

Preparing Performance Profiles – Clarifying Expectations is the Key to Hiring Success

Background: Every job has 6-8 performance objectives that define job success. These are things that our new employees must do to be considered successful, not what the individual must have in terms of years of experience, industry, academics, or skills. Here’s an example of a SMARTe Performance Objective for a Project Manager.

During the first three months prepare a detailed review of the project including an appraisal of all critical action items and potential bottlenecks. Identify key technical challenges including _____, and determine all resource needs.

Describing performance objectives as SMARTe makes them very clear to all those involved in the selection decision.

Specific
Measurable
Action oriented
Results defined
Time-bound
environment described

Benefits of a Performance Profile: when hiring managers, other interviewers, recruiters, and candidates understand what the new employee needs to do to be successful, instead of what the person must “have,” the overall accuracy and effectiveness of the hiring process improves dramatically. Specifically:

1. Interviewing accuracy is increased since the selection criteria is based on objective criteria.
2. Recruiters are better able to screen candidates based on measurable and objective criteria.
3. Fewer candidates need to be seen, since unqualified candidates can be eliminated earlier in the process.
4. The best candidates want to know what they need to do to be successful, so they are easier to hire this way. More top people are drawn into the process this way, and money is typically less important in accepting a job when the opportunities and challenges are clearly described.
5. Managers are viewed as better leaders by their staff, peers and boss(es) when they clarify expectations.
6. The number one hiring mistake – hiring candidates who are basically competent, but not motivated to do all aspects of the work – is reduced, by specifically measuring motivation across all key job needs.
7. Using objective criteria is the most preferred and legally sound way to hire. This approach also broadens the pool for more diversity and high-potential candidates.
8. The performance profile can be used for onboarding, employee development and performance measurement.

Overview and Guide to Performance Profiles

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The performance profile template involves a series of questions and steps a hiring manager and recruiter team need to consider during the preparation of a new job requisition. The primary goal is to first determine the top 6-8 performance objectives, in general terms. Each performance objective should start with an action verb like “do,” “change,” or “improve,” rather than a passive verb like “be responsible for” or “have.” Then the actual task needs to be described with a clear statement of when the task should be completed. For example, a basic performance objective could be something such as, “*complete the final design for the new ___ circuit by June 2005.*”

From this list of preliminary performance objectives select the most important, and then put them in priority order. When completed, a performance profile describes the results needed to be successful, the key process steps needed to achieve these results, and an understanding of the environment (pace, resources, professionalism, decision-making, culture, etc.).

Step-by-Step Guide for Preparing a Performance Profile

- 1. First determine major objectives:** *Determine what a person taking this job needs to do over the next 3-6 months (longer if appropriate) in order to be considered successful?* (Most jobs have two to three major objectives, e.g., implement a new process, see 25 customers per day, conduct an analysis, reduce costs).
- 2. Develop sub-objectives:** *For each major objective determine the two or three things a successful person would need to do make sure they achieved the major objective?* (Develop 2-3 key sub-objectives for each major objective. For example for a new product design, one sub-objective might be develop the product requirement specifications during the first 90 days. Another might be to get the budget approved. Not all objectives end up in the final performance profile, only the most important ones.)
- 3. Other questions to determine key objectives:**
- 4. Convert HAVING to DOING:** *Review each critical skill and requirement on the job description and*
..... (This is a good way to move from subjective to objective selection criteria.)
- 5. Convert technical skills into results:**
..... (It’s easier to measure technical competency by understanding what the person actually needs to do with the skill.)
- 6. Understand team skills:**
- 7. Understand management and organization objectives:**



8. **Benchmark the Best:** By benchmarking the best person currently doing the job, you'll often discover some additional issues that might have been overlooked in the above process. Here's how:

.....

To complete the performance profile, select the 6-8 most important objectives, make them as SMARTe as possible, and then put them in priority order. This final performance profile will be used to write ads, source less active candidates, and benchmark candidates. When managers understand the process involved in achieving success they are better able to assess candidate competency and motivation. In addition, this performance profile can be used to help transition new employees into the job. Clarifying expectations this way has been shown to be an important element of continuing job satisfaction and on-the-job success.

Call 888.878.1388 x128 if you'd like a complete copy of this performance profile guide, or email info@adlerconcepts.com.

Performance-based Hiring and Performance Profiles

A performance profile describes the most important 6-8 performance objectives a person taking the job needs to do to be considered successful. It differs from a job description in that it doesn't describe skills or traits, but rather what the person needs to accomplish with his or her skills and traits. For example instead of stating the person must have five years of accounting experience and a CPA, it's better to say "complete the implementation of the Sarbanes-Oxley reporting requirements by Q2."

Following is a basic performance profile for a mid-level software developer. Since it's a generic position it doesn't include any specific software languages, but it does describe the typical tasks a software developer would handle. Select the tasks that are most appropriate to your open position, add in the technical needs and then prioritize the objectives.

Job Description:

The primary efforts of a mid-level software developer typically involve developing software programs to perform some process, to improve or maintain some application or to solve some software problem or debug code that's not function properly. For this specific position the key projects involved in this effort include: (describe)

For this project experience should include a combination of ____ years of experience, academic training in the areas of _____, and project experience like:

Specific software language and design skills include:

Keys to Hiring

Using technical skills in a real-time environment while working with users and other developers is a typical situation for most mid-level developers. Completing projects on time is also a critical aspect of success.

Another part of any software effort is the ability to understand the

..... The best software developers have the ability to understand the whole system from both a technical perspective as well as from the users viewpoint.

Hiring Tips

A common mistake in hiring software developers is to focus too heavily on the technical knowledge and not enough on the team and project skills that make the best software developers. As you assess the requirements of the position convert the years of experience or level of skills into tasks that are measurable. For example, rather than saying the candidate "must have at least five years of C++, STL and threading experience" it's better to say, "lead the effort to improve the processing capability and functionality of our new CRM and search application by over 300% using your C++, STL and threading background.'



Performance Objectives for a Mid-level Software Developer

The following performance objectives represent the broad variety of tasks a mid-level software developer is likely to encounter. Most positions do not involve all of the tasks listed. Select those that are most appropriate.

- 1) **Develop a Complete Understanding of the Project(s):** Meet with the project team members and to determine the status of the project and
- 2) **Prepare product requirements documentation:** Working with product marketing and ____ take the lead on preparing the PRD. This needs to address
- 3) **Prepare a Software Development Plan:** Within the first ____ week(s) develop a project plan for development of the module(s) assigned to this position, outlining key project milestones, time to completion and present for approval. Also identify
- 4) **Complete Software Design:**
- 5) **Assess Adequacy of Existing Code:** Review existing code for the project and
- 6) **Write Efficient Code to Meet Requirements of the Project:** Using _____ (list languages) complete the detailed coding within ____ week(s) to meet project deadlines. Completed code should be written to
- 7) **Overcome Major Design or Technical Challenges:** Some of the major technical issues and challenges in this position include: _____ (list). Be in a position by _____ (date) to present a series of alternative approaches.
- 8) **Upgrade the Project Review Process:** Review the existing project review process and

Note: To improve sourcing effectiveness tie some of these efforts to a bigger company initiative. This is called job branding. It makes the job more compelling. Put the performance objectives in priority order to insure that candidates are aware of the real challenges in the job. During the interview you'll assess candidates based on their competency and motivation to do the work actually required.

This is a sample performance profile. CALL 888.878.1388 if you'd like the complete version of this performance profile.

