Chapter 4 – The Analysis and Design of Work

Students may benefit from instructors emphasizing and discussing how organizational structure must support strategy. It may be necessary to revisit and discuss organizational structure. Students may remember these concepts from an introductory course. Instructors may then introduce work-flow process (LO4-1) to better understand how organizations accomplish its daily operations.

Once work-flow analysis is understood, students should be able to see how jobs are determined by the work-flow to achieve the different outputs. Within this context, instructors may wish to introduce jobs, job design and job analysis, ensuring to point out the differences (LO4-2, LO4-3, LO4-5, LO4-6). It is important to also emphasize the importance of job analysis and how it impacts other HRM practices (LO4-2). Students may have a tendency to see job analysis as an evaluation of employees and their performance, and not as an investigation of the job itself. This may be further confused due to concepts such as job evaluation, so instructors should ensure clear understanding of job analysis.

Learning Objectives

LO 4-1: Analyze an organization’s structure and work-flow process, identifying the output, activities, and inputs in the production of a product or service.

LO 4-2: Understand the importance of job analysis in strategic human resource management.

LO 4-3: Choose the right job analysis technique for a variety of human resource activities.

LO 4-4: Identify the tasks performed and the skills required in a given job.

LO 4-5: Understand the different approaches to job design.

LO 4-6: Comprehend the trade-offs among the various approaches to designing jobs.

Society for Human Resource Management *Body of Competency & Knowledge*

This chapter contains content which may be identified within the following content areas in HR Expertise:

* Talent Acquisition
* Learning & Development
* Total Rewards
* Organizational Effectiveness & Design
* Workforce Management
* U.S. Employment Law & Regulations

Human Resource Certification Institute’s *A Guide to the HR Body of Knowledge*

This chapter contains content which may be identified within the following content areas:

* Business Management & Strategy
* Workforce Planning and Employment
* Compensation and Benefits

Guidance to Discussion Questions and End of Chapter Sections

For questions 1–2, Figure 4.1 may help.

**Discussion Question 1:** Assume you are the manager of a fast-food restaurant. What are the outputs of your work unit? What are the activities required to produce those outputs? What are the inputs?

Student rationale should support the chosen unit. General responses provided below:

* Outputs: The final prepared food of the specific unit.
* Inputs: Raw materials (food ingredients), equipment (kitchen utensils), people (skills associated with food preparation, service).
* Activities: Behaviors/skills associated with food preparation (cutting food), service (greeting customers).

**Discussion Question 2:** Based on Question 1, consider the cashier’s job. What are the outputs, activities, and inputs for that job?

Specific to cashier’s job (responses may vary).

* Outputs: Received correct amount of money and dispensed correct change (possible defined as balanced cash drawer).
* Inputs: Raw materials (cash for change), equipment (register itself, if electronic the software to run register), people (cashier: skill associated with counting money, inputting order).
* Activities: Counting money, inputting order, greeting and speaking with customers.

**Discussion Question 3:** Consider the “job” of college student. Perform a job analysis on this job. What are the tasks required in the job? What are the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform those tasks? What environmental trends or shocks (like computers) might change the job, and how would that change the skill requirements?

Responses will vary. Examples:

* Tasks: Attend class, take notes, and complete assignments
* Knowledge/skills/abilities: Ability to take strong notes, pay attention, time management
* Environmental trends: Online technology, so ability to adapt to classes with increasing amount of integration with computers. For example, assignments may no longer be paper-based, but electronically submitted or completed online.

**Discussion Question 4:** Discuss how the following trends are changing the skill requirements for managerial jobs in the United States: (a) increasing use of computers and (b) increasing international competition.

a) Ability to adapt and learn how to use computer/software/tablets quickly.

b) Ability to interact with diverse workforce, intercultural skill sets.

**Discussion Question 5:** Why is it important for a manager to be able to conduct a job analysis? What are the negative outcomes that would result from not understanding the jobs of those reporting to the manager?

Students should demonstrate understanding that job analysis provides the foundation for many other HRM practices. Examples for the second question would include inappropriate selection and performance evaluation criteria, mismatched compensation plans, and inability to identify necessary training programs.

**Discussion Question 6:** What are the trade-offs between the different approaches to job design? Which approach do you think should be weighted most heavily when designing jobs?

Students should identify specific trade-offs between the different approaches. These trade-offs in general will be between efficiency and cost for the organization against the development and enjoyment of the employee. Student responses to the second question should balance the need of the organization and its strategy with the chosen approach to job design.

**Discussion Question 7:** For the cashier job in Question 2, which approach to job design was most influential in designing that job? In the context of the total work-flow process of the restaurant, how would you redesign the job to more heavily emphasize each of the other approaches?

