

Job Description Tool Kit



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Introduction

Job descriptions serve several important purposes within a company, contributing to its overall efficiency, productivity, and organizational success. Here are some key reasons why your company should have job descriptions:

Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities

Job descriptions clearly outline the duties and responsibilities associated with a particular role. This helps employees understand what is expected of them, ensuring clarity about their job duties.

Recruitment and Hiring

When hiring new employees, job descriptions provide a basis for creating job postings and conducting interviews. They help potential candidates understand the qualifications and expectations for the role, attracting individuals who possess the necessary skills and experience. A clear and thorough job description also assists in setting the appropriate pay scale for a position.

Performance Management

Job descriptions serve as a foundation for performance evaluations. By having clearly defined roles and responsibilities, managers can assess employees based on how well they meet the expectations outlined in their job descriptions.

Goal Alignment

Employees can better align their individual goals with the broader goals of the organization when they have a clear understanding of their roles. This contributes to a more focused and cohesive workforce.

Training and Development

Job descriptions aid in the development of training programs. They provide a roadmap for employees to acquire the skills and knowledge required to perform their roles effectively.

Legal Compliance

Job descriptions can help ensure that the company complies with legal and regulatory requirements. They provide documentation of the essential functions of each role, which can be useful in case of legal disputes or audits.

Communication and Expectations

Clearly defined job descriptions facilitate communication between employees and managers. They help set expectations and create a common understanding of what each role entails.

Succession Planning

Job descriptions are valuable in succession planning by outlining the skills and qualifications necessary for each role. This aids in identifying and developing internal talent for future leadership positions.

Employee Engagement

When employees understand their roles and how their contributions fit into the larger organizational picture, it can enhance job satisfaction and overall engagement.

Organizational Structure

Job descriptions contribute to defining the structure of the organization by delineating reporting relationships and hierarchies. This helps maintain a clear and organized workplace.

In summary, job descriptions are essential tools that contribute to effective human resource management, organizational communication, and overall operational efficiency.

Developing Job Descriptions

Why Job Descriptions are important

Job descriptions are valuable in describing a position's purpose, critical tasks, duties, accountabilities, minimum education and experience qualifications. They also form the foundation for many important human resource processes: recruitment, hiring selection, employment classifications, compensation, training, and performance management. A job description gives an employee a clear and concise guide for job performance, helping them understand the essential tasks and how to best prioritize their work. It should answer, "What does this role do?"

Before Writing the Job Description

Writing a job description can be challenging but before you start that process you need to have a strong understanding of the position and how it fits into the organization. You will need to create a job description that accurately represents the position so that you can attract the right applicants and identify the best candidates. Here are steps to prepare you before you begin writing the job description. You can also use our [Job Description Checklist](#) to assist you in this process:

- **Define the Goals of the Position**

What is the purpose of the role? What do you need to accomplish? Think about how your goals for the position fit in with the overall objectives of the company. You need to do more than just list core qualifications and primary responsibilities. Consider various facets of the position, such as whether or not the person will interface with other positions and departments. Remember that you should not aim to adjust the position description based on what emerges during the hiring process; the job description should guide the hiring process from start to finish.

- **Understand and evaluate the current position**

If there is a current or similar position, make sure that you understand all components of that position and how it will affect this new Job Description. Providing a clear understanding of what each functional skill truly means and expressing it in a language the average person can understand is important.

- **Research the Market**

It can be helpful to check out what other companies require today in terms of skills, experience and accomplishments for similar positions. You can find this type of information through job postings, industry associations and trade groups. Be aware, however, of the similarities and differences between your organization and the ones you are reviewing.

- **Understand the job's importance and its Career Path**

Professionals want to know that their work will truly matter. Beyond merely listing duties, paint a picture of how those responsibilities connect to the broader success of the department or company. You might devote a short paragraph to defining growth potential. Consider phrases such as, *"This is a high-impact role that can lead to X."*

- **Tap your employees for insights**

Your current employees can be invaluable resources during many phases of the hiring process, including when you are creating a job description. Do not overlook the knowledge they can share. They likely know better than anyone what the real departmental needs are. Meet with the person who currently holds the position (if that person is still in place) to get a sense of what types of activities now comprise a typical workday. You may discover that the actual day-to-day tasks of the position are quite different from standard HR verbiage.

