

2 Profiling the role

The information you have generated can now form the basis of a recruitment campaign to attract suitable applicants. It can be used to develop the job description, using the tasks and responsibilities, and targets. It is also the basis for developing the person specification, using the information you've listed under skills, knowledge and abilities.

The person specification is used as the basis of the selection process. It also goes some way to providing evidence that your selection process is fair. It can be used in marketing the role, makes shortlisting and selection easier, and helps to make the process objective. This is because all parties are clear about the qualities and abilities being sought.

Recruitment and Selection

Writing a job description

The job description describes the job and how it fits into the organisation. A good job description will include:

- ◆ job title
- ◆ location/department/areas of the business
- ◆ the grade of job, if relevant
- ◆ the overall purpose of the job
- ◆ the title of the person to whom the jobholder reports
- ◆ the title of any employees who report to the jobholder
- ◆ the main duties and responsibilities of the post, prioritised in some way, for example by order or by giving each a percentage weighting
- ◆ any other significant information, such as special working conditions
- ◆ the date of issue.

It is now common to group activities into key result areas and to indicate expected standards of performance in each area. This places greater emphasis on results, rather than inputs.

Checklist – writing a job description

- ◆ Check that it does not overstate the importance and scope of the role
- ◆ Make sure that there is no bias in terms of gender, age, marital status or disability
- ◆ Ensure sexist language has been avoided
- ◆ Make sure the language is clear and easily understood by someone from outside the organisation
- ◆ Check it doesn't include jargon, acronyms or abbreviations and use as few technical terms as possible
- ◆ Consider offering flexible working arrangements such as the possibility of a job-share
- ◆ Avoid including an age range as it is meaningless in determining past experience and you may eliminate the most capable candidate
- ◆ Make sure the audience it is aimed at can easily understand it.

Recruitment and Selection

Checklist – putting together a person specification

When putting together a person specification, make sure it is:

- ◆ directly related to the job description
- ◆ ability-based in line with the requirements of the role
- ◆ realistic in terms of how the factors you choose contribute to job performance
- ◆ clearly defined
- ◆ measurable and/or observable
- ◆ agreed by everyone involved in the process
- ◆ weighted realistically in terms of essential and desirable qualities
- ◆ justifiable in terms of the criteria you have chosen.

Once the person specification is agreed it should not be changed and must be applied equally to all candidates.

Activity 8

Looking at job profiles

Objective

As a manager you need to be able to help develop appropriate and accurate job profiles. This activity will help you to comment on a job description and person specification and to make recommendations for change.

Task

- 1** Look at the following job description and person specification for a sales assistant.

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Job description

Job title: Sales executive

Location: Working on the shop counter in a busy warehouse in Doncaster with three other executives

Job purpose: To advise trade customers in the selection of bathroom fittings for the home. To sell, merchandise and arrange deliveries. To maximise sales

Reports: None

Duties and responsibilities:

- ◆ Advise customers on fittings
- ◆ Keep the shop area tidy
- ◆ Organise delivery dates/times with warehouse supervisor
- ◆ Sell goods to the value of £150,000 each year
- ◆ Advise on payment methods
- ◆ Take payments correctly
- ◆ Proper use of equipment associated with payment – Visa, Mastercard and Maestro
- ◆ Maintain stock control system (computerised)
- ◆ Take part in stocktaking when required
- ◆ Take part in training when required
- ◆ Apply customer service skills

Salary: £11,500 per annum

Working conditions: Front of warehouse is a challenging work environment: it can be dirty and cold in the winter. The job entails working with a very challenging set of customers.

Person specification

Job title: Sales executive

Skills *Essential*

- ◆ Customer service skills
- ◆ Patience
- ◆ Ability to work alone
- ◆ Planning and organising skills
- ◆ Ability to empathise with customers
- ◆ Interpersonal skills
- ◆ Sense of humour
- ◆ Willing and able to recommend improvements to processes

Desirable

- ◆ Assertiveness
- ◆ Leadership
- ◆ Creative

Knowledge *Essential*

- ◆ Computer skills
- ◆ Basic plumbing

Desirable

- ◆ Knowledge of our system (Droneon II)
- ◆ Bathroom fittings

Experience *Essential*

- ◆ One year in same or similar business
- ◆ Experience in a customer-facing role

Desirable

- ◆ Minimum two years working for a competitor

Qualifications *Essential*

- ◆ Maths Grade A at GCSE
- ◆ Computing Grade C at GCSE

Desirable

- ◆ Maths A Level
- ◆ Plumbing qualification

Special requirements *Essential*

- ◆ Clean driving licence
- ◆ Professional in manner and dress
- ◆ Vigorous, healthy and strong

Desirable

- ◆ Available for overtime when need arises

2 Comment on what is good and bad about the job description and person specification above, and note down your recommendations for change.

Recommendations for change

It does not say to whom the person reports - (this needs to be added).

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The duties and responsibilities seem to be in a random order and need to be prioritised. For example, selling goods to the value of £150,000 should probably be at the top. In fact, this is actually a standard of performance and would deserve a separate section.

Some of the duties are rather vague, for example 'keep the shop area tidy' should have the required standard added.

Some of the duties are very high level, for example 'advise customers on fittings', while others are very detailed, for example the reference to equipment associated with payment which is really part of taking payments and could be omitted.

The occasional duties of stocktaking and training should be put at the end of the list.

The statement about working with challenging customers under the working conditions heading could be seen negatively, unless it is explained in more detail.

Person specification

Good points

Again, this goes into quite a lot of detail.

It covers the main categories of skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications and special requirements.

It divides criteria into essential and desirable.

Bad points and improvements

It seems to be asking for someone who is overqualified: is a top grade maths qualification really necessary for the job?

A lot of skills are listed, and the essential requirement, customer service skills, needs further explanation. Also, it is unlikely that a sales assistant would need to display leadership or even creativity.

Some of the criteria are questionable. For example, why is a clean driving licence essential? What is meant by professional manner and dress – particularly bearing in mind the job is in a warehouse?

One of the worst aspects is that the specification could be discriminatory. For example, it is asking for qualifications only young people will have (GCSEs) and it is asking for the person to be vigorous and strong.