

# The Importance of Job Descriptions



Job descriptions are a diverse tool for Human Resources. Whether used for hiring or conducting a performance review, at some time one or many job descriptions have crossed your desk as an HR professional.



In short, a job description is a “written statement that describe the duties, responsibilities, required qualifications, and reporting relationships of a particular job” according to the [human resources section of about.com](#). Although many may find the responsibility of writing and reviewing job descriptions as mundane, or possibly even pointless, without them you would open your organization to a lot of danger.

## **Job descriptions are helpful in that they:**

- Give a clear understanding to candidates of what their duties and responsibilities for a particular position would be.
- Protect an organization legally, as the job description can defend why a candidate was selected – or not – for a position, and why a position is classified as exempt or non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
- Provide a consistent understanding across departments of job position roles and how they help the organization to grow.
- Help employees to create goals for job advancement.
- Create boundaries regarding employees’ responsibilities.
- Justify an employee’s pay.

**Job descriptions are important.** This means that great care needs to be taken in creating them and keeping them up to date. Paul Slezak lists in a post at [Recruitloop.com](#) five areas that should be included in writing job descriptions:

- **Job Title:** It should accurately reflect the nature of the job, including its ranking order with other jobs. It should also be generic enough for recruitment, and in harmony with similar jobs in the same industry.
- **Duties:** Ideally the list of responsibilities and duties associated with a position should include a percentage, to give a more rounded understanding of how much one would be expected to handle. It's also important to keep this section brief.
- **Skills and Competencies:** Listed separately, 'Skills' would be the activities one has learned through experience as well as qualifications earned. 'Competencies' are the traits we expect one in this job position to display.
- **Relationships:** Including reporting lines helps employees and candidates to see the hierarchy of the organization and where they fit.
- **Salary:** A salary range that is in competition with the market is ideal.

Because of the many roles that job descriptions play in an organization, it's essential to keep them up to date. An ideal approach is to review job content during the performance appraisal period, when hiring, and on a rotating two to three year cycle. With many touchpoints along the way, keeping descriptions up to date will not be a major time investment.

If your organization is quite large, it's been a while since you updated your job descriptions, or you are still having trouble completing a job analysis in order to write accurate job descriptions, contact Astron Solutions! One of the modules for our web-based talent management system is a job description module. To learn more information, email us at: [astronInfo@astronsolutions.com](mailto:astronInfo@astronsolutions.com).



(800) 520-3889

[www.AstronSolutions.net](http://www.AstronSolutions.net)