CHAPTER 5
Job Analysis

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JOB ANALYSIS

Job analysis is the basic building block in professional personnel/human resources management. It is the foundation upon which the other personnel activities are built. The job analysis results in a job description (encompassing the duties and responsibilities to be performed) and/or a shorter job specification (which describes the most important aspects or duties performed in that specific job). The job analysis' description is used for attracting candidates in recruitment. It is the document upon which selection testing is based. It is a guide for orientating new employees. It serves as the benchmark for determining training needs and for establishing performance appraisal standards (Brannock and Levine, 2002).

The job analysis contains three parts: job content, job context, and job requirements. Job content focuses on the internal role, the specific responsibilities and duties to be performed. Job context scans the external role, the environment -- working conditions, budget and resources, supervision, etc. -- in which the work is performed. Job requirements assess what skills, knowledges, and abilities are needed to successful perform the work.

The individual job tasks or responsibilities that are identified in the job analysis process may be either narrowly or broadly defined. Narrowly-defined job analyses focus on specific tasks that usually occur in a stable, routine environment (and allow for centralized administration). Broadly-defined job analyses such as are involved in broadbanding emphasize the requirement for situational adjustments and flexibility in the performance of tasks. Since these usually entail decentralization, the

results may be referred to as functional profiles rather than as job analyses or position descriptions. For example the inclusion of positions such as an Archivist (dealing with documents) and a Curator (dealing with preserving a physical specimen) may under a broadbanded Historical Preservation Specialist combine both formerly separate functions in regard to a specific set. In this instance, the individual employs archival skills to aid in physical preservation (or reconstruction). As a practical matter, broadbanding may be accompanied within each agency by the use of "selective factors" that are essentially the older job descriptions. This, of course, tends to undo much of what broadbanding was designed to accomplish.

The job context documents the situation or conditions under which the work occurs. It becomes a measure of the difficulties faced in performing the job content. It also addresses how a position functions in relationship to the other positions it interacts with. Hence, it recognizes the interdependence and team nature inherent in most positions. As such, the external role contributes to job performance (Van Dyne and LePine, 1998).

Job requirements focus on the individual. They delineate the skills, knowledges, and abilities that an individual would need to perform the job. These may also include personal characteristics that have been validated for specific jobs.

Individual jobs are grouped together with similar jobs in job classes. If jobs are narrowly-defined, this results in many distinct classes. Narrowly-defined jobs create career paths (often with limited labor pools) and a psychological feeling of progress as promotion and advancement is rapid. The trend towards more broadly-defined job classes while introducing greater flexibility has also created psychological uncertainty. Employees see more job competition
(while ignoring the greater opportunities afforded them) and fewer promotions (even though wage and salary increases may, in fact, exceed those under the older system).

Uses and Misuses of Job Analysis

Job analysis is the foundation upon which all other personnel activities are built. The job analysis' description is used for attracting candidates in recruitment. It is the document upon which selection and testing is based. It is a guide for orientating new employees. It helps determine training needs for job performance and promotional opportunities. It serves as

the benchmark for establishing performance appraisal standards. Finally, it can provide the basis for employee-supervisor understandings (Clifford, 1994; Gbemiye-Etta, 2004).

The job specification serves as a quick guide for recruiting prospective candidates. Its one or two pages provide an overview of the job behind the title. By highlighting the essential tasks entailed in a job an individual can judge as to whether this is a position that interests them and for which they are qualified. Because of their use in recruitment, job specifications also often include more generic information about the organization and geographic location.

Selection and testing is explicitly tied to the notion of job-relatedness. While this is clearly entailed in our notions of the merit system, its modern incarnation arises from Frederick W. Taylor's Principles of Scientific Management. The scientific management movement engendered the early development of industrial and organizational psychology, including personnel psychology. The federal Position Classification Act of 1923 is recognition of this. In the latter half of the twentieth century, job-relatedness has been reemphasized through the Civil Rights Movements. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent court interpretations such as Griggs v. Duke Power (1971), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 all refocus attention on the requirements for specific jobs. Individuals are judged and hired on the basis of their ability or potential for performing the tasks and responsibilities of a specific job. For this to work, job analysis is essential.

