


POMS & ASSOCIATES HR & EMPLOYMENT WEBINAR SERIES

WRITING CLEAR, EFFECTIVE, AND LEGALLY COMPLIANT JOB DESCRIPTIONS:


Tips and Traps For HR Professionals, and Managers

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TODAY'S PRESENTER



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JOB DESCRIPTIONS: AN INTRODUCTION

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JOB DESCRIPTION, JOB POSTING, OR POSITION DESCRIPTION?

- The terms job description, job posting, and position description (and other variations) are commonly used interchangeably. However, you could technically argue that there is a distinct difference between the three:
 - A job description** is a document that details an employee's high-level duties, responsibilities, and minimum requirements to be successful in that job.
 - A job description provides more detailed information, such as required and preferred (rather than desired) qualifications and skills needed for the role.
 - A position description** is a more comprehensive document that goes into greater detail about a position's significant responsibilities, day-to-day tasks, duties, and expectations (outcomes) required of a job.
 - A position description provides a more details about performance standards, and expectations, and as a guide for how you will assess the employee's performance in their role against those responsibilities.
 - A job posting** is a brief advertisement to entice potential candidates to apply for a job.
 - Job postings include basic company information, high-level job duties, desired qualifications, and regulatory information. Job postings may also include benefits for joining the company to attract talent.
- In the context of this webinar, we're going to use the terms "job description" and "position description" interchangeably, referring to a document used to describe a job's responsibilities and duties, and the requirements required to fulfill and be successful in the role.

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JOB DESCRIPTION, JOB POSTING, OR POSITION DESCRIPTION?

- COMPARING THE THREE:**
 - A job description** describes the core essential duties and responsibilities assigned to a position and the minimum qualifications required to carry out those duties successfully. Used with job incumbents, sometimes in finalist candidate interviews. Not an advertisement.
 - A position description** describes the detailed duties of a position that may differ between organizations or departments within an organization. It is used to establish performance standards, expectations, and as a guide for performance evaluations. It is used as a guide for employees and their leaders, is longer, and details how an employee can succeed in the position.
 - A job posting** is generally written informally to be engaging to candidates, both internal and external. It informs candidates of a job opening and advertises the job as appealing, in order to persuade them to join the team. A promotional tool.

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JOB DESCRIPTION, JOB POSTING, OR POSITION DESCRIPTION?

- EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS ANSWERED:**
 - A job description** answers an employee's questions like:
 - What are the main duties I will spend time on in the role? What qualifications must I have to succeed in this role? What are the minimum qualifications I need for this role? What is the scope of my role?
 - A position description** answers an employee's questions like:
 - What specific tasks will I be doing in this role? What does success look like in this role? What are the working conditions required for task completion? Who will I interact with and report to?
 - A job posting** answers candidate questions such as:
 - What is it like to work at the company? What kind of things will I do in this role? Are my skills a good fit for this role?

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JOB DESCRIPTIONS: AN INTRODUCTION

- Job descriptions are important and if done properly set the framework for everything that gets done in an organization.
- As HR continues to develop new technologies and employ new human capital programs (e.g. compensation, succession planning, training and development) there must first be a solid understanding of the work/jobs performed.
- Appropriately defining and documenting jobs (i.e. the job description) helps accomplish this goal.
- Job descriptions are useful in career planning, offering training exercises and establishing legal requirements for compliance purposes.
- A job description gives an employee a clear and concise resource to be used as a guide for job performance.
- Likewise, a supervisor can use a job description as a measuring tool to ensure that the employee is meeting job expectations.

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JOB DESCRIPTION POSITIVES

A well-written job description:

- Provides essential information for classification of the position into the salary structure - for making objective determinations about the relative value of a specific job in comparison with other jobs and assigning the appropriate pay grade, job function and/or title for the job;
- Provides the basis for the job posting developed to assist in recruiting efforts for screening and interviewing qualified job candidates;
- Identifies the essential functions of the job based on job specific competencies;
- Provides the incumbent an understanding of the primary accountabilities, duties and responsibilities they are expected to fulfill;
- Provides information used to develop concrete performance expectations and implement a performance management plan;

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JOB DESCRIPTION POSITIVES

A well-written job description (Continued):

- Provides information used to determine training and development needs based on skills and competencies required for success in the position.
- Provides documentation to help you cover your legal bases. For example, in regard to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you'll want to make certain that the description of physical requirements is accurate, and you'll want to split off the essential functions of the job from those less so. That offers a fair shake to people with disabilities if they can do the essentials (with reasonable accommodation) even if they can't do the rest.
- Provides information to tell job candidates what you are looking for. This helps you in the selection process, and it also helps when you are addressing questions from those who are not selected.

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JOB DESCRIPTION NEGATIVES

- Job descriptions become dated fast! It's a rapid-paced, ever-changing work environment these days, and outdated job descriptions are time bombs ready to explode the reality of what now needs doing back into what was needed in the past. Review descriptions regularly as part of your performance appraisal system.
- Job descriptions can encourage "that's not my job" thinking. They need enough flexibility that people can think "outside the box". They need to allow for cross-training. While it's not necessary to list every task expected of an individual, the essential duties (those that absolutely must be done) must be included and labeled as such.
- Poorly written job descriptions may be used as evidence against you. For example, if the job duties are written in an extreme manner (i.e. either too specifically in an attempt to detail every single task that might possibly occur – which is impossible – so that the omission of something causes problems or too broadly, not including enough specificity to accurately portray the duties).

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USING JOB DESCRIPTIONS IN MANAGEMENT

1. USING JOB DESCRIPTIONS TO ASSESS EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

- Creating detailed job descriptions can help in clearly communicating the work objectives you want your employees to achieve. By assessing your employees' performance, you can also more easily:
- identify key performers for promotion or those ready for a new challenge within the company;
- provide supportive documentation to acknowledge employee contributions or areas for improvement;
- evaluate employee progress after training, and identify any remaining gaps; and
- create a stronger bond between the organization and the employees, especially if employees are invited to take part in setting their expected level of performance and in rating the quality of their work.

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USING JOB DESCRIPTIONS IN MANAGEMENT

1. USING JOB DESCRIPTIONS TO ASSESS EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Listed below are steps to follow to illustrate how you can use your job descriptions to evaluate your employees.

- **Step 1.** From the job description, list the duties you want to evaluate;
- **Step 2.** Describe the level of performance that is expected in ways that can be measured (quality or quantity of work performed) for each of the duties;
- **Step 3.** Make the timing of evaluation clear: annual, monthly or other;
- **Step 4.** Provide concrete feedback to your employees. A simple rating scale such as “did not meet objectives”, “met objectives” and “surpassed objectives” may be used.
- **Step 5.** Suggest specific ways in which the employee could improve. This could include on-the-job training, certification or change of behavior.
- **Step 6.** If your employees regularly exceed their work objectives, discuss with them other types of work they might be interested in or qualified for to ensure they continue to be motivated and challenged. This can help your company grow and prosper.

