

employment  crossing

THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF JOBS ON EARTH

RECRUITMENT ADVERTISING THROUGH ONLINE JOB BOARDS

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PREFACE

The rise of online job aggregator boards and social media has not only changed how businesses recruit people, but has fundamentally changed how businesses compete with each other.

Although employers are able to provide more job listings and recruit more applicants faster using the internet, many have found it difficult to satisfy their job recruitment needs. Quantity does not always turn into quality...

Previously, jobseekers searched for jobs only during phases when they needed a new job. Today, they have developed habits of browsing through available jobs in the role of virtual window-shoppers who look at jobs and corporate descriptions offered by companies, even if they do not have any intention to consider the offers. Since online job boards and job forums are regularly used by the workforce to gain competitive knowledge about employers, company representation on internet job boards has become a major concern for branding and not only for recruitment.

The exponential increase in the number of communication platforms and avenues has amplified both information access and information overload for jobseekers and employers. And all this has happened before the people in charge of recruitment could master the proper use of even traditional web media like company websites or big monolithic career websites. Thus, over the last decade, the changes in online dynamics of recruitment and interaction between recruiter/candidates transformed so fast that recruitment departments in companies have been struggling to come to grips with the new scenario.

There was little time for the formation of a body of serious literature and research on the dynamics of corporate representation and recruitment advertisements through online job boards and new

online avenues. Most of the research that matter to people in charge of creating recruitment strategy remains unorganized and intermittent efforts without any cohesion to the needs of recruiters, or they remain in internal documents of companies.

This guide is a response to the situation and designed to help recruitment departments understand the implications and dynamics of using internet job boards during current times.

In creating this guide, we have used our own insights and experience in running internet aggregator job boards for over a decade, and have also collated and used whatever relevant research is publicly available on the subject. This guide is not a manual, but strives to provide the contextual knowledge a recruitment professional can count on, while designing strategies to use internet job boards.

When dealing with the subject of corporate descriptions and job postings on internet job aggregator boards and online media we have focused upon the lexical approach since words have much more importance than pictures in ensuring position on the search engines results page, which is the first crucial task to be fulfilled in any online recruitment effort.

We also clearly notify that in certain places where the words used by original researchers were found appropriate, we have not tried to reinvent the wheel, but used the words of such authors with proper attribution. Our intent remains to create literature that is useful to the end user and do it in the best possible manner.

Importance of Online Recruitment



In the existing unpredictable business market, one of the most distinctive competitive advantages companies can achieve and maintain is their human resources. Thomas and Ray believe that the single most important determinant of organizational effectiveness is the ability to attract, hire, and develop capable talent. However; thorough recruitment campaigns through traditional channels are costly in many respects.

The Internet assists companies in potentially decreasing that cost by an estimated 20 to 30 percent. Lee reported that Dow Chemical was able to cut costs per hire by 26 percent through utilizing a career website. By eliminating the need for applicants to be at a physical location, online recruitment allows for companies to locate qualified applicants from a wide range of geographic locations prior to costly onsite visits. This means that companies who engage in online hiring gain a distinct advantage over their competitors who are not online.

Regarding increasing efficiency, the move to online recruitment

“Online recruitment provides managers with rapid access to the information essential when planning, directing, and addressing staffing needs.”

provides managers with rapid access to the information essential when planning, directing, and addressing staffing needs. State of the art resume databases provide recruiters and human resource managers easy access to the best talent in the workforce. Employers can tailor questions and conduct searches for candidates based on specific skills, knowledge and abilities required for the position. From the database of information, they can extract a list of individuals that best meet the needs of the company.

In addition, providing facts about organization culture, environment, and practices can increase the visibility of the employer and enhance the chances of properly aligning the employer with a suitable employee. Furthermore, company websites can also be used to receive electronic resumes and online applications. The collection of resumes and applications online allows companies to quickly acquire large amounts of data on potential job applicants. The use of job agents allows HR departments to target and identify quality candidates with more efficiency.

Recruitment activities managed in an electronic format can lower recruitment cost by prescreening applicants, processing applications, and maintaining applicant information for forthcoming employment opportunities. It costs a company nearly one-third of an employee's salary to replace that employee.

Internet job aggregator boards as well as social forums involve a key change in representation of online recruitment efforts and the dissemination of employer brand information to potential candidates and beyond.

