

Human Resource Management

Chapter 4  
Designing Productive and Satisfying Work

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# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- After reading this chapter you should be able to:
  - Describe how the design of work tasks and roles can align with overall HR strategy.
  - Explain the steps in the process of job analysis.
  - Explain how to translate job analysis results into knowledge, skill, and ability lists that can be used to guide other human resource practices.

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe various approaches to job design, including the motivational, biological, mechanistic, and perceptual perspectives.
- Identify practices that make jobs more compatible with family demands.

# 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 aligned it helps organizations increase productivity and improve customer satisfaction**

# Two Elements of Work Design

- **Autonomy** is the extent to which individual workers are given the freedom and independence to plan and carry out work tasks.
- **Interdependence** is the extent to which an individual's work actions and outcomes are influenced by other people.

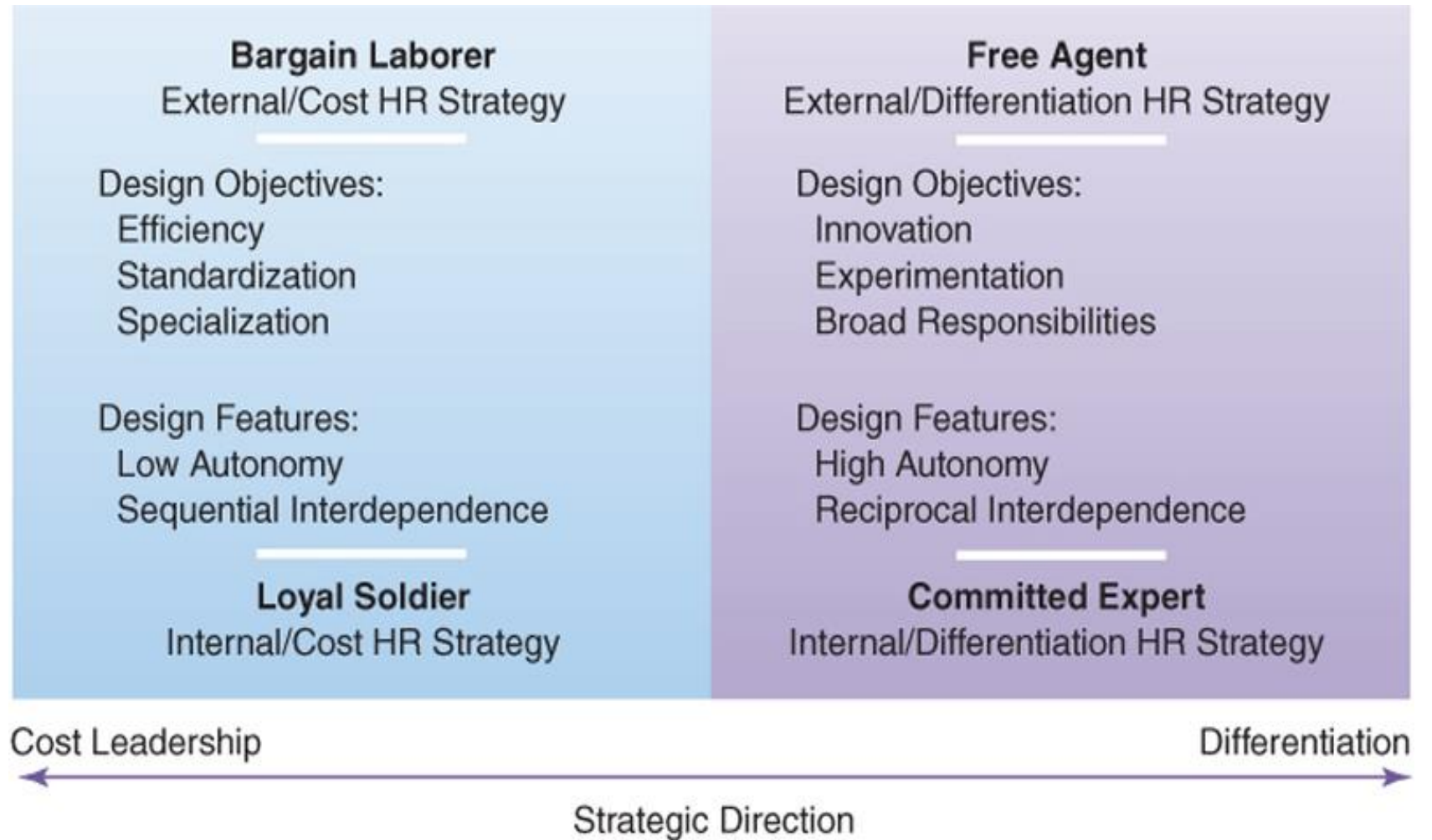
# Linking Autonomy and Interdependence to HR Strategy

- Organizations using cost HR strategies—either Bargain Laborer or Loyal Soldier—focus on efficiency.
- Efficiency is often created by combining low autonomy and sequential processing.
- With cost strategies, one objective is to standardize jobs so that employees can quickly learn a set of relatively easy tasks.

