

# What **do** you **do**?

*The job description must be clear to prevent absenteeism or high turnover.*

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**L**ack of job satisfaction is linked to high absenteeism and turnover. Employee productivity is linked to whether or not they are more productive when they are happy. Since our main goal as manager is to increase productivity, we should do whatever is in our power to make this happen. Sometimes this is a cumbersome task but often it is a simple one.

Job descriptions fall into the "simple" category. In larger companies, job descriptions are usually written by someone in Human Resources. Landscape management companies, however, don't all have an HR department, which may put the responsibility

on the owner's plate or on the crew chief's or the foreman's...or the receptionist's! But even if you have no background in Human Relations, it's important that you understand what makes up a successfully written job description.

A job description is written for at least three audiences:

- ▶ a potential employee;
- ▶ a present employee;
- ▶ a department manager.

It should consist of:

- ▶ job title;
- ▶ who you report to;
- ▶ date of hire;

- ▶ secondary duties;
- ▶ special requirements (license; certification);
- ▶ signature (verifying that the job description is clear and understood).

Aside from the obvious function of describing a job, a job description also acts to:

- ▶ advertise a job (a lot of organizations post them for cost-effective internal hiring or use a ver-

sion in writing classified ad copy);

- ▶ promote job satisfaction
- ▶ outline job tasks
- ▶ form part of the organizational structure
- ▶ support future strategic direction
- ▶ provide legal backing, just in case.

Look at the job description as a gap filler. View your organization as a whole and see what role this particular job plays. That way you can cover anything that has been overlooked. This also helps to let your employee know that his/her job is significant to the organization as a whole.

If you come up short on the role the job description plays in your company, you should review this job to determine whether or not it is truly needed. If you do this before you hire, you will save yourself a headache.

Remember to always keep job satisfaction in mind. Look over the job description after you have written it and analyze it to see if it clearly describes a job with the core elements leading to productivity. Does it offer:

- ▶ opportunity to use varied skills;
- ▶ clear performance objective;
- ▶ some degree of autonomy;
- ▶ task significance (does this person contribute to the company as a whole).

Lastly, encourage your employees to work outside the box. A job description is only an outline of what the job entails. At review time, have the job description available so that both the employee and you can see if the job has been completed as described. Keep in mind that your employee should also give you feedback as to whether or not the job description should be changed. □

*A job description should consist of:*

- 1) job title*
- 2) who to report to*
- 3) date of hire*
- 4) secondary duties*
- 5) special duties*