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Job Analysis, Employee Involvement, and Flexible Work Schedules

After studying this chapter, you should be able to



Discuss the relationship between job requirements and the performance of HRM functions.



Discuss the various job characteristics that motivate employees.



Indicate the methods by which job analysis typically is completed.



Describe the different group techniques used to maximize employee contributions.



Identify and explain the various sections of job descriptions.



Differentiate and explain the different adjustments in work schedules.



Provide examples illustrating the various factors that must be taken into account in designing a job.

Organizations are “reengineering” themselves in an attempt to become more effective. Companies such as Samsung, United Technologies, and Sports Authority are breaking into smaller units and getting flatter. There is emphasis on smaller scale, less hierarchy, fewer layers, and more decentralized work units. As organizational reshaping takes place, managers want employees to operate more independently and flexibly to meet customer demands. To do this, they require that decisions be made by the people who are closest to the information and who are directly involved in the product or service delivered. The objective is to develop jobs and basic work units that are adaptable enough to thrive in a world of high-velocity change.

In this chapter, we will discuss how jobs can be designed so as to best contribute to the objectives of the organization and at the same time satisfy the needs of the employees who are to perform them. Clearly, the duties and responsibilities present in jobs greatly influence employee productivity, job satisfaction, and employment retention.¹ Therefore, the value of job analysis, which defines clearly and precisely the requirements of each job, will be stressed. We will emphasize that these job requirements provide the foundation for making objective and legally defensible decisions in managing human resources. The chapter concludes by reviewing several innovative job design and employee contribution techniques that increase job satisfaction while improving organizational performance. Teamwork and the characteristics of successful teams are highlighted. Stacy Sullivan, director of HR at Google, notes that “the work environment and the sense of team spirit have become a critical job element.”²

Relationship of Job Requirements and HRM Functions



job

A group of related activities and duties

position

The different duties and responsibilities performed by only one employee

job family

A group of individual jobs with similar characteristics

job specification

A statement of the needed knowledge, skills, and abilities of the person who is to perform the job

A **job** consists of a group of related activities and duties. Ideally, the duties of a job should consist of natural units of work that are similar and related. They should be clear and distinct from those of other jobs to minimize misunderstanding and conflict among employees and to enable employees to recognize what is expected of them. For some jobs, several employees may be required, each of whom will occupy a separate position. A **position** consists of different duties and responsibilities performed by only one employee. In a city library, for example, four employees (four positions) may be involved in reference work, but all of them have only one job (reference librarian). Where different jobs have similar duties and responsibilities, they may be grouped into a **job family** for purposes of recruitment, training, compensation, or advancement opportunities.

Recruitment

Before they can find capable employees for an organization, recruiters need to know the job specifications for the positions they are to fill.³ A **job specification** is a statement of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of the person performing the job. In the HR department for the City of Mesa, Arizona, the job specification for senior HR analyst includes the following:

1. Graduation from a four-year college with major course work (minimum fifteen hours) in human resources management
2. Three to five years' experience in employee classification and compensation or selection or recruitment
3. Two years' experience in developing/improving job-related compensation and testing instruments and procedures⁴

Because job specifications establish the qualifications required of applicants for a job opening, they serve an essential role in the recruiting function. These qualifications typically are contained in the notices of job openings. Whether posted on organizational bulletin boards or HRIS Internet sites or included in help-wanted advertisements or employment agency listings, job specifications provide a basis for attracting qualified applicants and discourage unqualified ones.

Selection

job description

A statement of the tasks, duties, and responsibilities of a job to be performed

In addition to job specifications, managers and supervisors use job descriptions to select employees and orient them to jobs. A **job description** is a statement of the tasks, duties, and responsibilities of a job. (See “Job Descriptions” later in this chapter.)

In the past, job specifications used as a basis for selection sometimes bore little relation to the duties to be performed under the job description. Examples of such nonjob-related specifications abounded. Applicants for the job of laborer were required to have a high school diploma. Firefighters were required to be at least six feet tall. And applicants for skilled craft positions—plumbers, electricians, machinists—were required to be male. These kinds of job specifications discriminated against members of certain protected classes, many of whom were excluded from these jobs.

Since the landmark *Griggs v Duke Power* case and the Civil Rights Act of 1991 (see Chapter 3), employers must be able to show that the job specifications used in selecting employees for a particular job relate specifically to the duties of that job. An organization must be careful to ensure that managers with job openings do not hire employees on the basis of “individualized” job requirements that satisfy personal whims but bear little relation to successful job performance. In one case known to the authors, a company desired to hire only tall salespeople—male or female—on the assumption that tall individuals presented a more authoritative stature.

Training and Development

Any discrepancies between the knowledge, skills, and abilities (often referred to as KSAs) demonstrated by a jobholder and the requirements contained in the description and specification for that job provide clues to training needs. Also, career development as a part of the training function is concerned with preparing employees for advancement to jobs where their capacities can be utilized to the fullest extent possible. The formal qualification requirements set forth in high-level jobs indicate how much more training and development are needed for employees to advance to those jobs.

Performance Appraisal

The requirements contained in the description of a job provide the criteria for evaluating the performance of the holder of that job. The results of performance appraisal

may reveal, however, that certain requirements established for a job are not completely valid. As we have already stressed, these criteria must be specific and job-related. If the criteria used to evaluate employee performance are vague and not job-related, employers may find themselves being charged with unfair discrimination.

Compensation Management

In determining the rate to be paid for performing a job, the relative worth of the job is one of the most important factors. This worth is based on what the job demands of an employee in terms of skill, effort, and responsibility, as well as the conditions and hazards under which the work is performed. The systems of job evaluation by which this worth may be measured are discussed in Chapter 9.

Job Analysis



job analysis

The process of obtaining information about jobs by determining the duties, tasks, or activities of jobs

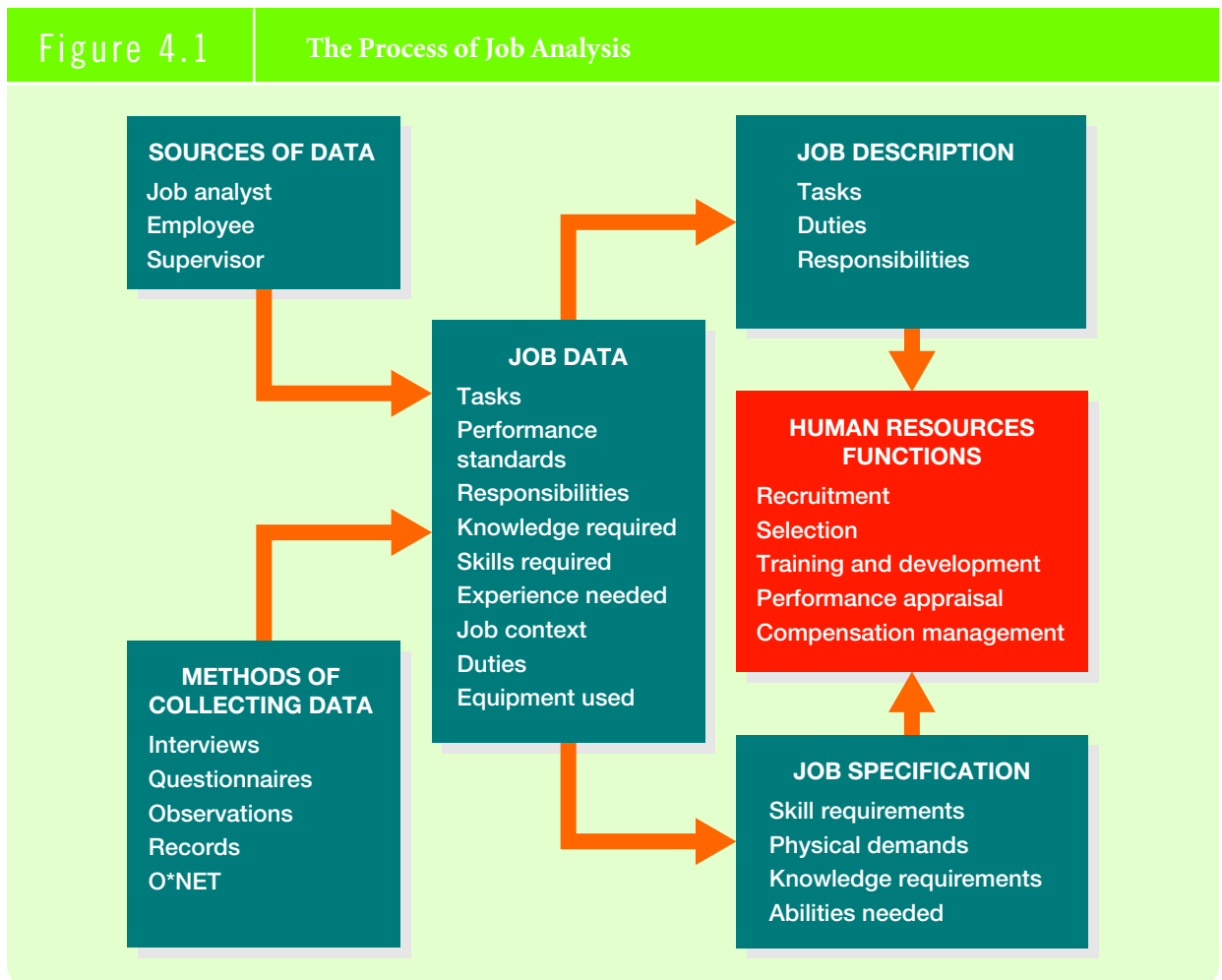
Job analysis is sometimes called the cornerstone of HRM because the information it collects serves so many HRM functions. **Job analysis** is the process of obtaining information about jobs by determining the duties, tasks, or activities of those jobs.⁵ The procedure involves systematically investigating jobs by following a number of predetermined steps specified in advance of the study.⁶ When completed, job analysis results in a written report summarizing the information obtained from the analysis of twenty or thirty individual job tasks or activities.⁷ HR managers use these data to develop job descriptions and job specifications. These documents, in turn, are used to perform and enhance the different HR functions such as the development of performance appraisal criteria or the content of training classes. The ultimate purpose of job analysis is to improve organizational performance and productivity. Figure 4.1 illustrates how job analysis is performed, including the functions for which it is used.

As contrasted with job design, which reflects subjective opinions about the ideal requirements of a job, job analysis is concerned with objective and verifiable information about the actual requirements of a job. The job descriptions and job specifications developed through job analysis should be as accurate as possible if they are to be of value to those who make HRM decisions. These decisions may involve any of the HR functions—from recruitment to termination of employees.

