



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 a 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 regarding the nature of man in the evaluative process.
7. Redesign, if needed, the printed job description to more fully meet the organizational needs.

KEYWORDS 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
16. Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy
17. Cognitive Domain
18. Psychomotor Domain
19. Affective Domain
20. Nurse Administrator (DON)
21. Nurse Leader (RN)
22. Job Descriptions vs. Policies

RECOMMENDATION: Access Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy online. There are three domains—*Cognitive (Intellectual)*, *Psychomotor (Task)*, and *Affective (Feelings and Attitudes)*. Each domain has levels of verbs to be used to commence each job expectation statement. The verbs for your choosing go from simple to complex. Determine the level desired of verbs (simple to complex) and start each job description expectation within each domain category with the verb complexity that best represents each job description expectation. It is often best to cluster each domain expectations together. Clustering of domain job expectations helps to easily evaluate job description attainment according to intellectual abilities, task abilities, and attitude related to the job.

One administrator stated to me that it was confusing to understand the different domains. Nonsense! Each domain, with its related verbs, identifies the first word (verb) of a job description expected behavior. Writing job descriptions in this manner shows exceptional and professional prowess! It provides a smooth, extremely appropriate, and professional way to thoroughly present expectations of a particular job for information and evaluation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR JOB EVALUATIONS

Nursing education, for the most part, teaches student nurses to perform health care. Teaching advanced concepts for successful nurse leadership often must wait for graduate school or the unique requirements of a leadership position. This document will present ideas of leadership that will move the student nurse and nurse leader into leadership roles that meet the unprecedented demands of nursing practice TODAY.

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

It is important to know the difference between leadership and management. Many nurses today are expected to perform in both realms—leadership and management. This document shares concepts of leadership—the process of accomplishing job descriptions through the active support and involvement of both the nurse administrator and nurse leader. The information teaches the humane and supportive use of the job description.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND POLICIES

When writing job descriptions, they are to be written as a *positive behavior expectation* as they related to Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy (three domains). Job descriptions can be either group-oriented or specific to the expectations of individuals.

Policies are more flexible and are the basis of general performance by employees. Policies are written as either *positive or negative statements of expectation that job descriptions support*. The purpose is to

make it very clear by a policy statement as to what all employees of that area, a group/department/company, use as guidelines for mutual behaviors.

SUPPORTIVE CONCEPTS:

Like most complicated and legal processes, there is a language that accompanies the professional preparation and evaluation of job descriptions. It includes:

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

Perception: A means whereby an employee and nurse administrator/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 considered to be in the realm of job performance excellence.

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

Nurse Administrator/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.
3. Communicate the expected quality and quantity of work performance with the employee.
4. Communicate immediately any change(s) in expected work quality and quantity.

JOB DESCRIPTION CONTENT AND PROCESS

A job description, by definition, is a document that describes expected cognitive behaviors, job performance tasks, and attitude while performing job expectations.

A job description document includes, at least, the following---

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
4. A mission and purpose statement of the hiring facility/organization

5. *An initial accounting 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 expectations required to accomplish the job expected behaviors successfully
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 subordinate and superordinate
10. Area and date for comments from the employee and leader/evaluator
11. Area and date regarding the quality and quantity of job performance

*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

Manager (by title and definition) relates to the approach/concept of just “getting the job done” (job description and job evaluation) through managerial decisions without involving others in the job assessment and evaluation process.

Leadership (by title and definition) relates to a more humanistic approach/concept to “getting the job done” (job description and job evaluation) through the encouragement, support, understanding, involvement, consideration, and involvement of others in the job assessment and evaluation process.

Now---as a professional—who would you rather have as a supervisor by title and behavior?

All job descriptions contain statements of job expectations from which actual job conduct is measured. Legally and ethically, anything *less than a firm preliminary and ongoing knowledge* by an employee as to job expectations is NOT ACCEPTABLE. Legally, employees are held accountable for the agreed upon, signed, and dated job description. 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 nurse administrator/ leader help, serve, and support an employee to meet their job description requirements. Managers and leaders, therefore, have in their job description the responsibility to answer questions and support employees in the successful completion of job description behaviors. It means that knowledge about who is the manager or leader is available information for every employee.

HISTORICAL AND CURRENT REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Historically, a job description was written, and an employee was expected to perform accordingly. It represented requirements of acceptable behaviors/activities to maintain his/her employment in a specific job position. Job descriptions included statements indicating the responsibilities of the job and the particular person (by name) overseeing the fulfillment of the expected job behaviors. Upon the evaluation, nurse administrators or nurse leaders of employees are usually determined in writing the required degree of job-related behaviors. Employees accepted the evaluations without personal input. The employee received their perceived compliance, signed the evaluation review, and sometimes, the employee was allowed to respond in writing to the evaluation. It was a “cut and dried” routine process with little employee input resulting in a satisfactory or unsatisfactory review. The satisfactory evaluation outcome usually resulted in continued employment or job advancement. The unsatisfactory evaluation outcome often resulted in a negative adjustment to employment, reprimand, or job termination. To some extent, these principles still apply.

The historical model of a nurse administrator’s/leader’s autocratic behavior (management, not leadership) comes from the philosophy that only the nurse administrator/leader will form and evaluate the basis of employee success! It diminished 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. In contrast, shared governance (leadership, not management), there is a recognition that an employee might share a recognized 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 management approach.

