PDs, Jas and AQs: Making Sense of Job Analysis

Virtual Conference for Supervisors
Recorded March 9, 2017

Good morning everybody, this is Katherine Callaway, [Indiscernible] from the Office of Learning and Development. We would like to welcome you to this webinar. Please remember to place your phones on mute. If it does not have a mute button, please press star six. There is a chat box available for you on the left-hand side of the screen. Please chat us a quick hello so we can take accurate attendance. A quick reminder that the session will be recorded. Now I'll pass it over to Melissa.

Good morning. Hello everybody. I don't know if you're hearing [Indiscernible] let me go ahead and shut off the speakers. There we go. Good morning. I'm so happy to be here with you. I'm so excited that you guys joined us so early in the morning; I noticed even earlier for some of you. I appreciate you guys being here, and I hope it's a great learning experience for you. Let's go ahead and begin.

The reason you are here is because you want some amazing [Indiscernible], which I don't blame you. My goal for you being here is to make sure you guys are using them. A quick introduction, name is Melissa Sims I currently serve as the Chief of Human Resources for the Northeast region [Indiscernible] staffing advisory services. Anyway, that we get people in is in my portfolio. The chat box is right below us, so if you have any questions or concerns we ask that you communicate with us through that, and I will be pausing at certain points during my presentation to check for your questions and I hope to make sure to answer them for you. It's good to see some familiar faces. Without further ado, let's dive right in.

Of course, being a former training officer I know that I have to have learning objectives [Indiscernible] immediate slide, because that is what we do. My two learning objectives should be pretty self-explanatory. At the end of this one hour block session I hope you guys have a great understanding that the PDs turns into the JAs, which turns into AQs. You keep going until you find the negative all at the bottom. And that you're able to go ahead and create these documents without [Indiscernible]. It’s pretty simple once you get the hang of it; I can tell you it's not rocket science. It’s a whole other module I'll be teaching next month. This is the general flow. We’re going to go mighty in depth on this in a second. Ultimately, what happens you move from a position description, to a job analysis which is the assessment questionnaire, which leads us to somebody applying for jobs in USAJobs. We’re going to go do a deep dive, like I promised you.
Let's go ahead and start with our most foundational document and that would be the classified PD. It truly is the foundational document for anything that we do in HR. It's how we make sure people are doing what we are paying them to do; everything starts with that PD. You will notice I said that the PDs have to be classified. It cannot be just a word document that you came up with over the weekend, and usually it's not from anybody lower than a [Indiscernible]. Once upon a time, when HR was residing at parks and all different places, classification authority was kind of [Indiscernible]. A lot of people had classification authority. Now we classify it and it's a great thing. We want to keep it centralized, because that's really have subject matter experts and we're making sure [Indiscernible]. These PDs go through classification and when they come back, they come back fine and dated in block 21. Because I have you guys as an audience, here's my platform to let you know that when a PD comes back in HR, it comes back in two pieces. We also get an evaluation statement. An evaluation statement is an amazing thing. Just by reading a couple evaluation statements you can learn a lot. It goes through in a very -- I'm sorry if I seem distracted. It's a special knock. [Laughter]. The evaluation comes back and actually [Indiscernible] and why they would be [Indiscernible]. If you don't get the evaluation statement back I can tell you you should ask your HR staffer [Indiscernible] evaluation statement, because it will give you a look behind the curtain as to how it's classified.

This is OS 8 and it goes on top of the PD. This proves to us that [Indiscernible]. When it comes back to classification and I know you can't see this on your screen here but you have a signature in block 21 saying that a classifier has passed off on this and they are absolutely saying yes this is 0301 and is at the 12 level. That that means you can go ahead and recruit for this job. With that being said, never again have a pop quiz, because what else would adult learning view without pop quizzes?

My first pop quiz for you all is this one. I would like to ask you guys about the best time to get a PD classified. Is it when somebody has already left their position, true or false? What would you guys say to that? I'm going to go ahead and close this. Here's how you guys voted. Most do you feel like it's false [Indiscernible]. The time to get a PD classified is any time that job significantly changes.

