



How to Write a Job Description That Delivers High-Performing Manufacturing Candidates

By Rhys Williams Recruitment Trouble Shooter and M.D. of Sigma Recruitment

Recruitment in our industry can be challenging. It takes a well thought through and planned strategy, thorough screening, and the use of careful analysis to get it right.

Being in the grip of a skills short market as we are in this sector, a clear and specific job description is imperative if you want to attract the right candidates to your organisation.

As is often quoted, people grow organisations, not products and services; therefore getting your talent acquisition process mapped out with accurate job descriptions that identify the criteria of the candidate you are looking for is vital.

Job descriptions have been around since the invention of the career. However, the importance of a job description from a “big-picture” perspective is often overlooked. Many HR professionals and hiring managers put off updating or developing job descriptions because they simply don’t understand how valuable they can be.

The truth is, a great job description aligns people with the goals and vision of a company. They help to define the structure of an organisation, determine how talent needs will be met, and identify gaps in the responsibilities of different roles.

From a strategic perspective, these critical documents can help you to understand what level of functional experience is needed for any given job, and how each role fits within the hierarchy of your company.

From a tactical viewpoint, job descriptions work as an essential guide in all aspects of the employment lifecycle in the sector - from hiring and onboarding practices to setting salaries and managing performance.

When written correctly, a job description is a communication tool that solidifies corporate culture and creates value for employers and candidates alike.

This report is based on our own experience of what is working now when it comes to recruiting high performing employees in the manufacturing sector.

Best regards,
Rhys Williams



Do You Need a Job Description?

Yes, absolutely.

Successful managers in any industry, understand that hiring the right people to work for you can either make or break your business. At the same time, a poor hiring decision could lead to a wasted budget, **higher turnover**, and an unhappy team.

From an employers perspective, job descriptions provide the benefit of establishing exactly what might be expected from future and current employees. The outline for your job description can double as a performance review, ensuring that your team members continue to excel consistently in their roles.

For applicants, job descriptions provide guidelines to help them determine whether this role is right for them. Applicants reviewing a job description will receive an insight into what might be expected of them, and which tasks they'll need to complete in the workplace. Throughout their career, a job description reminds your employees of the duties they're responsible for when it comes to playing their part in the growth of the organisation.

An effective job description:

- Serves as a reference for both employers and employees.
- Communicates the expectations of the role to both employers and candidates.
- Helps with succession planning.
- Assists with employee satisfaction by giving a candidate an idea of what to expect.
- Ensures that brands access the skills and talent they need to fill corporate gaps.
- Functions as inspiration for the development of interview questions.
- Offers a basis for salary increases, goal setting, and growth paths.
- Serves as legal documentation in the event of any employment or performance issues.

While organisations aren't legally required to write job descriptions, the benefits of taking the initiative are hard to argue against. While an effectively developed employee job description can work as a roadmap to organisational success, contributing to people-planning solutions, training and even maintaining satisfaction, a poor employee description can damage a brand.

A well written and considered job description retains and motivates the best talent by aligning business goals with employee expectations. Without the right job description, all you end up with is workplace confusion, problematic internal communication, and a workforce that isn't sure what's expected of them.

Writing a Job Description: What Does Your Organisation Need?

Writing job descriptions may seem like an onerous task, but it's not just the time commitment that can lead to avoidance from hiring managers or HR. Some companies fail to write compelling job descriptions simply because they're not sure exactly what they want from their candidates.

With that in mind, it's vital to make sure that you thoroughly assess the needs of your company and what your criteria will be before you even start putting pen to paper ahead of working with your **specialist recruiter**.

To begin writing the right job description, make sure you ask yourself the following questions:

What Does the Business Need?

Rather than trying to fill the current glaring gaps in your business by searching for a specific engineer or project manager; a good way to refine your search is to think about what your organisation needs, both now and in the next 3-5 years to hit your growth objectives.

Consider the different talent or skill sets that you will want to introduce into your company, then think about which roles will need both role profiles and job descriptions.