Students should identify the mechanistic approach, as efficiency was more than likely the consideration when designing the job. For the second part of the question, student responses should first identify the approach to job design and its aims. For example, the biological approach may look to ensure the cooks and food preparation tables are the appropriate height, while the perceptual-motor approach may look to maximize software to reduce the amount of input required by the employees within the restaurant, allowing the servers/hosts to focus more on customer service.

**Exercising Strategy**

Growing Old Together in Japan

1. How does this example illustrate the trade-offs that have to be made between short-term versus long-term strategy and investment at both the organizational level and the national level?

Japanese manufacturing is hampered by an aging workforce and aging equipment. During the economic turnaround, instead of investing in its own manufacturing, companies invested in shifting production to facilities outside of Japan. It was a gamble that will have a long-term impact.

1. Ironically, although the average age of Japan’s equipment is very high, that country is also home to many advanced robotic factories. How might investments in robotic technology be leveraged to change Japan’s competitive position in the world?

Given that both the factory workers and the equipment are aging in factories in Japan, an investment in robotic technology could help solve both of those problems by replacing some workers or equipment with robots. This would impact the country’s manufacturing infrastructure.

**Managing People**

New Organizational Structures: Teeming with Teams

1. If an employer wants to commit to processes that highlight the role of effective collaboration and teamwork, how could the process of workflow design play out and how might the results be different than if the organization was committing to processes that were aimed at promoting individual autonomy?

To effectively design jobs, one must thoroughly under­stand the job as it exists (through job analysis) and its place within the larger work unit’s work-flow process (work-flow analysis). Having a detailed knowledge of the tasks performed in the work unit and in the job, a manager then has many alternative ways to design a job. The motivational approach can be used to determine which design would be best suited to which tasks, including those that require teamwork and those that promote autonomy.

1. If an organization is moving from a more traditional, functional bureaucratic work structure to one that is team-based, what downstream implications does this have for personnel selection, training, and pay? Are some workers going to be resistant to such changes, and if so, how can HR help overcome this resistance?

Responses will vary. Management will need to communicate with workers about these issues and be open to feedback. Undoubtably some employees will be resistant if they perceive it will impact them negatively.

**HR in Small Business**

Blink UX Takes a Hard Look at Work Design

1. As described, is Blink UX’s redesigned approach to teamwork an example of a structure based on function or one based on customers? How well does this structure fit the company’s goals for employee empowerment?

Students should identify the impetus for the change as rationale for the customer-focused structure. They should also identify how employees are empowered through this structure.

1. Does the example of job redesign at Blink UX sound most like an example of job enlargement, job rotation, or job enrichment? Explain your answer.

Responses should reflect an understanding of each within the rationale, as it may be an example of all three.

Guidance to Chapter Cases

**A Look Back**

*Revisiting Robots, Humans and Effective Job Design*

1. The analysis of workflow design traditionally starts at the end of the process, with the final product or service that is to be rendered. If an employer wants to commit to processes that highlight the purchase of robots, how could the process of workflow design play out and how might the results be different than if the organization was committing to processes that were aimed at hiring more people?

The purchase of robots to do certain jobs can affect people’s job security because the robots may replace some positions or decrease the number of employees needed. The work-flow design process should focus on not just the mechanics of the jobs, but also the impact on people. Hiring more people, however, can also decrease job security if these people are seen as competitors for limited positions. Companies should share how the decision impacts job design, as well as the people who perform those jobs.

1. Although there are advantages and disadvantages to different structural configurations, why might it be more difficult to change one’s structure in some directions than others?

Responses will vary, but students should demonstrate knowledge of the structural configurations discussed in the text.

1. Many ways of reducing the cost of getting jobs done often come at some price to workers who have to do those jobs. What can be done to promote a more humane and sustainable workforce in all corners of the world? Does the competitive nature of product or labor markets mean that “nice guys always finish last?”

Responses will vary.

**Competing through Environmental, Social, and Governance Practices**

*Creating Jobs and Injuries in the American South*

1) Most local governments and politicians are driven to bring jobs into their districts. What can be done at the local level or the national level to attract employers, but at the same time protect taxpayers and the local labor force?

Labor laws should be enforced regardless of the plant’s owner or management. Some may feel that unionization should occur in these plants. Accountability is key, and supervisors should be required to follow strict safety guidelines set by the company.

2) Are the financial penalties that are administered by OSHA enough to deter employers from engaging in unsafe work practices, and if not, what else can be done to protect employees and better inform them of the risks associated with specific employers?

Responses will vary. Financial penalties may be enough with small plants with a small profit margin, but they may not impact a larger firm. Closer scrutiny by OSHA would help, as would a method for reporting violations without reprisals.

**Competing through Globalization**

Made in China 2025

1. How in this example does the nature of a country’s workforce shape strategic plans related to robots and technological investment?

The size of China’s workforce was large, and they were willing to do less-desirable jobs and to work for low pay. This influenced the use of robotics, as there was less urgency to automate. Now that the population has decreased and the workforce is aging, the government is seeing the need to promote robotics.

