

INTRODUCTION TO WORKFORCE  
PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

Welcome to the complex, sometimes challenging, and thankfully often rewarding world of workforce assessment strategies and practices! What is workforce assessment, you ask? **Workforce assessment** is comprised of all the processes, systems, and tools used by an organization to make accurate, reliable, and effective decisions about the jobs needed to achieve business objectives, as well as the qualifications and performance expectations for the individuals working in those jobs. Assessment methods will impact an organization's employees and job applicants beginning with the creation and development of a job itself and continuing through the recruitment of qualified candidates for the job, the selection of an individual to work in the job, the evaluation of his or her job performance, and the determination of training and development needs as well as goal setting to enable the employee to continue to perform the job to effectively meet organizational needs and goals. When an employee vacates a job, through resignation, termination, retirement, transfer, or promotion, this **employee life cycle** repeats from the beginning.

Before we begin, I thought I would share with you a bit of the history behind the idea for this book. I am an industrial/organizational psychologist and currently a professor for a private university where I teach courses in organizational behavior, human resource management, workforce assessment, and organizational development. I also conduct research in the area of performance management and have published and presented research study findings relevant to the accuracy of employee performance ratings. Prior to my life in academia, I was a human resources (HR) professional for a number of years, and throughout my business experience, I was responsible for every area of HR at one time or another. That includes job analysis and job description development, creation of competency models, compensation benchmarking and salary planning, recruitment and selection, new employee orientation, and management of the performance appraisal process and training and development programs, along with legal compliance, employee relations, and the maintenance of HR data and reporting. Through this experience, I quickly learned (and was often reminded) that job analysis is absolutely critical to everything else in the HR function. Let me repeat: Job analysis is the key to every strategy and practice in HR! I wish someone had given me this pearl of wisdom when I

**Workforce Assessment:**

Organizational strategy comprised of all the processes, tools, and systems to make effective decisions concerning work structure and job design, as well as the selection criteria and performance expectations for the individuals working in those jobs.

**Employee Life Cycle:**

Process comprised of job recruitment, selection and hiring, performance management, training and development, and, ultimately, the conclusion of employment.

was a student or when I was first starting out in HR. Nevertheless, I did figure it out and was amazed at how little attention was paid to conducting regular job analyses.

Yes, of course in the real world, the pace of an organization is so rapid and ever shifting that it can be challenging for HR professionals to be vigilant with their job analysis evaluation and modification. However, it is well worth the effort and is perhaps the most valuable use of an HR practitioner's time. The reason is simple: If a job is not clearly understood and defined in terms of its qualification requirements, level of authority, responsibilities, and tasks/duties, then its purpose and contribution toward the goals and objectives of its respective department as well as within the organization as a whole will be misaligned or lacking completely. This is an issue that many organizations struggle with—various jobs exist that have not been analyzed in a long time, and though the business needs have shifted, a job analysis has not been conducted to reflect what these jobs should actually look like to serve the organization effectively both presently and looking ahead to the future. This lack of alignment and accuracy will significantly impact an organization in myriad ways. At the staff level, individual employees are working on tasks every day that are irrelevant, redundant, and/or lack clear purpose and connection to job-related performance outcomes. At the department/functional level, operational efficiency and effectiveness are compromised because the work being performed by staff is not in alignment with the short- and long-term needs and objectives for that functional area, be it sales, finance, or research and development. In other words, some type of “work” is being performed but perhaps not exactly what the department needs to produce in terms of the high-quality and timely deliverables required to support the organization's needs and business drivers. Lastly, at the organizational level, this lack of strategic alignment will often result in suboptimal productivity, innovation, and responsiveness to customers and other stakeholders. It is not that people are not doing any work—make no mistake, the cogs are turning within the organization, but they are not driving relevant outcomes that the organization needs in order to sustain high performance, agility, and competitiveness. From a systems perspective, the input is not generating the desired output. In this chapter, we will begin our exploration of what work looks like in today's organizations and how jobs and workforce needs evolve based on changing expectations, goals, challenges, and external driving forces.

## WHAT IS “WORK”? THE ORGANIZATION OF WORK AND JOBS

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Before we can even begin to understand how to develop assessment strategies necessary for job design and the recruitment and selection of talented and qualified individuals to successfully perform in an array of jobs across an organization, it is critical to first examine the organization itself, including its vision/mission, objectives, products, and services, in order to understand the type of **work** that needs to be performed. Once we understand the big picture, we can determine the work activities that will be needed to

**Work:** A relevant and strategic collection of tasks and responsibilities that are performed for a specific purpose and outcome.

properly support the organization. These activities are typically referred to as *tasks*. A **task** is an activity requiring some combination of cognitive and physical performance resulting in a specific output. Some tasks are very unique and specific to just one or perhaps a few types of jobs (e.g., administering anesthesia, writing programming code). Other tasks are more general and may be more broadly relevant to many different jobs across functional areas/departments and organizations (e.g., handling monetary transactions, speaking to customers). Tasks will vary in terms of their complexity, frequency in which they are performed, and criticality to the organization. We will revisit this idea later on in the book, but it is important to point out here that not all tasks are created equal—tasks can vary tremendously from one another. Moreover, certain tasks are simple enough that many people would be able to perform them with relative ease, while other tasks may require individuals with specific physical and/or cognitive abilities as well as specialized education and training to successfully perform them.

**Task:** An activity requiring a specific combination of cognitive and physical performance that results in a targeted output.

In conducting an organizational needs assessment that will result in the identification of tasks and structuring of work and jobs, the following questions will be valuable to examine:

- What is the organization's strategic plan, including its short- and long-term goals?
- What tasks and activities will need to be performed to meet stated goals and objectives?
- How should these tasks and activities be organized into logical functional areas?
- How should work relationships be structured among departments and functions?

