**Elements of Effective Job Descriptions**

(Updated: April 16, 2017)

Most companies treat job descriptions as a bureaucratic exercise. They include the position's job title and a bullet point list of the required tasks.

**Every single hire in a new venture / small business is *critical!***

**"Imagine a startup as a rocket that uses 90% of its fuel just to take off. Each employee us a part of the fuel that helps the rocket escape gravity. If you are not elevating the rocket, then you are dragging it down . . . Your startup will grow as much as your employees grow. Any one of them can have as much impact on your culture as the CEO."**

**Talent Culture blog: talentculture.com**

Because every single hire by a new venture (or a small business) is so important, entrepreneurs don't have the luxury to make job descriptions routine paperwork. ***To make sure the company gets the maximum benefit from every person hired, a job description must clearly relate how this job helps the team achieve the company's overall vision and goals.***

An effective job description for a new venture serves three purposes:

1. provide a clear indication of how the job contributes to the overall company vision;
2. provide a clear, detailed indication of the priority responsibilities of the position; and
3. be such a galvanizing and appealing document it serves as a recruiting tool. Job applicants see the job description and say to themselves: "Wow - *I want to work at that company!"*

The six elements of an effective job description are:

1. Job objectives / contribution to company vision - the most important part of the job description, describing how this individual will make an important contribution to achieving the company's vision;

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1. Job objectives / contribution to company vision
2. Responsibilities (in priority order)
3. Indications of top performance
4. Reporting relationships
5. Required behaviors
6. Qualifications
7. Responsibilities (in priority order) - the traditional purpose of a job description, providing clear and specific direction on the tasks associated with the position;
8. Indications of to performance - the specific outcomes this position should deliver so the company can achieve its vision and meet its goals;
9. Reporting relationships - not only indicating who this position reports to, but also indicating who this position will serve inside and outside the company;
10. Required behaviors - the critical behaviors the person in this position must demonstrate, in order to fit into the company culture and succeed as a team member;
11. Qualifications - the education and experience a person needs to be considered for this position.

Job descriptions don't have to be full of long paragraphs, or even very long. A few key bullet points can make a job description both motivating *and* concise.

The next two pages shows an actual example - that of a Sales Regional Manager - of a concise, motivating job description.

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| **Job Description: Regional Sales Manager for *Superior Energy Efficiency Company (SEEC)*** | | | | | |
| Job Title | Regional Sales Manager | Location | Baltimore, MD | Last Updated: | July, 2017 |
| Job Objectives (Contribution to Company Vision) | To drive the sales growth of *SEEC* by:   1. recruiting, developing and motivating high-energy sales representatives capable of: a) securing new accounts; b) achieving sales goals; and c) creating complete customer satisfaction; 2. providing new product development input to Engineering, to make sure our energy efficiency services continue to be world class; 3. collaborating with other team leaders to make our company culture a competitive advantage, especially in terms of recruiting talented new team members. | | | | |
| Responsibilities (in priority order) | Team Selling Performance   * continuously upgrade sales rep performance through feedback, coaching, training, rewards, performance-based terminations and recruitment / new hiring * train sales reps in all relevant facets of the job (technology understanding, deal formulation/development, selling skills, customer service skills, ethics, time management, reporting) * establish sales and customer service goals that motivate sales reps and achieve company financial goals * maintain personal relationships with the largest accounts * create sales plans for each target market the company is pursuing * provide management reports on the status and outcome of all sales opportunities * participate in the strategic planning process, providing bottom-up sales targets and new business opportunities * evaluate and document sales rep performance. Recognize and reward top performers. Act to separate below average performers from the company, to be replaced by new BDMs   Product Development Input   * monitor competitors to determine when they have introduced competitive energy efficiency services * collaborate with customers to determine what they want in terms of future energy efficiency services * maintain effective relations with Engineering to provide continuous input into new product development   Corporate Culture   * work with the leadership team to maintain a company culture that draws and retains top performers, adding joy to their lives while helping them achieve their career objectives * work with team members to maintain a culture that recognizes performance, empowers front line team members, promotes work / life balance, puts customers first and includes fun as a job objective | | | | |
| Indications of Top Performance | SCEE meets or exceeds its revenue and profit growth goals  Sales reps have clear goals and provide weekly updates on where they stand versus achieving their goals  Top-performing sales reps regularly receive corporate recognition and increased compensation  There is "beneficial turnover" where top performers are retained and rewarded; below-average performers coached and improved; low-performers transitioned out of the company in favor of new, high-potential hires  Team leaders throughout the company regularly provide positive peer feedback in peer evaluation surveys | | | | |
| Reporting Relationships | Reports to the SVP - Marketing and Sales.  Collaborates with New Product Development Engineers, the Chief Financial Officer, Customer Service Manager  Serves sales reps and customer service reps | | | | |
| Required Behaviors | ***Driving and motivating, confident and positive, energetic and enthusiastic, extremely focused, effectively collaborative – these are the behaviors that are essential for the Regional Sales Manager.***  The Regional Sales Manager must be ***driving and motivating*** at all times:   1. relentlessly enhancing the quality and effectiveness of sales reps through continuous coaching; 2. providing constant supportive and constructively critical feedback to sales reps that help them continuously and measurably improve their performance; 3. reviewing the reports provided by BDMs to make sure they are making acceptable progress versus their goals on developing opportunities, pursuing opportunities and winning new projects; 4. providing continuous feedback to Engineering (product development) and Customer Service (complete customer satisfaction); and 5. making sure the company appropriately rewards (through recognition and compensation) high performing sales reps.   In any business as intense as ours, there is always the possibility that stress might arise during the highly competitive sales process.  Therefore, the Regional Sales Manager must be able to motivate sales reps to maximum productivity and success while maintaining a ***confident and positive*** outlook.  The Regional Sales Manager must be ***energetic and enthusiastic***, leading by example in terms of positive attitude, high levels of effort and multi-tasking. The best way to make sure sales reps stay positive and high performing is for the Regional Sales Manager to maintain an upbeat and enthusiastic demeanor.  The Regional Sales Manager must be ***extremely focused***. Every day is a day when a new opportunity can be uncovered, when a current opportunity can be pushed forward, when a pending sale can become a closed sale. The Regional Sales Manager provides the energy, push and focus that keeps sales reps moving forward to resolution on all of their sales and prospecting activities.  Finally, the Regional Sales Manager must be ***effectively collaborative***. SEEC is an organization that stresses teamwork. The Regional Sales Manager must be able to be a forceful and effective leader of his / her team, while remaining at all times part of a smooth working leadership team. | | | | |
| Qualifications | Four to eight years of excellent performance as a sales rep  Experience as a sales manager, or clear promise of being able to operate as a motivating sales leader  Experience in the energy efficiency market, or a working knowledge of SEEC's markets, technology and competitors  An Associates degree or Technical Diploma from a community or technical college, or a BA / BS university degree | | | | |