

We're Hiring:



Hiring IT Employees Doesn't Have to Be a Chore

by Sheri Lewis

The task of writing job descriptions may be one of the more stressful components of a law library manager's job. Such stress may be compounded when the manager is seeking applicants for positions that require unique and specialized skills, such as information technology positions. At this year's Annual Meeting and Conference, Program G-3, "We're Hiring: Designing IT Job Descriptions to Attract the Very Best," provided some excellent guidance for law librarians in hiring for IT positions.

The program had two complementary components. The first element was a very practical presentation by a human resources expert, **Michael Speight** of the University of Minnesota. Through the use of an overhead projector and handouts for all attendees, Speight reviewed the basics of two HR components: the job analysis and the job description. He explained that job analysis is "a systematic process of collecting data and making certain judgments about all of the important information related to the nature of a specific job." While he cautioned against the routine use of a job analysis due to the time and expense involved, Speight pointed out that this HR component can have many uses, including writing job descriptions, evaluating performance, employment planning, recruiting and determining compensation.

Speight focused on the actual writing of job descriptions, with examples related to information technology. He identified

physical and environmental requirements; and (10) a disclaimer statement reserving the right to change or add duties to the position. With respect to knowledge, skills and abilities, the speaker discussed the difference between minimum and preferred qualifications and the practice of including experience equivalencies for preferred educational credentials.

The second major component of this program was a presentation of the Job Descriptions Database, developed by the Computing Services Special Interest Section of AALL. **Robert Linz**, associate director of the library and information technology coordinator at the Ave Maria School of Law, and **Don Arndt**, associate director and head of public services at the LaValley Law Library of the University of Toledo, are the co-developers of this database. Linz delivered an informative behind-the-scenes look at the creation of the database using a slide show and a display of Web pages. Arndt, the coordinator of program G-3, solicited questions concerning the database and suggestions from the audience for improvement.

For two years, the CS SIS Job Descriptions Database has been a repository, or warehouse, for law library and legal information-related job descriptions. The database was developed to answer a frequent question posted on listservs, "Does anybody have a job description for ...?" Originally conceived as a database devoted to information technology

Designing IT Job Descriptions to Attract the Very Best

10 components of a job description: (1) title heading; (2) general purpose and objective of the position; (3) major job functions; (4) tasks within each major function; (5) percentage of time spent on each major function; (6) major job functions by importance to the position; (7) essential functions vs. non-essential functions; (8) knowledge, skills and abilities; (9)

positions, the content has been expanded to include a wide range of positions in various types of libraries.

The Job Descriptions Database has four functionalities. It allows the user to browse job descriptions by type, to search for job descriptions by keyword, to post a job description to the database, and to receive notifications of newly added descriptions by e-mail. The database developers collect various job descriptions posted on listservs, delete institutional and contact information, and index each description into one or more appropriate categories. There are three broad categories of job descriptions in the database. The Information Technology Job Category includes network support, hardware support, software support, Web site development, training and library computing services positions. The Library Job Category includes public services, technical services, foreign law library services, government library services and private law library services. The Administrative Category includes management jobs, such as library director and associate or assistant director positions, and clerical and library support openings. As of the writing of this article, the CS SIS Job Descriptions Database included 250 indexed job descriptions. Linz and Arndt plan to continue to improve the database by further defining job categories and developing a Job Descriptions Builder to facilitate creating new job descriptions using parts from existing descriptions.

The CS SIS Jobs Descriptions Database may be found at www.avemarialaw.edu/aall or by linking from the Computing Services SIS Web page at www.aallnet.org. A bibliography of job description resources created for this program is located at law.utoledo.edu/lavalleylibrary/darndt/g3bibliography.htm.

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