Once information has been gathered that addresses these big-picture questions, job design (or redesign) can proceed as the next logical step in the workforce planning process. Job design requires answers to a different set of questions that will dive more deeply into and be specific to each job, including the following:

- How should tasks and activities within each functional area be organized, scheduled, and distributed to specific job roles?
- What are the qualifications necessary for individuals to successfully perform the essential tasks and activities for each job?
- What are the performance expectations that an individual in a specific job should be able to consistently demonstrate in order to contribute to the achievement of departmental/functional and organizational outcomes?

The question of how many jobs are needed at any given time will be directly aligned with an organization's current and forecasted needs, so these micro-level and macro-level questions should go hand in hand. It is important to remember that just because a job has existed within an organization for years does not necessarily mean it will always be

needed or relevant in exactly the same way. A job may have been critically important to achieving certain organizational goals at one time but may need to be reengineered as goals change. A job should exist because it enables an employee to perform the tasks and activities (i.e., the work) in a systematic way that produces targeted outcomes that, in turn, contribute to the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. The nature of work and the design of jobs have shifted and advanced dramatically in the past 100-plus years since the inception of the U.S. Industrial Revolution in the early 1900s. In this next section, we will explore the history and evolution of work structure and organization.

## THE EVOLUTION OF WORK STRUCTURE

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### **Scientific Management:**

Concept developed by Frederick Taylor that emphasized worker efficiency and productivity through job design.

Perhaps the earliest evidence of the systematic organization of work and job design in industrialized environments can be examined through the work of Frederick Taylor, who developed the concept of **scientific management**, emphasizing production, streamlined processes, and the elimination of waste. Through his research involving work operations and time and motion studies, Taylor's mission was to facilitate worker efficiency and productivity through job design. Another prominent researcher of this time was Max Weber, a trailblazer in research on organizational structure and bureaucracy. Weber's focus was on hierarchical command and control, which featured prominently in the delegation of authority and decision-making power among different types and levels of jobs (Jex & Britt, 2008). Work was organized into simple, routine tasks—job design focused on a few basic tasks. Labor supply at the time was largely unskilled/semiskilled workers, and work was organized accordingly. As a result, an organizational hierarchy with greater supervisory span of control was necessary because workers had no authority or decision-making capability. This structure created high efficiency of production output for the jobs of that time, which were simplistic in terms of their skill requirements and activities. As a result of their theories and research findings, Frederick Taylor and Max Weber are considered to be pioneers in the area of job and organization design, significantly contributing to progress in the understanding of the nature of work and the context in which it is performed for maximum efficiency and effectiveness as society moved from mainly agrarian to industrialized. Though their work was more focused on work production than the needs of the workers themselves, Taylor and Weber laid the groundwork for future researchers such as Douglas McGregor (1960) and Abraham Maslow (1943) to expand into new and different directions that considered the needs of the employees as well as the organization.

### **Management by Objectives:**

Also referred to as MBO, a concept developed by Peter Drucker to facilitate the alignment of organizational objectives with worker tasks, goals, and performance outcomes.

In the latter half of the 20th century, Peter Drucker emerged as one of the most influential experts in organizational structure, management strategy, and understanding the nature of work as technology and knowledge workers became increasingly ubiquitous. Drucker (1954) developed the concept of **management by objectives**, or MBO, to facilitate the alignment of organizational objectives with worker tasks, goals, and

performance outcomes. The MBO strategy involves a manager and employee setting mutually agreed-upon work goals that have a clear connection to the organization's goals, along with specific performance standards and expectations. The idea behind this approach is that employees will be more engaged and motivated to perform at a high level when they are involved in setting their own work goals and understand how their day-to-day work actually impacts the organization in meeting its overall objectives. Each employee would not only have a clear understanding of their job duties and responsibilities, but also the performance level their manager expects and how their contribution enables the organization to move forward. At the departmental/functional level, the MBO approach fosters more open lines of communication between managers and their staff and a two-way dialogue that allows employees to ask questions, seek clarification, and better understand the purpose and context for the work they perform. At the organizational level, managers can ensure that the work their staff is performing on a regular basis is directly in alignment with the organization's focus and goals. That said, nothing ever stays the same, and as organizational needs shift, work goals and expectations will need to be evaluated and possibly readjusted. Myriad organizations have benefitted significantly from implementing the MBO process, including DuPont, Intel, Xerox, and Hewlett Packard.

As the world rapidly evolved (and continues to do so) from the latter half of the 20th century into the new millennium, so did organizations and the work required to keep them operating effectively for sustainable growth and success. The rise of technology, major societal, economic, and demographic shifts, and globalization have resulted in all of us living and working in a much more complex and sophisticated world. Work cannot be organized and distributed in such simplistic ways anymore; there is much more of a variety of organizational needs that may require workers who range from semiskilled to highly skilled and possessing an array of unique skills and abilities obtained through specialized education and training. Technology has impacted virtually all types of work. Even work that used to be performed by a worker with a limited or specific skill set may now require some level of technical proficiency. Consider the job of maintenance mechanic: Perhaps a decade ago, this work was performed based on a paper work order procedure—someone in a department filled out a paper work order request for a need such as repairing a leaky ceiling tile, the work order form was processed by a supervisor, and delegated to a mechanic for fulfillment. Today, that procedure is most likely handled through an electronic system that may result in eliminating or shifting the supervisor role as well as requiring the mechanic to proficiently access and use the online work order system for fulfilling maintenance requests.

In general, work is more complex and requires individual workers to make more autonomous decisions rapidly. We no longer have the luxury of time for a worker with limited job scope to submit a request to his or her supervisor for approval before proceeding with a work activity (and sometimes a supervisor would need to elevate the worker's request to his or her supervisor, causing even further delays in the process).

Complex jobs require more decision making and responsibility on the part of the incumbents, which is an important consideration for the organization in the job design process. Complex jobs also require higher qualifications and more specialized knowledge and skills (Berry, 2003). Work is being performed at an increasingly rapid pace, and this trend shows no sign of changing. Organizations need to stay competitive, agile, and able to shift gears and make quick decisions, often in complicated and unpredictable circumstances. To meet these needs, the work performed must be categorized, arranged, and distributed strategically and logically. Jobs and job families are the support system of the organization—how and where the work is performed that keeps the organization moving and progressing—so let's begin our exploration of jobs.

