

PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM MANAGEMENT TRAINING
Personnel Management

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PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Personnel Management

Course Description:

Hiring and retaining good employees is essential in achieving the goals of any organization, including those of a water utility. If your water system's goal is to consistently provide your customers with affordable drinking water that meets their expectations and complies with federal and state drinking water standards, you stand a better chance of meeting this goal if you have the right team of employees working for you. This course provides basic personnel management concepts that will enable you to better manage one of your water system's most important assets - your staff.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this course, participants should be able to do the following:

1. Differentiate between the functions of Governing, Managing, and Operating.
2. Explain the reasons, considerations, and costs associated with employee turnover.
3. Explain the importance of a job description and the components of a good job description.
4. List the necessary steps in hiring a new employee.
5. Explain the necessity of conducting regular performance reviews to evaluate employees.
6. State the importance of and retaining qualified employees.

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Section

A

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER 1.

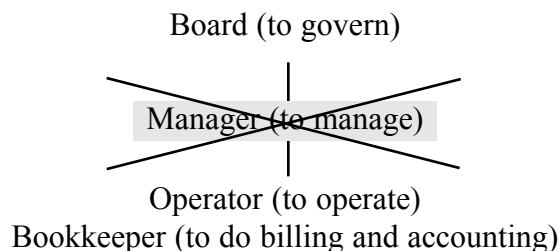
Governing vs Managing vs Operating

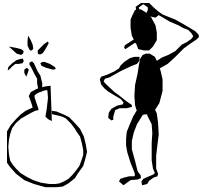
In many small systems, there's some confusion about the division of responsibilities among the Board and the paid employees of the system. As with any business, a small water system has to have clearly defined roles for each person who's responsible for delivering the product (in this case, safe dependable water) to the customer. Many small systems fail to define the roles and responsibilities and establish clear lines of authority. This can lead to the tasks not being completed, conflicts, and frustration. No one wants these types of problems in the workplace.

Differentiating between governing, managing, and operations provides small water systems with the basis for clearly defining each person's role. The board's role is to govern. Governing is different than managing. **Governing** involves overall responsibility for the company through the exercise of authority that includes establishing policies, priorities, and plans. **Managing** involves directing and implementing the policies, priorities, and plans established by the Board of Directors. A manager directs the affairs of the utility on behalf of and at the direction of the Board of Directors. **Operating** a system means carrying out the day-to-day tasks necessary to provide water to customers.

Operating the system, therefore, means ensuring proper treatment of the water, maintaining customer accounts, billing, collections, and accounting. Operators are trained to operate a water treatment and distribution system. Bookkeepers are trained to do customer billing and account for system revenues and expenses.

Some systems have paid managers to direct and oversee the day-to-day operations. But, many small systems don't have the money to hire someone to manage. Because small systems may have only a few staff (operator, billing clerk, meter reader, etc.) and no paid manager, there is a gap between the governing and operating functions that looks like this:





**VERY OFTEN, SMALL
SYSTEM BOARD
MEMEBERS DON'T
RECOGNIZE THE
MANAGEMENT
FUNCTION GAP
BETWEEN THEIR
DUTIES AND THE
DUTIES OF THE
OPERATOR AND
BOOKKEEPER.**

The lack of money to hire a manager does not eliminate the need for someone to perform the management function. The same kinds of management activities needed for large systems must still get done in a small system. The question becomes, "how and by whom will the system be managed?"

Without paid management, one of the following three things happens:

1. Management tasks simply do not get done because employees don't see it as their responsibility to do them.
2. The Board (intentionally or unintentionally) delegates the responsibility for performing management tasks to the operator, bookkeeper, or other employees who then becomes responsible for performing the tasks.
3. Management activities are accomplished by the board as a whole or by an individual board member who accepts the responsibility.

As a board member of a small system, it is critical to recognize that there are management responsibilities and tasks that must be done even though there may not be paid managers to do them.

Board members should expect problems when management functions are added to the duties of employees who were hired with the expectation of performing certain tasks that did not include managing the system. Not only may the employee not be trained or have the ability to perform the management duties that become their responsibility, they may also not have the time or the desire to perform them. Employees may resent assuming these additional responsibilities, particularly if there is no additional compensation.

Although some delegation of administrative duties to the operator and/or bookkeeper of a small system isn't unusual, it is recommended that it be done intentionally and that employees be compensated for the additional responsibility. While many employees are capable of performing management duties some are not and it is important to consider the following before delegating management tasks.

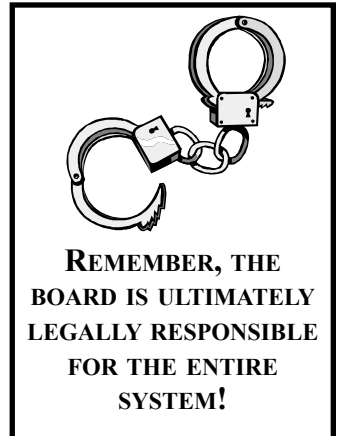
- Does the employee have the experience necessary to perform the duties?*** For example, if an operator is expected to supervise the bookkeeper, does the operator have any supervisory experience or training?

- ❑ ***What is the employee's workload?*** Is it reasonable to ask the employee to take on additional responsibility? Areas to consider when answering this question include the number of hours the employee has been working on a weekly basis; has the employee been able to take time off to use vacation or has company demands required that they forfeit vacation time; and do you have customers who have complained due to extended response time because the employee has more work to do than it is reasonable to accomplish during a normal work week?
- ❑ ***What is the employee's compensation?*** Additional responsibilities, especially responsibility for management functions, require consideration of an increase based on comparable compensation for managers in other water systems.

If the decision is made to delegate management tasks to an employee, use a system of oversight and regular communication to ensure success. Board members should not just turn over total responsibility to the operator and bookkeeper and walk away.

The best solution to assignment of management responsibilities is to discuss any management tasks that are required for the position with the prospective employee before the hiring decision is made. Including these responsibilities in the written job description used during the interview and selection process is the place to start this discussion and ensures that all employees or potential employees understand the job expectations.

Clear operating policies and procedures combined with job descriptions that are current and that accurately reflect the tasks and responsibilities provide clear guidelines within which to operate. Developing interview questions that are directly related to the duties defined in the job description provide the basis of clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and reporting relationships.



Summary

Often, small systems do not have the resources to hire paid management staff. Many small system problems are the result of boards of directors not clearly defining the management responsibilities expected of employees. As a result, some systems end up not being managed at all. If your system is one of those without a paid manager, be sure to delegate management tasks intentionally; let the employee know, in writing, what you expect them to do; and, compensate the employee for the management responsibilities they are expected to perform.

CHAPTER 2.

Hiring the Right Person for the Right Job

The primary component needed to keep your system running smoothly is people - qualified employees. A system needs employees who are capable of:

- Completing the routine daily tasks that keep the system running.
- Performing the managerial duties delegated to them by the Board of Directors.
- Accomplishing the tasks necessary to achieve the annual goals and, ultimately, the long-range plan or strategic vision.

The choice of people, or human resources, is as important to achieving a board's vision as the choices made regarding money, equipment, and technology. The operator and/or manager, bookkeeper, clerical support, and maintenance staff are essential to the operation and success of the system. Let's examine the basics of building job descriptions to meet your system's needs and how you can make sure your hiring decisions are effective.

ANALYZING EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

When a system has frequent turnover, it is probably due to one of two things:

1. The person you hire isn't the right person for the job; or,
2. The job isn't right for the person you hired.

An example of the first case is someone who doesn't have the necessary skills to perform the job functions. An example of the second case is someone who has the skills but does not agree with the duties they are expected to perform - they just don't feel they are being paid enough, etc. In both cases, the "person/job fit" is not there.