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USING JOB DESCRIPTIONS IN MANAGEMENT

2. USING JOB DESCRIPTIONS TO ID EMPLOYEE TRAINING NEEDS

- With good job descriptions, you can compare the tasks of employees to what needs to be done within the organization. This helps you easily identify critical areas that need to be addressed, ensuring you know your organization's strengths and weaknesses and, have a good view of employee's areas of strengths and areas for improvement or change.
- Reasons why training your employees may benefit your business in the long run include:
 - **Technological change:** When job requirements change due to the introduction of new technology, comparing the position's current job description to new requirements can help identify skills gaps and identify the learning and training needs of employees, ensuring a smoother transition to the effective use of new technology.
 - **Succession planning:** By using the job descriptions to identify the employment requirements of positions critical to the success of the organization, a manager can more easily identify the skills required by other employees should the vital position become vacant.
 - **Continuous improvement and innovation:** Organizations need to be aware of new developments taking place in their business. A company that identifies and supports the skills development of its employees is a company that increases its chances of not falling behind competitors.

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USING JOB DESCRIPTIONS IN MANAGEMENT

3. USING JOB DESCRIPTIONS TO RECRUIT AND HIRE EMPLOYEES

- With the specific information contained in the job description (such as functions and duties, qualifications, education, experience and personality suitability), the recruitment process can be done more easily and more effectively since all the information required for the position to be filled is already available and, already “thought-through”.
- The information found in a job description can help you draft a detailed job posting that can include:
 - the title of the job (what you plan to call the position);
 - a summary of the job description;
 - the employment requirements (e.g. education, training, qualifications and skills) you are looking for the candidate to possess at entry level and, possibly, those that will need to be acquired; and
 - the conditions of employment (e.g. full time or part time, shift work, working with hazardous material).

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**JOB DESIGN, JOB ANALYSIS,
JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND JOB SPECIFICATIONS**

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WHAT IS JOB ANALYSIS?

- Job analysis is the purposeful, systematic process of studying jobs to gather, analyze, synthesize and report information about job responsibilities and requirements and the conditions under which work is performed.
 - The procedure through which you determine the **duties of positions** in the organization, the **characteristics of the people** to hire for those jobs, and to determine in detail the particular job duties and requirements and the relative importance of these duties for a given job.
 - It involves studying jobs to determine what tasks and responsibilities they include, their relationships to other jobs, and the conditions under which work is performed, tools and equipment used, and the personal capabilities required for satisfactory performance.

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TYPES OF INFORMATION COLLECTED



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USES OF JOB ANALYSIS INFORMATION




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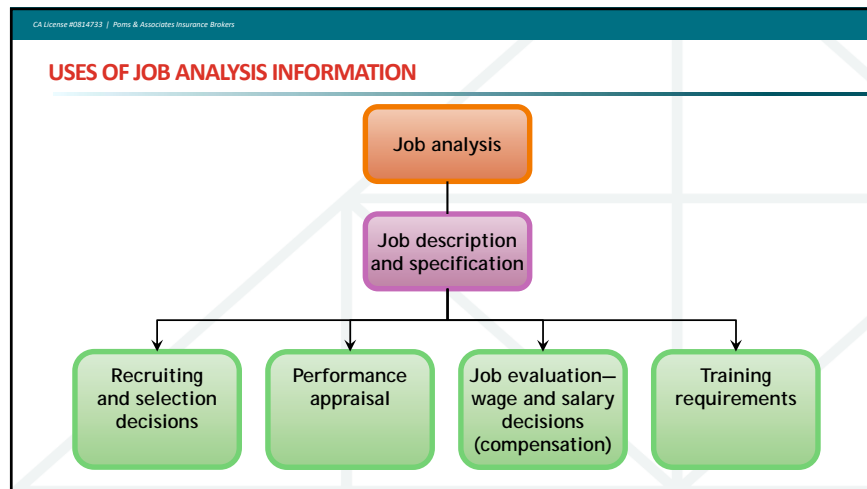
WHAT IS JOB ANALYSIS FOR?

Job analysis produces information for writing job descriptions (a list of what the job entails) and job specification (what kind of people to hire for that job)

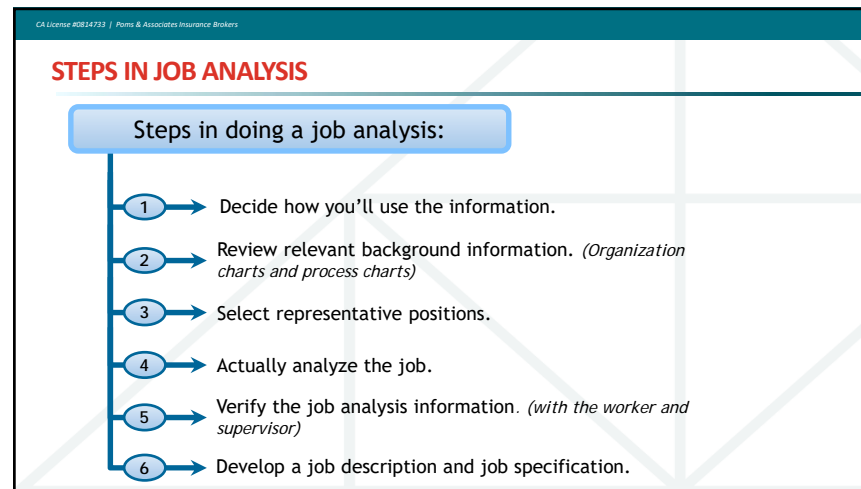
- Job description -the principal product of a job analyses. It represents a written summary of the job as an identifiable organizational unit.
- Job specification - a written explanation of the knowledge, skills, abilities, traits and other characteristics (KSAOs) necessary for effective performance on a given job.