Once hired, the job description can aid in oriented the individual to the job. The job description outlines the specific job tasks that are expected. Properly done the job description can serve as an instrument for goal-setting. It can also be used in the design of more general, organizational orientation material.

A job analysis also is important with regard to the development of training programs. For some jobs, the job description also entails or lists tasks for which the development of additional proficiencies -- skills, knowledges, and abilities (SKA's) or competencies -- is required. This serves to trigger the training needs assessment process by focusing on these precise areas. It alerts those in charge of training and development of the

need to provide such programs. More generally, the basic job description serves to set the job's performance boundaries. When performance discrepancies arise, a job description focuses attention on the areas in which training would be a meaningful solution. This, thereby, avoids the misapplication of training resources on performance problems attributable to non-SKA origins.

Similarly, the job description and its training parameters would assist individuals seeking promotional opportunities. By outlining job duties and the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform them, employees are provided with a career map. They can scan an organization's set of job descriptions for positions that interest them and make use of their talents. They can also seek out training and development opportunities that will enable them to qualify for these positions. The organization can, of course, encourage this by providing these promotional or career training and development opportunities. Internal promotional or career paths are a means for enhancing motivation and organizational commitment.

The job responsibilities identified in the job analysis also form the basis for evaluating an individual's performance. In conjunction with measurable performance standards they compose the objective performance appraisal instrument. They can serve to set employee goals, monitor progress, and plan for the future -- of the employee and the organization.

Running throughout these uses is the omnipresent notion that the employee-supervisor relationship is enhanced by job analysis. A job analysis clarifies and improves the job understanding of both the employee and the supervisor. It focuses attention on job responsibilities, duties, tasks, elements, etc., the competencies or SKA'S required and the conditions under which they are performed, and the performance standards, objectives, results, outcomes, etc. expected.

A discussion of the uses of job analysis would not be complete without detailing what drives many to fear the process. Like all tools, job analysis can be used for purposes it was not intended. These misuses can turn out to be, surprisingly, beneficial or, as is perhaps more likely, harmful.

The application of the job analysis technique stresses the separation of the position from the person. it is the job and not the individual who is the position's incumbent that is the subject of analysis. However, most

abuses center around the application of the analyses to the individual. While it is indeed the individual and not the position that is the key to productivity, this is not the stated focus of the job analysis technique. To make it so is to sow distrust among employees.

Job analyses can become subtle, or not so subtle, performance audits designed to downsize the organization. By disguising performance audits as job analyses and evaluations it is hoped that employees will more honestly and openly provide the necessary information (for eliminating their own jobs!). After all, one can't simply ask if one's job is unnecessary. Given the extent to which Americans see their person identity and wellbeing in their jobs, this poses a truly vital threat. Eliminating unnecessary jobs also eliminates "necessary" people.

Similarly, job analysis instead of focusing on the position may be misused as a productivity measure of the individual incumbent. Redefining the job can lead to the inclusion of addition responsibilities (without compensating adjustments in wages and salary). Again this raises concerns with regard to openness and trust.

The use of competencies (or skills, knowledges, and abilities) is offered as a solution to these problems. Competencies focus on what the individual knows that enables him or her to perform the job successfully rather than listing the specific tasks associated with the job. Hence, it focuses more so on personal development and goal attainment (Zingheim and Schuster, 2010; Bonder, Bouchard, and Bellemare, 2011).

The misapplication of job analysis can result in the incumbents' performance rating or length of service being used in assessing the job's contribution rather than the position itself.

The Americans With Disabilities Act has provided legal reinforcement to the application of job analysis. In determining the essential responsibilities of a job Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regulation 1630.2(n)(3) emphasizes (1) the organization's judgment as to what is essential, (2) written job descriptions, (3) the amount of time spent on a task, (4) the consequences of not performing the task, and (5) past and current work experiences (along with collective bargaining agreements). All are factors included in a proper job analysis. A function is "essential" if (1) the job exists solely to perform that task, (2) there are a limited number of employees who can perform the task, or (3) the task is so specialized that the incumbent is hired for his or her

skills in performing it.

