

Job spec



Introduction: Job description

When defining the job spec you should consider

What needs to be done?	Why does it need to be done?	What will be the outcomes?
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Look at the next three years and consider how any changes or events might affect your hiring and staffing requirements. For example, there may be movements in the economy or marketplace you will need to consider when determining the job description and person criteria.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Is taking someone on full time the best option? What other alternatives are available? It might be better to outsource the work, take on a contractor or find an interim solution.

What is the make-up of your current team? How strong is it? How diverse is it? Are there any gaps or too many common types? And what implications, if any, should be taken into account?

What are the Key performance indicators?

Consider high-level primary outcomes such as revenue increase, profit, margin increase, percentage market share, customer satisfaction improvement ratios, cost reduction, and operational improvement. These should be quantifiable, should directly contribute to the financial performance or value of the business and be smart....

SMART

Specific | Measurable | Attainable | Relevant | Time bound

Also consider what secondary skills, actions and behaviours contribute to the primary outcomes being realised.

You need to measure what counts most.

A common management error is to measure too many, or the wrong outcomes, which may result in employees failing to understand or act on what is most important. There is, however, a small number of circumstances or regulatory situations where all areas are equally important.

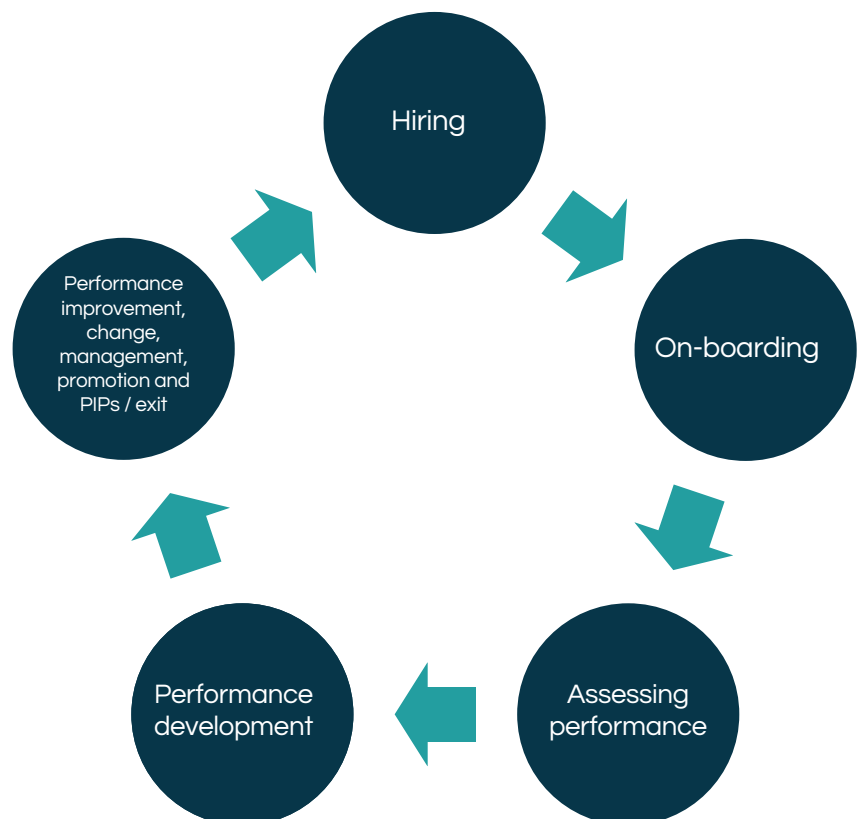
Often HR professionals will be very general in their description of the role, so that changes can be easily accommodated. This is a positive in respect of allowing scope for change.

The downside is that you can fail to state clearly exactly what is required. A smart manager may wish to have their own addendum which they keep to themselves and use as a point of reference or use with others as a Memo.

[Opportunity](#) | [Job description](#) | [Person spec](#) | [Template](#)

The job spec should cover 3 areas: the opportunity, job description and person spec.

You should use the job spec as a point of reference not only for hiring, but also on an on-going basis:



Opportunity

Managers frequently fail to assess the job opportunity from the candidate's point of view, and don't make the opportunity appear sufficiently attractive. Consider the following points:

- Assess your approach to the open market, external, and even internal hires
- Think about the relationship between how the market sees your opportunity and the quality of people who choose to look at what you have to offer.
- Those people with an average or poor ability level are more inclined to say yes to any job. Conversely the best people more likely to say "no".
- Look at quartiles or segments, and consider where the opportunity sits, and what kind of applicant it will appeal to.
- It is important to show the employer company as a great place to work as well as highlighting the attractions of the job and its future prospects.
- However you should avoid over selling the job to avoid anyone who joins feeling they've been sold a pup.
- A benefit is only a benefit if it is relevant. What may be a benefit to some may be a turn off to others.
- If you do not wish to disclose the salary package you can simply state:
"Competitive Salary" or that "The salary package is wide open for the right candidate".



Writing up the job description: checklist...

