DECODING A JOB DESCRIPTION

A job description is a general explanation that summarizes the essential tasks, responsibilities, skills, qualifications and requirements for a specific and available position for which an organization is trying to fill. Essentially, job descriptions explain the type of work expected from an individual in a specific role and should provide enough information to help determine if a candidate is qualified for the position.

Key Sections

Job descriptions are organized into different sections that provide key information on what the employer is looking for in a candidate. You can use this information as a "cheat sheet" to help you update your résumé and write your cover letter, as well as prepare for interviews. Below are some of the most common sections in a job description.

TITLE OR POSITION NAME

A short description of the role that reflects the purpose, content, and scope of the position, and is consistent with other job titles of similar roles.

POSTING OR OPEN DATE

The date for when the posting became available, which is important as it will tell you how long the position has been available to accept applications. If you notice the posting has been available for several months, you may want to consider doing some more research to make sure it's still available (the last thing you want to do is put a lot of time and effort into your application materials only to discover that it's no longer available).

DESCRIPTION OR SUMMARY

The description provides an overview of the position and its overarching function within the department, unit and/ or the organization. This will give an idea of how the role might interreact with key constituencies, as well as other offices within the company.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section details the responsibilities expected of a person in the position. Duties are usually listed in order of importance and/or frequency in which they are performed (i.e., most important or most frequent duties listed first). This section should clearly outline the major tasks an individual in this role will perform. This section will also be where to find "keywords" and "action verbs" that you'll want to incorporate in your résumé and cover letter.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

While the Duties/Responsibilities section detail what the person in the role will do, the Qualifications section specifies which skills or abilities are important for someone to learn to be successful in the role. Employers often explain the qualifications that are necessary (Minimum Qualifications) and list those that are preferred (Preferred/ Desired Qualifications).

- ▶ **Minimum Qualifications** - *details the minimum level of qualifications of an individual to be productive and successful in the role and lists the required level of job knowledge*
    - ▷ **Examples**: *bachelor's degree and minimum of one-year professional experience; knowledge and experience in marketing; ability to effectively communicate information and ideas in writing*
- ▶ **Preferred Qualifications** - *an expanded list of "nice to have" but not essential qualifications that can be used to further determine a candidate's ability to be successful in the role*
    - ▷ **Examples**: *knowledge and experience using the Adobe Creative Suite; data-driven, including working knowledge of data analytic tools; one year of management experience*

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Job Title: Marketing Specialist
Open Date: 07/25/2019
Department: Marketing Outreach
Reports to: Marketing Director

Description:

Big Red, Inc., located in Granville, Ohio creates and implements marketing strategies, conducts extensive market research to promote and build relationships with Denison University and the surrounding communities. Big Red is seeking a Marketing Specialist to oversee and execute the marketing strategies of the company and provide creative input to the organization.

Responsibilities:

- Build and manage the company's social media profiles and presence, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and additional channels that may be deemed relevant, and know how platforms are best deployed in relevant scenarios
- Develop, update and maintain various sections of the department's website, including the creation of engaging and informative content
- Observe and engage in relevant social discussions about our company, competitors, and/or industry, both from existing leads and customers, as well as from new audiences
- Coordinate, compile and deliver compelling email campaigns, including monthly digital newsletters
- Assist in analyzing marketing data (campaign results, email open and click rates, website traffic, etc.) to help shape future marketing strategies
- Collaborate with prominent members of the company, including directors and other marketing professionals to coordinate brand awareness and marketing efforts
- Explore innovative ways to engage and identify new social networks to reach our target audiences and bring new ideas for content creation to the team

Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree, preferably in marketing, communications, public relations, or similar field with at least one to two years relevant experience
- Proven knowledge and experience in marketing
- Ability to effectively communicate information and ideas to others through digital and print publications, emails and public speaking
- Able to analyze information and propose unique solutions to overcome problems
- Capable of working independently and as part of a team
- Experience planning and leading initiatives
- Working knowledge of market research, surveys and analyzing data
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office products, marketing software (CRM) and applications (web analytics)
- Prior experience working with Adobe Creative Cloud Suite (Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign) a plus

Additional Information:

Submit a résumé, cover letter and list of at least two professional references as a single PDF attachment to the job posting in Handshake.

Other Sections of a Job Descriptions

It's important that you read job descriptions very carefully, as each posting will be different, varying in length and detailed information. Some job descriptions may even have other sections that provide additional information.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, if you need any clarification about the position or application, or if you experience any issues while submitting your application, this is whom you should contact.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

This section may be excluded or left blank but could include a salary range, whether the position is exempt or non-exempt (eligible for overtime), salaried or hourly (paid by the hour), and/or list benefits (e.g., healthcare coverage).

WORK SCHEDULE

Sometimes included in the summary or responsibilities sections, the work schedule section details the days and number of hours per week you should expect to work and could include an anticipated start date.

COMPANY INFORMATION (ABOUT THE COMPANY)

Most job descriptions include a section with details about the organization, including the mission statement, values, organizational goals, and an explanation of their business philosophy. Reading and understanding about the organization can assist you in deciding if it will be a good match for you, as well as help you get a sense of the work environment and company culture.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This might be specific instructions on how to format your application (e.g., all documents should be combined into a single PDF), where or how to submit your application (e.g., apply through the company's website), important dates or deadlines, or other materials that need to be submitted with your application (e.g., list of references).

Tips & Next Steps

It's important you further research the organization in order to decide if the opportunity is the best fit for you. Here are some tips to help with your decision, and to ensure you submit a strong application.

- ► Tailor your résumé and write your cover letter so they match what they're looking for in a candidate
    - ▷ Incorporate some of the keywords and action verbs that are listed in the job description
- ► Connect with recent Denison grads in Wisr and LinkedIn to receive helpful advice
- ► Familiarize yourself with titles and keywords of the industry to help when reading through job postings
    - ▷ You may learn that Marketing Assistant, Marketing Coordinator, and Marketing Specialist might be different titles for very similar roles
- ► When searching opportunities on job sites, narrow the results using filters like:
    - ▷ Entry-level positions
    - ▷ Education level
    - ▷ Years of experience/Experience level
- ► Read industry news articles to keep current on market trends and job outlooks
- ► Remember, you don't need to feel confident about every responsibility, or meet every qualification in order to apply
    - ▷ If you meet 100% of the qualifications, you may be over-qualified for the position
- ► Remember, reading job descriptions will get easier and faster as you continue to apply