



## Job Descriptions

*could be your “weak link” in the hiring process!*

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A recent article on SHRM.org indicates that job descriptions can be so out-of-date or poorly written (or even non-existent!) that they fail to attract top talent, curb employee development, and even reduce retention of high-potential employees.

Not all employers have recognized the importance or need for a well-crafted job description. A job description not only is exclusive to the need for the job vacancy posting, it is a communication tool that clearly defines what you need to hire and also to retain those top employees at point of hire and beyond. They play an important role in onboarding, compensation, skills development, career planning and performance management.

Having an accurate job description creates a concrete set of expectations for the employer to communicate to the employee. The employee is aware of his/her responsibilities as outlined in the job description, so there is less confusion as to job expectations. It can also serve as an evaluation tool for employers to measure job performance based on pre-defined job duties.

Perhaps most importantly, accurate and up-to-date job descriptions will limit company liability. Poorly written job descriptions have been successfully used by employees against former employers in recent litigation. Job descriptions that have been carefully and thoughtfully prepared will also help employers when dealing with worker's compensation cases and return-to-work scenarios. Medical providers have a better understanding of what employees are required to do so that they can manage the employee's return-to-work in a more productive and efficient way.

Preparing good job descriptions often start with a job analysis of the position. The manager may be interviewed as well as current incumbents. A job analysis includes:

- Job responsibilities of current employees
- Analysis of duties, tasks and responsibilities that need to be accomplished by whomever fills the position
- Research of other companies who have similar jobs

Once enough information has been obtained, write a thorough, detailed job description. Components of a job description are:

- Succinct and accurate job title
- Overall position description or summary (include three most important responsibilities)

- Essential functions or responsibilities (no more than seven)
- Required knowledge, skills and abilities
- Required education and experience
- Description of the physical demands
- Description of the work environment

Common mistakes when writing or updating job descriptions:

- Poorly crafted job title (It shouldn't read like an obituary)
- Not making obvious what the position entails
- Too much text (Is it clear? Is it specific? Is it appealing?)
- Too many tasks (should be saved for a procedural manual)
- Failure to focus on core competencies (different than skills or qualifications)
- Failure or fear to update (job descriptions should be reviewed for accuracy once per year)
- Failure to be accurate for physical demands of position

Think of your job description as your next job ad! You want to be able to show candidates your commitment to the culture of your organization and the importance of this recruitment tool. If it is an applicant's first contact with you, you want it to be favorable. It should be clear, concise and searchable given the upswing in the use of hand-held devices by job seekers.

Is your organization ready to strengthen this "weak link"? Power Kunkle HR Solutions is ready to help you!