Job Analysis and Essential Job Functions

It should be emphasized that a major goal of modern job analysis is to help the organization establish the *job-relatedness* of its selection and performance requirements. Job analysis helps both large and small employers meet their legal duty under EEO law. Section 14.C.2 of the *Uniform Guidelines* states: “There shall be a job analysis which includes an analysis of the important work behaviors required for successful performance. . . . Any job analysis should focus on work behavior(s) and the tasks associated with them.” (The *Uniform Guidelines* are discussed more fully in Chapter 3.)

The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) also had a marked impact on the process of job analysis. Specifically, when preparing job descriptions and job specifications managers and supervisors must adhere to the legal mandates



of the ADA. The act requires that job duties and responsibilities be *essential functions* for job success. The purpose of essential functions is to help match and accommodate human capabilities to job requirements. For example, if the job requires the jobholder to read extremely fine print, to climb ladders, or to memorize stock codes, these physical and mental requirements should be stated within the job description. Section 1630.2(n) of the act gives three guidelines for rendering a job function essential: (1) the reason that the position exists is to perform the function, (2) a limited number of employees are available among whom the performance of the function may be distributed, and (3) the function may be highly specialized, requiring needed expertise or abilities to complete the job.⁸ Managers who write job descriptions and job specifications in terms of essential functions reduce the risk of discriminating on the basis of a disability. Remember also that once essential functions for a job are defined, the organization is legally required to make a reasonable accommodation to the disability of the individual.

Gathering Job Information

Job data may be obtained in several ways. The more common methods of analyzing jobs are through interviews, questionnaires, observation, and diaries.

- *Interviews.* The job analyst may question individual employees and managers about the job under review.
- *Questionnaires.* The job analyst may circulate carefully prepared questionnaires to be filled out individually by jobholders and managers. These forms will be used to obtain data in the areas of job duties and tasks performed, purpose of the job, physical setting, requirements for performing the job (skill, education, experience, physical and mental demands), equipment and materials used, and special health and safety concerns.
- *Observation.* The job analyst may learn about the jobs by observing and recording on a standardized form the activities of jobholders. Videotaping jobs for later study is an approach used by some organizations.
- *Diaries.* Jobholders themselves may be asked to keep a diary of their work activities during an entire work cycle. Diaries are normally filled out at specific times of the work shift (such as every half hour or hour) and maintained for a two- to four-week period.

Although HR specialists, called job analysts, are the personnel primarily responsible for the job analysis program, they usually enlist the cooperation of the employees and managers in the departments where jobs are being analyzed. These managers and employees are the sources of much of the information about the jobs, and they may be asked to prepare rough drafts of the job descriptions and specifications the job analysts need.

Controlling the Accuracy of Job Information

If job analysis is to accomplish its intended purpose, the job data collected must be accurate. Care must be taken to ensure that all important facts are included. A job analyst should be alert for employees who tend to exaggerate the difficulty of their jobs in order to inflate their egos and their paychecks. When interviewing employees or reviewing their questionnaires, the job analyst must look for any responses that do not agree with other facts or impressions the analyst has received. Furthermore, when job information is collected from employees, a representative group of individuals should be surveyed. For example, the results of one study indicated that the information obtained from job analysis was related to race. In another study, the experience level of job incumbents influenced job analysis outcomes.

A job analyst who doubts the accuracy of information provided by employees should obtain additional information from them, from their managers, or from other individuals who are familiar with or perform the same job. It is common practice to have the descriptions for each job reviewed by the jobholders and their managers. The job description summaries contained in O*NET, compiled by the U.S. Department of Labor, can also serve as a basis for the job analyst's review.

O*NET and Job Analysis

For many years the U.S. Department of Labor published the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, commonly referred to as the *DOT*. This book contained standardized

USING THE INTERNET

To explore the Department of Labor's new O*NET database, including how to convert from the *DOT* to O*NET, go to the Student Resources at:

<http://bohlander.swlearning.com>

and comprehensive descriptions of about 20,000 jobs. The purpose of the *DOT* was to group occupations into a systematic occupational classification structure based on interrelationships of job tasks and requirements. The *DOT* helped bring about a great degree of uniformity in the job titles and descriptions used by employers nationwide.

The Department of Labor has replaced the *DOT* with the O*NET online database.⁹ The O*NET database includes all occupations from the *DOT* plus an update of more than 3,500 additional occupations. The database job descriptors include skill abilities, knowledge, tasks, work activities, and experience level requirements. Importantly, in order to remain current with occupational change, the O*NET program collects and publishes data continuously, a feature not available with the old *DOT*. The O*NET database is useful for a variety of HR activities including career counseling and training as well as job analysis.

Approaches to Job Analysis

The systematic and quantitative definition of job content that job analysis provides is the foundation of many HRM practices. Specifically, the job analysis serves to justify job descriptions and other HRM selection procedures. Several different job analysis approaches are used to gather data, each with specific advantages and disadvantages.¹⁰ Five of the more popular methods are functional job analysis, the position analysis questionnaire system, the critical incident method, task inventory analysis, and computerized job analysis.

Functional Job Analysis

Developed by the U.S. Training and Employment Service, the **functional job analysis (FJA)** approach utilizes an inventory of the various types of functions or work activities that can constitute any job. FJA thus assumes that each job involves performing certain functions. Specifically, three broad worker functions form the bases of this system: (1) data, (2) people, and (3) things. These three categories are subdivided to form a hierarchy of worker-function scales, as shown in Figure 4.2. The job analyst, when studying the job under review, indicates the functional level for each of the three categories (for example, “copying” under DATA) and then reflects the relative involvement of the worker in the function by assigning a percentage figure to each function (such as 50 percent to “copying”). This is done for each of the three areas, and the three functional levels must equal 100 percent. The result is a quantitatively evaluated job. FJA can easily be used to describe the content of jobs and to assist in writing job descriptions and specifications.

The Position Analysis Questionnaire System

The **position analysis questionnaire (PAQ)** is a quantifiable data collection method covering 194 different worker-oriented tasks. Using a five-point scale, the PAQ seeks to determine the degree, if any, to which the different tasks, or job elements, are involved in performing a particular job.

A sample page from the PAQ covering eleven elements of the Information Input Division is shown in Figure 4.3. The person conducting an analysis with this questionnaire would rate each of the elements using the five-point scale shown in the upper-right-hand corner of the sample page. The results obtained with the PAQ are

functional job analysis (FJA)

A quantitative approach to job analysis that utilizes a compiled inventory of the various functions or work activities that can make up any job and that assumes that each job involves three broad worker functions: (1) data, (2) people, and (3) things

position analysis questionnaire (PAQ)

A questionnaire covering 194 different tasks that, by means of a five-point scale, seeks to determine the degree to which different tasks are involved in performing a particular job

Figure 4.2

Difficulty Levels of Worker Functions

DATA (4TH DIGIT)	PEOPLE (5TH DIGIT)	THINGS (6TH DIGIT)
0 Synthesizing	0 Mentoring	0 Setting up
1 Coordinating	1 Negotiating	1 Precision working
2 Analyzing	2 Instructing	2 Operating-controlling*
3 Compiling	3 Supervising	3 Driving-operating*
4 Computing	4 Diverting	4 Manipulating
5 Copying	5 Persuading	5 Tending
6 Comparing	6 Speaking-signaling*	6 Feeding-offbearing*
	7 Serving	7 Handling
	8 Taking instructions–helping*	

*Hyphenated factors are single factors.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, *Revised Handbook for Analyzing Jobs* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 5.

quantitative and can be subjected to statistical analysis. The PAQ also permits dimensions of behavior to be compared across a number of jobs and permits jobs to be grouped on the basis of common characteristics.

The Critical Incident Method

The objective of the **critical incident method** is to identify critical job tasks. Critical job tasks are those important duties and job responsibilities performed by the jobholder that lead to job success. Information about critical job tasks can be collected through interviews with employees or managers or through self-report statements written by employees.

Suppose, for example, that the job analyst is studying the job of reference librarian. The interviewer will ask the employee to describe the job on the basis of what is done, how the job is performed, and what tools and equipment are used. The reference librarian may describe the job as follows:

I assist patrons by answering their questions related to finding books, periodicals, or other library materials. I also give them directions to help them find materials within the building. To perform my job I may have to look up materials myself or refer patrons to someone who can directly assist them. Some individuals may need training in how to use reference materials or special library facilities. I also give library tours to new patrons. I use computers and a variety of reference books to carry out my job.

After the job data are collected, the analyst then writes separate task statements that represent important job activities. For the reference librarian one task statement

critical incident method

A job analysis method by which important job tasks are identified for job success

Figure 4.3

A Sample Page from the PAQ

INFORMATION INPUT

1	INFORMATION INPUT															
1.1	Sources of Job Information															
	Rate each of the following items in terms of the extent to which it is used by the worker as a source of information in performing his job.															
1.1.1	Visual Sources of Job Information															
01 U	Written materials (books, reports, office notes, articles, job instructions, signs, etc.)	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2"><i>Extent of Use (U)</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>NA</td> <td>Does not apply</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Nominal/very infrequent</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Occasional</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Moderate</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Considerable</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Very substantial</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<i>Extent of Use (U)</i>		NA	Does not apply	1	Nominal/very infrequent	2	Occasional	3	Moderate	4	Considerable	5	Very substantial
<i>Extent of Use (U)</i>																
NA	Does not apply															
1	Nominal/very infrequent															
2	Occasional															
3	Moderate															
4	Considerable															
5	Very substantial															
02 U	Quantitative materials (materials which deal with quantities or amounts, such as graphs, accounts, specifications, tables of numbers, etc.)															
03 U	Pictorial materials (pictures or picturelike materials used as <i>sources</i> of information, for example, drawings, blueprints, diagrams, maps, tracings, photographic films, x-ray films, TV pictures, etc.)															
04 U	Patterns/related devices (templates, stencils, patterns, etc., used as <i>sources</i> of information when <i>observed</i> during use; do <i>not</i> include here materials described in item 3 above)															
05 U	Visual displays (dials, gauges, signal lights, radarscopes, speedometers, clocks, etc.)															
06 U	Measuring devices (rulers, calipers, tire pressure gauges, scales, thickness gauges, pipettes, thermometers, protractors, etc., used to obtain visual information about physical measurements; do <i>not</i> include here devices described in item 5 above)															
07 U	Mechanical devices (tools, equipment, machinery, and other mechanical devices which are <i>sources</i> of information when <i>observed</i> during use or operation)															
08 U	Materials in process (parts, materials, objects, etc., which are <i>sources</i> of information when being modified, worked on, or otherwise processed, such as bread dough being mixed, workpiece being turned in a lathe, fabric being cut, shoe being resoled, etc.)															
09 U	Materials <i>not</i> in process (parts, materials, objects, etc., not in the process of being changed or modified, which are <i>sources</i> of information when being inspected, handled, packaged, distributed, or selected, etc., such as items or materials in inventory, storage, or distribution channels, items being inspected, etc.)															
10 U	Features of nature (landscapes, fields, geological samples, vegetation, cloud formations, and other features of nature which are observed or inspected to provide information)															
11 U	Man-made features of environment (structures, buildings, dams, highways, bridges, docks, railroads, and other "man-made" or altered aspects of the indoor or outdoor environment which are <i>observed or inspected</i> to provide job information; do <i>not</i> consider equipment, machines, etc., that an individual uses in his work, as covered by item 7)															

Source: *Position Analysis Questionnaire*, copyright 1969, 1989 by Purdue Research Foundation, West Lafayette, IN 47907. Reprinted with permission.

might be, “Listens to patrons and answers their questions related to locating library materials.” Typically the job analyst writes five to ten important task statements for each job under study. The final product is written task statements that are clear, complete, and easily understood by those unfamiliar with the job. The critical incident method is an important job analysis method because it teaches the analyst to focus on employee behaviors critical to job success.