We understand sometimes when people have left a position in [Indiscernible], but I can tell you from HR perspective, and I am in accordance with this, I can tell you a great time to review the PD is every year. When you're giving them a summation of how well they're doing at their job. Your HR specialist can work with you to tell you if it's something significant enough. Sometimes we add things to somebody's job; about 20% of the time. If we just add up to 20%. [Indiscernible]. Always work with your HR person, but generally saying, there is some leeway there will be [Indiscernible] without drastically going back and doing an overhaul on this PD. [Indiscernible] is a lot of head down work in the classification branches not that [Indiscernible]. [Indiscernible] said takes 20 business days; they are moving at the speed of light.
Okay, another pop quiz for you. One more. A direct reports PD should ultimately be maintained where: your drawer, their personnel file, their eOPF, where should it be maintained? Go ahead and vote. I’m going to go ahead and close this. It's kind of a trick question, I'll be honest with you.

I can tell you ultimately where should I be able to go looking for somebody's PD. I should be able to go to their eOPF, and we all know there’s a back log on the documents that are being uploaded that are in eOPF. Right now there is [Indiscernible] waiting to be uploaded to everybody's eOPF, and that way I would tell you, especially supervisors, it doesn't hurt to have a paper copy in your drawer where you keep all your other documentations. I would tell you it's nice to have it in your drawer as a hiring manager and a supervisor. It's also officially in your eOPF.

I have a Sasquatch on here because he is my signal to talk to about an urban legend. There as an urban legend out there that says a PD that's over five years old is no good. Like it has an expiration date on it, like milk in your fridge. I have a caveat here, and I'm not here to jump anybody's regional policy or procedures, I know we all do things a little differently, however, I can tell you according to the classification brand there's actually no expiration date on a PD. If the information in the PD is diligent it can be over five years old. The supervisor would need to supervise that on the [Indiscernible] by going into block 23 and certifying that. Again, I know regions do this differently. Last time I looked I know there was one region that at the five year mark they all get redone. I understand why HR would do that, because usually at the end of five years something has changed. I have had my own customers in my own region said that is [Indiscernible].

We have to be honest with each other when doing this. [Indiscernible]

We talked about the classified PD. We get the classified PD back and now we have to create a job analysis. Why? I'll get to that in a second. A job analysis is a systematic analysis of the task performance in a job and the competencies required to perform them. A job analysis is what I want you to think of as a bridge. If you remember taking geometry back in the day [Indiscernible] guess what [Indiscernible]. Job analysis is that bridge that gets us from the PD to the assessment questionnaire, which is ultimately turned into what applicant is replying to when they are trying to get a job with us. Why do a job analysis? We have to because it's required by law. [Laughter]. It’s absolutely required, and I am going to tell you that somebody who does a lot of job analyses and assessment questionnaire as I can tell you it's a great tool to use. It gets me thinking: ultimately, what do I need this employee to do? If I was to go straight from the PD and go to the assessment questionnaire I would be a hot mess. The job analysis is what I want you to think of if you ever go with your kids for [Indiscernible] and you have these different bins, and all of a sudden you get one out and get big rocks in the next one, and you keep doing this you get down to the little tiny gold. In a job analysis we go ahead and we list the major functions or duties of a job, and then we capture the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to do those major duties or functions.
So, this is an example, and again, I know it's small. The slides will be available for you later on. I do know you're able to zoom in. Katherine or Katrina, I don’t know if you can put the special way to zoom in so they can make these a little bigger.

That is correct – in the upper right-hand corner.

[Indiscernible] There is no rule on what the job analysis [Indiscernible] has to look like, because there can be more than one but in every template. You're going to have two major parts. You’re going to have a major duty section and a knowledge, skills and ability section. This is where people are like, “How am I supposed to know?” There are plenty of places where you can get the major functions and duties of a job. You can look in past job announcements, desk audits, Internet searches, colleagues and you can also start with position description. The position description is absolutely the place you want to go ahead and start. The reason it's the easiest place to start is because every single position description has a section that says major duties. Hello, that's exactly what I'm looking for is major duties. Oh my goodness, they happen to be right here in this PD. It's meant to be.

