# 4 easy steps to building the perfect job description suitable for any role

While there can be many reasons why a hiring exercise fails, more often than not a poorly constructed job description is involved. Fortunately, the opposite is also true – a well constructed job description will help you deliver a successful hiring exercise.

Let's take a closer look...

**1. The single greatest mistake made when creating job descriptions is going down the oversized path.**

While it might be an honest attempt to be thorough, some organisations try to list *every conceivable* duty and responsibility the new employee might be charged with.

Read one of these job descriptions and you realize it would be impossible for any employee to deliver on all the listed responsibilities. Showing an oversized job description to your preferred candidate can act as a turn-off, and it could also set up a future review talking about why the new employee didn't meet expectations.

When you're in the middle of your hiring exercise, the oversized job description will be hard to reconcile with your candidate's abilities and previous work experience.

So when you're creating your job description, just ask yourself one simple question – what's really important in this job?

**2. How to avoid the classic 'bloated' job description**

*Here's a simple way to avoid the oversized problem and produce a job description that works for the organisation, and works for the new employee.* Just follow these simple steps:

**List the primary responsibilities**

Construct your job description by listing (in order), the primary responsibilities of the new employee. Focus on the main 5 to 8 duties of the new employee and no more. A simple table works best.

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**Work out how much time for each responsibility**

Next to each responsibility list down as a percentage, how much effort should go into each item. Convert that percentage into the hours per week it equals (e.g.: a 40 hour week).

**Here's an example for a Project Manager**

| Responsibility | % of the job | = Hours per week |
|---|---|---|
| Managing projects using tracking software | 30% | 12 |
| Ordering and scheduling materials | 30% | 12 |
| Resource planning and management | 20% | 8 |
| Budgeting and reporting | 10% | 4 |
| Liaising with external parties | 5% | 2 |
| Organising permits and site access | 5% | 2 |
| | Total: 100% | 40 hours per week |

With this simple technique, you have placed a logical cap on the responsibilities for the new employee. There's no point listing 10 other responsibilities if there's no time available in the working week to fit them in. This approach focuses everyone on what's really important in the job. Once you're at this point, it's easy to compare the skills and experience of your candidates during the hiring exercise.

**3. Your new job description is now the perfect reference tool...**

With your new job description format, you're now in the ideal position to measure your candidates against the major responsibilities of the job. What's their track record in using software to manage projects or ordering materials?

Look closely and you will realise that your new job description actually helps you frame the best interview questions!

Naturally, your new job description needs to list down the required qualifications for your candidates, as well as any other special requirements of your organisation.

## 4. Refer back to the job description throughout the hiring exercise

Another key reason for unsuccessful hiring exercises is a failure to refer back to the job description when screening your job applicants or when interviewing. It's easy to find appeal in a well-presented candidate with good communication skills. That's where continual referral back to your job description keeps you focussed on whether their particular skill set is right for the job.

If you use this format you will find that you become very good at identifying the **wrong** candidates for the job and in recruitment; being able to identify the *wrong* candidate is as valuable as working out who's right for the job.

### Final checklist before beginning the hiring exercise

As you get your hiring exercise underway, ensure you have:

- Created the job description

- Structured interview format ready to use

- Use psychometric testing for your preferred candidate.

- Conduct reference checking.


Implement these steps and your recruitment process will be on solid foundations!


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