

Work Keys Profile

Administered by: Mission College for West Valley College VTEA Project

Occupational Title: **Administrative Professional (Administrative/Executive Assistant)**

Profile Date: **11/09/99**

Total Number of Companies Represented: **3**

Number of SME Groups: **1** Total Number of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs): **3**

Summary Report Comments

This profiling is being conducted pursuant to a 1999/2000 VATEA Grant Project called Developing Performance Standards and Measures for Office Professionals through West Valley College. The Workplace Learning Resource Center at Mission College is charged with conducting profiling among other aspects of this project.

This is an occupational profile for the position of Administrative Assistant/Executive Assistant. Site visits were conducted by the profiler and two sessions were conducted (11/9/99 initial task list, criticality ranking and final task list and December 10, 1999 skill leveling). Scheduling problems with some of the SMEs accounts for the long interval between sessions. Considerable time was spent in determining the final task list. Skill leveling was conducted smoothly in a straightforward manner. The profiler is satisfied that SMEs understood well the skill level descriptions and carefully identified the appropriate skill levels. Skill ranking was the last activity in Session #2.

Skill	Entry Level	Performance Level	Range
Reading for Information	6	6	3-7
Listening	4	5	1-5
Writing	5	5	1-5
Locating Information	4-5	5	3-6
Teamwork	4	4-5	3-6
Observation	5	4-5	3-6

Briefly, profiling an occupation involved the following four steps:

1. Developing a list of the most critical tasks to the occupation;
2. Identifying the tasks associated with each Work Keys skill;
3. Identifying on-the-job behaviors associated with each skill as it is used on the job;
and
4. Determining the Work Keys skill levels of the occupation.

As the initial step, subject matter experts (SMEs), consisting of employees identified by your organization as having firsthand knowledge of the requirements of the occupation, reviewed a task list taken from the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* for relevance and comprehensiveness. They deleted any tasks they considered unimportant, revised some task statements, and added tasks that they considered important to the occupation. The SMEs rated each task on both IMPORTANCE (i.e., the significance of the task to overall job performance) and RELATIVE TIME SPENT (i.e., the amount of time spent performing this task compared with that spent on other tasks). The CRITICALITY of each task to the occupation (the multiplication of IMPORTANCE and RELATIVE TIME SPENT) was then calculated. The SMEs reviewed the list of tasks and their CRITICALITY ratings and revised the list so that only the most critical tasks remained.

Using this list of the most critical tasks, the SMEs discussed the Work Keys skills (i.e., Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, etc.) were required for performance of each task and then identified the tasks associated with each skill (tasks could be associated with more than one skill). Guided by these new lists, the SMEs identified on-the-job behaviors and activities that required a particular skill, such as reading manuals, calculating the sum of a list of numbers, etc. Finally, the SMEs reviewed the descriptions of the Work Keys skills to determine the levels of Reading for Information, Locating Information, Listening, Writing, Applied Mathematics, Applied Technology, Teamwork, and/or Observation needed to perform the tasks of the occupation.

The resulting occupational profile as determined by the SMEs is presented in the table at the top of this page. The most critical tasks and a description of the Work Keys skill levels for this occupation are presented on the following pages.

Final Task List

1	Answers and screens telephone and gives information to callers or routes call to appropriate official and places outgoing calls.
2	May arrange travel schedule and reservations.
3	Greets customers and visitors, ascertains nature of business, and conducts visitors to employer or appropriate person.
4	Schedules appointments for employer, screens and gives information to callers, and otherwise relieves officials of minor administrative work and business detail.
5	Aids executive in staff capacity by coordinating office services, such as personnel, budget preparation and control, housekeeping, records control, and special management studies.
6	Analyzes and organizes office operations and procedures, such as typing, bookkeeping, preparation of payrolls, flow of correspondence, filing, requisition of supplies, personnel requirements, performance standards, and other office management services.
7	May direct services, such as maintenance, repair, supplies, mail, and files.
8	Works in teams to discuss and negotiate work related issues and solve administrative problems.
9	Composes, reviews, and creates statistical reports, correspondence and other documentation.
10	May hire, train, and supervise administrative personnel.
11	Coordinates activities of various organizational units.
12	May receive and route incoming and outgoing mail.
13	Coordinates collection and preparation of operating reports, such as time-and-attendance records, terminations, new hires, transfers, budget expenditures, statistical records of performance data and personnel records.
14	Prepares and/or assists in preparation of financial and organizational reports.
15	Files correspondence and other records.
16	Formulates procedures for systematic compilation, retention, protection, retrieval, transfer, and disposal of records.
17	Prepares reports including conclusions and recommendations for solution of administrative problems.
18	Locates and attaches appropriate file to correspondence to be answered by employer.
19	May make copies of correspondence or other printed matter.
20	May prepare notes, record minutes of staff meetings, correspondence, and reports.
21	Plans and/or coordinates office layouts.
22	Prepares activities reports for guidance of management.
23	Establishes uniform correspondence procedures and style practices.
24	Suggests improvements in work methods and procedures by preparing activities reports for management guidance.
25	Evaluates office production, initiates cost reduction programs, revises procedures, or devises new forms to improve efficiency of workflow.
26	May interview job applicants, conduct orientation of new employees, and plan training programs.