Task Inventory Analysis

task inventory analysis

An organization-specific list of tasks and their descriptions used as a basis to identify components of jobs

The **task inventory analysis** method can be considered a job-oriented type of job analysis. The technique was pioneered by the U.S. Air Force to analyze jobs held by Air Force specialists. Unlike the PAQ, which uses a standardized form to analyze jobs in different organizations, a task inventory questionnaire can be tailor-made to a specific organization.

The technique is developed by identifying—with the help of employees and managers—a list of tasks and their descriptions that are components of different jobs. The goal is to produce a comprehensive list of task statements that are applicable to all jobs. Task statements then are listed on a task inventory survey form to be completed by the person analyzing the job under review. A task statement might be, “Inventories current supplies to maintain stock levels.” The job analysis would also note the importance and frequency of use of the task to the successful completion of the job.

HRIS and Job Analysis

Human resource information systems have greatly facilitated the job analysis process. Available today are various software programs designed specifically to analyze jobs and to write job descriptions and job specifications based on those analyses. These programs normally contain generalized task statements that can apply to many different jobs. Managers and employees select those statements that best describe the job under review, indicating the importance of the task to the total job where appropriate. Advanced computer applications of job analysis combine job analysis with job evaluation (see Chapter 9) and the pricing of organizational jobs. Computerized job analysis systems can be expensive to initiate, but where the organization has many jobs to analyze the cost per job may be low. HR publications such as *HRMagazine* and *Workforce* contain advertisements from numerous software companies offering HRIS job analysis packages.

Job Outlook

Computer Programmers

Prospects should be best for college graduates with knowledge of a variety of programming languages and tools; those with less formal education or its equivalent in work experience should face strong competition for programming jobs. Earnings ranged between \$45,960 and \$78,140 a year.

Source: *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, 2004–05 Edition.
<http://www.bls.gov/oco>

Job Analysis in a Changing Environment

The traditional approach to job analysis assumes a static job environment where jobs remain relatively stable apart from incumbents who might hold these jobs. Here, jobs can be meaningfully defined in terms of tasks, duties, processes, and behaviors necessary for job success. This assumption, unfortunately, discounts technological advances that are often so accelerated that jobs, as they are defined today, may be obsolete tomorrow. The following statement by two HR professionals highlights this concern: “Typically, job analysis looks at how a job is currently done. But the ever-changing business market makes it difficult to keep a job analysis up-to-date. Also, companies are asking employees to do more, so there is a question of whether ‘jobs’ as we know them are obsolete. This means we must do an analysis of work as quickly as possible, leading to more emphasis on technology-related options, such as web-based job analysis.”¹¹

Furthermore, downsizing, the demands of small organizations, and the need to respond to global change can alter the nature of jobs and the requirements of individuals needed to successfully perform them. For organizations using “virtual jobs” and “virtual teams” there is a shift away from narrow job specifications and descriptions to a world where work is “dejobbed” and emphasis is placed on the distribution of work. In a dynamic environment where job demands rapidly change, obsolete job analysis information can hinder an organization’s ability to adapt to change.

When organizations operate in a fast-moving environment, several novel approaches to job analysis may accommodate needed change. First, managers might adopt a future-oriented approach to job analysis. This “strategic” analysis of jobs requires that managers have a clear view of how jobs should be restructured in terms of duties and tasks in order to meet future organizational requirements. Second, organizations might adopt a competency-based approach to job analysis, in which emphasis is placed on characteristics of successful performers rather than on standard job duties, tasks, and so on. These competencies would match the organization’s culture and strategy and might include such things as interpersonal communication skills, decision-making ability, conflict resolution skills, adaptability, and self-motivation.¹² This technique of job analysis serves to enhance a culture of TQM and continuous improvement, because organizational improvement is the constant aim. Either of these two approaches is not without concerns, including the ability of managers to accurately predict future job needs, the necessity of job analysis to comply with EEOC guidelines, and the possibility of role ambiguity created by generically written job descriptions.



Job Descriptions

As previously noted, a job description is a written description of a job and the types of duties it includes. Since there is no standard format for job descriptions, they tend to vary in appearance and content from one organization to another. However, most job descriptions will contain at least three parts: the job title, a job identification section, and a job duties section. If the job specifications are not prepared as a separate document, they are usually stated in the concluding section of the job description. Highlights in HRM 1 shows a job description for an HR employment assistant. This sample job description includes both job duties and job specifications and should satisfy most of the job information needs of managers who must recruit, interview, and orient a new employee.

Job descriptions are of value to both the employees and the employer. From the employees’ standpoint, job descriptions can be used to help them learn their job duties and to remind them of the results they are expected to achieve.¹³ From the employer’s standpoint, written job descriptions can serve as a basis for minimizing the misunderstandings that occur between managers and their subordinates concerning job requirements. They also establish management’s right to take corrective action when the duties covered by the job description are not performed as required.

Job Title

Selection of a job title is important for several reasons. First, the job title is of psychological importance, providing status to the employee. For instance, “sanitation engineer” is a more appealing title than “garbage collector.” Second, if possible, the

Highlights in HRM 1

Job Description for an Employment Assistant

Job Identification	<p>JOB TITLE: Employment Assistant Division: Southern Area Department: Human Resources Management Job Analyst: Virginia Sasaki Date Analyzed: 12/3/05 Wage Category: Exempt Report to: HR Manager Job Code: 11-17 Date Verified: 12/17/05</p>
Brief Listing of Major Job Duties	<p>JOB STATEMENT Performs professional human resources work in the areas of employee <i>recruitment and selection, testing, orientation, transfers, and maintenance of employee human resources files</i>. May handle special assignments and projects in <i>EEO/Affirmative Action, employee grievances, training, or classification and compensation</i>. Works under general supervision. Incumbent exercises initiative and independent judgment in the performance of assigned tasks.</p>
Essential Functions and Responsibilities	<p>ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepares recruitment literature and job advertisements for applicant placement. 2. Schedules and conducts personal interviews to determine applicant suitability for employment. Includes reviewing mailed applications and resumes for qualified personnel. 3. Supervises administration of testing program. Responsible for developing or improving testing instruments and procedures. 4. Presents orientation program to all new employees. Reviews and develops all materials and procedures for orientation program. 5. Coordinates division job posting and transfer program. Establishes job posting procedures. Responsible for reviewing transfer applications, arranging transfer interviews, and determining effective transfer dates. 6. Maintains a daily working relationship with division managers on human resources matters, including recruitment concerns, retention or release of probationary employees, and discipline or discharge of permanent employees. 7. Distributes new or revised human resources policies and procedures to all employees and managers through bulletins, meetings, memorandums, and/or personal contact. 8. Performs related duties as assigned by the human resources manager.

JOB SPECIFICATIONS

1. Four-year college or university degree with major course work in human resources management, business administration, or industrial psychology; OR a combination of experience, education, and training equivalent to a four-year college degree in human resources management.
2. Considerable knowledge of principles of employee selection and assignment of personnel.
3. Ability to express ideas clearly in both written and oral communications.
4. Ability to independently plan and organize one's own activities.
5. Knowledge of human resources computer applications desirable.

title should provide some indication of what the duties of the job entail. Titles such as *meat inspector*, *electronics assembler*, *salesperson*, and *engineer* obviously hint at the nature of the duties of these jobs. The job title also should indicate the relative level occupied by its holder in the organizational hierarchy. For example, the title *junior engineer* implies that this job occupies a lower level than that of *senior engineer*. Other titles that indicate the relative level in the organizational hierarchy are *welder's helper* and *laboratory assistant*.

Job Identification Section

The job identification section of a job description usually follows the job title. It includes such items as the departmental location of the job, the person to whom the jobholder reports, and the date the job description was last revised. Sometimes it also contains a payroll or code number, the number of employees performing the job, the number of employees in the department where the job is located, and the O*NET code number. "Statement of the Job" usually appears at the bottom of this section and distinguishes the job from other jobs—something the job title may fail to do.

Job Duties, or Essential Functions, Section

Statements covering job duties are typically arranged in order of importance. These statements should indicate the weight, or value, of each duty. Usually, but not always, the weight of a duty can be gauged by the percentage of time devoted to it. The statements should stress the responsibilities all the duties entail and the results they are to accomplish. It is also general practice to indicate the tools and equipment used by the employee in performing the job. Remember, the job duties section must comply with law by listing only the essential functions of the job to be performed (see "Job Analysis and Essential Job Functions" earlier in this chapter).¹⁴

Job Specifications Section

As stated earlier, the personal qualifications an individual must possess in order to perform the duties and responsibilities contained in a job description are compiled in the job specification. Typically the job specification covers two areas: (1) the skill required to perform the job and (2) the physical demands the job places on the employee performing it.

Skills relevant to a job include education or experience, specialized training, personal traits or abilities, and manual dexterities. The physical demands of a job refer to how much walking, standing, reaching, lifting, or talking must be done on the job. The condition of the physical work environment and the hazards employees may encounter are also among the physical demands of a job.

Job specifications should also include interpersonal skills or specific behavioral attributes necessary for job success. For example, behavioral competencies might include the ability to make decisions on imperfect information, decisiveness, the ability to handle multiple tasks, and conflict-resolution skills. Behavioral attributes can be assessed by asking applicants situational interview questions (see Chapter 6). For example, a manager could ask an applicant about a time he or she had to make a critical decision quickly.

