

**Job Search Analysis: The Fundamentals to Developing a More Effective Hiring Process.  
A Four-part Executive Series**

**PART 1: JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Objective: The Job Search Analysis**

The hiring process can be one of the most challenging aspects of growing and maintaining any department or business. It takes many factors to connect the right candidate to the right position and many times the hiring authority or HR team is left to conduct the process without the proper knowledge of just how to hire the right way. In this four part series, we will examine the framework of developing an effective job search analysis which encompasses the necessary disciplines to more effective hiring practices. The Job Analysis includes the development of a powerful job description, a detailed candidate profile, an insightful company profile and description of what the position offers as well as all the administrative processes required to secure the proper hire for any given position.

**Developing an Effective Job Description**

The development of an effective job description should cover five basic aspects that can be easily understood from the candidate's perspective. These areas include:

Company description, Job responsibilities (multi-year), Key deliverables (12-18 month goals), Workload, Resources & Organizational chart and Reporting lines.

Underlying these five main areas, it is very important to understand that throughout the entire hiring process, the objective is that both the candidate and employer are as transparent as possible in all of their communications. At first, this may seem to be a somewhat uncomfortable change from the traditional method of hiring; however, when both the candidate and employer communicate with transparency, there is a reduction in the amount of errors that are commonly caused through misunderstandings and unrealistic expectations. Without transparent communications up front and across the board, the chances of a solid long term hire are greatly reduced. In most cases, the symptoms of a bad hire generally do not surface until the candidate is deep into their employment experience which brings many additional problems to the company.

**Company Description**

Job applicants often go into interviews with only a vague idea of what their prospective company is all about. By providing details of the company in the job description, the applicant will be able to more fully understand the business scope and mission of their prospective employers. The description of the company should include details such as the number of the company's active legal entities, number of countries that the company operates in including overseas productions and any other facts that would help the candidate shape an accurate picture of the company.

**Job Responsibilities**

Job responsibilities should be graphed out over a three year period using a percentage system to describe exactly how much time the employee will be expected to spend in

each area of their given responsibility. Doing this will ensure two things; it will force the company to clearly communicate the specific amount of time they expect the employee to spend over a 12 month average in each area and second, by showing years one through three, the prospective employee can identify how their job might evolve in the future. Breaking down the areas under the employee's responsibilities also helps to give the applicant a good sense of the overall workload. Above all, a thorough job responsibility list helps to avoid any miscommunication in regards to what the employee will be responsible for implementing.

### **Key Deliverables**

By providing a detailed list of the position's key deliverables over a 12-18 month period, the candidate will be able to fully understand what the company will expect them to accomplish within a given timetable. Each of these deliverables should be reflective of specific projects or tasks that this person will be responsible for competing each within a defined time frame. Examples of tax deliverables for a Director of tax could include decreasing 1120 filing times by 25%, hiring two new department members or even identifying and implementing a tax provisions software solution.

### **Workload, Resources & Organizational Chart**

The job description should also include a list of the job's workload and resources as well as a company organizational chart. Preparing an outline of the volume of work expected to be done in the position is essential. By listing the resources of the job's department, the applicant will be able to better understand exactly what and who they will be working with and just how those resources will be utilized in the workflow. The list should also include all of the tools available to the department such as tax software (return, planning, provisions, etc.), online tax research services and department subscriptions to tax research materials. Additionally, a tax department organization chart that lists each current employee's title will ensure that there is little confusion as to who has what responsibilities within the department. It will also help ignite discussion during the interview process.

### **Reporting Lines**

Reporting lines are an important area to disclose so the prospective employee understands the hierarchy of his/her position before starting the job. Even dotted line relationships should be included so that there will be little confusion at any point in the future. An example of this would be a job description for a Director of Tax that would outline how that position interfaces directly with one or more members of senior management. The reporting line could also further detail that the tax position of all major business transactions and corporate strategic initiatives and would work directly with the Vice President of Tax and other tax professionals to assure that the tax positions provide the optimum benefit and risk profile for the company.

### **Summary**

The hiring process is never easy; however, there are ways to make the process more effective. The most important areas to remember are to organize the process, expect transparency in all communications to and from the candidate and be sure to have all the

internal hiring resources on the same page as to the needs and wants of the organization before you start the interview process. Clarity and attention to detail in the hiring process can only serve to enhance the quality of the hire and ensure that there are as few misunderstandings about the position's responsibilities as possible. Remember, the goal in hiring is not just to fill a position for today but to secure an employee that will evolve with the growth expectations of both the position and the entire organization.