Remember: Think carefully about what you want to achieve with your new hire.

If possible, write a list of the most critical tasks that need to be completed, which aren't currently getting the degree of attention they require or are causing delivery issues. Organise that list according to a hierarchy of most, to least necessary.

Is This an Established Role? Alternatively, Something New?

Sometimes, the unique needs of your business will be so niche that you won't be able to describe them using a pre-existing job title. On the other hand, you might need to create a "hybrid" job role that combines skill sets from two inter-connecting areas.

If designing a new role from scratch isn't realistic, then you may have to think about some alternatives. For instance, can you give some of your existing employee's extra responsibilities so that you can write a more specific job description for your new staff member? Alternatively, could you consider hiring two people instead of one to fulfil different roles?

The Common Mistakes to Avoid with Your Job Descriptions

Some hiring managers and business owners can start to feel as though if they've read one job description, then they've read them all. This is because there are many descriptions that are rushed, vague and anything but specific and detailed.

A job description is a key tool when it comes to reaching the right candidates for your position. If your descriptions are outdated, recycled, or you haven't sought the input of your specialist recruiter, then you won't get many hidden candidates applying for your role as your recruiter will struggle to connect the two.

Before you start, here are a few classic mistakes to avoid.



Mistake 1: A Confusing Job Title

Because you know what you mean when you say you want a “production ninja”, this doesn’t mean the rest of the world understands you. Many brands feel the need to rebrand job descriptions to make them sound more appealing. However, making your job titles as transparent and straightforward as possible will go a long way towards making sure you recruit the right candidate for the job who then goes on to perform well in the role.

Mistake 2: Too Much Industry Jargon

Many manufacturing organisations find that, after enough time in the industry, their company begins to create a language all its own. While this might be fine for people inside your “inner circle”, be careful not to use corporate jargon when writing a job description. Too many technical terms will create confusion and make the job description feel busy and unclear.

Mistake 3: Missing or Inaccurate Information

No matter how you choose to make your job description stand out from the crowd, it’s essential to ensure that you’re always informative. The last thing you want to hear from a new candidate on the production line is “That’s not in my job description”.

Before you begin writing, think about which specific skill sets or job functions are critical to your new role. Let your **manufacturing recruitment** consultant know which skills are a must-have (in other words don’t send me a CV if they haven’t got this skill) and which are nice to have, (if they have that too, it’s great though I will still see them anyway).

Mistake 4: Setting Unrealistic Expectations

While most organisations will be looking for a candidate that surpasses all their expectations, that doesn't mean that you should be unrealistic. Looking for someone who ticks every single criterion you can think of is unrealistic.

In today's market, the chances are that you'll have to make a few compromises when it comes to finding you're the specific candidate who can and will do the job. Prioritise the requirements that you're looking for, and make sure that you focus on those that are most crucial to the role you need to fill.

Mistake 5: Going Too Long, or Too Short

There's a fine line to walk between an informative, exciting, and helpful job description, and one that contains far too much information. "Brevity is the soul of wit", but you also need to make sure that you're not missing out any essential information while you're trying to keep your description concise.

The easiest way to make sure that your description is neither too long nor too short is to edit it when you're done writing. Cut out anything unnecessary, and keep all the vital parts. Where possible, using bullet points could be your saving grace. This is where an **experienced manufacturing recruiting partner can help.**

They will have viewed potentially thousands of job descriptions and more importantly, be aware of the ones that worked and those that didn't.

Mistake 6: Being Too Outdated

While re-posting the same description from last year might seem like a useful way to save time, the truth is that it's not the best way to get your hands on the right candidates. Update the language you used, inject some personality that better represents your brand, and refine the requirements and responsibilities section.

Starting with a template is fine, but it's key to make sure that you keep up-to-date, and let your company tone of voice come through in your final description.

Job Description Sections to Cover

Ultimately, this is a critical document and a guideline for every position in your company. A good description can:

- Outline the competencies and skills required for the role.
- Define the position of the role within the business hierarchy.
- Act as the basis for an employment contract.
- Provide a valuable tool for performance management.

