



HOW TO

BEAT THE TALENT SHORTAGE

ONE JOB DESCRIPTION AT A TIME

If your organization is drowning in job openings, you're not alone. Though much of the uncertainty that came with COVID-19 has dissipated, employers across the United States and many other parts of the globe have been hit with a new challenge that is likely to sustain well into the future, a shortage of labor. Coined the Great Resignation in early 2021, this crisis is a real thing, and it's affecting every organization in just about every industry worldwide.

BUT WHY IS HIRING SO HARD RIGHT NOW, AND WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT?

Under normal circumstances, job openings are a good thing. However, companies today still struggle to meet their goals, serve clients, and care for employees—all due to labor shortages.

While there is no ultimate solution, there are strategies we can apply to improve the situation. Better job description management has emerged as a way to address many critical concerns affecting talent shortfalls.

This eBook will examine the topics and metrics that have the most significant impact on employee recruiting, hiring, and retention and discuss how job descriptions and technology can provide the tools needed to implement practical solutions.

CONTENTS

Breaking Down the Current Labor Market..... 3

How Your Job Descriptions Might Be Harming Your Recruiting Efforts

The High Cost of Hiring Mistakes and How Better Job Description Management Helps

Expanding the Talent Pool to Include Non-Traditional Candidates

Effective Compensation

How Job Description Management Helps You Navigate Business Disruption



BREAKING DOWN OF THE CURRENT LABOR MARKET

Key trends underscoring the post-pandemic labor crisis

The topmost concerns for today's HR professionals won't surprise you. Attracting, recruiting, and retaining top talent is always a concern, and even before the pandemic, the recruiting landscape was highly competitive. But the labor pool continues to shrink. There are over 10 million job openings and roughly only 6 million candidates.

As always, compliance and regulatory risk are ongoing concerns. And when you do identify suitable candidates, adequate compensation is essential to ensure they are satisfied and will stay.

Macroeconomically, many are concerned about inflation and supply chain issues, but these worries now pale in comparison to our biggest problem, the labor shortage. In a world where it is hard to find and hire talent, our best hedge is to retain the employees we have in place.

YET

- ▶ 46% of the US workforce is currently searching or plan to search for a job in 2023.
- ▶ Nearly a third of US workers would quit their job without having another lined up.
- ▶ 76% of employers are concerned with the employee turnover rate.
- ▶ 63.3% of companies say retaining employees is actually harder than hiring them

Adding fuel to the fire, a JDXpert recent poll found that 78% of HR professionals consider it more difficult to hire today than ever before. 20% reported the same difficulty level, while only 2% found it easier.

Based on these statistics, it's clear that talent retention is in crisis. Viable solutions, strategies, and technology must be implemented if we are to overcome.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND TALENT RETENTION

Let's first consider the formula for retention and how we achieve it

The number one reason we lose good employees today is because of burnout. 77% of employees surveyed are dealing with burnout at their current job. 83% report that burnout is negatively impacting their personal relationships. 25% don't ever (or rarely) take time off.

These metrics are concerning for many reasons. Unsustainable work habits will almost certainly lead to burnout and subsequent attrition, but before that happens, productivity, engagement, and the quality of work will suffer along the way.

The specific causes of burnout vary but can include:

- 1 Excessive workload
- 2 Perceived lack of control
- 3 Lack of recognition
- 4 Disconnect from community or work culture
- 5 Lack of fairness
- 6 Mismatched values (personal vs. company values)



So, it's crucial to reduce the potential for burnout and establish a framework that addresses these causes. An accurate job description helps solve this challenge as employees and managers understand the expectations on the job and won't be focused on the arbitrary KPIs. The job description should provide a clear definition of the work to be done, define what success looks like within that position, and articulate what is and is not part of the job—Clearly providing positive impact on causes of burnout 1-3 above.

Let's not forget the positive side of the equation: Engagement. Engaged employees are happier and more productive and they are also 87% less likely to leave their job. Companies with highly engaged employees achieve 23% higher profits and 18% more productivity when compared to organizations with low employee engagement.

So – reduce burnout, improve engagement, retain employees. Sounds simple enough!

We know what contributes to burnout. But what makes for better engagement?

Compensation is, of course, always a driving motivator, But surprisingly it ranks only third on the top five reasons that employees leave a job, according to McLean and Company.