The Job Analysis Process

Job analysis and evaluation is a two-staged process. First, the job analysis identifies the essential job tasks or responsibilities. Second, the job evaluation compares and contrasts the resultant positions and sorts them into categories. This enables the organization to identify similar and different positions and the value or worth they add or contribute.

For most organizations job analysis and evaluation is a perennial backburner issue (with the burner turned off). Its physical cumbersomeness and psychological stressfulness make it difficult and expensive. However, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 has refocused attention on this issue. More importantly, this spotlight has brought with it the power of a legal mandate. While doing the right thing is nice, doing the legal thing is a must.

Following an initial job analysis process, each position should, ideally, be reanalyzed within a five-year framework. Many organizations have allowed this to slip to a ten-year cycle and some have neglected things for up to thirty years. Old job analyses, like old maps, may have certain historic value, but their current usefulness is rather suspect. Even the attempt at re-analyzing the positions involving the most individuals is an unsatisfactory option. While it leads to accurate descriptions for the lower level positions, it furthers the neglect accorded to the technical and professional positions.

Job analysis and evaluation is one of the more centralized techniques. While the employee and supervisor play the pivotal role in developing the raw data upon which the analysis and evaluation are based, the central personnel office and, most likely, outside consultants play the crucial role of transforming and standardizing this information into usable material.

Consultants bring their specialized knowledge and experience to this task. Smaller consulting firms or individuals have the advantage of relatively lower costs and a truly tailored product. The larger, major firms (such as the Hay Group or Ernest & Young), on the other hand, provide a more costly and, at-best, made-to-measure product. However, these are offset by their vast knowledge and experiential base.

In planning a job analysis survey previous job analyses as well as appropriate legal strictures need to

be examined. The practices followed in comparable organizations or jurisdictions are also quite useful. Given the psychological aspects and fears likely to be engendered, it is essential that plans include provisions for keeping employees fully informed of and involved in the process. While active employee participation is not as essential for the completion of the job analysis and evaluation process as it is in other personnel techniques, it is essential for controlling all the negative, secondary effects that might arise from it. What good is a successful operation if the patient dies from related complications?

Following the formal announcement that a job analysis and evaluation is being conducted and the introduction of the professional staff (this may entail a number of meetings before employee groups), every employee, often referred to as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) in the literature, should be sent a job analysis questionnaire. For vacant positions or vacationing employees, the supervisor should be provided with the questionnaire as the next best source of information. While individual employees should be allowed sufficient time in which to complete their job analysis questionnaire (in which they provide the raw information describing what it is that they do), a week should be suffice for this task.

There are a number of methods for obtaining job information. All, more or less, use the employee as the primary source. They differ in the degree to which the employee is allowed to actively participate in the process.

A number of methods rely directly upon information provided by the employee. Open-ended or close-ended survey approaches are often employed. They can run the gamut from asking the employee to record their activities in a diary through structured questionnaires to activity matrixes and formal checklists of specific job tasks deemed likely or appropriate for the positions under analysis (these latter devices are based on prior work).

These survey methods are quite cost-effective. They are easy to administer to a large number of employees, because little disruption of the workflow, guarantee a degree of anonymity to the employee. Surveys, especially the more structured, may not allow for free expression or responses that "don't fit."

The job analysts can also engage in the direct

observation of the employee at work. The employee's participation is limited; emphasis is placed on the interpretative expertise of the job analyst. Activities can be sampled at random intervals or critical incidents noted.

Although it is hard to imagine how an employee would remain unaffected, video monitoring can be employed in some situations. Observation need not disrupt the employee's work.

Assuming the expertise of the job analyst, these approaches enable the positions to be quickly and clearly assessed. However, it is this "expertise" requirement that is also their chief limitation. It simply cannot be assumed to exist. Furthermore, observation may be viewed by employees as "spying."

An interactive job analysis integrates the above employee and job analyst formats. This can be in the form of either a one-on-one interview or a group discussion. In each case the job analyst and employee or employees exchange information. Focus groups might also be used.

