

Job Descriptions or Job/Role Profiles*

Are job descriptions or job/role profiles still relevant?

As the nature of work changes and becomes ever more fluid, you might hear authors, recruiters and other human resource practitioners arguing about the value of using standard job descriptions or job/role profiles. Some fear that job descriptions are simply too old-fashioned for the modern workplace (where jobs are becoming more boundary less and defined by skill mix and personal traits), others believe that job descriptions are too static and inflexible.

That said there are still many, many roles out there, the purpose of which can be captured neatly in a one or two page document. Some roles require clear description for reasons of statutory compliance (such as a nurse or carer). Other jobs follow a professional career path, where development and growth changes can be captured and distinctly described as you build your skill and competence.

At Notebook Mentor we believe it's important to know what is expected of you at work – even if this expectation requires your flexibility. Having a job description summarising what you must do and achieve as well as expected knowledge, skills and traits can be of huge benefit – if it's put to good use. Organisations may employ you because you have **skills, character traits and values** they admire, but this might be in addition to the fact that you need to be a qualified accountant!

If you are working in a role where your skills and traits are more important than the technicalities of your job, or perhaps where you have a very broad and fluid role, then you might like to look at our resource document called Skills and Traits Cluster Profiles. This document focuses on describing roles not by what must be done, but by the more general skills and traits you'll need to be successful.

The purpose of a job description or role profile

Job descriptions or job/role profiles have more than one purpose. They can:

- ◆ Let the person doing the job know what is expected of them
- ◆ Enable an organisation to 'classify' a job, perhaps weighting its importance such that it can be categorised within a pay grading system
- ◆ Help group jobs together into Job Families (helping with both grading and career development)
- ◆ Be used for recruitment purposes
- ◆ Be used for induction, learning and development

What should be contained in a job description or job/role profile?

Unless dictated for statutory or compliance reasons, there is generally no hard and fast rule about what should or should not be contained with a job description or job/role profile. We believe that as a minimum you should expect to see the following:

Job title (the title you will or want to be known by)

For example, a professional title such as Consultant Neurologist, or a title that summarises how you would like to be perceived such as Entrepreneur, or Environmental Activist or a title that is defined by what you do, such as a Professional Footballer, Wellbeing Podcaster or Project Manager.

There is no end of job titles out there – many new and potentially difficult to pin down without the rest of the following detail.

The purpose of your job (the reason your job exists)

For example, for a Head of Cyber Security – ‘to define and maintain IT security protocols, closing cyber vulnerabilities and achieving required IT security corporate governance’.

For example, for a Professional Footballer – ‘to maintain fitness, train and play as a professional full back, alongside a squad of colleagues working as a team’.

The key deliverables that are expected of you (what you must achieve, sometimes within a specified time frame)

For example, for a Newspaper Journalist (dealing with the UK Royal family)

- ◆ Investigate possible leads on stories of public interest concerning the Royal family
- ◆ Pitch minimum of three engaging ideas per week to the Editor/Deputy Editor
- ◆ Gather, analyse and verify relevant investigative material and data
- ◆ Record (physically or electronically) all notes and audio files of interviews and investigative work
- ◆ Prepare and write factually correct, informative and concise articles concerning the Royal family
- ◆ Follow and uphold the ethical principles and standards of the professional
- ◆ Keep updated on the latest news and developments on unfolding stories
- ◆ Maintain fresh perspective by listening to others' opinions; reading published articles and learning pieces including what is across social media
- ◆ Influence public opinion in regard to the Royal family

Other jobs may require deliverables that are more straightforward (or so it might seem!).

For example, a café manager:

- ◆ Ensure customers receive excellent service on every visit
- ◆ Achieve daily sales targets, controlling expenses through efficient planning and waste management
- ◆ Manage basic accounting including employee wage costs, rent, utilities and raw materials
- ◆ Maintain hygiene and cleanliness of coffee shop to legally required health and safety standards
- ◆ Ensure customers have full access to service during opening times
- ◆ Take responsibility for daily stock deliveries, ensuring stock takes tally
- ◆ Attract, recruit and train competent staff to ensure the smooth running of the coffee shop
- ◆ Grow the skills and capabilities of the team through regular training and development

The skills, knowledge and/or qualifications you need to do the job

For example, for a Director of Compensation and Benefits, Pharmaceuticals Sector

- ◆ A graduate-calibre individual, ideally with the addition of a relevant professional qualification
- ◆ Comprehensive knowledge of compensation and benefits, performance management and pensions best practice
- ◆ Knowledge of global mobility strategy and practice an advantage
- ◆ Demonstrated experience of successfully implementing compensation and benefits, performance management and pensions practice in a multi-national organisation
- ◆ Broad knowledge of general Human Resource practice
- ◆ Knowledge of the pharmaceuticals sector an advantage

And the traits, abilities or style you might need to be successful for the same job:

- ◆ Excellent communication skills
- ◆ The ability to build effective, trusted relationships
- ◆ To be able to explain complex subject matter and to influence individuals at different levels within the organisation, including at Board level
- ◆ Highly commercial with a keen interest to understand how the organisation works, serves customers and is financially successful
- ◆ A demonstrated ability to effectively lead a team, attracting and growing talent around them
- ◆ A team player who is co-operative and collaborative with those within and outside of their subject matter expertise
- ◆ Able to demonstrate a high degree of evaluative and analytical judgement, using data and insight to support recommendations and theories
- ◆ Highly curious and open to listening and learning from others

If you find yourself in a job, with no job description or profile to speak of, we think it's perfectly reasonable for you to work one out for yourself. Perhaps you'll have the advantage of speaking to other colleagues who are doing the same work; perhaps your line manager will be able to help you out.

Start by seeking and listening to the views of others, building up a picture of the key components we have mentioned above.

Even if this document ends up being something just for you, chances are you'll be able to refer back to it at times when you are confused or frustrated about what exactly you are supposed to be doing – or when you want to think about development or moving on to something new.

Use the template on the following page if it helps:

Job Title:

Purpose of the job:

Key deliverables expected of you:

Key skills, knowledge, qualifications, traits, abilities or style required of the role or by the company