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# **Evaluation:**

**The Power of Job Descriptions**

## EVALUATION: THE POWER OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS

### GOALS

1. Describe the role of the job description in the employee evaluative process.
2. Write an effective job description that lends itself to quality and quantity.
3. Appreciate the employee introspective evaluation process as an expectation of job performance.
4. Perform an effective collaborative (employee and leader) job description evaluation.
5. Differentiate between historically written and current job descriptions.
6. Incorporate the positive aspects about the nature of man in the evaluative process.
7. Redesign, if needed, the printed job description to more fully meet the organizational needs.

### KEY WORDS FOR APPLICATION

1. Evaluation
2. Job Description
3. Quality vs. Quantity
4. Employee Introspection
5. Equal Opportunity Employee
6. Philosophy Statement
7. Mission Statement
8. Skills vs. knowledge
9. Collaborative Performance
10. Perception
11. Introspection
12. Nature of Man
13. Personal Goodness
14. Entropy
15. Accrediting Compliance

### WHY JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND EVALUATIONS ARE IMPORTANT!

Nursing education, for the most part, teaches student nurses to perform health care. Teaching *extensive* concepts for successful leadership often must wait for graduate school or exceptional requirements of a

leadership position. This document will present concepts of leadership that will move the student and practicing nurse into the leadership roles meeting exceptional requirements of nursing practice TODAY.

Holding health care staff accountable for performance on a job description can be a challenge. However, knowing the theory of leadership through the use of job descriptions will make the task easier and produce more job satisfaction for the leader and the provider of nursing care.

It is important to know the difference between leadership and management. Many nurses, today, are expected to perform in both realms. This document shares concepts on leadership—the process of accomplishing job descriptions through the effective support and expectations of other people.

It is the intention of this document to provide the information related to job description development in such a manner that it encourages and allows the employee and the leader to more mutually determine the degree of quality and quantity of job compliance.

This document reviews the basic humanistic concepts of leadership success as it relates to a job description. It is intended to support both the nurse and subordinate health care providers. The job description content focuses on expectations and the degree of compliance to these expectations. The information is intended to teach the humane and supportive use of the job description.

#### **SUPPORTIVE CONCEPTS:**

Like most complicated and legal processes, there is an accompanying language that accompanies the professional preparation and use of effective job descriptions. It includes:

Collaborative Performance: A shared attitude and evaluation of performance between an employee and leader regarding quantity and quality of the job expectations.

Perception: A means whereby an employee and leader uses their senses and intuition to determine the extent of quantity and quality of the expected job performance.

Goodness: A moral, kind, honest, and accurate behavior that is considered to be in the realm of job excellence.

Introspection: The act of an employee looking at him/herself regarding the extent of compliance to the expected job performance behaviors.

Leaders need to do the following to encourage a collaborative and supportive evaluation:

1. Hire employees who will effectively meet and are comfortable with the expectations of the job description.
2. Understand the process of job description development as a leader.
3. Communicate the expected quality and quantity of work performance with the employee.

4. Communicate immediately with the employee if any change(s) in expected work quality and quantity are expected.

### **JOB DESCRIPTION CONTENT AND PROCESS**

A job description, by definition, is a document that describes expected behavioral tasks, behaviors, attitude, and responsibilities of a job position.

A job description document usually states, at least, the following; however, this list is not stated in the order of importance or expected appearance on a job description.

1. The title of the organization and the job title
2. A statement indicating that the organization is an “equal opportunity employer”
3. A philosophy statement of the hiring organization and related to the specific job
4. A mission and purpose statement of the hiring organization
5. \*An initial statement of general expectations of the organization followed by more specific job expectations (quantity 15-20 maximum)
6. \*A statement of essential and non-essential job expectations
7. \*Skills and knowledge required to successfully accomplish the job expected behaviors
8. Goal(s) of the hiring organization and related to the specific job
9. The person’s job title for whom the employee will be a subordinate and superordinate
10. Area and date for comments from the employee and leader/evaluator
11. Area and date of appreciation or concern by the organization regarding the quality and quantity of job performance

In the ordering of the content on a job description (as seen above), the statements/expectation usually are most effective if they go from general statements of behavior/expectations to specific statements of behavior/expectations.