## **PART 2: DEVELOPING THE CANDIDATE PROFILE**

The next stage of making the right hire is developing a candidate profile. The candidate profile is a detailed breakdown of the educational background, technical tax knowledge, communication, management and leadership skill sets that are necessary for the candidate to possess. It is critical that these are in sync so that your company and search firm are not over or under hiring for the position for which you just developed the job description.

The candidate profile is, therefore, a template of the right candidate that fits the job as specifically outlined in the job description. It includes a candidate's:

- Professional Experience
- Education and Critical Tax Technical Expertise
- Accomplishments
- Personality Traits
- Management and Leadership Experience
- Skills

Additionally all members of the company who have any participation in the hiring process must be closely involved in creating this picture of the ideal candidate. This means that the HR person, the direct supervisor and the final decision maker must agree on the candidate profile. It is imperative that if a C level officer of the company is the final decision maker, he or she must provide their input. Without this essential voice the profile is not complete.

### **Professional Experience**

Describing the ideal candidate's experience should encompass two areas. These are years working in the field of tax; at what responsibility level, the candidate's specialties and critical tax technical knowledge. If you don't have a real understanding of the levels of experience your candidate should have, you run the risk of misusing everyone's time by finding candidates who aren't actually qualified to perform job tasks or accomplish deliverables.

Determine at a maximum and minimum the requisite experience you expect of the candidate in each part of their career history; responsibility, specialty, and technical tax knowledge. Then determine what is required or preferred in each area of tax. This includes specialty tax areas such as federal, state, local and international tax experience. Be sure to include specific areas of critical technical tax experience. Critical technical tax experience can be broken into the functional areas of tax which includes compliance,

audit, accounting and tax planning. All required experience should align with and flow from the specific job responsibilities that you've already outlined in the job description. As you now comprehend, each part of your candidates' profile is built on your earlier work in the job description.

### **Education**

As you create the profile, you should expect to specify the educational background of your candidate. This includes undergraduate, graduate and specialized education or licensing. If your candidate must have higher professional education such as an LLM, be sure to list these particular criteria. If you want a candidate who has demonstrated high achievement in their educational career, specify their class rank (upper 10% for example), or grade point average (GPA), or grade point ratio (GPR). If you need an attorney who is admitted to practice in more than one state, or other credentials that are particular to more than one country, remember to state this as well.

Are there other skills such as software skills or language skills which are desirable, but not required, to be successful in this position? If your candidate will be interfacing with international divisions or working with outsourced departments in other countries; foreign language skills might be a bonus. If your company uses specialized software be sure to include as a requisite, knowledge of this software in the candidate profile.

### **Accomplishments**

Perhaps the most important section, but potentially the most overlooked section of the candidate profile, is the one regarding accomplishments. This section is a verification of the skills needed to meet the job description.

Everyone involved in hiring this candidate including the final decision maker must enumerate the candidate's skills. There must be complete agreement about the necessary skills as revealed through accomplishments to create an accurate candidate profile.

If for example, the company requires this hire to establish a new tax division, the prospective candidate's accomplishments section must reflect a need for the candidate to have start-up experience, the ability to hire, motivate and establish priorities. Review the accomplishments section of the candidate profile against the deliverables as listed in the job description to be certain you have detailed the specific accomplishments to be sought. There must be tight linkage between what you expect to be delivered and what someone's prior accomplishments say of their skills.

### **Personality Traits**

Understanding your corporate culture will help as the team determines the personality of your candidate. For example, consider whether or not you will need a self-reliant individual who requires little outside structure. If yours is a highly structured company, a self-reliant individual may not be comfortable in such an environment. Instead your candidate profile should specify the need for a candidate who is comfortable with corporate structure. As another example, consider how innovative you need the candidate to be. Hiring someone who seeks new ways of doing things but who will be

placed in an atmosphere of predictable routine will create a candidate who will not mesh with the corporate culture.

Describe the styles necessary for effective communication and colleague relations. Will the candidate be required to provide counsel to other staff members? Can the candidate manage towards deliverables as spelled out in the job description? What self-management style is necessary? Must they be a strong leader or must they be a compromise builder? How will the candidate manage stress?

