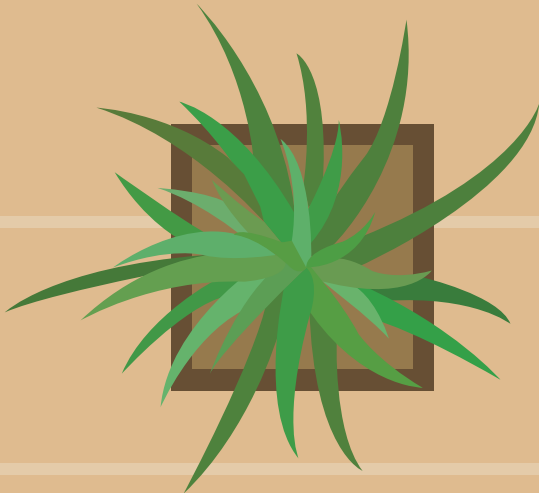


HOW TO  
**WRITE A JOB  
DESCRIPTION**  
— Worksheet —



# What Makes a Great Job Description?

Many job descriptions are so generic that they are not helpful for the employer or the job candidate.

Here's one example from a real-life recruiting ad:

*“Growing progressive company seeks dynamic individual with excellent presentation skills and work ethic for customer contact position.”*

Are they looking for a sales manager, a retail clerk or a customer service rep in a call center? There's no way to tell.

Alternately, the job description asks for so much that even a nationally recognized authority would have a hard time qualifying for the job.

A well-crafted job description can serve multiple uses:

- It lets the company narrow the field of applicants to only qualified candidates
- It lets the candidate clearly understand whether he or she should aspire to the position
- It spells out where the position fits in the hierarchy (managerial, supervisory or line job), and
- It can be used to gauge future performance in annual or periodic reviews.

# Writing the Job Description

Here's a template for writing a job description that can perform those multiple functions:

## 1) Job Title

Be as specific as possible.

"Operator" doesn't mean much. What is the person supposed to operate?

It is also a mistake to give the role more importance that it really has or ever will have.

Ambitious candidates will see through the bait-and-switch and will soon leave, causing yet another turnover problem.

## 2) Job Responsibilities

A list of duties and responsibilities will vary in length, but it's a good idea to keep it as short as possible, as long as it still conveys a good idea just what the person will be required to do.

If there are various tasks, a rough estimate of time involved in each will give the candidate a good idea whether he or she can stand it.

For example, a copywriter may be told his colleagues spend 30% of the time on the phone with customers, 30% writing and 30% researching.

Phone work may not be their favorite task, but if it were 70%, the job would be less appealing.

### 3) Skills Required

For a sales position, you may require candidates to be able to show that they can independently put together a sales presentation and tailor it to a specific customer in a particular industry.

Many employers place more emphasis on so-called "soft skills," such as communication skills and leadership potential, which are harder to gauge.

If those soft skills are required, you may ask candidates to be able to show specific examples how they used and applied those skills on previous projects.

Testing companies may also help in these areas to gauge candidates' natural aptitudes.

### 4) Reporting Relationships

Spell out specifically who the position will report to.

And if there will be any direct reports to the candidates, lay out in detail how many people and what kind of workers will need to be supervised.

Everyone wants to know who his or her boss will be, and if they'll be able to get along with the boss.

The relationship with the direct supervisor is the most important job satisfaction factor, even more than pay and benefits.

Good bosses retain people; bad bosses create constant turnover.

## 5) Experience Level

Many companies, especially those without labor unions, do not give salary levels up front. They do not want to be locked in, and do not want to make others who have been working at the company for some time jealous of new salary levels being offered.

Nevertheless, you will want to indicate whether you're looking for an entry-level customer service rep or a department head with many years' experience.

Required experience levels will give candidates some idea whether they fit the job description, are overqualified, or have no hope of being considered.

## 6) A Sanity Check

As a final sanity check, you may want to give your job description to a trusted person inside the company, such as a person who is doing a similar job now or the person vacating the position if he or she is leaving on good terms. Ask them:

- Is this what you do (did)?
- Is there anything that's not accurate?
- Is anything important left out?
- If you were on the outside, would you apply for this job? Why or why not?
- What would make it sound more attractive to you?

# Job Description Worksheet

**Job Title**

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**Job Responsibilities**

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**Skills Required**

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**Reporting Relationships**

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**Experience Level Required**

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