## ORGANIZING THE WORK: JOBS AND JOB FAMILIES

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**Job:** A type of work role comprised of a set of specific tasks and responsibilities that facilitate the achievement of performance outcomes.

**KSAOs:** Acronym that stands for knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics.

**Knowledge:** Declarative, procedural, and factual information required to be able to perform a job.

**Skills:** The demonstration of tasks that have been learned and practiced over time.

A **job** is a type of role within an organization comprised of a set of specific tasks and responsibilities that facilitate the achievement of targeted performance outcomes. These performance outcomes should be directly or indirectly aligned with organizational objectives and short- and long-term goals. Depending on the size of the organization and its needs, there may be more than one individual working in a specific job. A small neighborhood convenience store will need a cashier job but may only need one individual working in that job. A big-box retail store may also need a cashier job, but will certainly need more than one person working in that type of job. Each job will be comprised of a unique set of qualifications that will be necessary to effectively perform the work involved, and they are referred to as **KSAOs**—knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics. Having a clear understanding of a job's current KSAO requirements is critically important for all HR processes, including compensation planning, recruitment, selection, performance management, and training and development. Let's look at each of these elements in depth:

**Knowledge** may be comprised of any declarative, procedural, and factual information required to be able to perform the job. For school bus drivers, knowledge about road rules, the operation of the bus, and emergency evacuation procedures is absolutely critical to their safe driving performance. For pharmacists, knowledge about prescription and over-the-counter drugs, their chemical composition, potential side effects, and interaction effects with food and other drugs is equally critical to their job performance.

**Skills** are comprised of tasks that can be successfully demonstrated and have been learned and practiced over time. With essentially all of today's jobs, there is a diverse array of skill sets required for any type of job, such as technical skills, communication skills, organizational skills, and interpersonal skills. Again, the skills will vary across jobs, even though they may have these broad skill sets in common. A technical skill set may encompass proficiency in creating spreadsheets and graphs for the job of financial analyst, while the same skill set may appear as proficiency with web design or a programming

language for an IT professional. A communication skill set may incorporate proficiency in clearly explaining concepts to students for a teacher, while encompassing proficiency in negotiating with prospective clients for an automobile salesperson. An organizational skill set may require proficiency with coordinating travel arrangements and recording itinerary details such as flight numbers and times and hotel reservations for an executive assistant, proficiency in maintaining accurate data for reports for an accountant, and proficiency in generating possible solutions to solve a problem for the job of engineer. Lastly, we have the interpersonal skill set, which will most likely be comprised of similar universal skills across many different jobs. Some examples of interpersonal skills are diplomacy, building rapport, flexibility, being a team player, showing respect, being patient, and encouraging trust and positive relations.

**Abilities** include the capacity for demonstrating certain behaviors and performing a wide range of relevant tasks. While some abilities are applicable to many jobs (e.g., the ability to effectively multitask), this area may also look different from one job to another, as each job will require unique abilities. The job of physician's assistant (or similar health care professional) may require the unique ability to draw blood or give an injection without being squeamish. Personally, this is a unique ability I do not possess, which I learned after feeling nauseous just watching my nursing major college roommate practice giving injections using an orange! Also, an ability may be similar across diverse jobs but show up in different ways depending on the work context. For example, an elementary school teacher must have the ability to maintain a calm demeanor as well as be approachable and relatable to children while at the same time have the ability to maintain order and structure in the classroom. For firefighters, police officers, emergency room workers, and flight attendants, the ability to remain calm, be approachable, and maintain order will also be relevant, but these abilities may look a bit different on the job compared to the teacher and in more intense, high-pressure situations.

**Other characteristics** is the last KSAO element, comprised of any other critical personal/dispositional job requirements not covered within the knowledge, skills, and abilities. They may be broad and relevant to a wide variety of different jobs as well as being specific to certain job needs. For many, if not all, jobs, demonstrating passion and enthusiasm would be a critical other characteristics element (a requirement for professors that I hear from my students all the time!), as well as being reliable and proactive. For certain jobs, for example a research scientist, an inquisitive nature would certainly be an important other characteristics requirement. To really capture this element for a particular job, it can be helpful to observe high-performing incumbents for a period of time and note their personalities, behaviors, and special qualities they bring to the job that add value.

Two or more similar jobs will typically form a **job family**—a collection of jobs that are similar in function and scope and share common KSAOs. A job family may also include jobs of different levels. For example, a job family in an accounting department may consist of a billing clerk, accounts receivable specialist, an accounts payable

**Abilities:** The capacity for demonstrating certain behaviors and performing a wide range of relevant tasks.

**Other Characteristics:** Any critical personal/dispositional job requirements not covered within the knowledge, skills, and abilities.

**Job Family:** A group of jobs that is similar in function and scope and share common knowledge, skills, and abilities.

specialist, a bookkeeper, and an accounting manager. Having organized job families is beneficial to an organization in a variety of ways. They can ensure greater alignment and uniformity among similar jobs, which provides a clearer understanding of the nature of each job as well as how they operate together as a cohesive function (i.e., who does what). They can show the distinction from one job to another in terms of qualifications, performance expectations, and increased level of responsibility/authority, which can be used for career development and training purposes.

**Position:** A job that is held by one individual employee.

**Incumbent:** Another term for employee.

**Occupation:** A type of job that may exist in different types of organizations and/or industries.

A **position** is a job that is held by one individual employee, also referred to as an **incumbent**. Think of a position like a headcount—each incumbent working in an organization is filling one specific position. You can have multiple incumbents working in one type of job—bartender, bus driver, accountant, professor, project manager, sales executive, and so on. Say you are the manager of a restaurant with five bartenders on staff who cover different shifts; bartender is one job within the organization, and you have five positions that comprise this job.

