

**HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – LECTURE 4**

**CHAPTER 4 – DESIGNING PRODUCTIVE AND SATISFYING WORK**

**LESSON 4**  
**DESIGNING PRODUCTIVE AND SATISFYING WORK**

**Learning Objective 1 – How is work design strategic?**

HOW CAN STRATEGIC DESIGN OF WORK TASKS IMPROVE AN ORGANIZATION? Through the process of assigning and coordinating work tasks called Work Design.

Two key principles of work design

- Differentiation the assignment of similar tasks so that they can specialize in doing things well.
- Integration the coordination of the efforts of the employees.

When differentiation and integration are linked, firms are able to enhance their productivity and customer happiness.

To establish who performs what, strategic work design combines differentiation and integration. Effective differentiation and integration of tasks enables businesses to boost productivity and customer satisfaction. When work is designed strategically, employee efforts are integrated to support the organization's competitive strategy.

Two Elements of Work Design

- Autonomy relates to the degree to which workers are given the flexibility and independence to plan and execute their work duties.
  - Organizations may see two potential benefits from greater autonomy. One advantage relates to information. In many instances, front-line employees are closer to consumers and products and, as a result, have information that managers lack.

- The employees can utilize this knowledge, for instance, to promptly respond to change. Employees who are in close proximity to products and consumers are frequently able to make immediate adjustments if the production process or customers' needs change.
  - For instance, a waitress who discovers that certain customers do not like glasses of water can adapt to their demands more effectively than a manager who has never seen these customers.
  - Another possible advantage of considerable autonomy is enhanced motivation. Individuals with a stronger sense of autonomy are more accountable for their work.
  - Employees with greater autonomy are less likely to shirk their responsibilities, but those who lack autonomy frequently fail to complete their portion of job tasks.
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- **Interdependence** is the amount to which a person's activities and outcomes at work are impacted by others. When interdependence is low, most people operate independently. Each individual completes his or her assigned work with little assistance from or collaboration with others.
    - **Interdependence** is high when people collaborate closely. Each team member is responsible for a portion of the task, and the work is passed back and forth among team members. Each individual modifies his or her inputs based on the inputs of others.

#### Linking Autonomy and Interdependence to HR Strategy

- Organizations employing cost-based HR methods, such as Bargain Laborer or Loyal Soldier, prioritize efficiency.

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- Often, efficiency is achieved by combining minimal autonomy with sequential processing.
- One purpose of cost strategies is to standardize jobs so that people can quickly master a set of relatively simple duties.
- Innovation is the goal of organizations that employ differentiated HR methods, such as Committed Expert or Free Agent.
- High autonomy and mutually beneficial processes promote innovation.
- The purpose of differentiation is to develop new products and services that are superior to those supplied by competitors.
- People within the organization are more likely to try new approaches to solving problems

### Learning Objective 2 – How are Employee Jobs Determined?

How do employees know what their responsibilities are? Employees are hired for a position. The concept of having a job is so prevalent that many people characterize themselves in terms of their employment. Which is a bundle of responsibilities that an employee must do.

Why are some responsibilities assigned to one job while others are assigned to another?

The process of identifying jobs is known as Job Analysis. Job analysis is the methodical collection of information on work tasks. The procedure entails acquiring information from experts to determine the tasks that workers must complete, the tools and equipment they need to perform the tasks, and the required working conditions.

The Job Analysis Process

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Steps in the Job Analysis Process

Step 1. Getting Organized. The first step of job analysis is organization. During this phase, determining who will execute the analysis is crucial. Some firms have workers with the appropriate expertise to conduct employment analyses. Other organizations use outside consultants for assistance. In either scenario, accurate job analysis relies on identifying individuals with the abilities necessary for a comprehensive analysis of the jobs. Planned resources, such as personnel support and computer assets, can contribute to a project's success. During the period of organization, it is also vital to ensure that key decision-makers support the analysis plans. No matter how meticulously procedures are developed, problems will arise, and support from upper management will be required to ensure the success of the analysis.

Step 2. Choosing Jobs. The second part of job analysis consists of selecting the jobs to be analyzed. Clearly, the objective is to assess all positions inside an organization. However, budgetary and staffing restrictions necessitate the elimination of some of these positions. As you might anticipate, jobs that are crucial to the organization's performance should be given top priority. A special emphasis should be placed on jobs that employ huge numbers of people. Focusing study on tasks that are both significant and prevalent assures that efforts will be placed in areas where improvement will have the most influence on the success of the business.