\*The exact verb to be used at the beginning of each expectation is usually determined by one of three Bloom’s Taxonomy Domains (Cognitive, Psychomotor, or Affective--feelings)—not covered in this document. (See Recommended Reading at the end of this document.)

### **THE BASIS OF AN EVALUATION—THE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS OR JOB DESCRIPTION**

Whether a facility/organization identifies by job description that job behavior/performance has an oversight by a “manager” or “leader” is not important! However, the importance comes in the actual method of oversight by either titled employee.

Manager (by title and definition) relates to “getting the job done” through managerial accountability without necessarily having expectations of using others in the process. Leadership relates to a more humanistic approach to “getting the job done through the encouragement, support, understanding, involvement, and consideration of others.” Now---as a professional—who would you rather have as a supervisor by title and behavior? AND—a nursing leader (by job description, title, and reference) remembers that professional nurses are all leaders.

All evaluations must contain statements of expectations from which actual behavior is measured. Those statements are found in a job description. Legally and ethically, anything *less than a firm preliminary and ongoing knowledge* by an employee as to what is expected in doing their job is NOT ACCEPTABLE. The legal truth is that an employee should be held accountable for the agreed upon, signed, and dated job description. And---The employee should always have an opportunity for clarification of his/her expected role as set forth by the job description.

The secret of employee success is to have the leader help, serve, and support an employee to meet their job description requirements. Managers and leaders, therefore, have in their own job description and the responsibility to answer questions and support employees in the successful completion of job descriptions. This means that knowledge about who is the manager or leader of every employee is available to support employees.

## **HISTORICAL AND CURRENT REVIEW**

Historically, a job description was written and an employee was expected to perform accordingly. It represented statements of acceptable behaviors/activities to maintain employment in a specific job position. Job descriptions included statements indicating the responsibilities of the job and the specific person overseeing the fulfillment of the expected job behaviors. Upon the actual evaluation, leaders of employees usually determined in writing the degree of job related compliance. Employees accepted the evaluations without personal input, often with a written response to statements of job compliance. The employee accepted their perceived compliance, signed the evaluation, and often times the employee was given an opportunity to respond to the leader’s evaluation in writing. It was usually a “cut and dried” routine process with little employee input resulting in a satisfactory or unsatisfactory review. The satisfactory evaluation outcome usually resulted with continued employment or unsatisfactory review with a variety of possible consequences. To some extent these principles still apply.

The above stated pure historical process is the autocrat’s way of holding only the employee accountable to reset requirements of performance. The model of a leader’s autocratic leadership comes from the philosophy that only the leader will form and evaluate the basis of an employee success! It diminishes the philosophy that employees have basic human needs and that they want to be self-actualizing through their work performance. It denounced the humanistic approach to shared organizational governance. How about the need to change the job description—to make it better, or even make job changes due to the employee’s positive suggestions? That opportunity of participation for employees did not occur under an autocratic manager’s/leader’s direction.

Currently, many leaders might consider the possibility of a better way to encourage nursing employees to own their job description behaviors and help to direct their own appropriate personal job behaviors—let alone have employees share recommendations that might improve their job. Such expectations of employees might make them a more integral and supportive part of the facility/organizational team. After all, the employee might give the organization new and more productive methods of success! This provides every employee the opportunity to be instigators of positive change.

## **THE NATURE OF MAN**

Where tightly controlled leader evaluations have often been the usual process, there is now a possibility of job compliance through a better understanding and appreciation about the “Nature of Man.” It represents a more respectful platform for the important aspect of job employment compliance through an employee’s personal job introspection. It encourages an evaluation of job description performance by employees BEFORE a manager’s/leader’s job description evaluation and provides an interesting insight into an employee’s self-perception of job description performance.

