

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Most farm families have not developed job descriptions. The farm work, and how it is managed, just gets done. The work is largely based on how it has been done in the past and who is currently ready and able to do it.

Transition planning is about the transfer of ownership, management and labour. As the retiring generation begins to think about stepping aside, that transfer of management and labour, and giving up the control associated with it, starts to become more important. The succeeding generation starts to fulfill those roles.

Another issue is many farms have employees who at least provide some of the labour component to the farm and in more and more situations, assume management responsibilities as well.

The change provides lots of opportunities for confusion, slippage (work not getting done correctly) and frustration. This can ultimately result in poorer financial performance, which introduces several other potential issues.

In the previous topics, you developed structure around current and future (three year) management and the activities that accompany the structure. In the next topic you will look at compensation. Job descriptions, the current exercise, need to be developed and are the link between the structures, activities and compensation.

Why is this relevant?

It is difficult to do something without instructions. Without job descriptions it is increasingly difficult to manage the transition of labour and management to the next generation.

How will this help transition planning?

- Job descriptions can be used to help direct skill set development of the next generation.
- If the retiring generation leaving requires that additional labour be hired, the job descriptions will help to attract the right people for the job.
- Job descriptions help to retain current employees.
- They are useful when talking to employees and family about their performance.
- They can help to lessen the potential for conflict that comes from people not understanding what they should be doing.

Instructions

1. Key family members involved in the transition plan discussions should participate in this exercise.
2. Determine who is going to research information about job descriptions.
3. Have that person search the internet for information and examples.
4. If you are having trouble finding good information, talk to an advisor or your local MAFRD Business Development Specialist - Farm Management.

5. Once you have a good understanding of job descriptions and have a couple of good examples, develop a specific description for one of the management or labour functions on the farm.
6. Review the job description that you have created with the rest of the family members and make changes where required.
7. If you have existing employees, get their input on what you have developed.
8. Once you are happy with this first effort, proceed to develop other job descriptions as required.
9. Keep the job descriptions for each employee or family member in a personnel file.
10. Review the job descriptions annually and make improvements or adjustments as required.



EXAMPLE

Job Description

Position Title: *General Farm Labourer*

Reports To: *Farm Manager*

Date: *April, 2013*

Job Purpose/Objectives:

- *to assist farm manager in completing daily tasks in all departments of Sample Farms Ltd.*

Percentage of Time	Key Tasks
80%	<p>Activity 1: Grain Enterprise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - operation of various harvest equipment including grain truck, combine, and auger - operation of stone picker - assistant yard manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>direct and organize incoming farm vehicles</i> • <i>end-of-day yard clean up and equipment servicing</i> • <i>prepare yard vehicles for daily tasks</i>
20%	<p>Activity 2: General Farm Labour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - perform various tasks as required

Applicant must be a high school graduate. Agricultural degree or diploma is an asset, although not required. Students of these programs are encouraged to apply. Chemical safety course is essential and can be attained courtesy of Sample Farms Ltd. if applicant is not already a holder of this certificate. Class 1 license is required although applicants willing to write and take exam will also be considered. A training and development program will be established.

Experience and Skill Requirements:

No experience is required providing applicant is willing to go through rigorous on-the-job training. However, applicants who have a farm background will be considered over those that do not.

Supervision:

Supervision will be provided by Rob Sample.

Physical Requirements:

Salary Range:

Minimum: \$x/hr

Maximum: \$x/hr

Work Hours:

8:00 am – 5:00 pm (excluding one hour for lunch). Average 40 hours/week.

Overtime:

Seasonal

Benefits:

Two weeks paid vacation after one year. Three weeks after five years. Not to be taken during seeding or harvest.

Comments:

Opportunities for advancement will be considered after two years.

How does this apply?

The exercises you have just completed are of significantly less value if you do not follow through with developing job descriptions. Working through this exercise will increase the chance of a successful transfer of management and labour to the next generation.



PLANNING POINTERS:

- Developing job descriptions does not need to be a difficult task.
- Review your job descriptions annually and make improvements and adjustments as required.
- Consider using an external advisor if you do not have the time or are worried about the process. If you are using an advisor for the first time, refer to the *How to Choose and Use an Advisor* document in the appendix on pages 305-308.



WHAT TO WATCH FOR:

- If you have existing employees, try to include them in the process as opposed to springing a job description on them. This runs the risk of causing anxiety or at the worst, having an employee decide to leave.



EXERCISE: Go to the forms appendix at the back of this guide for a blank copy of the Job Descriptions exercise on page 287.

Next steps

Congratulations on completing this topic. You are now a step closer to having a transition plan for your farm. Please proceed to the next topic area on your Transition Plan, but don't forget to add any assigned tasks that were generated by working through this topic.

Job Description

Position Title:

Reports To:

Date:

Job Purpose/Objectives:

Percentage of Time	Key Tasks
	Activity 1:
	Activity 2:

Education and Training:

Experience and Skill Requirements:

Supervision:

Physical Requirements:

Salary Range:

Work Hours:

Overtime:

Benefits:

Comments: