UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

a New Day for Federal Service

Job Analysis

Topics

- Overview

- Developing a Job Analysis

- Ratings

- Additional Resources

Overview

- What is a job analysis?

- When to conduct a job analysis?

- Why use a job analysis?

- Uses for a job analysis?

What is a Job Analysis?

- A systematic examination of the tasks performed in a job and the competencies required to perform them

- A study of what workers do on the job, what competencies are necessary to do it, what resources are used in doing it, and the conditions under which it is done

- A job analysis is <u>NOT</u> an evaluation of the person currently performing the job

What is a Job Analysis?

- A job analysis consists of three general steps:

    1. Tasks and competencies are collected
    2. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) rate the tasks and competencies
    3. Any low-rated tasks and/or competencies are dropped

When to Conduct a Job Analysis

- It depends on the novelty of the position and the currency of the most recent job analysis for that occupation. However, if the requirements of the position are relatively static, then the position may only need to be reviewed as needed.
  - From the *Delegated Examining Operations Handbook*

When Should You Conduct a Job Analysis?

- When the position you seek to fill is unlike any other position in your agency

- When the requirements of the position are likely to change with relative frequency (e.g., information technology positions), you should review the position at least annually to ensure that your selection tools are still valid

Why Use a Job Analysis?

- To establish and document the tasks and competencies required for the job
- To identify the *job-relatedness* of the tasks and competencies
- To form the basis of applicant assessment tools
- To help provide legal defensibility
- To enhance the validity and utility of human resource products

Why use a job analysis?

- Legal requirements:
  - Federal regulations provide that each employment practice of the Federal Government generally, and of individual agencies, shall be based on a job analysis to identify:
    - The basic duties and responsibilities;
    - The knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the duties and responsibilities; and
    - The factors that are important in evaluating candidates
      - 5 CFR Part 300

Why Use a Job Analysis?

- Legal Requirements (continued):
  - In addition, the *Uniform Guidelines on Employment Selection Procedures* (1978), (29 CFR Part 1607) (www.uniformguidelines.com), provide a set of generally accepted principles on employee selection procedures, including when and how to conduct a job analysis that will meet the standards of the *Guidelines.*

Uses for a Job Analysis

- Job analysis data can be used to determine:
  - Job requirements
  - Training needs
  - Position classification and grade levels
  - Other personnel actions, such as promotions and performance appraisals

Developing a Job Analysis

- Definitions

- Gathering Information

- Developing Tasks

- Developing Competencies

Definitions

- **Tasks:** Activities an employee performs on a regular basis in order to carry out the functions of the job

- **Competencies:** A measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully

Definitions

- **Subject Matter Expert:** A person (first-level supervisor, superior incumbents, etc.) with bona fide expert knowledge about a particular job

- **Ratings/Cutoffs:** Computed (numerical) thresholds that determine which tasks and competencies are required to successfully perform the job

Gathering Information

- Job announcements

- Position descriptions (PD)

- Desk audits

- Internet searches

Developing Tasks

- Tasks can be developed through:
  - Listing/editing existing tasks from job announcements, position descriptions, desk audits, and internet searches
  - Writing new tasks

Developing Tasks

- You can develop tasks by pulling them from many sources, such as Position Descriptions, job announcements, etc.:

  - <u>Original text:</u> *Management relies on these specialists and systems to help them apply merit system principles to attracting, developing, managing, and retaining a high quality and diverse workforce.*

  - <u>Resulting task:</u> Assists management in applying merit system principles in all aspects (e.g., attracting, managing) of retaining a high quality and diverse workforce

Developing Tasks

- You can also develop tasks by writing them from scratch:

The general formula for writing items is:

Perform *What?* + to *Whom?* or *What?* + to produce *What?* or *Why? How?*

E.g., Sort + incoming mail + into groups for distribution

Developing Tasks

- When writing tasks, some common pitfalls (and how to avoid them) are listed below:
  - **Unnecessary Words**
    - Strip task to the bare elements; make it as concise and clear as possible
  - **Double-barreled Item (includes multiple tasks or components**
    - Remove extra actions or break the item into two (or more) separate items

Developing Tasks

- Task writing pitfalls and fixes, continued:
  - **Overly Specific Items**
    - Replace specific items (e.g., Uses Excel to add, subtract, and divide subordinates' timecards to calculate time and leave) with more general actions (e.g., Uses spreadsheets to track pay and leave)
  - **Vague or Ambiguous Terms**
    - Replace subjective adjectives and adverbs (e.g., excellent, adequate, best, all, timely, accurately) with more descriptive terms (e.g., verify, provide, create)

Developing Tasks

- Task writing pitfalls and fixes, continued:
  - **Abbreviations and Acronyms**
    - Avoid using abbreviations and acronyms; spell out the term whenever possible to ensure others understand the item

Developing Tasks

- Example of a poorly-written task:
  - *Makes a conscientious effort to check time reports for persons under own supervision for errors in addition and hours claimed within the NFC system, uses daily work summary sheets as a resource if necessary, signs time reports and/or payroll sheets, and routes to payroll department before pay period deadline in order to authorize payment for time worked.*

- Fixed:
  - Audits employee time reports.