# Linking Autonomy and Interdependence to HR Strategy

- Organizations that use differentiation HR strategies—either Committed Expert or Free Agent—focus on innovation.
- High autonomy and reciprocal processes encourage innovation.
- With differentiation, the objective is to create new products and services that are better than those offered by competitors.
- People within the organization are more likely to try new approaches to solving problems.

# Figure 4.1 Strategic Framework for Work Design



# HOW DO EMPLOYEES KNOW WHAT THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO DO?

- Employees are hired into a **Job**.
  - Which is a collection of tasks that a person is required to perform at work.
- Jobs are identified through a process known as **Job Analysis**.

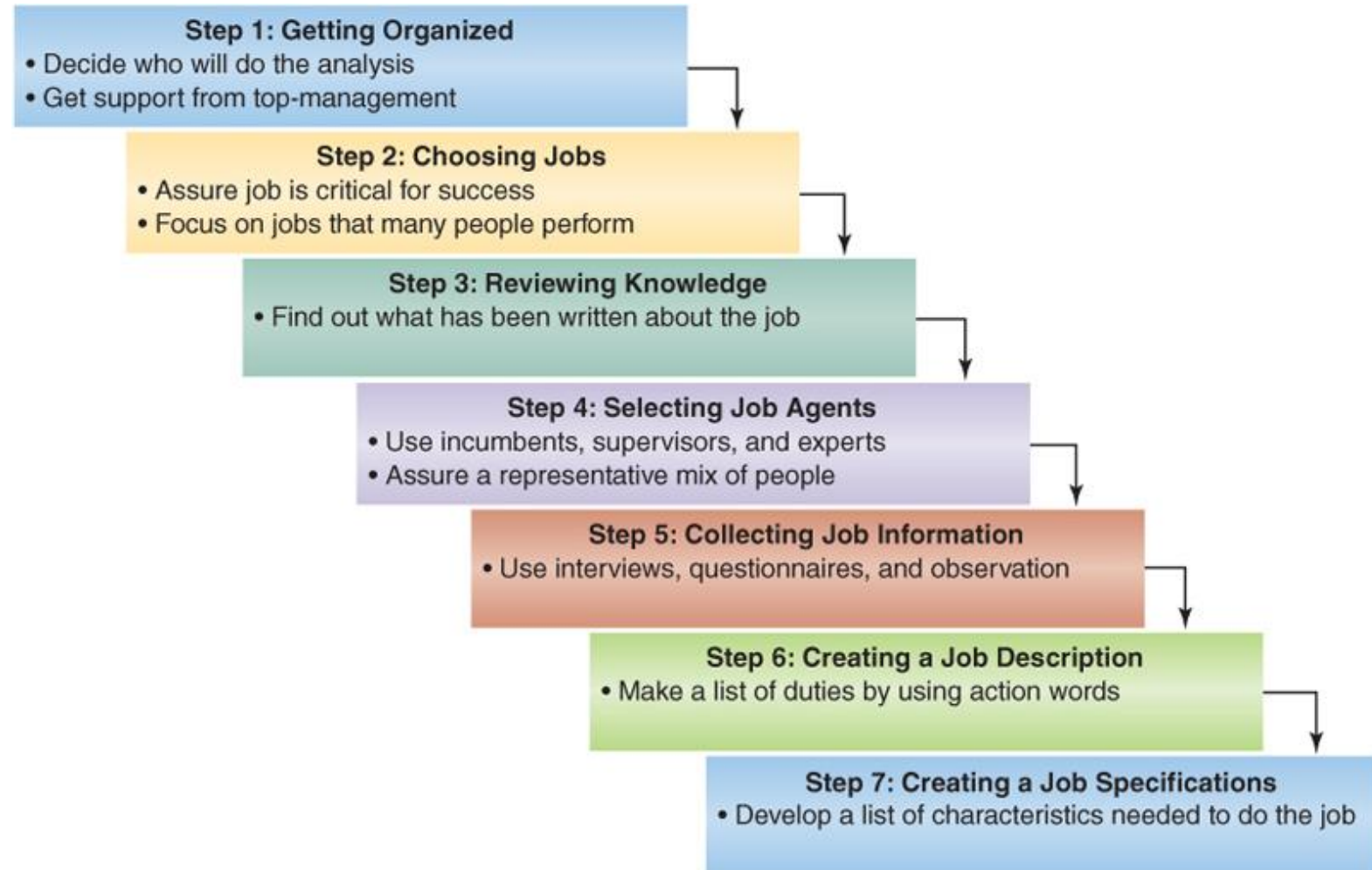
# Job Analysis

- Steps in the Job Analysis Process
  1. Determine who will do the analysis and get top management buy in to the process.
  2. Choose jobs that are critical to the success of the company and have a sufficient number of employees in them.
  3. Review what has already been written about the job.

# Job Analysis

4. Select job agents, such as incumbents, supervisors or job analysts.
5. Collect job information through interviews, questionnaires and observations
6. Create a job description that identifies skills, effort responsibilities and working conditions of the job.
7. Creating Job Specifications. The final step uses job analysis information to create job specifications. **Job specifications** identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities that workers need in order to perform the tasks listed in the job description.

# Figure 4.2 Phases of Job Analysis.



Source: Information from Robert D. Gatewood and Hubert S. Field, Human Resource Selection, 5th ed. (Cincinnati, OH: South-Western, 2001).

# Step 6

**Table 4.1**

*Job Description for Computer Programmer*

Overview: Convert project specifications and statements of problems and procedures to detailed logical flow charts for coding into computer language. Develop and write computer programs to store, locate, and retrieve specific documents, data, and information. May place content on Web sites.

1. Correct errors by making appropriate changes and then rechecking the program to ensure that the desired results are produced.
2. Conduct trial runs of programs and software applications to be sure that they will produce the desired information and that the instructions are correct.
3. Compile and write documentation of program development and subsequent revisions, inserting comments in the coded instructions so others can understand the program.
4. Write, update, and maintain computer programs or software packages to handle specific jobs, such as tracking inventory, storing or retrieving data, or controlling other equipment.
5. Consult with managerial, engineering, and technical personnel to clarify program intent, identify problems, and suggest changes.