The last term to be described here is **occupation**, which is a type of job that may exist in many different organizations as well as across industries. Consider an attorney, which may exist as a discrete job within an organization and may also exist in other organizations as well as in private law firms, school systems, and within the government. As you can imagine, there will be similarities and differences in the same occupation from one organization to another. A nurse is a broad type of occupation, and even though there will be overlap of the same qualifications and required tasks and responsibilities in different settings (e.g., private medical practice vs. hospital), there will also be unique requirements that vary with the setting and context in which it exists. There are a variety of free and publicly accessible online resources providing a wealth of occupational information that can be extremely valuable for HR professionals, consultants, and managers in the creation and organization of jobs, and we will examine two of them in detail next.

## The Standard Occupational Classification System

**Standard Occupational Classification System:** A system maintained by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics that is used by federal agencies to categorize workers by occupation.

The **Standard Occupational Classification System**, or SOC, is maintained by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018b) and serves as the standard used by federal agencies to categorize workers by occupation. However, any organization can use this resource to organize their jobs by similar job duties, knowledge, skills, and education/training. Currently, there are nearly 900 detailed occupations that comprise the SOC, organized into 23 major functional groups that include:

- 11-0000 Management Occupations
- 13-0000 Business and Financial Operations Occupations
- 15-0000 Computer and Mathematical Occupations
- 17-0000 Architecture and Engineering Occupations



- 19-0000 Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations
- 21-0000 Community and Social Service Occupations
- 23-0000 Legal Occupations
- 25-0000 Educational Instruction and Library Occupations
- 27-0000 Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations
- 29-0000 Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations
- 31-0000 Healthcare Support Occupations
- 33-0000 Protective Service Occupations
- 35-0000 Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations
- 37-0000 Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations
- 39-0000 Personal Care and Service Occupations
- 41-0000 Sales and Related Occupations
- 43-0000 Office and Administrative Support Occupations
- 45-0000 Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations
- 47-0000 Construction and Extraction Occupations
- 49-0000 Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations
- 51-0000 Production Occupations
- 53-0000 Transportation and Material Moving Occupations
- 55-0000 Military Specific Occupations

*Source:* [https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/major\\_groups.htm](https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/major_groups.htm)

Within each of these categories are subcategories relevant to different industries and/or areas of expertise. For example, let's examine the major group of 13-0000: Business and Financial Operations Occupations. This category may sound extremely broad, but the subcategories help to further organize the breadth of occupations that would fall into this group. Within this group are the following subcategories (and these subcategories have subcategories of their own):

- Business Operations Specialists
  - Agents and Business Managers of Artists, Performers, and Athletes
  - Buyers and Purchasing Agents
  - Claims Adjusters, Appraisers, Examiners, and Investigators
  - Compliance Officers

- Cost Estimators
- Human Resources Workers
- Logisticians and Project Management Specialists
- Management Analysts
- Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners
- Fundraisers
- Compensation, Benefits, and Job Analysis Specialists
- Training and Development Specialists
- Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists
- Miscellaneous Business Operations Specialists
- Financial Specialists
  - Accountants and Auditors
  - Property Appraisers and Assessors
  - Budget Analysts
  - Credit Analysts
  - Financial Analysts and Advisors
  - Financial Examiners
  - Credit Counselors and Loan Officers
  - Tax Examiners, Collectors and Preparers, and Revenue Agents
  - Miscellaneous Financial Specialists

Source: [https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/major\\_groups.htm#13-0000](https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/major_groups.htm#13-0000)

Even though this is just a small sample of the entire SOC, you can see what tremendous value this type of occupational taxonomy can be for any organization, from a small business with one location to large national or even global organizations with greater functional and geographic complexity. The SOC data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics is updated regularly and can be used in myriad ways, from the creation of new jobs to the design and composition of job families, functional areas, and departments.

### The O\*NET® Online Database

**O\*NET® Database:** An online, interactive occupational database maintained by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.

The **O\*NET® Database** is an online occupational database currently used by many HR practitioners, consultants, educators, and researchers as a reliable source of job-related information. The O\*NET® Database is maintained by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, and developed by the National Center for O\*NET® Development. The database replaced the previously used hard-copy reference book, which was also maintained by the U.S. Department of Labor, called the Dictionary of Occupational Titles. The O\*NET® Database is continually updated through survey research and data collection from a variety of credible sources of job data across all the occupations included.

The O\*NET® Database is an interactive tool, which makes it extremely user friendly and suitable to different individuals for an array of needs and purposes. The Appendix at the end of this book provides a tutorial and instructions with screen shots for effectively navigating the O\*NET® Database. The following uses are a few examples in which the database can be a tremendously beneficial and trusted resource for a variety of users:

For Job Seekers:

- Exploring careers by job titles, or simply by keywords if the specific job title is not known
- Building a compelling resume using industry-recognized terminology and phrasing
- Understanding the KSAOs needed for a specific job, as well as for related jobs hierarchically lower or higher
- Knowing current salary figures, both nationally and in one's geographic area

