

**JOB ANALYSIS**  
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Development = The backbone of Scientific Management. It lost popularity in the 50s and early 60s (just a part of pay). Interest rose again in recent years with the need to validate tests and other job requirements for EEO purposes.

Job Analysis = An ongoing activity carried out by professionals to gather, document, and analyze information about jobs, which is used to create job descriptions and job specifications.

Everyone agrees on the fundamental thrust of gathering information, but ...

(1) What exactly is "a job?" (How should "a job" be defined.)

- \* a collection of tasks which comprise an assignment (Dept. of Labor)
- \* the position and status of a job in the hierarchy (sociologists)
- \* a piece of work to be done (Industrial Engineer) - the division of labor
- \* the mental processes
- \* the physical actions
- \* the expectations within the informal organization

In practice, job analysts probe for functions, roles and examples of good and bad behavior.

Problem: Job analysis is the building block on which all of our HR practices rest. If it is weak or incomplete, so will be all that follows. In other words, when one does not capture all of the aspects of a job, then problems will arise with subsequent recruiting and selection, training, work load assignments performance appraisals, pay, etc.

Are we interested in looking at how job is done, how a job should be done, or both? You really need both. You need to focus on the gap between the two.

(2) What type of information should be gathered?

There are three basic areas:

Job Content: tasks and activities

Job Requirements: skills, ability, knowledge needed (aptitudes, strength, etc.)

Job Context: purpose of the job, accountability, responsibility, extent of supervision, consequences of errors

Job Specifications = Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Other Factors (KSAOs) = Job Requirements

Job Descriptions = Job Content and Job Context = The what and why, the how and the where of the job.

(3) Who should be involved in gathering the information? What sources of information should be relied upon?

One could consult industry sources (government, union, industry), company documents and/or human sources. We will focus on:

Job Analysts = Professional consultants from outside of the organization bring several potential positives and negatives. On the positive side, good ones have knowledge about how things are done in many other organizations. They would tend to focus on the "what should be" aspect of job analysis. They should have the necessary expertise to accurately produce job descriptions and job specifications. They also are not part of any of the departmental empires, so they should be able to make detached decisions with regard to potential cuts, job reclassifications and the like. On the negative side, one would not want these consultants copying what they have done elsewhere if in fact the jobs in this organization are different. They should not get a shallow snapshot, get the check and run. Ideally, they should make sure their report is integrated into HR practices (selection, training, pay, etc.). In practice, the coordination between the job analysts and the users of the informational outputs is often lacking. Some employees believe the consultants act as scapegoats for upper level managers. In this scenario, the top managers have certain cuts in mind, the consultants produce the desired report, and then leave, taking the blame for the resulting bad feelings with them. Obviously, in such a situation the report was predetermined and not the result of an objective study. This could be quite a costly process, and if the employees see through it, morale will suffer.

Jobholders = The employees are the best source of information on the "what currently is being done" portion of job analysis. One should be aware of a number of potential distortions, however, in this obtaining information from this source. Jobholders will tend to inflate what they actually do. For example, a janitor is a "sanitation engineer." People do this for at least two reasons: namely, one's ego is furthered by it, and one might obtain an upgrade in one's position which would result in a pay raise. Jobholders also fear that job analysis will result in a work load increase. Therefore, the employees who realize they are being studied will work in a slow and deliberate fashion ("beat it up").

Supervisors = Supervisors tend to provide information on the "how things should be done" part of job analysis. They are also likely to distort information. Supervisors want to appear quite important, so they tend to downplay what their workers are capable of. They may not delegate as much as they should, so when they are absent things fall apart. This makes them look essential. If they are gone and everything goes smoothly, they fear they might lose their jobs. Supervisors also fear that staff cuts will ensue from job analysis. If they have any extra workers, this slack must be hidden at all costs.

(4) How should the information be collected?

There are two important basic dimensions.

- (a) comprehensiveness = covering all aspects of a job
- (b) reliability = obtaining consistent results

Observation = This was the original mode of job analysis. Frederick Taylor watched and recorded the relevant activities. In general, observation is higher on comprehensiveness and lower on reliability. Observation is easier in routine, physical, repetitive jobs. Observation cannot detect thought processes, and it is not very workable in jobs where employees move about a great deal, or are regularly switching tasks. It is the best method when the employees do not write or speak well. If the employees cannot be trusted, observation might be capable of detecting some of their slowdown activities. It is obviously very time consuming. Observation is often the starting point for interview and questionnaire construction.

Interview = This method may involve jobholders, supervisors, or a combination of both. It tends to be a middle ground with respect to comprehensiveness and reliability. The same basic pattern of open-ended questions can be used. It is relatively simple, but it is not well controlled. There are three basic rules of thumb: (1) make the purpose clear; (2) encourage the worker to talk; and (3) guide the worker, but do not judge what he/she says. Distrust can be a serious obstacle ("What do you mean?" "What are you looking for?" and "Just tell them I'm happy."). The workers fear added work, the standards being raised, jobs being cut, etc.

Questionnaire = The most popular method today. It is a relatively cheap way to gather information quickly and consistently. Itemized responses make quantitative analysis possible. Questionnaires tend to be higher on reliability and lower on comprehensiveness. Without any open-ended questions, or some simultaneous observation and interviewing, one can not hope to pick up unanticipated aspects of a job. One has to carefully consider the reading level of the employees being surveyed. There are software packages that can rate the reading level of documents. There are some statistics that indicate 13-34% of our general population do not read well. Another important issue is the degree of specificity of the scales. Terms like "often" or "regularly" are not as specific as "once a day," "once a week," or "once a month." In some cases, questionnaires produce a false sense of accuracy.

Participant Logs (Diaries or self reports) = The jobholder documents his/her own activities. Ideally, this method will be comprehensive. It is unlikely it will be reliable. Some employees undoubtedly write better than others. Some will probably put more effort into their descriptions than others will. They are all likely to hide slack time, unscheduled breaks and the like. In short, the results are often uneven. Cameras and videos are sometimes used today. This seems like observation.