

Job Descriptions: how they work for you

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No management tool is potentially as powerful as job descriptions, yet they are frequently neglected by organizations. Here are a few of the major benefits.

Team building:

Many employees have no team orientation. Asking employees to evaluate others' job descriptions stimulates understanding and appreciation of co-workers' roles.

Work simplification studies:

A job description can increase efficiency by revealing how much time is spent on each phase of the work.

Employee motivation:

Job descriptions clarify the company's expectations and priorities and give insight into sources of intrinsic job satisfaction. Management can tout the rewards of certain tasks and address the problems associated with those tasks lacking satisfaction.

By identifying tasks with high negative outcomes such as fatigue, boredom and stress, management can redesign the tasks to reduce the negative outcomes.

Change in work design:

Job descriptions are especially useful in times of rapid change. They

- provide a record of work during change
- help in the planning stages

- provide continuity from one period to the next
- help prevent key tasks from being lost or misassigned
- help minimize chaos and ensure that tremendous imbalances and inequities in workloads do not become the norm.

Non-pay rewards:

Job evaluation procedures, which use job descriptions, help establish equitable wages and salaries. But job descriptions have perhaps even more potential for determining the benefits that should go to job incumbents.

Aiding employee outplacement:

Facilitating the orderly termination of employees can be vital for maintaining morale and the employee and public relations images of the company. Job descriptions will give the personnel staff access to vital information, necessary to

- help departing employees prepare resumes
- provide written and oral references
- give information to future employers seeking employees with particular experiences.

Job specifications:

A job description is the key to selecting the best candidate by ranking key skills for a position.

Strategic control point:

Using job descriptions allows managers to minimize the cost of control by focusing on the critical dimensions of the job.

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