



# **How to prepare a job description**

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# Definition

A job description is the first interaction that a potential employee has with a role within an organization. Business owners are reminded that candidates take approximately 30 seconds on average to read a job description. With the current raging war on talent, a well-written job description is an asset for any recruitment.

A winning job description generally describes the responsibilities of a job, the duties of an expected jobholder, the required skills and experience to perform a job. Also useful are additional information about the company; especially on culture and fit, and who the position will report to.

## Creating a job description

### 1. Collect data about the job

This is a very important step as it allows an employer to put focus on the job rather than the person who will take up a job. The data collection and analysis carried out in this process not only results in a well-written job description but also helps a company perform better in general.

The data collected and analyzed look into the most critical aspects of a job including but not limited to;

- Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA) needed to perform the job.
- How the job will interact with others both in the organization and outside of the organization.
- Working conditions both inside and outside the organization.
- Financial implications of the job to the organization.
- Supervisory requirements for the job.

- Tools needed for the job, e.g. machinery and other equipment.
- Physical attributes needed to perform the job.
- Acceptable levels of experience, education, and certifications needed for the job.

The data gathered and analyzed should be documented and can be presented in the form of a job description.

## **2. Describe the tasks of the job**

The data collection performed in step one becomes very useful in this next step. Here, an employer should be able to have a description of the tasks that will be performed for the job. While doing this, the employer should be having the job holder in mind hence utilizing this opportunity to give a candidate a glimpse of a typical workday for the job.

There are several things that can be done to ensure that this step achieves its target; that is, creates a compelling reason for a candidate to apply for a job and informs a job holder of what is expected of them at work. Below are some of the things to bear in mind. This list is, however, not exhaustive.

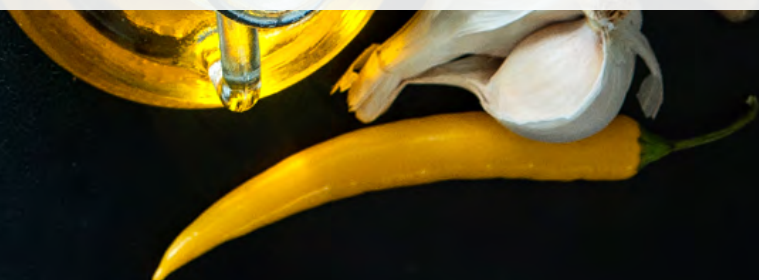
- Do not include all the tasks of the role. A job description is not meant to be exhaustive. Instead, focus on the essential tasks of the job.
- Focus on the outcome(s) of the tasks.
- Avoid mixing up the abilities of current job holder(s) with the task for a job.
- Use phrases that explain why, how, where the tasks will be performed.
- Start each task description with a descriptive action-oriented verb.
- Avoid using acronyms that have not been explained.

## **3. Organize the data collected in a coherent manner**

Each organization has its own unique way of presenting information that makes a job description. There are however some items that should always be contained in a job description. They

include:

- **The job title** – A concise name of the job.
- **Internal classification of the job** – Depending on the level of development of an organization, there are classifications for each job. This mainly includes salary grades, function grids among other classifications made on a job.
- **Reporting lines** – The position to which the job reports and those positions that report to the job.
- **Job location** – A statement of where the job will be performed.
- **Job purpose** – This is a high-level view of the job that summarizes why it exists and its overall expectations.
- **Key roles and responsibilities** – An outcome-focused description of the fundamental functions assigned to the role that outline what a job holder is expected to do for the job to be considered successful.
- **Qualification and experience** – A description of the educational and experience levels a job holder should have to perform the job successfully. These should be as descriptive as possible.
- **Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities** – A description of the must-have and nice to have knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the role. The description should include the extent to which a job holder is required to have the KSA, e.g. working, thorough, comprehensive, etc. Other quantity measures can include time input required. The description should contain both hard and soft skills.
- **Additional Qualifications** – A list of preferred professional certifications, licenses, and other associational requirements that make a job holder better suited and supported to perform the job.



- **Working conditions** – This describes the working conditions for the job. For example, travel requirements, exposures to hazards, physical effort, indication on whether working on rest days should be expected among other conditions related to the job.
- **Disclaimer** – It is a good practice to include in job descriptions a statement that indicates that the details in the job description are not exhaustive in relation to the job and that the job holder may be required to do additional tasks not noted in the job description.
- **Date** – It is a good practise to include the date the job description was authored.
- **Signatures** – Make a provision for a job holder to sign on the job description. This signifies that the job holder has read and understood the job description.





#### 4. Approvals

Once a job description has been authored and the information has been presented in a coherent manner, it is imperative that the necessary approvals for the job description are obtained.

The approved job descriptions should be well stored in a safe location. Copies of the same can be used for job postings, interviews, accommodation requests, compensation reviews and performance appraisals.



Conversations  
**with Wendy**



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*A CWW how to guide on  
How to prepare a job  
description*

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