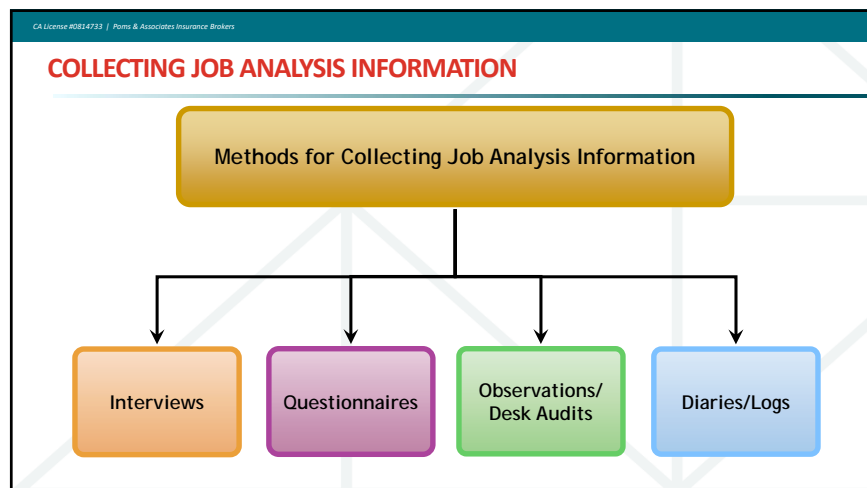
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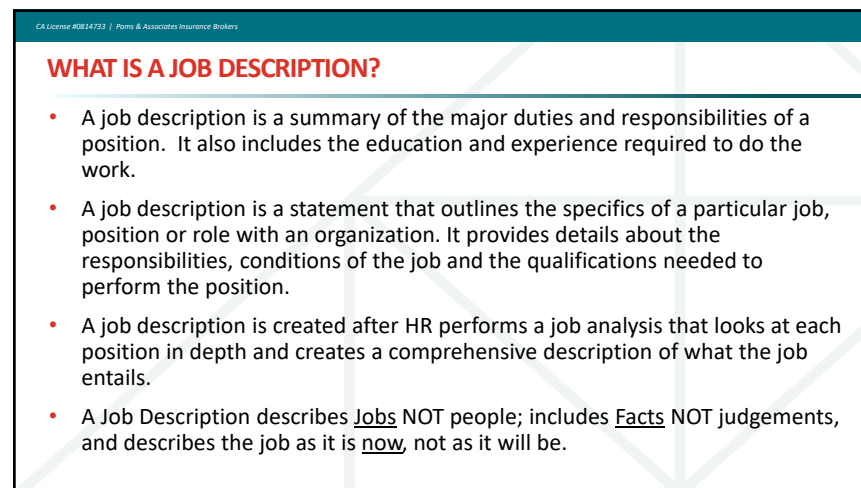
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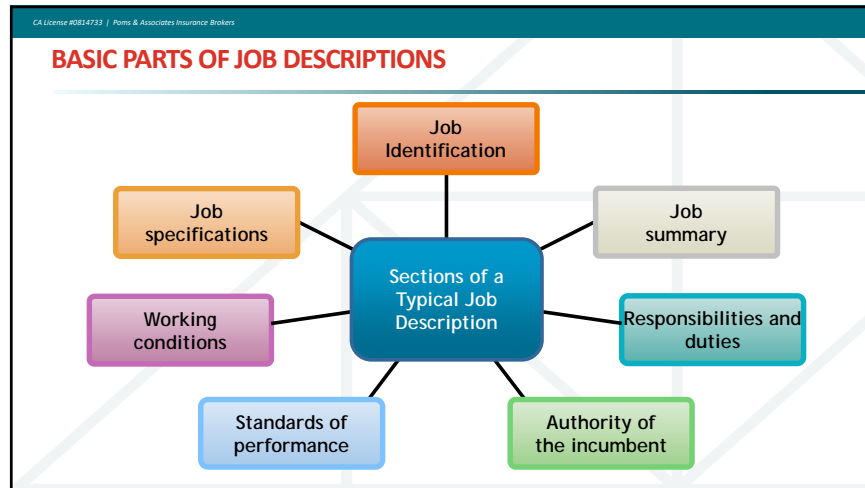
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WHAT CAN BE INCLUDED IN A JOB DESCRIPTION?

- **Job Title** – a term that describes in a few words the position held by an employee. Depending on the job, a job title can describe the level of the position or the responsibilities of the person holding the position.
- **Job Code** – individualized sets of numbers assigned to different jobs in order to identify the position in a data system.
- **Department** – a specialized functional area within an organization.
- **Grade** – a pay grade is a step within a compensation system that defines the amount of pay an employee will receive. The vertical steps in a pay grade chart refer to the level of the responsibilities defined by the job's requirements.
- **Position Summary** – a brief, general statement of the more important functions and responsibilities of a job.
- **Essential Functions of the Position** – are functions that the person holding the job must be able to perform. *Don't forget essential supervisory functions or lead worker functions.*
- **Non-Essential Functions of the Position** – are functions that do not affect the essence of the job and could be reassigned to another employee.

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WHAT CAN BE INCLUDED IN A JOB DESCRIPTION?

- **Expected Behaviors** – key behaviors expected of employees e.g., “teamwork,” “commitment to quality improvement,” etc. Somewhat uncommon, but helpful
- **Required Qualifications** – a qualification (education, experience, skills and personal qualities) that a candidate must demonstrably possess.
- **Preferred Qualifications** – a qualification that is not required but preferred that a candidate possess.
- **Supervision Received** – the level of supervision needed for this position.
- **Supervision Exercised** – the group or positions this job supervises.
- **Environmental Working Conditions** – the conditions in which an individual works in (physical environment, stress and noise levels, degree of safety or danger).
- **EEO Statement** – complies with the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) law and communicates that we provide equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment.

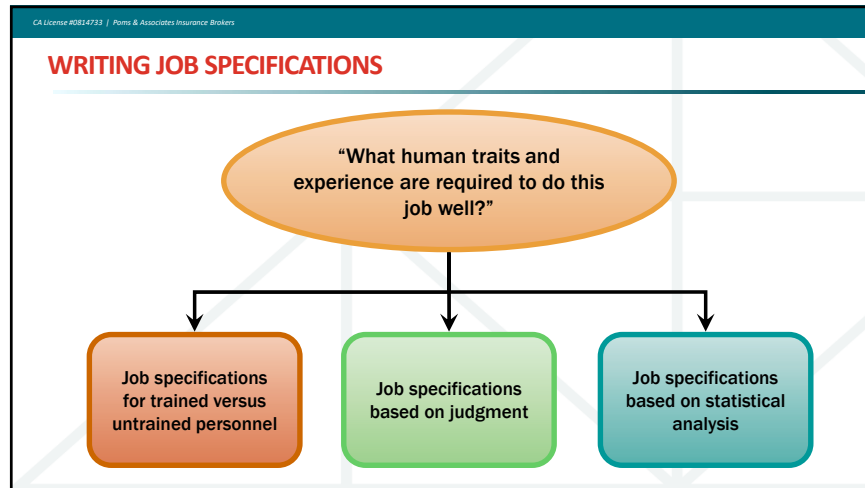
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JOB SPECIFICATION

- **Job Specification evolves from the Job Description.**
- The Job Specification describes the qualifications needed for successful performance of the essential job duties.
 - Essential qualities which a person must possess;
 - Desirable qualities which a person may possess; and
 - Contra-indicators which are likely to become a handicap to successful job performance.
- Job Specification is a statement of employee's characteristics and qualification required for satisfactory performance of defined duties and tasks comprising a specific job or function.
- The Job Specification addresses the question “what personal traits and experience are needed to perform the job effectively”

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ELEMENTS OF JOB SPECIFICATION

The job specification should include at least the following elements:

- **Job title:** Use typical convention to title a job. Creative and novel job titles make the position difficult to compare on wage surveys, industry databases and other benchmarks. This is not the time to be cute or unusual.
- **Job code:** Most organizations have some type of coding scheme (business unit, job family, department, etc.)
- **FLSA status:** Is this job exempt or nonexempt for overtime purposes? It is important to identify that on-the-job description to avoid wage and hour problems or misunderstanding by employees regarding entitlement to overtime pay.
- **Job summary:** This is a brief paragraph that explains the basic purpose for the job. The summary should be just a few sentences.
- **Knowledge required to perform the job:** Knowledge is a body of information that can be applied to the performance of job tasks. Examples include business and management, engineering and technology, arts and humanities, and communications.
- **Skills required to perform the job:** A skill is an observable competence used to apply knowledge to perform a particular task. Examples include reading comprehension, writing, speaking, critical thinking, problem solving and decision making.

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ELEMENTS OF JOB SPECIFICATION

The job specification should include at least the following elements:

- **Abilities required to perform the job:** An ability is an underlying, enduring trait that is useful in performing tasks. Examples include cognitive, psychomotor, physical and sensory ability.
- **Mental characteristics** such as general intelligence, memory, judgment, foresight, ability to concentrate, critical analysis, problem-solving ability, etc.
- **Behavioral, social, and psychological characteristics** such as emotional intelligence, flexibility, manners, drive, conversational ability, interpersonal ability, attitude, values, creativity etc.
- **Education required, and preferred:** An appropriate level of education required to successfully perform the job is determined based on the essential job duties identified. It is important to set the level of required education at the level that most current successful employees possess.
- **Experience required, and preferred:** An appropriate level of experience required to successfully perform the job is determined based on the essential job duties identified. It is important to set the level of required experience at the level that most current successful employees possess.
- **Required licensure or desired certification to perform the job:** Based on the essential job duties identified and applicable regulations, required licensures or desired certifications are determined. Health care professionals, commercial vehicle operators, accountants, attorneys, and many other occupations require licensure or certification.

