

Practice Writing Job Descriptions

This tool gives you a great starting point to compile the first draft of your job description. You'll find a list of best practices at the beginning of the tool. Then, in each section of the tool, you'll find specific guidelines or guiding questions, and tips.

Tip: Once you've compiled your thoughts and ideas in this tool, consider getting feedback from other employees in your company or from trusted advisors. This collaborative process will make your job description more solid.

Best Practices

The best practices listed below apply to the entire tool.

- Write clearly and concisely. It's likely that candidates are checking job openings on their mobile phones, so make yours easy to read.
- Address the candidates directly. This will make your job description more relatable.
- Use acronyms sparingly. When you do use them, define them.
- Use gender-inclusive vocabulary. This will help you attract a diverse pool of candidates. For example, instead of he or she, try "the incumbent" or "they."
- Avoid superlatives or extreme modifiers. For example, avoid phrases like "world-class" or "unparalleled." Research shows that such phrasing can prevent women, as well as many men, from applying.¹

Job Description Tool

JOB TITLE:

- Use one to four words to describe the job title.
- Use industry-standard terms in your job title. Using quirky superlatives such as Data Geek or Comms Wonk may sound like they add personality, but they can actually put people off.

In the space below, write the title of the role you're hiring.

For example: "Java Programmer" instead of "Rockstar Java Coder"

ABOUT US:

Tip: Use this section to make your job description inviting, giving candidates reasons to want to be a part of your company.

When writing this section, use these guiding questions:

- What products and services are you offering, and how do they improve lives?
- What are your company's values and mission statement?
- What is your company's culture?
- What's it like to work at your company?

In the space below, write some background information about your company.

For example: We are Trot the Globe, a travel agency that believes in the transformative power of exploring new places and cultures. We understand that people often do not have the time to plan their next vacation. So, we do it for them!

We have a passionate team that spreads the joy of travelling by bringing affordable flights and unforgettable adventures to our customers. We operate on the values of passion for the planet, passion for our customers, and taking care of each other.

If you'd like to become a part of our mission of connecting people to their next big adventure, we'd love to hear from you!

JOB SUMMARY:

- Outline the main purpose of the job/position. As you're thinking about the main purpose, ask yourself—"What does success in this position look like?"
- Keep this information brief, with no more than four sentences.

Tip: Highlighting how this role will help make people's lives better will encourage candidates to be a part of your company.²

In the space below, write a summary of the job opening at your company.

For example: We are searching for a third Java developer to join our team. In this role, you'll manage Java/Java EE application development to help us fully automate every step of our business processes. You'll support continuous improvement by collaborating closely with other developers and leads from other departments (marketing and business development).

JOB FUNCTIONS:

Tip: This is one of the most important sections of your job description. This is where you'll communicate to the candidates **how** they will contribute to your business and to society in general.

When writing job functions, consider these Do's and Don'ts.

Do's	Don'ts
Keep things real by listing only the tasks that this role will need to do now and in the near-term.	Cram tasks that you anticipate this role may need to do in the long-term.
<p>Separate tasks into two categories—essential and other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When writing essential tasks, ask yourself— “What tasks are absolutely necessary and because of which this job opening exists?” • When writing other tasks, ask yourself— “What tasks aren't required but will support the job and the business's goals in general?” “What can I train the candidate to do if necessary?” 	List more than seven job-specific tasks in each category.
In each category, list the tasks in accordance with their importance or frequency.	
Begin each task statement with an action verb. For example: Deliver error-free code on deadline.	Write incomplete task statements that are vague. For example: Understand TPA report format.

Tip: To find suggested tasks for the role you're hiring for, visit [CareerOneStop](#).

In the space below, write the job role and essential and other tasks for that role at your company.

Job Role:

Essential Tasks:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Other Tasks:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:

- Outline the academic and professional qualifications necessary for this position.
- For clarity and to avoid turning off candidates, separate the academic and professional qualifications into two categories—required and preferred.

DID YOU KNOW?