We’re going to go ahead and look at an example here. This is something I listed straight from a position description for HR Specialist. Management relies on these specialists in the systems to help them apply merit system principles to tracking, developing, managing and retaining a high quality and diverse workforce. The bottom line is, I need to squeegee that down and take down all the extraneous material there and make it more streamlined so it's going to fit in a job analysis. Here's the deal. I tweaked it a little bit.

What I’m going to write on my job analysis is one of the major duties which is this, I need [Indiscernible] to assist management [Indiscernible] to retain a high quality and diverse workforce. Do you see what I’m saying? [Indiscernible] this, when you get back the classified PD, under major duty changes are you have more than the three to five major duties that we are asking you to come up with. Again, you should only have three to five major duties. Major duties that really separate that job from doing anything else that a responsible adult with a government job would have to do. I know people are like “I must be a great communicator,” right? I want to know what separates that person [Indiscernible]. Those major duties should be very specific to that series in that grade. Again, description, we will have a bunch of these major duties, but I should go through them. They're going to say those are kind of the same thing. Doing this exercise helps you think how you craft your PD. I know we're all in the business aspect of more is more. Why eat one donut when you can eat three? [Indiscernible]. I'm going to tell you streamlined is much better. It’s a better way to go when we’re talking about position description and job analysis.

We have are classified PD and we [Indiscernible] the three to five major duties that series at that grade is going to do. We write them on the job analysis worksheet, and now were expected to come up with a knowledge, skill or ability that actually captures what is that would make me sure that person could carry out that major duty. Our aim, by the way, is to have no more than a total of five knowledge, skills or abilities. If you came up with five major
duties I would need one for each. A knowledge, skill or ability that comes over and says this is what that looks like what I have that person sitting there doing my job. This is where people are like, “How am I going to do that?” First of all it's very focused, because you have to start off with knowledge of this [Indiscernible] ability to do this, doing this. That's a good starting point. We have to have that verbiage there.

The other place you can start is this handy dandy resource; information just got circulated about this. About this great [Indiscernible] which I'm putting below here. It’s on the slide, and I'm trying to not jack up our Q&A. This is a great resource here. That will get us to this [Indiscernible]. A mosaic competency is a resource that OPM came up with by collecting information by people in jobs and people supervising those people in jobs by the range of [Indiscernible]. This is an amazing resource for when you have [Indiscernible] creating a job analysis and you know what you want to say, like if it’s up here in your head but you don't know how to put it in English. That happens to me sometimes. I know what I want to say and I want to make it sound like I know what I’m talking about. If we go to that mosaic competency, we can get the language and turn it into the knowledge, skill or ability that goes along with that major duty.

Here's an example, and again it's written on the [Indiscernible] I understand. I can barely fit those words on here. If it was an eye test I would be in thick glasses at this point. It’s very difficult to read; I understand that. I have an example for us there we go. I'm going to read to you. I can’t say if I'm recruiting for a contract specialist at the 13 level. I can say, you know what, I really need a contract specialist to be able to do, I need a person to be able to do contracting or procurement. So, what I can do is actually go to mosaic [Indiscernible] and look up some tracking and procurement and I can say it's right here. I'm going to read it to you. It says knowledge of various types of contracts, techniques or requirements for contracting or procurement and contract negotiation and administration. I can say, “Oh my goodness, isn't it cool that it started with the word knowledge?” It is cool, and again, you're like, “It's meant to be.” That's because it's meant to be at not just like some weird coincidence. If I have one of my major duties and [Indiscernible] contracting [Indiscernible]. I can actually just put this as a knowledge, skill or ability that they need to be able to do.

We got to the PD; now they got into the JA and never get a move on to the assessment questionnaire. The job analysis is just a way to get to the bridge. You can go ahead and read on the screen what an assessment questionnaire is, as well we have ultimately what turns into those questions that when I sit down and apply to a job, I can say yes, I'm an expert at that, of course I am. I'm an expert in everything. Here it is again, and here is the process and the flow. We have the job analysis, the major duties and the knowledge, skills and ability. We take those knowledge, skills and abilities and we move them over, and they now become the factors on the AQ. It's kind of like watching National Treasure where they have to find [Indiscernible] bifocals before they can go and find the [Indiscernible].

