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Job Design and Enrichment



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Job Design and Enrichment

Introduction

One of the most important concerns of personnel managers in the past several years has been employee productivity and satisfaction. Personnel managers have realized that an important factor influencing these areas is the type of work handled by the employee. Job design answers the questions of how the job is to be performed, who is to perform it and where it is to be performed. Thus, in a way, job design greatly affects how an employee feels about a job, how much authority an employee has over the work, how much decision-making the employee has on the job and how many tasks the employee has to complete. Managers realize that job design determines their working relationship with their employees and the relationship among employees themselves. Job design refers to the way that tasks are combined to form complete jobs. The early emphasis in management was to design jobs around high specialization and standardization. During the last thirty years, managers have realized the importance of designing jobs in a novel, interesting way enhancing employee satisfaction and productivity. Let us examine these approaches briefly.

Approaches to Job Design

There are three important approaches to job design, viz.,

- Engineering approach,
- Human approach and
- The Job characteristic approach.

Engineering Approach

The most important single element in the Engineering approaches, proposed by FW Taylor and others, was the task idea, “The work of every workman is fully planned out by the management at least one day in advance and each man receives in most cases complete written instructions, describing in detail the task which he is to accomplish . . . This task specifies not only what is to be done but how it is to be done and the exact time allowed for doing it.” The principles offered by scientific management to job design can be summarised thus:

- I Work should be scientifically studied. Taylor advocated fragmentation and routinisation of work to reap the advantages of specialisation.
- I Work should be arranged so that workers can be efficient.
- I Employees selected for work should be matched to the demands of the job.
- I Employees should be trained to perform the job.
- I Monetary compensation should be used to reward successful performance of the job.

These principles to job design seem to be quite rational and appealing because they point towards increased organisational performance. Specialisation and routinisation over a period of time result in job incumbents becoming experts rather quickly, leading to higher levels of output. Despite the assumed gains in efficiency, behavioural scientists have found that some job incumbents dislike specialised and routine jobs.

Problems with engineering approach