1. In this example, the Chinese Government is clearly supporting companies and steering them to a specific strategy. In the United States, there is a general philosophy that suggests that the government should not get involved in business decisions and instead, let the markets decide where businesses should invest. Which of those two strategies do you think best in the short term versus the long term?

This is classic communist versus capitalist economies. Answers will vary, but it is likely that with the government’s financing, Chinese companies will be able to move more quickly.

**Competing through Technology**

Not Wanted: Lone Genius Nerd

1. In what ways have stereotypes regarding the job requirement for tech workers limited opportunities for otherwise qualified workers in terms of demographic diversity? Is there still a place in the world of work for loners, and what kind of jobs might legitimately promote that trait as a requirement?

The stereotype of programmers as loners does not support real-life firms that require a varied set of skills and a high level of collaboration. In addition, a diverse workforce is paramount today in the global environment in which most companies operate, making a narrow definition of a position less useful. Student answers will vary regarding jobs for “loners.”

1. Can you think of other jobs totally outside the tech industry where the job specifications may be based on inaccurate stereotypes in a similar way, and thus limit both organizational performance and individual opportunity?

Responses will vary. One example may be caregiving, in which women overwhelmingly participate and men are seen as not nurturing enough.

**Integrity in Action**

*Toxic Killer Comes Back from the Dead*

1. Although the computer chip manufacturing industry left the United States long ago, in what way are U.S. authorities in the industry responsible for ensuring that what was learned in this country regarding worker safety is exported along with the jobs?

This question focuses on the issues of ethics and social responsibility. Student answers will vary as some will feel U.S. companies should be held responsible for what happens at their suppliers, while others will say it is not.

1. Everyone who owns a computer or a cell phone is a consumer of the types of computer chips manufactured by Samsung. What can each of us do as concerned consumers to ensure that the products we love are not manufactured in a way that harms unsuspecting workers?

Getting information on the practices of foreign companies can be difficult, but much has been published on companies who have harmful practices. A Google search can reveal a surprising amount of information.

Other Classroom Materials: CONNECT

There are CONNECT exercises available through McGraw-Hill, which can greatly assist student preparation for class and understanding of chapter concepts. Instructors may wish to structure the class, where students must complete the CONNECT exercises prior to class, thus, further reinforcing material and allowing instructors to expand and challenge student understanding during class time. CONNECT exercises may be set-up to be time-based, requiring students to practice chapter materials for a specific timeframe. It is the instructors’ discretion how they desire to include this into the course grade, but a low-stakes grading system based on completion is suggested to help encourage student usage, while minimizing penalties for mistakes during completion.

The following activities are available in Connect for this chapter:

**The Importance of Job Analysis**

*Click & Drag*

This activity presents various requirements for a customer service representative (CSR) and asks students to determine whether each requirement is part of job specification or job description.

LO: 04-04 Identify the tasks performed and the skills required in a given job.

Difficulty: 2 Medium

Blooms: Understand

AACSB: Knowledge Application

Topic: Job Analysis and Job Design; Explain Job Descriptions and Job Specifications

**Job Analysis Methods**

*Case Analysis*

This activity describes what information would be found when performing a job analysis for an HR manager position using the Occupational Information Network (O\*NET).

LO: 04-03 Choose the right job analysis technique for a variety of human resource activities.

Difficulty: 2 Medium

Blooms: Apply

AACSB: Knowledge Application

Topic: Job Analysis and Job Design

**Approaches to Job Design**

*Case Analysis*

This activity reviews various approaches to job design and job redesign.

LO: 04-05 Understand the different approaches to job design.

Difficulty: 2 Medium

Blooms: Apply

AACSB: Knowledge Application

Topic: Job Analysis and Job Design

**Organizational Structure**

*Case Analysis*

This activity asks students to determine the best organizational structure for an emerging health food store chain.

LO: 04-01 Analyze an organization’s structure and work-flow process, identifying the output, activities, and inputs in the production of a product or service.

Difficulty: 3 Hard

Blooms: Analyze

AACSB: Knowledge Application

Topic: Work-flow Analysis

**CHRO Conversations: Scott Weisberg, Former CHRO, Wendy’s**

*Video Case*

This activity has students watch a video interview with the former CHRO of Wendy's and answer questions about the role HR takes in overseeing the impact of technological and other changes on jobs and the importance of constantly evaluating and updating jobs to maximize efficiency and motivate workers.

LO: 04-01 Analyze an organization’s structure and work-flow process, identifying the output, activities, and inputs in the production of a product or service.

04-02 Understand the importance of job analysis in strategic human resource management.

Difficulty: 2 Medium; 3 Hard

Blooms: Apply; Analyze

AACSB: Knowledge Application; Analytical Thinking

Topic: Job Analysis and Job Design; Challenges Facing Human Resources Today; Work-flow Analysis