Again, the last screenshot here, but ultimately this is what we are doing. On the left-hand side of your slide [Indiscernible] are from the job analysis, you see a stick in the knowledge, skills
and abilities and moving them over to become the factors on the assessment questionnaires. Those factors are still pretty chunky. They are still on prelate. What we have to do next is we have to turn those factors, those overarching factors on the AQ which used to be the knowledge, skills and abilities from the job analysis, and we have to make questions that actually capture what I want that person to respond to when they are applying for my job. This general flow, this is absolutely [Indiscernible] You’re getting all the slides after the presentation. This is what you want to keep as a resource. I'm in the HR business and I do this day in and day out. I'm going to tell you I have my cheat sheet, I have it up right here. I have it sitting right here and I use it as a resource all the time, because it's a reminder to show me how everything goes hand in glove. Here we go.

I will give you an example. FR factor which I took straight from my knowledge, skills and ability section on my job analysis, my factor is skill [Indiscernible] applicable to the acquisition of unique requirements and complex first time acquisitions and I move that over and make that a factor. I now have to write questions about that because I'm not going to have that in USA jobs. I'm not going to say here applicant and never ever land [Indiscernible].

When I have those rather large factors, here is what I ask myself, “What does this really mean?” And I envision myself walking into that person's office and saying, “You know what you are really awesome at?” I would never pop off with this large chunky thing about federal procurement, I would say you know you're also [Indiscernible], you're awesome at awarding federal financial assistance agreements. So, I would have that as one of my questions. Let me give you another example. I would turn that chunky thing about “can you do all this nonsense” into “you know what you are really great at contracting officer, you are great at excelling at a evaluating and recommending disposition of required waivers” and that would be one of my questions. Can you evaluate and recommend [Indiscernible] required waiver? Yes I can. Then I have one more example. Contracting officer, you are wonderful at closing out contract files and maintaining them in accordance with the law. Here's my question, can you close out contract files and maintain them in accordance with the law? Do you have experience doing this on your own without anybody holding your hand? And you would say, “Yes, I'm amazing at that.”

I have a couple more helpful hints for you and then we will open it up to questions. When you break these questions, ultimately they support under your factors. They are still rather large. When we are writing these questions we’re writing them very quickly and distinctly. We’re developing items that distinguish among applicants. I always see these questions. Must be able to communicate verbally. I have news for you, do not put that on your questionnaire. It’s a washout. You're going to be able to tell if that person can communicate verbally when you do your interview with that person. What happens is this, if I have 10 questions on there and I want my applicant to reply and [Indiscernible] On these three questions were that is actually contract specialist, and a good one has to be able to do, if they're not good at these all these questions dilute these very important questions. You really on your assessment questionnaire goes down to a handful of questions that make a difference. [Indiscernible].
There is a strategy involved in all of this. Stay away from the questions that need [Indiscernible] be able to do. In your questions, when the questions go into [Indiscernible] jobs make sure they are absolutely are the questions that will have people saying yes I'm an expert, [Indiscernible]. I also have to tell you this, [Indiscernible] here is what happens. The question in USAJobs, can your applicant assemble quarterly performance data from internal office courses into a spreadsheet and prepare a written report? If I'm responding to that question now, I like all my stuff to be typed. Here's what I'm thinking, oh my gosh, I know I can provide an input port but can I [Indiscernible] and turn into a spreadsheet? Now I have this moral issue. Am I an expert in both of those? Because it was off a double barrel question. If I really want to know if that applicant can do both of those things, I have to ask in two separate questions. Think of the opposite end [Indiscernible]. We have a person who is like, I can't put that into a spreadsheet, but I can probably write a report. Meanwhile you hire this person.