When filling a vacancy, first consider why the position is vacant. If the system is expanding, there is not much to look for - growth is typically a good thing. However, if the opening is for an existing position, some thought as to why the previous employee either quit or was dismissed is necessary before a replacement is hired. Trying to pinpoint the reasons for

turnover in advance of hiring a replacement could prevent future turnover. For example, if operators are leaving on a consistent basis for nearby systems that pay better, the system should seriously consider increasing compensation before hiring a replacement. Board members may not have thought about the cost of employee turnover, but it is quite high. The cost includes both direct and indirect costs.

Direct costs include advertising the position, spending time interviewing candidates, and potential increases in unemployment insurance rates. In extreme cases, legal expenses may be incurred. For example, a former employee may file a wrongful discharge lawsuit that, even if you win in court, you lose time and money defending against the charges.

Indirect costs include lost productivity while you're waiting for a replacement, lower morale and productivity of other employees, a potentially poor reputation as an employer, and increased difficulty and expense for recruiting new employees. In addition, if the former employee in the position was not capable, productivity was lost while the person was employed and the system may now be scrambling to recover from the bad decision made when that individual was hired.

For these and other reasons, hiring the right person for the right job and **keeping the right person in the right job** is a very important function of the Board of Directors. The remainder of this chapter presents ideas for doing just that.

BUILDING A GOOD JOB DESCRIPTION

Before hiring a new employee, it is necessary to fully understand the job functions that the person is expected to perform thus, it is necessary to have a written job description for the position that accurately reflects the tasks and responsibilities. In other words, the first step is to define the work to be performed. To illustrate these points, sample job descriptions will be used as examples during this training. (Note: Sample job descriptions included at the end of this chapter include: Bookkeeper/Operations Clerk, Operator/Manager, and Maintenance Technician.) All sample job descriptions follow the same format.

In presenting the following suggestions for defining jobs and hiring employees, we realize that in many small communities and rural areas there may be a small pool of available and qualified candidates to fill these

positions. Some of the ideas may not be applicable given community characteristics and system size, but utilizing as many of the suggestions as possible improves the chances of hiring the right person for the right job.

1. The ***Job Summary*** includes an overall description of the job, to which the employee reports, whether the position is part-or full-time, whether it is an exempt (salaried) or non-exempt (hourly) position, the length of the introductory period, and, in the case of employees who handle money, the requirement that they must be bonded.
2. The ***Educational Qualifications and Experience*** needed for the job includes level of education requirements and the minimum number of years of experience required.
3. The ***Operational Duties*** the employee is expected to perform includes the routine, daily tasks that are necessary to keep the system running.
4. A description of the ***Duties Related to the Management and Administration of the System*** are the tasks reviewed in Chapter 1 - those routine management tasks that the board delegates to employees when there is not a system manager. These duties usually begin with terms like advises, conducts, recommends, determines, manages, and supervises.
5. The description of the ***Duties Related to the Strategic Goals of the System*** includes any tasks assigned to an employee that are necessary to achieve the short-range (annual) goals and, ultimately, the long-range goals for the system.
6. A listing of the ***Knowledge and Skills*** the employee must have to successfully carry out the duties. For each duty, the knowledge or skills needed to perform the job tasks must be defined. Using the Bookkeeper/Operations Clerk job description as an example, the first duty requires knowledge of double-entry bookkeeping using a standard Chart of Accounts. The second duty requires knowledge of how to balance bank accounts, how to maintain cash receipt journals, etc. The duties that deal with the public require the ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing as well as the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff, customers, and the general public. All duties require the ability to understand and follow oral and written instructions.

XYZ WATER SUPPLY CORPORATION
BOOKKEEPER/OPERATIONS CLERK

Job Summary:

Under the supervision of the Secretary/Treasurer of the XYZ Water Supply Corporation, the Bookkeeper/Operations Clerk performs a wide variety of accounting functions related to the proper financial management and operation of the Utility. This is a non-exempt (hourly wage) position that works under minimum supervision. The position is hired by the full Board of Directors. Employee must be bonded.

Education and Experience:

Requires at minimum a high school diploma or equivalent with at least two years cash accounting experience working in a public or private organization, preferably with a high level of customer contact. Position requires a basic knowledge of computer operation, preferably with experience with accounting and billing software.

Operational Duties:

- Maintains General and Special account ledgers in a standard double entry Chart of Accounts for the classification of all assets, liabilities, expenses, revenues, and other accounting transactions.
- Maintains check registers, cash receipt journals, monthly disbursement and collections summaries, reconciles monthly bank statements. Prepares checks for Board signature.
- Maintains and prepares payroll, including federal, state, and local withholding taxes.
- Prepares bills and receives payment of water bills and posts payments to accounts; makes change and prepares monies for deposit; prepares shut-off notices, bills, and other materials for mailing. Prepares and submits to the Board of Directors those checks requiring Board signature.
- Prepares monthly financial reports providing: the current month's revenues and expenditures; actual year-to-date revenue and expenditures; projected 12-month revenues and expenditures versus budgeted revenues and expenditures; net gain or loss for the month and year-to-date; beginning and ending balances for all operating and reserve accounts; and a summary of all past due accounts.
- Accepts applications for new service, transfers, or termination of service; maintains Individual Customer Accounts.
- Provides information and assistance to customers with questions or complaints; provides assistance and/or refers to proper person.

- Performs general office duties such as ordering office supplies as needed, answering correspondence as needed and maintaining correspondence files, and other clerical tasks as assigned by the supervisor.

Duties Related to the Management and Administration of the System:

- Advises and assists the Board regarding financial and administrative procedures.
- Advises and assists the Board in developing the Annual Budget.
- Assists external auditors to complete Annual Audit.
- Supervises temporary or part-time clerical help.
- Works closely with Board and Operator in procuring equipment, supplies, and outside services.

Duties Related to the Strategic Goals of the System:

- Collect any past due accounts that remain after the Board members' 3-month collection activity.
- Determine if hardship applications qualify for time payment plan.
- Prepare and submit to Board for signature a letter to customers stating policy dealing with unpaid bills and the intention to enforce it.
- Mail letter with customer bills.
- Report orally and in writing the Past Due Account Summary at all monthly Board meetings.
- Assist Board Budgeting and Rate Setting Committee to develop budgets for the next five years.
- Assist Budgeting and Rate Setting Committee to complete a rate study.
- Assist in educating the public about the need for a rate increase.

Required Knowledge and Skills:

- Knowledge of cash accounting procedures.
- Knowledge of basic math principles.
- Knowledge of basic office procedures.
- Working knowledge of computers.
- Ability to learn new software programs.

- Ability to sort, classify, code, and otherwise prepare financial records for computer input.
- Ability to prepare local, state, and federal payroll tax documents.
- Skills in public relations and proper telephone etiquette.
- Ability to respond to inquiries from the public, provide assistance and routine information, and refer non-routine questions to the proper person.
- Ability to maintain files in an established filing system using set procedures.
- Ability to understand and follow oral and written instructions.
- Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing.
- Ability to supervise subordinates' work.

XYZ WATER SUPPLY CORPORATION
MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN

Job Summary:

Under the supervision of the Operator of XYZ Water Supply Corporation, the Maintenance Technician performs a wide variety of tasks for the efficient maintenance, repair and evaluation of the mechanical parts of the system. This is a non-exempt (hourly wage) position that works under medium supervision. Position will be on 24-hour call and paid at 1 ½ times the regular hourly wage for hours over 40 per week. The Operator hires the position. There is a six-month probationary period. Evaluations are conducted at the end of the probationary period and annually thereafter.

Education and Experience:

Requires at minimum a high school diploma or equivalent. Requires two years experience in mechanical trades. At least two years experience repairing and maintaining standard water system equipment preferred.