6. Perform or direct revision, repair, or expansion of existing programs to increase operating efficiency or adapt to new requirements.
7. Write, analyze, review, and rewrite programs, using workflow chart and diagram, and applying knowledge of computer capabilities, subject matter, and symbolic logic.
8. Write or contribute to instructions or manuals to guide end users.
9. Investigate whether networks, workstations, the central processing unit of the system, and/or peripheral equipment are responding to a program's instructions.

Source: Information from the Occupational Information Network O\*Net OnLine, <http://online.onetcenter.org/>.

# Step 7

**Table 4.2**

*Job Specifications for Computer Programmer*

Knowledge of

- Computers and electronics, including circuit boards, processors, chips, computer software and hardware
- English language, including meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition and grammar
- Mathematics, including arithmetic, algebra, geometry, calculus, statistics, and their applications

Skills in

- Writing computer programs
- Critical thinking and complex problem solving
- Active learning and listening, reading comprehension, and learning strategies
- Operations analysis, technology design, and troubleshooting

Ability for

- Arranging information in patterns
- Deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning
- Seeing details at close range
- Oral and written comprehension
- Oral and written expression
- Knowing when something is wrong or likely to go wrong

Source: Information from the Occupational Information Network O\*Net OnLine, <http://online.onetcenter.org/>.

# Job Analysis-Methods

- Task Analysis Inventory
  - The job agents provide ratings concerning a large number of tasks.
    - Most analyses require responses for at least 100 different task statements.
    - These task statements usually begin with an action verb that describes a specific activity—for example, “explains company policies to newly hired workers” and “analyzes data to determine the cost of hiring each new employee.”
  - One rating is for frequency or time spent, and the other is for importance.
    - Ratings for *frequency of performing the task* range from “never performed” to “performed most of the time.” Ratings might also be made for *time spent on the task*. However, ratings of frequency and time spent essentially measure the same thing.
    - Ratings for *task importance* usually range from “not important” to “extremely important.”

# Job Analysis - Methods

- **Critical-incidents technique** identifies good and bad on-the-job behaviors.
  - Job agents are asked to generate a number of statements that describe behaviors they consider particularly helpful or harmful for accomplishing work.
  - Each statement includes a description of the situation and the actions that determined whether the outcome was desirable or undesirable.