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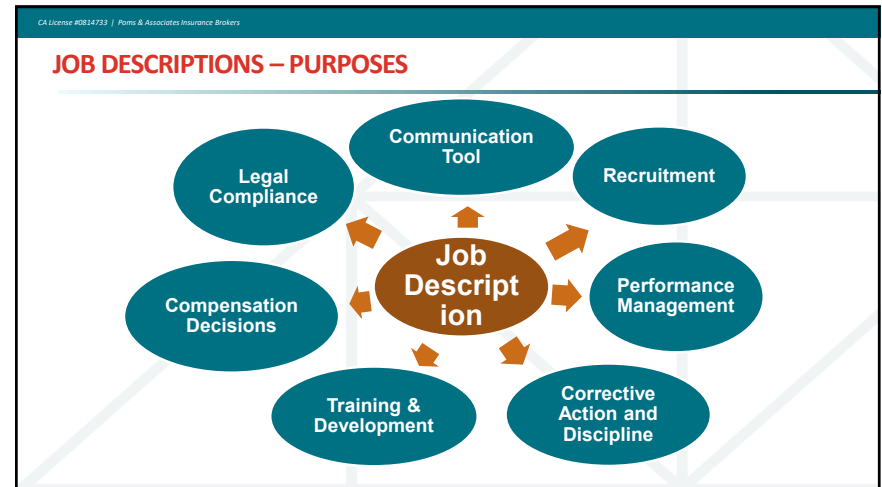
MAINTENANCE OF JOB DESCRIPTION, AND JOB SPECIFICATION

- Jobs and organizations are constantly changing. It is critical that once the job analysis has been conducted that it not go to waste. Periodic review of all jobs is essential to comply with statutory requirements and to keep up to date with current practice in the organization.
- Job descriptions and specifications must be kept current to reflect changes in:
 - Work practices and processes.
 - Tools and equipment used on the job.
 - Levels of discretion
 - Licensure or certification.
- Appropriate times for review are:
 - Annually as part of the performance appraisal process.
 - Whenever a major change in technology or work methods takes place.
 - When governing bodies change the certification or licensure requirements.
 - When the job incumbent leaves the job and HR is recruiting and staffing for the job.

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COMMON LAW STANDARDS IN CORRECTIVE ACTION AND DISCIPLINE

Employee Should:	Employer Should:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Know clearly what policies, procedures, and work rules must be followed 2. Be informed of expected standards of performance –e.g., job description, work procedures 3. Have the right to be given appropriate feedback 4. Be given the chance for improvement 5. Receive professional assistance, training, and other support, if necessary 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clearly state what the problem is – performance, behavior, conduct 2. Specify impacts of the problem(s) 3. Listen to the employee’s explanation of “what happened” 4. Provide clear, specific expectations of what change is to be made. 5. Provide specific timelines for improvement or change 6. Clearly indicate consequences of not making required changes 7. Provide specific direction, guidance, and training for improvement. 8. Document all “good faith efforts” to help the employee to succeed.

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JOB DESCRIPTIONS – PURPOSES

1. Clarifies employer expectations for employee performance
2. Provides basis of measuring job performance
3. Provides clear description of role for job candidates
4. Provides a structure for company to understand and structure all jobs and ensure necessary activities, duties and responsibilities are covered by one job or another
5. Provides continuity of role parameters irrespective of manager interpretation
6. Enables pay and grading systems to be structured fairly and logically
7. Prevents arbitrary interpretation of role content and limit by employee and employer and manager
8. Essential reference tool in issues of employee/employer dispute

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JOB DESCRIPTIONS – PURPOSES

9. Essential reference tool for corrective action and discipline issues
10. Provides important reference points for training and development areas
11. Provides neutral and objective (as opposed to subjective or arbitrary) reference points for appraisals, performance reviews and counselling
12. Enables formulation of skill set and behavior set requirements per role
13. Enables organization to structure and manage roles in a uniform way, thus increasing efficiency and effectiveness of recruitment, training and development, organizational structure, workflow and activities, customer service, etc.
14. Enables factual view (as opposed to instinctual) to be taken by employees and managers in career progression and succession planning

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JOB DESCRIPTIONS – PURPOSES

- **HR planning:**
 - Work design.
 - Skills required.
- **Staffing:**
 - Advertising in labor market.
 - Selection criteria.
 - Selection methods.
 - Succession planning.
- **Training & Development:**
 - Training needs for new employees.
 - Training program content.
 - Training evaluation.
- **Performance management:**
 - Performance standards.
 - Evaluation criteria.
 - Appraisal forms and methods.
 - Feedback and communication with employees.

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JOB DESCRIPTIONS – PURPOSES

- **Safety and health:**
 - Training required.
 - Protective equipment needed.
 - Hazard communications.
 - Accommodations for medical impairments.
- **Rewards:**
 - Value of each job for compensation purposes.
 - FLSA status.
 - Pay adjustments.
- **Employee relations:**
 - Work rules, policies and procedures.
 - Clear lines of authority and responsibility.
 - Union work settings.
- **Legal compliance:**
 - Recordkeeping.
 - Accommodations.
 - Training.
 - Compensation practices.
 - Equal employment practices and affirmative action.

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WHAT IS A WELL-WRITTEN JOB DESCRIPTION?

- A job description is a useful, plain-language tool that explains the tasks, duties, function and responsibilities of a position.
- It details who performs a specific type of work, how that work is to be completed, and the frequency and the purpose of the work as it relates to the organization's mission and goals.
- **A well-written job description:**
 - Provides essential information for classification of the position into the salary structure - for making objective determinations about the relative value of a specific job in comparison with other jobs and assigning the appropriate pay grade, job function and/or title for the job;
 - Provides the basis for the job posting developed to assist in recruiting efforts for screening and interviewing qualified job candidates;
 - Identifies the essential functions of the job based on job specific competencies;
 - Provides clearly communicated job performance expectations and standards;

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WHAT IS A WELL-WRITTEN JOB DESCRIPTION?

A well-written job description: *(continued)*

- Provides the incumbent an understanding of the primary accountabilities, duties and responsibilities they are expected to fulfill;
- Provides information used to develop concrete performance expectations and implement a performance management plan;
- Provides information used to determine training and development needs based on skills and competencies required for success in the position.
- Provides documentation to help you cover your legal bases. For example, in regard to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you'll want to make certain that the description of physical requirements is accurate, and you'll want to split off the essential functions of the job from those less so. That offers a fair shake to people with disabilities if they can do the essentials (with reasonable accommodation) even if they can't do the rest.
- Provides information to tell job candidates what you are looking for. This helps you in the selection process, and it also helps when you are addressing questions from those who are not selected.

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WHAT IS A WELL-WRITTEN JOB DESCRIPTION?

