The SCALES Essential Skills Job Posting Tool

How to Create Job Postings that Highlight Essential Skills

This tool is designed to assist career practitioners in writing job postings that define job tasks and duties using Essential Skills. Including Essential Skills in job postings assists participants in "decoding" what skills the employer is looking for. Job tasks or duties that are listed in traditional job postings often have unintentional hidden meanings. Breaking down the job tasks and duties using Essential Skills language may assist in getting a true sense of what the employer is looking for and may be helpful in creating a better understanding between participant and the employer. This in turn may lead to better job retention and job success.

Career practitioners may want to use this tool to create job postings when employers call or email leads to a career or employment centre or when career practitioners meet with employers that are seeking candidates to fill job postings.

This is a sample of what a traditional job posting might look like:

EMPLOYER/COMPANY		DATE POSTED	
ABC Company		MM/DD/YYYY	
POSITION AVAILABLE			
Customer Service Representative			
ADDRESS			
123 Company Lane, Anywhere, Canada			
PHONE NUMBER		**FAX NUMBER**	
xxx-xxx-xxxx		xxx-xxx-xxxx	
CONTACT PERSON		**E-MAIL**	
Chris Smith		Csmith@abccompany.org	

NUMBER OF VACANCIES	POSITION AVAILABILITY					
2	FT	X	PT	☐	TEMP/CASUAL	☐

JOB TASKS OR DUTIES

- Customer Service
- Operate a Cash Register
- Answer Telephone
- Work under pressure
- Work with minimal supervision
- Resolve conflict situations

QUALIFICATIONS

- 2 years of Customer Service Experience
- Reliable & Punctual
- Self-Starter
- Good Problem Solving Skills

HOW TO APPLY/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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START DATE	WAGE RATE	CLOSING DATE
As soon as possible	To be negotiated	MM/DD/YYYY

So...How do we get there?

Start by breaking down the job tasks. Decoding what a job posting is asking for can be difficult. The career practitioner may need to picture themselves as either the employer or the worker at that company and ask themselves what it would be like to work in that environment and what it would take to achieve success at this job.

The job posting template used in this tool was adapted from Metro Vancouver YWCA. Their job posting can be viewed and downloaded from their website.

1 **Select a task from the job posting**

JOB TASKS OR DUTIES
Customer service
Operate a cash register
Answer telephone
Work under pressure
Work with minimal supervision
Resolve conflict situations

1. Select this job duty

2. Ask yourself the questions provided in this document

3. Identify the Essential Skills that are used to complete this task to write an Essential Skills job posting

2 **Decode the job task by analysing the parts of the task**

For each job task ask these questions:

- What does this job involve?
- What does a day in the life of the worker look like?
- What is the impact of the worker's ability to complete the tasks on customer service, profits, losses and general well being of the business?

	The worker:
• Operate a cash register	• Would likely stand • Uses a cash register (form of a computer) • Handles money (adding, subtracting, making change) • Talks/interacts with co-workers (if there was an issue such as needing additional change) • Solves problems

3 Identify the Essential Skills that match the parts of the job task

Use this process to determine the Essential Skills related to the parts of the job task

Operate a cash register		
Essential Skill:	**Questions to Ask:**	**Analyzing the Task:**
Reading	Does the duty involve reading? If so, what? What is the importance of this task? Will money be made or lost if an error is made?	No, not to a great extent.
Writing	Does the duty involve writing? If so, what length? Is it a professional letter or brief email?	No.
Document Use	Does the duty involve using documents, either to enter or retrieve information? What impact will errors have on business?	Yes. The cash register keyboard could be considered a document, with a variety of buttons to push. Speed and accuracy is critical and there are consequences. A slower pace and inaccurate input may impact sales and customer satisfaction.
Numeracy	In this task, is something measured (time, money, number of customers, number of calls)? Does the duty involve using numeracy? If so, what type? Are there several types? What is the impact of errors? In this task, is there a regular desired outcome (satisfied customers, a timeframe, a desired cost or savings)?	Yes. Money is involved. Making change, counting change. If the wrong amount of change is given, the records will be out at the end of the day and profits could be affected.
Computer Use	Does the duty involve use of technology (computers, hand held scanners, etc.)? How often?	Yes. Both a cash register and possibly a debit or credit card machine with a "chip" function. Mistakes made while using the computers may affect speed and customer satisfaction. Perhaps a calculator.
Thinking	Does the worker have to answer to someone else or do they give direction to others? Does the duty involve a significant amount of thinking? What type is most often?	Yes. Could be a variety of Thinking skills, most likely Problem Solving.