The interactive approaches combine the richness of employee surveys with the expertise of observation. Group discussions can greatly assist in clarifying what tasks indeed are common to a position and, in fact, what those tasks are. Of course, interactive approaches are time consuming and labor
intensive, hence expensive.

Finally, job information may be obtained from external sources. The organization may have prior reports and records that detail the tasks performed by various positions. This can also include the use of key consultants or media sources.
Reports and records, including prior job analyses, can be highly valuable sources of information. In as much as circumstances have not been subject to drastic changes, these documents can indeed be quite up-to-date. Unfortunately, there are often changes. While sudden changes in the nature of a job -- what activities are performed or the process followed -often catch our attention, incremental adjustments can also lead to substantial change. Governments are notorious in overlooking both these forms of change. Consultants and media information can be invaluable in addressing relevant external conditions.

The information gathered through job analysis traditionally has been task-specific to the particular job. However, the technique may be used with a systemic

focus so that it can be used within a Total Quality Management framework (Siegel, 1996).

Having collected the raw job information, the personnel professionals and consultants, often with the assistance of employee or SME groups, examines and determines which represent different jobs and which are variations of the same job. For each job class so identified, they winnow the myriad of individual job statements into a set of standardized statements. The Department of Labor's Occupational Information Network (O*NET) which replaces the Dictionary of Occupational Titles also serves as a data source for activity/behavior statements (http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet/).

At this stage a sampling of the employee position analysis questionnaires is taken, and the jobs are subject to an observational desk audit in which the professionals and consultants monitor or verify what occurs. This results in a set of preliminary position classes and accompanying job descriptions. Although these individuals are highly trained in the use of job analysis techniques, they remain subject to the limitations of the "state of the art" (Clifford, 1994).

The preliminary job evaluation is also performed at this point. Using the information included in the job descriptions, positions are evaluated against a set (or series of sets) of factors deemed relevant to the organization. These external or internal factors are viewed as the means through which the organization is made productive or effective. Hence, they help measure the value or worth which each job adds or contributes to the organization's mission.

These preliminary job descriptions (along with the job evaluation implications) are returned to the job incumbents for their review and comment. Job incumbents may appeal what they consider to be oversights or mistakes. These are especially likely to arise in regard to the job evaluation part of the process if rank or grade changes (with or without adjustments to pay) are being suggested. In cases where downgrading is being suggested, it is common to "red-circle" the position's pay. The job incumbent in this case is not subject to a pay cut (or exempt for, say, five years); however, neither are they eligible for pay increases until such time as that position's pay-levels have been adjusted to encompass the incumbent's salary range.

Only after this process has been completed is the new job analysis implemented. This is usually accompanied by a

formal announcement of its adoption. This serves to clearly indicate to all employees in the organization the completion of the job analysis and evaluation.

Job Analysis Systems

The job analysis technique itself is a dual approach which integrates various systems for describing job tasks with differing methods for obtaining this information. Job task systems focus on traits or activities; information gathering methods rely on expert opinion or employee statements (Gael, 1988).

The basic tasks that compose an individual job can be defined either in terms of the underlying traits or work behaviors that the worker possesses which enable him or her to perform the job or in terms of the specific work activities or results that are expected. "Task statements are used to describe work behaviors by incorporating (a) what the worker does, (b) to what or to whom a behavior is directed, (c) upon what instructions, (d) how the behavior is performed, and (e) why the action is taken (Feild and Gatewood, 1989: 156)."

Because of concerns over fairness and discrimination, work activities are given legal preference due to their more straight forward face validity. Behaviors or traits, while perhaps more appealing in that they focus on what it takes to get things done, require a difficult, two-step validation. First, a valid instrument measuring the work behavior or trait must be constructed, and then that instrument must be demonstrated to be job-related. Work activity methods only require the latter.

Psychological traits focus on the inherent factors that motivate people to perform. Basically, traits are a question of character or personality. As such, traits are highly desirable as a method for defining job tasks. Personality studies have begun to group traits into the "Big Five" categories: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness (Digman, 1989, 1990; Goldberg, 1993; John, 1990; McCrae and John, 1992; Wiggins and Pincus, 1992).

