

The Invaluable Job Description

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In today's world of digital sound bites, some argue traditional HR documents like job descriptions (and handbooks and org charts) are unnecessary and obsolete. Not the case if job descriptions are done in the right way and used appropriately. Here are ways that job descriptions (JDs) add real value to organizations both big and small:

VALUE-ADD

- They create definition and clarity around roles and expectations. This is important for applicants, new hires and existing employees within the organization. JDs can provide framework for hiring, evaluating performance, development opportunities and succession planning.
- JDs provide the basis for justifying the exempt status of a position and give guidance for setting compensation.
- Well-written JDs provide invaluable support in ADA lawsuits, discrimination claims and issues with classifications of nonexempt and exempt employees.
- JDs support the recruitment and selection process ensuring appropriate candidates apply and the right candidates are selected.

Do your job descriptions contain the essential components to be effective? Incorporate the following:

- Job Summary:** the primary responsibility for the position and the reason why this job exists in the organization.
- Key Responsibilities/Essential Functions:** the primary tasks associated with a particular role.
- Work Environment:** can include location, physical requirements and reporting relationship.
- Job Qualifications:** the objective, measurable requirements for the position. This includes education, experience, certifications and training

Other items to consider when creating job descriptions:



- ❖ Keep it simple (and stay high level). Remember the JD is not a procedure manual. Describe what is expected not how it should be done.
- ❖ Don't include a personality profile in the JD. Use measurable objective qualifications.
- ❖ Solicit input from both managers and successful incumbents in preparing JD. They both bring valuable perspectives.
- ❖ Do a reality check to make sure the JD accurately reflects the expectations of the position not a desired state or a personal bias.

DO JOB DESCRIPTIONS STILL ADD VALUE?

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Lastly, what not to do with a job description:



- **Copy/paste the JD into a job posting.** What creates clarity in the organization will likely not entice applicants to your company in today's competitive job market. Be selective about what you include from the JD (high level summary and job requirements) and use the rest of your posting to sell the candidate on your company and its culture.
- **Don't file and forget your JDs.** Review your JD portfolio consistently, at least annually. Organizations are fluid and roles change – job descriptions can quickly become obsolete.

Creating or auditing a job description portfolio can be a daunting task. Beard Group has a history of partnering with our clients to support their needs around job descriptions. Contact us at: www.beairdgroup.com/contact-us for information on how Beard Group can support your HR needs.