The positive aspect related to the “Nature of Man” says that mankind is naturally and favorably enhanced by the “goodness” of his/her spirit, soul, and body. This degree of appropriate “goodness” (morally good and virtuous) enhances probable success within a caring organization/facility. This provides the initial impetus for organizations to hire leaders (and all employees are leaders in some way) that have a sense of personal “goodness,” and then, in return, the (leaders/managers) have a responsibility to help fill other job positions by hiring personnel with the same “goodness” quality by:

1. Selecting /recommending employees that respect, know, and emulate the organizational standards and mission.
2. Determining a successful degree of collaborative mind-set with a potential employee that will promote a team effort toward meeting the job description for the purpose of success.
3. Presenting the potential employment interview as a *legitimate effort* to successfully fill a job description---not just a happening that fills existing policy as to numbers of potential employees interviewed or a fallacious interview.

It is true--The need to comply with external hiring and accrediting compliance requirements of an interviewing process is often/sometimes required. This process is often known by potential employees before entering the employment interview. This accrediting requirement process can lead to a legitimate interview or a fallacious interview. The fallacious interview is often due to a quietly predetermined person to fill the job position. However, any interview should be respectful and maintain consistent qualities of expected “goodness.” This, also, means that when any new employee is hired, he/she is expected to have the capability and willingness to be introspective as to their expected positive qualities of their future job performance.

If the potential employee is selected *carefully* by a hiring person/group/committee as to his/her ability to meet a job description, there should be no question as to the potential employee’s honesty and

“goodness” qualities. This expectation is an integral part of an employment effort by a facility/organization as well as a part of the ongoing job description expectation after employment.

Only by hiring appropriate and caring employees with positive attributes can the expected organizational “goodness” occur throughout the facility/organization. It is a domino effect. Statistically, we could almost guarantee (philosophically and literally) that there will be a positive relationship correlation of shared “goodness” (increased helpful support) between managers/leaders and staff if such a shared attitude of goodness prevails. We can also infer strongly that a *positive relationship with the community* (and from which employees usually come) will be derived from such ongoing positive working relationships and environment.

## **JOB COMPLIANCE BY EMPLOYEE SELECTION AND JOB INTROSPECTION**

Selecting an Employee---

Required personal employee accountability for job excellence is one of the most important activities to help employees accept the responsibility of performing their job stewardship. The willingness of potential employees to participate in personal accountability for job expectations is a necessary employment criterion and is the foundation of job success. Different from the usual historical approach of only a manager/leader evaluation of job performance, the *employee’s self-evaluation* ability and enthusiasm to comply will form the basis of an evaluation.

First Requirement of the Introspective Evaluation Process--

As a hired nursing employee, it is important to encourage an employee to be the *first responder* to account for job description compliance when it is time to determine job compliance. This required employee contemplation and perception of the degree of his/her compliance highly encourages personal accountability for expected job behaviors. The employee’s ongoing review of job expectations also helps to set the stage for the future successful job-related behaviors by *again* bringing into their full awareness their expected behaviors. This requirement of the *willingness and ability* to perform job description introspection by the employee must be part of the employee’s written job description— don’t forget that!

Second Requirement of the Introspective Evaluation Process---

The *second responder* to an employee’s job description is the manager/leader. This means that the leader reads and responds in writing on the job description (see suggested format) to the employee’s stated degree of perceived personal job description compliance.

During this evaluation process by the leader, there are questions for the leader to consider---

1. Is the degree of personal job description compliance stated by the employee correct, honest, and personally introspective regarding each expected job requirement?