While the specific nature of the role you're hiring for will determine some of the critical elements of your job description, some of the universal features to include in any job description include:

1. The Job Title

After the geographical location, a job title is the first thing that you need to be precise. Without a good job title, you'll struggle to attract the proper attention for your chosen position.

Remember, your title should be:

- Self-explanatory, and accurate enough for your candidates to understand.
- Capable of accurately reflecting the nature of the position and the duties to be performed.
- Non-exaggerative, and free of any age or gender implications.
- Connected with the overall hierarchy of the business.

2. Duties

It should also contain a comprehensive list of all the responsibilities and duties associated with the role, as well as how much skill is required to complete each task. You can represent the time taken to each task with a percentage (such as technical documentation production 25%). Remember, descriptions of duties should only be a couple of sentences long and based on specific outcomes. For instance: "You will complete weekly hands-on testing and fault finding in company products".

3. Competencies and Skills

Competencies and skills within this role should be listed in separate areas from each other, as they're different things. While skills are activities that the candidate can perform according to what they might have learned in the past, competencies are the attributes or traits that you expect the candidates to show in their role. For instance, a skill might be the ability to lead the development and creation of products.

On the other hand, a competency might be a welcoming personality. While you can teach someone to improve their product development skills, a winning personality is more of an inherent part of what makes someone unique. Today, competency-based job interviews are becoming increasingly common in the search for the ideal applicants.



4. Relationships

This is an area that's frequently forgotten in many job descriptions, but one that shouldn't be taken for granted. Outlining the working relationships and reporting lines that are associated with a specific role will help your candidate to understand who they will be reporting to, and who will report to them. This isn't only essential from a compliance perspective, but it will also give an insight into the hierarchal structure of your business. As many manufacturing companies have large workforces, it is important to outline the employee structure early on for clarity.

Working relationships represent the people and departments your ideal candidate will need to work with. You could consider using an organisational chart to describe the relationships most essential to a specific role. Talk to your recruitment partner if you need help with this.

5. Salary

Finally, the salary range should be stated clearly. Instead of giving a specific salary to your chosen position, you'll need to select a salary "range" that you can add to the description that's competitive regarding similar posts. This range will allow for variations based on experience and education.

There's a good chance that your salary range will need to be updated with time, as pay scales and preferences continue to change in the manufacturing industry.

In today's job market additional benefits like gym memberships, work at home days, compassionate leave, the ability to be given time off to carry out work in a favourite charity, and pension contributions can all swing a candidate's decision.

What Candidates Are Looking For In Job Descriptions Today

Often, writing a job description isn't only about knowing which sections you "should" cover, but also recognising the things that your candidates want to know. Writing job descriptions which candidates can engage with is a great way to attract better quality applicants.

Studies have found that describing exactly what benefits the employer can offer its employees, rather than simply addressing the things that employers need from their applicants, can help to increase the number of applications.

Unfortunately, there's no one-size-fits-all approach to the best job description. However, if you're dipping your feet into a very specific manufacturing talent pool, then you're going to have to compete against a range of other companies looking for the same skills as you. With that in mind, it's worth making sure that your job description is attractive enough to make you competitive in the eyes of applicants. Some of the key things that most candidates look for include:

1. Attention to Detail

You know exactly what you want from a new production, engineering or project management candidate, but it's essential to make sure that your applicants know what you're looking for too. Be clear and concise.

Remember to outline your minimum requirements for things like certifications, years of experience, skills, and more.

2. Critical Benefits

When it comes to making your role stand out, remember that no benefit is too small to highlight. Look for ways to demonstrate to new candidates that you value your employees. For instance, mention the different team building events that you take part in, or any free meals that might be provided when employees are on shift. Consider whether you can offer schedules that are flexible enough to suit families and students, and outline any opportunities that you provide in terms of training and development.

3. Simple Applications

As well as the job description and subsequent advert, make sure that the application process for the job seeker is not overly complicated.