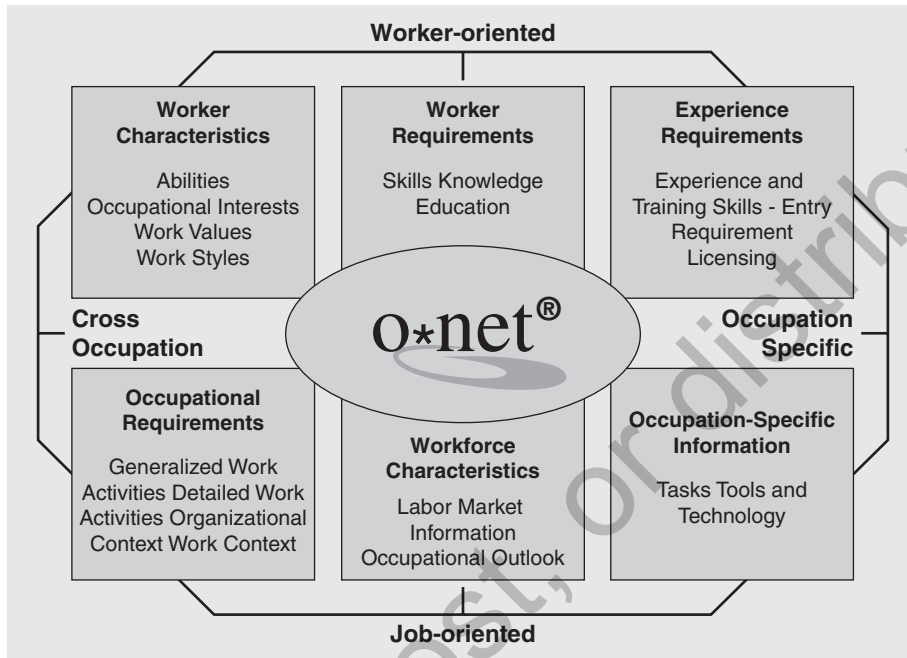
For HR Practitioners:

- Conducting job analyses
- Understanding the currently accepted system for organizing job tasks and responsibilities
- Identifying appropriate wording for job descriptions and recruitment postings
- Ensuring clear and fair performance outcome expectations for tasks across different levels of a job family
- Benchmarking compensation trends and market-rate salary/hourly wage figures

For Researchers and Consultants:

- Understanding workforce and organizational trends
- Forecasting shifts for in-demand jobs and job families
- Working with clients on job analysis/design, selection of test development, and other strategies
- Determining updates and modifications for processes and systems that support workforce needs (e.g., applicant tracking systems, human resource information system maintenance, performance evaluation criteria)

**Figure 1.1 The O\*NET® Content Model**



Source: The O\*NET® Resource Center, <http://www.onetcenter.org/content.html>

The database is organized using a comprehensive structure of key occupational components, all in alignment with each other. As depicted in Figure 1.1, they include worker characteristics, worker requirements, experience requirements, occupational requirements, workforce characteristics, and occupation-specific information. The O\*NET® Database provides in-depth, validated data across a breadth of occupations and industries, and it is a free resource that is accessible to anyone.

## THE LOGISTICS OF WORK

Now that we have examined work in the context of what it is and how it is organized, let's take a look at work in the context of how, when, and where it is performed. The logistical coordination of work should be directly aligned with organizational purpose (i.e., products/services), objectives, and needs.

### Individual Work Versus Team-Based Work

Work can be performed by individual employees or by teams. Another important consideration in the arrangement and delegation of work involves the use of teams. As

organizational structure and hierarchy has flattened, the use of teams has increased. Even though organizations had reduced the number of supervisory layers in their hierarchical design, they still had decision-making needs that had to be reallocated. In some cases, individual jobs were expanded to empower employees and give them greater control over their tasks and responsibilities and more autonomy to make certain types of on-the-job decisions themselves without requiring a supervisor's approval. In other situations in which it was not entirely appropriate for one sole employee to be responsible for making certain types of decisions, teams were developed to facilitate collaboration on decisions that may be higher stakes or carry a greater degree of risk.

In the United States, we started to witness marked growth in the implementation of work teams in the 1980s with the emergence of such initiatives as quality circles, which the Japanese had been using very successfully for years and believed to be a factor in their remarkable success in the automotive and electronics industries (Lawler & Mohrman, 1985). A quality circle is essentially a self-managed team charged with sharing suggestions and ideas, troubleshooting problems, and generating solutions for the organization. For many organizations, quality circles were a key component of a larger participative management structure within the culture. Employees still worked in their own individual jobs on their specific work tasks, but they also collaborated with peers to make interactive decisions based on collective ideas for problem solving and improvements. The concept of the quality circle and its prevalence in organizations has evolved over the years, but team-based work continues to expand, with functional teams and cross-functional teams operating in person, virtually, or a combination of both. With innovation and agility being perhaps the most important business drivers for all industries at this time, high-performing teams with clear and specific tasks and goals are likely to be more effective in rapidly delivering innovative ideas and solutions compared to the cumbersome managerial hierarchy work structure of decades past (Weldon & Weingart, 1993; West & Anderson, 1996).

## Work Shifts

In terms of when work is performed, the standard work day in which business is conducted has traditionally been between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. This work day has not changed much for most jobs in office settings or environments that follow the typical business day such as banks. However, there are many jobs in a vast array of work settings that do not follow this traditional **work shift**. Industries such as retail, aviation, hotel/hospitality, restaurants, hospitals, law enforcement, security, and manufacturing environments are just a few examples of settings that require alternative as well as multiple work shifts. Work may need to be performed beyond the standard 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. work day, and sometimes around the clock in a 24-hours a day, 7-days a week manner. A bricks-and-mortar retail store may not require a 24/7 operations schedule, but they will certainly have broader hours of operation than a traditional office setting, perhaps 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. (although retail establishments are increasingly extending their hours

**Work Shift:** The hours in which an employee is scheduled to work.

to be open for business pretty close to 24 hours to stay competitive). However, there are many work settings that absolutely must maintain continuous 24-hour per day operations. Consider a hospital: This is an environment where the work can never simply stop for the day and resume the next morning. Patients need attention and medication day and night, emergencies come in unpredictably all hours of the day and night, and surgeries are scheduled in the early morning hours and continue to be performed well into the night. Moreover, a full hospital staff is a necessity not only for medical personnel such as doctors, nurses, and surgeons but also for administrators checking in patients and processing intakes and health insurance, as well as maintenance and custodial staff keeping everything clean and sterile. Other settings that must maintain around-the-clock work shift schedules are police and fire departments, utility companies, and security guard services, all of which are responsible for ensuring public safety and providing rapid response to critical needs.