Recruitment information on traditional internet job boards, where employers need to pay to post, is primarily within control of the employer ab initio. The same goes for purchased banner advertisements or information posted on the employer's own company website.

However, both internet job aggregator boards and social media provide involuntary exposure of company recruitment efforts, are more frequently used and relied upon by jobseekers, and affect employer branding apparently beyond the control of recruiters.

Businesses have responded to this lack of control with reputation management efforts on social media, and by learning how to use internet job boards to gain maximum benefits.

Online Recruiting Avenues: A Timeline

“Today, the Internet is firmly the most popular method to recruit potential employees, with the maximum competition for qualified talent happening online.”

Rapid technological developments in the field of communications have absolutely changed the manner in which companies conduct recruitment and interact with the public. While companies still use newspaper classifieds and other traditional recruitment advertising, there has been a major shift in needs and attitudes making the use of social media and Internet job boards essential and integral to recruitment efforts by employers.

The development and deployment of the Internet, the World Wide Web, and web technology introduced the use of the online interactivity, company websites, and online job boards for recruitment and primary screening of personnel.

Next, advances in web search technology introduced online job aggregator boards, which became specialized job search engines for jobseekers. Then, advances and development in mobile phones made cellphones and smart phones ubiquitous, and put almost every jobseeker within the reach of the Internet, and of every employer who cared. The sudden expansion in communicative reach of recruitment departments was mind-boggling, and in many cases little-understood and unmanageable.

The explosion of social media followed suit with Internet forums, blogs, review boards, and mobile apps steadily multiplying avenues for company exposure, scrutiny, criticism, and interaction with target audiences.

Today, the Internet is firmly the most popular method to recruit potential employees, with the maximum competition for qualified talent happening online. Over 90% of Fortune 500 companies use some form of online recruiting. One survey by Schweyer showed 85 percent of companies with 500 or more employees in North America have an online recruiting program. Today, even startups

gravitate naturally towards online recruitment advertising and selling corporate images online, before considering other traditional media.

At the same time, job seekers are also conducting a major portion of their searches online. Over 52 million Americans have used online job searches, with over 4 million doing so daily. Also, studies based on hiring practices reveal that 51 percent of new hires in 2005 were generated from internet sources. These are of course pre-recession figures.



Online Recruitment Statistics

- » 90% of Fortune 500 companies use online recruiting.
- » 85% companies with 500+ employees have online recruiting programs.
- » 51% of new hires in 2005 were generated from online sources.

Current data from the Conference Board and BLS shows almost all vacancies in businesses being posted online in USA, and internet job boards and corporate websites forming the primary points of exposure and interaction between employers and potential candidates.

Corporate Branding and Internet Job Boards

Corporate descriptions and recruitment advertisements on internet job boards, and generally on the internet, have become extremely powerful tools for corporate branding and remaining ahead of the competition.

Over and above providing links to corporate websites and company information, recruiters are also using recruitment advertising descriptions and corporate descriptions to link potential job applicants to various other sites that could attract applicants (and reinforce brand perception), such as community sites and local attractions.

For jobseekers, analyzing a company online through social media, review boards, and from representations and testimonials on internet job boards has become a major step in the process of finding employment. Thus providing facts about organization culture, environment, and practices increase the visibility of the employer and enhance the chances of aligning the employer with the right employee.



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Businesses are finding many favorable reasons to use online recruiting including increasing efficiency, lowering recruitment and hiring costs, attracting applicants that are more qualified, and/or simplifying the entire selection process. However, while employers initially started using online recruitment methods and internet job boards for cost reduction and streamlining data and processes, today, not using internet job boards and well-defined internet recruitment strategy means being left out of the race.

Online recruitment strategy is no more a matter of choice for most recruiters, but integral to company visibility and success. To the Internet users that are simply surfing the Internet and not actively looking for a job, recruitment advertisements are a great method to sell a company's image and culture. If the company website is taken as a virtual brochure, then corporate and job descriptions on internet job boards and social media act as newspaper headings about the company. Whether the surfers are on a web page to look for a job, or just trying to find more information on a company, it is an opportunity recruiters cannot afford to miss while competing for talent.