Some things to be wary of with job descriptions include:

- **Job descriptions become dated fast!** It's a rapid-paced, ever-changing work environment these days, and outdated job descriptions are time bombs ready to explode the reality of what now needs doing back into what was needed in the past. Review descriptions regularly as part of your performance appraisal system.
- **Job descriptions can encourage "that's not my job" thinking.** They need enough flexibility that people can think "outside the box". They need to allow for cross-training. While it's not necessary to list every task expected of an individual, the essential duties and functions must be included and labeled as such.
- **Poorly written job descriptions may be used as evidence against you.** For example, if the job duties are written in an extreme manner (i.e. either too specifically in an attempt to detail every single task that might possibly occur – which is impossible – so that the omission of something causes problems or too broadly, or not including enough specificity to accurately portray the duties).

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WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

No state or federal law "requires" job descriptions. But they can be helpful tools for practical and legal reasons. Here are some of the most important:

As a Useful Communication Tool

- Job descriptions can be useful communication tools to tell employees exactly what tasks you expect them to perform. Job descriptions may also address quality or quantity of performance standards, or even work rules that apply to a particular job. Without such clear communications, employees may not perform to your expectations.

To Help Identify the Right Employees for a Job

- Job descriptions can help identify skills or abilities that are necessary for a position and tells the applicant what the position may involve or require.

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WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

To Help in the ADA Interactive Process

- Some state or federal laws require reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. Job descriptions can help with the interactive process that such laws require. A job description serves as a starting point for what the employer believes to be the essential job duties. The applicant or employee then must identify which of the listed duties he or she cannot perform.
- Once those duties are identified, the employer and individual with a disability can begin an interactive dialogue about what accommodations may help the individual to perform those duties without being an undue hardship on the employer or without creating a direct threat to the individual or others. A job description can also be helpful in soliciting the advice of professionals such as physicians, chiropractors, counselors or rehabilitation therapists about whether the individual can actually perform a particular job.

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WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

To Describe Legitimate Minimum Qualifications

- If a job requires a particular certification, such as a commercial driver’s license, a particular degree, or professional designation, list it in a job description. Similarly, if a negative drug test is required before starting or continuing work, that should be stated in the job description.
- Other objective, minimum qualifications can be listed as well, including such basics as the need for good attendance and the ability to work well with others. Then, if a person seeks a position and does not possess the required certification or qualifications, you have a legitimate, nondiscriminatory reason for not placing the person in the job.
- Be careful not to OVER-STATE what the job’s actual minimum qualifications are, e.g.,
 - H.S. Diploma for jobs not objectively requiring it
 - Overstating degree requirements when a job does not inherently need it (e.g., HR)

To Describe Legitimate Preferred Qualifications

- Preferred qualifications are the preferred, non-mandatory skills and experience of an ideal candidate. These are often more qualitative than the minimum qualifications (e.g., demonstrated proficiency in persuasive communications, teaching background preferred).

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WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

To Help Justify an Employee’s Exempt Status

- Job descriptions will not, by themselves, determine whether a person should be exempt or nonexempt under applicable wage and hours laws. A job description must first accurately reflect the duties of a particular position. In addition, other elements of the applicable exemptions must also be present with respect to each individual worker to qualify as exempt.
- But if you claim a person is exempt from minimum wage, timekeeping and overtime requirements under the “executive” exemption to the Fair Labor Standards Act, the job description should state that the employee manages a “recognized department or subdivision” of the company and regularly supervises at least two or more full-time equivalent employees every week. Other managerial duties should also be referenced in the job description.
- Similarly, for those employees that you are attempting to qualify as exempt under the “administrative” exemption, the job description should state that the employee “regularly exercises independent judgment and discretion about matters of significance” or words to that effect. Again, describing duties that involve such independent judgment and discretion, such as “negotiates” or “decides,” would also be helpful.

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APPLICATIONS OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS

EMPLOYMENT

- **Workforce Planning.** Job descriptions help in pinpointing staffing requirements and gaps as well as in identifying overstaffing or superfluous positions. They are also valuable when decisions regarding centralization or decentralization must be made.
- **Candidate Recruiting, Selection and Placement** are more effective since the job description provides a clear picture of the requirements necessary to identify and select the best fit between candidate and job.
- **Interviews.** You can build your set of interview questions around the job’s actual requirements, as set out in the description. This will not only help you find a great hire, but also help you steer clear of topics that could lead to legal trouble.
- **Hiring.** The job description is the basis of your search for a new hire. It will help you weed out applicants who don’t have the necessary qualifications and find a new employee who has what it takes to succeed.

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APPLICATIONS OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS

ACCLTURATION AND ON-BOARDING

- **Orientation.** The importance of orientation and adjustment to a new job can’t be overstated. A newly hired worker with an accurate, well-written job description to review and analyze has received a good introduction to the job and is therefore able to understand more fully what the company and the supervisor expect. All new employees should be instructed to regard the job description as a framework or starting point, not as an upper limit to their own abilities and interest.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

- **Collective Bargaining.** The issues of varying pay rates for similar work have often been raised by unions, who may point to job description as a basis for standardizing pay rates. Job descriptions have also been used by employers to defend themselves against what they feel are unjustified union demands for uniformity in pay rates.

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APPLICATIONS OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS

COMPENSATION AND CLASSIFICATION

- **Classification Job Evaluation.** A job description gives you (or your human resources department) a solid way to measure the value of a job and set the pay accordingly.
- **Job Families and Grades.** Job descriptions make it possible to identify common job elements and requirements. Good job descriptions can clarify which jobs are truly similar and which jobs warrant different pay levels because they require different levels of skill, knowledge, or responsibility, or because they contribute to company goals in different ways.
- **Pay Establishment and Pay Equity** requires that jobs are sufficiently defined so that an appropriate amount of pay can be paid for a job. It also helps to ensure that employees performing jobs with similar levels of skill, effort, risk and responsibility are paid equitably.

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APPLICATIONS OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS

PERFORMANCE PLANNING, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

- **Goal and Expectation Setting.** The expectation of performance is established by virtue of identifying the duties and responsibilities required by the job and detailed in the job description. As such, the job description becomes the starting point for the discussion that follows with the employee.
- **Performance Management.** The job description explains what constitutes success in the job. You can measure an employee's performance against those expectations. The description also gives you written proof that your employees knew what the company expected, if you later have to discipline or fire someone who couldn't measure up.
- **Performance Reviews.** While performance appraisals enable managers to make decisions in many areas other than compensation, the link between describing the job and developing appropriate performance standards cannot be overlooked. These performance standards, in turn, are critical factors when it comes to evaluating an employee's readiness for pay increases, promotions, succession opportunities, etc.

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APPLICATIONS OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS

PERFORMANCE PLANNING, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT *(Continued)*

- **Career Planning and Progression and Succession Planning.** Job descriptions reveal the relationship among certain jobs and the education, experience, or skills needed to advance from one job to another. With that understanding, a link between jobs and the employees who occupy them is made which facilitates the succession planning process.
- **Training & Development.** Understanding the requirements of the job in terms of education, skills, knowledge, etc. enables a manager to determine the gap between what employees currently have and what is required to be able to perform their current jobs more competently or move to another within the same or different job families.

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APPLICATIONS OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

- **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).** Although the ADA does not require job descriptions, it does require that applicants and employees are able to perform the —essential functions|| of the job, with or without reasonable accommodation.
- **Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).** Job descriptions are often used as supporting documents when it comes to establishing a job's exempt status.
- **Equal Pay Act (EPA).** The job description should clearly identify the level of skill, effort, risk and responsibility required by the job as well as the conditions under which it is performed. This can be a vital piece of evidence when asked to support pay differences that may exist between genders.
- **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.** This Act makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against any individual with respect to hiring, compensation, or other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. The job description defines the requirement of the job and sets the standards for job performance, both of which are crucial considerations in such cases. The job description is also important as far as testing regulations are concerned. Any employment or pre- employment tests that are administered must be strictly in line with job requirements, which in turn, are spelled out in the job description.


