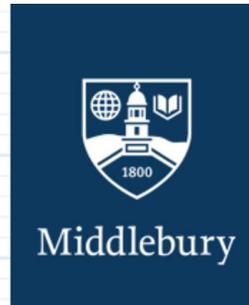


Leadership Insights



Job Descriptions: A New Approach

In this Leadership Insights we will discuss:

- [Job Descriptions: What Purpose Do They Serve?](#)
- [Our new Approach to Job Descriptions](#)
- [How Do Job Descriptions Tie to People Experience?](#)

Job Descriptions: What Purpose Do They Serve?

Job descriptions help employees understand what is expected of them and how their work contributes to the department and Middlebury as a whole. Job descriptions highlight the primary purpose of a position and essential functions of a position. Job descriptions also outline necessary prerequisites needed to be successful in the position (skills, abilities, education, or experience). Job descriptions should outline physical demands or working conditions. Not only do job descriptions outline the core responsibilities of the position, but they are also used to evaluate the position against to? market data to place the position in our compensation structure.

NOTE: The job description is an official document, therefore it should be written in appropriate language. Personal characteristics such as age, gender, race, religion, should never be used to define a position.

Our new Approach to Job Descriptions

Moving forward, job descriptions will be reviewed and/or updated twice a year in conjunction with our semi-annual position request process.

We are asking not for a summary of the overall role but for leaders to identify the primary purpose of the role: the most important aspect of the position. We recognize that there is rarely a position that doesn't perform duties outside of its primary purpose but by limiting the

information that can be provided about the position and asking managers to identify the primary purpose of a position, we are better able to find comparable positions in the market.

Core responsibilities are the essential functions of a position and should focus on important duties of the role and the impact that they have: on materials, finances, people, or resources. These help to determine the required knowledge, skills, abilities, and physical demands of a position and are used for many purposes – including, but not limited to, outlining how the position supports the mission of the institution, assessing reasonable accommodations under the Americans with disabilities act, and determining the appropriate salary for the position.

We've designed the new one-page format to remove the burden of creating and keeping job descriptions updated. We encourage hiring managers to keep additional documentation, if necessary, that specifies business processes and task lists which describe the day-to-day tasks versus the primary scope of the position. Separate task lists from the job description are not required, however for certain positions it may be useful to identify the responsible party and any delegates; to create efficiency; and set expectations and priorities.

How Do Job Descriptions Tie to People Experience?

Job descriptions provide a foundation for centering people in achieving Middlebury's mission. They are a basis for successful recruitment, hiring, growing and engaging our employees to make a meaningful impact through their work and contributions to the organization and our community.

Job descriptions often gather dust and then can be a source of frustration if they are not accurate and used during compensation and professional development conversations. Job descriptions can often fall to the bottom of a leader's to-do list and be something that you mean to get to but may not happen in a regular, consistent way. We get it and we want to make things easier, more streamlined, and consistent! This approach aims to reduce the burden to write, update and navigate changes to job descriptions on an ongoing basis. A short, consistent format frames the primary purpose of a role and captures the information needed for compensation—and our hope is that it can become a useful tool to use in conversations with employees. Instead of taking hours to update and deliberate over seven pages of details, zoom out, focus on primary responsibilities, and core functions—and spend your time in connected, supportive conversations with employees.

Up Next...

In our next Leadership Insights we'll be sharing helpful tips for writing effective job descriptions. We'll also share tips on how to engage staff in the job description update process.

Commented [GC1]: @Lynch, Christina took a stab! Not sure it is catchy, feel free to edit!

Commented [CA2R1]: Thanks! I added a little bit too.

Leader Pulse Survey

Is there something that you're looking for that we haven't covered in previous articles? We want to hear from you! Share your feedback with us using this link to the Leadership Insights Ideas Survey: [Leadership Insights Ideas \(office.com\)](#)