

# #1 – Developing Effective Job Descriptions & Specifications

*To ensure you are not overlooking skilled immigrant candidates for a position, confirm the key experience, skills, qualities, and education you are seeking for the role. You can do this by creating a job description and specification and identifying the minimum requirements a candidate must have in order to be successful in the position.*

## Job Descriptions

A Job Description is a written statement that defines the purpose, duties, and relationships expected of anyone in the job. It is an overall view of what is to be done in the job. Typically it includes:

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Immediate Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of the Purpose of the Job: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

List of Other Typical Duties and Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

General Information Related to the Job: \_\_\_\_\_

Training Requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

Tool Use: \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** A Job Description generally does not include the specific results that are expected from the duties performed. Once your detailed Job Descriptions have been completed, you may consider developing a **Position Results Description**. The PRD defines the job in results expectations versus just tasks performed. It's a very effective device to help manage the results. You set up major goals within your Key Result Areas (KRA's), such as customer service, productivity, quality, administration, attitude, sales goals etc. Then you set a performance standard with each key result area.

Example:

A job description for a receptionist would include the duty "answering telephones."

A Position Results Description might say, “answering phones in an enthusiastic and professional manner, enhancing the caller’s first impression of our company and indirectly communicating our values.”

**See the difference?**

## Developing Effective Job Specifications

A Job Specification is an analysis of the kind of person it takes to do the job, that is to say, it lists the qualifications and competencies required for the position. Typically this would include

Degree of Education (Degrees, diplomas & certificates or Canadian equivalent): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Desirable amount of previous experience in similar work (in Canada or other): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Specific Skills required: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Health/Physical Considerations: \_\_\_\_\_

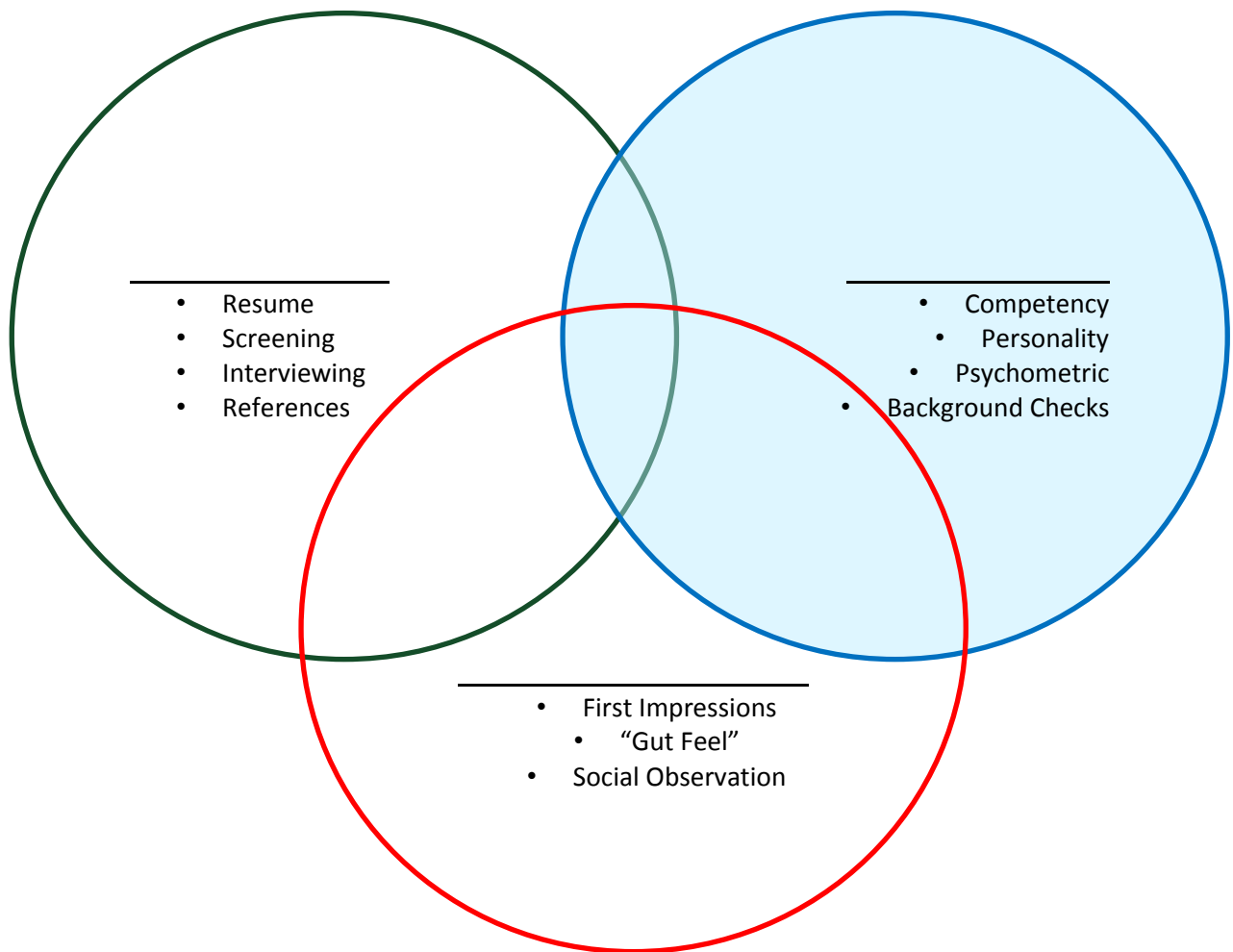
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**Note:** These specifications can be divided into 2 categories:

- 1) Essential (must have to start in the position)
- 2) Desirable (would be nice to have)

## #2 – Uncovering the “Real Candidate”

*It is important to note that the quality of responses immigrant candidates provide during an interview is affected by their culture, past work experience, and comfort level in interview situations, and could potentially get them eliminated from the candidate pool prematurely. The best approach is for you, the interviewer, to evaluate them using a combination of methods.*



## #3 – Behavioural Interview Question Samples

*The following are examples of behavioural interview questions. The purpose of the behavioral interview is to gather information from job candidates about their actual behavior during past experiences which demonstrates competencies required for the job. The reasoning behind this increasing common practice is that the best predictor of future behavior on the job is past behavior under similar circumstances. The drawback, however, is that in some cultures, certain behaviours are not condoned. For example, employees are not allowed to disagree with their superiors, so candidates from such cultures may not be able to give an example of a time they had a conflict with their supervisors.*

### **ABILITY TO HANDLE STRESS**

What has been the most stressful situation you have ever found yourself in at work? How did you handle it?

What have you done in the past to prevent a situation from becoming too stressful for you or your colleagues to handle?

### **ADAPTABILITY**

Tell me about a situation in which you have had to adjust to changes over which you had no control. How did you handle it?

Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to a colleague's working style in order to complete a project or achieve your objectives.

### **ANALYTICAL SKILLS / PROBLEM SOLVING**

Describe the project or situation that best demonstrates your analytical abilities. What was your role?

Tell me about a time when you had to analyze information and make a recommendation. What kind of thought process did you go through? Was the recommendation accepted? If not, why?

Tell me about a situation where you had to solve a difficult problem. What did you do? What was the outcome? What do you wish you had done differently?

### **ATTENTION TO DETAIL**

What process do you use to check that you have the right details from a customer?

Give me an example of a time you discovered an error that been overlooked by a colleague. What did you do? What was the outcome?

Tell me about a time that you were confused by a customer's request. What steps did you take to clarify things?

### **CLIENT FOCUS / CUSTOMER ORIENTATION**

When have you had to deal with an irate customer? What did you do? How did the situation end up?

Tell me about a time you have "inherited" a customer. What steps did you take to establish rapport with them? What did you do to gain their trust?

Give an example of a time you went well out of your way to ensure a customer received the best possible service from you and organization. What was their reaction?

## **COMMUNICATION**

When have you had to present to a group of people with little or no preparation? What obstacles did you face? How did you handle them?

What obstacles or difficulties have you ever faced in communicating your ideas to a manager?

Tell me about a time in which you had to use your written communication skills in order to get an important point across.

## **CREATIVITY**

Tell me about a problem that you've solved in a unique or unusual way. What was the outcome? Were you happy or satisfied with it?

Give me an example of when someone brought you a new idea that was odd or unusual. What did you do?

## **DECISION MAKING**

Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision without all the information you needed. How did you handle it?

What is the most difficult decision you've ever had to make at work? How did you arrive at your decision? What was the result?

## **INTERPERSONAL SKILLS**

Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. How/why was this person difficult? How did you handle it? How did the relationship progress?

What, in your opinion, are the key ingredients in guiding and maintaining successful business relationships? Give me examples of how you have made these work for you.

## **LEADERSHIP**

Tell me about a team project when you had to take charge of the project? What did you do? What was the result?

What is the toughest group that you have ever had to lead? What were the obstacles? How did you handle the situation?

What has been your greatest leadership achievement in a professional environment? Talk through the steps you took to reach it.

## **PLANNING AND ORGANISATION / TIME MANAGEMENT**

How do you prioritize projects and tasks when scheduling your time? Give me some examples.

When has a project or event you organized not gone according to plan? What happened? Why? How did you feel? What did you do about it?

## **TEAMWORK**

Tell me about a time when you worked with a colleague who was not doing their share of the work. How did you handle it?

Tell me about a time when you had settled a dispute between team members. How did you go about identifying the issues? What was the result?