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APPLICATIONS OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

- **Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act.** Many job descriptions have a section that discusses working conditions, especially when these conditions are considered uncomfortable or dangerous. It is important that any unusual or adverse job condition be specified within the job description so that an employee coming into the job knows what to expect.
- **Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA).** The job specifications section of the job description, which states what the job requires of the job holder in terms of education or work experience, skills, physical characteristics, personal characteristics, etc., should not discriminate based on age unless there is valid reason.



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STEPS TO TAKE IN WRITING A JOB DESCRIPTION

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STEP 1: PERFORM A JOB ANALYSIS

- This process of gathering, examining and interpreting data about the job's tasks will supply accurate information about the job so that an organization can perform efficiently. Performing a job analysis includes the following steps:
 - Interviewing employees to find out exactly what tasks are being performed.
 - Observing how tasks are performed.
 - Having employees fill out position analysis questionnaires (PAQ) or worksheets.
 - Collecting data on jobs from other resources such as salary surveys O-NET



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STEP 1: PERFORM A JOB ANALYSIS

- The results should be documented and reviewed by the employee who is currently in the position—and his or her supervisor—for any changes regarding the knowledge, skills, abilities, physical characteristics, environmental factors and credentials/experience of the position:
 - **Knowledge**—comprehension of a body of information acquired by experience or study.
 - **Skill**—a present, observable competence to perform a learned activity.
 - **Ability**—competence to perform an observable behavior or a behavior that results in an observable product.
 - **Physical characteristics**—the physical attributes an employee must have to perform the job duties with or without a reasonable accommodation.
 - **Environmental factors**—working conditions (inside or outside the office).
 - **Credentials/experience**—the minimum level of education, experience and certifications acceptable for the position, and then the preferred levels of education, experience and certifications you are looking for.

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STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- While performance elements tell employees what they have to do, the standards tell them **how well they have to do it**. Once the performance standard for a particular job has been made, essential functions of the position must be defined. This will provide a better avenue for evaluating Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation requests.
- **Performance Standards** - A performance standard is a management-approved expression of the performance threshold(s), requirement(s), or expectation(s) that must be met to be appraised at a particular level of performance.
 - Performance standards should be objective, measurable, realistic, and stated clearly in writing (or otherwise recorded). The standards should be written in terms of specific measures that will be used to appraise performance.
 - In order to develop specific measurers, you first must determine the general measure(s) that are important for each element. General measurers used to measure employee performance include the following – note that not all measures will necessarily apply to every element or essential job function. (See next slide)

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STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

WHAT ARE ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS?

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1992 encouraged employers to identify the essential duties of a position to help determine whether reasonable accommodations could be made.
- Employers can achieve this goal by identifying job duties as essential or marginal.
- Essential job functions/duties must meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - The job duty/function is one of the reasons the position exists.
 - A limited number of employees are available to perform the function.
 - The function is highly specialized.

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STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Performance Standards - A performance standard is a management-approved expression of the performance threshold(s), requirement(s), or expectation(s) that must be met to be appraised at a particular level of performance.

- Performance standards should be objective, measurable, realistic, and stated clearly in writing (or otherwise recorded).
- The standards should be written in terms of specific measures that will be used to appraise performance.
- In order to develop specific measurers, you first must determine the general measure(s) that are important for each element.
- General measurers used to measure employee performance include the following – note that not all measures will necessarily apply to every element or essential job function.

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STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

SUCCESS CRITERIA-

- Success criteria tell an employee the level of performance a supervisor expects.
- They are needed for each job function and should be: 1) measurable, 2) objective, 3) attainable, 4) time-bound, and 4) reflect the level of skill required to be successful in the position.
- Measurable criteria include, but are not necessarily limited to:
 - **Time** (e.g., completing a function by a certain date),
 - **Quality** (absence of error or variation),
 - **Frequency of occurrence** (performing a task daily, weekly, etc.),
 - **Productivity counts** (processing a certain number of items per week, for example), and/or
 - **Cost** (e.g. organizing an event within a specified budget).

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STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Performance Measures/Metrics -

- **Quality** address how well the work is performed and/or how accurate or how effective the final product is. Quality refers to accuracy, appearance, usefulness, or effectiveness.
- **Quantity** addresses how much work is produced. A quantity measure can be expressed as an error rate, such as number or percentage of errors allowable per unit of work, or as a general result to be achieved. When a quality or quantity standard is set, the Fully Successful standard should be high enough to be challenging but not so high that it is not reasonably achievable.
- **Timeliness** addresses how quickly, when or by what date the work is produced. The most common error made in setting timeliness standards is to allow no margin for error. As with other standards, timeliness standards should be set realistically in view of other performance requirements and needs of the organization.
- **Frequency factors** addressing how often a function must be performed of occurrence (performing a task daily, weekly, etc.).

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STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Performance Measures/Metrics -

- **Productivity** factors such as counting widgets may apply in certain jobs and functions, such as processing a certain number of items per week, per hour, etc.
- **Cost** can be factored in terms of budget, profitability, efficiency, such as organizing a successful event within a specified budget.
- **Compliance** factors may come into play for certain performance elements or job functions, if there is a particular policy, law, or regulation that governs how the particular function must be performed.
- **Cost-Effectiveness** addresses dollar savings to the organization or working within a budget. Standards that address cost-effectiveness should be based on specific resource levels (money, personnel, or time) that generally can be documented and measured in agencies' annual fiscal year budgets. Cost-effectiveness standards may include such aspects of performance as maintaining or reducing unit costs, reducing the time it takes to produce a product or service, or reducing waste.

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STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Performance Measures/Metrics -

So, when writing each performance element or essential function, decide which of these general measurers are important to the performance of the element by asking the following questions:

- **Is quality important?** Does the stakeholder or customer care how well the work is done?
- **Is quantity important?** Does the stakeholder or customer care how many are produced?
- **Is timeliness important?** Does the job element need to be accomplished by a certain time or date?
- **Is efficiency important?** Does the element need to be done within certain cost limits?
- **What are the performance standards?** Who could judge that the element was done well? What factors would they look for?
- **What are the performance metrics?** How could [quality, quantity, timeliness, and/or cost effectiveness] be measured?

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STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- When writing essential functions of the job, imagine you are supervising the incumbent(s) in a job position, and ask yourself:
Can I clearly assess the performance of the person doing this essential function?
- If you answer “yes,” then you probably have a well-written essential function of the job.
- For example, let’s look at HR/employment records management as an essential function of an HR Administrative Assistant:

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STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

WRITING ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE JOB	
Wrong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Files and maintains all HR and employment records.
Correct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administers HR/employment records management program (RMP), ensuring that all files and records (quantity) are accurately (quality) filed within two working days of receipt or creation (timeliness). Maintains, retains, and purges HR/employment records in accordance with approved retention schedule, and all applicable legal/regulatory requirements (compliance). Ensures that all HR/employment records are secure and protect privacy and confidentiality (quality) of sensitive employee information (compliance). Ensures that HR/employment records and information are readily accessible (quality) as needed (timeliness) by authorized users.