Operational Duties:

- Performs routine maintenance inspections of equipment; performs repairs, adjustments, and maintenance of pumps, electric motors, valves, meters, chemical feeders and filters, lubricates and oils machinery, maintains gas engines and compressors, and maintains proper records of maintenance work
- Helps operator install and remove pumps and motors, maintains wells, including testing, taking readings, and keeping wells clean
- Helps operator maintain inventory of materials, supplies, and equipment needed and prepares purchase requisitions as necessary
- Records meter and gauge readings and notes significant fluctuations, collects data on specified plant rounds, reviewing data for accuracy and appropriateness
- Responds to improper readings by making necessary changes to assure correct levels and pressures
- Performs maintenance on buildings and grounds
- Reads customers' meters once a month
- Responds to emergency conditions according to standard procedures

Duties Related to the Management and Administration of the System:

- Advises and assists the operator regarding repair/replacement of needed equipment
- Advises and assists the operator in developing estimates for recommended purchases of goods and services

Duties Related to the Strategic Goals of the System:

(These are hypothetical examples based on a strategic goal of "reducing unaccounted for water or water loss to 15%")

- Assists Operator with leak detection
- Reports equipment failures, meter malfunctions, and unusual excessive water use to Operator

Required Knowledge and Skills:

- Working knowledge of the methods, practices, tools, and materials used in the operation, maintenance, and repair of water treatment machinery and equipment
- Working knowledge of plumbing methods and techniques and low voltage electricity
- Mechanical aptitude and good finger dexterity
- Ability to read gauges and meters accurately
- Ability to prepare accurate records and reports
- Physical stamina and no physical limitations on lifting
- Ability to understand and follow oral and written instructions
- Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with the staff

XYZ WATER SUPPLY CORPORATION

SYSTEM OPERATOR/MANAGER

Job Summary:

Under the supervision of the Board of Directors of XYZ Water Supply Corporation, the System Operator/Manager performs a wide variety of tasks necessary for the efficient production and distribution of water for sufficient quantity and quality to meet customer demand. This is a non-exempt (hourly wage) position that works under minimum supervision. Position will be on 24-hour call and paid at 1 ½ times the regular hourly wage for hours over 40 per week. The position is hired by the full Board of Directors. There is a six-month probationary period. Evaluations are conducted at the end of the probationary period and annually thereafter.

Education and Experience:

Requires at minimum a high school diploma or equivalent, a valid Class II State Operator Certification, and at least two years experience working at a ground water system with at least 400 connections.

Operational Duties:

- Ensures operational compliance with state and federal EPA water quality standards.
- Maintains routine water test records and prepares appropriate production and treatment reports.
- Provides regular oral and written reports to the Board regarding system status/needs.
- Maintains inventory of materials, supplies, and equipment needed and prepares purchase requisitions as necessary.
- Batches chemicals in accordance with established operating procedures.
- Records meter and gauge readings and notes significant fluctuations, collects data on specified plant rounds, reviewing data for accuracy and appropriateness. Responds to improper readings by making necessary changes to assure correct levels and pressures.
- Performs routine maintenance inspections of equipment; performs repairs, adjustments, and maintenance of pumps, electric motors, valves, meters, chemical feeders and filters, lubricates and oils machinery, maintains gas engines and compressors, and maintains proper records of maintenance work.
- Installs and removes pumps and motors, maintains wells, including testing, taking readings, keeps all equipment clean and in proper working order.
- Calculates water loss figures.

- Responds to emergency conditions according to standard procedures.

Duties Related to the Management and Administration of the System:

These are hypothetical examples based on a strategic goal of "reducing unaccounted for water or water loss to 15%)"

- Advises and assists the Board regarding repair / replacement of needed equipment.
- Develops estimates for recommended purchases of goods and services.
- Advises and assists the Board in developing the Annual Budget.
- Works closely with engineers, contractors, Fire Chief, Planning Office, and state regulatory officials.
- Participates with the Board and consulting engineers in planning system improvements or expansions.
- Handles customer inquiries and complaints related to water service.
- Supervises part-time operational help, meter reader, and maintenance staff.

Required Knowledge and Skills:

- Extensive knowledge of the methods, practices, tools, and materials used in the operation, maintenance, and repair of water storage, treatment, and distribution equipment and machinery, including but not limited to:
- Extensive knowledge of the chemical and physical processes for treating water.
- Working knowledge of the mechanics of pumps and other electrical equipment and machinery.
- Ability to learn plant electrical systems, power circuit changes, and circuit breaker resets.
- Ability to understand plant hydraulics and operation of valves and bypasses.
- Ability to perform basic chemical test and quality control analysis.
- Ability to detect and diagnose faulty operation of equipment and make corrections.

- Thorough knowledge of the equipment, tools, and procedures used in installing and repairing water mains, services, fire hydrants, and meters.
- Knowledge of safety regulations for crew and public safety and the proper use of chlorine and other hazardous chemicals.
- Ability to plan, organize, and supervise (if necessary) the operation, maintenance, and repair of the utility's storage, treatment and distribution systems, and the organizational skills necessary for scheduling daily activities.
- Ability to prepare concise and accurate records and reports.
- Ability to project the utility's needs and plan for necessary expansions and improvements.
- Skills in public relations and the ability to respond to customer questions and complaints about water quality.
- Ability to understand and follow complex oral and written instructions.
- Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with the Board, staff, contractors, municipal officials, consulting engineers, and the general public.
- Ability to supervise subordinates' work.

DEVELOPING THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

After the job description for the open position is complete, the next step is to develop the interview questions. There are questions that it is illegal to ask during an interview. Basically, stay away from questions that have more to do with personal lifestyles than job experience. If the question is not related to performance on the job, it should not be asked.

Determining whether or not the candidate has the knowledge and skills to perform the job duties is an integral part of the interview process. ***But, equally important is to find out if the candidate can apply that knowledge in real life situations and if the candidate has the motivation to apply the knowledge.*** Asking candidates questions about how they have dealt with real problems or how they would deal with hypothetical problems typically encountered during performance of the job duties is the best way to obtain information on the candidates' motivation and skills application. Remember, civil rights laws require that all applicants be treated equally. This is usually interpreted to mean that the selection system cannot ask a question or request performance of a task by one applicant and not others.

For the Bookkeeper/Operations Clerk position, questions that would be helpful in obtaining this type of information include:



"Tell me about a time you had to deal with a customer who was angry about his/her bill?" if the candidate has been employed in a similar position; or,



"If a customer called and was really mad about his/her bill, how would you handle it?" (If the candidate has not been employed in a similar position, try the previous question.)

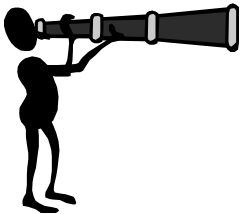
Another aspect of your interview questions is trying to find out if the candidate would "fit in." Each system has its own particular "work environment." It may be casual or formal. There may be a great deal of freedom to make independent decisions or the Board of Directors may make all major decisions. Make a list of the predominant characteristics of your system's unique culture and hire the candidate that fits into that culture. Hiring someone whose *preferred* work environment is the opposite of the system's *actual* work environment is not likely to work out in the long run and turnover will result.

Finally, when developing interview questions, consider the strategic vision defined by the board for the system. Too often, in the rush of trying to find a new employee, the focus is on how the job is currently accomplished without much thought being given to the strategic implications. Think about how the board envisions the system five years later. What is needed in the position is a candidate who not only can perform the day-to-day tasks, but who can also help achieve the annual goals and the objectives of the long-term vision. When writing interview questions, include questions that will help determine whether or not the candidate has the capability and motivation to move toward achieving the long-range goals.

To assess skills, clerical applicants may be given a typing test to determine whether or not he/she has the minimum skills required to perform the job functions. Checking references is one way to verify past experience and having the candidate provide a transcript verifies education. The following are examples of basic questions that can be included in the interview that do not specifically address the skills, education, or experience requirements of the job description but are designed to address the person/job fit.