Step 3. Reviewing Knowledge. The subsequent phase, knowledge review, is understanding what is already known about similar occupations in other firms. The United States Department of Labor's Occupational Information Network is an essential source of information. The O\*Net network is accessible online at <http://online.onetcenter.org>.

Step 4. Selecting Job Agents. The fourth phase involves the selection of job agents, or the individuals who will give job information. In many instances, the finest source of information is the person currently performing the job. These individuals are well comfortable with

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routine responsibilities. Existing personnel may stress what is really done rather than what should be done, which is a potential concern. Supervisors are a second source of information. Supervisors may not be as knowledgeable with the job's specifics, but they can frequently provide clarification regarding the tasks they wish to be completed. Analysts who make a living analyzing jobs are a third source of knowledge.

Step 5. Collecting Job Information. The following stage is to gather information about the position. A frequent method of data collection is the employment analysis interview.

The interviewer inquires about the duties and obligations of job agents. Interviews with agents can be conducted alone or in groups. In either scenario, the interview should be arranged so that everyone is asked the identical questions. Interviews for job analysis can be effective for discovering unique qualities of a given position. However, interviews can be time-consuming and expensive.

A second common method for collecting information is the **job analysis questionnaire. This is the PAQ.** Here, agents respond to written questions about the tasks they perform on the job. One type of questionnaire is an off-the-shelf instrument that has been developed to provide information about numerous different jobs. Another type is a tailored questionnaire developed just to obtain information about a specific job in a specific organization. An advantage of job analysis questionnaires is that they are relatively inexpensive. A disadvantage is that they may only provide very general information.

- Observation is a third frequent technique. Observation for job analysis involves job analysts to observe employees at work and take notes on the tasks completed. This technique can provide valuable information for professions involving repetitive tasks. Observation is difficult for employment when duties are either cerebral or not performed frequently enough for an outsider to watch.

Step 6. Creating Job Descriptions. Next, analysts use the information from the job analysis to construct a job description. A job description is a collection of task statements that outline what individuals doing a job are expected to do. This description focuses on duties and

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responsibilities and is typically a list of actions performed by personnel in the position being described.

Step 7. Creating Job Specifications The final stage utilizes information from the job analysis to build work specifications. The knowledge, skills, and abilities that workers must possess in order to accomplish the duties outlined in the job description are specified in the job specifications.

### Job Analysis-Methods

Numerous techniques have been developed for collecting employment analysis data.

### Task Analysis Inventory

- The job agents provide ratings concerning a large number of tasks.
  - The majority of analyses require replies to at least one hundred distinct task statements.
  - Typically, these task statements begin with an action verb that specifies a specific job, such as "explains corporate policies to newly hired employees" and "analyses data to calculate the cost of employing each new employee." One rating is for frequency or time spent, and the other is for importance.
  - Ratings for the frequency of completing the task vary from "never" to "most of the time." There may also be ratings for the amount of time

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spent on the task. However, frequency ratings and time spent ratings measure roughly the same thing.

- Task importance ratings typically range from "not important" to "very important."

**Critical-incidents technique** identifies good and bad on-the-job behaviors.

- Job agents are requested to develop a number of statements describing behaviors they deem particularly beneficial or detrimental to work performance.
- Each sentence describes the situation and the activities that determined whether the outcome was desirable or unpleasant.

### Position Analysis Questionnaire

The Position Analysis Questionnaire (PAQ) is a systematic questionnaire that evaluates the required job-related activities. This questionnaire collects information not about jobs or responsibilities, but rather on the traits individuals must possess to do well on the job. The PAQ, in essence, bypasses Step 6 of the job analysis process and proceeds directly to Step 7.

### Job Analysis – Questionnaire

- **(PAQ)** is a structured questionnaire that assesses the work behaviors required for a job. Such as:

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- *Information input*—where and how a worker obtains needed information such as education and or experience.
- *Mental processes*—reasoning and decision-making activities.
- *Work output*—physical actions required for the job, as well as tools or devices used.
- *Relationships with other persons*—the interactions and social connections that a worker forms with others.
- *Job context*—the physical and social surroundings where work activities are performed.
- *Other job characteristics*—activities, conditions, or characteristics that are important but not contained in the other five dimensions.

#### Job Descriptions and Job Specifications

- The PAQ, which consists of multiple pages is then transcribed into smaller document called a Job Description by the job analysts.
- The Job Description consist of two parts. One is the description of the job and the second is the Job Specifications.
- A good job description and job specification focuses attention on knowledge, skills, and abilities need to do the job.
- The Job Description is used in multiple human resources processes such as recruiting, compensation and training.

