



LESSON 3

CRAFTING COMPELLING JOB DESCRIPTIONS: THE 3-PART FORMULA

Introduction: More Than Just a List of Duties

A job description is often the very first point of contact a potential candidate has with your organization.

It is a critical piece of marketing material that can either attract or repel top talent. A boring, generic job description that is nothing more than a laundry list of duties will get lost in the noise.

A compelling, well-crafted job description, on the other hand, will not only attract the right candidates but will also get them excited about the opportunity to join your team.

In this lesson, we will introduce the **3-Part Formula for Clear Job Descriptions**, a simple yet powerful framework for creating job descriptions that are clear, concise, and compelling.

The 3-Part Formula: Purpose, Key Responsibilities, and Typical Activities

Part 1 PURPOSE (The "Why")

This is the most important part of the job description. It answers the fundamental question, "Why does this job exist?" It should be an inspiring and purpose-driven statement that connects the role to the larger mission of your organization. It should focus on the impact the role has, not just the tasks it performs.

- **Traditional Way:** "Front desk agent responsible for checking guests in and out."
- **The 2025 Smart Way:** "To create amazing first and last impressions that make our guests feel valued and appreciated, and to be a knowledgeable and helpful resource that ensures every guest has a memorable stay."

More Examples:

Restaurant Server Purpose:

- Old Way: "Take orders and serve food."
- New Way: "To create memorable dining experiences that turn first-time visitors into loyal customers and raving fans."

Office Manager Purpose:

- Old Way: "Take orders and serve food."
- New Way: "To create memorable dining experiences that turn first-time visitors into loyal customers and raving fans."

Part 2 KEY RESPONSIBILITIES (The "What")

This section outlines the 5-7 main things you are paying the person to accomplish. These should be high-level responsibilities, not a detailed list of every single task. Think about the major buckets of work that the person in this role will own.

Hotel Front Desk Key Responsibilities:

- ① **Guest Experience:** Proactively anticipate and respond to guest needs to ensure a seamless and positive experience from arrival to departure.
- ② **Revenue Management:** Drive hotel revenue by selling upgrades, promoting amenities, and maximizing occupancy.
- ③ **Information Hub:** Serve as a knowledgeable expert on the hotel's services and the local area.
- ④ **Team Coordination:** Collaborate effectively with housekeeping, maintenance, and other departments to ensure guest needs are met.
- ⑤ **Systems Management:** Accurately and efficiently manage reservations, payments, and guest records.

This section lists the specific, daily tasks that the person will perform to accomplish their key responsibilities. This is where you can get more detailed and tactical.

Front Desk Agent Daily Activities:

- Check in 20-40 guests per shift in a warm and efficient manner.
- Answer phone calls and emails within 2 rings or 2 hours.
- Process wake-up calls, transportation requests, and other special guest needs.
- Balance the cash drawer at the end of each shift with a high degree of accuracy.
- Update guest information and preferences in the property management system.

Writing Tips for 2025: Attracting the Modern Workforce

To attract top talent, especially from the Gen Z and Millennial generations, your job descriptions need to be more than just informative; they need to be engaging and appealing.

- **Use Active Language:** Instead of "Responsible for handling customer complaints," say "Resolve customer concerns quickly, professionally, and with empathy."
- **Be Specific and Quantify:** Instead of "Provide excellent customer service," say "Greet every guest within 30 seconds and use their name whenever possible to create a personalized experience."
- **Include Success Metrics:** Instead of "Maintain a clean work area," say "Keep your work station organized and ready to serve the next guest, consistently passing cleanliness inspections with a score of 95% or higher."
- **Highlight Growth Opportunities:** The modern workforce is highly motivated by opportunities for learning and advancement. Mention the potential career path for the role.
- **Showcase Your Culture:** Use language that reflects your company's values and what it's like to work there.

A Note on Legal Safety

When writing job descriptions, it is crucial to be mindful of legal compliance. Focus on the requirements of the job, not on the personal characteristics of the person you think should do it. Use gender-neutral language, avoid any references to age, and ensure that all requirements are directly related to the ability to perform the essential functions of the job.

ACTIVITY: REWRITE A JOB DESCRIPTION

Time needed: 35 minutes

What You'll Do

Transform a messy job description into a clear, compelling document using the 3-Part Formula. Make it easy to understand and legally sound.