Skill Level Descriptions

Reading for Information**Level : 6**

Employees must read difficult company policies, procedures, and announcements. These reading materials present complicated information; for example, they may include excerpts from regulatory and legal documents. These reading materials use advanced vocabulary, jargon, and technical terms to describe elaborate procedures and concepts. Most of the information employees need in order to identify and appropriate course of action is not clearly stated in the reading materials. Thus, employees may need to determine the principles underlying the described situation and apply those principles to new situations not depicted in the reading material.

Employees are required to:

- understand specialized words or phrases (Jargon or technical terms) when used in an unfamiliar context,
- apply complicated information to new situations,
- figure out the general principles underlying situations described in these reading materials and apply those principles to related situations,
- understand implied details, and
- figure out the reasoning behind a procedure, policy, or communication.

Listening**Level : 4**

Employees must understand and convey in writing all the primary information as well as correctly report the relationships among the pieces of information in the spoken material. They may miss supporting details or may have incorrect supportive information which is so minor that it does not interfere with accurate communication.

Listening**Level : 5**

Employees must understand and convey in writing all the primary information and supporting details from the spoken material. This includes correctly reporting the relationships among the pieces of information.

Writing**Level : 5**

Employees' writing conveys information clearly and does not contain any mechanical errors. Writing has good sentence structure; a smooth, polished, and logical style; and precise language. In addition, messages represent the company in a professional manner.

Locating information**Level : 4**

Employees must read straightforward workplace graphics, such as basic order forms, line graphs, standard tables, basic diagrams, flowcharts, instrument gauges, and maps.

Employees are required to:

- find several pieces of information in these types of graphics,
- summarize and/or compare information and trends in a single graphic,
- summarize and/or compare information and trends presented in more than one workplace graphic, such as a bar chart and a table showing related information, and
- determine the relationships among graphics.

Locating Information

Level : 5

Employees must read complicated workplace graphics, such as detailed forms, tables, graphs, diagrams, instrument gauges, and maps.

Employees are required to:

- summarize and/or compare information and trends in a single graphic,
- summarize and/or compare information and trends presented in more than one workplace graphic, such as a bar chart and a table showing related information, and
- sort through distracting information.

Teamwork

Level : 4

Employees are required to recognize the behaviors or actions that would best support the team and contribute to work performance when faced with work situations involving several problems or issues to be handled. In these work situations, the goals and consequences are not totally clear, some of the resources needed to deal with the problems are not available, and/or the team members have diverse concerns or needs (there is some underlying tension, but no confrontation).

Employees may be required to:

- organize tasks and schedule time in a way that will help accomplish team goals efficiently and effectively,
- choose a course of action that indicates consideration of what is said by team members, and
- identify behaviors that show appreciation for the personal and professional qualities of other team members and respect for their differences.

Teamwork

Level : 5

Employees are required to recognize the behaviors or actions which would best support the team and contribute to work performance when faced with new situations involving many subtle and competing problems and issues to be handled. In these work situations, the team goals and consequences are unclear, many of the resources needed to deal with the problems are not available, and the team members have competing concerns and needs.

Employees may be required to:

- identify courses of action that distribute the workload to the team members effectively; in taking on tasks and sharing tasks with others, employees must consider how best to use team talents to accomplish team goals,
- choose approaches that encourage and support the efforts of other team members to further team relationships and/or task accomplishment, and
- consider the possible effects of alternative behaviors on both team relationships and team accomplishments and select the one which will best help the team meet its goals (each team member's behavior affects the other team members).

Observation**Level : 4**

Employees must pay attention to and remember a procedure that involves some details that are hard to notice. The tasks are performed at a moderate pace, and some extra details and/or distractions are present. Although the procedure is normally routine and somewhat under the employee's control, the employee must be alert for important details and exercise judgement in determining which of those to pay attention to.

Employees are required to:

- select and pay attention to important details (but not all details) of a straightforward procedure,
- pay attention to details that are shown at a moderate pace,
- remember a few important, reinforced details,
- remain focused on details despite some extra details and/or distractions, and
- notice less obvious differences.

Observation**Level : 5**

Employees must pay attention to and remember work procedures that involve several tasks which may occur at the same time and/or outside the employee's control. Tasks are performed at a moderate pace, often interact with each other, and may change from one situation to another. The employee must examine differences and figure out if the differences are important to note (e.g., detect differences from standards and figure out if the differences are big enough to report). There are often several extra details and/or distractions that may make it difficult for the employee to pay attention to the important elements.

Employees are required to:

- focus attention on and remember several important details from a complex series of events that may occur at the same time,
- pay attention to details that are presented at a moderate pace,
- maintain attention to detail with little prompting,
- ignore irrelevant background information or distractions by only paying attention to important points, and
- recognize several differences presented at the same time or examine a subtle difference to judge if it is an acceptable difference.

