relevant
- Be short and to the point
- Accurately reflect the level of the role
- *Not* contain all aspects of the role

DISSECTING THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Summary & Primary Duties

Summary

- Outline the position
- “NEED TO KNOW” INFORMATION

Primary Duties

- Basic job duties (with or without reasonable accommodations)
- Tailored for the JOB
- Not an exhaustive list; should only include duties that are at minimum 10% or more of the role

DISSECTING THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Required Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

Required knowledge, skills and abilities are...

- Skills, experience and education you **ABSOLUTELY MUST** have in order to do the job

Be mindful that “soft skills” are ripe for equity issues

- Excellent interpersonal communication skills
- Articulate professional
- Ability to provide ongoing information as it relates to quality workmanship
- Aggressively manage relationships

DISSECTING THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Required Qualifications “Test”

Factor 1

- Can it be objectified/quantified?

Factor 2

- Does it reflect the ***bare minimum*** needed to perform successfully?

Factor 3

- Can someone who does not meet this qualification ***still perform*** in the role?

Education

- Describe minimum education required to perform the job:
 - Avoid inflating the requirements
 - Don't confuse education with experience
 - Don't make the requirement too high
 - Use consistent terminology in all job descriptions ex: Bachelor's Degree or BA or BS
- If there are acceptable alternatives to the requirements, state them ex a degree with experience.

Experience

- Indicate overall range of experience to perform the job
- If experience ranges **significantly** differ by specific skill or competency and are key to the job, it may be listed separately
- Avoid overly complex descriptions of experience or too many criteria. Examples:
 - Minimum 10 years' experience in Compensation in higher education preferred
 - Minimum of 5 years' experience developing and leading employees within a department
 - Minimum of 3 years' experience with forecasting software i.e. Oracle Demantra

Certifications/License	Skills & Competencies	Skills & Proficiency Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires credentials • Include authority granting credential if known • Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered Nurse (State of MI) • CDL Commercial Drivers License • Project Management Professional (PMP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific skills that are critical to perform the job • Define the target level of proficiency for each skill • Excel – create formulas, pivot tables/charts and graphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill: Microsoft Excel Proficiency: Expert • Skill: Bilingual Spanish-English Proficiency: Intermediate • Skill: Payroll Reconciliation Proficiency: Beginner

DISSECTING THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Preferred Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

Preferred knowledge, skills and abilities are...

- Not “mission critical”
- Used to help identify candidates who are “more qualified”

Working Conditions

- Used to include any working conditions that need to be considered such as work location, lifting requirements, etc.

Working Conditions	Physical Demands	Disclaimer Section
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informs about conditions – sets expectations • Extremes of temperature, noise, odors or fumes • Toxic materials • PPE or special gear • Equipment hazards • Safety training or protocols required • Job may require alternative hours, shifts, weekend work, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines what is required to do the job • May be required to stand, walk, sit, reach with hands and arms, climb or balance, stoop or kneel, talk and hear, and use fingers or hands to feel objects, tools or controls • Ability to lift up to 30 pounds • Fully functioning vision requires (prescription lenses are acceptable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informs that duties may be subject to changes • List is not comprehensive and other tasks not mentioned here may be required • Changing business conditions may trigger changes to job responsibilities (ex: COVID) • Job descriptions are not employment contracts

INVOLVE EMPLOYEES

Employees should know their jobs or what they are doing better than anyone else.

- Helps make them feel that they are part of the process
- Document what they are actually doing
- If you have many incumbents, facilitate group discussions
- Allows managers to calibrate how they view the role

SUPERVISORS/MANAGERS ROLE

- **Review and approve job descriptions of direct reports**
 - Make this part of your annual performance review process to ensure it's up-to-date and accurate
- **Uncover inefficiencies**
 - Duties that are being done that shouldn't be
 - Duties that should be done, but are not
 - May need a new role

EXECUTIVES ROLE

By reviewing job descriptions with executives, it:

- Allows them to embrace the process
- Allows them to review and approve job descriptions of their direct reports
- Helps them to develop a deeper understanding of the jobs within their organization and the work being accomplished

HUMAN RESOURCES ROLE

HR manages the process, acts as an advisor, and helps ensure consistency

- Manages the overall process
- Ensures consistent language, fairness and leveling across the organization
- Makes sure the language is accurate for the role
- Reviews for compliance issues

THINGS TO AVOID

- ✓ Don't add in any temporary job duties
- ✓ If adding new duties, ensure you've reviewed all other duties and remove any that are no longer needed
- ✓ Writing a job description for a person and not the role
- ✓ Certain phrases (e.g., high energy, new grad) as this could imply discrimination
- ✓ Too many buzzwords – candidates will not understand them
- ✓ Inflating/understating duties – leads to inaccurate market pricing
- ✓ Degree inflation – eliminates potential qualified candidates, potentially implies discrimination, leads to inaccurate market pricing

JOB DESCRIPTION VS. JOB POSTING

Job Description	Job Posting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Should be focused on what the job <i>is</i>, and the skills, experience and qualifications needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Typically brief• Often “market” the role and the organization<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We are looking for this kind of person• Describe the environment and culture• Benefits of the organizations• Use keywords for search engines

MARKET PRICING

Accurate job descriptions = accurate market pricing

- Pointers to improve matching:
 - Titles should work for our organization, but not be so unique that it makes market-matching difficult to explain
 - Well written job summaries
 - Well defined essential duties, skills and experience levels
 - Clearly described job levels
- Not every match will be exact
- Adjust or change match to be consistent with key skills, experience and education

QUESTIONS?