TOP 5 REASONS EMPLOYEES LEAVE

- 1 Lack of opportunity for career advancement
- 2 Dissatisfaction with role and responsibilities
- 3 Base salary
- 4 Lack of opportunities for career-related skill development
- 5 The degree to which their skills are utilized in the job



An effective job description will reduce ambiguity around roles and provide the building blocks for advancement and skill development. Providing a roadmap for employees to set expectations and goals.

Towards this end we find more JDXpert clients, each year, developing job architecture and resulting career paths to enhance employee engagement. A clear and visual career path helps guide employee growth within the organization and provides dynamic tools to help them plan their career trajectories.

For HR professionals, these key points within the job description provide a basis for understanding training, succession, and employee performance.

THE HIGH COST OF HIRING MISTAKES AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

According to data from [SHRM, it costs approximately \\$4425 to hire a new employee](#). However, the cost is likely much higher as we must consider the time it takes to reach peak productivity. Also, it takes about [six months](#) to recoup the money spent on a successful new hire, while alternatively [25% of new hires](#) will fail within the first year.

For those that fail, the cost of a bad hire, is much higher -- about [30% of the employee's annual salary](#). Again, this number rises along with the level of responsibility and complexity of work. For example, the cost of a bad hire for high-level management positions can be 50% or more of that employee's annual salary. Be careful, though, in evaluating these estimates because often they only include the hard costs, those out of pocket. When you consider soft costs, like lost productivity, decreased customer service/satisfaction, increase pressure and lost engagement for remaining workers, the cost of a bad hire can be multiple times that individual's annual salary.

The labor market is tight, and recruiters are often grateful to find quality applicants at all. When asked why they are unable to fill open positions, [here's what recruiters](#) said:

WHY RECRUITERS SAY THEY CANNOT FILL OPEN POSITIONS

43% of candidates do not have the appropriate hard skills.

29% of candidates don't have the right soft skills.

Additionally, 29% of recruiters said they have trouble separating essential from preferred skills and other qualifications. 24% also stated they have difficulty identifying the right soft skills for the job.

THE SOLUTION

To solve—or at least minimize—hiring mistakes, the first order of business is to assure that your job descriptions are accurate, up-to-date, and reflective of what people actually do.

Detailing competencies in the job description is also very important. This is key, because although everyone is focusing on hard skills these days, soft skills or competencies are the innate qualities that allow individuals to learn new hard skills. This is a critical point, as it identifies candidates that could ultimately excel in a role given proper training, producing far better outcomes than vacant position or worse, bad hires. Interview guides should also be configured to include competencies so that the interviewers considers these points and do not dismiss a candidates based on hard skills alone.

Next, and this is something that about 80% of JDXpert clients have implemented, is to automate the interface between job descriptions and your applicant tracking system (ATS).

JDXpert integrates with most third-party ATS and HRMS, including Workday. Integration reduces HR workload and ensures that recruiting efforts are focused on the actual skills and attributes required to do the job.





EXPANDING THE TALENT POOL TO INCLUDE NON-TRADITIONAL CANDIDATES

There are many ways to expand your available talent pool. Some companies are actively revisiting their compensation packages and implementing skills-based recruiting, and most are now accepting remote applicants.

In keeping with our theme, we'll explore two key concepts our customers have found to be most effective, namely, skills-based recruiting and debiasing job descriptions.

When you consider that we're seeing some of the [highest job opening numbers](#) ever in the US, something must change. If your job descriptions require that candidates must have a four-year degree, your talent pool is immediately narrowed.

Recruiters must consider that [62% of the adult population](#) in the United States do not have a bachelor's degree or higher. Also, traditional education is not keeping up with current skills needs, especially where technology is concerned. Highly skilled tech workers often gain experience on the job or through non-traditional sources, such as boot camps, online courses, and even internships.

The gig economy is another source of non-traditional candidates, though many will fall through the cracks because their applications won't get past ATS filters that screen out those with employment gaps or lacking advanced degrees.

SKILLS BASED RECRUITING

A pedigree-based job posting places education and experience up front, leading potentially qualified candidates to self-eliminate because they do not meet those criteria.

The more weight you place on education and experience, the more risk you're drastically narrowing your talent pool. Plus, education is no guarantee of adequate skills or experience, as traditional school curriculums do not often correlate to the real-world skills needed.

