

# Role Descriptions

Prepared by: Stan Granberg | Last Revised: January 28, 2016

Whoa! Write a role (ps: it's like a job) description? That's not one of the most exciting options for spending an hour or so in your day. But it may be one of the best investments you can make for your sanity and the health and well-being of your church. This paper gives you a basic approach for writing helpful, productive role descriptions that will bless you, your church staff, and the all those volunteers who put in hundreds of hours of work because they love it!

## What is a Role Description?

You're probably familiar with the phrase 'what gets measured gets done.' Measuring the right stuff starts with the role description. The role description is your basic blueprint for success for every important, ongoing job that you want to get done. The role description clarifies what needs to be done, how well it needs to be done, what kind of people are most likely to succeed at the job, and the context in which the job will occur. For our purposes "role" to refer to any long-term or ongoing task, role, or position that needs to be filled.



## Why Spend the Time?

Writing good role descriptions is hard work. They take thoughtfulness, time, attention, and effort. While we expect role descriptions for paid positions, in a volunteer organization like a church it may be even more critical to have role descriptions for our volunteers. Here are reasons why we should take the time to write good role descriptions:

- *So you know what the job is you're asking people to commit to.* You'll be asking people to give up vacation time, to take time away from family, to do extra hours all for the "general good" of everybody else. Don't you think it's worth knowing what you're really asking for when you ask? The role description helps you think clearly about the task so everyone involved has the same understanding and expectations.
- *So you can get the right people in the right seats doing the right things.* This is a Jim Collins, *Good to Great*, phrase, but it's also a phrase about giftedness. When we believe God gifts people with talents, abilities, and spiritual gifts we've also got to believe God does this on purpose and not just "because." A good role description will help people sort through their gift sets to see if they fit or if this job will help them add to their giftedness.
- *To set expectations for performance.* This is a hard one for volunteer organizations. In the church world it seems any kind of job performance is OK because, after all, "we're Christians and our real goal is to love one another, right? After all, God doesn't give us salvation because we're

good enough or we earned it.” Is this biblical thinking or even good thinking? Faith is not an excuse for shoddy work. A role description should raise the bar for people by describing how well things need to be done or what kinds of outcomes we expect them to achieve.

- *To describe both whom people work with and for whom, i.e., who are people responsible for and to?* It really helps people to know who is my leader, who are my co-workers, and who works for me. When we describe these relationships we’re not describing who is better than whom. We’re describing who is responsible for whom and for what. Those are big-ticket items. A role description should clearly describe where the position sits in relationship to other people and jobs.
- *To set the context of the role into the mission, vision, and values of the church.* This is about motivation. Sometimes we ask people to do jobs without giving them any sense of why it is so important. Take for example an usher. It’s just to find people seats, right? Wrong! It’s about meeting people, noticing how they are acting, offering them hospitality, introducing them to others, or lending a helping hand. A good role description will clearly describe why this job is important and what it contributes to the overall work of the church. This means stating specifically how this role connects, adds to, or displays the mission, vision, and values of the church.

**Role Description Example:**

The following example gives you the main topics you can use to prepare your role description:

Role description for

# Set-Up Team Leader

Prepared by: Stan Adamson | Last Revised: October 26, 2016

Job Purpose Summary – The set-up team leader manages a Sunday worship preparation team to set-up our worship materials from arrival to departure of the trailer. This is a one-year appointment.

Ideally one sentence

Spiritual Gift Set – The set-up team leader uses gifts of administration, management, organization, and helps.

Associates giftedness to ministry

Role Narrative – The set-up team leader is responsible for setting up everything inside our worship area. This begins with unloading the trailer and includes setting up our chairs, tables, signs, communion, and stage, everything except the A/V equipment. The set-up team leader manages one of our three set-up teams that work for one-month rotations. Your work includes:

Gives people a mental context to think about and you the chance to talk about your core values and the importance of this job for the church.

- recruiting people onto your team to keep a full team
- training them in our set-up procedures
- organizing their work, and
- making sure everything is in proper order for our service.

We depend on you to have our worship ready for an inspiring and God-honoring service 15 minutes before our start time. To demonstrate our core value of *hospitality* tear-down begins 10 minutes after our closing so our guests do not feel driven away. Also, if people volunteer to help you joyfully include them. The team's work ends when our materials are repacked into the trailer and the worship area is picked up, swept and/or mopped (as needed), and put back the way our host expects to find it Monday morning.

Time Expectation - 2 hours every Sunday when the team is on active duty.

Position reports to and works with –This position reports to our Guest Services Minister, Stan Adamson. This position works in coordination with our other two Set-Up Team Leaders: Brian Henderson (team 1) and Zack Blackenship (team 2).

### Key Responsibilities

Provide some numbered points, beginning with those requiring the most time or the most importance.

1. Recruit and manage your set-up team
2. Create a joyful spirit of hospitality within your team as they serve our community of faith
3. Meet the trailer to unpack our materials
4. Be familiar with our set-up procedures and details
5. Use our set-up guide and photos to train and organize your team for their work which includes setting up the worship area and cleaning the restrooms
6. Do a final walk around at 15 minutes before service begins to check the "fit and finish" of the set-up for our guests