Operate a cash register (con't)		
Essential Skill:	**Questions to ask:**	**Analyzing the task:**
Oral Communication	If they deal with people on a regular basis, do they communicate orally or in a written format?	Yes, with both customers and co-workers.
Working With Others	Does the worker have to deal with people? Co-workers? Clients? Customers? Does the worker have to answer to someone else or do they give direction to others?	Yes, customers and clients.
Continuous Learning	Does the role include the requirement to continuously learn or update skills?	Possibly. There may be a requirement to increase skills on the cash register if there are technology changes.

4

List the Essential Skills that match the parts of the job task

Remember that some tasks may correspond to more than one Essential Skill. For example, the third task on this chart uses both Oral Communication and Working with Others skills.

The Worker:	**Corresponding Essential Skills:**
Uses a cash register (form of a computer)	Computer Use
Handles money (adding, subtracting, making change)	Numeracy (Money Math)
Talks/interacts with co-workers (if there was an issue such as needing additional change)	Oral Communication
	Working with Others
Solves problems	Thinking (Problem Solving)

Customer service	Greeting customers (Oral Communication)
	Discussing the sale of goods (Oral Communication)
	Problem Solving issues with orders or incorrect price tags (Thinking—Problem Solving)
	Finding products that are not in stock (Thinking)
Operate a cash register	Use cash register (Computer Use)
	Take money and give change (Numeracy)
	Communicate with the client to clarify sale (Oral Communication)
	Problem solve issues with cash register (Thinking – Problem Solving and Computer Use)
Answer the phone	Use of the phone/transfer calls (Computer Use)
	Speak with customers over the phone (Oral Communication)
	Find out information for customer (regarding products or services) (Thinking—Finding Information)
Work under pressure	Time management skills (Thinking - Job Task Planning and Organizing, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Decision Making)
Work with minimal supervision	Time management skills (Thinking – Job Task Planning and Organizing, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Decision Making)
Resolve conflict situations	Having discussions with customers or co-workers (Oral Communication and Working with Others)
	Being able to step back and think through the situation (Thinking—Critical Thinking, Decision Making, Problem Solving)

Here is an example of a job posting with a breakdown of job tasks using Essential Skills language:

Here is an example of a Job Posting with a breakdown of job tasks broken down with Essential Skills.

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Customer Service Representative

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123 Company Lane, Anywhere, Canada

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JOB TASKS OR DUTIES

Customer Service	Greeting Customers (**Oral Communication**) Discussing the sale of goods (**Oral Communication**) Problem Solving issues with orders or incorrect price tags(**Thinking Skills—Problem Solving**) Finding products that are not in stock (**Thinking Skills**)
Operate a Cash Register	Use Cash Register (**Computer Use**) Take money and give change (**Money Math**) Communicate with the client to clarify sale (**Oral Communication**) Problem Solve issues with Cash Register (**Problem Solving/Computer Use**)
Answer the Phone	Use of the phone/transfer calls (**Computer Use**) Speak with Customers over the phone (**Oral Communication**) Find out information for customer (regarding products or services) (**Thinking Skills—Finding Information**)
Work Under Pressure	Time Management Skills (**Thinking Skills--Job Task Planning and Organizing**) **Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Decision Making**
Work With Minimal Supervision	Time Management Skills (**Thinking Skills--Job Task Planning and Organizing**) **Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Decision Making**
Resolve Conflict Situations	Having discussions with Customers or Co-workers (**Oral Communication/Working with Others**) Being able to step back and think through the situation (**Thinking Skills—Critical Thinking, Decision Making, Problem Solving**)

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Template of Questions to Ask when decoding job tasks in Essential Skills Language

Essential Skill:	Questions to Ask:	Analyzing the task:
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Writing	Does the duty involve writing? If so, what length? Is it a professional letter or brief email?	
Document Use	Does the duty involve using documents either to enter or retrieve information? What impact will errors have on business?	
Numeracy	In this task, is something measured (time, money, number of customers, number of calls)? Does the duty involve using numeracy? If so, what type, are there several types? What is the impact of errors? In this task, is there a regular desired outcome (satisfied customers, a timeframe, a desired cost or savings)?	
Computer Use	Does the duty involve use of technology (computers, hand held scanners, etc.)? How often?	
Thinking	Does the worker have to answer to someone else or do they give direction to others? Does the duty involve a significant amount of thinking? What type is most often used?	
Oral Communication	If they deal with people on a regular basis, do they communicate orally or in a written format?	
Working With Others	Does the worker have to deal with people? Co-workers? Clients? Customers?	
Continuous Learning	Does the role include the requirement to continuously learn or update skills?	

EMPLOYER/COMPANY		DATE POSTED

POSITION AVAILABLE
8

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER	FAX NUMBER

CONTACT PERSON	E-MAIL

NUMBER OF VACANCIES	POSITION AVAILABILITY					
	FT		PT		TEMP/CASUAL	

JOB TASKS OR DUTIES   Specific Skills / Essential Skills

QUALIFICATIONS

HOW TO APPLY/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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