### **Management and Leadership, Experience and Skills**

Before you determine what management abilities your candidate needs, review the job description. How many people will be supervised and at what levels will they be? What are the deliverables? Reviewing these criteria from the job description will clarify the breadth of management responsibilities essential to the candidate. As was discussed earlier, the input of the final decision maker is vital. Not knowing or correctly delineating these specific management abilities is often where a hiring process can go off course. It has happened that the final decision maker, when reviewing a candidate, will reject that candidate. This most often happens when the final decision maker's management criteria have not been included in the candidate profile's management section. To prevent this occurrence, you must include all aspects of management experience from all involved in the hiring process, especially the final decision maker.

Enumerate the prospect's desired management skills in three areas; 1.) Project management, 2.) Administrative management, and 3.) Leadership. Not every position will require a prospect with all these strengths. You may need a candidate who is strong in only one or two of these areas.

Drive down into the details of what everyone expects from the candidate. If your job description reflects a project oriented set of deliverables, you naturally will be seeking an individual whose experience reflects project management. When it comes to administrative management if your division or department's reporting requirements are particularly heavy, you may require a candidate that understands the top-to-bottom organization that serves your reporting requirements. Does this job demand a person who will need to show leadership strength beyond the normal scope?

### **Summary**

While seemingly simple at first thought, the creation of an accurate candidate profile may not be so. It is predicated on a well-crafted job description that fully encompasses all areas of prospect responsibility and deliverables. The candidate profile demands the input of all who have a stake in this candidate's success, including the final decision maker. It must be tightly aligned with the job description and be comprehensive of all the tax skills and abilities necessary for success in the position. The candidate profile must create an accurate picture of the professional, educational, technical tax, management skills and abilities imperative for selecting the candidate best suited for your company.

### **PART 3: COMPANY PROFILE AND POSITION OFFER**

Once the candidate profile and job description are properly developed, it is critical to complete a comprehensive company profile and position offer that will serve as the basis to attract appropriate candidates.

The company profile provides a macro view of the organization. The profile gives candidates a true perspective and comprehension of the mission, scope and complexity of the company and the specific department they will be joining. The company profile demands transparency and full disclosure so there are few surprises throughout the interviewing process. The company profile should be written in a manner that provides answers to the logical questions a candidate will inevitably ask. During the development of the Company Profile, be sure to reference the job description and the candidate profile to keep from missing any items that were important in those sections and that may have bearing on the completed company profile. Remember you are making a positive but accurate statement about your company to the candidate who will ultimately best fit your needs.

#### **Specifications of the company profile**

In the company profile, you will need to disclose specific information that will demonstrate a well packaged company. You do not want to be caught having a well-qualified candidate asking questions in an interview that you can not readily answer. Information in the profile should include total company revenue, the approximate number of legal entities and the number of foreign countries in which your company does business.

The total revenue must break out the percentage of international revenue from domestic revenue. Doing this gives the candidate a flavor of your company as well as an idea of the complexity of your reporting and compliance issues.

Many companies have multiple entities operating in both domestic and international markets. The candidate also needs to know the number and type of entities as well as the countries in which they are organized.

Next you need to state the countries in which your company operates. In each instance break out this list by sales and manufacturing. The more you can disclose to a candidate up front, the faster the communication and information exchange process will go during the interview and hiring process.

#### **Reporting Lines**

You will need to prepare a tax department flow chart with brief descriptions of the department's structure including titles and positions. However, you need not supply this in the company profile but keep it ready to provide to the prospect after initial screening. This will provide the candidate information to understand the structure and reporting lines and how they impact the position for which they are a prospect.

Qualified candidates will want to examine just where they stand in conjunction to other team members as well as understand what opportunities or liabilities may exist based on the deliverables and objectives required in the position.

### **What makes your offer attractive?**

In order to create an effective offer, it is important to think like a candidate and proactively determine what it is he or she will desire as part of the position. During the formation of the offer, ask what makes this specific position attractive to a candidate who may ultimately fit the candidate profile? What would induce them to leave their current position and come to work at your company? Your goal is to answer the questions the candidate (who fits the profile) will have about the non-tangible aspects that may be very important in a candidate becoming interested or finally accepting the open position.

Additional questions to consider as part of the offer process is to know what opportunities for advancement or growth exist at the company. Is there a mentor within the organization to help facilitate the growth process for the business and the candidate? Is there a flexible work environment? Can the candidate telecommute? Does the position offer interaction with other business units or offices that could involve travel?