Problems with Job Descriptions

Managers consider job descriptions a valuable tool for performing HRM functions. Nevertheless, several problems are frequently associated with these documents, including the following:

1. If they are poorly written, using vague rather than specific terms, they provide little guidance to the jobholder.
2. They are sometimes not updated as job duties or specifications change.
3. They may violate the law by containing specifications not related to job success.
4. They can limit the scope of activities of the jobholder, reducing organizational flexibility.

Writing Clear and Specific Job Descriptions

When writing a job description, it is essential to use statements that are terse, direct, and simply worded.¹⁵ Unnecessary words or phrases should be eliminated. Typically, the sentences that describe job duties begin with a present-tense verb, with the implied subject of the sentence being the employee performing the job. The term “occasionally” is used to describe duties that are performed once in a while. The term “may” is used in connection with duties performed only by some workers on the job.

Even when set forth in writing, job descriptions and specifications can still be vague. To the consternation of many employers, however, today’s legal environment has created what might be called an “age of specifics.” Federal guidelines and court decisions now require that the specific performance requirements of a job be based on *valid* job-related criteria.¹⁶ Personnel decisions that involve either job applicants or employees and are based on criteria that are vague or not job-related are increasingly successfully challenged. Managers of small businesses, in which employees may perform many different job tasks, must be particularly concerned about writing specific job descriptions.

Managers may find that writing job descriptions is a tedious process that distracts from other supervisory responsibilities. Fortunately, software packages are available to simplify this time-consuming yet necessary task. One program provides an initial library of more than 2,500 prewritten job descriptions. Since the program works much like a word processor, text can be easily deleted, inserted, or modified to user demands.

Job Design



job design

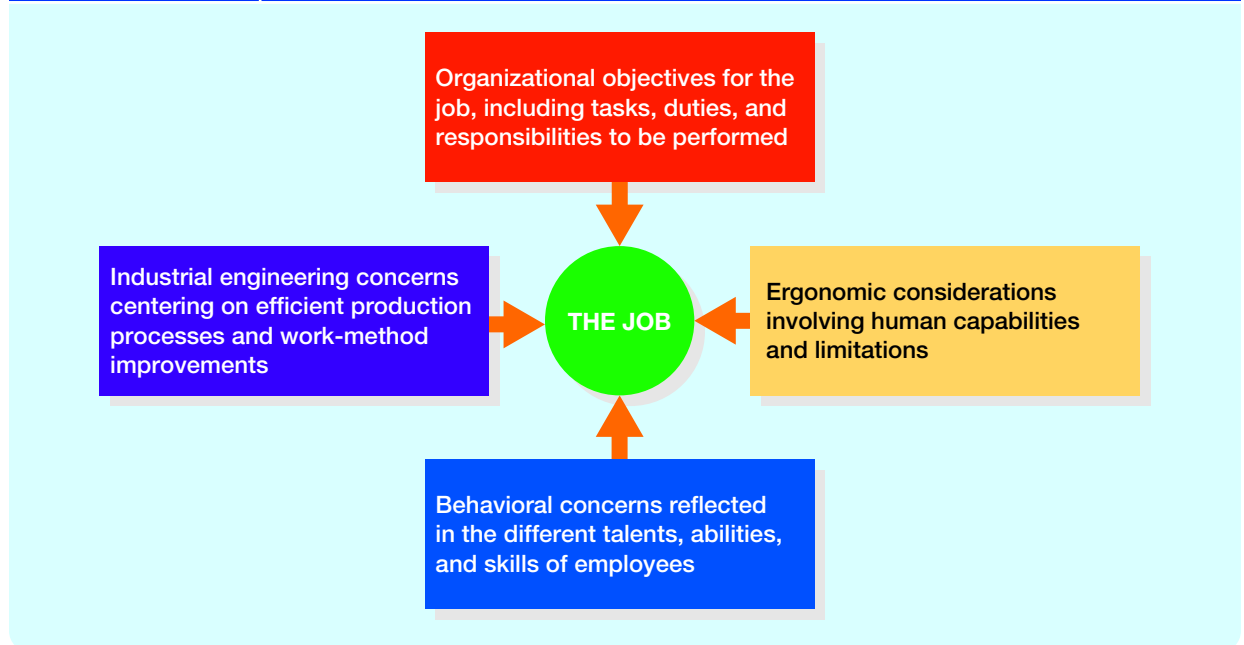
An outgrowth of job analysis that improves jobs through technological and human considerations in order to enhance organization efficiency and employee job satisfaction

It is not uncommon for managers and supervisors to confuse the processes of job analysis and job design. Job analysis is the study of jobs as currently performed by employees. It identifies job duties and the requirements needed to perform the work successfully. **Job design**, which is an outgrowth of job analysis, is concerned with structuring jobs in order to improve organization efficiency and employee job satisfaction. Job design is concerned with changing, modifying, and enriching jobs in order to capture the talents of employees while improving organization performance.¹⁷ For example, companies such as Harley-Davidson, Lucent Technologies, and PageNet, which are engaged in continuous improvement, or process reengineering, may revamp their jobs in order to eliminate unnecessary job tasks or find better ways of performing work. Job design should facilitate the achievement of organizational objectives.¹⁸ At the same time, the design should recognize the capabilities and needs of those who are to perform the job.

As Figure 4.4 illustrates, job design is a combination of four basic considerations: (1) the organizational objectives the job was created to fulfill; (2) industrial engineering considerations, including ways to make the job technologically efficient; (3) ergonomic concerns, including workers' physical and mental capabilities; and (4) behavioral concerns that influence an employee's job satisfaction.

Figure 4.4

Basis for Job Design



Behavioral Concerns

Two job design methods seek to incorporate the behavioral needs of employees as they perform their individual jobs. Both methods strive to satisfy the intrinsic needs of employees. The job enrichment model and the job characteristics model have long been popular with researchers and practitioners as ways to increase the job satisfaction of employees.

Job Enrichment

Any effort that makes work more rewarding or satisfying by adding more meaningful tasks to an employee's job is called **job enrichment**. Originally popularized by Frederick Herzberg, job enrichment is touted as fulfilling the high motivational needs of employees, such as self-fulfillment and self-esteem, while achieving long-term job satisfaction and performance goals.¹⁹ Job enrichment, or the *vertical expansion* of jobs, may be accomplished by increasing the autonomy and responsibility of employees. Herzberg discusses five factors for enriching jobs and thereby motivating employees: achievement, recognition, growth, responsibility, and performance of the whole job versus only parts of the job. For example, managers can use these five factors to enrich the jobs of employees by

- Increasing the level of difficulty and responsibility of the job
- Allowing employees to retain more authority and control over work outcomes
- Providing unit or individual job performance reports directly to employees
- Adding new tasks to the job that require training and growth
- Assigning individuals specific tasks, thus enabling them to become experts

These factors allow employees to assume a greater role in the decision-making process and become more involved in planning, organizing, directing, and controlling their own work. Vertical job enrichment can also be accomplished by organizing workers into teams and giving these teams greater authority for self-management.

In spite of the benefits to be achieved through job enrichment, it must not be considered a panacea for overcoming production problems and employee discontent. Job enrichment programs are more likely to succeed in some jobs and work situations than in others. They are *not* the solution to such problems as dissatisfaction with pay, with employee benefits, or with employment security. Moreover, not all employees object to the mechanical pacing of an assembly line, nor do all employees seek additional responsibility or challenge. Some prefer routine jobs because they can let their minds wander while performing their work.

Job Characteristics

Job design studies explored a new field when behavioral scientists focused on identifying various job dimensions that would improve simultaneously the efficiency of organizations and the job satisfaction of employees. Perhaps the theory that best exemplifies this research is the one advanced by Richard Hackman and Greg Oldham.²⁰ Their **job characteristics model** proposes that three psychological states of a jobholder result in improved work performance, internal motivation, and lower absenteeism and turnover. A motivated, satisfied, and productive employee (1) experiences *meaningfulness* of the work performed, (2) experiences *responsibility* for work outcomes, and

job enrichment

Enhancing a job by adding more meaningful tasks and duties to make the work more rewarding or satisfying

job characteristics model

A job design theory that purports that three psychological states (experiencing meaningfulness of the work performed, responsibility for work outcomes, and knowledge of the results of the work performed) of a jobholder result in improved work performance, internal motivation, and lower absenteeism and turnover



(3) has *knowledge of the results* of the work performed. Hackman and Oldham believe that five core job dimensions produce the three psychological states. The five job characteristics are as follows:

1. *Skill variety*: The degree to which a job entails a variety of different activities, which demand the use of a number of different skills and talents by the jobholder
2. *Task identity*: The degree to which the job requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work, that is, doing a job from beginning to end with a visible outcome
3. *Task significance*: The degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other people, whether in the immediate organization or in the external environment
4. *Autonomy*: The degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out
5. *Feedback*: The degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job results in the individual being given direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance

The job characteristics model appears to work best when certain conditions are met. One of these conditions is that employees must have the psychological desire for the autonomy, variety, responsibility, and challenge of enriched jobs. When this personal characteristic is absent, employees may resist the job redesign effort. In addition, job redesign efforts almost always fail when employees lack the physical or mental skills, abilities, or education needed to perform the job. Forcing enriched jobs on individuals lacking these traits can result in frustrated employees.

Employee Empowerment

Job enrichment and job characteristics are specific programs by which managers or supervisors can formally change the jobs of employees. A less structured method is to allow employees to initiate their own job changes through the concept of empowerment. **Employee empowerment** is a technique of involving employees in their work through the process of inclusion. Empowerment encourages employees to become innovators and managers of their own work, and it involves them in their jobs in ways that give them more control and autonomous decision-making capabilities (see Highlights in HRM 2). As described by one manager, employee empowerment involves “pushing down decision-making responsibility to those close to internal and external customers.”

While defining empowerment can become the first step to achieving it, in order for empowerment to grow and thrive, organizations must encourage these conditions:

- *Participation*. Employees must be encouraged to take control of their work tasks. Employees, in turn, must care about improving their work process and interpersonal work relationships.
- *Innovation*. The environment must be receptive to people with innovative ideas and encourage people to explore new paths and to take reasonable risks at reasonable costs. An empowered environment is created when curiosity is as highly regarded as is technical expertise.

employee empowerment

Granting employees power to initiate change, thereby encouraging them to take charge of what they do

Highlights in HRM 2

Empowered Employees Achieve Results

In today's highly competitive and dynamic business environment, employers as diverse as Home Depot, Wal-Mart, Cigna HealthCare, Costco, AutoZone, Disney, and Applebee's have turned to their employees to improve organizational performance. Empowered employees have made improvements in product or service quality, have reduced costs, and have modified or, in some cases, designed products.