#### How is Job Description Information Made Useful?

As shown in Figure 4.3, job descriptions emphasize activities and responsibilities, whereas job definitions emphasize personality traits. Therefore, the information contained in job descriptions must be converted into work specifications, which are necessary for purposes such as employee selection. Ultimately, knowing only the duties of a position's employees is not very helpful when identifying the type of candidate to hire. Those conducting the recruiting must also be aware of the qualities to look for in candidates.

Job Descriptions	Job Specifications
<p data-bbox="280 352 602 422">Describes <i>what</i> is to be done</p>  <p data-bbox="378 856 651 888">Focus is on duties</p>	<p data-bbox="862 352 1117 579">Describes the</p> <ul data-bbox="862 394 1036 506" style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge</li><li>• Skills</li><li>• Abilities</li></ul> <p data-bbox="862 506 1117 579">needed to perform the duties</p>  <p data-bbox="816 856 1360 888">Focus is on characteristics of people</p>

### Job Analysis and Legal Issues

The method of job analysis serves as the foundation for numerous effective human resource initiatives. Good decisions regarding how to select, appraise, and compensate employees are most likely to arise from practices based on solid analysis. Legal considerations are another crucial aspect of a thorough work appraisal. A number of judicial rulings have affirmed the significance of employing effective job analysis processes. When an organization makes recruiting or promotion decisions that have discriminatory impacts, it might successfully defend itself by demonstrating that its decisions were based on thorough studies of the jobs in question. In contrast, such judgments are likely to be perceived as arbitrary and deemed unlawful if the organization has not followed proper job analysis methods.

### Competency Modeling

Competency modeling has arisen as knowledge-intensiveness has increased in the workplace.

- Competency modeling depicts the work tasks in terms of the required skills and competencies.

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- In addition to knowledge, skills, and abilities, competencies attempt to capture motivation, values, and interests. Thus, competencies encompass both "can do" and "will do" traits of individuals.

### Learning Objective 3 – How Do We Determine the Tasks Associated with Each Job?

#### Job Design

- The job design process focuses on selecting which tasks will be grouped to form employee roles.
- There are four primary techniques to organizing labor tasks: the mechanical, the motivational, the perceptual, and the biological.

#### Mechanistic Approach

- The Mechanistic Approach incorporates concepts from Frederick Taylor's Scientific Management.
- The fundamental objective of the mechanistic method is to simplify labor duties as much as feasible.
- Tasks are automated. Each position is extremely specialized and, to the extent possible, simple.
- Employees focus on accomplishing a single task at a time, and a small collection of tasks is repeated.
- The mechanistic approach tends to diminish worker autonomy and produce sequential processing.
- Specialization and simplification of jobs have been associated to increased productivity.
- Thus, organizations adopting either the Loyal Soldier or Bargain Laborer human resource strategy can profit from mechanistic job design approaches.

### Motivational Approach

- The objective of this motivating strategy is to increase employees' enjoyment of their work and, consequently, their effort.
  - Individuals tasked with establishing a marketing plan for a cell phone maker, for instance, may be assigned a variety of duties that allow them to exercise their creativity.
  - Not only are jobs structured to maximize productivity, but also to offer people with duties they find important and pleasurable.
- In contrast to the mechanical method, the motivational approach aims to develop complicated and hard tasks.
  - The work characteristics model, which emphasizes the development of intrinsic motivation, is a technique used in job design.
  - Intrinsic motivation exists when employees perform job because they love it, and not necessarily for monetary or other benefits.
  - Individuals are intrinsically driven, according to the job characteristics model, when they view their work to have the following three characteristics: Meaningfulness. People view their job as meaningful when they are able to utilize a variety of abilities, when they can see that their contributions result in the completion of a certain service or product, and when they perceive that their duties have a significant impact on others.
  - Responsibility. People feel personal responsibility for the results of their work when they have autonomy, which is the ability to make decisions.

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- Understanding of the results. Receiving feedback in the form of information regarding the efficacy of one's work enables one to get insight into the outcomes of one's efforts.

#### Perceptual Approach

- The primary purpose of the perceptual method is to reduce mental demands on workers and, consequently, errors.
- Safety and accident avoidance are crucial. Due to its emphasis on simplicity, the perceptual approach to job design typically results in sequential processing and limited autonomy.
- This strategy is especially prevalent in firms employing the Loyal Soldier or Bargain Laborer human resource strategies.

