

**MAKING ORDER
OUT OF CHAOS
– CAN JOB
DESCRIPTIONS
REALLY HELP?**

**CREATE
PRESENTATION,**

**WRITE
JOB DESCRIPTION,**

**GRAB
COFFEE,
CONFERENCE**

**CALL,
LUNCH
MEETING,
REPLY TO
EMAILS,**

**WRITE
JOB DESCRIPTION,**

**POST A
TWEET,**

**WRITE
JOB DESCRIPTION,**

**CHECK
EMAILS
AGAIN...**

RECOGNIZE THIS?

Departments are being restructured, new roles have been created and existing roles need to change.

You know you and your line managers will have to write new job descriptions but simply can't face it.

Where are the old job descriptions?

What needs to be in the new ones?

Can't I just cut and paste?

For HR and line managers alike, this is a day-to-day reality. The pain is especially acute in fast-growing organizations where people management processes may not have kept pace with the rapid rate of change, and who knows how long the new order will last.

The pain isn't confined here. Not many C-suite members would admit it, but many also struggle to understand the detail of what it is their workforces actually do. They know how many people they pay and where they work, but ask them what their actual jobs are and the puzzled looks begin.

A HOUSE BUILT ON SAND

In practice this leaves a multitude of inconsistent job descriptions, poorly written, and bearing little relation to the actual responsibilities, skills and behaviors that companies need from their people. It's hardly a foundation for success.



I've been amazed over the years by the number of organizations who scratch their heads and say they don't know what they've got in terms of their workforce", says Phil Johnson, Head of Work Measurement at Hay Group. "They tell us that they

have almost as many unique job descriptions as they have people and that they need help streamlining this and making it manageable. We get projects to do that all around the world. And as for job titles, that's a whole other mess."

What's the cause of all this chaos? Processes are often different, with everyone creating job descriptions in their own way, in their own style. And there's often no common definition and understanding of the skills and behaviors demanded by any given role. Marketing teams are building consistent communications campaigns across the globe, so why aren't businesses doing the same with their most important asset – their people?

**MARKETING TEAMS ARE BUILDING
CONSISTENT COMMUNICATIONS
CAMPAIGNS ACROSS THE GLOBE,
WHY AREN'T BUSINESSES
DOING THE SAME WITH THEIR MOST
IMPORTANT ASSET – THEIR PEOPLE?
BECAUSE JOB DESCRIPTIONS AREN'T
IN THEIR JOB DESCRIPTION**

69%

OF THE BUSINESSES SURVEYED SAID INCORRECT JOB DESCRIPTIONS RESULT IN WASTED TIME WITH IRRELEVANT CANDIDATES WITH THE WRONG SKILLS.

58%

OF HR MANAGERS GLOBALLY SAY POOR JOB DESCRIPTIONS CAUSE EMPLOYEES TO LEAVE.

\$900 million

STAFF TURNOVER COSTS LARGE BUSINESSES IN THE UK (OF 500+ EMPLOYEES) NEARLY \$900 MILLION A YEAR AND \$4.5 BILLION YEAR IN THE US.

REMIND ME WHAT THEY'RE FOR AGAIN?

One of the reasons job descriptions don't get the attention they deserve is that people have lost sight of their number one purpose – to communicate what companies expect of their people in their jobs.

Effective teams start with everyone knowing what their role in the team is. The ideal job description should make it clear to the individual what they're expected to deliver, and give a sense of how they will be evaluated at the end of the year. It shouldn't be too detailed, as it's a statement of responsibility not an operating manual.

“

It's where the rubber hits the road when it comes to putting business strategy into practice,” says Phil. “With a structured approach that defines how you talk about responsibilities, skills and competencies, you'll find it helps running your organization, either implementing your new strategy, or being more effective in your operation because you've got people who know what to do and are better suited to their roles.”

Only a small number of specialist industries actually need task-oriented job descriptions. The nuclear power industry is one, where every task or responsibility needs to be accounted for in order for their business to operate safely. But most organizations don't have this excuse and focus too much on specific tasks, rather than on what people are accountable for and the competencies needed to perform the role successfully. A good job description should focus on outputs and on the skills and behaviors needed to achieve them.

LAST ONE OUT TURNS OFF THE LIGHTS

Get job descriptions wrong and the cost to businesses can be enormous. Firstly, there's lost time. Within the recruitment process, 69% of HR managers believe they've wasted valuable time with irrelevant candidates because of wrong job descriptions¹. Then there's employee retention. 58% of HR managers globally say poor job descriptions cause employees to leave¹. The financial cost of turnover alone is huge. With more than a third of businesses having a staff turnover rate higher than 21%, this costs large businesses in the UK nearly \$900 million a year. In the US, it's a staggering \$4.5 billion¹.

Then there's the cost of your employees not knowing what they're there for in the first place. Our research² shows that almost one in four employees express doubt over their firm's direction and goals. But when people are clear on what's expected of them, they are more likely to deliver what you want. Most people genuinely want to do a good job and are prepared to invest time and effort to get better at the things that matter. They also stay longer. So getting job descriptions right and matching expectations from the get-go helps.

A consistent approach with a standard job description template gives a company clarity over what their people do, which is crucial in helping to solve these important pain points for organizations. If only they weren't such a pain to create.

