

Elements of Effective Job Descriptions

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Most companies treat job descriptions as a bureaucratic exercise. They include the position's job title and a bullet point list of the required tasks.

Because every single hire by a new venture (or a small business) is so important, entrepreneurs don't have the luxury to make job descriptions routine paperwork. **To make sure the company gets the maximum benefit from every person hired, a job description must clearly relate how this job helps the team achieve the company's overall vision and goals.**

Every single hire in a new venture / small business is critical!

"Imagine a startup as a rocket that uses 90% of its fuel just to take off. Each employee is a part of the fuel that helps the rocket escape gravity. If you are not elevating the rocket, then you are dragging it down . . . Your startup will grow as much as your employees grow. Any one of them can have as much impact on your culture as the CEO."

Talent Culture blog: talentculture.com

An effective job description for a new venture serves three purposes:

- 1) provide a clear indication of how the job contributes to the overall company vision;
- 2) provide a clear, detailed indication of the priority responsibilities of the position; and
- 3) be such a galvanizing and appealing document it serves as a recruiting tool. Job applicants see the job description and say to themselves: "Wow - I want to work at that company!"

The six elements of an effective job description are:

- 1) Job objectives / contribution to company vision - the most important part of the job description, describing how this individual will make an important contribution to achieving the company's vision;
- 2) Responsibilities (in priority order) - the traditional purpose of a job description, providing clear and specific direction on the tasks associated with the position;
- 3) Indications of top performance - the specific outcomes this position should deliver so the company can achieve its vision and meet its goals;
- 4) Reporting relationships - not only indicating who this position reports to, but also indicating who this position will serve inside and outside the company;
- 5) Required behaviors - the critical behaviors the person in this position must demonstrate, in order to fit into the company culture and succeed as a team member;
- 6) Qualifications - the education and experience a person needs to be considered for this position.

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- 1) Job objectives / contribution to company vision
- 2) Responsibilities (in priority order)
- 3) Indications of top performance
- 4) Reporting relationships
- 5) Required behaviors
- 6) Qualifications

Job descriptions don't have to be full of long paragraphs, or even very long. A few key bullet points can make a job description both motivating *and* concise.

The next two pages shows an actual example - that of a Sales Regional Manager - of a concise, motivating job description.

Job Description: Regional Sales Manager for Superior Energy Efficiency Company (SEEC)					
Job Title	Regional Sales Manager	Location	Baltimore, MD	Last Updated:	July, 2017
Job Objectives (Contribution to Company Vision)	<p>To drive the sales growth of SEEC by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) recruiting, developing and motivating high-energy sales representatives capable of: a) securing new accounts; b) achieving sales goals; and c) creating complete customer satisfaction; 2) providing new product development input to Engineering, to make sure our energy efficiency services continue to be world class; 3) collaborating with other team leaders to make our company culture a competitive advantage, especially in terms of recruiting talented new team members. 				
Responsibilities (in priority order)	<p><u>Team Selling Performance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuously upgrade sales rep performance through feedback, coaching, training, rewards, and recruitment of new talent; also, willing to terminate low-performing sales reps to upgrade the performance of the sales force • train sales reps in all relevant facets of the job (technology understanding, deal formulation/development, selling skills, customer service skills, ethics, time management, reporting) • establish sales and customer service goals that motivate sales reps and achieve company financial goals • maintain personal relationships with the largest accounts • create sales plans for each target market the company is pursuing • provide management reports on the status and outcome of all sales opportunities • participate in the strategic planning process, providing bottom-up sales targets and new business opportunities • evaluate and document sales rep performance. Recognize and reward top performers. Act to separate below average performers from the company, to be replaced by new BDMS <p><u>Product Development Input</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitor competitors to determine when they have introduced competitive energy efficiency services • collaborate with customers to determine what they want in terms of future energy efficiency services • maintain effective relations with Engineering to provide continuous input into new product development <p><u>Corporate Culture</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work with the leadership team to maintain a company culture that draws and retains top performers, adding joy to their lives while helping them achieve their career objectives • work with team members to maintain a culture that recognizes performance, empowers front line team members, promotes work / life balance, puts customers first and includes fun as a job objective 				
Indications of Top Performance	<p>SEEC meets or exceeds its revenue and profit growth goals</p> <p>Sales reps have clear goals and provide weekly updates on where they stand versus achieving their goals</p> <p>Top-performing sales reps regularly receive corporate recognition and increased compensation</p> <p>There is "beneficial turnover" where top performers are retained and rewarded; below-average performers coached and improved; low-performers transitioned out of the company in favor of new, high-potential hires</p> <p>Team leaders throughout the company regularly provide positive peer feedback in peer evaluation surveys</p>				

<p>Reporting Relationships</p>	<p>Reports to the SVP - Marketing and Sales. Collaborates with New Product Development Engineers, the Chief Financial Officer, Customer Service Manager Serves sales reps and customer service reps</p>
<p>Required Behaviors</p>	<p><i>Driving and motivating, confident and positive, energetic and enthusiastic, extremely focused, effectively collaborative – these are the behaviors that are essential for the Regional Sales Manager.</i></p> <p>The Regional Sales Manager must be <i>driving and motivating</i> at all times:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) relentlessly enhancing the quality and effectiveness of sales reps through continuous coaching; b) providing constant supportive and constructively critical feedback to sales reps that help them continuously and measurably improve their performance; c) reviewing the reports provided by BDMs to make sure they are making acceptable progress versus their goals on developing opportunities, pursuing opportunities and winning new projects; d) providing continuous feedback to Engineering (product development) and Customer Service (complete customer satisfaction); and e) making sure the company appropriately rewards (through recognition and compensation) high performing sales reps. <p>In any business as intense as ours, there is always the possibility that stress might arise during the highly competitive sales process.</p> <p>Therefore, the Regional Sales Manager must be able to motivate sales reps to maximum productivity and success while maintaining a <i>confident and positive</i> outlook.</p> <p>The Regional Sales Manager must be <i>energetic and enthusiastic</i>, leading by example in terms of positive attitude, high levels of effort and multi-tasking. The best way to make sure sales reps stay positive and high performing is for the Regional Sales Manager to maintain an upbeat and enthusiastic demeanor.</p> <p>The Regional Sales Manager must be <i>extremely focused</i>. Every day is a day when a new opportunity can be uncovered, when a current opportunity can be pushed forward, when a pending sale can become a closed sale. The Regional Sales Manager provides the energy, push and focus that keeps sales reps moving forward to resolution on all of their sales and prospecting activities.</p> <p>Finally, the Regional Sales Manager must be <i>effectively collaborative</i>. SEEC is an organization that stresses teamwork. The Regional Sales Manager must be able to be a forceful and effective leader of his / her team, while remaining at all times part of a smooth working leadership team.</p>
<p>Qualifications</p>	<p>Four to eight years of excellent performance as a sales rep Experience as a sales manager, or clear promise of being able to operate as a motivating sales leader Experience in the energy efficiency market, or a working knowledge of SEEC's markets, technology and competitors An Associate Degree or Technical Diploma from a community or technical college, or a BA / BS university degree</p>