#### Biological Approach

- This method is occasionally related with ergonomics, which focuses on planning tasks to prevent physical damage.
- Task requirements are evaluated in terms of strength, stamina, and joint stress. Then, work practices are developed to eliminate movements that can cause bodily harm or undue exhaustion.
- Employees are frequently instructed in fundamentals such as maintaining proper posture and avoiding excessive wrist movement.
- The primary objective of the biological approach is to eradicate pain and harm.
- Incorporating breaks and chances to swap jobs reduces fatigue. Occasionally, efficiency advantages are compromised in order to minimize worker discomfort or damage.
- The biological approach's guiding principles are therefore applicable to tasks characterized by sequential processing.

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- Discuss work design in automobile assembly factories.

**Learning Objective 4 - How Can Work Be Designed to Improve Family Life?**

Work-family conflict is a factor that is becoming increasingly important in employment design. It is challenging for many people to blend their obligations as employees with those of parents or spouses. This dispute is reciprocal in nature.

Home-related stress can have a negative impact on work performance, leading to family-to-work conflict.

Similarly, stress encountered at work can negatively impact home life, a phenomenon known as work-to-family conflict.

According to studies, spending more time at work increases stress at home, whereas spending more time with family increases stress at work.

- A second cause of conflict between job and family is that the psychological effort required to cope in one area depletes the resources required to cope in the other.
- A young mother who participates in a severe dispute with a coworker is likely to be emotionally drained by the time she gets home to her family.
- Increasing conflict between work and family duties is a concern since it increases absenteeism and turnover.
  
- Role conflict is a concern for employees because it diminishes contentment, promotes alcohol and drug usage, and leads to poor physical health.

Work/Life Balance

- Flexible scheduling techniques allow individuals to organize their schedules with a partner, so reducing the inherent conflict between being a parent and an employee.
- Flextime and the compacted workweek are two of the most popular forms of flexible scheduling.
  - **Flextime** allows employees to determine when they will arrive and go from work.
    - The organization establishes a mandatory attendance period for all employees. For instance, a bank may demand all tellers to be present between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., its busiest hours. Outside of this core group, employees are free to work whenever they choose.
    - Others may arrive at 11 a.m. and depart at 8 p.m. This flexibility allows employees to combine work, family, and other obligations more effectively.
  - **Compressed workweek** Allows employees to hold full-time jobs while working fewer than five days per week.
    - Typically, compressed schedule employees work four ten-hour days. Providing staff with three-day weekends can afford them more time for family activities.
    - A reduced workweek may facilitate scheduling of events such as doctor and dental appointments. Additionally, commuting on four rather than five days can minimize travel time.
- Numerous firms permit employees to work away from company premises.
- The most prevalent arrangement involves employees working from home.
  - This method is sometimes referred to as telework since employees remain connected to the office via voice and data services delivered over telephone lines.

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Over 80% of organizations report at least some teleworkers, and 45 million Americans spend at least some time teleworking.

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**Test Questions**

1. Giving employees more independence is a surefire method to boost their performance.
2. A corporation must have up-to-date job descriptions in order to avoid legal issues.
3. The basic purpose of effective work design is to group tasks into jobs that enhance worker productivity.
4. People who undertake monotonous duties on a regular basis sometimes find their work unpleasant.
5. The performance of employees is enhanced when they have the freedom to choose when they work.
6. It is not necessary to do a job analysis because it clarifies employee expectations.
7. In addition to knowledge, skills, and talents, compelling competencies try to capture factors like as motivation, values, and personal interests.
8. When complicated operations require mental rather than physical inputs, reciprocal processes are more likely to be the most efficient mode of operation.
9. The basic objective of successful job design is to maximize the degree of productivity attained by employees. To achieve this purpose, tasks are grouped into jobs.
10. When employees are granted greater independence, their overall performance almost always improves.

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**Answer Key**

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. True
6. False
7. True
8. True
9. False
10. False

**Identification**

1. The extent to which individual workers have the ability to choose how they will complete their work.
2. An employee's work responsibilities are defined by a set of tasks that they must complete.
3. Task statements are statements that define the work tasks that must be completed by someone in a specific position.
4. It is the process of assigning and coordinating work tasks among employees that is known as work assignment and coordination.
5. Knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the tasks outlined in a job description are listed in a job description.
6. A physical action required for the job, as well as tools or devices used.
7. An alternative to traditional job analysis that focuses on a broader set of characteristics that workers need to effectively perform job duties.
8. Organizing work tasks so that employees are responsible for specific aspects of the work process, allowing for specialization, is known as task segmentation or task division.
9. The extent to which individual workers have the ability to choose how they will complete their work.
10. A method of designing work tasks that emphasizes the importance of proper posture and movement

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**Answer Key**

1. Autonomy
2. Job
3. Job Design
4. Job Description
5. Job Specification
6. Work Output
7. Competency Modeling
8. Differentiation
9. Autonomy
10. Ergonomics