- **Salary/Wage Ranges**

Although any **Job Postings or Job Announcements** are now required to have the salary range, please be aware the same is not true for **Job Descriptions**. While the Job Description may drive what information is included in a Job Posting for an open position, the Job Description is generally used as an internal document and given to employees after they are hired.

Writing the Job Description

Having a well-written and compliant job description is the first step in the process. A job description is what a recruiter or hiring manager will use when hiring a new employee and it will also be a candidate's first interaction with your company. As such, it is critical that your company's job descriptions are thorough, clear, accurate and updated on a regular basis.

A quality job description may not look the same for all positions at an organization, but each description should include similar aspects. It should be written clearly, detail job functions and duties, and list required skills, qualifications and expectations, providing

examples as appropriate. Well-written job descriptions are concise, free from gendered or technical language, and specific.

Generally, there are 7 specific components to a Job Description. These sections can be followed by an Employment Equal Opportunity (EEO) statement as well as a signature line for the employee. Some of the components of the Job Description require precise and thoughtful descriptions while others should be shorter and to the point. Refer to the following to guide you in writing your first job Description. You may also use our [Job Description Template](#). Use our [Job Description Example](#) to see what one should look like once completed.

Job Title

The Job Title should be specific but not too lengthy. Consider your industry, the job function and level of the role when determining the title. Example: for a Bank, instead of the title of “Analyst” consider using “Financial Analyst”. For a Customer Service Center with various role levels, consider “Senior Customer Service Representative” to highlight positions with senior level responsibilities. Avoid abbreviations and acronyms and by all means, leave out extraneous information. You want to keep the Job Title clean and uncluttered.

Job Data

Job Specific Data needs to define if the position is an Exempt or Non-Exempt position, sometimes referred to as Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) status, among other things (such as on-call or temporary status). California presumes that all employees are non-exempt unless the employer can prove it should be an exempt position. You can use [CEA's exempt analysis worksheets](#) to help determine whether the position should be classified as exempt or non-exempt.

Job Summary

The Job Summary is an opportunity to expand on the characteristics of the position. The summary is a high-level overview of the role and scope of responsibilities. It should be no more than 2 - 5 sentences and should succinctly highlight the purpose of the position.

Example of Job Summary for a Talent Acquisition Specialist: “*The Talent Acquisition Specialist supports the company’s efforts to maintain a high-performance culture through its recruitment and ongoing development of a superior workforce. The Human Resources Assistant has regular interaction with the Human Resources Team, Hiring Managers and outside candidates to meet the recruitment goals of the company.*”

Responsibilities/Duties

The responsibilities and duties of the position should be separated into two areas to highlight the essential duties of the position as well as the occasional, or non-essential duties. The duties should be listed in the order of the most important responsibilities to those of the least importance. Use action words and keep everything in the present tense. Finally, try to avoid jargon that is not clear and specific to the industry for the job.

As an example, the following are some of the Duties and Responsibilities that may be on a Job Description for a Graphic Designer:

- Create a wide variety of deliverables using Adobe Creative Cloud
- Work with the creative team to brainstorm innovative advertising campaigns
- Resize images using Adobe Photoshop
- Research emerging design trends

Qualifications

The section on qualifications consists of 3 major areas to be defined:

- **Experience:** Include the required experience that the position needs by anyone who fills the job. These are the “must haves”. You may also choose to include preferred experience which would be viewed as “nice to have.”
- **Education:** Be specific when you include the mandatory education that is required for this position. You may wish to include *preferred* education or allow for a substitute of additional experience in lieu of education.
- **Knowledge/Skills/Abilities:** Clearly define the knowledge, skills and abilities that a person must have in order to perform the duties of this position. You will also want to ensure that what is listed clearly reflects the *level* of the knowledge, skill or ability.

Some examples could include:

- **Basic** knowledge of Accounting Principles;
- **Advanced** knowledge of Microsoft Applications including Excel, Word, and PowerPoint.
- **Above average** skills in phone etiquette.
- **Exceptional** skills in managing multiple priorities.

Work Environment

Work Environment – detail the work environment including factors such as the setting (office or outdoors), travel requirements or any environmental exposures such as heat or cold.

Physical Demands

Physical Demands are important to highlight what will be expected of the person in this position. This may include lifting (include maximum weight), standing, walking, use of hands, eyes, hearing, etc.

Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

This is a statement that affirms the organization's commitment to equal opportunity employment and may include information about anti-discrimination policies.

