

How to create an Effective Job Description Job Requisition to Yield the Best Possible Candidates



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The purpose of a job description is not to find the perfect candidate. Generating a pool of candidates to be assessed during the interview process more accurately describes the goal. Therefore, rethinking the way you create a job requisition would be a good start to a more efficient method of beginning the talent acquisition process.

Words, words, everywhere.

In the quest to find perfection, most job descriptions contain more words than most short novels. In an attempt to be comprehensive, the author tends to go overboard. Twenty bullet points highlighting work style / personality traits of the ideal candidate is overkill and the “requirements” section doesn’t need another dozen bullets.

Too many bullet points aren’t motivating for the reader, but overbearing. Only a necessary, pertinent amount of information is required. Therefore, the job description will be pushed aside and slowly consumed by larger stacks of paper or to be subsumed by other – more pressing – emails.

In addition, high-caliber candidates are turned off; they feel unqualified for the position – who could? Chances are the person outlined does not exist.

Move from job description to performance profile.

Lou Adler has stated that the only way to systematically hire superior people is to clearly define superior performance prior to any job search. Therefore, a change in mindset is clearly necessary, moving focus from comprehensiveness to one on minimum requirements. Focus on a “performance profile” or a “position profile” instead of a “job description.”

Job descriptions attempt to identify the ideal candidate. A position profile identifies the minimum requirements a candidate must possess to qualify for the position. The focus needs to be shifted to the six to eight key performance objectives determining on-the-job success.

It is never a good strategy to screen out suitable candidates because they are not ideal or don’t possess all the skills currently necessary for the role.

High-caliber candidates always learn the skills necessary to perform the position. It makes more sense to focus on performance, competency, and individual caliber. The higher level the role in the organization, the more the focus on competency and caliber.

Minimum is a not a dirty word.

The word “minimum” – in this context – is not negative. Additional competencies, a strong track record, experience, and personality traits are always welcomed and in the end, may contribute to the selection of the final candidate.

However, the initial position profile should list the minimum requirements for the candidate to enter the interview process.

By focusing on 6-8 performance competencies, the position profile isn’t being dumbed down; the focus has been shifted from what skills the

candidate is required to have vs. their caliber / past performance. Key skills or competencies are not being left out, the emphasis has just changed. Knowing the requirements – the goals of the job – and what it will take to be successful becomes necessary prior to creating the position profile. Capturing this information accurately will create a spot-on profile.

Competencies... What is a competency.

When a position profile's requirement list focuses on skills, the attractive candidate may match the skills, experiences, industry background and educational qualifications listed, but no data is gathered about performance or competencies and the candidate may not be able to deliver the needed results.

To determine success in a role, a position profile needs to focus on what needs to be accomplished. This will attract top-tier candidates and be much more interesting than the skills usually posted in a typical job description. Determining competencies, track record, depth of experience, and knowledge highlights how a person might act effectively in a job or situation. They specify the "how" (as opposed to the "what") of performing a certain role successfully. For example, a high-performing candidate with a competency in application management rises above the "skill level" and would be effective in any financial applications software environment. A high-caliber candidate, who exhibits competency and can point to past performances, will learn what he needs to know to adapt and excel in the new environment.

What can I do? That is the question.

Top candidates need to know what they are going to be required to accomplish and based on that, what potential will that bring. A well-written position profile will

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provide that plus more and will attract top candidates.

This group wants to know about growth prospects, the value they can add, career opportunities, company culture, and even something that explains why these open positions are important to the company's future.

Traditional job descriptions do not provide this information. Therefore, top candidates do not read them. They are interested in more than a simple laundry list of required skills and educational requirements.

Sell the Job.

To attract top talent, a position profile must sell the company, highlight key

selling points about the role, and describe the environment. High-caliber, top-performing candidates are targets for every company, but most are not looking for a new job. They have one. By considering an open position, they are being asked to take a risk... to leave the excellent opportunity they currently have, and accept one that is filled with uncertainties. Those uncertainties must be characterized and viewed as positively motivating by the candidates.

Therefore, selling the position is not an option – and starts with the position profile.

Position profiles are just part of the answer. They are not the answer.

The majority of the hiring process focuses on the wrong things – finding candidates who are eager to accept the position and who have a majority of the skills outlined in a job requisition.

To hire the best talent, companies must focus on the entire hiring process – both in the position profile and during the interview process. Interviewers need to focus on gathering the necessary data from qualified candidates and discussing the real challenges in the role, not on checking off job skills, listening to anecdotal stories highlighting those skills, developing an opinion about how well a candidate interviewed, and whether they were liked or not. A candidate's properly assessed past performance creates the only window that will allow the prediction and expectation of future performance.

If you have any questions about creating a position profile that will allow you to hire proven performers, please contact me directly at 636.537.7863.

