

Writing Job Descriptions

The following is a toolkit for writing employee job descriptions.

Job Title

The formal position of the successful applicant. Use clear terminology.

Organization Name

The name of your organization.

Job Objective

Write concise statements reflecting the general nature, purpose and objective of both the organization and the job. It should describe the broad scope of the position, and be no longer than three or four sentences.

Duties & Responsibilities

Decide which functions are essential to meeting the objectives of the job, and which are of secondary importance. These should be differentiated in the job description.

As specifically as possible, list each duty and responsibility of the job. Each statement should begin with an action verb describing the activity.

Examples of action verbs:

performs, drives, cooks, coaches, monitors, plans, inputs, supervises, recommends, analyzes, paints, weeds, answers, changes, trains, verifies, sells, organizes, files, plays, examines, orders

Qualifications & Requirements

Identify the minimum qualifications needed to perform the essential elements of the job, including education, languages, experience, equipment, credentials, skills, and knowledge. Any critical expertise or skills should be noted.

When hiring a new employee, be careful not to over-qualify for the job. If only a high school education is necessary, make this the minimum requirement, rather than a university degree.

Lines of Communication

Identify where the position fits within the hierarchy of your organization.

Training

Note on-the-job training, where applicable.

Job Location

Indicate where the employee is expected to work.

Duration of Employment and Hours

Identify whether the job is full or part time, continuous or fixed term. Identify number of hours per week, and whether the employee will work weekdays and/or weekends.

Salary

Identify remuneration parameters.

When advertising for a new position, include whether the salary is negotiable, dependent upon experience, within a range, or fixed. Job seekers prefer knowing as accurately as possible how much you expect to pay them.

Contact (for advertising new jobs)

List contact name for responding and other important information, such as phone & fax numbers, e-mail and mailing address.

Job Descriptions Play a role in Evaluating Employees

Non-profit organizations should regularly evaluate the performance of employees, to determine how well they are meeting their objectives. To measure performance you need a reference point, and job descriptions perform that role.

Employee evaluations should directly involve supervisors who work most closely with them, and employees themselves should also assess their effectiveness. Following an evaluation, your organization should be prepared to revise or update job descriptions.

Evaluations will be easier if job descriptions are results oriented and measurable. For example:

Duties & Responsibilities

Measurable Results

Organize regional softball tournament

Tournament began and ended on schedule

Perform secretarial duties for Board of Directors

Minutes of meetings taken and distributed

Upgrade computer network for office

All computer terminals hooked-up on time