## #4 – Pre-Interviewing Preparations for Immigrants

*Tips to prepare interviews that will be inclusive of candidates from diverse cultures*

- Know what you can and cannot ask - Make sure you are familiar with current legislation
- Be aware of your style of asking questions to ensure you are not unintentionally discriminating
- Identify the Job Descriptions, Specifications & Position Results Descriptions for the position
- Don't let first impressions be affected by candidate appearance, dress, accent, age, eye contact or lack of, race, gender, body language, and even their greeting style
- Identify and prioritize skills by level of importance to help remain objective
- Choose / develop interview questions and rating system
- Be very specific when inviting the candidate for an interview (location, time who they will be meeting with etc. allow time for questions)

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## #5 – Interviewing Immigrants

*Tips to keep in mind during interviews that will keep the focus on the skills and experiences of immigrant candidates*

- Use immigrant friendly language –keep the language simple and straightforward. Try to avoid slang or jargon and allow for differences in communication style.
- Expect some miscommunications and awkwardness – “small talk” could be uncomfortable.
- Understand that immigrant professionals that have English as their second language have to work twice as hard during interviews.
- Meet face to face – because of communication challenges, screening potential candidates over the phone may not be effective.
- Practice re-phrasing questions – if you receive an inaccurate or short answer during the interview you may need to ask the question a different way in order to ensure the candidate understands.
- Try to make the candidate as comfortable as possible – most people are very nervous in a job interview so keep in mind that someone who is interviewing in a second language could be even more nervous. They might make communication errors that they might normally make.
- Use scenario-based questions to assess how the candidate would perform on the job – ask for examples and specifics or enable the candidate to demonstrate their skills.
- Be prepared for different cultural norms – assumptions about basic Canadian cultural norms may not be accurate e.g. handshakes, eye contact, personal space, body language etc.
- Provide a pen and notepad – allows candidates to record information and details from the interview as well as help organize their thoughts if needed during the interview.

- Share extra information about the company – core values, mission statement, goals, cultural diversity

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## #6 – The Post Interview Process

*It is very important that when concluding an interview with a candidate that is new to Canada that they leave the interview with a positive impression of the company and a clear understanding of what happens next. This means knowing how to effectively close up the interview and what to do in the follow up process.*

- Leave enough time for the candidate to ask any questions that they may have about the role and the organization
- Make sure that you are very clear about next steps and your time frame for making a decision
- Don't hesitate to check references – check local references (work, volunteer activities or character references). If local references are not available, many international references do speak English... so don't be afraid to pick up the phone. You may also want to send specific questions for referees via email ahead of time so that they may prepare their responses.
- Offering the position – be very clear when describing starting wages, benefits, start dates, times, where to park, what to bring, who will meet them etc.

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## #7 – Avoiding Interview Pitfalls with Immigrant Candidates

*Be aware of the following biases that could affect your evaluation of qualified immigrant candidates for the job:*

- Halo Effect** – A candidate is rated highly on all skills because they score highly on a single skill. e.g.: The interviewer values leadership ability. The person who has leadership ability does better on the other skills because of their perceived leadership ability.
- Demographic Bias** – Making decisions or reaching conclusions as a result of common and unsubstantiated generalizations (stereotypes). e.g.: The interviewer knows that certain cultures encourage little eye contact. The interviewer assumes that a candidate who makes little eye contact will be a weak leader.
- Strictness Bias** –The tendency to rate a candidate lower (strictness) on all skills even though large differences in proficiency exist. e.g.: The interviewer did not feel the candidate demonstrated leadership ability; therefore the interviewer rates all other skills lower.
- Primacy Bias** – Most interviewers make their decisions within the first few minutes of an interview; therefore information available early in the interview receives more weight. e.g.: The candidate began to relax as the interview progressed and started to make more eye contact. The interviewer still assigns low ratings to the candidate because they can't forget that the candidate looked away when first introduced.
- Similar To Me Bias** – The tendency to hire individuals who are similar to the interviewer. e.g.: same attitudes, values, credentials, etc. This is especially problematic for skilled immigrants, because people from different countries will likely have different values and backgrounds.
- Not Knowing the Job:** Interviewers who do not have a comprehensive understanding of the skills needed for the job often form their own opinion about what constitutes the best candidate. They use this personal impression to evaluate candidates. Therefore, it is important to make sure interviewers fully understand the requirements of the job.
- Pressure to Hire:** When interviewers believe they need to make a decision quickly, they tend to make decisions based on a limited sample of information, or on a small number of candidate interviews. Interviewers should adhere to the established interview procedure and timeline with each candidate to avoid making erroneous decisions.
- Contrast Effects:** The order in which the candidates are interviewed can affect the ratings given to candidates. While making ratings, interviewers should refrain from comparing and contrasting candidates to those who have been previously interviewed.
- Non-verbal Behavior:** Interviewers should base their evaluation of the candidate on the candidate's past performance and current behavior as it relates to the competency being evaluated and not just on how the candidate acts during the interview. Questions and probes relating to the competencies of interest will usually direct the interviewer to the important information.