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STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

In the examples of essential job functions are below, note that each includes performance standards, metrics, and outcomes:

- Evaluates patient status as appropriate to accurately diagnose, life role, age development, functional status, length of stay and expected discharge environment; records and reports information using [Company] patient intake system.**
- Ensures that sacks weighing up to 50 lbs. are transported promptly from loading dock to storage room and placed on storage racks according to company standards.**
 - NOTE** that this essential function states “are transported,” but does not specify how the sacks are to be transported. The “how” is irrelevant to the essential function (outcome) of the job.
- Monitors peripheral equipment and error messages displayed on monitor of terminal to detect faulty output; responds immediately and appropriately to alarm messages.**

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STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

DEFINING THE ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS THROUGH THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

- Ensure that the elements of the job function are truly necessary or a requirement to perform the job.
- Determine the frequency at which the function is performed or how much time is spent doing it.
- Determine the consequences of not performing the function and whether this would be detrimental to the employer’s operation or result in severe consequences.
- Determine if the functions can be redesigned or performed in another manner.
- Determine if the functions can be reassigned to another employee.

IT IS AN ESSENTIAL DUTY IF:

- This job exists specifically to perform this duty: for example, Programmer jobs exist to code programs in computer language.
- The incumbents were specifically hired to perform the highly-specialized function. For example: a person hired to translate a foreign language would have the essential function of “translating.”
- No other employee in the location is available to perform the duty or responsibility

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STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Write Behaviorally, Specifying Outcomes and Metrics** - Since position descriptions will be used to monitor and evaluate, as well as to provide orientation and training, write them behaviorally with action verbs. Use outcome metrics in writing essential functions, such as: quality, quantity, frequency, timeliness, etc.
- Ask yourself the following questions** to evaluate whether the essential function is written properly:
 - “Why is this function being performed? For what purpose?”
 - “What is the desired performance outcome of this function?”
 - “How do I measure whether this was done to the desired performance standard?”
 - “Is there a legal, regulatory, or policy compliance element to this function?”
- In identifying an essential function to determine if an individual with a disability is qualified, the employer should **focus on the purpose of the function and the result to be accomplished, rather than the way the function presently is performed.**


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STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

WHEN WRITING ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS: For example:

- In a job requiring use of a computer, the essential function is the ability to access, input, and retrieve information from the computer.
- It is not "essential" that a person in this job enter information manually or visually read the information on the computer screen. Adapted devices or computer software can enable a person without arms or a person with impaired vision to perform the essential functions of the job.



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STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

FUNCTIONAL COMPETENCY (KSAs) STATEMENTS

Provides examples of knowledge, skill and ability statements (competencies) for several functional areas that are specific to each job.

- **Knowledge** - Knowledge is the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. Commonly known principles required for this field of work (e.g., generally accepted accounting standards (GAAP) for an Accounting Director, familiar with standard change management concepts for HR practitioners, etc.).
- **Skills** - Skills are the proficiencies developed through training or experience. Measurable learnings (e.g., can perform at an Intermediate level of Excel and Word, Typing at 50 wpm, Advanced knowledge of research protocols, etc.).
- **Abilities** - Demonstrated learnings (e.g., able to translate strategy to action, communicate at all levels of organization, work effectively in ambiguous situations, proven track record of increasing customer base). Ability statements refer to the power to perform an observable activity at the present time. This means that abilities have been evidenced through activities or behaviors that are similar to those required on the job, e.g., ability to plan and organize work. So, abilities are the qualities of being able to do something.

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STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CORE COMPETENCIES, AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Be careful writing KSAs

- They should be specific to each job, or class of jobs, NOT cut and pasted for all job descriptions
- If essential functions are properly written, KSAs may already be built in, and don't need to be specified as KSAs. For example, "Knowledge of and ability to apply GAAP principles to ..." would already be covered by this essential function in an Accountant job description:
 - *"Completes monthly close accurately, in a timely manner, and in accordance with GAAP accounting standards, providing required and requested reports and recommendations to management and the Board of Directors."*

Core Competencies Required (KSAs):

- **Interpersonal Skills:** Interacts effectively with others using discretion, empathy and self-regulation when working toward resolution of divergent interests; recognizes and appreciates the unique traits of others.
- **Critical Thinking** — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
- **Judgment and Decision Making** — Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.

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STEP 3: ORGANIZE THE INFORMATION

The structure of the job description may vary from organization to organization; however, all the job descriptions within an organization should be standardized so that they have the same appearance. The following topics should be included:

- **Job title**—name of the position.
- **Classification**—exempt or nonexempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
- **Salary grade/level/family/range**—compensation levels, groups or pay ranges into which jobs of the same or similar worth are placed, including minimum and maximum pay bands.
- **Reports to**—title of the position this job reports to.
- **Date**—date when the job description was written or last reviewed.
- **Summary/objective**—summary and overall objectives of the job.
- **Essential functions**—essential functions, including how an individual is to perform them and the frequency with which the tasks are performed; the tasks must be part of the job function and truly necessary or required to perform the job.

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STEP 3: ORGANIZE THE INFORMATION

Essential functions—*continued*

- For **supervisory positions**, include a section of essential functions *pertaining to the job of supervising, managing, and leading employees*
- For **lead positions**, include a section of essential functions *pertaining to the job of leading employees*
- For **all positions**, include a section of essential functions *pertaining to those functions that all positions are responsible for doing – e.g., complying with safety policies, rules and standards; attendance, etc.*
- **Core Competencies Required (KSAs)**—knowledge, skills and abilities.
- **Supervisory responsibilities**—direct reports, if any, and the level of supervision.
- **Work environment**—the work environment; temperature, noise level, inside or outside, or other factors that will affect the person's working conditions while performing the job.
- **Physical demands**—the physical demands of the job, including bending, sitting, lifting and driving.
- **Position type and expected hours of work**—full time or part time, typical work hours and shifts, days of week, and whether overtime is expected.
- **Travel**—percentage of travel time expected for the position, where the travel occurs, such as locally or in specific countries or states, and whether the travel is overnight.

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STEP 3: ORGANIZE THE INFORMATION

Core Values and Expected Behavior—This section is standard, and should be included in all job descriptions, establishing behavioral standards you expect of your employees:

As a requirement of their employment, all [COMPANY NAME] employees are expected and required to support and demonstrate the [COMPANY NAME]'s core values and behaviors, and to perform the essential functions and elements of this position competently. Employees are expected to demonstrate these values and behaviors through their behavior and performance throughout the course of their employment. The values, behaviors, and competencies that need to be demonstrated by all [COMPANY NAME] employees include but are not limited to:

- **Customer/Client focus:** *Striving for high external and internal customer/client satisfaction, going out of our way to be helpful and pleasant, making it as easy as possible on the customer/client, rather than on self, department, or organization.*
- **Initiative:** *Takes action to influence events, generate ideas for improvement, takes advantage of opportunities, and does not wait to be told what to do next.*
- **Efficiency and Continuous Improvement:** *Planning ahead, managing time well, being on time, being cost conscious, thinking of better ways to do things*
- **Team Player:** *able to work collaboratively with others in the organization, and to work well with diverse groups of people and gain and maintain of respect of others, both inside and outside the [COMPANY NAME].*

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STEP 3: ORGANIZE THE INFORMATION

- **Required education and experience**—education and experience based on requirements that are job-related and consistent with business necessity.
- **Preferred education and experience**—preferred education and experience based on requirements that are job-related and consistent with business necessity.
- **Additional eligibility qualifications**—additional requirements such as certifications, industry-specific experience and the experience working with certain equipment.
- **Affirmative action /equal employment opportunity (AAP/EEO) statement**—clause(s) that outlines federal contractor requirements and practices and/or equal employer opportunity statement.
- **Other duties as assigned**
- **Disclaimer** - it is important to add a statement that indicates that the job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee. Duties, responsibilities and activities may change, or new ones may be assigned at any time with or without notice.

