

Cidery Job Descriptions Best Practices

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Recruiting, hiring and retaining good employees is a challenging task. However, with a clearly written job description the task gets easier.

The purpose of a job description is to clearly define what needs to be done, and clearly define the type of person you need to do it.

A well-written job description will include a short overview of the position, bullet points of tasks to be done, and a listing of important qualifications. In essence, the job description should *describe the job*.

In this short guide, we'll review Best Practices for writing your cidery job descriptions, present the One Thing that should be in your job description (but probably isn't), and provide a road map for putting the job description into practice.

Best Practice: Get it in writing

At its most basic, the job description should be in writing and given to the employee (or job candidate). Sounds obvious, but I've seen many employees hired and many employees who worked for years without a formal job description.

Sometimes we are in a hurry to hire someone and neglect to write up a job description. Other times, we just take it for granted that the employee knows what to do in the position and everything will work out fine.

Regardless, one simple basic best practice is to get the job description down on paper and get it in the hands of the employee.

Best Practice: Follow a Job Description Structure

The website BetterTeam.com defines job descriptions this way:

A job description is an internal document that clearly states the essential job requirements, job duties, job responsibilities, and skills required to perform a specific role.

The document itself can be one page, or several pages, depending on what's needed to outline the necessary requirements and skills.

A typical job description will use the following structure:

1. Short narrative overview
 - Give the candidate a feel for the position. What can they expect? What do you expect from them?
2. Bullet point list of tasks, responsibilities
 - List only what is important and meaningful. Use the 'other duties as assigned' to cover the rest

3. Qualifications you want from the candidate
 - List specialized skills, knowledge, or education
4. Specific job requirements
 - If there will be travel away from home, working nights or weekends, spell it out so there's no hard feelings later

These are the standard sections of a job description. In total, they provide a good overview of what the job is about and what is expected of the employee.

Best Practice: One Thing You Must Include in a Job Description

What most job descriptions leave out is the one thing that's most important: The priority or goal for the position.

Most job descriptions will list haphazardly, a dozen or two dozen responsibilities without any sense of priority. What's most important? The job description should clearly identify the goal for the position. The priority or goal will define how success will be measured in the role.

When the employer clearly communicates what success looks like, the employee understands what they need to do to excel in the position.

Moreover, the employer gets clear on the goal and priority for the position in order to hire the candidate you actually want.

By way of example, if customer service the single most important skill you want for your position, then hire for excellence in customer service. If you have a dozen bullet points with different duties, the priority gets lost.

A best practice in creating job descriptions is to define the priority and goal of the position. This will establish how success is measured in the role.

Best Practice: Tie the Role to the Company Mission

Another best practice for writing a good job description is to describe how the role ties into your company mission and culture.

Provide details on how the position adds value to the cidery and how the employee (or candidate) will fit into the bigger picture.

People exist to make a difference. Show them how they can contribute and make a difference at your cidery.

Best Practice: Update the Job Description Regularly

Time flies and job duties and responsibilities change quickly. On a regular basis (at least annually) review the job description and update it with changes.

We recently did this at our cidery and were surprised to find that many of the duties listed on the documents were outdated or obsolete.

This is especially important when new technology is introduced. Everything changes when new software is rolled out, and the job description needs to change as well.

Best Practices: Employee Training

Now that you have the job descriptions, it's time to put them into action with your training program.

There are dozens of training best practices out there, but below are the ones that I feel most strongly about. I believe these are the key factors to give your employees the best chance at success.

- On-Boarding: Start off on the right foot
- Big Picture Training: What we do, and how you make a difference here
- Appeal to the Highest Level of Thinking = Highest Level of Performance

On-Boarding. Remember that people are overwhelmed the first few weeks on a new job. Everything is new at this stage – new people, names to remember, new routine. Keep it simple, and allow them time to acclimate to the new environment. Before you bury them in policies and procedures, show them where the bathroom is.

Big Picture Training. In our company, we felt it was important to show employees the big picture of the business. New hires spent an entire day working each part of the operation. This provided an opportunity to experience all aspects of the business, and understand how they fit in. People exist to make a difference in the world – Big Picture Training can show them how.

Appeal to the Highest Level of Thinking. This is one of my favorite quotes from Jack Stack, author of the Great Game of Business: “When you appeal to the highest level of thinking, you get the highest level of performance.” Teach employees to think, ask questions, and understand the process of their work. Teach them to see beyond their role, and how they fit into the larger mission of the company. Teach them to ask questions: Why am I doing this? What value does this add? How can I improve?

When you appeal to the highest level of thinking, employees get engaged. When they are engaged, they have the best chance for success.

Use 80/20 Employee Training. The 80/20 rule can be applied in every area of your business including employee training. 20% of activities create 80% of the results. Likewise, you can identify the vital 20% of training that creates 80% of the employee benefit.

The Job Description should outline the vital 20%. These are the goals or priorities that you have identified as most important for the position.

80/20 training is a process you can use to identify the result you want, and focus your efforts on those training activities that help achieve the result. The 80/20 concept is a great tool, but it takes time and a thoughtful approach to do it right.

- Identify the goal – The 80% results you want
- Identify the training needed to achieve the goal – the 20% effort, and where to focus training

For example, if you hire a customer service person, and providing great customer service is the goal, then focus your training here.

It sounds obvious, but we often lose sight of the goal when the actual training begins. The customer service job involves computer training, trips to the post office or the bank, and a host of other tasks that are necessary but distract from the primary goal.

Connect the goal to training. Identify the 20% training efforts (customer service training, product training) that will get you the 80% results you want (excellence in customer service).

Think of 80/20 training as 'training on purpose'. Be thoughtful about what the job is, and the results you want to achieve. Focus most of the training time on the 20%, the vital few. Focus on the aspects that will have the biggest impact. Establish a training plan that gives you the best chance to achieve the goal.

Wrap Up + Action Items

Recruiting, hiring and retaining good employees is a tough task. However, with a clearly written job description the task gets easier.

Use the best practices listed here to create first-class documents for your cidery .

Your employees will thank you, and your human resources person will thank you as well!