



Know the Difference: *Job Descriptions vs. Job Announcements*

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Written by Catherine Mattice Zundel – 3/19/19

When I work with organizations to create or update their performance management systems, I start by asking to see their job descriptions. What I get in return is a mixture of job announcements and descriptions, unclear or incomplete descriptions, or an email saying that they don't have any – yikes!

Job descriptions *hold employees accountable for their performance and help protect the organization from risk*. They essentially act as a contract between the employer and the employee, as they lay out tasks, responsibilities, physical requirements, classification and other important information needed to defend any overtime exemptions or to assist in conversations about accommodations.

From those tasks and responsibilities emerge expectations and core competencies – that managers must articulate and enforce to drive employee performance. Without job descriptions managers can't possibly communicate expectations effectively, and are left struggling to discuss areas in need of improvement.

Also keep in mind that job descriptions are fluid and may change as the position evolves and as the person in that position grows. They should be openly discussed at one-on-one's and during performance conversations when needed.

Job announcements are different documents entirely. They are marketing assets, meant to *attract viable candidates*. *Marketing is meant to attract customers, and job announcements are meant to attract candidates.*

Announcements should include a description of the position, key qualifications and information about the organization's culture. Also share why this position is important to the organization's success.

Don't get too caught up in sharing every last detail of the job, save that for the interview. Your announcement should give people enough information to apply, and ensure you're getting the right candidates, but people don't need to know that the executive assistant job will require some filing, for example.

Also think about how the announcement can speak to your culture. If your culture is fun, then one of the responsibilities for your sales manager could be, "Help the sales team kick even more butt than they already are." If your culture is more straight-laced, you might try, "Coach our stellar sales team into even greater success."

If you don't have job descriptions or are treating your job announcements like job descriptions, it's time change that. Seriously, put it at the top of your to do list.



About Catherine Mattice Zundel

Catherine Mattice Zundel, MA, SPHR, SHRM-SCP is President of consulting and training firm, Civility Partners, and has been successfully providing programs in workplace bullying and building positive workplaces since 2007. . Her clients include Fortune 500's, the military, several universities and hospitals, government agencies, small businesses and nonprofits. She has published in a variety of trade magazines and has appeared several times on NPR, FOX, NBC, and ABC as an expert, as well as in USA Today, Inc Magazine, Huffington Post, Entrepreneur Magazine, and more. Catherine is Past-President of the Association for Talent Development (ATD), San Diego Chapter and teaches at National University. In his book foreword, Ken Blanchard called her book, *BACK OFF! Your Kick-Ass Guide to Ending Bullying at Work*, "the most comprehensive and valuable handbook on the topic." She recently released a second book entitled, *SEEKING CIVILITY: How Leaders, Managers and HR Can Create a Workplace Free of Bullying*.

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