Guide to Developing a Job Description

A good job description is much more than a laundry list of tasks and responsibilities. If well written, it gives the reader a sense of the priorities involved. It not only provides a clear picture of the position for potential candidates but is also a useful tool for measuring performance and a vital reference in the event of disputes or disciplinary issues.

***Job title***

*The first fundamental element of the job description is the job title. A good job title will have the following qualities:*

* *It accurately reflects the nature of the job and the duties being performed*
* *It reflects its ranking order with other jobs in the company*
* *It does not exaggerate the importance of the role*
* *It is free of gender or age implications*
* *It is generic enough that it can be compared to similar jobs in the industry for the purposes of equity in pay and conditions*
* *It is self-explanatory for recruitment purposes (in most online job searches, the job title is the main keyword searched).*

*An example of a good job title is ‘Parking Inspector’. An example of a bad job title for the same position would be ‘Council Enforcement Officer’. This title gives you no indication of what is being enforced. In this case, the word ‘parking’ would be a mandatory requirement in the job title.*

***2. Duties***

*The job description should contain a list of the duties and responsibilities associated with the role.*

*Descriptions of duties should be no more than two or three sentences in length and should be outcome-based, containing an action, an object and a purpose (eg ‘compiles monthly reports to allow monitoring of the department’s budget’).*

*The list of duties and responsibilities will vary in length, but as a rule, should be as short as possible, otherwise the document becomes an operational manual rather than a job description.*

*Roles in smaller companies (e.g. office manager) may have more tasks associated with them, due to their ‘all rounder’ nature.*

***3. Skills and competencies***

[*Skills and competencies*](http://recruitloop.com/blog/how-to-assess-the-soft-stuff-when-hiring/)*should be listed separately from each other, as they are two quite separate things.*

*Skills are activities the candidate can perform based on what they have learned in the past, or from qualifications they have obtained.*

*Competencies are the traits or attributes you expect the candidate to display in the role.*

*An example of a skill is the ability to give effective presentations. It is a skill that can be learned through study and practice. An example of a competency, on the other hand, is strong communication, which is an innate characteristic displayed by a person.*

*The modern trend towards competency-based job descriptions means extra weight is given to behavioural competencies such as leadership, teamwork, flexibility, communication and initiative.*

***4. Relationships***

*It is important to include reporting lines and working relationships in your job description. Reporting lines clarify the responsibilities of the position by showing who the candidate reports to and who reports to them. This is important, not only in relation to compliance issues, but also to give the candidate an insight into the hierarchical structure of the organisation and how their position fits into it.*

*Working relationships are the people and departments the position requires the candidate to work closely with. It is a good idea to give an indication of the size of such departments and the extent of interaction.*

*An organisational chart is a good way to represent relationships in a job description, with vertical lines between boxes demonstrating reporting lines and horizontal lines showing working relationships.*

***5. Salary***

*Rather than assigning a salary to the position, work out a salary range to include in the job description that is competitive with similar positions in other organisations and allows for variations in education and experience*

Job Specification

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reporting To \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Department \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
**Company Description**

*Include some General Information on the Company; What it is that your company does, key achievements, and future plans*.  
  
**Overview of the job**   
*Decide what it is you want from this role. Why do you need this person, what do you want them to do? What are the parameters of the role? What do you hope they can achieve?*

*Tell them a bit about their team. Who are they reporting to? How many people will report into them? What size is their team?***Job description**    
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*The list of duties and responsibilities will vary in length, but as a rule, should be as short as possible, otherwise the document becomes an operational manual rather than a job description.*

*Roles in smaller companies (e.g. office manager) may have more tasks associated with them, due to their ‘all rounder’ nature, but you should still aim to keep your list to around fifteen tasks and preferably less.*

**Skills and competencies required**   
*Skills are activities the candidate can perform based on what they have learned in the past, or from qualifications they have obtained. Competencies are the traits or attributes you expect the candidate to display in the role.*

*An example of a skill is the ability to give effective presentations. It is a skill that can be learned through study and practice. An example of a competency, on the other hand, is strong communication, which is an innate characteristic displayed by a person. You should list the essential Skills, Competencies and Qualifications as separate from the Advantageous or Beneficial Skills, Competencies and Qualifications.*  
**Essential Skills, Competencies and Qualifications**

**Advantageous Skills, Competencies and Qualifications**

**Benefits**   
*List all benefits that will be available to the employee e.g. Pension scheme, Healthcare, Life Assurance, Competitive Salary, Additional Days holidays, Gym Membership etc.*