

DID YOU KNOW...

IMPORTANT HIRING INFORMATION

HIRING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Staffing is all about *hiring the right people with the right skills at the right time.*

Making sure you hire well is so important. Committed, motivated, qualified employees help your organization achieve its purpose. Hiring right can be time consuming, but personnel is a substantial investment and limited financial resources mean that hiring mistakes can be a huge financial burden. The cost is compounded when a hiring mistake erodes employee morale and disrupts your office. Additionally, the hiring process must be carried out fairly to avoid expensive and reputation damaging human rights claims.

Laying the Groundwork

The hiring process usually starts with the need to fill a vacant or new position. For a vacant position, this is a good time to assess if the job still helps your organization serve its purpose and achieve its mission. Hiring a new employee needs to be rooted in a larger staffing plan that is connected to your organization's strategic plan.

Related Policies and Procedures

Human Resource (HR) policies assist the process of bringing a new employee into the organization. Up-to-date, clear policies on recruitment and staffing make the hiring process straightforward and less time consuming. Policies on probation, employee orientation, workplace health and safety and training and development - to name a few topics - **clarify what management and employees expect of each other.** Plus, HR policies are a great source of information for a new employee.

Why are Job Descriptions Important?

For each employee, a good job description helps the incumbent to understand:

- Their duties and responsibilities
- The relative importance of their duties

- How their position contributes to the mission, goals and objectives of the organization

For the organization, good job descriptions contribute to organizational effectiveness by:

- Ensuring that the work carried out by staff is aligned with the organization's mission
- Helping management clearly identify the most appropriate employee for new duties and realigning work loads

Job descriptions are also the foundation for most HR management activities:

Recruitment: Job descriptions are used to develop a recruitment campaign that clearly articulates the duties to be performed and qualifications required by the organization for the position

Selection: Interview questions, hiring criteria and the screening process are based on the duties and qualification outlined in the job description

Orientation: The job description helps the employee see how their position relates to other positions in the organization

Training: The job description can be used to identify areas where the employee does not adequately meet the qualifications of the position and therefore needs training

Supervision: The job description can be used by the employee and the supervisor to help establish a work plan

Compensation: Job descriptions can be used to develop a consistent salary structure, which is based on relative level of duties, responsibility and qualifications of each position in the organization

Performance Management: The job description and the work plan are used to monitor performance

Evaluations: Face to Face review (semianual/Annual) of performance is important for both employer and employee.

Legal Defense: If an employee is terminated for poor performance, an accurate, complete and up-to-date job description will help the organization defend its decision

Developing the Job Posting

There are three key sections to a job posting:

- 1. Information about the organization:** This is a key part of attracting the candidate to the position and is where you help the candidate understand the mission of your organization.
- 2. Information about the role:** Here you want to give a sense of what the role entails and provide enough information about the minimum qualifications for the position to allow readers to self-assess whether they meet the position requirements

How is a Job Description Developed?

The jobs appropriate for an organization come directly from the organization's mission and structure.

- *Identify the values that should be reflected by all staff*
- *Establish the tasks or functions that need to be done*
- *Determine the experience, knowledge, skills and other characteristics that are required*
- *Consider any special working conditions or physical requirements*
- *Write or update the job description*

and minimize the number of unsuitable applications.

- Job title
 - Purpose of the position
 - High level overview of responsibilities
 - Identify whether they will be part of a team, leading a team or working independently
 - Work location and travel requirements (if any)
 - The reporting arrangements
 - Requirements including experience, qualifications, skills and personal attributes
 - The salary and benefits associated with the position (may say the salary is dependent on experience)
- 3. Information about the application process:**
- This section advises candidates:
- Where to get more information
 - How they can apply and the necessary contact details
 - Whether the selected candidate will need to meet any special requirements. (e.g. language, criminal records check, physical/ substance

testing, Council/Commissioner approval)

- The application deadline
- To avoid excessive enquiries it's useful to advise that while all applications are appreciated, only those candidates selected for interview will be contacted
- Veterans preference applicability

Plan the Selection Process

Selection is the process of screening applicants to ensure that the most appropriate candidate is hired.

The first step in the selection process is to review the information (resume, application form) provided by all job applicants to determine which applicants meet the minimum qualifications as stated in the job posting. No further consideration will be given to those who do not meet the minimum qualifications. Those job applicants who meet or exceed the minimum job qualifications are then assessed to decide which ones will be short-listed for a job interview.

The most common methods of selection for all positions include an interview followed by a reference check.

Other selection techniques used during the interview phase are: work samples, written tests, oral presentation, and personality or aptitude tests.

Working with a Selection Panel

Engaging other people in a selection process can be very helpful. You may want to include a senior staff member, a board member and a potential co-worker, for example. When you invite panel members to participate, let them know how much time it will take and what their role will be. Their contribution can include:

- Helping to develop selection criteria
- Screening resumes
- Preparing interview questions
- Participating in interviews
- Assessing each candidate against the selection criteria
- Providing input about the final selection

Make sure the panel is aware of questions that cannot be asked. (e.g. Age, Nationality)

Good Practice

When working with a selection panel:

- *Give panel members copies of the candidates' resumes and any other information provided*
- *Prepare for interviews by clarifying which panel member will ask each question.*

Preparing for the Interviews

Prepare a list of questions to ask during the interview. Develop key questions to explore past job performance, covering all essential functions. Also, prepare follow-up questions. Use a variety of approaches to get different kinds of information, tailoring questions to open up a topic for conversation or to confirm information.

Good Practice

Beware of bias in the interview process. All selection or screening methods must be based on the essential tasks and skills for the position as outlined in the job description.

Conduct the Interviews

Choose an appropriate environment for the interviews and ensure that you will not be interrupted. If you are interviewing internal candidates, consider doing it off-site.