# Results from an analysis using the critical-incidents technique

	Good	Bad
Interest in residents	31	19
Availability	14	27
Responsibility	12	20
Fairness	18	10
Self-adherence to rules	0	28
Social skills	19	7
Programming	13	7
Self-confidence	12	8
Rule enforcement	4	14
Authoritarianism	1	16
Counseling skills	12	4
Self-control	5	2
Confidentiality	1	2

Source: Reproduced with permission of authors and publisher from Michael G. Aamodt, Robert J. Keller, Krista J. Crawford, and W. Kimbrough, "A Critical-Incident Job Analysis of the University Housing Resident Assistant Position," *Psychological Reports* 49(1981): 983–986. [# Psychological Reports 1981]



# Job Analysis - Questionnaire

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

# Figure 4.3 Comparing Job Descriptions and Job Specifications.

Job Descriptions	Job Specifications
<p data-bbox="759 425 1207 515">Describes <i>what</i> is to be done</p>  <p data-bbox="894 1125 1276 1162">Focus is on duties</p>	<p data-bbox="1574 425 1931 729">Describes the</p> <ul data-bbox="1574 482 1931 625" style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge</li><li>• Skills</li><li>• Abilities</li></ul> <p data-bbox="1574 639 1931 729">needed to perform the duties</p>  <p data-bbox="1505 1125 2270 1162">Focus is on characteristics of people</p>

# Job Analysis and Legal Issues

- Job analysis results help many organizations determine whether they are complying with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- ADA guidelines make an important distinction between essential and nonessential tasks. For a disabled employee to be qualified for a position, he or she must be able to perform all essential tasks (with reasonable accommodations).

# Job Analysis and Legal Issues

- When an organization makes hiring or promotion decisions that have discriminatory effects, the organization can defend itself successfully by showing that it based its decisions on good, solid analyses of the jobs involved.

# Critical procedures

**Table 4.4**

*Legal Issues and Job Analysis*

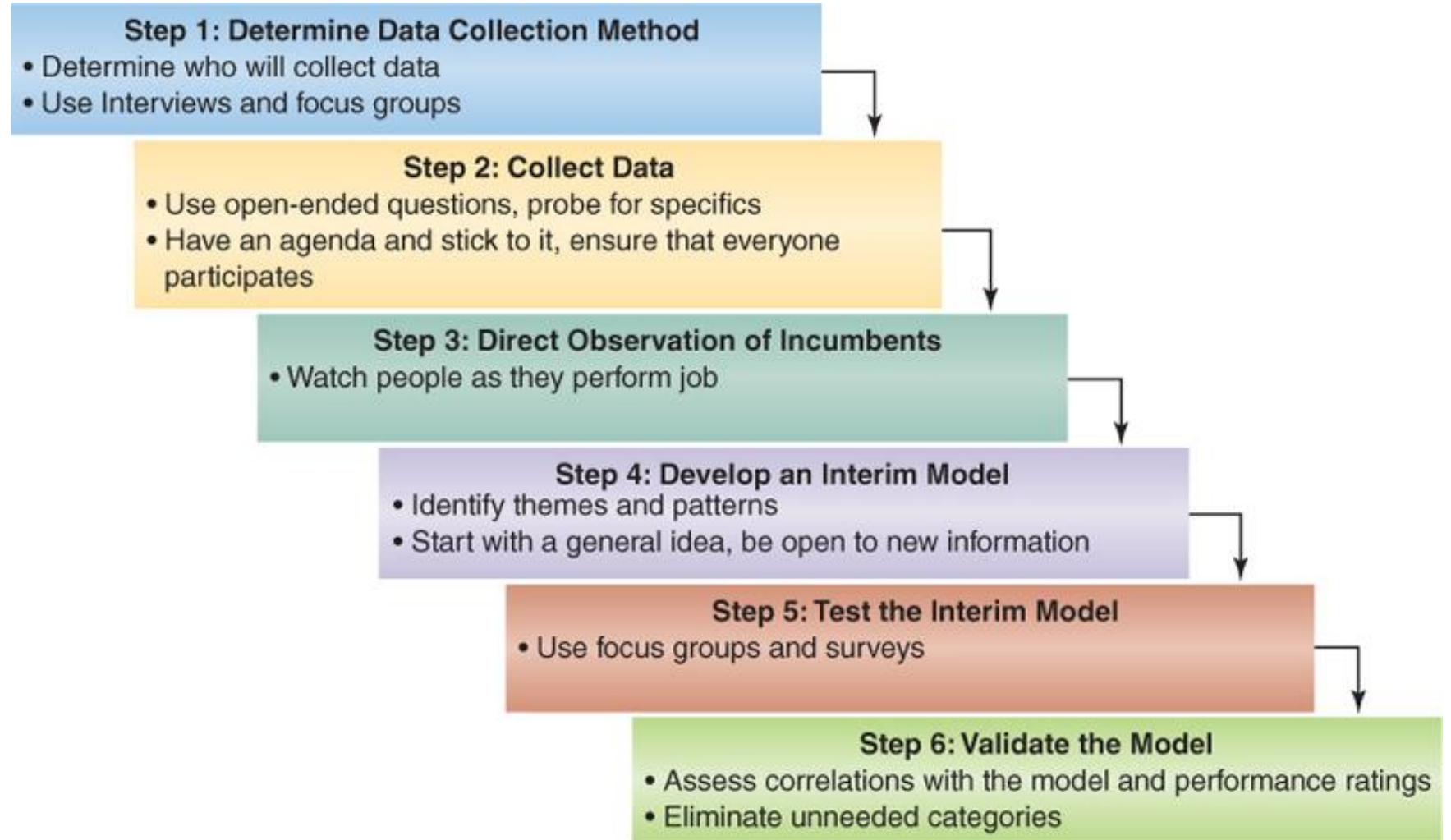
1. Analysis results should be in writing.
2. The method used to analyze the job should be clearly described.
3. Expert job analysts should collect data from several up-to-date sources.
4. Data should be collected from enough people to be sure the results are accurate.
5. Tasks, duties, and activities must be identified and included in the job analysis.
6. Specify the relative degree of competency necessary for entry-level performance.