These five trait categories form separate personality dimensions. Neuroticism assesses emotional stability focusing on tension and stress. Extraversion examines sociability and friendliness. Openness touches upon the role of creativity and imagination. Agreeableness records levels of trust or skepticism. Conscientiousness registers the individual's sense of self-worth and competence along their degree of discipline.

Personality traits are certainly a major factor in

determining individual performance. Determining which specific traits or combination of traits are necessary (let alone the "amount" required of any trait) is not known, and, in fact, may be unknowable. In addition, some traits may be inherent (or learned at very early age) and, as such, not easily altered or remedied. This can pose questions of fairness.

Unfortunately, the question of legal validity poses a costly and difficult problem. The indirect relationship between traits and job performance raise questions as to their fairness and accuracy. In addition to linking the trait to the specific performance of a given job's duties, the instrument for measuring the trait itself must also be validated. This two-fold validation makes the use of trait approaches prohibitively costly.

Because of these legal and cost considerations, trait systems have been left primarily to the realm of academic research. Trait or work behaviors job analyses may endeavor to comprehensively detail all the relevant job-related traits and work behaviors involved as with the original position analysis questionnaire (McCormick, 1979) or focus only on the most essential traits and work behaviors as in a job element inventory (Primoff, 1975). The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, focusing on a job's essential functions, adds support to the use of such systems (Bishop and Jones, 1993).

Work activities possess the advantage of being quite visibly linked to job tasks. Even so, they should be subject to psychometric validation to insure that the activities are indeed keyed to job performance. Like trait systems, activity approaches may detail all of a job's tasks and the defining activities performed in each, as in the original Functional Job Language (Fine and Wiley, 1971; Fine, 1974; Fine and Cronshaw, 1999) or limit itself only to those deemed essential as in the Critical Incident technique (Flanigan, 1954).

Expanding upon Felix Lopez's (1988) Threshold Traits Analysis (TTA), Donald Klingner advocates the use of a Results-Oriented Description (ROD) or performance expectations. Drawing upon changes in the performance appraisal process designed to enhance its objectivity, the specification of results or performance standards clarifies and refines the job tasks. Klingner sees RODs as a means for obtaining the benefits of trait approaches without the costly and difficult validity problems. By adapting the work activities systems to include the measurable outcomes that each job task is expected to

accomplish, the trait approach's motivational advantage is duplicated in an activities-based job analysis (Klingner and Nalbandian, 1985: 77-79).

Klingner also includes as part of his Results-Oriented Descriptions the specification of the conditions or processes under which the job duties are performed. The inclusion of such circumstantial characteristics is an essential ingredient in developing realistic position descriptions that reflect what a job actually does. Especially in the public sector, the process by which something is done can be just as important as the substantive results themselves.

Among private sector organizations one can also find a few experimenting with "no descriptions." Adapting to an environment grown more uncertain and interdependent, these ad hoc organizations hire people (on the basis of a wholistic assessment of organizational peers) and then require them to figure out how to be useful. This provides for a quite flexible organization in which individuals move to where they're most needed.

While referred to as "jobless" or "open" organizations, there is indeed a job description. However, it focuses on the skills, knowledges, and abilities (SKAs) that an individual possesses rather than on the job tasks they will perform. Specific tasks and process are subject to rapid change in today's world; in fact, they are expected to change if the organization is to be successful. Hence, the basic competencies that enable an individual to successfully perform those tasks and to adjust, if not, initiate their change are focused on. By rewarding these competencies an organization can reinforce desired behavior (Luthans and Stajkovic, 1999). In an open organization internal divisions and jurisdictional claims aren't allowed to hamper the task of getting the job done and concomitantly the organization's survival (Bowen, Ledford, and Nathan, 1991; Quinn, 1992a, 1992b; Pickett, 1998).

Competencies have much in common with personality traits or attitudes. The important difference that transforms a trait or attitude into a competency is job-relatedness. Unfortunately, many organizations do not make the effort to carry out the validation studies that establish the competency link to performance.