Most strong candidates will also want to understand their opportunity for advancement. Is there chance to move up in the corporate structure or within the tax department itself? What would that timeline be for such advancement and are there any assurances or performance benchmarks that can be tied into the key deliverables? For example, if your company seeks to hire a #2 person who can move up to the #1 position within two years, is there anything that might interfere, such as a current employee who will also be considered for the #1 position? Is it assured that the #1 is moving on? The candidate needs to know if this is a guaranteed move-up or if they must compete with the current employee. If the #1 has no plans to move up or retire, and the chance for the prospect to move to the #1 position is only the C-level officer creating bench strength or providing succession planning, your candidate's chances of move up are less likely and should be disclosed as such.

In another example; if the candidate is to anchor the tax planning department but wants to be working in compliance in five years, then you have a mismatch between personal goals and job description. You want to be sure to bring out where and how the person can grow and in what sections of their job responsibilities that growth might be possible.

Just as you considered the corporate culture in the creation of the candidate profile, the Company Profile should describe the culture of both the tax department and company and how they affect the atmosphere in which the candidate will work. As an example, for younger candidates it will be important to understand the level of informality versus the level of formality inherent in the culture. Can they work from home some days or do you have a relaxed dress code or flextime hours?

Finally you also need to consider your company reputation. Is your company perceived in

a good light? Are there any issues that must be anticipated and for which information must be provided in advance? Are there challenges for the new hire as they begin work? Any issues need to be honestly and transparently outlined to reduce those last minute surprises that cast doubt on the value of the position.

### **Compensation Package, Salary and Bonus**

It is essential that the offer is in sync with the required job description and candidate profile. In order to make an acceptable offer, the company must do some [salary benchmarking](#). Outline when increases can be normally expected and what the increase history is for top achievers. Also, anticipate the prospective candidate's need to know what types of bonuses have been provided and when they have been awarded. Be prepared to give the candidate a bonus history that covers the last five years. Also be prepared to answer questions about equity options (both restricted and non-restricted), their nature and timing as well as when they vest.

### **Non-cash Compensation and Benefits**

Next, you must have the details of the non-cash compensation package delineated, so the candidate that fits the described candidate profile will have a full picture of your offer package. Will he or she be provided a company car or car allowance? What is the medical benefits package? Provide a benefits summary for the candidate with your company profile and the offer.

You expect the candidate to work hard, but most every person looks forward to vacation and some even to the day when they can retire. Define for the candidate the vacation plan and number of holidays as well as sick leave. Are there other benefits such as health club membership or an executive dining room, childcare or healthcare on premises? These perks are often the touches that say as much to the candidate as salary.

Finally, review what comprises the relocation package your company can give the ideal candidate who fits the profile to do the job as described in the job description. The company must see if they can offer what the ideal candidate needs. In these days of tight real estate markets, are you prepared to ease your ideal candidate's relocation? Will the company purchase the candidate's current house, pay real estate taxes and pay closing costs on the new home so they can move quickly? Will you provide door-to-door moving service and temporary living arrangements until they can move to a new home? If your candidate will be moving to a city such as San Francisco or New York where the cost of living is higher than other cities, will you provide a cost of living adjustment (COLA)?

### **Summary**

In our first two steps we created a job description and a template for the ideal candidate. If those two items were well-crafted and contained the contributions of all on the hiring team including the final decision maker, it should be easy to write the company profile and set a compensation package. The hallmarks of these two pieces are clarity, transparency and self-examination. The company profile and compensation package are the final elements that are needed to help the ideal candidate understand the nature of the

company and how their work will fit into the tax department and the corporate culture. It will also allow them to comprehend how they will be compensated for the work you are asking that they do and what their expectations are for their future. Ultimately, the analytical enumeration of these items will benefit both the company and the candidate. You will be assured of the right hire that will flourish in your corporate culture and perform well for your company.

**This is Part 4 of the four part executive series on Job Search Analysis: The Fundamentals to Developing A More Effective Hiring Process brought to you by Tax Talent. In this executive summary, we draw conclusions from each of the last three reports to help companies understand and initiate a more effective hiring process.**

### **Key Findings**

In the last three reports, we have examined the fundamental disciplines to developing a more effective hiring process utilizing the Job Search Analysis methodology. These primary areas have included:

1. The Job Description
2. The Candidate Profile
3. The Company Profile & Position Offer

We have discovered that in order to effectively match an appropriate candidate to a position it is imperative that all three of the key areas must be identified with transparent disclosure. Additionally, all vested parties involved in the hiring and employment process must participate up front in the Job Search Analysis in order to effectively cultivate and organize the information required to market to, attract and communicate to the target candidate.