Why Online Recruitment

- » Increase Efficiency
- » Lower Hiring Costs
- » Access Better Talent
- » Simplify Recruitment Processes
- » Build Positive Employer Branding

Challenges to Proper Use and Leverage of Online Job Boards

“Poor branding strategy on online job boards can diminish brand perception and indirectly affect competitive advantage of a company.”

While employers are able to provide more job listings and recruit more applicants faster using the internet, many have found it difficult to satisfy their job recruitment needs. Quantity does not always turn into quality.

Despite benefits of recruiting online, there are challenges, including loss of potential candidates from application overload or technical problems, loss of valued employees, loss of “personal touch” by recruiters with potential applicants, and in some cases, increased costs in the recruiting process. Poor branding strategy on internet job boards can diminish brand perception and indirectly affect competitive advantage of a company.

The principal barriers and challenges faced by employers in using online recruiting are as follows:

- Employers are receiving applicants with below standard skill sets, causing unnecessary work for the hiring manager who has to sift through and eliminate nonqualified candidates
- The proliferation of online job postings has made it difficult for the employee and the employer to find each other. Large sites such as Monster.com and CareerBuilder.com can become a quagmire of too many people and can quickly swamp a HR Department with too many applicants.
- Career sites must be designed with advanced capabilities, use of artificial intelligence, and keyword matching systems that will accurately reflect search criteria. These attributes are proving to be difficult to accomplish by many individual company websites.
- Most individual company websites do not have the technical abilities to provide an effective database that is functional, user friendly, and allows easy data entry for users as well as simple data retrieval by human resource professionals

“Resume databases are less effective than attracting candidates with fresh job postings and proper corporate descriptions.”

- The speed of technological development is another challenge that makes HR professionals dependent on internet job boards rather than relying solely on technology available within the company.
- Resume databases are less effective than attracting candidates with fresh job postings and proper corporate descriptions. Resume databases are often old and not updated by people who are in gainful employment, and many job seekers consider online resume posting inefficient due to, among other reasons, lack of personal attention.
- In case of ‘pay for post’ traditional job boards the costs involved can be divided into the price charged by the job boards, and the costs incurred by the company in sorting and evaluating the candidates obtained from the use of a job board. So, companies can incur non value-added costs if there are pay structures linked to things like ‘each resume received.’ Due to the large volume of resumes that can be received through a job board, a company must contribute additional resources to the sorting and evaluating of the information received.
- Relying simply on a company’s own website to attract “passive” job seekers requires that a potential recruit visit the website. This can work to the detriment of small companies, which do not have the online influence and brand image to attract large numbers of visitors. Hence, using internet job boards becomes essential.
- Companies must also spend time competing with other companies when using job boards due to the high availability of access by an individual applicant.
- Legalities of online recruitment

Although the use of internet job boards can represent additional costs to a company, the availability of qualified applicants and cost savings achieved by online recruiting generally outweigh any costs incurred.

Competing for the Talent Pool through Job Postings and Advertising on Internet Job Boards

“Corporate descriptions and job advertisements on online job boards are subject to parameters of search engine algorithms, and therefore the words used in job postings matter more than graphics.”

Attention to the issue of effective and appropriate applicant attraction is justified for a number of reasons. First, an appropriate match between the parties is critical to the well-being and productivity of individuals and organizations. Second, organizations spend a great deal of money in the recruitment process and, without the right applicants, cannot hope to develop the level of competitive advantage necessary to compete in a volatile economy.

The first step in developing competitive human capital in a business is attracting the right applicants. Unfortunately, applicant attraction is an inexact science, despite numerous studies examining the process by which job seekers choose an employer, and employers seek to attract viable candidates.

Additionally, corporate descriptions and job advertisements on internet job boards are subject to parameters of search engine algorithms, and therefore the words used in corporate descriptions and recruitment advertisements matter more than graphics. For this reason, the lexical approach in candidate or potential jobseeker attraction is of the highest importance in advertising on internet job boards.

