

Developing the High Performance Workforce Series

Article #1: Designing the Job

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Job design is the process of defining duties, tasks, and activities. A properly designed job will provide clear information to the employee about expectations related to their:

- Work environment
- Critical tasks or duties performed
- Placement of the job in relation to overall process
- Relationship to other workers

Focussed planning leads to good job design, which leads to:

- Improved productivity
- Successful quality audits
- Clear employee guidelines for performance
- Clear training requirements

One of the products of good job design is a job description, and a good job description can assist you to:

- Write accurate, informative job postings and advertisements
- Communicate expectations to job incumbents
- Provide clarity to employees and supervisors about roles and expectations
- Give employees the information they need to develop their careers
- Link pay and benefits to job tasks and responsibilities
- Provide standards against which to measure employee performance
- Match employee skills with job assignments

The Process of Job Design

One of the challenges in job design is creating interesting work that motivates employees. This includes building in new experiences that lead to personal and professional growth.

If your goal is to have skilled and competent employees who stay with your organization, offer them a work environment that meets their needs and desires. Retention strategies can be built into the job design process. Try to structure jobs so that superior performance in one job naturally leads to opportunities for growth and promotion at the next level.

- Collect information from employees and supervisors. Other sources may include standard occupational descriptions or profiles.

- Collect information about tasks, duties, responsibilities, equipment used, level of skills, knowledge, and experience required.
- Compile and write down the information into a written job description.
- Use the information to record and apply to recruitment, selection, training and development, performance review, and compensation.

Job Analysis

Most job analysis methods are based on gathering information from the workers themselves about the work that they do. This is based on the assumption that the people who know the most about the job are the people who do the work. Watch to ensure that you document the skills and knowledge required for the job, not just those displayed by the incumbent. Supervisors and managers can be valuable sources in job analysis.

Information to collect includes:

- Purpose of the job.
- Required tasks—on a daily, weekly, and occasional basis.
- The level of skills and knowledge—technical, team work, communication – required.
- Listing of the most critical tasks performed.
- Equipment, technology and materials used.
- Required working relationships—with clients, coworkers, supervisors managers, and the general public.
- Regulatory requirements, including health and safety requirements.
- Required/preferred hours of work.

Information can be gathered by:

1. **Watching people on the job.** This method works best for occupations that consist mostly of repetitious tasks and may not capture tasks not done on a daily basis.
2. **Interviewing job incumbents and managers.** This method allows for follow-up or probing questions and can result in very detailed and specific information. Interviews can be time-consuming and difficult to validate.
3. **Surveying job incumbents and managers.** Written surveys using open and closed questions identify job information. It is a very efficient, though time-consuming, method of gathering large amounts of data.
4. **Panels or focus groups.** Group processes are commonly used to gather job information and have built-in validation. Small organizations may need to include supervisors and other individuals who have knowledge of the job.

5. **Using existing information.** Some sources of job information include: [Sector Councils](http://www.councils.org), <http://www.councils.org> and Essential Skills Profiles, [Essential Skills Hiring Checklist](#). As well, the National Occupational Codes (NOC) include skills and task information for many occupations, industry accrediting, and licensing bodies <http://www.rhdsc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/noc>

Job analysis is the foundation for providing your employees with job information. If everyone knows their role you can better provide a coordinated approach to managing your employees.

What is A Good Job Description?

Job analysis leads to job descriptions. A job description is a written document that identifies the key elements of the job.

Sample 1

Key Elements	Book Keeper
Job Title	Book Keeper. Terms: Full-time, hourly. Accountable to: Business Operations Manager
Job Summary	Must complete sets of books; keep records of accounts, process payables and receivable. Ensures procedures used for recording financial transactions are in accordance with General Acceptable Accounting Practices.
List of Duties and Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps financial records and maintains various accounts using Simply Accounting Software • Posts journal entries and reconciles accounts • Prepares trial balance of books and maintains general ledgers • Prepares financial statements • Calculates and prepares cheques • Completes and submits tax remittance forms, workers' compensation forms, pension forms, and other documents, etc.
Minimum Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient in the following computer applications: Microsoft Office (Word & Excel), Simply Accounting, Microsoft Outlook, and Internet Explorer • 2 years experience in book keeping

Key Elements Book Keeper



Keeping Current

Job descriptions not only need to meet your needs—they need to comply with federal and provincial human rights legislation. Including critical aspects of the job will help to prevent unintentional discrimination against women, visible minorities, aboriginals, and persons with disabilities.

When reviewing current job descriptions, ask yourself:

- √Has this document been updated within the past two years?
- √Has the supervisor verified that the job description is accurate?
- √Are educational and other minimum qualifications genuine job requirements?
- √Have there been significant changes in processes or products that affect job tasks and responsibilities?
- √Does this job description unintentionally discriminate?

Sample 2 (note continues on next page)

Key Elements Business Operations Manager

Job Title

Business Operations Manager
Terms: Full-time, hourly.
Reporting to: President

Job Summary

Operating under minimal supervision provides leadership in financial, administrative, personnel, and project management. Coordinates implementation of policies and procedures across the organization. Directs administrative operations and supervises three support staff. Provides organizational support to an additional staff of 15 employees in sales, product development, and finance.

Key Elements**Business Operations Manager**

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Responsible for overall business operations on a daily basis.
- Ensures administrative support to sales, product development, finance, and manufacturing.
- Oversees the design and production of all sales and product materials.
- Develops policies and procedures manual.
- Develops, implements, and revises record keeping systems and procedures as required.
- Coordinates strategic planning and reporting processes.
- Provides leadership in developing and monitoring annual and quarterly business plans.
- Provides leadership to corporate projects as assigned.

Education and Technical Requirements

- B. Comm. degree or equivalent combination of experience and education in business and strategic planning
 - 5 years management experience in a manufacturing or sales environment.
 - Proficient in the following computer applications: Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Outlook, Internet Explorer).
 - Training and/or experience in Project Management using Microsoft Project.
 - Exceptional written and oral communication skills.
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