1. When were you most satisfied or dissatisfied in your work? What was most satisfying or dissatisfying about that?
2. When were you most satisfied or dissatisfied working in a company? What was it about the company that made it satisfying/dissatisfying?
3. Tell me about one of the most difficult and demanding tasks you've had to complete. How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with that?
4. A company's size and culture can foster or impede an upbeat, energetic atmosphere where employees can get to know one another well. Tell me about a company for which you worked and describe the degree of fun and friendliness that was or was not present. How did you feel about that?
5. Tell me about a job you had that did not require additional learning after the initial training for you to be effective. How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with that?
6. Some companies operate with minimal staff resources, while others have a sizeable staff. Describe one of your past employers that had one of these work environments. How did you feel about that?
7. Tell me about a job you had that required high attention to details. How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with that, and why?

8. Tell me about a job you've had in which the work environment was or was not comfortable (temperature, atmosphere/décor, noise levels, humidity, dust, etc.). How did you feel about that?
9. Tell me about a time in your job when your opportunities for promotion or advancement were limited. How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with that?
10. Tell me about a situation in which you worked alone much of the time. How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with that, and why?
11. Tell me about a job in which you had to follow established procedures to accomplish routine tasks. How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with that, and why?
12. What job activities have you found require the most energy? What did you do to maintain your effectiveness?
13. In your most recent position, how did you define doing a good job? Did you do a good job? How did you know? Give me an example.
14. Tell me the one word that best describes you at work. Why?
15. Why are you interested in working for our company?



ADVERTISING THE OPEN POSITION

After the job description has been finalized and the list of interview questions developed, the next step is to advertise the open position. Using the Job Summary and Education and Experience sections of the job description to write the ad will provide a basis for describing the position to potential candidates. The following is a sample advertisement based on the job description for a System Operator/Manager.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY: System Operator/Manager for the XYZ Water System. This position performs a wide variety of tasks necessary for the efficient production and distribution of water of sufficient quantity and quality to meet customer demand. Requirements include a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent, a "2" State Operator Certification (or the ability to obtain certification within 6 months,) and a valid state driver's license. At minimum of two years experience working in a ground water system with at least 400 connections is preferred. 24-hour emergency on-call. Applications are available at 134 Rose Street, XYZ, USA, 78548. Application deadline is 1/26/06.

INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES

Form the interview team during the time period that applications are being received. A team of three people to conduct the interviews is an effective way to hire the best candidate for the job. Having perspective and input from more than one person typically results in a better hiring decision being made.

Match the interview team to the open position - for example, when interviewing for a highly technical and specialized position like a System Operator, have at least one team member who is technically qualified to assess the candidates' technical knowledge. If the technical expertise is not available within the system that is hiring, options include asking a technical expert from a nearby system to participate in the interview process. It is worth paying for this individual's time to ensure hiring someone who knows that they are doing. Before the interview, members of the interview team should carefully review the candidate's application and/or resume a second time.

Select candidates for interviews when their experience and education, as reflected on their application, appear to be the closest to the ideal you are looking for. Allow enough time during the interview to thoroughly cover the interview questions as well as allowing time for the candidate to ask questions about the job. The length of the interview is proportionate to the complexity of the position.

During the interview, one member of the interview team has the role of asking the questions while the other members observe the candidates as they respond, ask follow-up questions for clarification, and take notes of the candidate's responses. Taking notes is a critical to making the best decision on the candidate to hire for the long-term success of the system. If the candidate clearly indicates that the position is temporary, the interview team should take this into consideration when determining whether or not such a candidate is the best fit for the job.

The first step during the actual interview is to explain all of the duties and responsibilities of the position. This is typically accomplished by reviewing the job description with the candidate. Another important part of the interview is to let the candidate know the length of the introductory period and that employment may be terminated at any time during the introductory period. Before concluding the interview, ***be certain that the candidate has provided information on and authorization for checking at least two past job references and one personal reference.***

Remember, a successful employee has to have the knowledge and skills to do the job, the ability to apply that knowledge, and the desire or motivation to do the job.

SELECTING THE CANDIDATE WITH THE BEST JOB FIT

As soon as possible after each interview, while the details are still fresh in the minds of the interview team members, have each member rate the candidate. Use the job description as the basis for the review and decide if the candidate's strengths are in the most critical areas of the job and if they have the potential to become quickly competent in the most important aspects of the job. Completing this process to rate candidates will result in a ranking of the candidates who are most likely to be successful in the position.

After the interviews and ranking processes are completed, the decision is made on whether or not any of the candidates are the right person for the job. Now it is time to **check the references** of the candidate most likely to be hired. If two or more candidates appear to be equally qualified, check the references of both applicants and use the information you receive to decide who will receive the job offer. Ask the same questions for each reference check. Requests for references may be either via telephone or written request. The following are examples of questions that may be asked during reference checking.

1. How long have you known _____?
2. How long did you work with _____?
3. On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the best, rate _____ on dependability? Teamwork? (Any area that is related to the job may be substituted.)
4. Is _____ eligible for rehire? If not, why?
5. The position _____ has applied for is _____ and involves these types of duties: [**list the most important duties of the position**]. Do you have any reservations about recommending _____ for this position?
6. Is there any additional information you would like to provide?

If, after the complete selection process, there appears that no one who was interviewed could step-in and do the whole job immediately, is there someone who could do most of the job and learn the rest with additional training or experience? If so, consider offering the position to that candidate using the option of lower compensation during an extended introductory period with a requirement for completion of training during that time period.

If, after the complete selection process, it is clear that not one of the candidates interviewed can do the job, keep the job "open" and continue accepting resumes. It may be necessary to re-advertise the position in order to obtain additional candidates. During the time the position continues to be open, if there are tasks that have to be done, hiring temporary help just to take care of the bare essentials is an option.

The final step of the selection process is to advise all candidates of their status, whether they were interviewed or not. The method most often used to accomplish this is to send "thanks but no thanks" letters to the candidates. Sample letters are included at the end of this chapter.

A successful selection process results in hiring a candidate who is the best person/job fit. A system can get into serious trouble fairly quickly if positions are filled with people that clearly cannot do what needs to be done. Taking the time necessary to find the right person for the right job will pay off!

Summary

- ❑ The purpose of the interview and selection process is for the interviewers to systematically collect evidence of a candidate's ability to perform well in those key areas that are critical to successful job performance.
- ❑ Qualified employees are needed to implement long-range plans and to keep the system running well while the Board of Directors works toward their vision of the future. Qualified employees are capable of:
 - Completing the routine daily tasks that keep the system running.
 - Performing the managerial duties the board may delegate to them.
 - Accomplishing the tasks necessary to achieve the annual goals and, ultimately, the long-range plan or strategic vision.
- ❑ Employee turnover has both direct and indirect costs - knowing why previous employees either quit or were dismissed helps avoid future turnover.
- ❑ A written job description that accurately reflects the tasks and responsibilities of the position is critical to hiring the best person for the job. A good job description has six parts:
 1. The Job Summary.
 2. The Educational Qualifications and Experience needed for the job.
 3. The Operational Duties the employee is expected to perform.
 4. A description of the Duties Related to the Management and Administration of the System.
 5. A description of the Duties Related to the Strategic Goals of the System.
 6. A listing of the Knowledge and Skills the employee must have to successfully carry out the job.

- ❑ Part of the interview process is to determine that the candidate has the knowledge and skills to perform well. Equally important is to find out if the person can apply that knowledge in real life situations and has the motivation to do it. The best way to find out if the person can apply their knowledge is to pose real or hypothetical problems and ask candidates how they would deal with the situation.
- ❑ The critical steps in the interviewing process are to:
 - Set up an interview team, including technical experts when needed.
 - For interviews, select candidates whose experience and education seem to be the closest to the ideal.
 - During the interview, explain the duties and responsibilities of the job as well as the length of the introductory period.
 - Check references.

Sample Letter

Resume or application
was received but
individual was not
interviewed.

January 2, 2004

John H. Smith
PO Box 000000
Anywhere, State 00000

Dear John Smith,

Thank you for your interest in the position of _____
for the City of XYZ Water System. We have reviewed your resume and have
carefully considered your qualifications and have decided to pursue other
candidates for this position.