Breaugh and Starke's review of recruitment research describes studies that deal with recruitment messages at a micro level. Their review indicates that textual recruitment messages are more attractive when they are vividly written and include language that is concrete rather than abstract. Messages that convey unexpected information or personally relevant information are also more attractive. Breaugh and Billings found that the recruitment message must be understandable and credible, whereas Jablin, Putnam, Roberts, and Porter suggested that it is important for the message to be written using the appropriate level of expression and correct language. Finally, Barber and Roehling noted that when

““Money talks,” but in the case of corporate descriptions, firms seem to allow other aspects of their organization to have the floor.”

organizations do not supply sufficient information, applicants are likely to regard the organization as having sloppy recruitment practices. Their findings show that applicants pay more attention to specific rather than general information.

Popular Perceptions about Job Descriptions Based on Traditional Media Publications Cannot Be Superimposed on Online Job Advertisements and Corporate Descriptions: Sometimes, Money Doesn't Talk

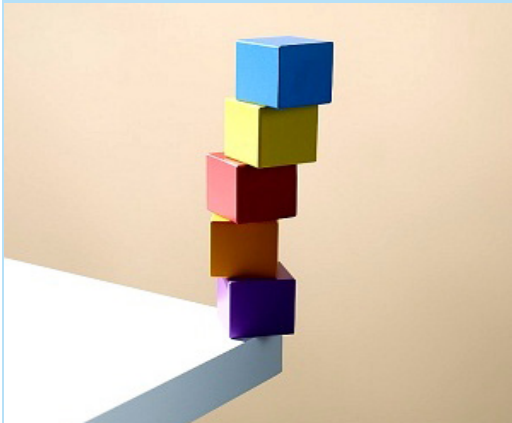
As the old saying goes, “money talks,” but in the case of corporate descriptions, firms seem to allow other aspects of their organization to have the floor. A study on corporate descriptions used by big companies on internet job boards found such descriptions devoted an average of only 5% of text to talking of compensation and benefits. Only 41% of firms even mentioned compensation or benefits. In the descriptions that did touch on compensation or benefits, there was a blanket statement promising “competitive salary and benefits.” Thirty-five percent of descriptions included an overall “competitive salary statement.” When benefits were mentioned, most descriptions opted for a bulleted list format to itemize the various benefits. When that occurred, the number of benefits mentioned ranged from 5 to 26. Although the mainstays of the benefits list are medical, dental, 401(k) and pension plans, and various forms of paid leave, some firms are very creative in the benefits areas. Among the unique benefits listed were Cigna’s “healthy babies program,” adoption reimbursement, work/life balance support, domestic partner benefits, free meals, all-day coffee bar, dry cleaning delivery, and fitness club memberships.

The Lexical Approach to Creating Job Descriptions and Corporate Descriptions

The vast majority of research that has been done on the impact of recruitment content on applicant decisions has largely focused on the impact of “compensation, location, and diversity or fairness policies on application decisions” (Barber, 1998: 42). An exception is a study by Mason and Belt (1986). They argued that job applicants try to match their interests and abilities with the requirements of advertised jobs. The lexical approach to gain person-organization-fit has since then been proved as sound and valid approach for coining job descriptions.

The lexical approach considers a five-factor model of personality to create the basis of advertisements and text that promotes the chances of Person-Organization-Fit.

Consistent and multiple research has proved the validity of the “Big Five” or five-factor model of personality characteristics encoded in language models people use to describe one another, regardless of English or non-English language use.



5 Key Influencers of Recruitment Ads

- » Extraversion
- » Emotional Stability
- » Agreeableness
- » Conscientiousness
- » Openness to Experience

These five factors of personality (the “Big Five”) are **Extraversion**, **Emotional Stability** (Neuroticism), **Agreeableness**, **Conscientiousness**, and **Openness to Experience**. Research by Barrick and Mount (1991), Mount and Barrick (1995), and Salgado (1997) have demonstrated the usefulness of the five-factor model for predicting job performance.

The Big Five need to be kept in mind while designing or creating all corporate descriptions or recruitment advertisements.

Online Job Postings: Issues Involved

“The words used in recruitment advertisements can screen out, disinterest, or interest readers suitably for ensuring that the right people are attracted towards joining the applicant pool.”

Wording and Content

In recruitment advertising, the task of business communicators is to find the appropriate words to grab the curiosity of the desired talent and encourage such candidates to apply for the offered position.

The words used in recruitment advertisements can screen out, disinterest, or interest readers suitably for ensuring to an extent that the right people are attracted towards joining the applicant pool.