2. What does the leader need to write per each employee's introspective response that will support or correct introspective employee response(s)?
3. Do the employee's written introspective comments warrant continued employment, reassignment, or other forms of action?
4. On paper, does the existing job description represent what the actual job requires, or does the job description need revision for future job requirements?
5. Collectively, does the information gleaned from the entire job description (employee and supervisor) require a rethinking of the job requirements that will help the organization move more effectively toward goals and meet the mission of the organization?
6. What appropriate positive statement can be made about the job performance?
7. Is there observed evidence of the phenomenon of "Regression to the Mean/Average (RTM)"? That is, are there times when, through repeated observation of performance, the employee shows a variation to the under or over performance of job description expectations, yet on the average (statistical mean) the observed work performance meets the expectations of the stated job description? Due to the ubiquitous (being everywhere) phenomenon in repeated performance, we would *expect* to see a variation in expected job description performance. However, over time and as a result of continued frequent observation of RTM performance, the leader will see the employee frequently return to the true and actual average (mean) performance. It is this *return* to the average (mean) performance that occurs even though variations of under-performing or over-performing might occur. The average/mean of job performance *changes* as job expertise, knowledge, and ability to perform changes over time—known as Entropy! Hopefully, there is an upswing in the average/mean as time goes by. It is the *current* average (mean) performance that should be evaluated at the specific time of the job description evaluation.

**PREPARING AN EMPLOYEE INTROSPECTIVE JOB DESCRIPTION TO BE USED FOR EMPLOYEE EVALUATION:**

Job descriptions should be related to a specific job by a specific person who has the talent to perform the job description. Expectations as to quantity and quality of the performance are written or inferred by the job description. When requiring an employee's introspective response during an evaluation, *example(s) should be required* of the employee to support his/her statements. The total facility/organization's job descriptions all support each other to form the so-called *supportive harmony* of the facility/organization. This integral process of job description formulation and integration might take time to develop. However, to add the dimension of security to activities that move the organization forward, it cannot be ignored or pass into oblivion due to entropy-- wherein everything moves toward randomness and inaccuracy.

Every job description is a legally binding contract—even the job description of the manager/leader. To break that contract with any employee, an attorney should be consulted and, at least, be actively aware of the job termination process. Proactive protection from a disgruntled employee is always the best

policy. Every job description should state that the job description, once signed and dated, is a legally binding contract of expected job behavior.

The more noncompliant an employee has a tendency to be, the more specific the job description is written and the more specific examples of personal job description compliance are required. It is understandable that some job descriptions will be lengthy---oh, well!

#### Example

One *example* of the spaces immediately following each job requirement statement in a job description could appear as follows:

Attendance: Attend every scheduled work day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with an approved break in the morning and afternoon. Lunch time will be determined by the manager/leader.

Employee Response & Example(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Leader Response: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

At the end of the entire evaluation there should be a place for signatures of both the employee and the leader/supervisor and a place for any changes in work/job expectations of the employee as an outcome of the evaluation.

In review of every completed evaluation, there is to be a private verbal exchange between the employee and the employer regarding the total content of the evaluation. Always give a final signed and dated copy to every employee. And---always keep a copy in the employees file!!

#### **IN CLOSING:**

Dare to improve all aspects and especially the involvement of the employee during the evaluative process. See the evaluative process as a positive move for the betterment of the facility/organization. It is just a matter of attitude about the positive Nature of Man, the ability to select employees wisely, and the willingness to hold employees personally accountable for identifying their job- related behaviors as they relate to their job description.

#### **LAST THOUGHTS**

**\*“The more you include others, the more smoothly things flow and the more easily things come to you.”**

**A NEW EARTH: AWAKENING TO YOUR LIFE’S PURPOSE, p. 123. (Eckhart Toole) (Copyright 2018)**

## **CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

1. How do you perceive the positive Nature of Man?
2. How would you incorporate your perception of the positive Nature of Man into a Job Description?
3. How would you know that an employee understands the specific job expectations?
4. What does the RTM mean in judging performance?

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

Entropy by this author

En.wikipedia.org/wiki/job description

<https://jobdescriptions.net>

[www.job-descriptions.org](http://www.job-descriptions.org)

<https://www.indeed.com>

simplejobdescriptions.org

www.fresnostate.edu (Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs—pdf)