XYZ Water System does not maintain resumes on file for any position other
than the specific position for which the resume was submitted. If you wish
to apply for other positions, please resubmit your resume.

Again, thank you for your interest in employment with the City of XYZ
Water System and we wish you success in your search for a suitable career
position.

Sincerely,

Sample Letter

January 2, 2004

John H. Smith
PO Box 000000
Anywhere, State 00000

Dear John,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time last week to speak with us regarding our need for a _____ for the City of XYZ Water System. We certainly enjoyed speaking with you and appreciated your taking the time to learn about our system as well as your patience throughout our search process. While we were impressed with your qualifications, we were faced with a difficult decision. We finally selected another candidate who we believe more closely matches what we are looking for in the position.

XYZ Water System does not maintain resumes on file for any position other than the specific position for which the resume was submitted. If you wish to apply for other positions, please resubmit your resume.

Again, thank you for your interest in employment with the City of XYZ Water System. We wish you success in your continued search.

Respectfully yours,

Individual was interviewed but not hired for the position.

CHAPTER 3.

Evaluating Employee Performance

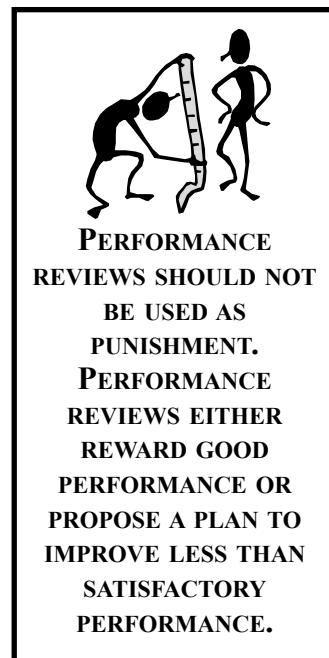
Evaluating the performance of employees is important to the creation and maintenance of a high performing workplace. The objectives of formally evaluating performance are to measure, maintain, and improve job performance while letting the employee know how they are doing on the job. The process includes:

- Recognizing employee contributions.
- Assessing an employee's strengths, weaknesses, and potential for growth.
- Encouraging and guiding an employee's development of special skills and work interests.
- Facilitating eligibility for compensation increases and promotion to a position of greater responsibility, when appropriate.
- Facilitating employee input into operations.
- Identifying training needs.

Without a formal evaluation process, in the day-to-day operation of the system, the efforts of employees may be overlooked or taken for granted. Most employees need occasional confirmation that they are doing a good job and compensation increases are typically tied to good job performance. Conversely, employees who are not performing up to the required standards need to be informed how performance is not meeting expectations and how to improve that performance.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW TIPS

- Poor or unacceptable job performance needs to be dealt with and documented when it happens. Employees who clearly can't perform the job should hear about it before the planned performance evaluation date. The performance review results should not be a surprise - the employee should be informed of performance deficits before the annual process.



- Employees should be evaluated by their immediate supervisor. The Board of Directors is responsible for conducting evaluations of employees they directly supervise, such as the bookkeeper and operator. Other employees, like the maintenance technician who is evaluated by the operator, are evaluated by their immediate supervisor.
- Conduct all annual evaluations during the same time each year. Within 30 days of the beginning of a new fiscal year is a good time because it allows budgeting for salary increases in the new budget before the performance evaluation process is completed.
- Be sure timing of the actual performance evaluation processes matches any written procedures the system has. Be sure to check job descriptions to determine if a specific length of time for an introductory period and subsequent performance review is included. Employees rely on this type of written information to confirm when they will be evaluated.
- Be sure an employee's first performance review is conducted in a timely manner as employees use the results of this first review to see how they measure up to the expectations of their employer.
- Be sure to update job descriptions as part of the annual review process. This is the time to add tasks that are new or delete tasks that are no longer applicable.

CRITERIA FOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Suggested criteria for use when evaluating job performance includes:

- Job knowledge and skills
- Initiative/self-direction
- Problem-solving/decision-making ability
- Work quality/accuracy
- Dependability/reliability
- Ability to work effectively with others

Job knowledge and skills: The job description defines the knowledge and skills the employee must have to perform the job well. Complete evaluations provide a foundation for determining whether or not a good person/job fit exists.

Initiative/self-direction refers to the employee's ability to work with minimal supervision, the effectiveness of the employee's time management and task completion, and the manner in which they made decisions that are delegated to them by the Board of Directors. Initiative and self-direction are critical in a small system. With few employees to do the required tasks, an employee who seeks guidance on unimportant things is draining the time of others. Often, when an employee who lacks initiative cannot find someone to ask for guidance, the job doesn't get done at all.

Problem-solving/decision-making ability is the ability to analyze, evaluate, create, reason, and arrive at conclusions and make decisions that result in the job being done in a manner that achieves the goals of the system.

Accuracy and quality of work are very important dimensions to assess. Mistakes can jeopardize a system's ability to deliver the product to the customers. Because of the lack of resources - specifically, a small number of employees - to check and double-check the accuracy of work an employee's work, employees in a small utility must routinely deliver high quality work. The health and welfare of the community and the system can be compromised by sloppy work.

Dependability/reliability is a measure of the degree of reliance the Board of Directors can place on an employee's performance of assigned tasks. This includes quality and quantity of work produced, consistency in level of effort, trustworthiness, work attitude, and steady work attendance.

Ability to work effectively with others is important for any business to run smoothly. Teamwork is important for communication, collaboration, and effectiveness. When conflict, rather than teamwork, exists between employees, it can be time consuming for supervisors and the Board of Directors. It also can lower the morale of other employees while promoting resentment and cliques. The bottom line is that conflict reduces the time employees spend in productive work, which affects the system's bottom line.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION CHART

For the end of introductory period or annual evaluations, an Evaluation Subcommittee of two-to-three board members facilitates an effective process. The following page contains a sample Performance Evaluation Chart for use during employee evaluation processes - make as many copies as necessary.

The first step is to use the job description to complete the left-hand column sections on duties and responsibilities. For example, using the job description for an Operator/Manager, the items listed under Operational Duties would include "ensures operational compliance with State and Federal EPA water quality standards." Each member of the Evaluation Subcommittee then rates each operational duty or task according to all six performance criteria: (1) Knowledge and skills; (2) Initiative/self-direction; (3) Problem-solving/decision-making ability; (4) Work quality/accuracy; (5) dependability/reliability; and, (6) Ability to work effectively with others.

All criteria may not apply to every task and, in those instances, place N/A (or Not Applicable) in that space. As tasks are examined in terms of the evaluation criteria, it will become obvious if the criteria are a valid measurement of the performance of the task. For example, in the area of "ensuring compliance," at the least the first five criteria would be rated but utilizing the sixth criteria, "ability to work well with others," depends on how much communication the operator normally has with regulatory agency officials and whether the operator delegates some responsibilities to a Maintenance Technician. In those cases, ability to work well with others would be an important part of ensuring compliance.

Listed below are examples of types of indicators in each area.

Knowledge/skills: When evaluating a bookkeeper/operations clerk, measurements for this area may be based on the adequacy of the monthly financial reports to the Board of Directors, recommendations from an outside auditor, or feedback received directly or indirectly from customers.

Assessing the job knowledge and skills of your operator may be based on the monthly reports they submit to state regulatory agencies or the Board of Directors; the system's compliance record; or the results of sanitary surveys performed by the state. Any incidents of violations of water quality standards may indicate the operator does not possess good job knowledge or skills. Likewise, frequent breakdowns and delays in repairs could indicate that the operator is not doing required preventative maintenance.

JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY	COMMENTS	POINTS Poor: 0-5 Avg: 5-10 Exc: 10-15			
Knowledge & Skills					
Initiative & Self Direction					
Problem Solving & Decision-making Ability					
Work Quality & Accuracy					
Dependability & Reliability					
Ability to Work with Others					
Employee Name: Position Title: Job Summary: Employee Signature: _____ Supervisor Signature: _____ Board President Signature: _____		Operational Duties (List) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. Management Duties (List) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.			
TOTAL POINTS:					
Below Average Needs Improvement	0-29 Total Points	Average	30-59 Total Points	Above Average	60 or More Total Points

Initiative/self-direction. When evaluating a bookkeeper, has he/she planned a strategy for collecting past due accounts and then carried through with it? If there was a lack of computer skills, did he/she take the initiative to improve their skills either through taking a training class or self-study?

When evaluating an operator, do you have to remind or prod him/her to prepare the written monthly reports for the Board of Directors? Does the operator take the initiative to plan and carry out a preventive maintenance program? Does the operator organize and monitor inventory effectively? Do employees make frequent suggestions on ways to improve operations?

Problem-solving/decision-making ability. In some systems, routine duties do not require a lot of problem-solving/decision-making ability due to the existence of standard, written policies and procedures that govern how tasks are performed.

For example, a system should have well established payroll and purchasing policies and procedures that provide clear guidelines on how the tasks are to be completed by the bookkeeper. However, some systems may not have any written policies or procedures and, in this case, the bookkeeper would be required to have a high level of problem-solving/decision-making ability.

An operator's problem-solving/decision-making ability can be assessed according to how they respond to emergencies and non-routine situations. Are his/her solutions thought through and successfully implemented? Does he/she exhibit sound judgment?

Accuracy and quality of work. Mistakes range from small errors that are readily detected in the normal course of work or routine cross-checking, like balancing the checkbook, to major errors that can lead to very serious consequences in a very short time period, like failure to balance accounts monthly or neglecting to provide regular financial reports to the Board of Directors. Small errors result in minor confusion and, unless they occur frequently, they don't often have disastrous consequences. Major errors, like failure to appropriately manage and report finances, can lead to serious financial problems very quickly. An error in not accurately calculating the chlorine dosage in the water treatment process can lead to contamination with serious health and regulatory consequences.

The bottom line is does the employee perform relatively "error free" work. If mistakes are made, are they minor and easily caught and corrected?

Dependability/reliability. When assessing an employee on this criterion, ask yourself the following:

- Does the employee show up for work, ready to work, every day?
- Does the job take precedence over less important personal matters?
- If required to be on 24-hour call, does the employee respond appropriately to emergencies?
- Does the employee volunteer to help out when tasks need to be done that may be outside his/her job description?
- Does the employee show consistency of effort in their work?
- Through their work, does the employee have the trust of their supervisor and/or board members?
- Is the quantity of work produced by the employee consistent?
- Can the employee be relied on to consistently do their best on behalf of the system?

Ability to work effectively with others. When assessing an employee on this criterion, ask yourself the following:

- Does the employee have cooperative working relationships with other employees that facilitates the work getting done? With Board members? With his/her supervisor and/or subordinates?
- Does the employee have an effective working relationship with outside consultants, members of the community, and state regulatory/funding agency personnel?
- Does the employee present a professional image to the public?
- If the employee supervises others, are the responsibilities for those supervisees properly defined and are the employees properly supervised to assure quality?

SCORING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Multiple options exist for scoring employee evaluations.

Checkmarks are the simplest, but probably least accurate, method. This method involves simply making checkmarks down the columns to indicate the tasks have been completed.

Assigning numerical scores is the second method. This method involves assigning values to indicate performance that is

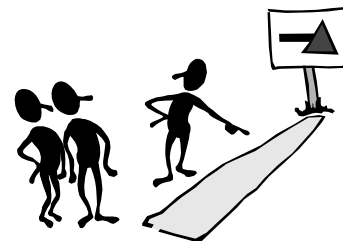
Below Average	=	0
Average	=	2
Exceeds Average	=	4

After assigning numerical values, multiply the total number of duties that have been evaluated (the form contains spaces for 20 duties) for the highest possible score: $20 \times 4 = 80$. Using this formula results in "40" being the overall score for average work performance ($20 \times 2 = 40$). Therefore, a total score between 40 and 80 is acceptable. Total scores below 40 indicate that an employee needs overall improvement - scores of "0" in any one area indicate the need for a performance improvement plan focused on that specific area. Total scores of less than 25 suggest carefully reviewing how the employee can significantly improve their performance within the next six months period and then implementing a stringent performance improvement plan to facilitate that improvement. Without this option, consideration should be given to placing the employee on probation or even dismissing him/her.

Weighting the criteria is the third method. This method involves identifying which criterion is more critical to good performance. For example, an Operator/Manager ensuring compliance with state and federal water quality standards suggests that knowledge/skills and work quality/accuracy may be much more important than ability to work effectively with others. Initiative and problem-solving ability may also be important to the duty but not as critical. Thus, rather than scoring the numerical values listed above, the decision may be made to increase the scores for this particular operational duty with the average performance being scored as "4" and exceeds average performance being scored as "8." This results in the most critical aspects of the job being given credit for the level of importance when the evaluation scores are totaled.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

One of the most important aspects of the performance evaluation process is developing a plan for improving performance when an employee has demonstrated "below average" performance either in a specific area or overall. Effective performance improvement plans are specific, measurable, and time-limited. For example, if the employee is rated as "below average" in absenteeism, the employee might be given a specific number of days that, if exceeded in the next six months, will result in dismissal. Whatever the requirements set for improvement, the plan must include:



- Time frame for improving
- Consequences of not improving
- How improvement will objectively be measured
- Offer to assist with the improvement
- Schedule for timely feedback on the improvement process.

Follow-up is essential - be sure to conduct scheduled meetings and respond to requests for information or assistance in a timely manner.

Performance evaluation is critical to a system's viability and members of the Board of Directors are responsible for establishing an environment where the seriousness of the process, including performance improvement plans, is communicated and where the process is consistently and fairly administered. Employees cannot be expected to respond with positive action to improve their performance if this focus is absent.

Summary

- ❑ The objectives of formally evaluating performance are to measure, maintain, and improve job performance while letting the employee know how they are doing on the job. Employees need to know if they are meeting the expectations of the Board of Directors. Evaluations provide a framework for recognizing good performance as well as acknowledging when a less than satisfactory person/job fit exists. When performance is less than satisfactory, performance improvement plans are implemented.

- ❑ Suggested criteria for evaluation job performance include:
 - Job knowledge and skills.
 - Initiative/self direction.
 - Problem-solving/decision-making ability.
 - Work quality/accuracy.
 - Dependability/reliability.
 - Ability to work effectively with others.

- ❑ Effective performance evaluation processes include a means for improving job performance in all areas where performance is below average. Whatever the requirements set for improvement, the plan must include a time frame for improving, the consequences of not improving, how improvement will objectively be measured, an offer to assist in the improvement, and a schedule for timely feedback on the improvement process.

CHAPTER 4

Retaining Quality Employees

In Chapter 2, we discussed that frequent turnover is probably due to the person/job "fit" not being there. Considering why a vacancy exists can lead to keeping the next person from leaving however, do we ever really know why employees leave? Most often, the reasons given for leaving a job are that "I found a better job" or "I got a job that pays more." More money is easy to understand but what does a "better job" really mean. Not knowing the answer to this question costs every company, large or small.

Every time an employee leaves, all the money that has been invested in that employee leaves with them. In addition, any new employee has a learning curve and their productivity and quality will not be nearly as high as the employee who left that you had trained to do the job. When quality and productivity suffer not only does the company have to deal with the consequences but the customer suffers too. Human resources is just as important as the choices made regarding money, equipment, and technology. And, you can do something about preserving your human resources.

Most companies just think that turnover is something they just have to accept but nothing is further from the truth and it is worth your time to find the answer. There are both direct and indirect costs associated with turnover, as discussed in Chapter 2. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that it costs a company one-third of a new hire's annual salary to replace any employee. The estimated cost to replace a supervisory, technical or management employee is at least 50% of their salary.

