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Analyzing Job Tasks to Set Expectations

Tips for Conducting a Job Task Analysis:

- Map the work as it is *actually* performed, not just as it appears in an old job description.
- Turn the map into explicit expectations, training, and early performance milestones.
- For international hires, the analysis should capture both technical work and unwritten workplace practices that local employees may already understand.

Steps for Establishing Job Expectations:

1. Start with one plain-language statement summarizing the job and identify 3–5 outcomes the employee must satisfy to achieve the results they are accountable for.

2. Gather evidence from the work without relying only on the manager's view or an existing job description. (Refer to *Building a Task Inventory* on the next page). Interview the current role holder, observe busy periods, and ask new hires what they learned only *after* starting.

3. Identify hidden expectations by asking the following for every task:
   - What would an experienced employee do automatically?
   - How long does it typically take to complete the task?
   - What cues tell them how to assess task priority?
   - What decisions can they make without approval?
   - What must be escalated, to whom, and how quickly?
   - What does respectful disagreement or a request for clarification look like here?
   - Is an employee expected to speak up, stop work, or question an instruction in a safety or quality situation?
   - What does "take initiative" mean in this role?

4. Convert tasks into job postings, onboarding procedures, and expectations.

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Building a Task Inventory:

This helps identify the hidden duties that emerge on-the-job and are often not listed in the job description. Teasing out these details will help employers construct clearer job postings, providing employees with a deep understanding of their role and responsibilities beforehand, and preventing surprises and/or new-hire ghosting. For each task, document:

Category	Insight
Task	Observable action, beginning with a verb
Trigger	What causes it: daily schedule, customer call, machine issue, manager request
Frequency	Per shift/week/month; regular, occasional, or peak-period only
Time share	Approximate percentage of a normal week
Standard	What "done well" looks like: accuracy, deadline, tone, safety, quality
Independence	Observe, practice with support, perform independently, or escalate
Complexity	Routine, variable, or exception-based
Consequence	Effect of an error on safety, quality, customer, cost, or team workload
Tools and knowledge	System, form, equipment, terminology, policy, or process required
Communication	Who they speak or write to, channel, purpose, and response expectation
Support	SOP, job aid, buddy, supervisor approval, formal training
Cultural/workplace norm	Any implicit expectation, such as raising concerns early or confirming understanding

Sources: *//cord.com/hiring-insights/hiring-advice/articles/how-to-conduct-an-effective-job-task-analysis* | *www.businessnewsdaily.com/9451-clear-employee-expectations.html* | *www.indeed.com/hire/c/info/employee-expectations*

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