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## BLOGS

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# Traditional Job Postings: Who Needs Em?

In a [recent Week in Review](#) post, we referenced a [Wall Street Journal article](#) about Zappos.com. It has abandoned job postings in favor of a radically different approach. Instead of posting job descriptions at online career sites, Zappos will maintain a social media network of Zappos Insiders. Through social media, people interested in working at Zappos will network and connect with current employees and provide (sometimes public) information about their skills and interests in hopes of being tapped to work in a specific job. As the *Wall Street Journal* article points out, Zappos approach raises some concerns about privacy, because the Insiders' posts may be public.

Aside from these privacy concerns, another interesting question to ask is whether employers should still use and communicate traditional job descriptions when posting open positions. Many would readily agree that detailed job postings and written formal job descriptions, if not well drafted and kept up to date, can be meaningless and disconnected from the actual duties and responsibilities of a job. In writing about job descriptions in the past, [we've encouraged employers](#) to draft descriptions that are current and accurately reflect reality. When that is done, having taken the time to consider and write out a jobs responsibilities and the required skills and experience can help an employer to hire better candidates with the correct skills for success in the job. In addition, clearly and accurately communicating the essential functions of a position can help job candidates self-select out of seeking positions for which they are not qualified. Job descriptions can also be helpful in identifying essential job duties for disabled applicants or employees. In short, the real purpose of a job description is to clearly set and communicate expectations.

So, even if an employer uses non-traditional methods to advertise job openings and screen candidates, there may still be good reasons to build in some tradition when it comes to job descriptions. The Zappos experiment promotes the notion of out with the same old, same old and in with the new. Zappos clearly has a [unique workplace with a unique culture](#) and it will be interesting to watch how its novel recruiting approach evolves. Whatever your workplace culture, though, an employer can still be well-served by clearly defining job duties and requirements, writing it all down, and then communicating the information to job candidates and employees.