While you want to make sure that you're only getting the best possible candidates for your role, that shouldn't mean that applying for your position feels like a test. **Ask your specialist recruitment agency how you can simplify the process.**

What If...?

Successful businesses today understand the value of making the right decisions for their hiring needs. Whatever the reason might be for offering a job to the wrong person, you will find that incorrect hires can be an expensive error.

Without the right job description, you can't hire the right people, and a wrong hire leads to astronomical costs for companies. An estimated **80% of all employee turnover** comes down to bad hiring decisions. On top of that, the cost of replacing employees is one-fifth of their average salary. The costs quickly add up; don't they.

Writing the best job description, and making the right hire is crucial to keeping a company successful. Failing to dedicate enough time and effort to your descriptions can result in:

Increased Productivity Costs

While you and other managers in your company are wasting time trying to train someone new or manage conflicts between your new hire and your existing staff, your plant starts to suffer. All that time spent managing an incorrect hire drains productivity. In a recent rec report **39% of the chief financial officers surveyed** in one study found that bad hires cost them productivity, while 11% said that poor hires cost them sales.

Financial Costs

When you hire the wrong person, you're not only paying a salary to someone who isn't performing according to your expectations, but you're also paying for the cost of additional training too. If you end up firing your new employee after all your hard work, you might also have to manage severance pay, alongside the expenses incurred when you start searching for their replacement. Today, most HR professionals consider a bad hire to be the equivalent to a loss of thousands of pounds.

Employee Satisfaction Costs

When you're spending all your time and budget on correcting the mistakes that come with hiring the wrong person, or failing to attract the right one, the remainder of your team might become disengaged and dissatisfied. It's challenging to stay upbeat and happy in your role when one specific team member is getting all the help and attention. 95% of the financial executives surveyed in the study we mentioned above said that a bad hire damaged the morale of the team. If your corporate culture suffers, your entire company suffers along with it.

Reputation Costs

Finally, in today's highly-digital and transparent world, job seekers are always connected to a stream of information. In other words, they can easily see when something isn't working in your

company. If they notice that your employee culture is suffering, or that you're not getting things done correctly because of a bad hire, they'll be able to link that back to your unwillingness to write the correct job description in the first place.

Rather than losing all the money and time associated with hiring the wrong person, the next time you need to recruit, make sure that you take your time to write a description that attracts the right people.

Finally....

The humble job description is easy to overlook. For some hiring managers and executives, it's easy to consider this document to be nothing more than a shopping list when it comes to finding the right hire for your organisation.

If you struggle to write job descriptions on your own, then go to your **specialist recruitment agency** for help, or bring different members of your team together to brainstorm ideas. While a great job description will always be a significant investment in time and effort, it's one that easily, and quickly pays off. After all, hiring the wrong person is costly, and a great job description is the first step to finding the candidate you want.

Best regards,

Rhys Williams

Established in 2005 – Sigma Recruitment have recruited for some of the largest and most successful manufacturing companies in South Wales and the South West, including many blue-chip global organisations.

Our experienced team of consultants have a wealth of recruitment experience in manufacturing including; automotive, life science, aerospace, electronics, packaging, FMCG, power generation, plastics and many other manufacturing sectors.

We focus on recruitment for the following skills:

- Technical / Engineering
- Purchasing / Logistics
- Scientific
- Management
- Graduates

Why Choose Sigma Recruitment?

Sigma Recruitment has one of the largest and most comprehensive recruitment candidate databases in the area. In addition to this, we offer FREE advertising with most of the UK's leading job boards, including Totaljobs, Jobsite, CV Library, JobsinWales and additional industry-related boards.

We are therefore able to provide clients with an outstanding selection of candidates across a wide range of skill sets. Sigma Recruitment has a thirteen-year proven track record of delivering the right candidates, at the right time and a cost-effective price.

To speak with one of our experienced manufacturing recruitment consultants call us on **02920 450 100** or email us on **info@sigmarecruitment.co.uk**