By removing the education and experience requirements and including those with employment gaps and frequent changes as well as those lacking advanced degrees, you're tapping into a massive talent pool that would otherwise be invisible to you.

So, to compete successfully for talent in the current labor market, a skills-based approach is recommended. To achieve this, your job postings should place more weight on competencies and knowledge/skills/abilities. Licenses and certifications may still be necessary, but these filters can be applied to a much larger pool of applicants once you've eliminated education and experience requirements. Working conditions

and physical demands may also be important for some roles, as it gives candidates an accurate representation of what they can expect from day-to-day. This is also vital for ADA compliance as to not exclude differently abled people and determine if accommodations can be made.





DEBIASING YOUR JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Debiasing is another method by which it is possible to widen your talent pool. We talked a bit about placing too much weight on degrees and job experience. Still, hidden biases can exist in job description language that may cause candidates to self-eliminate.

Debiasing has many other [positive impacts](#). It leads to greater diversity in hiring, which is proven to increase profitability by up to 33%, improve performance by 50%, and increase innovation revenue by 19%.

Your [candidates care about diversity](#) too. 67% of job seekers consider workplace diversity necessary. 50% of employees would like to see their employers do more to increase diversity, and 78% report that the leadership in their company lacks diversity. Organizations that prioritize diversity report up to 58% better performance than those that do not. These are significant metrics that are directly affected by debiasing—and it's something you have complete control over.

Of course, compliance with pay equity and fair hiring laws are essential, but specific terminology and verbiage may alienate good candidates, so it's vital to ensure such wording is reworked or removed entirely.

For example, if you're a restaurant looking for servers, using the word "waitress" in your posting will eliminate qualified males and may turn off some females who consider that language oppressive.

Less overt language can also have a big effect on applicants. Words with connotative bias like “aggressive” or “nurturing” can skew applicants’ perceptions of whether the job is for them, causing qualified candidates to self-eliminate. There are also terms, although not biased, that can cause a similar self-elimination effect-- jargon or excessive superlatives. For example, a job description that uses an endless stream of acronyms or high-tech jargon will intimidate some candidates. Similarly, using over-the-top verbiage like “awesome” and “world-class” can be a turn-off. In better practice, clearly and simply state your point, spell out industry-related acronyms, and avoid superlatives.

Unbiased language sends a message of inclusivity, establishing a sense of belonging for all. If you’re unaware of what constitutes biased language, you may be narrowing the talent field inadvertently.

Biases associated with age, gender, religion, race, class, ability, or health status must be avoided. [JDXpert’s debiasing function](#) helps you immediately identify biased language and suggests alternatives so you can be confident your JDs are fair, inclusive, and compliant.



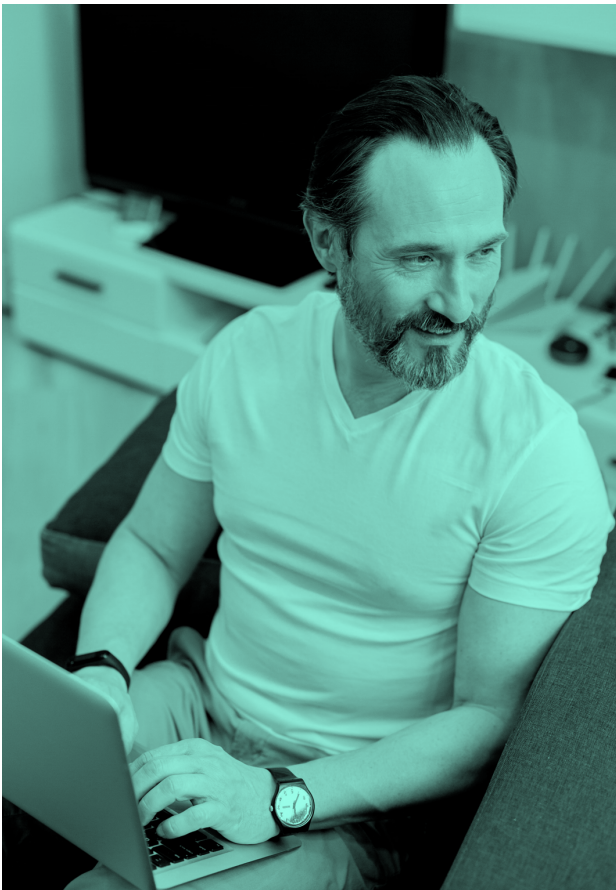
EFFECTIVE COMPENSATION

Despite what many people say, we live in a capitalist society, and money is key, so it's important to ensure that your compensation is in-line with industry benchmarks and competitive with similar roles at other companies.

