**Job Descriptions and Advancement**

A job description is the word picture of what the job is, what it requires of the incumbent, and the type of skills necessary to satisfactorily accomplish the job. Job descriptions have two distinct components. They are:

1. Responsibilities. A complete listing of the duties and responsibilities of the position that combine to identify all aspects of the job.

2. SKAPs. The requirements for doing the job: Skills, Knowledge, Attitude, Profile.

In organizations large enough to have several individuals performing the same basic function, you will find that SKAPs are useful in providing job growth and a career path for the employees. Using SKAPs, a job may then be divided into two or more “levels”, wherein the higher the level, the greater the responsibilities and rewards. This is the “Career Ladder” or equivalent term at your company. Following this logic, the Job Description can be generic. Consider this very simple job description for an Aircraft Pilot:

* fly plane,
* understand navigation,
* responsible for moving aircraft from A to B.

The SKAPs will depend on level of responsibility and complexity, e.g.,

* Level 1: Cessna Pilot
* Level 2: Twin Engine
* Level 3: Small Jets
* Level 4: 747 Pilot

Of course, pay would go up from the lower level to the higher level.

Let's assume your company is a high-technology, fish production facility that uses recirculating aquaculture system technology and you need to develop a set of job descriptions using the above SKAPs approach.

1. Job Title. FISH TECHNICIAN (FT)

Responsibilities. Responsible for care of fish in high-density growth environment. Duties include: Feeding, taking water samples, monitoring and correcting for water quality/level, maintaining a clean work area, and other associated duties. During harvest will be involved with collection, sorting and distribution of fish. Must be willing to work an eight (8) hour shift, with occasional overtime. Job performance requires light to moderate lifting, and the ability to stand, walk, and climb.

2. SKAPs

**FT 1 (lowest/entry level):**

Skills: No direct experience required however, must have reasonable level of skill in caring for animals. Able to lift 20 kg easily without strain.

 Knowledge/Education: Basic understanding of water chemistry, feed conversion, fish husbandry practices. Ability to safely operate loading equipment, etc. Education: High School Graduate

 Attitude: Can take direction with good spirit/attitude. Willing to pitch in where needed. Good team player.

 Salary Range for FT 1: $7.15 to $8.00 per hour (plus $.50/hr shift bonus)

**FT 2. Same as FT 1 plus:**

Skills: Skilled in managing and understanding water recirculation equipment. Construction/assembly skills. Can catch fish with small net without injury to fish.

 Knowledge: Fundamental understanding of water chemistry. Good understanding of feed conversion principles. Can identify fish gender for sorting purposes. Education: Minimum 2 year associate degree

 Attitude: Willing to assist others in training. Shows willingness to lead projects with direction

 Salary Range for FT 2: $7.50 to $8.50 per hour plus $.50 shift premium

**FT3. All of FT1 and FT2 plus:**

Skills: Skilled in constructing/cleaning/moving tanks. At least two years experience in managing fish growing environment. Plumbing skills — can assemble plumbing and piping.

Knowledge: Can undertake with minimal supervision breeding management, egg collection etc. Can contribute intellectually to optimization of feed conversion ratios. Advanced knowledge of conversion biology/physiologies. Education: 4-year University degree in related field.

Attitude: Shows willingness and ability to lead people. Shows willingness and ability to contribute intellectually

Salary Range for FT 3: $9.00 to $10.00 per hour plus $.75 shift premium

You get the idea. What this all would mean is that a person could, in theory, be hired as an FT1, work for a couple years at a Level 1 and eventually move up to a Level 2, 3 or even 4 making more money and so on as he/she goes. This approach has the advantages of:

* Gives management something definitive to work from
* Gives the employee the knowledge that he/she can “get ahead” even if, nominally, in the same job
* Promotes/allows a “flat” organizational structure that emphasizes processes/work objectives and not “bosses”
* Allows flexibility in hiring

Equivalence:

Do not use the word equivalent in job descriptions; be specific & let it stand

Do not use the “or equivalent” terminology on things such as education because the above is the “idea” profile. Let it stand as such.