- At Kraft Foods, employees at the company's Sussex, Wisconsin, food plant participated in work-redesign changes and team building that increased productivity, reduced overhead, and cut assembly time.
- Avon Products empowered its minority managers to improve sales and service in inner-city markets. Grounded in the belief that minority managers better understand the culture of inner-city residents, Avon turned an unprofitable market into a highly productive sales area.
- Dorothy Galvez, administrative assistant to Robert E. Mittelstaedt, Jr., dean of the W.P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University, has empowered her position by planning college activities and events, preparing special college reports, learning new educational and business technology, and serving as the dean's representative at college and business events.
- At Ford's factory in Wayne, Michigan, one group of employees made a suggestion saving \$115,000 a year on the purchase of gloves used to protect workers who handle sheet metal and glass. The group figured out how to have the gloves washed so they could be used more than once.
- Home Depot's Special Project Support Teams (SPST) work to improve the organization's business and information services. Employees with a wide range of backgrounds and skills collaborate to address a wide range of strategic and tactical business needs.
- American Airlines' "Rainbow Team" of gay employees brought in \$192 million in annual revenue by targeting the gay community.

■ *Access to information.* Employees must have access to a wide range of information. Involved individuals decide what kind of information they need for performing their jobs.

■ *Accountability.* Empowerment does not involve being able to do whatever you want. Empowered employees should be held accountable for their behavior toward others, producing agreed-on results, achieving credibility, and operating with a positive approach.

Additionally, employee empowerment succeeds when the culture of the organization is open and receptive to change. An organization's culture is largely created through the philosophies of senior managers and their leadership traits and behaviors. Effective leadership in an empowered organization is highlighted by managers who are honest, caring, and receptive to new ideas and who exhibit dignity and respect for employees as partners in organizational success.

Industrial Engineering Considerations

industrial engineering

A field of study concerned with analyzing work methods and establishing time standards

The study of work is an important contribution of the scientific management movement. **Industrial engineering**, which evolved with this movement, is concerned with analyzing work methods and establishing time standards. Specifically, it involves the study of work cycles to determine which, if any, elements can be modified, combined, rearranged, or eliminated to reduce the time needed to complete the cycle. Next, time standards are established by recording the time required to complete each element in the work cycle, using a stopwatch or work-sampling technique. By combining the times for each element, observers can determine the total time required. This time is subsequently adjusted to allow for the skill and effort demonstrated by the observed worker and for interruptions that may occur in performing the work. The adjusted time becomes the time standard for that particular work cycle.

Industrial engineering constitutes a disciplined and objective approach to job design. Unfortunately, the concern of industrial engineering for improving efficiency and simplifying work methods may cause the behavioral considerations in job design to be neglected. What may be improvements in job design and efficiency from an engineering standpoint can sometimes prove psychologically unsound. For example, the assembly line with its simplified and repetitive tasks embodies sound principles of industrial engineering, but these tasks are often not psychologically rewarding for those who must perform them. Thus, to be effective, job design must also provide for the satisfaction of behavioral needs.

ergonomics

An interdisciplinary approach to designing equipment and systems that can be easily and efficiently used by human beings

Ergonomic Considerations

Ergonomics attempts to accommodate the human capabilities and limitations of those who are to perform a job. It is concerned with adapting the entire job system—the work, the work environment, the machine and equipment, and the processes—to

Alan Hedge, a professor of ergonomics at Cornell University, sits in a special chair with a floating arms keyboard designed to be ergonomically correct. In the background are other ergonomic chairs that Hedge and students tested.



match human characteristics. In short, it seeks to fit the job to the person rather than the person to the job.²¹ Ergonomics attempts to minimize the harmful effects of carelessness, negligence, and other human fallibilities that otherwise may cause product defects, damage to equipment, or even the injury or death of employees.

Equipment design must consider the physical ability of operators to use the equipment and to react through vision, hearing, and touch to the information the equipment conveys. Designing equipment controls to be compatible with both the physical characteristics and the reaction capabilities of the people who must operate them and the environment in which they work is increasingly important. Ergonomics also considers the requirements of a diverse workforce, accommodating, for example, women who may lack the strength to operate equipment requiring intense physical force or Asian Americans who may lack the stature to reach equipment controls. Managers must adapt the workplace to the labor force or risk sacrificing quality and productivity.

Ergonomics improves productivity and morale and yields positive return on investment (ROI). Peter Budnick, president of ErgoWeb, Inc., notes, “At our company we look at ergonomics as much more than a musculoskeletal issue. Injuries are one of the natural outcomes of poor workplace design. But so is lost productivity, loss of efficiency, errors and increased waste. We really look at ergonomics as a broad approach to improving human performance.”²² Ergonomics has proven cost-effective at organizations such as Compaq Computer, 3M, Pratt and Whitney, and the U.S. Postal Service. Unfortunately, more than 1.8 million workplace injuries occur yearly resulting from motions such as lifting, bending, and typing. Therefore, ergonomics has recently focused on elimination, or at least reduction, of many repetitive-motion injuries, particularly those related to the back and wrist. For example, with the increased use of computers, ergonomics has particular application at employee workstations. Figure 4.5 provides a checklist of potential repetitive-motion problem areas for employees using computers.



Designing Work for Group/Team Contributions

Although a variety of group techniques have been developed to involve employees more fully in their organizations, all of these techniques have two characteristics in common—enhancing collaboration and increasing synergy. In increasing the degree of collaboration in the work environment, these techniques can improve work processes and organizational decision making. In increasing group synergy, the techniques underline the adage that the contributions of two or more employees are greater than the sum of their individual efforts. Furthermore, research has shown that working in a group setting strengthens employee commitment to the organization’s goals, increases employee acceptance of decisions, and encourages a cooperative approach to workplace tasks.²³ Two collaborative techniques are discussed here: employee involvement groups and employee teams.

Employee Involvement Groups

Groups of five to ten employees doing similar or related work who meet regularly to identify, analyze, and suggest solutions to shared problems are often referred to as **employee involvement groups (EIs)**. Also widely known as *quality circles (QCs)*, EIs are used principally as a means of involving employees in the larger goals of the organization through their suggestions for improving product or service quality and

employee involvement groups (EIs)

Groups of employees who meet to resolve problems or offer suggestions for organizational improvement

Figure 4.5

Computer Workstation Ergonomics Checklist

Use the following list to identify potential problem areas that should receive further investigation. Any “no” response may point to a problem.

1. Does the workstation ensure proper worker posture, such as
 - Thighs in the horizontal position?
 - Lower legs in the vertical position?
 - Feet flat on the floor or on a footrest?
 - Wrists straight and relaxed?
2. Does the chair
 - Adjust easily?
 - Have a padded seat with a rounded front?
 - Have an adjustable backrest?
 - Provide lumbar support?
 - Have casters?
3. Are the height and tilt of the work surface on which the keyboard is located adjustable?
4. Is the keyboard detachable?
5. Do keying actions require minimal force?
6. Is there an adjustable document holder?
7. Are armrests provided where needed?
8. Are glare and reflections minimized?
9. Does the monitor have brightness and contrast controls?
10. Is there sufficient space for knees and feet?
11. Can the workstation be used for either right- or left-handed activity?

Source: The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), *Elements of Ergonomics Programs: A Primer Based on Workplace Evaluations of Musculoskeletal Disorders* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, March 1997).

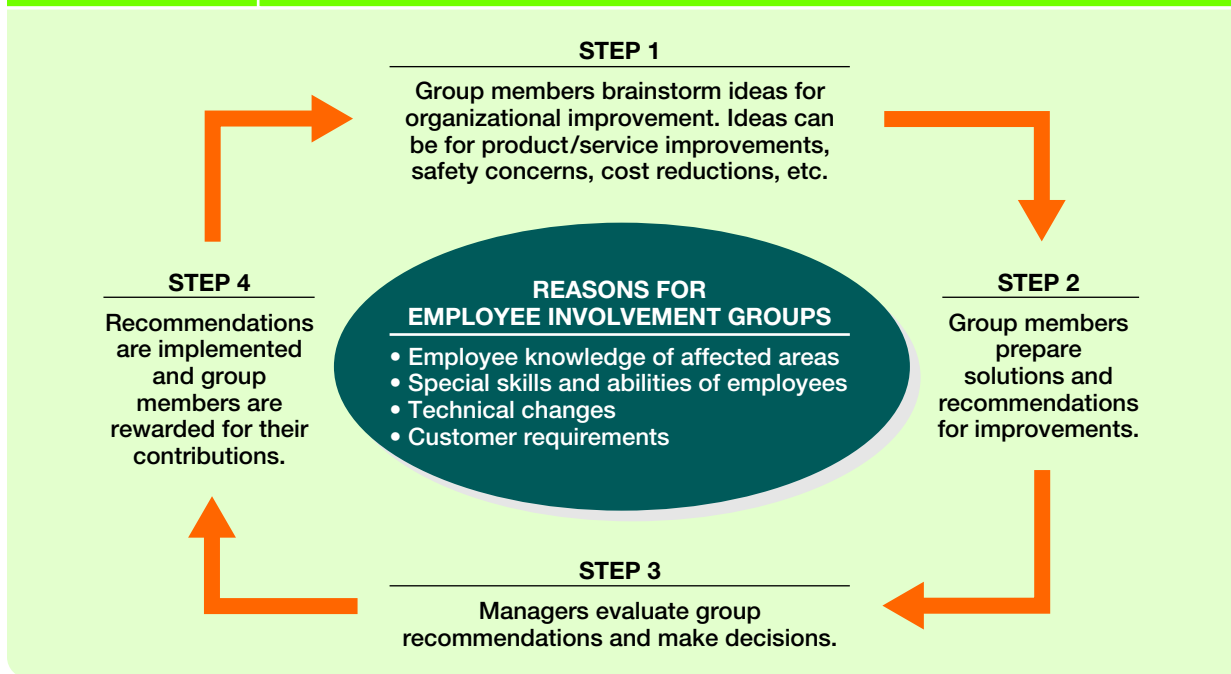
cutting costs.²⁴ Generally, EIs recommend their solutions to management, which decides whether to implement them.

The employee involvement group process, illustrated in Figure 4.6, begins with EI members brainstorming job-related problems or concerns and gathering data about these issues. The process continues through the generation of solutions and recommendations that are then communicated to management. If the solutions are implemented, results are measured, and the EI and its members are usually recognized for the contributions they have made. EIs typically meet four or more hours per month, and the meetings are chaired by a group leader chosen from the group. The leader does not hold an authority position but instead serves as a discussion facilitator.