Multiple work shifts may also be necessary in work environments where there are not any emergency, life-or-death situations. An example of a noncritical/nonemergency response work environment with continuous operations is a manufacturing plant. This type of work setting does not sustain ongoing activity for the same reasons as the aforementioned settings, but multiple work shifts are still logical for a number of reasons. Technically, a manufacturing plant could shut down for the night and start back up in the morning, but that would not be a good idea in terms of operations efficiency and productivity.

I worked in the HR function for two different manufacturing companies in the early part of my career, and both settings had similar work schedule logistics. The front office departments, including HR, accounting, research and development, and sales, kept a standard 8:00/9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. work schedule, while the manufacturing shop floor area maintained a 24/7 multiple shift schedule for two main reasons. First, there are highly complex and time-consuming standard operating procedures for starting up, running, and shutting down entire assembly lines and large pieces of equipment. It would be difficult and inefficient to have to safely shut everything down every night, only to have to start everything up cold the next morning. It is also less costly to keep equipment and machinery running consistently rather than shutting it off and restarting it over and over again. Anyone who has ever run an air conditioner during a heat wave can probably attest that it is more efficient to keep the air conditioner running at a steady level rather than turning it off, letting the house heat back up again, and turning the unit back on so that it has to work hard all over again to bring the house temperature back down to a comfortable level. Second, customer demands do not sleep or take a break! Both of the manufacturing companies I worked for had large global customers with strict deadlines for receiving the products and materials we produced for them. We absolutely had to keep production moving along day and night in order to meet our customers' needs and expectations. In fact, losing even an hour or two on an assembly line that was not running properly and required maintenance could significantly impact production numbers and

cause an issue with getting a deliverable out the door to a customer by the promised deadline. As we have become an increasingly globalized society and marketplace, organizations have had to become less tethered to their time zones and traditional working hours to sustain profitability and competitiveness. As a result, strategically designed work shifts enable continuous work flow with minimal downtime.

A typical work setting that operates on a 24/7 basis will most likely implement four distinct shifts. Did you think I was going to say three shifts, because three 8-hour shifts will comprise a full 24-hour period? Well, three shifts would be adequate—if the workers never needed any days off! It is true that three 8-hour shifts will facilitate nonstop operations over 24 hours, but an organization will typically need to include a fourth shift to cover each shift's regular workers when they are off for a day or two. This is sometimes called a *floating shift* and may be integrated in the following structure:

First Shift:	8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Second Shift:	4:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.
Third Shift:	12:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
Floating Shift:	First (2 days), second (2 days), third (2 days) off (2 days)

With this type of 24/7 shift schedule, each shift including the floating shift works a 6 days/on, 2 days/off schedule. This is one simple work shift example, and organizations can create many different variations based on their unique organizational products and services as well as the needs of the population they're serving.

## Work Location

The last logistical consideration we will examine is where work is performed. For many jobs, the work must be performed in a specific physical location that houses all the required equipment and resources to perform the job. Production and maintenance employees working for an automobile manufacturer must all report to the physical plant to perform their jobs because that is where the assembly lines, machinery, and raw materials are located. The same would hold true for chemists working in a laboratory, chefs cooking in a restaurant kitchen, airline employees working in an airport, and a wide variety of other types of jobs that must be performed in a specific location. However, there is an increasing number of jobs that are not location-bound all the time. This shift in where certain jobs are performed is the direct result of a growing array of technology tools that facilitate a more seamless “anywhere, anytime” approach to working. Jobs that are more project-based and/or are performed mainly via computers and technology devices have become more portable with the expansion of wireless networks, virtual document sharing, and sophisticated face-to-face communication modalities for meetings and conference calls. Consider the job of executive assistant to a CEO, which is a job

that in the past would have required the incumbent to report to the office for a specified work shift and be physically present to perform the duties of the job, such as coordinating the CEO's calendar; handling incoming phone calls and e-mails; making travel reservations; proofreading reports, documents, and presentations; and so on. Today, all these tasks (and many more) can be performed remotely. Moreover, incumbents in this type of job may be even more effective without the constraints of having to do their work in the actual business office during set hours in terms of their level of responsiveness and availability to stakeholders in different time zones. While not every job will have the flexibility of being able to be performed from any location at any time, this shift in work location will continue to impact a great number of jobs at different levels within an organization.

## STRATEGIC JOB REDESIGN AND ITS BENEFITS

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As we have covered, the type of work that is required for an organization to effectively and efficiently achieve its goals and objectives will most likely shift and change based on both internal and external influencing factors, trends, and challenges. As a result, jobs will need to be evaluated and often redesigned to continue to support the organization. Job redesign may be needed due to unpredictable and/or immediate needs, and it may also be strategically implemented to enhance existing jobs to contribute to the organization in more far-reaching, innovative ways. Next, we will explore two strategies for proactive job redesign: job enlargement and job enrichment.

### Job Enlargement

**Job Enlargement:**

The augmenting of a job by adding an array of tasks similar in complexity and responsibility as the existing tasks, enabling variety.

**Job enlargement** is a strategy that involves augmenting a job by adding an array of tasks to offer variety and more of a well-rounded role for the incumbent. Tasks that are approximately the equivalent in terms of complexity and responsibility are added to a job. Job enlargement is not about giving an employee more work to do for the same pay, but rather an opportunity to expand into different types of related tasks for stimulation and the ability to experience the job in a more holistic way as it contributes to the bigger picture for the organization.

An example of job enlargement for a barista at a coffee shop may be to expand an incumbent's tasks from simply making the drink orders as a standalone task to taking the orders from the customers, making the beverages, and delivering them to the waiting customers. Clearly, if an organization decides to expand a job in this manner, it is still necessary to divide the workload so one incumbent is not getting overloaded. If the coffee shop always had three baristas on shift, one taking the orders, one making the drinks, and one delivering the orders, then job enlargement would be a strategy to infuse variety into that job by enabling all three baristas to do all three of these tasks. This approach also benefits the incumbents by allowing them to develop new skills, which in



turn facilitates greater agility for the organization. If one employee is unable to make it to work, there are other employees who know how to perform all the tasks required for that job. Job enlargement, when carefully designed and implemented with fairness and equity, can be integrated into many different jobs, particularly jobs that have traditionally consisted of a few specialized routine tasks without much variety.

