

Four Step Approach to Job Description Development

The job description is the cornerstone to many of your HR functions. It is the tool used to assist in recruitment sourcing and selection, plan training for a new hire, measure performance, determine pay raises and so on.

With the job description carrying the weight of many responsibilities, you want to ensure you have descriptions that accurately reflect your business needs and company culture.



Information Gathering

The start to writing your job description is in identifying why this role exists. What need does this job fill for your organization? Define how this role impacts the financial success of your business.

Also consider how this job impacts the satisfaction of your customers. Define the impact this role has on your customers. What would happen to customer service and satisfaction if this job was not done? Remember your internal and external customers.

Identify the processes that need to be followed in order for this job to fill your financial and customer needs. What steps need to be followed for this job to be completed efficiently and effectively? Also consider what other jobs this job impacts, how it impacts the other jobs and when the impact is critical.

Define the key functions required to complete the processes. What are the key tasks involved in completing the required processes for this job?

Define the levels competency within the functions of the role from low performance to exceptional performance. The higher the level of competency, the greater financial impact there is for your organization. Likewise, the lower the level of competency, the lower level of financial contribution the performance brings to your organization. How do you define and measure the levels of competency?

When determining the above mentioned areas of a job it is important to also consider the communication required for the role - what type of communication, what level of communication, who needs to be communicated with and how to communicate effectively.

Involve your key people in the process of job description development. Your top performers have valuable information and insight into the roles they perform. The value added from including your top performers in this process includes: increased accuracy in the job description and

increased buy in from your staff. Remember that creating ownership in the job empowers your people to perform at greater levels.

Gathering the information - there are various techniques you can use to gather the information you require for your job description. Job Analysis can be conducted through interviews, questionnaires, observation, and diaries. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. Choose the one or a combination that works best for you. They key is to ensure that the data is accurate.

Compiling your information

Remember to keep the language in the job description simple and easy to read and understand. This document serves as a guide for your employees as well as a guide for your other HR functions.

When drafting your information, some of the common categories are:

- Job Title
- Department
- Reports to
- Salary Range
- Date Prepared/Reviewed
- Location
- Hours of Work
- Level of Seniority
- Purpose of position
- Key Functional Relationships - Internal/External
- Key Competencies (Minimum and Preferred)
- Indicators of Success/Key Performance indicators
- Special Requirements
- Health and Safety Considerations
- Personal Specifications - Knowledge/Experience, Skills, Attributes

Testing your job description

Once you and your key players have gathered and analyzed the job information. You are prepared to draft a rough of your job description. Once drafted, it is important to test the description to ensure it is an accurate reflection of the job. Taking

the time to test your job description with your top performers will help you avoid costly mistakes. Ensure your new job description is well written and provides the required information for the job holder to perform the tasks required for your business to be successful.

Completing/Communicating

Once you have tested and made any necessary revisions, you can complete the document. Be sure you distribute it throughout the organization to all it will be relevant to. Ensure your people have a copy and know where they can access the main document. Ensure the people who are responsible for performing the job have copies and understand the document, why it was revised and how to use it. Ensure that anyone involved in the recruitment and selection process, performance review process etc. all have access and know how to use the job description and understand it's role in the various HR functions.

Some key areas to keep in mind

Simplicity - don't overcomplicate the process for you or your staff, keep it simple while ensuring a link to your organizational goals. Always keep the language of your job description easy to read and understand.

Update as specifications change - Create policy and a procedure for job description review. If you review and update your document on a regular basis, you ensure the jobs within your organization accurately reflect the needs of your business. When you review and revise on a regular basis, it keeps the task simple and saves valuable time in the long run.

Communicate - Always communicate any changes to your people. If the job description has an impact on a role, the person in that role needs to know.

Keep the job specifications directly related to job success.