Although EIs have become an important employee contribution system, they are not without their problems and their critics. First, in order to achieve the results desired, those participating in EIs must receive comprehensive training in problem identification, problem analysis, and various decision-making tools such as statistical analysis and cause-and-effect diagrams. Comprehensive training for EIs is often cited

Figure 4.6

The Dynamics of Employee Involvement Groups



Source: Adapted from materials prepared by The Family and Relationship Center, 7946 Ivanhoe Avenue, La Jolla, CA 92037.

as the most important factor leading to their success. Second, managers should recognize the group when a recommendation is made, regardless of whether the recommendation is adopted. This approach encourages the group to continue coming up with ideas even when they are not all implemented by management. Third, some organizations have found that EIs run out of ideas, and management must feed them ideas to keep the process going. Finally, and most important, managers and supervisors must exhibit a participative/democratic leadership style in which employees are encouraged to work collaboratively with management to improve organizational performance.

Employee Teams

During the past decade perhaps one of the more radical changes to how work is done is the introduction of organizational teams. Jim Barksdale, president and CEO of Netscape Communications, states, “These days it seems as if every time a task needs to be accomplished within an organization, a team is formed to do it.” This statement simply emphasizes the increasing importance of teams to organizational success in an ever-dynamic business climate. At such diverse organizations as Federal Express, Hewlett-Packard, the City of Phoenix, Calvin Klein, and Lockheed Martin Aeronautics in Fort Worth, Texas, the benefits of employee teams have included more integration of individual skills, better performance in terms of quality and quantity, solutions to unique and complex problems, reduced delivery time, reduced turnover and absenteeism, and accomplishments among team members.²⁵

employee teams

An employee contributions technique whereby work functions are structured for groups rather than for individuals and team members are given discretion in matters traditionally considered management prerogatives, such as process improvements, product or service development, and individual work assignments



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Team members brainstorm, support, and challenge each other, and interact as they work together for a common goal.

Employee teams are a logical outgrowth of employee involvement and the philosophy of empowerment. Although many definitions of teams exist, we define a work team as a group of individuals working together toward a common purpose, in which members have complementary skills, members' work is mutually dependent, and the group has discretion over tasks performed. Furthermore, teams seek to make members of the work group share responsibility and accountability for their group's performance. Inherent in the concept of employee teams is that employees, not managers, are in the best position to contribute to workplace performance. With work teams, managers accept the notion that the group is the logical work unit to apply resources to resolve organizational problems and concerns.²⁶

Teamwork also embraces the concept of *synergy*. Synergy occurs when the interaction and outcome of team members is greater than the sum of their individual efforts.²⁷ Unfortunately, synergy may not automatically happen, but rather, it must be nurtured within the team

environment.²⁸ Figure 4.7 lists the factors contributing to a synergistic team setting.

Teams can operate in a variety of structures, each with different strategic purposes or functional activities. Figure 4.8 describes common team forms. One form, self-directed teams, is often championed as being the highest form of team structure. Self-directed teams, also called *autonomous work groups*, *self-managed teams*, or *high-performance teams*, are groups of employees who are accountable for a "whole" work process or segment that delivers a product or service to an internal or external

Figure 4.7

Synergistic Team Characteristics

Team synergy is heightened when team members engage in these positive behaviors.

- **Support.** The team exhibits an atmosphere of inclusion. All team members speak up and feel free to offer constructive comments.
- **Listening and Clarification.** Active listening is practiced. Members honestly listen to others and seek clarification on discussion points. Team members summarize discussions held.
- **Disagreement.** Disagreement is seen as natural and is expected. Member comments are nonjudgmental and focus on factual issues rather than personality conflicts.
- **Consensus.** Team members reach agreements through consensus decision making. Consensus decisions require finding a proposal that is acceptable to all team members, even if not the first choice of individual members. Common ground among ideas is sought.
- **Acceptance.** Team members are valued as individuals, recognizing that each person brings a valuable mix of skills and abilities to team operations.
- **Quality.** Each team member is committed to excellent performance. There is emphasis on continuous improvement and attention to detail.

Figure 4.8

Forms of Employee Teams

Cross-Functional Teams. A group staffed with a mix of specialists (e.g., marketing, production, engineering) and formed to accomplish a specific objective. Cross-functional teams are based on assigned rather than voluntary membership.

Project Teams. A group formed specifically to design a new product or service. Members are assigned by management on the basis of their ability to contribute to success. The group normally disbands after task completion.

Self-Directed Teams. Groups of highly trained individuals performing a set of interdependent job tasks within a natural work unit. Team members use consensus decision making to perform work duties, solve problems, or deal with internal or external customers.

Task Force Teams. A task force is formed by management to immediately resolve a major problem. The group is responsible for developing a long-term plan for problem resolution that may include a charge for implementing the solution proposed.

Process-Improvement Teams. A group made up of experienced people from different departments or functions and charged with improving quality, decreasing waste, or enhancing productivity in processes that affect all departments or functions involved. Team members are normally appointed by management.

USING THE INTERNET

To obtain a wide variety of information on teams, including free pamphlets and articles, view the Center for the Study of Work Teams. Go to the Student Resources at:

<http://bohlander.swlearning.com>

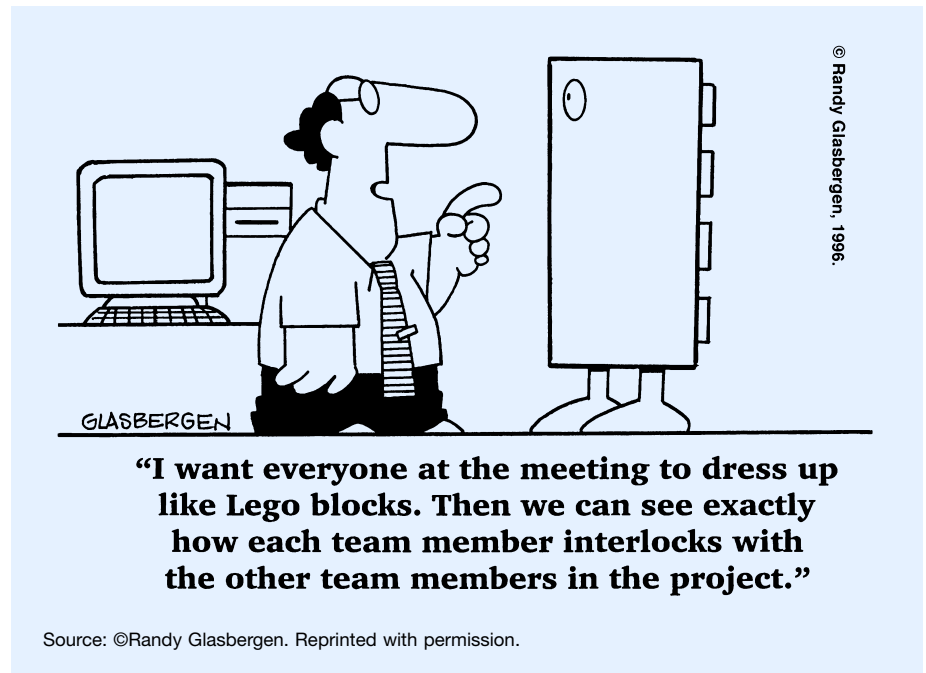
virtual team

A team with widely dispersed members linked together through computer and telecommunications technology

customer. Team members acquire multiple skills enabling them to perform a variety of job tasks. To varying degrees, team members work together to improve their operations, handle day-to-day concerns, and plan and control their work. Typical team functions include setting work schedules, dealing directly with external customers, training team members, setting performance targets, budgeting, and purchasing equipment or services.

Self-directed teams are designed to give the team “ownership” of a product or service. In a manufacturing environment, a team might be responsible for a whole product or a clearly defined segment of the production process. Similarly, in a service environment, a team is usually responsible for entire groupings of products and services, often serving clients in a designated geographic area. Providing employees this type of ownership usually requires broader job categories and the sharing of work assignments.

To compete in today’s national and international markets, managers have formed virtual teams.²⁹ **Virtual teams** use advanced computer and telecommunications technology to link team members who are geographically dispersed—often worldwide.³⁰ Management may form a cross-functional team (see Figure 4.8) to develop a new pharmaceutical drug and have the team operate in a virtual environment to achieve its goal. Virtual teams provide new opportunities for training, product development, and product market analysis. Importantly, virtual teams provide access to previously unavailable expertise and enhance cross-functional interactions.³¹ However, although virtual teams have many benefits, they are not without their problems. Paulette Tichenor, president of Organizational Renaissance, a team training organization, notes these concerns with virtual teams: language and cultural barriers, unclear objectives, time conflicts due to diverse geographical locations, selecting people who are self-starters and have technological skills, and behavioral problems caused by a lack of close interpersonal contact.³²



Regardless of the structure or purpose of the team, the following characteristics have been identified with successful teams:

- Commitment to shared goals and objectives
- Motivated and energetic team members
- Open and honest communication
- Shared leadership
- Clear role assignments
- Climate of cooperation, collaboration, trust, and accountability
- Recognition of conflict and its positive resolution

Unfortunately, not all teams succeed or operate to their full potential. Therefore, in adopting the work-team concept, organizations must address several issues that could present obstacles to effective team function, including overly high expectations, group compensation, training, career movement, and power.³³ For example, new team members must be retrained to work outside their primary functional areas, and compensation systems must be constructed to reward individuals for team accomplishments. Since team membership demands more general skills and since it moves an employee out of the historical career path, new career paths to general management must be created from the team experience. Finally, as the team members become capable of carrying out functions, such as strategic planning, that were previously restricted to higher levels of management, managers must be prepared to utilize their newfound expertise.

Another difficulty with work teams is that they alter the traditional manager-employee relationship.³⁴ Managers often find it hard to adapt to the role of leader

rather than supervisor and sometimes feel threatened by the growing power of the team and the reduced power of management. Furthermore, some employees may also have difficulty adapting to a role that includes traditional supervisory responsibilities. Therefore, from our experience in working with teams, extensive attention must be given to training team members as they move through the four stages of team development—forming, storming, norming, and performing.³⁵ *Complete* training would cover the importance of skills in (1) team leadership, (2) mission/goal setting, (3) conduct of meetings, (4) team decision making, (5) conflict resolution, (6) effective communication, and (7) diversity awareness.³⁶



Flexible Work Schedules

Flexible work schedules are not a true part of job design because job tasks and responsibilities are not changed. Nevertheless, we discuss adjustments in work schedules here because they alter the normal workweek of five eight-hour days in which all employees begin and end their workday at the same time. Employers may depart from the traditional workday or workweek in their attempt to improve organizational productivity and morale by giving employees increased control over the hours they work.