## Job Enrichment

**Job enrichment** involves enhancing a job by offering work that is more complex and increasing its scope of autonomy and/or responsibility (Berry, 2003). This is a strategy designed to facilitate greater motivation and job satisfaction, leading to increased performance. Hackman and Oldham (1976) developed a set of characteristics that can be used as a tool to assess the extent to which a job can be enriched:

### **Job Enrichment:**

The enhancing of a job by adding tasks that are greater in complexity and/or responsibility.

- **Skill Variety:** the breadth and type of skills that a job incumbent must possess to successfully perform a job.
- **Task Identity:** the extent to which a task is clear to understand and has a defined beginning, midpoint, and end.
- **Task Significance:** the value or importance of the task in the context of the job in which it is performed and the outcome it yields for the organization.
- **Autonomy:** the extent to which a job incumbent has control of how tasks are performed, such as the procedures and timelines.
- **Task Feedback:** the level of knowledge that a job incumbent has about his or her task performance that is received as a result of performing the task rather than receiving the feedback from a supervisor.

A relevant example of job enrichment can be seen in various retail environments. A common job today is that of a manager on duty (MOD), also referred to as a *key holder*. This job is essentially a cross-functional combination of a salesperson and a supervisor. The worker in this type of job is able to perform all the same activities as any sales associate, handling customer transactions, responding to customer inquiries for assistance, keeping products organized and well-stocked, and so on. However, an MOD is also given the added responsibility and authority to serve as the acting manager on his or her work shift, performing activities such as opening or closing the store, accepting deliveries, resolving customer problems, monitoring sales progress in accordance with daily goals, and handling on-shift employee issues such as staff motivation, conflict resolution, and immediate disciplinary action needs.

The difference between job enlargement and job enrichment is that tasks are being added to a job when it is being enlarged, but the newly added tasks are not significantly more complex or require greater responsibility or decision-making authority than the

existing tasks. Job enrichment does result in the addition of new tasks that are still relevant to the job, but they are more complex, they may require a higher level of knowledge and skills, and they will likely require the incumbent to shoulder greater responsibility, accountability, and authority for the organization. The addition of required tasks and responsibilities to a job should not be made randomly or without thought—there should be a strategic plan to both job enlargement and job enrichment. Also, if there are people already working in the job, care should be taken to include those individuals in a discussion about any changes to their job so they feel that the additions are a positive adjustment and they are not getting punished for doing an excellent job by being delegated more work or responsibility than they would be comfortable with or would actually like to take on.

These strategic job modifications should be discussed, vetted, and decided on by the HR professionals and departmental managers together; such adjustments should not be implemented without this collaboration. For functional/departmental managers, they may have a vision of which tasks and responsibilities are a logical fit to be integrated into a particular job, but they may not have a solid understanding regarding the implications of changing a job on its compensation structure and overall worth, necessary incumbent qualifications (e.g., education, KSAOs), training and development needs, and equity among employees. For HR professionals, they may be cognizant about all of these employee-related concerns but may not have a firm grasp on how the tasks and responsibilities are actually performed on the job and how they might be effectively and feasibly combined. For these (and many other) reasons, the partnership between the HR function and the organization's functional/departmental managers is absolutely critical. In the next and concluding section of this chapter, we will explore the role of HR professionals in job and workforce planning, design, and assessment, as well as the importance of maintaining a collaborative ongoing partnership with first-line and middle managers who are directly engaged with their staff on a daily basis.

## THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN WORKFORCE PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

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The HR function is unique in that it is really the only department within an organization that needs to be fully aware of the day-to-day activities and short- and long-term goals of all the other departments at all times. HR needs to continually balance strategic long-term organizational needs and goals with the daily/weekly/monthly planning and decision making. HR professionals, unlike anyone else, are directly involved in designing and updating the jobs that enable each and every department to run effectively and contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives, as well as ensuring that the most qualified individuals are working in those jobs and meeting and/or exceeding performance expectations and outcomes. This is why the HR function is considered a horizontal entity within the organization—it is a layer that spans all other functional

areas, business units, departments, and geographic locations. The HR function is responsible for all the information pertaining to an organization's jobs, though the employees performing the jobs are managed by the supervisors and managers within their respective department or functional area. For this reason, the alignment between HR and management is critical. Because of this vast responsibility, it can sometimes be challenging to proactively maintain open lines of communication with all the managers from other areas on a daily basis. However time consuming this effort may be, it is very important for HR professionals to take on this responsibility. Why? The reason is simple—if the HR department does not continue to reach out and check in with its departmental managers on a regular basis, then those managers will forget why they even need to work with HR in the first place. There will be a disconnect, and out of sight is out of mind.

### **Sustaining the Human Resources–Functional Manager Partnership**

From my own HR experience, it is not reasonable to expect that departmental hiring managers will reach out to the HR department proactively with planning needs (e.g., maintaining job descriptions through regular job analysis, revisiting previously run recruitment postings for modification), and often not even for actual job and employee-related needs that they are attempting to deal with by themselves. On many occasions, I had learned that a manager actually ran a job ad, interviewed candidates, and made a job offer without working with HR on any of the steps throughout the entire process. One of the worst-case scenarios I experienced as an HR professional was when a manager had to retract a job offer that was made to a candidate after realizing there was no budgetary allocation for adding a full-time employee in that department, which the manager would have discovered if he engaged with HR on this process, which begins with obtaining budget approval to hire before proceeding with recruitment efforts. Another example from my own HR experience, equally as serious but in a different way, was when a new manager posted a costly job advertisement and proceeded to review resumes and invite candidates to interview without consulting HR on the job itself. The job had not been evaluated in several years, and it required substantial updates to its qualifications as well as its duties and responsibilities. Fortunately, no job offer was made! However, the job analysis resulted in so many critical changes that the new job description far exceeded the old one that was used to craft the job ad. Very few of the candidates who applied were actually qualified based on the updated job requirements, resulting in a waste of time and money; a revised job ad had to be posted and another batch of resumes had to be reviewed for consideration. So let me reiterate: The HR function must be the one to take on the responsibility of regular outreach to managers to cultivate and sustain collaborative partnerships.

