

Job Analysis & Hiring the Right Person

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Let's say you're a small business owner and you need to hire someone to support your growing business. You might not be able to afford to hire a full time Human Resources Manager, but you feel you need a little more expertise to help you find the right person for the job.

Job analysis may just be the solution you need.

Job analysis is simply defined as the collection and organization of critical information about a job. When doing a job analysis, you take into account the job's tasks and activities, any management or supervision requirements, the products and services that result from the job, equipment and materials necessary to complete the job, and the job's working conditions.

After completing the following 5 important job analysis steps, you'll be much more knowledgeable about what qualifications the right person to fill the job should have. If you do it reasonably well, finding the right person for the job will be considerably easier...

...because you'll know exactly who you're looking for! Here are the steps to job analysis:

1. Ask yourself: What do you want your new employee to accomplish on a daily, weekly, monthly, and annual basis? The answer to this question will inform the next step of your job analysis.
2. Identify the tasks and responsibilities that will need to be a part of the new job to make sure it accomplishes your desired result.

Here are some questions to consider that will help you get this information.

What will your new employee do on a day to day basis? What equipment will he use? Will there be different tasks to do on different days? Will your new employee be supervising any people or processes?

3. Once you think you know all the tasks your new employee will need to perform on a regular basis, you're ready to start thinking about the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) necessary to successfully complete the tasks and responsibilities of the position.

What knowledge will your new employee have to have?

Knowledge is factual information that your employee has acquired through education and experience, which she'll need to use during the course of a normal work day.

For example, perhaps the right person would have a strong knowledge of accounting principles. Or they might need a specific knowledge of your target market.

What skills will your new employee have to have?

Skills are techniques your employee will have learned and honed through repetition and experience for completing specific tasks.

For example, do they need to have the skill to run or fix your machinery? Maybe she needs to have excellent managerial skills to be able to run your new branch office, or closing skills for a high-level sales position.

And finally, what abilities should your employee have?

Abilities are the natural gifts that we're all born with.

For example, some positions require a high level of interpersonal intuition, others a high level of mechanical ability, some may require an employee to remain cool under pressure, etc.

4. Get together a group of subject matter experts. People who already hold similar jobs, supervisors and managers are typically included in your group of job experts. In certain circumstances, important customers can be included as well.

Call a meeting of your experts and discuss everything important to the position. Talk about the tasks, responsibilities and KSAs that you've already come up with, and ask for their thoughts and ideas about the list.

Then, use your group to prioritize the requirements of the job. You want to make sure you hire someone who meets your top requirements.

5. Discuss with your team if there will be any differences between the job to be filled now, and the same job in the future. If you're going to be implementing new procedures, new software, new products, etc., you need to take those KSAs into account, too.

Prioritize your list once more, and presto! Your job analysis is done, and you now have all the information you need for a solid job description!

If you want to be very thorough, you can ask yourself (and maybe a select few of your experts) these questions about your new job description: Is it realistic? Can any one person do all the tasks and have all the skills you've listed?

Don't strike anything from your list if you think the job description might be unreasonable, just write notes on any reservations you have and adjust your results accordingly if your job opening isn't immediately filled, or if your new employee seems overwhelmed.

Now you're ready to start the hiring process, which is where your job analysis really makes things work better for you.

You can use it to help you write a targeted job listing in your local paper or industry periodical. This will help you weed out prospective employees who you don't want to interview, and will attract those you do want to interview.

Once you've got a good pool of resumes, use the job analysis to narrow your pool to a manageable list of people who you want to interview. Most businesses don't have time to interview more than a half dozen people for a job, so shoot for that number of top candidates, or less if you can.

Keep your job analysis handy during your interview. If you use it to ask each qualified applicant how they meet your needs, you'll be more likely to be comparing "apples to apples" when you make your hiring decision.

Once the hiring decision is made, share the job description you've made with your new employee, and then keep it on file for performance reviews. This can help your employee to know exactly what you expect of them, and will help you to know if they're on the right track.

Good luck!

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