Currently, many nurse administrators and nurse leaders perform a better way to encourage nursing employees to own their job description behaviors. An employee’s input into their job expectations makes them a more integral and supportive part of the facility/organizational team. After all, the employee might give the facility/organization new and more productive behaviors and methods of success! It provides every employee the opportunity to be instigators of positive change. Therefore, the nurse administrator’s or nurse leader’s behavior (performing in this manner) is known as “leadership.”

EVALUATING THE NATURE OF MAN AND THE SEARCH FOR MAN’S “GOODNESS”

Where tightly controlled leader evaluations (management) 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 critical aspect of job employment compliance through a potential *employee’s job introspection*. It encourages an evaluation by the prospective employee regarding his/her possible job description performance ability BEFORE employment and the extent of job compliance BEFORE each job performance evaluation. In other words, the employee is the first responder to the ability to perform and the degree of actual performance.

The positive aspect related to the “Nature of Man” says that humankind is naturally and favorably enhanced by the “goodness” of his/her spirit, soul, and body. This degree of appropriate “goodness” (morally excellent, virtuous, supportive, and kind) enhances probable success within a caring organization/facility. It provides the initial impetus for organizations to hire (in the first place) nurse administrators/leaders that have a sense of personal “goodness.” In return, there is 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 success.
3. Presenting the 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 by a facility/organization to comply with external hiring and accrediting compliance requirements and policy of an interviewing process is required. Potential employees often know this process before entering the employment interview. This accrediting requirement process can lead to a legitimate interview or a fallacious interview. The false (fallacious) interview is often a result of a quietly predetermined person by the facility/organization to fill the job opening.

Regardless, any job interview is expected to be respectful and maintain consistent qualities. The new successful employee must have the capability and willingness to be introspective as to the positive “goodness” qualities related to their future job performance. Listen carefully for the “goodness” qualities that reflect the job requirements and the philosophy, mission, and objectives of the facility/organization.

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 the initial employment effort and requirements of a facility/organization.

Only by evaluating and 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 that a *positive relationship with the community* (and from which employees usually come) is derived from such ongoing positive working relationships.

JOB COMPLIANCE AND JOB INTROSPECTION

Selecting an Employee---

Required personal employee accountability for job excellence is one of the essential 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 evaluation.

First Requirement of the Introspective Evaluation Process--

The *first responder* to an employee's job description is the employee. It means that the employee reads and responds in writing regarding his/her job description compliance. This required employee contemplation and perception of the degree of his/her job description 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 practices by *again* bringing into the employee's full awareness of 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.

The *second responder* to an employee's job description is the manager/leader. It means that the leader/manager reads and responds in writing regarding the employee's job description compliance. The nurse administrator/leader pays attention to the employee's ability to evaluate his/her job description performance accurately.

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 reflective regarding each expected job requirement?
2. What does the leader need to write per each employee's response that will support or correct the employee response(s)?
3. Do the employee's written 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 full job description (employee and supervisor) require a rethinking of the job requirements that will help the organization move more forcefully toward goals and meet the mission of the organization?
6. What is an appropriate positive statement about job performance?
7. Is there observed evidence of the phenomenon of "Regression to the Mean/Average (RTM)"? There are times when, through repeated observation of performance, the employee shows a variation of under or over performance as it relates to his/her job description expectations. Yet,

on the average (statistical mean), the overall 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 know the employee frequently returns to the accurate and actual average (mean) performance. There is a *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 is evaluated and recorded at the specific time of the job description evaluation.

PREPARING A JOB DESCRIPTION FOR EMPLOYEE EVALUATION

Job descriptions should be related to a specific job by a particular 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 subjective response during the evaluation, an *example(s) should be required* of the employee to support his/her statements.

All facility/organization's job descriptions support each other to form the so-called *supportive harmony* of the facility/organization. This necessary process of job description formulation and integration throughout the facility/organization might take time to develop. However, to add a dimension of security to activities that move the organization forward, the supportive harmony of all job descriptions 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 nurse administrator/leader. To break a job description contract with any employee, an attorney should be consulted or, 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 for monetary reimbursement.

The more noncompliant an employee might tend to be, the more specific the job description, and the more specific examples of personal job description compliance are required. Understandably, some job descriptions will be lengthy---oh, well!

Example---

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

Attendance: Attend every scheduled workday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with an approved break in the morning and afternoon. The manager/leader will determine the lunchtime.

Employee Response & Example(s): _____

Leader Response: _____

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

In a review of every completed evaluation by both the nurse administrator/leader, there is a private verbal exchange of the evaluation outcome(s). Give a final signed and dated copy to every employee. And---always keep a copy in the employee's file!!

IN CLOSING

Dare to improve all aspects and 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 successful accomplishment of job description behaviors.

LAST THOUGHTS

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

RECOMMENDED READING

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 do you know that an employee understands his/her specific job expectations?
3. What does the RTM mean in judging performance?

RECOMMENDED READING

Entropy by this author

En.wikipedia.org/wiki/job description

www.job-descriptions.org

<https://www.indeed.com>

simplejobdescriptions.org

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

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