

## Chapter 8<sup>1</sup>

### Work, organization and job design

#### 8.1 Introduction

Work, organization, and job design are three distinct but closely associated processes that establish what work is done in organizations and how it is done. Work design deals with the ways in which things are done in the work system of a business by teams and individuals. Organization design is concerned with deciding how organizations should be structured. Job design is about establishing what people in individual jobs or roles are there to do. Although these three activities are dealt with separately in this chapter they share one purpose to ensure that the organization's work systems and structure operate effectively, make the best use of people in their jobs and roles and take account of the needs of people at work.

In theory, to achieve that purpose, work, organization and job design function sequentially. The work system is designed to meet the specific needs of the business and to deliver value to its customers or clients. An organization structure or system (not all organizations are rigidly structured) has to be developed to enable the work system to operate. The structure is made up of jobs or roles (there is a distinction, which will be explained later) that have to be designed in ways that will maximize the extent to which they can be carried out effectively and provide intrinsic motivation, ie motivation from the work itself.

In practice, the processes involved can run concurrently the work system will involve deciding how the work should be organized, and both the work system and organization design processes will define what sort of jobs or roles are required. At the same time, job design considerations will affect how the work is organized and how the work system functions. This chapter deals with each aspect of design separately, but it should be remembered that the processes interlink and overlap.

#### 8.2 Work design

Work design is the creation of systems of work and a working environment that enhance organizational effectiveness and productivity, ensure that the organization becomes a great place in

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<sup>1</sup>Armstrong, M. (2014). Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice (11th ed.). London: Kogan Page.

which to work' and are conducive to the health, safety and well-being of employees. Work involves the exertion of effort and the application of knowledge and skills to achieve a purpose. Systems of work are the combined processes, methods and techniques used to get work done. The work environment comprises the design of jobs, working conditions and the ways in which people are treated at work by their managers and co-workers as well as the work system. Work design is closely associated with organization and job design in that the latter is conducted within the context of the system of work and the work environment.

To understand the meaning of work design it is necessary first to appreciate what is happening to the world of work and next to review its history.

### **8.2.1 What is happening to work**

The key changes in the contextual and external environment surrounding the world of work have been set out clearly by Parker et al (2001). They are:

- a shift away from large-scale industrial production, with a dramatic decline in manufacturing jobs and rise in service work;
- partly as a consequence of this, an increase in customer-facing roles involving some form of emotional behaviour – the requirement for employees to express positive emotions in the way in which they interact with customers;
- significant shifts in the demographics of the workforce in the shape of an increased proportion of women, greater ethnic diversity, more educated employees and an ageing workforce;
- growth in the number of employees engaged in 'knowledge work' – for example, professional services and new product and service development;
- the requirement for a greater variety of products and services and flexibility and agility in responding to customer needs and increased global competition;
- developments in technology affecting the degree to which jobs are involved in IT and become dependent on it;
- shifts from traditional, office or factory-based working to more flexible alternatives, including homeworking;

### 8.2.2 Work system design

A system is a set of practices or activities that fit together and interact to achieve a purpose. Work system design is concerned with how the various processes required to make a product or provide a service should operate. It deals with the set of related activities that combine to give a result that customers want. The structure of the system describes the relations between different operations.

A work system may be centered on activities such as manufacturing, chemical processing, information processing, supply, distribution, transport, the provision of public services or customer service. There is usually a choice between different processes within the work system. As the design of the work system affects costs, quality and productivity it is important to provide the best match between the product or service and the process used to make or deliver it.

### 8.3 Job design

Job design specifies the contents of jobs in order to satisfy work requirements and meet the personal needs of the job holder, thus increasing levels of employee engagement. As observed by Wall and Clegg (1998: 265):

Jobs are created by people for people. Whether deliberately or by default, choices are made about which tasks to group together to form a job, the extent to which job holders should follow prescribed procedures in completing those tasks, how closely the job incumbent will be supervised, and numerous other aspects of the work. Such choices are the essence of job design.

#### 8.3.1 Jobs and roles

A distinction can be made between jobs and roles. A job is an organizational unit consisting of a group of defined tasks or activities to be carried out or duties to be performed. A role is the part played by individuals and the patterns of behaviour expected of them in fulfilling their work requirements. Jobs are about tasks; roles are about people. This distinction means that while jobs may be designed to fit work requirements, roles are developed as people work flexibly, demonstrate that they can do more and take on different responsibilities. Role development (as covered in the next section of this chapter) happens informally, in contrast to the more formal approaches to job design (considered below).

### 8.3.2 Factors affecting job design

Deciding on the content of a job starts from work requirements because that is why the job exists. When the tasks to be done have been determined it is then necessary to consider how the jobs can be set up to provide the maximum degree of intrinsic motivation for those who have to carry them out with a view to improving performance and productivity. Consideration also has to be given to another important aim of job design: to fulfil the social responsibilities of the organization to the people who work in it by improving the quality of working life, an aim that, as stated in Wilson's (1973) report on this subject, depends upon both efficiency of performance and satisfaction of the worker.

