



Job Analysis and a Well-written Position Description

As a line manager, it's your responsibility to recruit the right person for the job. By understanding your role and responsibilities in the recruitment and selection process, you can reduce and in most cases eliminate the risk of poor hiring decisions. This is good for your effectiveness as a manager, good for your team and organisation, and good for those you hire.

Why Does Getting It Right Matter?

It matters because poor recruitment costs time, money and effort – for you and all involved. The costs can be direct (e.g. advertising, remuneration) or indirect (e.g. performance problems, lower team morale, reduced productivity). Combined, they can add up to 2.5 times the salary of the role.

Poor recruitment takes many forms. If you place an ad that describes a job inaccurately, hire a person who can't handle future work demands or is not a team player, that's poor recruitment. In addition to creating costly problems, situations like this can linger long after the initial appointment is made, causing stress for you and your team.

A robust, well-considered recruitment process means that you're better able to select the best person for a role.

What Is this Document?

This document is a guide for line managers who are responsible for recruiting. It is intended to complement the Victorian Public Sector Commission's (VPSC) [Best Practice Recruitment and Selection Toolkit](#), released in 2008.

The tools in this guide aim to promote best practice and minimise risk in Stage 1 of recruitment, which comprises the following:

1. Job analysis
2. Position descriptions

Note: This document is a guide only. It does NOT replace departmental or agency policy.

1. Job Analysis

What Is Job Analysis?

Job analysis helps you assess whether a role is required and if so, what you want to achieve in filling it.

It assists you in describing the role and the desired outcomes, as well as identifying the knowledge, skills and attributes applicants must have to succeed in the role. Effective job analysis also informs the classification of the role.

Job analysis makes it easier to develop appropriate accountabilities and key selection criteria which then feed into the position description and allow you to develop relevant assessment methods (e.g. interview questions, work sample tests).

Why Does Job Analysis Matter?

As a hiring manager it's your responsibility to undertake effective job analysis. Failing to do so, or simply using an old position description means that you run the risk of not reflecting the role accurately and you could end up recruiting the wrong person.

You should regard job analysis as the foundation of the recruitment and selection process. It helps you:

- assess how a role can help your team and organisation achieve future goals
- create a position description that accurately reflects the emerging role
- align the role with your team's work plan
- determine accurate classification of the role

- choose the best selection techniques for the role
- manage the prospective employee's expectations.

Poor job analysis can create problems for you, your team and your organisation. For example:

- You have recruited for yesterday's work, not for the work tasks required tomorrow.
- The new employee leaves disillusioned because the role they applied for isn't the role they're doing.
- Team morale falls and stress increases as you and your team struggle to cope with a new employee who doesn't have the required capabilities.

These frustrations can distract you and your team from achieving your goals. Good job analysis reduces this risk.

A useful tool is the Victorian Public Sector Commission's Victorian Public Employment Capability Framework Guide and Card Set. These identify 43 capabilities commonly needed to perform effectively in various government roles. The capabilities include 17 personal qualities and 26 knowledges and skills. The guide also includes a template for defining specialist expertise requirements.

Action	Notes	Done (tick)
Consider your organisation's current & future operational needs	Discuss your organisation's goals with your manager to consider if the role actually needs to be filled or needs re-design.	
List the objectives of the role	Consider what you want the role to achieve.	



Action	Notes	Done (tick)
List the key accountabilities of the role	It may help to discuss this with a peer or manager who knows the role and work unit.	
List what the candidate must know to succeed in the role	e.g. knowledge of engineering, law, industrial relations.	
List what the candidate must do to succeed in the role	e.g. design, analyse, write, lead, negotiate, research.	
List personal qualities needed to succeed in the role	e.g. empathy, teamwork, customer service.	
Develop the Key Selection Criteria (KSC) from the knowledge, skills and personal qualities.	For example, if a role requires strong written communication, the KSC might be: able to write emails, letters, reports, briefings and other documents clearly, concisely and accurately.	

2. Position Descriptions



What are Position Descriptions?

A position description (PD) is a compilation of: accountabilities; key selection criteria – the knowledge, skills and personal qualities required; and organisational information. Its main purpose is to inform candidates about the role and promote your organisation as a great place to work.

It should be clear and concise. You don't need to include every conceivable task that might be undertaken, or embellish the role by overstating the tasks. The PD must be relevant to the current role, but also needs to look to the future. The public sector needs flexible employees who can adapt to changing work.

The PD should avoid jargon, for example: public sector acronyms unfamiliar to private sector candidates may discourage them from applying. Technical terms are fine for roles requiring that expertise. In fact, such terms can be used to screen out unqualified candidates.

It's a good idea, then, to run your draft PD past a peer to ensure candidates will understand exactly what the role involves.

Why are Position Descriptions Important?

A good PD sells a role to those who can do it. It gives candidates enough accurate information to decide if they have what it takes to do the role (and therefore apply). A good PD benefits you and your team because:

It actively encourages applications from people with the potential to be an asset for your organisation now and in the future.

Candidate assessment is more accurate, appropriate and objective.

The successful applicant doesn't get any nasty surprises once they start work.



Action	Notes	Done (tick)
Develop PD	<p>Use the information generated from the job analysis to create the PD, which should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • header: job title, organisation, location, grade, level; • summary: an overview listing the role's purpose; • critical accountabilities for the role, also known as Key Result Areas (KRAs); • reporting relationships; • Key Selection Criteria (KSC) including any mandatory qualifications or licenses; • opportunities for development and career advancement the role will offer; • organisational statements and values; • any mandatory information, such as equal employment and occupation health and safety statements; and • any checks that an applicant might be required to undertake , such as: a police check, or a working with children check. <p>Ensure the PD gives candidates enough information on the role and your organisation for them to decide if they should apply.</p> <p>Keep the PD unambiguous and jargon free so your target audience understands every word.</p>	



Action	Notes	Done (tick)
Peer review	<p>Will the target audience understand the PD?</p> <p>Ask someone who knows the role to vet your PD for clarity and relevance to current and future work needs.</p> <p>Ask someone capable of assessing work value to ensure the role is classified appropriately.</p>	

Further Tips to Help You Achieve the Best Possible Outcome

Once you've completed the PD and advertised the role:

Ensure that someone's been nominated to receive the applications and respond to any queries regarding the process. Identify and contact the panel members who will be short-listing and interviewing applicants. Organise your diary to accommodate the short-listing process. Identify any assessment techniques (work sample testing, writing tests, etc.) that you will use to assess the short-listed applicants.

Once you have completed a short-list:

- Book rooms for interviews and other assessment processes.
- Make sure all panel members have the times in their diaries.
- Ensure the panel members are provided with all the necessary information (applications; interview questions; scoring methodology) for the interview and assessment process.
- Advise short-listed candidates of the time and place of the interview and details of the assessment techniques.
- Determine whether any of the short-listed applicants have special requirements (such as assistance in accessing the building).

Remember – make sure your recruitment and selection process is efficient and professional. Good candidates don't wait around for long.



VPSC Publications that may be of Interest:

- [Best Practice Recruitment and Selection ToolKit](#)
- [Mastering the Art of Interviewing](#)
- [VPS HR Capability Framework](#)

