**Job Descriptions FAQ**

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is a job description?**   
   A job description is your organization’s statement of what an employee in a specific job does, how they do it, under what conditions they must work and why the job is done.  They will also include information such as the type of employment (exempt/non-exempt), the position to which it reports, etc.

1. **Why should my company be concerned about job descriptions?**Job descriptions are essential to the following organizational responsibilities:

* Recruiting
* Compensation
* Employee orientation
* Disability accommodations (must list essential requirements of a job in order to determine a reasonable accommodation)
* Labor relations
* Safety and health
* Career development
* Training
* Employee development
* Performance management
* Benchmarking

1. **How do I write a job description?**There are several ways job descriptions can be constructed – the details of the job can be obtained through:

* Job Shadowing – complete audits by shadowing employees and documenting their day-to-day tasks.
* Job Analysis Questionnaire – ask employees specific questions about how they perform their job. Further, you could ask employees to create log sheets for a period where they document their daily tasks.
* Interviews – interview employees, clients, supervisors or managers, co-workers and any other individual who interacts with the employee whose position is having a job description written.
* Doing all the above would result in a very thorough analysis of a job, generating a job description that is as accurate as possible.

1. **What job description policies and practices should my organization have?**

* Job descriptions should be reviewed annually if possible since positions change over time.
* Your organization may create a policy where a certain percentage of jobs are evaluated annually.
* Your compensation policies may reference job descriptions and pay grades.

1. **What kinds of resources are available?**

* A job description template is available through Catapult.
* Catapult has experts readily available to help write job descriptions or to lend guidance on the process.   Sample job descriptions are available at most of the major job posting sites (Monster and LinkedIn offer good resources).  Since neither of these sites provide information on work environment or physical requirements, you should also look at O\*NET (onetonline.org) to see if you need additional detail.  Industry organizations may also have samples or templates available – keep in mind that each job at each company is unique and copying a job description may not provide you with an accurate portrayal of the job in your organization.
* Salary surveys often provide information about jobs that may be relevant to your organization. They are useful for benchmarking not only pay rates but also major job duties.
* The Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook also describes a variety of duties related to most job types (<http://www.bls.gov/OCO/>)