Coining of words for recruitment advertising upon the premise of the Big Five depends upon what a company sees as the “right candidate” for a particular position. According to business exigency, the right applicants may be those who fit the job in terms of a match between their particular skills, abilities, and values and those desired by the organization (Person-Organization-Fit). In other cases, the right applicant may be the best and brightest from the labor market, regardless of specific person-organization fit issues.

The wording and content of recruitment advertising is vitally important to the organization because it is the first link to suitable potential employees.

The use of personality as an employee selection criterion is receiving increasing attention today. The idea is that, when hiring people, it is to the organization’s advantage to select individuals that fit with the organization’s culture. The advantages of successful person-organization fit (P-O fit) include increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, feelings of work group cohesion, organizational tenure, individual performance and decreased turnover and intentions to quit (Cable and Judge, 1996; Chatman, 1991; O’Reilly et al., 1991).

Employer Brand Building

Employer Branding: Employer branding is fairly new in the practice of recruitment. The term employer branding was used as early as 1996 in a European marketing journal (Ambler & Barrow, 1996), and began to crop up frequently in the popular business press in the late 1990s (Cowe, 1998; Froom, 2001; “How to Build,” 2001). The Conference Board, in its 2001 study of employer branding practices, proposed that “the employer brand establishes the identity of the firm as an employer. It encompasses the firm’s values, system, policies and behaviors toward the objectives of attracting, motivating, and retaining the firm’s current and potential employees”. These definitions indicate that employer branding involves promoting, both within and outside the firm, a clear view of what makes a firm different and desirable as an employer.

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As in product branding, the assumption in employer branding is that potential applicants are attracted to the firm based on their perceptions of the attributes of the firm, the perceived benefits, and their assessment of the brand image (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Furthermore, to improve overall retention, employers use employer branding techniques to help applicants screen companies for the correct match between their values, priorities, and work styles and those of the organization (Bergstrom & Anderson, 2000).

Legal Implications: Discrimination and Keywords

Legal issues must be addressed when a company is engaged in online hiring. One consideration is disparate impact in the selection process. If a member of a protected category is eliminated from consideration at a greater proportion than a majority category, then disparate impact might be occurring. Although the Internet should, in theory, make job openings available to a greater diversity of candidates, it may in fact discriminate against protected groups (Wyld, 2005).

A major legal issue facing online recruiting relates to the keyword search, its validity and legality. Mohamed, Orife, & Wibowo (2001) proposed three ways that a key-word search could be found to be invalid and therefore illegal. The first would be choosing keywords that may not be related to the job for which the resumes were submitted. A second problem arises with inconsistency of keyword choices. Consistency is necessary to establish validity and, therefore, a company that uses an inconsistent keyword bank may be using a flawed process. The third is related to the resume writing

“While coining descriptions of job advertisements meant for job boards, care must be taken not to use words or phrases that might be held as discriminatory.”

skills of an applicant. In the case where applicants are familiar with prime words used in the keyword search, they would be granted an unfair advantage in the selection process. Flynn (2002) speculated that a keyword search might be used to screen out members of a protected group. Because of the differences in word choices between different races, a company could be using keywords that discriminated against certain groups of people.

However, most of these problems are associated with the use of keyword searches and tagging within a company's own website and in-house recruitment processing, and not to what happens on an internet job board. However, even while coining descriptions of job advertisements meant for internet job boards, care must be taken not to use words or phrases that might be held as discriminatory.

Legal Implications: Recruiting through Company Websites and the Disabled

Direct company websites used for online recruitment are painfully open to many legal implications. A very recent study “Investigating the Accessibility and Usability of Job Application Web Sites for Blind Users” Journal of Usability Studies, Vol 7, Issue 2, February 2012 highlights growing concerns in this regard (http://www.usabilityprofessionals.org/upa_publications/jus/2012february/JUS_Lazar_February_2012.pdf). The opening text of the abstract is significant in highlighting the natures of the problem *“Most companies today place their job advertisements online and frequently require that applications for jobs be submitted online. Unfortunately, many online employment Web sites are inaccessible to users with disabilities, preventing these individuals from even applying for jobs online. ... for a total of 32 applications submitted. Many of the online employment application processes were inaccessible to blind users, and users repeatedly asked for assistance from the researchers when they faced accessibility problems. Only 9/32 (28.1%) of application attempts could be completed independently without any assistance ... suggestions for improvement, including providing accessible feedback, unique and clear hyperlink text, properly structured layout, logical grouping of questions, clearly identified data format and required form fields, and conducting regular accessibility evaluations. It is essential that companies ensure that their online employment applications are accessible and usable for all individuals, including individuals with disabilities.”*