The individual job tasks or responsibilities that are identified in the job analysis process may be either narrowly or broadly defined. Narrowly-defined job analyses focus on specific tasks that usually occur in a

stable, routine environment (and allow for centralized administration). Broadly-defined job analyses, labeled job profiles, such as are involved in broadbanding emphasize the requirement for situational adjustments and flexibility in the performance of tasks (which are usually decentralized). Reinventing Government and New Public Management efforts emphasize the flexibility advantages of broadbanding (Kellogh, 1999).

The skills- and competencies-based "position expectation description" or "functional profile" really focuses on what the individual can do. Misleading organization charts with their evenly regimented boxes of job descriptions are replaced by individual profiles. These greatly enhance supervisory understanding of what an organization's real capabilities are.

By highlighting skills and competencies instead of tasks and behaviors, the organization is targeting the very things it needs to do to succeed. Competencies encompass results; specifically, they indicate the effort necessary for a task or activity to be performed successfully. Individuals think of achieving goals and results rather than narrowly focusing on one specific means of accomplishing an often vaguely defined task. By assuring that the skills and competencies necessary for fulfilling the strategic plan are possessed or provided for through employee training and development, the organization's managers and supervisors concentrate their efforts on the factors essential for success (Sullivan, 1996; Pickett, 1998; Raja Johns, and Ntalianis, 2004).

Skills, knowledges, and abilities

Included almost as an afterthought in the job analysis' job description (and often treated as such) is the specification of the skills, knowledges, and abilities (SKAs or KSAs) necessary if one is to perform the job. The growing focus on competencies (primarily among management-level positions) is transforming this limitation.

Skills, knowledges, and abilities measure three levels of job performance. Skills indicate that one can and does perform the job. It is the highest level representing actual experience. Knowledge registers the possession of information for successful job performance. Finally, ability argues that, in general, there is nothing that would prevent one from performing the job. The individual is physically, psychologically, and intellectually capable and could perform the tasks once trained (Feild and Gatewood, 1989: 151; Clifford, 1994: 326).

As way of illustrating the relationships involved in the concepts of skills, knowledges, and abilities, take bread making. Skill indicates that one can and has successfully baked loaves of bread. Knowledge implies that one is familiar with the process and has read a cookbook. Ability suggests that there is nothing that would prevent one from carrying out the task -- enjoys eating bread, willing to make it, capable of mixing the ingredients, could learn how to use the equipment, etc.

For each separate, distinct work behavior or activity there should be designated, corresponding SKAs or competencies. The SKAs map out what human capital inputs are necessary to successfully complete the task. They serve as a reminder and guide as to what should be done in performing a task. When difficulties arise, they direct immediate attention to possible solutions. While somewhat difficult (as is job analysis itself), the added effort required to chart out SKAs is merited. Skills, knowledges, and abilities can be analyzed in just the same fashion as job tasks are (Clifford, 1994: 331-333).

Unfortunately, too many position descriptions are conducted in a slipshod fashion. The part devoted to the SKAs is often shortchanged. Instead of individual task assessments, general requirements such as academic degrees and other credentials along with years of prior experience in similar or related jobs are focused on. These are, at most, rudimentary efforts. As far as any meaningful use goes, these are virtually worthless.

Properly done, the documentation of the skills, knowledges, and abilities necessary to perform a job successfully is a key element in planning for training and for individual career advancement (Wooten, 1993). The identification of similar SKAs also enables organizations to recognize jobs with comparable work and aids in the job evaluation process. In as much as SKAs focus on characteristics and traits (including efforts to validate their use), they are centering-in on the very core requirements in the knowledge organization.

Skills, knowledges, and abilities designate the minimum competencies required for a job. However, they can also include advanced, SKAs that can lead to greater proficiency (and, ultimately, to advancement). While these would not be required for an individual to assume a position, they would indicate that the minimum expected standards were not also the maximum effort expected.