Why This Matters

Bad job descriptions cause problems:

- Wrong people apply
- Legal issues arise
- New hires don't know what's expected
- Performance reviews become arguments

Good job descriptions:

- Attract right candidates
- Set clear expectations
- Protect you legally
- Make performance reviews easy

The 3-Part Formula

Part 1 Purpose - Why this job exists (1-2 sentences)

Part 2 Responsibilities - What they'll actually do (5-8 key tasks)

Part 3 Requirements - Must-haves vs. nice-to-haves (split them clearly)

Instructions

Step 1: Find a Job Description (5 minutes)

Option A: Use a real job description from your workplace

Option B: Find one online (Indeed, LinkedIn, company websites)

Option C: Use this sample bad description:

"Restaurant Server - Responsibilities: Serve food, take orders, clean tables, help customers, work with team, follow health codes, handle money, other duties as assigned. Requirements: High school diploma, 2+ years experience, good communication, team player, flexible schedule."

Copy your chosen description into the worksheet.

Step 2: Identify Problems (5 minutes)

Check your description for these issues:

- ✗ No clear job purpose stated?
- ✗ Vague duties ("other duties as assigned")?
- ✗ Tasks listed without context or priority?
- ✗ Requirements mixed together (no "must-have" vs. "nice-to-have")?
- ✗ Uses jargon or corporate speak?
- ✗ Written in passive voice ("will be responsible for")?
- ✗ Doesn't explain impact or outcomes?
- ✗ Over 2 pages long?

Your score: _____/8 problems found

Top 3 problems to fix:

- ① _____
- ② _____
- ③ _____

Step 3: Rewrite Using the 3-Part Formula (20 minutes)

PART 1: PURPOSE (Write 1-2 sentences)

Answer: Why does this job exist? What problem does it solve?

✗ **Bad:** "The server is responsible for serving guests"

✓ **Good:** "Create exceptional dining experiences that turn first-time guests into regulars. You're the face of our restaurant and the reason people leave 5-star reviews."

Your job purpose:

PART 2: RESPONSIBILITIES (List 5-8 key tasks)

Use this format:

- Start each with action verb (lead, create, manage, handle)
- Be specific about what and how much
- Show the outcome/impact

✗ **Bad:** "Take orders"

✓ **Good:** "Take accurate orders for 15-20 tables per shift using POS system, ensuring dietary restrictions and special requests are communicated to kitchen"

Your responsibilities (write 5-8):

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

PART 3: REQUIREMENTS

Split into two clear sections:

- Must-Haves (Deal-breakers): These are non-negotiable. Candidates need ALL of these.

Example:

- 1+ years in customer-facing role (restaurant, retail, or hospitality)
- Available evenings and weekends
- Food handler certification (or ability to obtain within 30 days)
- Ability to carry trays up to 25 lbs

Your must-haves (3-5 items):

1

2

3

④ **Nice-to-Haves (Preferred but not required):** These give candidates an edge but aren't deal-breakers.

Example:

- Experience with Toast POS system
- Bilingual (English/Spanish/Arabic)
- Wine service knowledge
- Previous fine dining experience

Your nice-to-haves (2-4 items):

① _____

② _____

Step 4: Add Salary & Benefits (3 minutes)

Include this information:

Compensation:

Salary/hourly rate: \$ _____ \$ _____

Tips/commission: (if applicable)

Pay frequency: _____

Key Benefits (list top 3-4):

① _____

② _____

③ _____

Step 5:

Polish Your Description (2 minutes)

Final checks:

- ✓ Purpose clearly states why job exists?
- ✓ Each responsibility starts with action verb?
- ✓ Must-haves separated from nice-to-haves?
- ✓ Specific numbers/metrics included?
- ✓ Written in active voice ("you will" not "will be responsible for")?
- ✓ No jargon or vague phrases?
- ✓ Under 1.5 pages?
- ✓ Salary range included?

Before & After Comparison

Read both versions. Which would YOU want to apply to?

Before:

- ☐ Clear job purpose? Yes / No
- ☐ Specific responsibilities? Yes / No
- ☐ Readable in under 2 minutes? Yes / No

After:

- ☐ Clear job purpose? Yes / No
- ☐ Specific responsibilities? Yes / No
- ☐ Readable in under 2 minutes? Yes / No

Common Mistakes

- ✗ "Other duties as assigned" (too vague)
- ✓ Be specific or remove it

- ✗ "Must be team player" (everyone says this)
- ✓ "Collaborate with 5-person kitchen team during 200+ cover dinner service"

- ✗ Lists 15+ requirements
- ✓ 3-5 must-haves only

- ✗ "Competitive salary" (meaningless)
- ✓ "\$15-\$18/hour plus tips averaging \$150-\$200 per shift"

Submit Your Work

- ①

Original "before" job description
- ②

Problem diagnosis (3 problems identified)
- ③

Complete rewritten description with all 3 parts
- ④

Salary and benefits section
- ⑤

Before/after comparison answers