



BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE JOB DESCRIPTION

A job description is a "must-have" for every position in your organization. **Job descriptions provide the framework for hiring, managing, rewarding, and disciplining your employees - they can even keep you out of legal trouble!** Job descriptions help ensure your employees understand their roles and what they will be held accountable for.

Writing an effective job description begins with an analysis of the job. This can be done by interviewing those currently doing the job, reviewing any existing job descriptions, and observing the job as it is being done. External sources such as industry specific guides and other occupational handbooks are also helpful.

There are six key elements that should be included in your job descriptions:

- **Job title** - The job title should include an **accurate description of the type of work performed** (clerk, processor, analyst, etc.) as well as **the level of work** (senior, lead, etc.) Look at job titles on the websites of competitors in your industry for ideas. Job seekers will look for job titles they recognize within their industry.
- **Summary of the general nature and level of the job** - The summary should be one paragraph or less and give a **basic overview of the purpose and function of the job.**
- **Key responsibilities** - This is a **listing of the primary tasks the jobholder performs.** When appropriate, include descriptive wording for clarification such as, "Greets guests in a friendly manner" or "Collects all employee timesheets on a bi-weekly basis." **Stick to the key functions of the job.** The disclaimer will incorporate those minor/rare tasks that may be required.
- **Minimum job requirements** - This includes the education, experience, skills, and certifications or licenses needed to complete the job. **Be very careful here! If you cannot prove that your job requirement is truly "required," you may be opening yourself up for a discrimination claim.** For example, requiring a high school diploma to wash dishes in your restaurant may be seen as discriminatory against certain minority groups who are statistically less likely to complete their formal education. Keep in mind that race, gender, religion, age, national origin, etc. should NOT be among your list of job requirements!
- **Physical requirements** - This should list both the physical demands (lifting heavy objects, standing for long periods of time, etc.) and the environment of the job, such as noise level. **This is another dangerous area!** If there truly are physical requirements, listing them here is imperative in case you are later challenged on a "BFOQ" or bona fide occupational qualification. Likewise, listing things that are NOT BFOQ's can be seen as discriminatory toward those unable to meet the requirements due to a disability. Talk to employees currently doing the job to see if the physical requirements on your job description

are in line with the employee's on the job experience.

- **Disclaimer** - All job descriptions should include **a statement that indicates that this is only a summary of the typical functions of the job and is not intended to be all-inclusive.** Include wording stating that other duties may be assigned. You may also consider having the employee sign the job description as acknowledgment that he/she has reviewed it and understands it.

If using your job descriptions as part of your recruiting, you may consider adding information such as salary range and benefits for which the employee performing this job would be eligible.

AccuPay's HR Support Center offers templates for many job descriptions in several industries which may be downloaded in Word and edited as necessary. **Contact Lisa Reed, SPHR, or your processor at 317-885-7600 for more information.**

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