The inclusion of such proficiency SKAs would assist in justifying pay-for-performance schemes. Currently,

public acceptance suffers from the perception that individuals are paid more for doing the "same" job. Position descriptions that only detail the minimum standards perpetuate the notions that government jobs are simple (especially in as much as the generic qualifications that are often listed imply such). Such job descriptions discourage the growth potential that exists within jobs. This has lead dynamic individuals to focus on promotion as the sole means of development.

Of course, placing an emphasis upon SKAs is not without danger. The difficulty in constructing instruments that can measure the various competencies and characteristics and link them to job-related functions is not trivial. However, extensive research has already been conducted on the Big-Five model of personality traits.

The Big-Five model groups personality traits into five major dimensions -- neuroticism/emotional stability, extraversion/introversion, openness, agreeableness/antagonism, and conscientiousness/undirectedness -- and has now gained wide acceptance among researchers (Digman, 1989, 1990; John, 1990; Barrick and Mount, 1991; McCrae and John, 1992; Wiggins and Pincus, 1992; Goldberg, 1993)

However, it is important as many of the critics of the Big-Five model of personality traits research have noted to devote our attention to those competencies and characteristics over which individuals exert some degree of control. If personality traits are inherent, then regardless of how well they predict job performance they are likely to be perceived as unfair. Personality traits that individual can develop and modify are more likely to gain acceptance.

As a practical matter beyond the academic construction and validation of instruments, the costs associated with such double validations is a barrier. Organizations, especially those in the public sector, do not favor "diverting" resources away from their primary mission to pay the expenses of administrative overhead.

Perhaps even more importantly, the perception of fairness and, hence, employee acceptance is questionable. The advantage of job tasks based on worker activities is quite straight forward; it is the visible part of the job. The competencies and characteristics that are needed in order to perform those tasks are inherently invisible or latent.

The knowledge organization exists in a changing world where job tasks do not remain fixed. Work behaviors and

activities, in fact, the very jobs themselves, are undergoing constant and rapid evolution. To remain constant to the organization's purpose, attention must be focused on the workers themselves. It is their knowledge and their ability to change and learn that is essential.

While the competencies or SKAs identified in a job analysis are linked to the performance of specific tasks, they tend to be adaptable to or inherent in evolving needs. The open or jobless organization reflects this notion. Individuals are hired on the basis of their SKAs and then turned loss to use them. Such knowledge workers must be self-directed. Guided by the organization's strategic plan, workers align their capabilities with its goals. Knowledge workers are also able to learn and adapt. In the pursuit and fulfillment of their organization's goals they can see the rise of new technical needs and engage in their own development to address them (Quinn, 1992a, 1992b; Arthur, Claman, DeFillippi, 1995; Quinn, Amderson, and Finkelstein, 1996).

JOB EVALUATION

Job evaluation compares and contrasts the individual job analyses and sorts these separate positions into similar and different job categories. This sorting or ranking provides the basis for determining each individual job's (and not that of the individual's themselves) contribution to the organization. Job evaluation allows an organization to compare individual jobs to one another thereby enabling it to develop an overall picture of how various positions are related to and support one another. It also enables the organization to assess the direct and indirect contribution each position makes to the organization's mission. In addition, job evaluation can also be the basis for compensation and benefit systems (Heneman, 2003).

Typically, an organization (often with directional assistance from a management consulting firm) determines which factors are essential to carrying out its mission. While anywhere from a dozen to twenty overall factors may be developed, specific jobs may only relate to three to six factors. Compensable factors can delineate such things as data, people, and things found in the Functional Job Language; job requirements, difficulty of work, responsibility, personal relationships, and other factors from the federal Factor Evaluation System; or mental activity (problem solving), know how, and accountability according to the Hay Method. Individual jobs are ranked or

rated on the extent and degree to which they are involved in each factor.

The composite score from these separate evaluations (with the factors treated equally or weighted, however, the organization feels best reflects its structure) indicates the overall worth or contribution of the job to the organization. Each method provides for detailed instruction and training in its use along with guide charts for assigning appropriate point levels under the point-factor systems.