Consider the following scenario:

The bookkeeper of your system has decided to resign. The salary range for that position is a minimum of \$20,000 and a maximum of \$35,000. The current bookkeeper makes \$24,500 but you don't plan on hiring in someone at that level because the salary of \$24,500 reflects four years of employment and you think you should be getting someone for less. Could this mean a savings of as much as \$4,500 during the next 12 months?

Current Bookkeeper's Salary	\$24,500
<u>New Bookkeeper's Salary</u>	<u>\$20,000</u>
Potential Savings over next 12 months	\$ 4,500

But wait.... what is the cost of turnover?

Cost of turnover is estimated at 1/3 of the position's annual salary.

Turnover for the bookkeeper: (33% of \$20,000) = \$ 6,600

So, are you really saving any money?

Potential savings over 12 months from lower salary	\$4,500
<u>Cost of turning over that position</u>	<u>(\$6,000)</u>
Net Gain	(\$2,100)

The cost of the turnover exceeded the savings on a lower salary. The impact to your bottom line was negative and not only has your system lost money but your customers have lost quality and service.

Managers often just accept that money is the chief cause of turnover and that there is nothing they can do about it. But, money is rarely the most important factor although it can be very important if the work relationship is not built on mutual respect, consideration, and communication and if there are not clear job descriptions and expectations. Research tells us that the reason employees most often leave a job is because of their relationships or, specifically, the lack of good relationships with their manager. Seeing how much turnover costs gives you some idea how much you can spend to prevent it. In our learning exercise, spending \$3,500 on a salary increase could have saved \$4,585 in turnover costs.

But, remember that it is not just about money - either for the system or the employee. Money may have been what an employee asks for from the system but what do they really want? What they've always wanted ... work that challenges and stimulates them, fair pay for a day's work, the tools to do their job, recognition for work well done, involvement in decisions that affect their jobs, treatment with dignity, and an opportunity to grow. Managers' and employees' view of what they want varies.

Finding the best "fit" for the job in a work environment where communication, trust, and respect are inherent while paying a fair and adequate salary and having a competitive benefits package set the system up for long-term success. These are the basis of work relationships that retain quality employees.

Section

B

LEARNING EXERCISES

LEARNING EXERCISE 1 - DEVELOP A JOB DESCRIPTION

Purpose: A job description is an essential tool for finding the right employee needed for the position and is also used for training, evaluation, promotion and accountability purposes. In addition, the job description can assist in growing the business and helps managers learn more about what they want for the future of the business.

Scenario: Soggy Bottom Water Association has an immediate job vacancy for a Part-Time Meter Reader (5 days per month). Soggy Bottom W.A. has been advised that the development of written job descriptions would assist in cutting down on employee turnover. This position is salaried exempt with limited supervision, requiring a high school diploma or GED and a valid driver's license with a clean driving record. The water system provides a vehicle, which includes insurance, fuel, etc. 870 connections are served by the water system. Make sure when developing the job description that the six components are included.

Instructions: Using the scenario listed above and the sample job description on the next page, develop a job description for a part-time meter reader for Soggy Bottom Water Association.

- Sample -
Soggy Bottom Water Association
Meter Reader
(Part-Time)

Job Summary:

Under the limited supervision of the Operator, the Meter Reader provides the task of reading meters. This is a salaried exempt position and will work for a period of five (5) days each month. These five (5) days are pre-determined by the Board of Directors. Must have a valid driver's license with a clean driving record. The Soggy Bottom Water Association provides a meter reading vehicle, commercial automobile and liability insurance, and fuel.

Education and Experience:

Requires a high school diploma or equivalent.

Operational Duties:

Read customer meters once a month for 870 connections.

Accurately records readings on meter reading sheets.

Duties Related to the Management and Administration of the System:

Advises the Operator regarding repair/replacement of meters and related apparatus.

Duties Related to the Strategic Goals of the System:

Reports leaks and meter problems to the Operator.

Reports non-functioning or suspecting slowing meters to the Operator

Required Knowledge and Skills:

Ability to read meters and gauges accurately.

Ability to understand and follow oral and written instructions.

Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing.

Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with the staff.

Ability to work independently.

Ability to plan and organize activities in time frame allotted for this part-time position.

Knowledge of safety regulations.

Ability to prepare accurate records and reports.

LEARNING EXERCISE 2 - SCREENING APPLICATIONS

Purpose: The purpose of this exercise is to assist the participants in reviewing and understanding resumes and applications. This exercise will point out critical areas to look at and things to be aware of. Screening is an important part of the hiring process due to the fact that you may end up interviewing the wrong candidate and the right person for the job may slip away.

Scenario: There are three resumes on your desk; one from Johnny Granger, one from Billy Bob Barefield and the last one is from Jane Franklin. They have applied for the position of General Manager/Chief Operator at Soggy Bottom Water Association.

Instructions: You have copies of 3 applicant's resumes' and the General Manager/Chief Operator position information. Review each resume and determine the positives and negatives for that resume as related to the requirements of the position. Decide on whether the participants possess the necessary prerequisite qualifications and experience and which ones that you should attempt to interview.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS

Position being hired: General Manager/ Chief Operator

Salary Range: \$24,000 - \$30,000 Annual DOE

General Duties: Manage and operate a rural drinking water system; supervise 3.5 employees; report to the board; ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.

System Information:

1,900 + connection rural water district;
3 groundwater wells; 2 elevated tanks;
lime plant w/clear well (Class II Treatment);
475 + miles distribution system; SCADA
system; \$500K + budget.

Prerequisites: 3 - 5 years experience; Class II or higher CO License; good driving record; references.

APPLICANT #1

Name: Johnny Granger

Salary Requirement: \$32,000

Employment History:

1985 - Present: Manage and Operate 430 connection Class II system.

1983 - 1985: Service Tech for same water system.

1980 - 1983: Meter Reader for same system.

Education / Certification:

CRG ACT Management Courses

1983 Class II Operator

1979 Graduated Jr. College (Vo-Tech)

Membership / Awards:

District Secretary Operator's Association

Governor's Water Task Force

AWWA

APPLICANT #2

Name: Billy Bob Barefield

Salary Requirement: \$30,000

Employment History:

2000 - Present: Electric Company Meter Reader

1999 - 2000: Managed Store

1997 - 1999: Certified Operator for Glyndale M.H.P.

1985 - 1991: Certified Operator for 600 connections Class III System.

Education / Certification:

1985 Class III Operator

1975 G.E.D.

Other Information:

Native of area - Uncle James is county judge.

APPLICANT #3

Name: Jane Franklin

Salary Requirement: \$25,000

Employment History:

1994 - Present: Bookkeeper (current Employee of system w/opening)

1984 - 1994: Bookkeeper, law office

1978 - 1984: Legal Secretary

Education / Certification:

1979 Graduated Business College

1977 Graduated H.S. w/Honors

1994 - Present: Attended Rural Water Association Training Conference.

Other Information:

Will attend Operator Certification Short course if hired.

LEARNING EXERCISE 3 - DEVELOPING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Purpose: The purpose of this exercise is to give you as participants an opportunity to develop interview questions.

Scenario: XYZ Water Association has an opening for a Meter Reader.

Instructions: Using the sample resume below and the job description on Page 42 develop interview questions.

SAMPLE RESUME INFORMATION

Name: Sam Jones

Salary Requirements: \$15.00/hour

Employment History:

1995 - Present: Operator ABC Water Association

1994-1995: Maintenance Technician

1990-1995: Self-employed

Education/Certification:

1995 Class II Operator Certification

1988-1989 Northwest Community College Business Courses

1986-1987 Northwest Vo-Tech Automotive Repair, Electronics

Other Information:

Interested in additional training

References:

Furnished upon request

LEARNING EXERCISE 4 - PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Purpose: The purpose of this exercise is for the participants to understand how to conduct a performance evaluation.