You also have to stay away from overly specialized items. Very important. When you recruit, and, hopefully, whoever you have in your HR specialist they will help you with this or catch it if they notice you doing it. They cannot say in the HR world [Indiscernible] that every federal government HR specialist uses [Indiscernible]. The use of the comparable to those and those out there [Indiscernible]. I would want to make that from [Indiscernible] and put it into more of a balcony term. You want to avoid acronyms. I have a background from the Army; when it came to National Park Service I was always translating in my head, that's not a weapon system that is this. I always had to translate. [Indiscernible]

Now for the field people – what are your questions? There are 14 of you in here with me today. I expect some awesome questions. Here we go. What questions do you have that pertain to PD, JA and AQ? I will try to answer you in the broadest terms so I don't step on anybody's toes. If I say contact your HR specialist, well then [Indiscernible].

I can't find a PD for some very unique jobs. Here's what I'm going to tell you, I mean no malice when I tell you this. This happens all the time. In my region I have to say my interpreters are very special, interpreters at Gettysburg are not like those interpreters at the Statue of Liberty. I'm going to tell you, it's not necessarily on the PD unless you have the [Indiscernible]. Unless you really have a very specialized job, I'm going to tell everybody on this webinar that your first stop is to look at the standardized position description library. If you go InsideNPS and you look and go to the HR section, it's right there. If you can't find a PD, then I would tell you to go ahead and contact the others of you out there in the entire service and just say hey anybody got this? Your HR specialist can also possibly help you. You can always reach out through classification. They have everything in a big virtual file cabinet of everything they ever classified. [Indiscernible]. There is other resources for you and you can always [Indiscernible] together.

What options does a hiring manager have? Then they look at a resume or interview a candidate and can't validate. What I want you to know about HR is this. Lots of people say this to us, you didn't drop that person’s score, you didn't help their score. What you have to understand is this, there are very strict rules when we can drop somebody's score. Veterans
are a concern for us, because when we tried to get past all the veterans it depends on what disability level that veteran is, that and to put out that vacancy on who approves on getting past that veteran. I'm going to tell you also instead of dropping scores, you guys don't necessarily know or see is that HR lots of time throw people out entirely. You may not see that. If you interview somebody and really be like this person, you can always go back to HR and say this is what happened. I always tell you to take notes during your interviews and always to archive them because you never know what could happen.

I would tell you Matt, is instance where somebody times you is drastically unqualified for the job, if you're like this person is applying for chief clown and they can't make a balloon animal, we need to know at HR. The person has to be minimally qualified for the job. Sometimes they have to be more than that, but is a lot of nuances here. Take it back to the HR and we will waive them.

What other questions do you guys have? I'm happy to answer any questions you guys have about PD, JA and AQ. I would tell you, Nancy, yes. I don't know about an AQ library on level, but I do think there is some discussion around it. I feel like I just got to the point where we have an academic library and ultimately I want the JA and AQ to go with it. I think it's just an issue of time and it does make sense. I can tell you this, you really do have an AQ library out there, we all do. It's USAJobs. I am going to Google all the time and I can type what position I want to recruit for and I find old. I didn't know how to put it into English. It does exist in a weird work around way. I can tell you, Nancy, because we do all the recruiting at our region. We do it at our region that's why. Sure, no problem.

Any other questions?

By the way you guys are the bright side of my day. I am enjoying myself today. Oh no, you keep losing network. Guess what, it will all be recorded and we'll get it to you. I promise. I heard there is some beeping. The operator is in the room and trying to clear it.

Awesome. Perfect. Thank you.

Any other questions or concerns? That's a good question. I'm not sure, one of them being expert. That's a great question, Daniel. I know we all use them right. I don't know who they are set by, because I know there are different ways to advertise that. I know DOD has buried different ways. I don't know, Daniel. I know we use them University in. That's a good question. Here is the deal, this is me. If you guys have a follow-up question, you can of course reach out to me and also have your own to rely on. With that being, said I wish you guys a beautiful Thursday morning, and you guys can go ahead and get off the phone and enjoy the rest of your day. Goodbye, everybody.

This is the operator I got your line pulled out a conference. It sounds like it's coming from.