

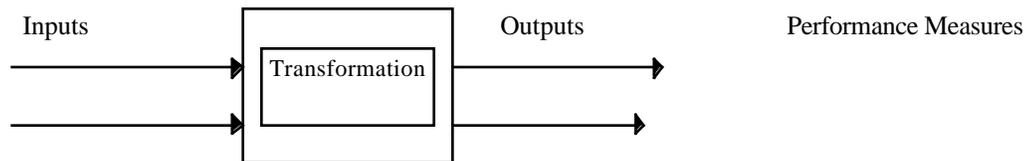
# Job Design

LEIT 564: Performance Technology and Training  
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## What is Job Design?

The process of job design has been defined as, "...specification of the contents, methods, and relationships of jobs in order to satisfy technological and organizational requirements as well as the social and personal requirements of the job holder." (Buchanan, 1979)

Recall the model of the organization below?



Job design primarily focuses in on designing the *process of transformation* of inputs into outputs and considers the human and organizational factors that impact that transformation.

## Aspects of Job Design

### Work Organization

- Rearranging or replacing work (e.g. automating, teaming, work groups, division of labor)
- Giving the worker additional responsibility/tasks (job enlargement)
- Job rotation

### Job Structuring

- Giving responsibility for different types/levels of work (job enrichment)
- Granting control over work (autonomy)
- Self-Organization (time/process management)

### Location/Scheduling

- Telecommuting (part or full off-site work)
- Alternative scheduling (4 day work week, flextime, etc.)
- Virtual Office/Virtual Organization

## Research/Job Design Theory addresses four basic questions:

- What motivates people to work?
- What job characteristics are significant?
- How are job design alternatives to be identified?
- What job design changes are to be implemented?

## What job characteristics are significant?

### Variety

- removal of repetitiveness
- skill variety

## **What job characteristics are significant? (cont.)**

### Autonomy

- removal of no choice of tools or methods
- removal of mechanical pacing
- decision making

### Use of Capacities

- removal of minimum skill requirements
- removal of surface mental attention
- learning time
- challenge

### Progress/Career Path

- achievement
- perceived opportunities for advancement
- growth in competence
- continuous learning
- desirable future

### Intrinsically Meaningful Work

- removal of minute subdivision of product/process
- task identity (seeing relationship of task to whole/end product)

### Socially Meaningful Work

- task significance
- need to relate work and social life

### Interaction

- interaction opportunities
- social support and recognition

### Knowledge of Results

- recognition
- feedback

### Responsibility

- accountability
- choice over tools and methods

## **How are job design alternatives to be identified?**

Steps of analysis (Hill, 1971; Taylor, 1975; Susman, 1976) includes five steps:

- (1) Scanning (initial analysis of system inputs, outputs, organization structure and workplace layout)
- (2) Technical Analysis (similar to process mapping...identifies system operations and key variances. Variances are classified as having an affect on output quality, output quantity, operating costs and social costs)
- (3) Internal Systems Analysis (social system analysis; survey of perceptions of work roles; maintenance system analysis; supply and user system analysis)
- (4) Proposals for Change and Implementation

Sample Outputs: Work Flow Re-Design; Re-organization/Work Group Implementation; Revised Job Descriptions; Revised Career Paths

## **What job design changes are to be implemented?**

Conclusions of research show that at the individual level, design jobs with (1) optimum variety (2) a meaningful whole task (3) optimum work cycle (4) control over work standards and feedback of results (5) preparation and auxiliary tasks (6) use of valued skill, knowledge and effort (7) perceivable contribution to end product.

At group level, work organization should provide (1) job rotation or physical proximity where individual jobs are interdependent or are stressful or make no perceivable contribution to the end product and (2) grouping of interdependent jobs to provide a whole task that contributes to the end product or control over standards and feedback of results and control over boundary tasks (3) communication channels (4) promotion channels.

## **References/Additional Reading:**

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## **Glossary**

- Job enrichment: according to Herzberg (1966), building into jobs elements which provide for a human's needs for (1) cortical stimulation and (2) psychological growth. Also known as "vertical job loading."
- Job enlargement: expanding tasks (or points of transformation) to be completed by an individual or work team.
- Job rotation: varying an individual's job tasks at pre-described intervals so that coverage of all (or many) points of transformation are familiar to each employee.
- Task identification: the ability to see the relationship between the task at hand and the mission of the system or organization.
- Task significance: the ability to see the importance of the task at hand to the success of the system or organization (or society)
- Telecommuting: part or full time work completed off the main organization's site.
- Virtual Office: a colloquialism used to describe the "not quite real" work location of an off-site or self-employed worker; usually related to the illusion provided by technology and telecommunication networks.
- Work Cycle: the time and motions required to complete a point of transformation.