- Determine what you may wish to communicate to people:
 - Outside of your business about your organisation and the role (external hires) and
 - What you may choose to include for internal candidates (those people already employed within your organisation).
- The business – its operations, the environment in which it operates, any significant plans. Consider what you choose to make public and what you don't.
- Background to the role becoming available – what has happened to create the vacancy? You may or may not wish to make this public. However, often the reason for the opening becoming available will shape the nature of the job as well as the qualities of the person to be hired.
 - Where the role sits – organization structure, team (functionally and physically).
 - The purpose of the role, its scope and its dimensions.
 - The principle accountabilities of the role.
 - Exactly what would you like someone to accomplish in the role and in what timescales.
 - Key challenges in the role and attractions to it.
 - Consider the extent to which the role is working independently, perhaps remotely or as part of a team.
 - Future plans for the role – career/progression/intentions.



Person spec

- A person specification should outline clearly the skills and competencies required of the job-holder. Sometimes it will be appropriate to augment this with a likely person profile.
- By the time you’ve collated ideas as to what qualities are required of the person, your own ideas, those from HR and other departments with whom the role will interact, you can expect a long – and probably unrealistic – list of what is required. It is common practice therefore to differentiate between “Essentials” and “Nice to haves”.
- Ideally, when determining the person spec you’ll note down the four or five most important qualities you’re looking for. Then benchmark the candidates by rating them on these qualities on a scale of 1-5. This will enable you to distinguish between the candidates on a practical basis.
- Use others to help you define the person spec criteria and what’s essential / desirable: experience (track record), knowledge, qualifications, skills, technical competencies. When building the brief consider...
- You should determine which competencies are required in the role and to what extent these may be required.

Achievement Orientated	Analytical Ability	Communication Skills (Oral, written, presentation)	Creativity / innovation
Decision-Making Skills	Integrity / Honesty	Flexibility / Adaptability	Initiative
Interpersonal Skills	Leadership	Management Skills	Persuasiveness / Influencing
Planning and Organisational Skills	Problem-Solving Skills	Team Building / Team Work	Time Management

Misc.

- Recruitment and selection process - stages, participants, criteria, tools, timescales....
- Remuneration package, reward and benefits.
- On-boarding and engagement plans.

- Work to a manageable number of criteria
- Consider what an ideal candidate’s background may look like and where / how this kind of person may be found.

Job specification

Job title:	ABC Title / XYZ Business Unit	
Reporting line:	Reporting into / Title of the person into whom the role reports	
Direct reports:	Individual contributor or number e.g. 5 direct reports, 40 total	
Department:	Manufacturing Marketing Sales Customer services Finance	
Location:	Office location	
Job number:	1234	
		Job spec dated:

Opportunity overview:

A general and succinct overview of the purpose of the role. 2/3 lines. A broad description of the nature of the job.

Role description:

Key objective:
It would be appropriate to state here the most important outcome for the role is.

This might be an objective or specific goal together with a timeframe in which it is to be achieved. For example, this could be something which has to be accomplished within the first 12months, and which would be assessed when reviewing performance or undertaking an appraisal.

Primary responsibilities:
List between 3 and 5 of the most important responsibilities.

- These would be responsibilities / tasks which if completed well would suggest the hire has performed well in the role. Likely to be well defined.
- Once again, these are likely to be those outcomes for which the job holder is likely to be most accountable and where performance is reviewed informally or as part of an appraisal.
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Additional responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
All other responsibilities worthy of note. Be realistic in the number you mention. If you include the words “not limited to:” this allows for flexibility. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Nunc commodo ultrices ipsum sed

Typical demands of this role:
Hours of work and exceptions. Travel. Physical work / requirements. Deadlines and pressures.

Person specification

Qualifications:	Essential	/ desirable
Degree qualified / MBA etc or	✓	
Degree calibre or commensurate experience desirable	✓	
Industry or professional certifications.		✗

Knowledge and skill requirements:

It is quite common to state candidates should possess a certain number of years of experience gained in a role type / discipline.	✓	
This may take the form of requiring a number of years of experience in two stated areas considered critical to the success of the prospective hire.		✗
It may be appropriate to state experience gained in a particular type of role (function) and or in a particular industry.	✓	
Furthermore you may wish to include specialist areas within a particular industry or function.	✓	
This could include a level of seniority in the role not necessarily determined by number of reports. Instead, it might be the ability to perform in the role, complete tasks with minimum supervision and to coach others or act as a mentor.		✗

Competencies, strengths & personal qualities:

Such as.... Achievement orientated, analytical ability, communication skills (oral, written, presentation), creativity / innovation, decision-making, Integrity / honesty, flexibility / adaptability, initiative, interpersonal skills, leadership, management, persuasiveness / influencing, planning & organising, problem solving, team builder / player, time management.	✓	
Focus, work rate, reliability, attention to detail, drive....	✓	
You may wish to include in this area any aspects relating to cultural fit and what core values may be of importance to your employer organisation or specific department.	✓	

Misc.

For example language skills.		✗
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Legal statements:

It may be appropriate for you to include statements to the effect of: Applicants should possess suitable work permits / entitlement to work in the country. The successful applicant will be subject to a background check, credit check... XYZ is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

See competency based interview question bank.... Which includes typical qualities people would look for when hiring into role as well as example questions.