Developing Competencies

- Competencies can be developed through:

  - Listing/editing existing competencies from job announcements, position descriptions, and internet searches

  - Writing new competencies

Developing Competencies

- You can develop competencies by pulling them from many sources, such as Position Descriptions, job announcements, etc.:
  - Original text: *Has basic understanding of the legislation, regulations, and guidance applicable to formulating, executing, and reporting on the use of Federal resources.*
  - Resulting competency: Knowledge of the legislation, regulations, and guidance applicable to formulating, executing, and reporting on the use of Federal resources.

Developing Competencies

- You can also develop competencies by writing them from scratch. Some tips from the Delegated Examining Operations Handbook include:
  - Define competencies simply and clearly
  - Make sure competencies embody a single, readily identifiable characteristic
  - Avoid stating a competency in a way that would confuse it with a task
    - This frequently occurs when competency statements begin with a statement such as "Ability to (perform a task)"

Developing Competencies

- Competency writing tips, continued:
  - Make the competency definitions behaviorally based
    - This ensures the competency can be assessed through measurable behaviors. One way to do this is to incorporate action verbs into the competency definitions (except for definitions of knowledge areas)
  - Remove unnecessary qualifiers such as "Thorough Knowledge," "Considerable Skill," or "Basic Understanding"
    - They do not provide meaningful information to distinguish examples of performance clearly

Ratings

- Handling the Data
- Rating Scales
  - Tasks
  - Competencies
- Cut-off Scores
- Task-Competency Linkages
- Documentation

Handling the Data

- Collect all the tasks and competencies in one area
  - Spreadsheet (preferred)
  - Word Processor
- Subject Matter Experts will provide ratings on all tasks and competencies
- Use a data-processing software (e.g., Excel) to average ratings and apply cut-off scores

Rating Scales

- Task Rating Scales
  - Tasks are often rated using two criteria
    - **Frequency**: How often a task is performed
    - **Importance**: How important a task is to successfully performing the job

Rating Scales

- Example of a Task Frequency Rating Scale
  - Indicate how often you perform the task as part of your job, using the following scale:
    - 0 = Not Performed
    - 1 = Every Few Months to Yearly
    - 2 = Every Few Weeks to Monthly
    - 3 = Every Few Days to Weekly
    - 4 = Every Few Hours to Daily
    - 5 = Many Times Each Hour to Hourly

Rating Scales

- Example of a Task Importance Rating Scale
  - Indicate how important the task is to successfully performing the job, using the following scale:
    - 0 = Not Performed
    - 1 = Not Important
    - 2 = Somewhat Important
    - 3 = Important
    - 4 = Very Important
    - 5 = Extremely Important

Rating Scales

- Competency Rating Scales
  - Competencies are often rated using three criteria
    - **Importance**: How important a competency is to successfully performing the job
    - **Needed at Entry**: When the competency is needed to successfully perform the job
    - **Distinguishing Value**: How valuable the competency is to distinguish superior from barely acceptable performance

Rating Scales

- Example of a Competency Importance Rating Scale
  - Indicate how important the competency is to successfully performing the job, using the following scale:
    - 1 = Not Important
    - 2 = Somewhat Important
    - 3 = Important
    - 4 = Very Important
    - 5 = Extremely Important

Rating Scales

- Example of a Competency Need at Entry Rating Scale
  - Indicate when the competency is needed to successfully perform the job, using the following scale:
    - 1 = Needed the first day
    - 2 = Must be acquired within the first 3 months
    - 3 = Must be acquired within the first 4-6 months
    - 4 = Must be acquired after the first 6 months

Rating Scales

- Example of a Competency Distinguishing Value Rating Scale
  - Indicate how valuable the competency is for distinguishing between superior and barely acceptable performance, using the following scale:
    - 1 = Not Valuable
    - 2 = Somewhat Valuable
    - 3 = Valuable
    - 4 = Very Valuable
    - 5 = Extremely Valuable

Cut-off Scores

- Cut-offs are applied to the average task/competency ratings
- You can apply your own cut-offs if proficiency levels are supported
- See OPM's guidelines for cut-offs from the *Delegated Examining Operations Handbook*

Cut-off Scores

- Tasks:
  - Eliminate tasks that were rated as "Not Performed" on either the importance or frequency scale by at least half of the SMEs
  - Of the tasks that remain, compute an average rating (excluding any "0=Not Performed" ratings from the average) across SMEs for each task on each scale

Cut-off Scores

- Tasks, continued:
  - Recommended cut-offs for both the *Importance* and *Frequency* scales is 3.0 or above. That is, tasks that, on average, were rated 3.0 or above on both importance and frequency are considered critical for the job.

Cut-off Scores

- Competencies:
    - Recommended cut-off for the ***Importance*** scale is 3.0 or above, and the recommended cut-off for the ***Need at Entry*** scale is 2.0 or below. Competencies with rating averages that meet these cut-offs are considered critical for the job.

Cut-off Scores

- Competencies, continued:
  - Ratings on the **_Distinguishing Value_** scale may be used to guide your decision on which critical competencies to include in the assessment process. A recommended cut-off for the distinguishing value scale is 3.0 or above.

Task-Competency Linkages

- Tasks and competencies should be linked by SMEs to demonstrate the job-relatedness of each competency

- Tasks that cannot be linked to one or more competencies and competencies that cannot be linked to one or more tasks should be eliminated

Documentation

- Thoroughly document any job analysis you conduct

- Date the results and keep them in a file maintained exclusively for the position(s) in question

- This practice will help to ensure your selection methodologies are current and valid

Sources of Additional Information

- Delegated Examining Operations Handbook

- Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures

- Assessment and Selection Policy Website

Contact Information

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