Clearly, the content of a job depends on the work system in which it exists and the organization structure in which it is placed. Job design therefore happens within the context of work and organization design, as described in this chapter, but it is also affected by the following factors:

- the characteristics of jobs;
- the characteristics of task structure;
- the process of intrinsic motivation; the job characteristics model;
- the implications of group activities.

### 8.3.3 Approaches to job design

Job design starts with an analysis of task requirements, using the job analysis techniques described in Chapter 51. These requirements will be a function of the system of work and the organization structure. As described by Robertson and Smith (1985), the method can be based on the job characteristics model as follows:

- Influence skill variety by providing opportunities for people to do several tasks and by combining tasks.
- Influence task identity by combining tasks to form natural work units.
- Influence task significance by forming natural work units and informing people of the importance of their work.
- Influence autonomy by giving people responsibility for determining their own working systems.
- Influence feedback by establishing good relationships and opening feedback channels.

These methods influence the four approaches to job design described below.

1) Job rotation : this is the movement of employees from one task to another to reduce monotony by increasing variety.

2) Job enlargement : this means combining previously fragmented tasks into one job, again to increase the variety and meaning of repetitive work.

3) Job enrichment : this goes beyond job enlargement to add greater autonomy and responsibility to a job. Job enrichment aims to maximize the interest and challenge of work by providing the employee with a job that has these characteristics:

- it is a complete piece of work in the sense that the worker can identify a series of tasks or activities that end in a recognizable and definable product;
- it affords the employee as much variety, decision-making responsibility and control as possible in carrying out the work;
- it provides direct feedback through the work itself on how well the employee is doing his or her job.

As described by Herzberg (1968), job enrichment is not just increasing the number or variety of tasks, nor is it the provision of opportunities for job rotation. These approaches may relieve boredom, but they do not result in positive increases in motivation.

4) Self-managing teams (autonomous work groups) : these are self-regulating teams who work largely with- out direct supervision. The philosophy on which this approach is founded is that of job enrichment but it is also influenced by socio-technical systems theory, which suggests that because the technical aspects of work are interrelated with the social aspects both should be considered when designing jobs.

A self-managing team enlarges individual jobs to include a wider range of operative skills (multi-skilling); decides on methods of work and the planning, scheduling and control of work; distributes tasks itself among its members; and monitors its own performance, taking corrective action when required.

## 8.4 Job Analysis

### 8.4.1 Definition

Job analysis is the process of studying & collecting information relating to the operation & responsibilities of a specific job. The immediate products of this analysis are job descriptions & job specification.

Meaning: – Job Analysis is a process of Collecting information about a job. The process of job analysis results in two sets of data

a) Job Description: – A statement contains Job title, Location, Job summary, Duties, Machines, tools & equipment, Materials & forms used, supervision given of received, working conditions, hazards.

b) Job Specification: – A statement of human qualification necessary to do the job, which contains Education, Experience, Training, Judgement, Initiative, Physical effort, Physical skills, Responsibilities, Communication skills, Emotional characteristics.

#### **8.4.2 Uses of Job Analysis**

##### **– Human Resource Planning :**

HRP determines as to how many & what type of personnel will be needed in the coming period. The number & the type of personnel are determined by the jobs which need to be satisfied. Job related information is therefore, necessary for human resource planning.

##### **– Recruitment & Selection :**

Recruitment needs to be preceded by job analysis. Job analysis helps human resource manager to locate places to obtain employees for openings anticipated in the future. An understanding of the types of the skills needed & types of jobs that may open in the future. Selection a qualified person to fill a job requires knowing clearly the work to be done & the qualifications needed for someone to perform the work satisfactorily, without a clear & precise understanding of what a job entails.

##### **– Training & Development :**

Job analysis is useful for human resource development manager is as much as it helps him/her know what a given job demands from the incumbent in terms of knowledge & skill. Training & development programmes can be designed depending on the job requirements. Selection of trainees is also facilitated by job analysis.

##### **– Job Evaluation :**

it involves determination of relative worth of each job for the purpose of establishing wage & salary differentials, relative worth is determined mainly on the basis of job description & job specification.

##### **– Remuneration :**

job evaluation helps determine wage & salary grades for all the jobs. Employees need to be compensated depending on the grades of jobs, which they occupy. Remuneration involves fringe benefits, bonus & other benefits.

**- Performance Appraisal :**

it involves assessment of the actual performance of an employee against what is expected to him/her. Such assessment is the basis for awarding promotion, effecting transfers, or assessing training needs.

**- Safety & Health :**

the process of conducting a detailed job analysis provides an excellent opportunity to uncover & identify hazardous conditions & unhealthy environmental factors (such as heat, noise fumes & dust) so that

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