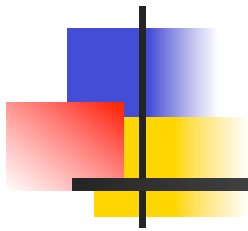


Developing and Using Job Descriptions



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Introduction – The Employee Perspective

- Most employees in small businesses **do not have** written job descriptions
- Most employees **want** a written job description



Introduction – The Employer Perspective

- Most managers in small businesses think written job descriptions would be impractical for them
- But most managers who use written job descriptions don't want to eliminate them



Introduction – The Issue

Employer-employee communication



Employees wonder:

- “How am I doing?”
- “Why wasn’t I told what my job really would be?”
- “Why am I blamed for not doing what I didn’t know I was supposed to do?”



Employers' fears:

- Employees not wanting to do something that is not in their job descriptions
- Not being able to get everything in a job description



Job descriptions can:

1. Improve employer/employee communication
2. Clarify duties and responsibilities
3. Provide performance standards
4. Help sell jobs to applicants
5. Improve training programs



Job descriptions can: (Continued)

6. Motivate employees to advance in their careers
7. Help establish employer's right to take corrective action when duties are not performed as required
8. Reduce chances of litigation
9. Help in litigation



The groundwork for job descriptions

- **Job analysis** - Duties, tasks or activities of the job
- **Job design** – Structure and enrich jobs
- **Job specification (qualifications)** – Knowledge, skills, abilities and physical demands that need to be satisfied for success in the position



Format for a job description

- No standard format
- Develop a format that fits your business
- Consistency within a business more important than among businesses



The parts of a job description

1. Job title
2. Job summary
3. Job identification
4. Job duties
5. Performance expectations
6. Compensation (Optional in job description)
7. Qualifications (Optional in job description)



Job title

- Communicate in 1-3 words what the job is
- Seek to provide some indication of level of the position, *e.g.*, *senior equipment operator*
- Give psychological importance to title by providing status
- Put honesty and accuracy above impressiveness
- Incorporate consistency across the company, *e.g.*, *supervisor means same level of responsibilities in all parts of the company and is different from manager*



Job summary

- Brief overview of the job stated in narrative form
- Distinguishes one job from another without any confusing detail



Job identification

Include at least:

- Supervisor or title of supervisor
- Department or area
- Date job description was last revised
- Exempt or nonexempt status



Job duties or Essential functions

- Begin each duty with an action verb
- Arrange in order of importance
- Include percentages of time to help communicate relative importance
- Include an elastic clause: *“Assist with other duties for the good of co-workers and the business.”*
- Include only essential duties (ADA)



Job description tips

1. Involve current and previous job holders, supervisors and perhaps co-workers
2. Commit time in the short-run to save time in the long-run
3. Borrow ideas from other companies
4. Take advantage of vacancies to create new job descriptions
5. Keep job descriptions current and accurate



Job description tips (Continued)

6. Write duties before selecting title and writing job specifications
7. Do not confuse a duty with how to accomplish a duty
8. Limit duties to 8 or fewer and sub-duties to 4 or fewer
9. Use terse, direct and simple wording
10. Consider using a job description software package



Keeping job descriptions current and accurate

1. Make update of the job description a part of the annual performance review
2. Ask the person in the position to suggest needed changes to better describe what she or he is now doing



A recipe for making job descriptions a waste of time

1. Write them poorly using vague language and misleading terminology
2. Make them long and hard to read
3. Let them become outdated
4. Fail to use them in hiring, orienting, training and performance feedback
5. Make them important to the person in the job but unimportant to the supervisor
6. Include violations of the law



Key take home points

1. Primary motivation for job descriptions is to facilitate communication
2. **Simple** is better than complex, **less** is better than more, **current** is better than stale
3. Time is required for job descriptions to become a HRM strength
4. Job descriptions signal professionalism



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