



# **National Diploma Animal Farm Staff Management**

## **Handout 7 Job Profiling**

## **What is a job description?**

Job descriptions are an essential part of hiring and managing your employees. These written summaries ensure your applicants and employees understand their roles and what they need to do to be held accountable.

Job descriptions also:

- Help attract the right job candidates
- Describe the major areas of an employee's job or position
- Serve as a major basis for outlining performance expectations, job training, job evaluation and career advancement
- Provide a reference point for compensation decisions and unfair hiring practices

A job description should be practical, clear and accurate to effectively define your needs. Good job descriptions typically begin with a careful analysis of the important facts about a job such as:

- Individual tasks involved
- The methods used to complete the tasks
- The purpose and responsibilities of the job
- The relationship of the job to other jobs
- Qualifications needed for the job

## **What to Avoid**

Don't be inflexible with your job description. Jobs are subject to change for personal growth, organizational development and/or evolution of new technologies. A flexible job description encourages employees to grow within their position and contribute over time to your overall business.

## **What to Include**

Job descriptions typically include:

- Job title
- Job objective or overall purpose statement
- Summary of the general nature and level of the job
- Key functional and relational responsibilities in order of significance
- List of duties or tasks performed critical to success

Additional Items for Job Descriptions for Recruiting Situations

- Job location where the work will be performed
- Salary range

## What the terms mean

Before you begin writing job descriptions, it's helpful to understand the common terms used in job descriptions:

- **Job** is a basic term that describes a set of duties and responsibilities performed by one person or multiple people.
- **Position** is a job held by one person.
- **Responsibilities** are major areas of accountability and are the primary functions of a job.
- **Tasks** are specific activities that jobholders perform to accomplish larger duties and responsibilities. For example, a jobholder might perform the *task* of inputting general ledger entries into the accounting system as part of the larger *responsibility* of maintaining the organization's financial accounting system.

## Proper Language in the Job Description

Keep each statement in the job description crisp and clear:

- Structure your sentences in classic verb/object and explanatory phrases. Since the occupant of the job is the subject of your sentence, it may be eliminated. For example, a sentence pertaining to the description of a receptionist position might read: "Greets office visitors and personnel in a friendly and sincere manner."
- Always use the present tense of verbs.
- If necessary, use explanatory phrases telling why, how, where, or how often to add meaning and clarity (e.g. "Collects all employee time sheets on a bi-weekly basis for payroll purposes.")
- Omit any unnecessary articles such as "a," "an," "the," or other words for an easy-to-understand description.
- Use unbiased terminology. For example, use the he/she approach or construct sentences in such a way that gender pronouns are not required.
- Avoid using adverbs or adjectives that are subject to interpretation such as "frequently," "some," "complex," "occasional," and "several."

## How to write the job description

### i. Job summary/ purpose

A job summary describes the primary reason for and function of the job. It also provides an overview of the job and introduces the job responsibilities section.

The job summary should describe the job without detailed task descriptions. Its length should range from one sentence to a paragraph, depending on the complexity of the job. It essentially answers to the question: why do this job exist?

## ii) **Key responsibilities**

The key responsibilities of a job are the essential functions that the jobholder performs. The key responsibilities section of the JD should include an overview of the job's essential functions that describes the basic aspects of the job and its primary responsibilities. JDs should include only higher-level responsibilities — minor task descriptions provide too much detail for the scope and purpose of JDs.

Begin each job responsibility with a present tense action verb, and describe the area of responsibility in action terms. Normally, there will be 7 to 10 responsibilities, depending on the job. The key responsibilities could also be described as the outcomes of the job. What are the key outcomes/ outputs that this job must deliver?

## iii) **Minimum job requirements**

This section describes the minimum knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that are required to perform the job. You could use KSAs to guide recruiting efforts and determine whether candidates are minimally qualified.

To determine the minimum requirements of a job, ask yourself what the job candidate needs to possess in terms of:

- **Education** — the type and minimum level, such as high school diploma and bachelor's degree.
- **Experience** — the type and minimum level, such as three to five years of supervisory experience, five years of editing experience, and two years of experience with content management systems.
- **Special skills** — such as languages spoken and computer software proficiencies.
- **Certifications and licenses** — such as industry certifications and practitioners' licenses.

Remember to list only the minimum knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the job, not the ideal attributes you look for in a candidate.

## iv) **Physical requirements**

The physical requirements section describes the physical demands and environment of the job and lists the basic physical conditions needed to perform the job. This section should also list specific physical requirements such as lifting heavy objects

and standing for long periods of time.

#### v) **Disclaimer**

All JDs should include a disclaimer that clearly states that the JD is only a summary of the typical functions of the job, not an exhaustive or comprehensive list of all possible job responsibilities, tasks, and duties. Disclaimers should also state that the responsibilities, tasks, and duties of the jobholder might differ from those outlined in the JD and that other duties, as assigned, might be part of the job. Some organizations, jobholders, and labor unions interpret the language of JDs literally. Therefore, it is important to include a disclaimer.

#### **Review and approve job descriptions**

Review your JD before distributing it. If the JD was written by an external source, it is advisable that a management-level employee or a few jobholders in the relevant department also review the JD.

JDs should be approved by human resources staff members and line or staff management. If a review process does not exist, create one. Periodic reviews of JDs are also necessary — review every two or three years for accuracy.

#### **Make job descriptions work**

JDs can also be helpful for performance reviews and compensation strategies. Focus your efforts on developing accurate JDs that include the six key components and are clear, concise, and consistent across your organization. By developing effective JDs, you can make the management of staff on your farm so much easier.