

2. How to Create a Job Description and Person Specification

1 WHAT IS A JOB DESCRIPTION?

A job description details the key duties and responsibilities involved in a job. A job description has a number of roles:

- It can help you articulate the most important outcomes you need from an employee performing a role.
- It can provide clarity and define boundaries between roles. It will define where the role of one employee ends and the job of another employee begins.
- It is an important part of the performance management process. You can use a job description to inform induction training and longer term development needs, evaluate the performance of new staff during their probation period and measure and assess whether the full requirements of the job are being fulfilled.

2 WHY IS A JOB DESCRIPTION IMPORTANT?

A job description is important during the recruitment process for several reasons:

- It can ensure that you have considered and decided on the responsibilities and scope of the position.
- It can help define the knowledge, skills, education and capabilities you seek in your new employee. This will help appropriate interview questions to be formulated which will assess these requirements.
- It can inform potential job candidates about the duties and responsibilities of the position for which they are applying.

3 CREATING A JOB DESCRIPTION

These are the normal elements of a job description:

- Overall position description with general areas of responsibility listed.
- Essential functions of the job described with examples.
- Required knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Required education and experience.
- A description of the physical demands.

4 WHAT IS A PERSON SPECIFICATION?

A person specification is a profile of what you will look for in candidates during the recruitment and selection process. This usually includes personal skills, qualifications, abilities and experience.

5 WHY IS A PERSON SPECIFICATION IMPORTANT?

A person specification can enable you to specify what you want and objectively assess how candidates match the criteria. A person specification lists the criteria required to fulfil the job role and can help a candidate to decide whether or not to apply for the job.

6 CREATING A PERSON SPECIFICATION

The person specification describes the personal attributes desired in a potential employee. These attributes should be divided into essential and desirable criteria and can include qualifications, skills, experience, and knowledge. These can be used in the short-listing process to distinguish between candidates.

Essential criteria - are the skills, qualifications, knowledge that are considered essential for the satisfactory performance of the job (the minimum requirements to do a job).

Desirable criteria - are the skills, knowledge and expertise that enhance a person's capacity to do the job, but are not essential (optional extras).

7 NEXT STEPS

- Include the main tasks and responsibilities of the job in the job description.
- Avoid talking in terms of timescales of experience as we all learn at different rates.
- Avoid using criteria in the person specification that unfairly discriminate on the grounds of the protected characteristics (race, religion or belief, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership or pregnancy/maternity).

8 FACTSHEETS & TEMPLATES TO HELP

- How to Create an Effective Job Advert
- How to Review Job Applications
- How to Review Candidates and Make a Hiring Decision
- How to Make an Offer of Employment
- Promoting an Equal Opportunities Workplace and Avoiding Discrimination
- Job Description Outline

9 FOR MORE ADVICE AND INFORMATION

ACAS - (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) free and impartial information and advice to employers and employees on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law. www.acas.org.uk

Achieve in Bath & North East Somerset - free recruitment support, advice and help. Matching job seekers, employers and course providers to help employers recruit, train and retain employees.

www.achieveinbathnes.co.uk

Future Bright - free help & support for businesses and employees to realise their full potential. Provide access to training and development, workshops and networking. HR support to promote career progression and best practice to attract and retain staff. www.futurebright.org.uk.

Bibliography - this fact sheet was produced by Rathbone HR Solutions in association with Cool Ventures Ltd in December 2018 with content sourced from; HR Inform (www.hr-inform.co.uk), ACAS (www.acas.org.uk), CIPD (www.cipd.co.uk), the pensions regulator (www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/employers), HMRC (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs), the Information Commissioner's Officer website (www.ico.org.uk)



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