



rganizational
rchitecture

USING JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND COMPETENCIES AS LEADERSHIP TOOLS

JULY 2026



INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Organizational Architecture, Inc.

- Since 2007
- Veteran-owned
- Expert advisors to public sector and nonprofit organizations
- Human Resources consulting
- Recruiting

CLIENTS

- Akron-Summit County Public Library
- Anderson Public Library
- Ashland Public Library
- Birchard Public Library
- Cincinnati-Hamilton County Public Library
- City of Bedford Heights
- City of Cleveland Heights
- City of Green
- City of Rossford
- City of Seven Hills
- City of Strongsville
- Clermont County Public Library
- Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library
- Cleveland Public Library
- CLEVNET
- Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities
- Cuyahoga County Public Library
- Cuyahoga Falls Library
- Dayton Metro Library
- Delaware County District Library
- Elyria Public Library System
- Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland
- Floyd County Library System
- Geauga County Public Library
- Grafton-Midview Public Library
- Hamilton-East Public Library
- Hussey-Mayfield Memorial Public Library
- Kent State University
- Live Oak Public Libraries
- Lorain Public Library System
- Marysville Public Library
- Medina County District Library
- Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
- Oberlin Public Library
- O'Neal Library
- Preble County District Library
- Ritter Public Library
- Rockford Public Library
- Sandusky Public Library
- State Library of Ohio
- Stark County Library
- Stow-Munroe Falls Public Library
- Summit ADM Board

CLIENTS

- Summit County Developmental Disabilities Board
- Tiffin-Seneca Public Library
- Toledo-Lucas County Public Library
- University City Public Library
- Upper Arlington Public Library
- Urbana Free Library
- Village of Newburgh Heights
- Wadsworth Public Library
- Westerville Public Library
- Wickliffe Public Library
- Worthington Libraries
- Youngstown and Mahoning County [Public Library of]

PARTNERS

- American Library Association / Public Library Association
- Association of Public Treasurers
- Government Finance Officers Association
- Illinois Library Association
- Indiana Library Federation
- Michigan Library Association
- Northeast Ohio Regional Library System
- Northwest [Ohio] Regional Library System
- Ohio Association of Public Treasurers
- Ohio Government Finance Officers Association
- Ohio Library Council
- Pennsylvania Library Association
- Public Sector Human Resources Association [formerly IPMA-HR]
- Society for Human Resource Management

Today's objectives

- Reframe job descriptions as leadership tools
- Understand how competencies support expectations
- Connect roles, performance, and development
- Identify practical ways to use these tools with supervisors

Why this matters

- Employees want clarity
- Supervisors need practical guidance
- Organizations need consistency
- Change is easier when expectations are clear

THE COMMON PROBLEM

- Job descriptions are often outdated
- Duties may not match current work
- Expectations vary by supervisor
- Performance conversations become subjective
- Development needs are hard to prioritize

A BETTER VIEW OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS

- Not just compliance documents
- Not just recruiting tools
- A foundation for supervision
- A guide for performance
- A link between strategy and daily work

WHAT JOB DESCRIPTIONS SHOULD CLARIFY

- Why the role exists
- What work is essential
- How success is measured
- What judgment is required
- How the role supports the organization

WHAT COMPETENCIES ADD

- Define how work should be performed
- Create common language
- Support fairer expectations
- Help identify development needs
- Reinforce organizational culture

TWO TYPES OF COMPETENCIES

- **Behavioral** competencies describe how people work
- **Technical** competencies describe what people must know or do
- Both are needed
- The mix should vary by role
- Competencies should be observable

LIBRARY EXAMPLE: BEHAVIORAL COMPETENCIES

- Adaptability
- Communication
- Customer service
- Leadership
- Problem solving
- Teamwork

LIBRARY EXAMPLE: TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES

- Community engagement
- Essential technology skills
- Fiscal operations
- Personnel management
- Policies and procedures
- Project management

FROM LIST TO LEADERSHIP TOOL

- Select competencies intentionally
- Match competencies to the role
- Define expected behaviors
- Avoid generic “wish lists”
- Keep the model usable

ROLE CLARITY REDUCES FRICTION

- Employees know what is expected
- Supervisors have a reference point
- HR has a consistent framework
- Teams understand handoffs
- Leaders can identify gaps

USING THESE TOOLS IN SUPERVISION

- Set expectations during onboarding
- Use duties to discuss priorities
- Use competencies to discuss behavior
- Coach from shared language
- Document progress consistently

USING THESE TOOLS IN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- Align goals with job duties
- Evaluate both results and behaviors
- Reduce vague feedback
- Support more objective discussions
- Identify development priorities

USING THESE TOOLS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Compare current ability to role expectations
- Focus training where it matters
- Support career growth conversations
- Build individual development plans
- Connect development to organizational needs

USING THESE TOOLS FOR SUCCESSION PLANNING

- Identify critical roles
- Define readiness requirements
- Spot competency gaps
- Prepare emerging leaders
- Reduce risk from turnover

USING THESE TOOLS IN RECRUITMENT

- Write stronger postings
- Screen for role-specific needs
- Design better interview questions
- Evaluate candidates consistently
- Improve hiring decisions

JOB DESCRIPTIONS DURING CHANGE

- Clarify what is changing
- Identify roles affected by change
- Communicate new expectations
- Support supervisors during transition
- Reduce confusion and resistance

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Review current job descriptions
- Identify outdated or unclear duties
- Select role-specific competencies
- Train supervisors on use
- Build into performance and development processes

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Job descriptions should guide leadership
- Competencies make expectations clearer
- Supervisors need practical tools
- Development should connect to real work
- Clarity supports accountability and change

OTHER SERVICES

- Senior level recruiting
- Performance management tools
- Department head / supervisor effective leadership training
- Compensation benchmarking and analysis
- HR operations review
- Capacity / capability analysis
- Training and development

RESOURCES



Website



Article

CONTACT US



oa@oahumanresources.com



216.586.4762



oahumanresources.com