If we can revisit one vital statistic, remember that one of the top reasons employees leave their jobs (or don't accept job offers) is because of inadequate compensation. [46% of job seekers](#) are looking for new jobs to upgrade their salaries and will consider changing jobs for better pay and benefits.

Pay equity is critical, too, as [58% of candidates](#) say they would not work for a company where there is a pay gap.

For each job, you need a detailed, accurate understanding of the work to be done to effectively market price the job. If your job descriptions are inaccurate, your results will be too, preventing you from effectively competing for talent. JDXpert's advanced Job Description Management technology is integrated with [Payscale's](#) MarketPay as [MarketPay Jobs](#), allowing you to effectively market price accurate and up-to-date job descriptions as well as manage your overall compensation structures and programs. JDXpert is also the recommended Job Description Management application for other advanced market pricing tools like [BetterComp](#).



JOB DESCRIPTION MANAGEMENT HELPS YOU NAVIGATE REMOTE WORK

In the post-pandemic world, [87% of employees](#) now prefer to work from home at least one day per week and [68% prefer](#) to be fully remote. And don't think that performance drops when working remote. 94% of employees feel that they are more productive working from home, with 68% of business saying that they've seen improvements in performance. Keeping job descriptions accurate in context of remote work is more critical than ever. The ability to work from home ranks high in preference for candidates, so that's a huge consideration as it may help companies in their effort to widen the talent pool and attract more candidates.

More notably, perhaps, companies that offer remote work report [25% less employee turnover](#). When we consider the cost of hiring and the fraught nature of the recruiting landscape, anything you can do to reduce attrition is beneficial.

In a remote work setting, [51% of employees](#) are unsure whether their managers have faith in their productivity, so many will choose to work additional hours, clocking in early and out late, to compensate. In this regard, accurate job descriptions take on even greater significance. For remote workers, job descriptions help employees stay focused on essential functions rather than worrying about meeting perceived performance indicators.

Job descriptions also support HR in monitoring, motivating, and evaluating remote workers and will help companies defend against litigation should a dispute arise. The incidence of employee litigation against their employers sharply rose in the wake of the pandemic. Some companies were forced to make tough decisions to lay off employees or close their doors altogether. Others put employees at risk by failing to consider complaints and requests for work accommodation.

Maintaining job descriptions to reflect dynamic work conditions is essential to reduce risk and ensure employee satisfaction. It would benefit all employers to review all JDs to identify work that can be done remotely. Doing so will reduce conflict, improve employee happiness, and expand the available talent pool to include candidates that would not otherwise apply.

Job descriptions should now clearly articulate remote work guidelines, including identifying remote-capable positions and highlighting tasks or responsibilities that are not remote-capable. All stakeholders in the hiring process—hiring managers, managers, leadership, and team members—must know what work can be done remotely vs. what must be done on premises. An accurate job description clarifies understanding of these concerns, especially when accommodations must be made for working conditions that may have a bearing on compliance.

Job description management technology like JDXpert enables you to report on remote capable positions, making it easy to identify and sort jobs as to whether they are dependent on an on-site presence. Advanced tools allow you to reorganize jobs allowing employees to work remotely while moving onsite tasks to those that will be on site anyway or be performed in a different manner.

WRAPPING UP

Today's labor market is challenging, but job description management technology can help. HR professionals today need a tool that simplifies workflows while reducing compliance risk and removing common hiring barriers such as biased language or pedigree-based job requirements.

Job descriptions are more essential today than ever before, as they address concerns related to the post-pandemic work environment, including how employees want to work today.

Job descriptions help employees and managers understand job expectations, improve engagement, and mitigate employee burnout. They also help companies attract and retain the talent they need to grow.

Job descriptions are also a critical tool to help HR avoid hiring mistakes, providing a clear understanding of the work involved and a benchmark for competitive compensation.

To learn more about JDXpert, [request your demo today](#). We are passionate about job descriptions and helping people like you succeed.

If you enjoyed this eBook, check out our other eBooks at [JDXpert.com](https://jdxpert.com).



Copyright ©, JDXpert, 2023 All rights reserved.