

**Chapter 7 Case Study: Job Analysis for New Coding Position**

Amy E. Haisten

Georgia Northwestern Technical College

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Dr. Donna Estes

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The Health Information Management Department at University Hospital currently has two medical coding positions, Inpatient Coding Specialist and Outpatient Coding Specialist. The hospital plans to combine these two positions into one. The new position will also have a few additional job requirements, including creating data reports and displays for management every month. Management needs to perform a job analysis of the two coding positions and create a new title to reflect the updates (Kelly, 2020, p. 131).

Both University Hospital's current coding positions include the phrase "Coding Specialist" in their titles. This exact phrase is also found in a portion of AHIMA certification titles. AHIMA has several coding certifications, including the Certified Coding Specialist (CCS) and the Certified Coding Specialist – Physician (CCS-P). These certifications show a mastery of medical coding in a hospital setting (CCS) or a physician setting (CCS-P) (AHIMA, n.d.a). Using the term "Specialist" and the same terminology as AHIMA implies the position requires a knowledgeable medical coder and that the job is in line with AHIMA. Continuing to use the exact phrase, "Coding Specialist," in the new title will continue this trend.

AHIMA says "Coding Specialist" by itself is one possible alternative title for a coding position (AHIMA, n.d.b). "Coding Specialist" sounds more important and implies the requirement of more knowledge than simply using other generic titles like "Coder" or "Medical Coder." The title for the new position should eliminate the words "Inpatient" and "Outpatient" and be shortened to "Coding Specialist." This new title continues to emphasize credentials and knowledge requirements while also generalizing and broadening the scope of the position by eliminating the words "Inpatient" and "Outpatient" used in the two current job titles.

The first tool management will use for job analysis is observation. The HIM Director and a human resources representative will directly watch each employee as they perform their tasks.

Then, they will record their findings and comments on standard and uniform comment sheets (Kelly, 2020, p. 131). Management will use their recorded observations to create the required knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform each job. This method allows for a realistic view of day-to-day fulfillment of duties, and it is better used for production jobs with a short cycle (*Society for Human Resource Management*, n.d.).

Observation is a method often thought to be valuable because it obtains objective information. However, several issues exist with observation. Observation is challenging while watching complex job functions and activities performed quickly during time constraints and under deadlines. Duties performed only occasionally may be missed by the observer altogether. The observer will also apply his own knowledge and biases to interpret what he sees (Dunckel, 2002). Issues like these are why management should use multiple methods of job analysis.

In addition to observation, management will also use personal interviews, an excellent analysis method for professional jobs (*Society for Human Resource Management*, n.d.). Interviews are the most common technique used for job analysis due to their ease of use. The employees are the most knowledgeable people about their jobs because they are the ones who perform all the duties, so they are a valuable resource (Dunckel, 2002).

The HIM Director and a human resources representative will meet with the current Inpatient Coding Specialist and the Outpatient Coding Specialist to ask each employee the same set of predetermined, structured questions (Kelly, 2020, p. 131). The interviewers will ask additional questions based on the employees' responses. Through this face-to-face interaction, management hopes to obtain the information needed regarding the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform each job (*Society for Human Resource Management*, n.d.).

University Hospital aims to keep up with advances and changes in healthcare and the area of health information management. The new job title and alterations to the coding job functions of HIM is a step toward maintaining this goal.

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