Speaking on the importance of flexible work schedules, Lois Brakon, codirector of the Families and Work Institute, notes, “Flexible schedules are going to be the way good, competitive businesses work.”³⁷ Flexible work schedules may be assigned by the organization or requested by individual employees (see Highlights in HRM 3). The more common flexible work schedules are the compressed workweek, flextime, job sharing, and telecommuting.

The Compressed Workweek

Under the compressed workweek, the number of days in the workweek is shortened by lengthening the number of hours worked per day. This schedule is best illustrated by the four-day, forty-hour week, generally referred to as 4/10 or 4/40. Employees working a four-day workweek might work ten hours a day, Monday through Thursday. Although the 4/10 schedule is probably the best known, other compressed arrangements include reducing weekly hours to thirty-eight or thirty-six hours or scheduling eighty hours over nine days (9/80), taking one day off every other week.

Several examples illustrate this popular work arrangement.³⁸ At AVT Document Exchange Software Group in Tucson, Arizona, all general workers work four ten-hour days, with workers choosing the day they would like off. The organization’s information technology employees, working swing and midnight shifts, work four nine-hour days. Working one less hour is comparable to offering a pay differential. In comparison, employees at Nahan Printing Inc., in St. Cloud, Minnesota, work three twelve-hour shifts, while employees at Marcel Dekker in New York City are employed on a Monday-through-Thursday office schedule with employees working a total of thirty-eight hours. At Marcel Dekker, employees are given the option of starting their workday between 7:30 A.M. and 9:30 A.M.

Managers cite the following reasons for implementing compressed workweek schedules:

- Recruitment and retention of employees³⁹
- Coordinating employee work schedules with production schedules

Highlights in HRM 3

How to Request a Flexible Work Schedule

You may be thinking, “My manager would never agree to a flexible work schedule.” But that’s not necessarily so. When valued employees make reasonable scheduling requests, managers often try to accommodate employee proposals. Here are some proven strategies for securing different types of flexible work hour arrangements.

- *Investigate.* Look into similar arrangements others have made within your company or industry. Research company policy. Be realistic by providing a schedule that will fit the demands of your organization.
- *Be Professional.* Treat your request as a business proposal. Be positive and assume a “can-do” attitude. Be serious and present the proposal as a benefit to both you and your company. Present your idea as a “win-win” arrangement.
- *Write It Out.* Submit your request for a flexible work hour arrangement in a well-organized, detailed written proposal.
- *Promote Yourself.* Explain your value to your organization. Have others speak to your abilities—especially those in authority. Ask to be evaluated based on your quantity and quality of work rather than on the hours you actually spend on the job.
- *Anticipate Questions.* Be prepared for potential problems and have specific answers on how to deal with these issues. For example, how will you communicate or coordinate with other employees?
- *Propose a Review.* Propose review dates to evaluate your new flexible schedule. Continually assess how you work with others and your manager.

Source: Adapted from Julie Shields, “Showing How to Flex It,” *Incentive* 178, no. 3 (March 2004): 47.

- Accommodating the leisure-time activities of employees while facilitating employee personal appointments—medical, dental, financial⁴⁰
- Improvements in employee job satisfaction and morale

The major disadvantage of the compressed workweek involves federal laws regarding overtime.⁴¹ The Fair Labor Standards Act has stringent rules requiring the payment of overtime to nonsupervisory employees who work more than forty hours a week. (See Chapter 9.) Another disadvantage of the compressed workweek is that it increases the amount of stress on managers and employees, and long workdays can be exhausting.

flextime

Flexible working hours that permit employees the option of choosing daily starting and quitting times, provided that they work a set number of hours per day or week

Flextime

Flextime, or flexible working hours, permits employees the option of choosing daily starting and quitting times, provided that they work a certain number of hours per day or week.⁴² With flextime, employees are given considerable latitude in scheduling their work. However, there is a “core period” during the morning and afternoon

when *all* employees are required to be on the job. Flexible working hours are most common in service-type organizations—financial institutions, government agencies, and other organizations with large clerical operations. The regional office of Sentry Insurance Company in Scottsdale, Arizona, has found that flextime provides many advantages for employees working in claims, underwriting, and HR areas. At Sentry Insurance, employees work a core period from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M. Flexible time periods are 6 A.M. to 9 A.M. and 3 P.M. to 7 P.M.

Flextime provides both employees and employers with several advantages. By allowing employees greater flexibility in work scheduling, employers can reduce some of the traditional causes of tardiness and absenteeism. Employees can adjust their work to accommodate their particular lifestyles and, in doing so, gain greater job satisfaction. Employees can also schedule their working hours for the time of day when they are most productive. In addition, variations in arrival and departure times can help reduce traffic congestion at the peak commuting hours. In some cases, employees require less time to commute, and the pressures of meeting a rigid schedule are reduced.

From the employer's standpoint, flextime can be most helpful in recruiting and retaining personnel. It has proved invaluable to organizations wishing to improve service to customers or clients by extending operating hours. Qwest, a telecommunications company, uses flextime to keep its business offices open for customers who cannot get there during the day. Research demonstrates that flextime can have a positive impact on the performance measures of reliability, quality, and quantity of employee work.

There are, of course, several disadvantages to flextime. First, it is not suited to some jobs. It is not feasible, for example, where specific workstations must be staffed at all times. Second, it can create problems for managers in communicating with and instructing employees. Flextime schedules may also force these managers to extend their workweek if they are to exercise control over their subordinates.

Job Sharing

The arrangement whereby two part-time employees perform a job that otherwise would be held by one full-time employee is called *job sharing*. Job sharers usually work three days a week, "creating an overlap day for extended face-to-face conferencing." Their pay is three-fifths of a regular salary; however, job sharers usually take on additional responsibilities beyond what the original job would require. Companies that use job sharing are primarily in the legal, advertising, and financial-services businesses. Among more notable national programs, Sprint began an extensive job sharing program for its attorneys, and Kaiser Permanente, one of the nation's largest health maintenance organizations, developed a job sharing program for physicians in its Northern California region. American Express, Lotus Development Company, and Carter Hawley Hale Stores also use job sharing extensively. Employers note that without job sharing two good employees might otherwise be lost.

Job sharing is suited to the needs of families in which one or both spouses desire to work only part-time.⁴³ It is suited also to the needs of older workers who want to phase into retirement by shortening their workweek. For the employer, the work of part-time employees can be scheduled to conform to peaks in the daily workload. Job sharing can also limit layoffs in hard economic times. A final benefit is that employees engaged in job sharing have time off during the week to accommodate personal needs, so they are less likely to be absent.



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Telecommuting allows employees to balance both work and family responsibilities.

telecommuting

Use of personal computers, networks, and other communications technology such as fax machines to do work in the home that is traditionally done in the workplace

Job sharing does have several problems, however. Employers may not want to employ two people to do the work of one because the time required to orient and train a second employee constitutes an added burden. They may also want to avoid prorating employee benefits between two part-time employees. This problem may be reduced, however, by permitting the employees to contribute the difference between the health insurance (or life insurance) premiums for a full-time employee and the pro rata amount the employer would otherwise contribute for a part-time employee. The key to making job sharing work is good communications between partners, who can use a number of ways to stay in contact—phone calls, written updates, e-mail, and voice mail.⁴⁴

Telecommuting

One of the more dynamic changes and potentially the most far-reaching is telecommuting. **Telecommuting** is the use of personal computers, networks, and other communications technology such as fax machines to do work in the home that is traditionally done in the workplace.

A variant of telecommunicating is the *virtual office*, where employees are in the field helping customers or are stationed at other remote locations working as if they were in the home office.⁴⁵

Both managers and HR professionals note the following advantages of telecommuting:⁴⁶

following advantages of telecommuting:⁴⁶

- Increased flexibility for employees
- Ability to attract workers who might not otherwise be available
- Lessened burden on working parents
- Less time and money wasted on physical commuting
- Increased productivity
- Reduced absenteeism

Perhaps the strongest economic reason in favor of telecommuting is its power to retain valued employees. Retention is a top priority for employers largely because the costs of replacing employees are far higher than those involved in installing a telecommunicating arrangement. Figure 4.9 presents suggestions for establishing a successful telecommuting program.

While telecommuting offers significant benefits to employers, it also presents potential drawbacks. These include the loss of creativity as employees are not interacting with one another on a regular basis, the difficulty of developing appropriate performance standards and evaluation systems for telecommuters, and the need to formulate an appropriate technology strategy for allocating the necessary equipment.⁴⁷ Additionally, managers may believe that telecommuting negatively affects employee-supervisor relationships through loss of knowledge or information, trust,

Figure 4.9

Keys for Successful Telecommuting

- *Identify jobs best suited to distance work.* Those involving sales, customer service, and auditing are logical choices.
- *Select responsible employees.* Employees who are self-starters, motivated, and trustworthy and who can work independently are ideal candidates. Establish employee feedback procedures and performance review methods for employee evaluation.
- *Establish formalized telecommuting procedures.* Telecommuting guidelines could cover hours of availability, office reporting periods, performance expectations, and weekly progress reports or e-mail updates.
- *Begin a formal training program.* Training for both telecommuters and managers should include the technical aspects of equipment usage and relationship factors such as how and when to contact the office or availability and location of support facilities.
- *Keep telecommuters informed.* Physical separation can make telecommuters feel isolated and invisible. Department and staff updates, inclusion of telecommuters on project teams, required attendance at meetings, and “chat room” discussions all keep telecommuters “in the loop.”
- *Recognize when telecommuting isn’t working.* State in telecommunicating policies that the arrangement may be terminated when it no longer serves company needs or if the employee’s performance declines.

Source: Adapted from Barbara Hemphill, “Telecommuting Productivity,” *Occupational Health and Safety* 73, no. 3 (March 2004): 16.

and a sense of connectedness.⁴⁸ Employers wishing to have their employees telecommute must also comply with wage and hour laws, workers’ compensation regulations, equipment purchase or rental agreements with employees, and federal EEO posting requirements (see Chapter 3). Employees who are denied the opportunity to work from home may feel discriminated against and elect to pursue legal action or simply become disgruntled employees.

SUMMARY



Job requirements reflect the different duties, tasks, and responsibilities contained in jobs. Job requirements, in turn, influence HR functions performed by managers, including recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, and various labor relations activities.