Job evaluation is a matter of equity. It is an attempt to identify the relationships that link various jobs or positions to the organization's mission. Each position is assessed on a factor or set of factors that have been chosen because they encompass the major, compensable components or dimensions that lead to successful performance. By identifying what each position contributes to achieving the organizational success, the internal value or worth of that job vis-a-vis all the other jobs within the organization can be determined.

The focus on compensable factors reflects the primary use of job evaluation as a method of establishing pay equity. While the job evaluation process can indeed produce a uniform pay structure, the subjectivity inherent in the process itself means that different systems (along with the choice and weighting of different factors) will lead to divergent pay systems. The application of job evaluation techniques does not imply that there is one, underlying correct answer to the question of pay equity (Madigan and Hoover, 1986; Madigan and Hills, 1988; Lewis, 1989; Clifford, 1996).

While job evaluation is traditionally linked with an organization's compensation system, the Equal Pay Act of 1963 gave impetus to the employment of job evaluation systems in determining compensation (Greenlaw and Lee, 1993). While legal requirements have not been extended to matters of comparable worth, the Equal pay Act has been interpreted to require, in addition to equal pay for equal work, equal pay for comparable work (Moore and Abraham, 1992, 1994; Abraham and Moore, 1995). Benchmark jobs are used in establishing pay relationships. Even so, job evaluation has been effectively used to target gender-related pay differentials (Thompkins, 1987, 1988; Lewis and Stevens, 1990; England and Kilbourne, 1991; Scholl and Cooper, 1991). Ethnic differences are also subject to examination through job evaluation (Green, Veres, and Boyles, 1991).

While this focus is important, it is not the only use of job evaluation. In as much as job evaluation provides a picture of how the organization works together to achieve its mission, it serves as a road map for planning activities. The organizational analysis aspect of job evaluation is just as valuable as its role in compensation. In fact, without a sense of how each job assists in accomplishing the organization's mission, an adequate compensation system can not be constructed.

The disadvantages of job evaluation can not be ignored. This can be an overly rigid and inflexible system that stifles creativity. It focuses attention on the managing of positions rather than on accomplishing the organization's mission. People, not positions, perform the work.

When "job responsibility" is included among the factors, "bureaucratic" empire-building and budget-maximization are encouraged. Job responsibility, including the number of individuals one supervises (a measure of greater responsibility) reinforces hierarchy and the development of "ranks." By focusing individual attention onto the tasks that compose their jobs, boundaries are established. These boundaries are rigorously guarded and defended. Additionally, those tasks, no matter how important or necessary, "beyond the pale" readily fall prey to the "Not My Job" claim.

This concern with "turf protection" also tends to direct attention internally. Great effort is spent on monitoring what goes on within the organization rather than scanning the environment for potential opportunities and threats. Management may buy internal peace by imposing uniform policies and procedures on all. While a "one size fits all" approach appears egalitarian, it can readily discourage necessary adaptation and change.

When associated with pay systems (as it usually is), job evaluation can lead to various "point grabbing" and job design games. In organizations that eschew pay adjustments for inflation or the rewarding meritorious individuals (common, if not universal, among public sector organizations), grade inflation becomes the only means by which a supervisor can make things "right." These games serve only to undermine the system's and the organization's credibility.

Finally, under job evaluation schemes rewards are attached more to promotion than to job performance. This can contribute to goal displacement. Since job evaluations are often "adjusted" to "correctly" reflect exiting

reality (which enhances their acceptability), they perpetuate the biases and social discrimination included in current pay scales. This places undo emphasis upon the importance of promotion and formal tasks over that of doing a job well (Lawler, 1990: 139-150).

Job analysis is the basic building block of personnel administration. It is though job analysis that the content of specific positions is defined. Knowing the tasks that a job is to perform allows recruitment and selection for those skills, training to develop them more fully, and appraisal of the efforts and results of incumbent jobholders.

While job analyses focus primarily on determining the internal role, job-related tasks performed by a specific position, attention is now also focusing on the competencies or skills, knowledges, and abilities that enable one to perform those tasks. External role, organizational relationships are also beginning to be given credence.

Chapter 5

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