Source: Information from Duane E. Thompson and Toni A. Thompson, "Court Standards for Job Analysis in Test Validation," *Personnel Psychology* 35 (1982): 865–874.

# Competency Modeling

- As work activities have become more knowledge based **Competency modeling** has emerged.
- Competency modeling describes the work activities in terms of skills and competencies need to perform the job.
- Competencies include knowledge, skills, and abilities, but they also seek to capture such things as motivation, values, and interests. Competencies thus include both “can-do” and “will-do” characteristics of people.

# Figure 4.4 Steps in Competency Modeling.



Source: Information from Antoinette D. Lucia and Richard D. Lepsinger, *The Art and Science of Competency Models: Pinpointing Critical Success Factors in Organizations* (San Francisco Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, 1999),

# Job Design

- The process of **job design** focuses on determining what tasks will be grouped together to form employee jobs
- There are four general approaches to grouping work tasks: mechanistic, motivational, perceptual, and biological.

# Mechanistic Approach

- Job design is viewed from the perspective of creating an efficient machine that transforms labor inputs into goods and services.
- Industrial engineers often use analyses designed to find the work methods that take the least time. Such as Time and Motion studies.

# Motivational Approach

- The motivational approach is aimed at increasing employees' enjoyment of their work and thus increasing their effort.
- Jobs are designed not simply to get work done as quickly as possible but also to provide workers with tasks they find meaningful and enjoyable.
- A model of motivational job design is the **job characteristics model**, which focuses on building intrinsic motivation.
  - Intrinsic motivation exists when employees do work because they enjoy it, not necessarily because they receive pay and other rewards.

# Perceptual Approach

- The basic objective of the perceptual approach is to simplify mental demands on workers and thereby decrease errors.
- Safety and prevention of accidents are critical.
- The perceptual approach to job design usually results in work characterized by sequential processing and low autonomy.

# Biological Approach

- This approach is associated with **ergonomics**, which concerns methods of designing work to prevent physical injury.
- Job tasks are assessed in terms of strength, endurance, and stress put on joints.
- Work processes are then designed to eliminate movements that can lead to physical injury or excessive fatigue.
- The basic goal of the biological approach is to eliminate discomfort and injury.

# HOW CAN WORK BE DESIGNED TO IMPROVE FAMILY LIFE?

- Workers can experience stress at home work-to-family conflict when the stress they feel at work is carried into their family environment.
- They can also feel the same conflict when stress at home carries into their work environment family-to-work conflict.
- **Flextime** and **Compressed workweeks** were introduced to combat both types of work/family conflict.

# Work/Life Balance

- **Flexible scheduling** allows people to coordinate their schedules with a partner and reduce the conflict associated with being a parent and an employee.
- Two of the most common forms of flexible scheduling are:
  - **Flextime** provides employees with the freedom to decide when they will arrive at and leave work.
  - **Compressed workweek** enables employees to have full-time positions but work fewer than five days a week.

# Work/Life Balance

- Many organizations allow employees to work at locations other than company facilities.
- The most common arrangement is for employees to work at home. This practice is often called **telework**.

Thank you