Think of the interview as a business conversation. Make sure you use the same interview format and setting for every candidate, and that interview appointments are the same length.

Welcome the candidate and provide her/him with an overview or “road map” for the interview. Ask your questions, then sit back and listen. Ideally, you should talk no more than 20% of the time. Use follow-up questions to have the candidate expand on their answers. Comment on what the candidate says to let them know you are interested and to encourage discussion. You may want to consider using an Interview Rating Guide to evaluate the answers given by each person that you interview.

Conclude the interview by thanking the candidate and explaining the next steps. Ask for their permission to contact references.

Check References of Final Candidates

Checking references carefully and thoroughly is one way to avoid hiring the wrong person. It may seem easier to accept letters of recommendation that address a candidate’s abilities and experience. However, talking to people will allow you to probe issues deeply enough to get a fuller sense of the candidate’s values, nature, approach to work and how they interact with others. Telephone interviews are the best way to get more depth about the candidate’s character and background.

Reference checks are a last opportunity to verify informa-

tion the candidate has provided, validate their personal suitability and explore any areas of concern. Talk to references before you make an offer. Let the candidate know you will be doing this. Be sure to find out if there is anyone the candidate would prefer you not speak to - for example, a current boss or current colleagues.

Prepare a list of questions for references. Ask about information on the candidate’s resume and about topics discussed during the interview. Ask for insights into the candidate’s character, examples of good work they have done and areas that need development. If you keep the conversation casual but professional, you are likely to get more information. Record the reference’s responses. Remember that any notes that you take when talking to a reference must comply with human rights legislation. Potential candidates may have the right to see what references have said about them so keep accurate notes.

At the beginning of your conversation, explain to the reference the importance of the position you are hiring for and tell them you appreciate their honesty. At the end, thank them for the time they have spent talking to you and for their help.

Social Media Check

If you conduct a social media check into the applicant, public employers need to protect Fourth Amendment rights and not wrongfully obtain information as well as possibly providing notice that the check will occur. Steps should also be taken isolate protected information learned from the search (e.g. age, race, etc) from the hiring decision maker.

Veterans Preference

Under State law (see SDCL 3-3 et seq) qualifying veterans (and in certain circumstances their spouses) shall receive preference for certain state, county, municipality, and school district employment. You should investigate the qualifications of such applicant where the preference applies. No guarantee of employment to such applicant exists, but preference for hiring shall be given where applicants are equally qualified.

Make the Offer

Call the candidate to make an offer, advising (if applicable) it is contingent upon successful completion of other requirements (e.g. drug screen, Council/Commissioner approval, etc.). After the hire is official, inform all other final candidates by phone of the outcome of the recruitment process.

Conduct Post-Offer/Pre-Hire Work

After making a conditional offer, additional selection techniques can include drug and physical tests, criminal

Keep all of your recruitment and selection materials on file for at least two years.

Make sure your decision is nondiscriminatory, complies with federal laws and your hiring policies and is based on sound judgment.

Discuss the decision with colleagues or others who participated in the interviews and/or other stages of the hiring process.

records check, driver's records check, criminal background check. Consideration should be given as to the necessity/job-relatedness of such techniques as not all should be conducted for every job. Written consent is required before requesting records checks. If applicable, obtain Council/Commissioner approval. If an applicant is disqualified due to the credit check, the notice should be sent pursuant to the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

Do the Paperwork

If an employer provides an employment agreement, it is important that employers include a termination clause within the employment agreement and, if applicable, provide notice of the at-will employment status and statutory right to removal by employer. This clause creates contractual (agreed upon) terms, such as the amount of reasonable notice, the employee's entitlement to payment of benefits during the notice period, and the definition of "compensation" provided in lieu of notice (i.e. how variable pay will be addressed, such as bonuses and incentive pay). Therefore, a termination clause protects the employer from liabilities under common law, which could increase termination costs significantly. It also provides certainty to employees and can be referred to at a later date in the event of a dispute.

Orientation

A new employee orientation introduces new employees to the organization and their new role. Beyond providing information about the organization's policies and procedures, an effective orientation should make the new employee feel comfortable, helping them to learn about their role and the organization's culture and values.

Too often, busy workplaces forego a proper orientation in the hopes that new recruits will 'figure it out' as they get to work. But in fact, by taking the time to properly orient new hires, employers will increase that employee's chances of

being successful. This could increase employee retention which saves the organization time and money in the long run.

A good orientation will enable a new employee to be successful by:

- Reducing the anxiety of the new employee
- Sharing relevant organizational information and beginning a process of learning about the organization's mission and work
- Socializing the employee to the culture of the organization.
- Building relationship between the new employee and colleagues, including managers or supervisors

Covering the Basics

- Make introductions
- Give a tour of the assigned workspace and the rest of the office/facility.
- Provide an organizational overview, including an organizational chart if available
- Review new employee's job duties and responsibilities including:
 - Job description and expected outcomes
 - Review work expectations and schedule:
 - Start and finish times, lunch time and breaks
 - Probationary period
 - Appropriate safety procedures
- Review HR and administration procedures including:
 - Necessary paperwork for pay and benefits
 - Employee policies and procedures manual
 - Travel and reimbursement processes
 - Absences, leave, vacation, etc.
 - Telephone and email protocol, internet use policy
 - Review health, fire and safety procedures
 - Review the performance management system, learning and development plans
 - Explain the internal communication processes including staff meetings

Good Practice

*Sample forms and documents available online at:
www.sdcountycommissioners.org*

- *Job Description Template*
- *Interview Guidelines*
- *Selection Criteria Template*
- *Sample Letter of Offer*
- *Sample Employment Agreement*
- *Sample Orientation Checklist*
- *Probationary Review Templates*