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STEP 3: ORGANIZE THE INFORMATION

Work Environment, Mental & Physical Demands, Working Conditions ("The ADA Section")


- *The physical and mental demands, and working conditions described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of this position.*
 - **Physical Effort and Demand:**
 - **Visual Acuity, Hearing, Speaking, Manual Dexterity:**
 - **Mental Demand:**
 - **Environment/Working Conditions:**
 - **Travel Requirements:**
 - **Safety-Sensitive Position Designation:**
 - **Conditions of Employment e.g.,**
 - *Employees are required to comply with the [NAME OF COMPANY] policy on current influenza and other vaccination requirements.*

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STEP 4: ADD SIGNATURE/ACCEPTANCE LINES

- Signatures are an important part of validating the job description.
- They show that the job description has been approved and that the employee understands the requirements, essential functions and duties of the position. At a minimum, signatures should include those of the supervisor and of the employee.



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STEP 5: FINALIZE AND OBTAIN APPROVALS

- A draft of the job description should be presented to upper management and the position supervisor for review and approval. A draft allows a chance to review, add or subtract any detail before the final job description is approved.
- Both the job description and position assignment documents **MUST** be reviewed and approved by the Human Resources department before they can be used and/or issued.
- The final job descriptions should be kept in a secure location, and copies should be used for job postings, interviews, accommodation requests, compensation reviews and performance appraisals. Employers may also wish to post them on their intranet.

JOB TITLE: CONTROLLER	CLASSIFICATION RANGE:	
DEPARTMENT: Finance and Accounting	POSITION STATUS:	Regular
REPORTS TO: City Manager	FLSA STATUS:	Exempt
	FULL/PART TIME:	Full-Time
APPROVED BY: <i>Department Director</i>		Date
APPROVED BY: <i>Human Resources Director or Designee</i>		Date

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STEP 6: CONSTANTLY UPDATE AND ASSESS

In the spirit of continuous improvement and process review, job descriptions should always evolve based on emerging priorities or shifts in organizational and departmental needs.

- Be sure to constantly update and assess job descriptions in the following ways:
 - Let employees know that their job descriptions are always subject to change
 - Ensure that employees understand the difference between their job description and their position assignment —although it may be valid when someone says, "That's not in my job description," it may indeed be in their position assignment
 - Review job descriptions and position assignments when you discuss the performance expectations and development plans for the coming year with employees
 - If changes identified in your annual plan involve fundamental additions or deletions to the existing functions described in job descriptions, you may need to incorporate those changes into your employees' position assignments as well.
- Again, all updates and changes to job descriptions and position assignments must be reviewed and approved by the Human Resources department before they are used and/or issued.

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DO'S AND DON'TS OF WRITING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

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DO's OF WRITING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

DO - Give Specifics

- Rather than stating that a maintenance worker "keeps up equipment," it is better to spell out the position's requirements, which might include performing routine maintenance on assembly machines, including adjusting settings; cleaning and lubricating shafts, gears, and bearings; and dismantling and replacing defective parts, etc. Be careful, however, not to begin describing the work process or instructions for actually doing the work, for example, "Pick up the tool, select the proper size fitting, and gently burnish ..."

DO – Use Accurate Adjectives

- Include adjectives that describe the pace of work ("deadline-driven," "fast-paced") or the work environment ("enclosed area," "noisy setting"), but avoid flowery and overly long descriptions ("cozy but comfortable work environment that encourages creativity").

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DO's OF WRITING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

DO – Allow for flexibility

- The job description should never restrict supervisors from assigning additional duties not specified in the job description. However, these extra duties and responsibilities should not be considered "essential functions" of the job; if they are, list under the essential functions heading. So rather than writing "Assists Department G on request," (when that only occurred once 2 years ago) organizations tend to include a statement similar to the one that follows:
- *This job description in no way states or implies that these are the only duties to be performed by this employee. Incumbents in this position will be required to follow any other instructions and to perform any other duties requested by their supervisor.*

DO – Keep job descriptions current

- Change happens. There aren't many jobs that haven't changed significantly in the past few years. If job descriptions haven't kept up, confusion and legal challenges are headed your way. Courts pay little attention to job descriptions written after lawsuits are filed. The time to write them—or update them if needed—is now.

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DONT's OF WRITING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

DON'T - Use subjective terms, opinions or recommendations

- Avoid using words that are subject to differing interpretations such as "this job is the hardest job in the plant, computerizing the inventory will make this job more efficient."
- Just talk about the job with reference to how it is currently done, not how it might be done. Instead of saying you seek a certain attitude, cooperation, or initiative, describe expected outputs, different constituencies with whom this position interacts, and the nature of those relationships (such as "reports to," "provides support to," "supervises").

DON'T – use words that raise a question of discrimination

- Avoid language that would be questionable in a job listing. For example, don't use words such as "youthful" or "able-bodied."

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DONT's OF WRITING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

DON'T – use vague, general wording or jargon or technical terms

- Spell it out. It is tempting to rocket through writing job descriptions by inserting vague language like "takes care of employment." Does that mean routine recordkeeping, labor negotiations, or executive recruiting? Does that entail responsibility for employment or just participation in the process? "Handles emergencies." This could range from simply calling 911 to being site coordinator for the entire emergency operation during a major meltdown. Clarify what you mean!
- *"Performs Gaj-Jac reroll if random SIT readings exceed PPLT."*
- *Even if their meanings are well known to the jobholder and the supervisor, spell technical details out, so that those who might refer to the job description in the future, (including outside authorities), will know what it is saying.*

DON'T – include anything derogatory or specific about a person who previously held the position

- Job descriptions are not the place to air grievances or disappointments about individuals who previously held the position. Talk about what the jobholder does, not what he or she doesn't do. (That could be a long list!)

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DONT's OF WRITING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

DON'T – gloss over essential versus non-essential functions

- With the advent of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it became "essential" to separate essential functions of a job from those less so. This allows persons with disabilities to still be hired if they can carry out those key tasks (sometimes with reasonable accommodation), even if they can't do lesser tasks. Every job-description must make this separation to be ADA-compliant. If your job descriptions are fuzzy about essential functions, things won't go your way in court.

DON'T – describe duties to be performed in the future

- "When the conversion is done, employee will handle task X." The general rule is that a function must have been performed for a period of 3 months before being included in a job description, in order for the worker to be familiar enough with it to provide the job analyst creating the description with the necessary information.

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A GREAT RESOURCE TO HELP YOU TO WRITE JOB DESCRIPTIONS


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A KEY RESOURCE: O*NET

Dictionary of Occupational Titles is now online on O*Net. It is a comprehensive searchable database of every job title imaginable:

<http://online.onetcenter.org>




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QUESTIONS

- This is the chance to address issues that may not have been covered to your satisfaction; or
 - To expand a point; or
 - To clarify a point.
- If there are any further questions which we were not able to get to today, please feel free to contact the instructor.



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