Job analysis data may be gathered using several collection methods—interviews, questionnaires, observations, and diaries. Other more quantitative approaches include use of the functional job analysis, the position analysis questionnaire system, the critical incident method, task inventory analysis, and computerized job analysis. It is

the prevailing opinion of the courts that HRM decisions on employment, performance appraisal, and promotions must be based on specific criteria that are job-related. These criteria can be determined objectively only by analyzing the requirements of each job.



The format of job descriptions varies widely, often reflecting the needs of the organization and the expertise of the writer. As a minimum, job descriptions should contain a job title, a job identification section, and an essential functions section. A job specification section also may be included. Job descriptions should be written in clear and specific terms with consideration given to their legal implications.



Job design is a combination of four basic considerations: organizational objectives; industrial engineering concerns of analyzing work methods and establishing time standards; ergonomic considerations, which accommodate human capabilities and limitations to job tasks; and employee contributions.



In the job characteristics model, five job factors contribute to increased job performance and satisfaction—skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. All factors should be built into jobs, since each factor

influences different employee psychological states. When jobs are enriched through the job characteristics model, employees experience more meaningfulness in their jobs, acquire more job responsibility, and receive direct feedback from the tasks they perform.



To improve the internal process of organizations and increase American productivity, greater efforts are being made by organizations to involve groups of employees in work operations. Employee involvement groups are composed of employees in work units charged with offering suggestions for improving product or service quality or fostering workplace effectiveness. Employee teams stress employee collaboration over individual accomplishment. Teams rely on the expertise and different abilities of members to achieve a specific goal or objective. Self-directed teams are characterized by their willingness to perform traditional managerial tasks.



Changes in work schedules—which include the compressed workweek, flextime, job sharing, and telecommuting—permit employees to adjust their work periods to accommodate their particular lifestyles. Employees can select from among these HR techniques to accommodate diverse employee needs while fostering organizational effectiveness.

KEY TERMS

critical incident method
employee empowerment
employee involvement groups (EIs)
employee teams
ergonomics
flextime
functional job analysis (FJA)

industrial engineering
job
job analysis
job characteristics model
job description
job design
job enrichment
job family

job specification
position
position analysis questionnaire (PAQ)
task inventory analysis
telecommuting
virtual team

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. Place yourself in the position of general manager of a service department. How might formally written job requirements help you manage your work unit?



2. Discuss the various methods by which job analysis can be completed. Compare and contrast these methods, noting the pros or cons of each.



3. Working with a group of three or four students, collect at least five different job descriptions from organizations in your area. Compare the descriptions, highlighting similarities and differences.



4. Explain how industrial engineering and ergonomics can both clash with and complement each other in the design of jobs.



5. The job characteristics model has five components that enhance employee jobs—skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. Give an example illustrating how each component can be used to improve the organization and the job of the employee. (Suggestion: Consider your present or a recent job to answer this question.)



6. Figure 4.8 shows the different forms of employee teams. Provide an example of where each type of team can be used. How do teams create synergy?



7. As a small-business employer, explain how nontraditional work schedules might make it easier for you to recruit employees.

BIZFLIX EXERCISES

Intolerable Cruelty: Just Doing My Job

This chapter discussed several aspects of job analysis and job design. Try to apply much of that discussion to this scene from the film *Intolerable Cruelty*. Use the questions below as guides to your viewing.

Ruthless, beautiful Marilyn Rexroth (Catherine Zeta-Jones) matches the brilliance of divorce attorney Miles Massey (George Clooney). Conflict rises and falls as the two try to outwit each other in this charming romantic comedy. The film twists and turns in typical Coen brothers (co-screenwriters; Joel Cohen, director) fashion as it reaches its predictable end.

This scene comes from “The War Room” segment that occurs about 20 minutes into the film. It follows Rex Rexroth’s (George Herrmann) escapade with a young woman (Kristen Dattilo). His wife, Marilyn Rexroth, hired private detective Gus Petch (Cedric the Entertainer) to videotape the event. He now needs

some legal help. Miles Massey meets his new client and discusses the case. The film continues with some women sitting by The Waters swimming pool talking about their ex- and present husbands.

What to Watch for and Ask Yourself

- What knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) are required for the successful performance of Miles Massey’s job?
- Recall the earlier chapter section “Job Analysis.” Apply some observations from that section to this scene. What duties, tasks, and activities do you infer from the scene for Massey’s job?
- Job design views certain job characteristics as important for a person’s motivation and satisfaction (see the earlier section “Job Design”). Which of the five core job dimensions appear(s) in Miles Massey’s job?

HRM Experience

Establishing Ground Rules for Team Success

Professional trainers understand that setting ground rules for teams is a cornerstone for continued team success. Ground rules—or team norms—are agreed-on formal rules that guide group member behavior. Norms established prior to the team's task regulate the behavior of group members. Ground rules simply state how members want to be treated and how members agree to treat others. When team members follow the established norms, then norms help maintain order, promote positive behavior, and can be used to correct undesirable actions. Remember, because teams operate in different settings, different norms may be appropriate in different arrangements.

Assignment

1. Working within your team, select what you believe are the ten most important norms for team behavior.
2. From the following Behavior List, have each team member *silently* select two lists of ten items each of the behaviors they believe most critical for team success. The first list of ten items (your A list) is considered the most important for group conduct. The second list (the B list) is desired items but those not of major importance.
3. In a group discussion, have all team members select a final list of ten items from both lists. These become your team's final norms. Select no more than ten items. During your discussion, items can be modified or combined to meet your team's specific needs.
4. Prepare a written document of chosen behaviors and have all team members sign the form. You have now established a written contract for positive team conduct.

Behavior List

While working in our team, individuals should . . .

1. Do their fair share of the work.
2. Check to ensure that everyone clearly understands what is to be done.
3. Encourage planning, including short-range agendas as well as long-range goals.
4. Encourage open and candid opinions about issues.
5. Listen willingly and carefully to other people's ideas, even if those people have a different viewpoint.
6. Prepare thoroughly before meetings.
7. Make team members feel at ease in discussion.
8. Ask questions when they do not clearly understand tasks or procedures.
9. Propose specific analyses of the pros and cons of decisions faced by the team.
10. Follow through on task assignments.
11. Help other members when assistance is requested.
12. Treat all team members as equals.
13. Paraphrase or restate what someone else says in order to check meaning.
14. Openly voice opinions and share ideas.
15. Be flexible in arranging meeting schedules.

16. Compliment others for things they have said or done.
17. Be willing to meet whenever it is necessary to discuss a problem.
18. Deal with conflict directly, bringing it to the attention of the team.
19. Express enthusiasm about what the team is doing.
20. Encourage budgeting of the team's time.
21. At the end of a meeting, restate their own responsibilities to check for agreement.
22. Be serious about the team's work.
23. Arrive on time for regularly scheduled meetings.
24. Be willing to listen to other team members' ideas.
25. Get the team's approval on important matters before proceeding.

case study

1

Building a Stealth Fighter with Virtual Teams

On October 26, 2001, defense contractor Lockheed Martin Aeronautics of Fort Worth, Texas, won its largest manufacturing contract ever—a whopping \$200 million. The contract, received from the U.S. Department of Defense, is to build a new family of supersonic stealth fighter planes. Success of the megaproject will hinge greatly on intricate teamwork. For example, more than eighty suppliers will be working at 187 locations worldwide to design and build components of the Joint Strike Fighter. A seventy-five-member technology group at Lockheed's aeronautics division will link the suppliers, along with the U.S. Air Force, Navy, and Marines, to Britain's Defense Ministry to track progress and make midstream design and production changes if necessary. Individuals working at more than 40,000 computer stations will collaborate to get the first plane airborne in just four years. Speaking of the teamwork involved, Mark Peden, vice president for information systems at Lockheed Aeronautics, said, "It's the true virtual connection."

Teams working both nationally and internationally will interact as if team members were working in the same room. Teams will communicate via their computers while looking at shared documents, carry on e-mail chats, and use electronic whiteboards on which geographically separated team members can draw pictures or charts, in real time, as others watch and respond. The Internet is designed to allow people from different companies with incompatible computing systems to interface on web sites that speak a common language.

QUESTIONS

1. What advantages will Lockheed Martin gain by using virtual teams? Explain.
2. Identify and discuss potential problems with using virtual teams—for example, interpersonal, technical, or geographical concerns.
3. Discuss specific training that virtual teams could receive.

Source: This case was written by George Bohlander, based on information found in Faith Keenan and Spencer E. Ante, "The New Teamwork," *Business Week* (February 18, 2002): EB 12.

case study 2**But My Job
Has Changed**

Job descriptions are a critical tool used for job orientation and training and, importantly, in annual employee performance evaluations. When the duties and responsibilities listed in the job description do not reflect current job content employee/management disagreements can arise, as this case illustrates.

Both employees and managers agree that Brenda Batten has been an exceptional employee. As a senior technical representative (STR) for Blackhawk Aironics, she is valued for her knowledge in airplane instrumentation. One manager described her as “simply an expert in the complex technology of satellite weather systems.”

In May 2004, Blackhawk Aironics implemented a new work reorganization plan. STRs such as Brenda now work largely by telecommuting with managers and engineers at company headquarters in Denton, Texas, and with customers scattered throughout the United States. Additionally, under the new work plan, STRs were given more freedom to deal directly with customers and engineers without supervisory intervention. This freedom greatly facilitated customer service needs and demands in an aviation market everyone considers highly dynamic.

Brenda’s current job description reflects the technical dimensions of her position but not the telecommuting requirements now performed. Personal competencies such as decision-making, self-motivation, problem-solving, and communication skills are not covered.

In May 2005, Brenda met with her manager, Martin Eaton, for her annual performance review. Unfortunately, unlike past meetings, which were highly satisfactory, this meeting quickly developed into a disagreement. At the center of the controversy were the factors to be used to measure Brenda’s new job demands. Martin wanted to place major emphasis on the tasks and duties listed in her current job description. As he explained to Brenda, “I hardly see you anymore, and I have no objective criteria or performance data by which to measure those behaviors you now use.” Brenda, in response, acknowledged that some things in the current job description were still important aspects of her job, but overall the current job description did not capture the full scope of her new duties and responsibilities. Brenda concluded that she was satisfied with Martin’s evaluation of the technical aspects of her job, but she was clearly not pleased with the overall evaluation of her performance. As she told Martin, “It’s simply not fair, you just don’t know what I do now.”

QUESTIONS

1. Given the facts of this case, is it possible for Brenda and Martin to reach a satisfactory result? Explain.
2. How could an organization go about identifying and measuring the personal competencies of employees?
3. How could the company prevent this problem from occurring in the future? Explain.

Source: Based on an actual case known to the authors. All names and locations are fictitious.

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