Job Descriptions, Legal Compliance, and the ADA

Most of the text in this portion has been quoted ad verbatim from the JAN Accommodation and Compliance Series on Job Descriptions, a report created by a service of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. There are two reasons to quote ad verbatim – First, when it comes to legal implications the words of the government are safer than our own words, and second, the report clearly encourages reproduction. The JAN report can be accessed here (www.askjan.org/media/downloads/JobDescriptionsA&C.pdf)

While the tasks that creators really need to perform while creating corporate descriptions and job advertisements to ensure attracting and recruiting the right talent pool have already been outlined above, this portion explains what one needs to keep in mind according to government regulations.

According to the JAN report on job descriptions, a job description typically consists of six major components: 1) essential job functions; 2) knowledge and critical skills; 3) physical demands; 4) environmental factors; 5) the roles of the ADA and other federal laws such as the Occupational Safety Health Act (OSH Act); and 6) any explanatory information that may be necessary to clarify job duties or responsibilities.

1. Relevant Rules and Regulations

Employers often question whether there are organizational or other rules and regulations that govern policies on developing job descriptions. Though other federal and state requirements may exist, employers are concerned with whether Title I of the ADA requires employers to complete job descriptions. According to the enforcing agency for the ADA, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC):

The ADA does not require an employer to develop or maintain job descriptions. A written job description that is prepared before advertising or interviewing applicants for a job will be considered as evidence [in determining essential functions] along with other relevant factors. However, the job description will not be given greater weight than other relevant evidence.

The ADA does not limit an employer's ability to establish or change the content, nature, or functions of a job. It is the employer's province to establish what a job is and what functions are required to perform it. The ADA simply requires that an individual with a disability's qualifications for a job are evaluated in relation to its essential functions (EEOC, 1992).



- » Essential job functions
- » Knowledge and critical skills
- » Physical demands
- » Environmental factors
- » The roles of the ADA and other federal laws
- » Additional information needed to clarify job duties/responsibilities.

Guidance also exists on identifying the essential functions of the job. There are several reasons why a function could be considered essential:

1. The position exists to perform the function. For example, a person is hired to proofread documents. The ability to proofread accurately is an essential function, because this is the reason that this position exists.
2. There are a limited number of other employees available to perform the function, or among whom the function can be distributed. For example, it may be an essential function for a file clerk to answer the telephone if there are only three employees in a very busy office and each employee has to perform many different tasks.
3. A function is highly specialized, and the person in the position is hired for special expertise or ability to perform it. For example, a company wishes to expand its business with Japan. For a new sales position, in addition to sales experience, it requires a person who can communicate fluently in the Japanese language. Fluent communication in the Japanese language is an essential function of the job (EEOC, 1992).

According to the EEOC, several types of evidence are considered in determining whether a function is essential. This list is not all-inclusive, and factors not on the list may be equally important as evidence. Evidence to be considered includes:

a. **The employer's judgment.** For example, if an employer requires its typists to be able to accurately type 75 words per minute, the employer is not required to show that such speed and accuracy are "essential" to a job or that less accuracy or speed would not be adequate. Similarly, if a hotel requires its housekeepers to thoroughly clean 16 rooms per day, it does not have to justify this standard as "essential." However, in each case, if a person with a disability is disqualified by such a standard, the employer should be prepared to show that it does in fact require employees to perform at this level, that these are not merely paper requirements and that the standard was not established for a discriminatory reason.

b. **A written job description prepared before advertising or interviewing applicants for a job.** If an employer uses written job descriptions, the ADA does not require that they be limited to a description of essential functions or that "essential functions" be identified. However, if an employer wishes to use a job description as evidence of essential functions, it should in some way identify those functions that the employer believes to be important in accomplishing the purpose of the job.

c. **The amount of time spent performing the function.** For example, if an employee spends most of the time or a majority of the time operating one machine, this would be evidence that operating this machine was an essential function.

