



# THE ULTIMATE CHEAT SHEET for Writing Great Job Descriptions

Because the scope of many positions has changed over the years, simply dusting off an old job description or using a generic one just doesn't cut it. Having accurate job descriptions serves you well when evaluating potential and existing employees.

Writing a job description is a lot like creating a blueprint for recruiting and hiring: If it's done right, there's a much better chance that everything else will fall smoothly into place. In an OfficeTeam survey of human resources (HR) managers, nearly all (97 percent) said accurate job descriptions are important when recruiting for an open position. They're absolutely right: A great job description helps hiring managers clarify exactly what they're looking for in a job candidate. And when used as the basis of the job posting, it gives candidates a good sense of the job's role and responsibilities.

But a [well-written job description](#) is more than just [an effective recruitment tool](#) – it also can help set the stage for a new employee's success. With clear guidelines in hand, a new hire has a good understanding of the expectations of the job from day one. Down the line, those guidelines can also help management provide that [new employee](#) with a constructive performance evaluation.

 **OfficeTeam**<sup>®</sup>  
A Robert Half Company

1.800.804.8367  
officeteam.com



 **FFICE**  
OF THE **FUTURE**<sup>®</sup>

Evolving workplace trends impacting  
administrative professionals



# 5 Tips for Crafting Strong Job Descriptions

## 1. Interview your top performers.

Before you start writing a job description, talk to your best people in that role, and try to determine what makes them so successful. Find out the skills, personality traits and values they share and include these elements in the job description.

## 2. Make sure the job is doable.

Are the duties you're outlining compatible? For example, if you're looking for someone who can perform complex analytical tasks independently, you should place less emphasis on his or her ability to work in a team-based, collaborative setting. [Work with a staffing firm](#) that specializes in placing jobs in the particular field to craft job descriptions that are realistic.

## 3. Set priorities.

Don't just compile a laundry list of the duties required for the job. First, summarize the position's overarching role within the organization and how it relates with to jobs and departments in the company. Then, describe the day-to-day tasks of the position in order of priority, from top to bottom. The glossary of job descriptions in the [OfficeTeam Salary Guide](#) can give you a good starting point in establishing this list of duties.

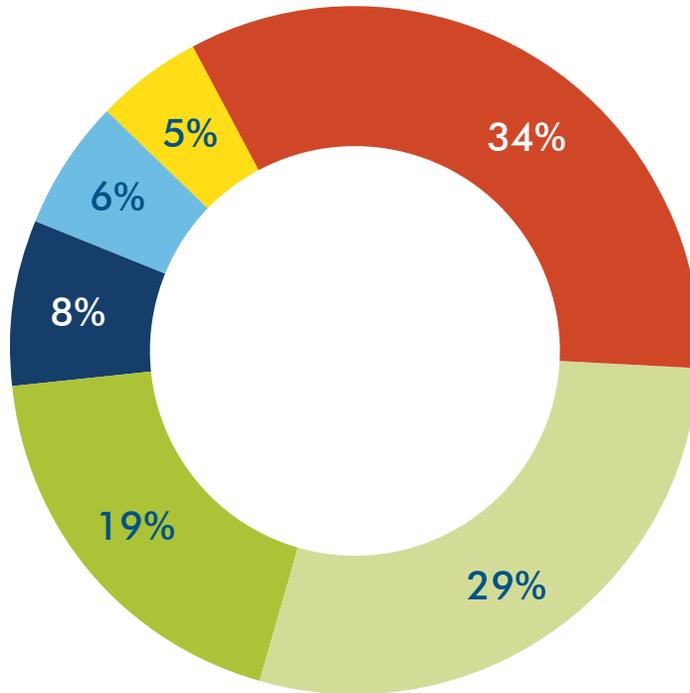
## 4. Focus on the must-haves.

If you go overboard when setting the specific skills, experience, [training](#) and education requirements for the job, you might miss out on a promising candidate who lacks one attribute, but would otherwise be a perfect fit for the position. Of course, don't forget to include the soft skills and interpersonal abilities that help a person succeed in the job, such as the ability to work well on a team or a talent for creative problem-solving.

## 5. Spell things out in more detail when necessary.

Aim to be as concise as possible in your job descriptions, but don't shortchange clarity for the sake of brevity. For example, rather than asking for good communication skills, say that the job needs someone who can "communicate technical information to non-technical audiences."

# Greatest Challenges When Developing Job Descriptions for Open Positions



- Accurately describing the job duties the position entails
- Identifying the job skills and experience that are essential vs. "nice-to-have"
- Describing the desired personality traits
- Determining the salary range
- Determining the appropriate job title
- Other/don't know

Source: OfficeTeam survey of 613 HR managers in the United States and Canada. Responses do not total 100 percent due to rounding.

# Job Description Checklist

When writing a job description, include these elements:

- Job title
- The department where the person will be working
- The title of the manager who will supervise the position
- The titles of the people who will report to the position, if applicable
- A brief summary explaining the position and its overall role in the company
- A list of the position's key job duties, the estimated time to be spent on each duty and the frequency of performing each duty (daily, weekly, monthly)
- The specific knowledge, skills, experience or other training required for the job
- The educational requirements of the position
- Qualities or characteristics that help a person excel in the job
- Physical requirements
- Job classification (exempt or non-exempt)

For more information on Office of the Future, visit:

[officeteam.com/oof](http://officeteam.com/oof)

 **OfficeTeam**<sup>®</sup>  
A Robert Half Company



© 2014 OfficeTeam. A Robert Half Company. An Equal Opportunity Employer  
M/F/D/V. All referenced trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

 **FFICE**  
OF THE **FUTURE**<sup>®</sup>

Evolving workplace trends impacting  
administrative professionals