Scenario: The meter reader (Junior Gump) with Soggy Bottom W.A. is nearing the end of his 90-day probationary period and thus a mandatory performance evaluation needs to be conducted.

Instructions: You have a copy of the performance evaluation form, job description, and background information on "Junior." Using this information:

1. Complete (summarize) the duties on the bottom right of the evaluation form using the job description.
2. Write comments beside each assessment category and rate Junior accordingly (Below Average 0-5, Average 5 - 10, or Above Average 10 - 15).
3. Add the six different ratings and denote the sum on the bottom line for the total points.
4. Circle the overall evaluation grade below based on the total points (Below Average 0-29 points, Average 30 - 59 points, Above Average 60 or more points)

**SOGGY BOTTOM WATER ASSOCIATION
Job Performance Evaluation**

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY	COMMENTS	POINTS Poor: 0-5 Avg: 5-10 Exc: 10-15			
Knowledge & Skills					
Initiative & Self Direction					
Problem Solving & Decision-making Ability					
Work Quality & Accuracy					
Dependability & Reliability					
Ability to Work with Others					
Employee Name: Junior Gump Position Title: Meter Reader Job Summary: Read all customer meters monthly between the 5th & 10th days of the month. Report all customer complaints and water leaks found while reading meters. Employee Signature: _____ Supervisor Signature: _____ Board President Signature: _____		Operational Duties (List) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. Management Duties (List) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.			
TOTAL POINTS:					
Below Average Needs Improvement	0-29 Total Points	Average	30-59 Total Points	Above Average	60 or More Total Points

SOGGY BOTTOM WATER ASSOCIATION, INC.

Meter Reader

Job Summary:

Under limited supervision of the General Manager, the Meter Reader performs monthly meter reading services for all active and inactive meters. This is an exempt (salary) position that works under minimum supervision. The Board of Directors hires the position. There is a six-month probationary period. Evaluations are conducted at the end of the probationary period and annually thereafter during the month of the association's annual membership meeting.

Education and Experience:

Requires at a minimum a high school diploma or equivalent and at least two years experience driving routes. The board may waive the education and experience requirements if there are no applicants meeting the requirements for this position. However, if such a waiver is granted, the probationary period is automatically extended to one year in which time the person filling this position may be dismissed by a majority vote of the board if there is reasonable evidence that the lack of education and experience is hindering the execution of the required duties stated below.

Other Requirements:

Because the person filling this position is required to drive the association's vehicles, it is required that the person possess a valid drivers license and possess and maintain a good driving record with no DUI / DWI convictions within the past three years. There will be no waivers granted to the above requirement.

Operational Duties:

- Reads all Soggy Bottom W.A. water meters monthly beginning no earlier than the 5th day and ending by the 10th day of each month. (Normally, meters can be read within three days)
- Indicates on meter reader sheets and by leaving a door hanger if it appears that a customer has a water leak based on meter reading and water flow indicator.
- Turn meter reader sheets into office by the end of the 10th day of each month (unless an extension has been granted by the General Manager).
- As directed by the Bookkeeper or the General Manager, re-reads all meters suspected of inaccurate readings.

Managerial Duties:

- Contacts Soggy Bottom Office as soon as possible if large leaks or low pressure is found or reported by customers.

- Contacts Soggy Bottom Office if it is believed that more than one house is connected to a meter or if a delinquent meter has been tampered with or otherwise turned back on.

Duties Related to the Strategic Goals of Soggy Bottom W.A.:

- Indicates on meter reader sheets all leaks found or reported by customers during the monthly meter reading cycle.
- Indicates on meter reader sheets all meters suspected of slowing or not registering actual usage.

Required Knowledge and Skills:

- Ability to read gauges and meters accurately.
- Ability to record meter readings on meter reading sheets.
- Physical stamina and no physical limitations on lifting, driving, walking, or bending.
- Ability to understand and follow oral and written instructions.
- Ability to communicate effectively.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with the General Manager and other staff members, the customers, and the Board of Directors of Soggy Bottom W.A.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON JUNIOR GUMP

Junior began his employment with Soggy Bottom W.A. two and a half months ago. His 90-day probationary period is coming to an end and pursuant to the Soggy Bottom W.A. Personnel Policy, Junior up for a mandatory performance evaluation (all employees evaluated prior to the end of the probationary period and then annually unless poor performance dictates additional evaluations).

Junior has picked up the route fairly quickly and does not have to call in very much any more requesting directions to meter locations. Only one verified complaint has been filed by a customer regarding Junior driving through her backyard to get to the meter rather than walking. When confronted with the complaint, Junior apologized and stated that he would not drive over her grass from now on. He has consistently performed his duties pursuant to his job description and has already developed a good rapport with the customers as well as the fellow staff members. His reporting of leaks and other complaints has been exemplary and he has even offered to help fix leaks during his off time each month. At the suggestion of the General Manager, the Board is considering offering Junior additional work on an hourly wage basis once he completes his meter route each month.

LEARNING EXERCISE 5 - INTERVIEW DO'S AND DON'TS

Purpose: The purpose of this exercise is to distinguish between legal and illegal or inappropriate interview questions.

Instructions: Please indicate, by placing a checkmark in the appropriate column, if the following questions should be included in an interview.

Do	DON'T	QUESTIONS
		1. Ask about marital status.
		2. Ask about the number of children.
		3. Ask about skills to do the job.
		4. Ask for a woman's maiden name.
		5. Ask the age of the applicant.
		6. Ask for driver's license.
		7. Ask about race, gender, or religious affiliation.
		8. Ask about birthplace of applicant.
		9. Ask about club memberships.
		10. Ask if planning to have children.
		11. Ask about preferred hours of work.
		12. Ask about disabilities.
		13. Ask about other names applicant has used.
		14. Ask about arrest record.
		15. Ask about height and weight.
		16. Ask about nature of military discharge.
		17. Ask about friends or relatives with the company.
		18. Ask for clergy as references.
		19. Ask about credit questions.
		20. Ask if the applicant is willing to travel.

LEARNING EXERCISE 6 - COST OF TURNOVER

Purpose: The purpose of this exercise is to recognize the cost of employee turnover and understand how it can impact management decisions.

Remember the bookkeeper we talked about in the section on the cost of turnover? The bookkeeper's salary was \$24,500 after a recent 5% increase. The bookkeeper left because to accept an offer for another job that paid 20% more than his/her current job in your system.

Before leaving, the bookkeeper had requested an increase in salary to compensate him/her for the additional management duties they had taken over that were not originally a part of their job. The requested increase to \$28,000, matched what the bookkeeper in a water system 25 miles away made. You denied the bookkeeper's request during the meeting because he/she had just received a 5% annual increase.

Question:

Would you have saved money by giving the bookkeeper the increase of \$3,500 to \$28,000?

Answer:

Cost of turnover -

Cost of turnover is estimated at 1/3 of the position's annual salary.

Turnover for the bookkeeper: (33% of \$24,500) = \$

So, would you save any money?

Cost of salary increase to \$28,000 \$3,500

Cost of turning over that position

Net Gain

? So, (circle the correct answer) **YES or NO** you would have/have not saved money by giving the bookkeeper the raise.

Instructions: What would have been a better solution than denying the bookkeeper's request during the meeting? In groups, discuss the possible options and summarize what you come up with on a flip chart for presentation to the group.

LEARNING EXERCISE 7 - WHAT DO PEOPLE WANT

Purpose: To recognize that you may not really understand the needs of your staff.

Instructions: On the following worksheet below rank the items in order of importance to you in the column titled "Your Ranking," 1 being the most important and 10 the least important.

WHAT DO PEOPLE WANT?

MOTIVATORS	YOUR RANKING	MANAGER'S RANKING	EMPLOYEE'S RANKING
Money			
Interesting Work			
Appreciation			
Job Security			
Being an "insider"			
Promotion			
Sympathy for problems			
Working Conditions			
Loyalty from Company			
Tactful Disciplining			