

Distinction between Job Analysis and Task Analysis

In human resources, job and task analysis are intertwined in the same process of writing a job description and deciding on the characteristics of the ideal candidate to fill the role. According to the article "Employee Task and Job Analysis," task analysis is a subset of job analysis, which not only examines specific day-to-day job duties, but also considers the knowledge and training required and defines job-performance goals.

Job Analysis

Job analysis usually begins when a company wants to recruit a new employee to work in a new position. Job analysis can also occur with corporate restructuring to clarify employee roles in the face of changing job titles and shifting responsibilities. According to the website hr-guide.com, job analysis looks at special tools and equipment needed for the job, work environment, hierarchical relationships, knowledge, skills, abilities and, of course, the basic duties and tasks of the position.

Job Analysis Function

Doing a complete job analysis isn't just important when writing job descriptions for recruitment. Once you have found your perfect candidate, job analysis can help you decide on the value of the applicant's skills and experience when negotiating salary. Furthermore, employees need to have a clear idea of what their responsibilities are, and more importantly, their evaluating managers need to be on the same page. Both employees and their supervisors need a clear understanding of worker requisite knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes for job success. Without a complete job analysis, workers might fail to do required tasks or take on too much additional work because responsibilities aren't explicitly stated. The job descriptions and benchmark expectations that come from job analysis give employees and managers a common reference point and keep bias and favoritism out of annual performance reviews.

Task Analysis

Task analysis is just one part of a complete job analysis procedure, but it's important, especially when considering what on-the-job training and orientation an employee will need to succeed in her role. In other words, it is an extension of a job analysis especially for employee training and development. According to the article "Chapter 15 -- Training and Professional Development" from the FAO Corporate Document Repository, task analysis is important for identifying knowledge gaps and pinpointing areas of focus for corporate training. A good task analysis not only states basic job responsibilities, but also breaks down the specific step-by-step procedures required. For example, an administrative assistant might be responsible for maintaining a library of corporate documents. Further analysis of the task would reveal that understanding the company's in-house document management system is important, and HR might design an orientation program to help new administrative assistants build basic system knowledge.

Job Analysis Methods

Job analysis cannot be carried out successfully by an HR professional working alone. Defining responsibilities, conducting task analyses and creating performance goals requires talking with people who understand the position best. For example, if you're creating a task list for a junior developer and breaking down each duty in a detailed task analysis, a senior developer or manager would know best what a junior team member would be doing and how they should be doing it. According to hr-guide.com, HR professionals rely on internal sources of information, including interviews with managers and employees, questionnaires and observation, as well as external job classification systems when performing job analyses.