Attestation and Signature

This section is for the employee to attest to their comprehension of the job description and sign. This should only be asked of the individual after they have been offered and accepted the position.

Resources for Job Descriptions

“Writers Block” is common when preparing job descriptions. Having resources to help you get started is very helpful. The following items are here to assist you in this aspect. CEA also has a [Job Description Template](#) to use as a starting point.

Competencies

The following chart of core competencies is extremely helpful particularly when you are compiling the section on Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Behavioral Traits

- Adaptable – applies knowledge to new circumstances
- Detail Oriented – verifies important details; ensures there are no surprises or gaps in needed information.
- Flexibility – adapts to changes while remaining focused on goals
- Initiative – remains proactive when suggesting improvements and solving problems
- Innovative – seeks novel ways to improve and grow; open to trying new things
- Multi-tasking – comfortable juggling multiple priorities and projects
- Persistent – sees projects through to completion, persevering even when faced with obstacles

Leadership Traits

- Empowers others – gives employees confidence and allows freedom to complete tasks
- Ethics – sets a positive example for others by following high ethical standards
- Influence – enlists the support and cooperation of others

- Strategic-minded – focuses on the big picture ensuring that goals and objectives are strategically aligned with the organization’s vision and mission.
- Team-building – establishes and guides a team that promotes a common goal

Communication Skills

- Collaboration – works with and through others to achieve common goals
- Conflict Resolution – works to resolve differences and maintain work relationships
- Effective Listening – builds understanding through listening to what others have to say and responding appropriately
- Interpersonal Relations – exhibits respect and understanding of others to maintain professional relationships
- Verbal Communication – speaks with clarity, precision and purpose in small and large groups
- Writing skills – possesses excellent writing and grammar skills, including the ability to write concisely, clearly and logically

Thinking Style

- Analytical – ability to tackle complicated issues by evaluating available information
- Creative – brainstorms a large number of ideas; develops innovative solutions to problems; considers multiple perspectives and thinks “outside the box”
- Critical thinking – uses logic and reasoning to deliberately analyze information in order to make quality judgements and decisions
- Forward thinking – thinks and plans for the future; embraces the future to see a bigger picture

Job-Specific Skills

- Customer service – ability to help customers resolve issues and ensure a positive experience
- Diplomacy – builds and maintains professional relationships by using tact and mutual respect
- Financial analysis – analyze financial data to identify trends and risks
- Project Management – collaborates with a team to manage a project and to achieve all goals within a defined timeline
- Risk Management and Assessment – identifies, evaluates and manages risks to minimize any negative impact

Action Verbs

Action verbs are very important to include on a job description. They help define the type of performance that can be verifiable, measurable and observable. The following chart is a mere example of some of the common action verbs that can be used in the job description.

Achieve	Deliver	Guide	Manage	Publish
Acquire	Design	Handle	Manipulate	Query
Adapt	Determine	Help	Map	Question
Administer	Develop	Identify	Maximize	Recommend
Advertise	Diagnose	Illustrate	Mentor	Reconcile
Advocate	Direct	Imagine	Minimize	Represent
Allocate	Discover	Implement	Modify	Research
Analyze	Display	Improve	Monitor	Resolve
Anticipate	Distribute	Increase	Motivate	Respond
Appraise	Draft	Influence	Narrate	Restore
Arrange	Document	Inform	Negotiate	Review
Assemble	Edit	Initiate	Observe	Schedule
Assess	Eliminate	Inspect	Obtain	Screen
Assist	Emphasize	Influence	Operate	Select
Audit	Enable	Institute	Order	Shape
Bolster	Enforce	Install	Organize	Solve
Brief	Enlist	Instruct	Originate	Spearhead
Budget	Establish	Integrate	Participate	Specialize
Build	Estimate	Interview	Perform	Strategize
Calculate	Evaluate	Introduce	Persuade	Streamline
Collaborate	Examine	Invent	Plan	Summarize
Consult	Exceed	Investigate	Predict	Supervise
Contract	Excel	Judge	Prepare	Survey
Contribute	Expand	Launch	Present	Theorize
Convert	Experiment	Lecture	Prioritize	Transcribe
Coordinate	Explain	Lead	Produce	Translate
Create	Finalize	List	Program	Update
Cultivate	Formulate	Listen	Promote	Utilize
Decide	Furnish	Locate	Protect	Validate
Delegate	Gather	Maintain	Provide	Verify