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# How to Write an Effective Job Analysis and Job Description

Make sure you know what you're looking for in an employee before you actually start looking. Use these guidelines to help.

The employees you hire can make or break your business. While you may be tempted to hire the first person who walks in the door--"just to get it over with"-- doing so can be a fatal error. A small company cannot afford to carry deadwood on staff; so start smart by taking time to figure out your staffing needs before you even begin looking for job candidates.

## Job Analysis

Begin by understanding the requirements of the job being filled. What kind of personality, experience and education are needed? To determine these attributes, sit down and do a job analysis covering the following areas:

- The mental/physical tasks involved (ranging from judging, planning and managing to cleaning, lifting and welding)
- How the job will be done (the methods and equipment to be used)
- The reason the job exists (including an explanation of job goals and how they relate to other positions in the company)
- The qualifications needed (training, knowledge, skills and personality traits)

If you're having trouble, one good way to get information for a job analysis is to talk to employees and supervisors at other companies that have similar positions.

## Job Description and Specification

Use the job analysis to write a job description and a job specification. Drawing from these concepts, you can then create your recruitment materials, such as a classified ad. The job description is basically an ***outline of how the job fits in to the company***. It should point out in broad terms the job's goals, responsibilities and duties.

First, write down the job title and whom that person will report to. Next, develop a job statement or summary describing the position's major and minor duties. Finally, define how the job relates to other positions in the company. Which are subordinate and which are of equal responsibility and authority?

For a one-person business hiring its first employee, these steps may seem unnecessary, but remember, you are laying the foundations for your personnel policy, which will be essential as your company grows. Keeping detailed records from the time you hire your first employee will make things a lot easier when you hire your 50th.

The job specification ***describes the personal requirements you expect from the employee***. Like the job description, it includes the job title, who the person reports to, and a summary of the position. However, it also lists any educational requirements, desired experience, and specialized skills or knowledge required. Include salary range and benefits. Finish by listing any

physical or other special requirements associated with the job, as well as any occupational hazards.

Writing the job description and job specifications will also help you determine whether you need a part- or full-time employee, whether the person should be permanent or temporary, and whether you could use an independent contractor to fill the position.

*Excerpted from Start Your Own Business. <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/56490>*

## **Writing Effective Job Descriptions**

Job descriptions are an essential part of hiring and managing your employees. These written summaries ensure your applicants and employees understand their roles and what they need to do to be held accountable. Job descriptions also:

- Help attract the right job candidates
- Describe the major areas of an employee's job or position
- Serve as a major basis for outlining performance expectations, job training, job evaluation and career advancement
- Provide a reference point for compensation decisions and unfair hiring practices

### **Overview**

A job description should be practical, clear and accurate to effectively define your needs. Good job descriptions typically begin with a careful analysis of the important facts about a job such as:

- Individual tasks involved
- The methods used to complete the tasks
- The purpose and responsibilities of the job
- The relationship of the job to other jobs
- Qualifications needed for the job

### **What to Avoid**

Don't be inflexible with your job description. Jobs are subject to change for personal growth, organizational development and/or evolution of new technologies. A flexible job description encourages employees to grow within their position and contribute over time to your overall business.

### **What to Include**

Job descriptions typically include:

- Job title
- Job objective or overall purpose statement
- Summary of the general nature and level of the job
- Description of the broad function and scope of the position

- List of duties or tasks performed critical to success
- Key functional and relational responsibilities in order of significance
- Description of the relationships and roles within the company, including supervisory positions, subordinating roles and other working relationships

Additional Items for Job Descriptions for Recruiting Situations:

- Job specifications, standards, and requirements
- Job location where the work will be performed
- Equipment to be used in the performance of the job
- Collective Bargaining Agreements if your company's employees are members of a union
- Salary range

### **Proper Language in the Job Description**

Keep each statement in the job description crisp and clear:

- Structure your sentences in classic verb/object and explanatory phrases. Since the occupant of the job is the subject of your sentence, it may be eliminated.
  - o For example, a sentence pertaining to the description of a receptionist position might read: "Greets office visitors and personnel in a friendly and sincere manner."
- Always use the present tense of verbs.
- If necessary, use explanatory phrases telling why, how, where, or how often to add meaning and clarity
  - o For example: "Collects all employee time sheets on a bi-weekly basis for payroll purposes."
- Omit any unnecessary articles such as "a," "an," "the," or other words for an easy-to-understand description.
- Use unbiased terminology
  - o For example, use the he/she approach or construct sentences in such a way that gender pronouns are not required.
- Avoid using adverbs or adjectives that are subject to interpretation such as "frequently," "some," "complex," "occasional," and "several."



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