

Are your job descriptions working for you?

What does an employment agreement look like?

An employment agreement is a legal document that contains the 'terms and conditions' of your employment.

Your employment agreement must include:

- **Employer & Employee** – your name and your employer as parties to the employment agreement
- **Position** – the position which you are employed in (eg shop assistant)
- **Duties** – what type of work you will be required to do as part of your job (eg customer service, point of sale, keeping the shop and items tidy)
- **Place of Work** – where you will be required to work
- **Working Hours** – what hours you will be required to work. If you change your working hours, you and your employer should update your employment agreement with the new hours.
- **Types of Pay** – how and what you will be paid for your work,

Department of Labor

Clear Context

Does every individual should know clearly where they fit in, how they contribute and the consequences of poor performance?

- Do your job descriptions have a 1 -2 sentence statement of purpose that clearly shows how the job supports the organisation's vision/mission and key strategies?
- Do they describe relationships with others, including reporting relationships, internally and externally?

Clear role boundaries

Are there conflicts between people in different roles?

- Is there is clarity and logic in the way work is divided and coordinated between functions and departments ?
- Are clear boundaries are provided in job descriptions where accountabilities and tasks may overlap with others ?
- Does the job description provide guidance on decision and budget/spending authority?

Clear job role expectations

Would staff describe their role exactly as their manager would?

- Are the key accountabilities of the position clearly shown as 3-6 main headings?
- For each accountability are there clear and measurable performance standards?
 - In routine roles for key tasks and duties
 - In senior roles for expected results

Flexibility

A focus on outcomes gives much greater flexibility and more objective measurability than just a task list.

- Does the job description clearly identify expected outcomes for the organization ?

Capability Requirements

The capabilities needed to meet the expectations are described, taking into account the role context, accountabilities and tasks, scope and work environment.

- Does the job description outline minimum requirements, not a (potentially expensive) wish list?
- Do Capability requirements include;
 - Education and Qualification requirements (if any)
 - Job specific training if applicable
 - Industry, functional or leadership experience as appropriate
 - Key knowledge and skills
 - Other relevant and measurable personal attributes – e.g. attention to detail

Information balance

Many job descriptions are multi page dense documents that are uninviting to read – at the other extreme many are too brief or too vague.

- Are your Job descriptions kept to 3 pages maximum?
- Is the page layout clear and easily read?
- Do the Job descriptions encapsulate succinctly the role and its scope?

Using the job descriptions

Great job descriptions are worthless if they are out of sight and out of mind in a filing system.

- Can every individual accurately and spontaneously explain the key purpose of their role?
- Do managers and staff have regular performance conversations that focus on job accountabilities?
- Do staff and managers together regularly update job requirements as the work changes and evolves?

If you couldn't answer all these questions positively you are in the company of most organisations!

Attention to your job descriptions and the way you use them will help you align staff effort, manage individual performance more effectively, boost productivity and avoid the risk of costly employment relations disputes.

The Centranum Talent Management platform provides managers with a user friendly Job Description Management module. Job Descriptions are living documents that clearly communicate current expectations and are easily updated as required.

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