Whether the decision is to hire internally or engage a third party in the search and marketing of a particular position, these hiring fundamentals are valid to ensure efficiency within the hiring process and to protect from over or under hiring for a specific position. Without a proper hiring process, resource drains, opportunity loss and potential employment brand damage may occur. It is critical to organize and connect all three hiring elements bringing them all in sync to meet the needs of the company and the target candidate.

### **Resulting Factors of Disorganized Hiring Practices**

Many companies and departments do not take their hiring process seriously and the resulting damage can be far greater than one may assume. Without integrating the methodology of the Job Search Analysis up front prior to marketing and interviewing candidates, there are several potential loss areas which may include:

1. Inability to identify the (right) candidate

2. Candidate offer turndowns
3. Counter-offer situations
4. Short-term turnover

Without internal consensus on a position and candidate profile, there will be a disconnection between the search, the interview and the needs of the hiring authority resulting in an inability to identify and/or agree upon the (right) candidate. Lack of up front internal consensus can significantly delay finding the right candidate or end up placing the wrong person in the wrong position. Additionally, lack of unity on the needs and wants of the organization can be easily detected by strong candidates resulting in offer turn-downs or counter-offers which end up costing the company valuable time and resources.

The worst results of poor hiring practices may not reveal themselves for longer periods of time. These factors can include short term employment where candidates take a position but later realize the position is not what they assumed or what the company disclosed up front causing very costly turnover situations which reflect negatively on the company or department. Lastly, a poor hiring record or history can do extensive public relations damage as a tax employer of choice as the industry is generally a tight-knit community. It does not take long for word to spread that your organization is not prepared for quality personnel based on the level of organization in the hiring process. Each hiring mishap can have longer term damage that could be easily avoided if the proper work was put in up front to minimize the risks associated with poor hiring practices.

### **Internal Versus External Hiring Practices**

After absorbing the Job Search Analysis process, you may be faced with the decision to internalize or outsource the hiring process. Regardless of your decision, the principles of the Job Search Analysis cross over with either scenario. Should you internalize this process, be sure the hiring authority is driving the process with the proper HR support that gathers and organizes all the necessary information that must be communicated in the marketing and interview process. If you feel you have the ability and drive to initiate and manage this process then give it a try and assess your performance but remember that mistakes in the process are not always revealed until much later.

Should you decide to outsource the hiring process, be advised that you will still be required to put the necessary time in to gather the information, build internal consensus and process interviews effectively until the right candidate is right in front of your organization awaiting an appropriate offer. Third party hiring assistance may also be instrumental in developing market penetration for a specific position. Remember it is one thing to have all your job profile and hiring ducks in a row but marketing to target the perfect candidate is something that cannot be minimized.

### **Effective Hiring Administration**

To engage and maintain the interest of the hiring authority, it is imperative that he or she be supported in the job search and hiring process. Administrative support will be required to canvass all vested parties for their input, gather all the required documents and marketing and interview materials, assist the position marketing and candidate communications as well as provide fact checking and general research activities to ensure that the offer made to the target candidate is appropriate with consideration of every detail.

Once all the information is gathered in the Job Search Analysis, it is wise to research salary benchmarks and comparatives that can help determine an appropriate level of compensation for the candidate of choice. Many of these research tools for the tax field can be found on TaxTalent.com. Remember that each candidate will have specific hot buttons that will attract them to a position. It is vital that the HR person in the hiring process communicate all candidate details to the hiring authority so an effective compensation strategy can be developed that will secure the applicant's interest.

### **Effective Hiring Is A Process Not an Event**

Whether you internalize, outsource or combine multiple hiring efforts it is important to recognize that developing effective hiring practices is a process and not an event. It takes up front commitment, transparency, communication and unified consensus to ultimately drive an effective hiring process and that can take time for any organization to achieve even with external assistance. The faster a company or department recognizes and implements many of the methodologies of the Job Search Analysis, the faster their hiring results will turn positive creating an environment as the employer of choice.

The hiring process is a dynamic situation but one that can be controlled. It is vital to gather as much information internally about the position and then about each individual candidates. Match significant jobs to significant people is not easy; however, with the right information, communication strategy and business minded offer, your chances of successful hiring outcomes will greatly increase.

It is important to recognize how vital hiring practices are to your organization. Many businesses and departments act on a hit or miss hiring method and fail to recognize that there can be effective methods placed into the madness of finding the right candidate for the right position. In the end, shaping an effective hiring process can become a very effective contributor to the overall health and vitality of any business looking to grow or improve their performance.