d. **The consequences of not requiring a person in this job to perform a function.** Sometimes a function that is performed infrequently may be essential because there will be serious consequences if it is not performed. For example, an airline pilot spends only a few minutes of a flight landing a plane, but landing the plane is an essential function because of the very serious consequences if the pilot could not perform this function.

e. **The terms of a collective bargaining agreement.** Where a collective bargaining agreement lists duties to be performed in particular jobs, the terms of the agreement may provide evidence of essential functions. However, like a position description, the agreement would be considered along with other evidence, such as the actual duties performed by people in these jobs.

f. **Work experience of people who have performed a job in the past and work experience of people who currently perform similar jobs.** The work experience of previous employees in a job and the experience of current employees in similar jobs provide pragmatic evidence of actual duties performed. The employer should consult such employees and observe their work operations to identify essential job functions, since the tasks actually performed provide significant evidence of these functions.

Other relevant factors such as the nature and scope of the work operation and the employer's organizational structure may be factors in determining whether a function is essential. For example, a particular manufacturing facility receives large orders for its product intermittently. These orders must be filled under very tight deadlines. To meet these deadlines, it is necessary that each production worker be able to perform a variety of different tasks with different requirements. All of these tasks are essential functions for a production worker at that facility. However, another facility that receives orders on a continuous basis finds it most efficient to organize an assembly line process, in which each production worker repeatedly performs one major task. At this facility, this single task may be the only essential function of the production worker's job (EEOC, 1992).

Employers should also research whether there are other rules and regulations that apply to them, such as state disability and federal and state safety and health laws. For example, to comply with OSH Act regulations, any handling of, or exposure to, human body fluids, biological agents, laboratory chemicals, or hazardous materials such as noise, asbestos, or carcinogens must be documented.

2. **Size and Type of Organization and Industry**

The size of an organization is a consideration in whether to develop job descriptions. For a small organization, there may be less time and resources available to devote to the process. However, such an employer may have fewer position titles, which require less time to write the actual descriptions. On the other hand, large organizations often have a multitude of departments and job titles. Larger employers benefit from having job descriptions when they need to standardize job functions across multiple locations and throughout the organization. Also, some employers should plan on having highly unique job titles that are specific to their industries, while others will have many job titles that are extremely similar, such as organizations with several clerical and administrative positions.

3. Hiring Practices

Many job seekers consider job descriptions a valuable screening tool. Conveying job expectations and requirements in a written job description can attract qualified and interested candidates. Inappropriate language used in job descriptions reveals discriminatory or inappropriate phrases and offers a quick indicator that an individual may want to apply elsewhere. For example, an employer should avoid citing standards that may unnecessarily screen out particular groups such as individuals with disabilities. In contrast, a description written in a respectful tone with appropriate etiquette may encourage an individual to apply.

According to the ADA, an employer may not ask disability-related questions and may not conduct medical examinations until after it makes a conditional job offer to the applicant (EEOC, 1995). An individual, as an applicant or a current employee, may wish to disclose that s/he has a disability and needs an accommodation, but is uncertain whether disclosure is possible or advisable. Including a brief and accurate statement in the job description about the employer's responsibility and the individual's rights may help initiate the interactive process between an employer and an individual with a disability. If an individual is qualified to perform essential job functions except for limitations caused by a disability, the employer must consider whether the individual could perform these functions with a reasonable accommodation. An employer is not required to reallocate the essential functions of a job as a reasonable accommodation.

While creating a job description that meets legal guidelines of the U.S. government it is advisable to go through the following publications and also seek latest information on the EEOC website:

EEOC (1996). Enforcement Guidance: Workers' Compensation and the ADA, www.eeoc.gov/docs/workcomp.html.

EEOC (1995). Enforcement Guidance: Preemployment Disability-Related Questions and Medical Examinations, www.eeoc.gov/docs/preemp.html.

EEOC (1992). A Technical Assistance Manual on the Employment Provision (Title I) of the Americans with Disabilities Act, www.askjan.org/links/ADAtam1.html.

Milkovich, George T. and Newman, Jerry M. (1998). Compensation, Seventh Edition, Richard D. Irwin, Inc. Homewood, Illinois.

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In creating this report, while we have gone through and learned from a multitude of sources, the works from which we have borrowed most heavily include the following:

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