1) Source: Hay Group research 2015, Poor job descriptions driving staff turnover

2) Source: Hay Group research 2013, Prepare for take off

LOVE AT FIRST WRITE

Of all the phrases least likely to be heard in the workplace, "I love writing job descriptions" must rank near the top.

Let's face it, for line managers, it's often seen as a chore and pushed to the bottom of their to-do list; for HR professionals, it can be a time-consuming distraction from doing more strategic work. Maybe even seen as a necessary evil, only filled in because of company policy or because the recruitment process requires it.

CREATING A JOB DESCRIPTION – OF COURSE, NO PROBLEM IT'S ON MY LIST ...ISH ; (

"It's not only the time spent on job descriptions, but also the pain of worrying about it," says Phil Johnson. "It nags away and is a distraction." Some put job descriptions on their to-do list and let them stay there until they're forced to begin writing. Others start with a blank piece of paper – and stare at it or use unreliable sources, like the internet. Often, the task is just given to the HR team.

CREATING A JOB DESCRIPTION –

- 1.TOP PRIORITY
- 2.LATER TODAY
- 3.REMIND ME TOMORROW**

“

It's not only the time spent on job descriptions,
but also the pain of worrying about it.
It nags away and is a distraction.”
says Phil Johnson

FRAME IT THE RIGHT WAY

All of this angst detracts from one important fact: job descriptions are an essential tool in helping you get the most from your people. And despite people often feeling that their job description should be unique to them, this is a common misconception, believes Phil Johnson. “Once we establish the principle that a company doesn’t need 1,000 unique job descriptions – perhaps it needs only 100 – then we can start making a real difference,” says Phil. “So instead of 57 different administration assistant job descriptions, we can create a framework where there are actually only two main jobs: an administration assistant and a senior administration assistant.”

Within this new framework, it becomes easier to discuss career progression or do strategic workforce planning – for example, seeing how many Key Account Managers may be needed in five years. “By having a manageable set of job descriptions, human resources functions have a platform to be more strategic, and do things that are more organized than in the chaos of the past,” continues Phil.

This also helps HR support managers...



Line managers will save time as there’s no longer a need to have lengthy conversations with HR before sitting down to write the job description”, says Phil. “They can get it all done and off their task-list straight away. This way HR teams and managers spend less time on tactical tasks and more time on their most meaningful work.”

DOING THE THINGS YOU ARE BEST AT



CREATING A JOB DESCRIPTION

TIME SPENT



DESIGNING A DO-ABLE JOB PHEW!

The end goal is to create job descriptions for roles that people can succeed in. And nobody knows what success looks like in a role better than the line manager. But how do they know what the right candidate looks like on paper? Empowering them to translate the work needed into an effective job description is key.

For Phil Johnson, this means helping managers create job descriptions that have the right skills and competencies mapped against key responsibilities. And that these responsibilities call for a similar set of skills and competencies so that you can find people who can succeed in the whole job.



If you are designing a role for a sales manager, for example, there are certain behavioral competencies you'll need for success such as resilience and influence. If you're looking for these skills when you're recruiting, you'll have a better quality candidate pool and a more reliable starting point to find the right person."

ACTIVATE JOB DESCRIPTION

Activate Job Description is an easy-to-use tool that gives you and your managers the best starting point to create great job descriptions, helping you build a consistent foundation across your business. It provides over 70 years of Hay Group expertise at the fingertips, automatically suggesting the right skills and behaviors needed for a role. Meaning that it's much easier to start looking for the most relevant candidates. And as well as getting the right people into the right roles, senior leaders get a clear picture of the roles, skills and competencies that exist within the business.

7 WAYS A STANDARD FRAMEWORK FOR JOB DESCRIPTIONS CAN HELP...

- 1.** Gives organizations a consistent framework to be more flexible when planning their workforce and making strategic people choices.
- 2.** Gives directors and senior managers clarity on the types of roles, skills and competencies within the business.
- 3.** Gives managers a great starting point to quickly and easily build great job descriptions that are consistent with the business.
- 4.** Helps managers understand just how different (if at all) a specific job is from a generic set of jobs their company has, to make sure they use titles consistently and avoid job description proliferation.
- 5.** Helps attract and recruit the right people and reduce staff turnover through creating good job descriptions that accurately reflect what the role involves.
- 6.** Provides a clear pathway to career development through highlighting the skills and competencies needed for progression.
- 7.** Frees up time for HR teams to spend on adding value to the organization instead of transactional tasks.



We're putting tools into the hands of line managers," says Phil. "Previously, they would take hours to do a job description, having conversations with their HR partner, which is all non-productive time. What's worse, they might have to do it over and over – today for recruitment, next month for training and then later in the year for performance management. This is about activating the line manager as part of the transformation of the service-delivery model of HR. Not only are we helping HR move away from the transactional activities, it's more efficient for everyone. We've limited the amount of work needed within the job description process."

LET US DO THE HARD WORK FOR YOU AND YOUR MANAGERS. IF YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ACTIVATE JOB DESCRIPTION PLEASE VISIT:

<http://web.haygroup.com/activate-job-description>

-  [linkedin.com/company/hay-group](https://www.linkedin.com/company/hay-group)
-  [facebook.com/HayGroup](https://www.facebook.com/HayGroup)
-  [@HayGroup](https://twitter.com/HayGroup)