*Research shows that even when highly qualified, women are less likely to apply for a job than men if they do not have **all** of the required qualifications.³*

So what can you do to encourage all candidates to apply? Consider these tips:

- When considering a preferred qualifications list, ask yourself—“Could the candidate gain these qualifications on the job?”
- If you decide to add a preferred qualifications list, make sure to iterate that these aren’t required to be successful in this role.

In the space below, list the academic and professional qualifications necessary for the position.

Required Qualifications:

Preferred Qualifications:

SKILLS:

When writing this section, use these guiding questions:

- What skills must the candidate have to perform the job functions?
- What types of skills are required for this job?
Tip: Think about categories such as technical skills, communication skills, and analytical skills.
- Are there skills that are nice to have that the candidate can learn on the job? List these under preferred skills.

Tip: “Be specific about the key skills, mindset, and core competencies required to succeed rather than itemize every skill and duty one will conceivably encounter during the workday. Specificity about what is most important will generate a smaller pool of stronger candidates who can see themselves in that job.” —Tammy Johns⁴

In the space below, list the skill categories necessary for this job. Write the required skills first.

Required Skills:

Preferred Skills:

WORKING CONDITIONS:

If the job demands working in unusual conditions, mention them here.

- Are there any physical demands associated with the job? For example: lifting objects.
- Will there be exposure to weather, mechanical hazards, etc.?

Tip: If this position requires working in a standard office environment or if there is a possibility of working remotely, then you may choose to skip this section.

In the space below, clearly define the work conditions for the position you're hiring.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS:

In this section, you have the opportunity to woo top talent by presenting the benefits and perks your company offers.

- If you can, disclose the salary range or the rate of pay.

Tip: The salary range should be based on the required experience level to the preferred experience level.

Tip: In some cases, businesses can't find candidates because the pay they offer, especially for in-demand jobs, is not competitive with other employers in their field.⁵

- List the benefits and perks you offer and how they play out on a day-to-day basis. For example:
 - Sponsoring conference visits.
 - Encouraging professional development by sponsoring necessary course enrollments.
 - Encouraging social missions, such as company-sponsored community events, time off for volunteering, percent of sales donated to any special cause.
- List the opportunities you offer for work/life balance—scheduling flexibility, paid time off, and holidays.

In the section below, list the compensation and benefits package associated with the role you're hiring.

For example: At [company name], you'll enjoy these benefits:

- *Health insurance plan.*
- *Retirement savings plan.*
- *20 paid vacation days.*

DID YOU KNOW?

Gallup has found that companies with more-diverse teams (including more women) have a 22 percent lower turnover rate. Organizations with more inclusive cultures also have an easier time with recruiting.⁶

RESOURCES:

1. Check out this excellent [toolkit](#) to generate, customize, and download job descriptions for your business's needs.
2. For help with writing job descriptions, contact your local [American Job Center](#) to connect with a Business Services Representative or other resource.⁷

¹ NCWIT Tips for Writing Better Job Ads, National Center for Women and Information Technology, https://www.ncwit.org/sites/default/files/resources/ncwittips_writingbetterjobads_03172015update.pdf, (accessed Jan. 11, 2019).

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Tammy Johns, Job Descriptions and “Experience-Needed” Syndrome,, Harvard Business Review, (April 5, 2012), <https://hbr.org/2012/04/job-descriptions-and-the-exper>, (accessed Jan. 11, 2019).

⁵ Recruit & Hire, CareerOnestop Business Center, <https://www.careeronestop.org/BusinessCenter/RecruitAndHire/recruit-and-hire.aspx>, (accessed Jan. 11, 2019).

⁶ Karen Schoellkopf, Hire More Women In Tech, <https://www.hiremorewomenintech.com/>, (accessed Jan. 11, 2019).

⁷ Recruit & Hire, CareerOnestop Business Center, <https://www.careeronestop.org/BusinessCenter/RecruitAndHire/recruit-and-hire.aspx>, (accessed Jan. 11, 2019).