HR professionals need to demonstrate their value and all the benefits their function has to offer to managers in making their jobs easier and their departments run more effectively and more cost and time efficiently. How is this accomplished? Well, this is where the WIIFM factor comes in. What is WIIFM, you ask? **WIIFM** stands for

**WIIFM:** Acronym that stands for What's In It For Me.

What's In It For Me, and this essentially translates into having a clear understanding of other people's needs and interests, and crafting your message to them in a manner that you know will resonate with their needs and interests. Understanding a person's WIIFM is a lot like having empathy—you are able to see a situation from his or her perspective. Managers need to understand why developing and maintaining accurate job data is of significant benefit to them, and then they will consider it important. It is not enough for an HR professional to try to convince managers that understanding the importance and value of maintaining clearly defined and structured jobs for recruiting and selection purposes is necessary simply so the organization does not risk getting into legal trouble. This is merely a scare tactic and perpetuates the opinion that the HR function is the workforce police. It is also insufficient to expect managers to care about maintaining accurate and up-to-date job data just because the HR function needs it; that is not enough of a reason for managers—not all, but many—to focus on this and make it a priority. They will only support such a need because they clearly understand how it impacts them, their staff, and their departments. HR professionals, as well as consultants, must be fully adept in determining the various WIIFM needs of their stakeholders and fostering a dialogue that addresses job and staffing needs in a way that will garner support and interest.

### **HR Role Requirements for Workforce Planning and Assessment**

As many of you already know, all HR professionals will share similar KSAOs regardless of their specific role within the HR function, including, but certainly not limited to,

- the ability to align and balance long-range strategic planning with short-term, often unpredictable, needs and shifts in direction;
- knowledge of organizational operations and processes (e.g., budget cycles, shift schedules); and
- knowledge of employment law and legislation.

I mention these specific KSAOs because they are directly related to the competencies required to be effective in all the areas this book examines. However, there are other knowledge and skill-set areas that an HR professional or consultant will need to be successful in job design and evaluation, assessment of workforce needs, recruitment, and selection: data collection and analysis, and working with tests and measures.

Now let me be clear here, before I lose all of you (!): To be successful in strategic workforce assessment and job planning/design does not necessarily require advanced proficiency in data science, testing, and statistics. The level of required knowledge and skill set typically depends on the organization itself, its size, complexity, and sophistication with regard to its workforce management strategy. A small or medium-sized enterprise will likely have a different level of job and workforce assessment needs than a

large global organization such as Google or McDonald's. It does, however, require competency in data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of findings for myriad decision-making purposes. A reasonably high comfort level with different sources of data and analytical tools is imperative for workforce planning and assessment. Additionally, a person responsible for any area of job or candidate assessment, whether an HR professional or consultant, should possess a sound knowledge of the tests and measurement tools relevant to the HR function. An understanding of the different types of validity and reliability and their importance to employment decision making is also necessary. As the role of HR continues to evolve and become increasingly more strategic and in partnership with an organization's C-suite and key stakeholders, the perceived level of value and sophistication in HR deliverables must also grow and expand.

This book will explore the following topics in the context of how they fit within the role of the HR function for effective job design, recruitment, and candidate evaluation and selection:

- Job Analysis
  - Data Collection Methods
  - Validity and Reliability of Data
- Job Description and Competency Model Design
- Job Evaluation
  - Compensation Benchmark Analysis
- Recruitment Strategy
  - Internal Recruiting
  - External Recruiting
- Candidate Evaluation and Selection Strategy
  - Interview Methods
  - Skills and Ability Testing
  - Personality Testing
  - Simulations and Assessment Centers
  - Biodata
  - Background and Reference Checks

Additionally, we will also examine the legal compliance requirements and ethical considerations that must be factored into the design of the tools, forms, measures, and processes necessary for developing new jobs and modifying existing ones, as well as for evaluating job worth and determining equitable compensation, and recruiting and hiring job candidates in a structured, fair, and consistent manner. The entire focus of Chapter 2 pertains to U.S. legislation requirements for nondiscriminatory employment practices, and legal and ethical points of consideration will continue to be explored and illustrated throughout each chapter. The goal of this textbook is to provide an in-depth

examination of the strategies, tools, and practices needed for proactive and effective workforce planning and assessment from job design through the hiring process.

## ORGANIZATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

### SPOTLIGHT ON JOB ROTATION AT HSBC

HSBC, a respected global financial and banking institution, has become recognized for its strategically designed job rotation programs. **Job rotation** is a strategy in which incumbents systematically move through different jobs in an array of functional areas within an organization to better understand how each area operates on its own and how all the different areas work together as a cohesive system. Job rotation also facilitates acquisition of new knowledge and skills in an on-the-job context. HSBC employees, many at an entry-level status, have the opportunity to develop both breadth and depth of banking knowledge and skills through a 2-year rotation program. Each rotation phase is designed to give the incumbent a comprehensive experience within a specific business stream or line of business. Upon completion of a job rotation program, employees will better understand HSBC's range of products and services and how to assess client needs effectively to customize targeted solutions. Examples of HSBC's business stream-driven rotation programs include:

- **Global Trade and Receivables Finance:** This program enables employees to broaden their knowledge of product management, business development, and risk, and focuses on trade cycles and strategies to assist clients in using their working capital efficiently, managing their trade risk, and funding their supply chains.

- **Relationship Management:** This program facilitates a greater understanding of how to work with an array of clients and identify their unique business needs to design custom HSBC product and service solutions. Employees in this rotation program will examine governance and risk and will take on a client-facing role.
- **Payments and Cash Management:** This program enables employees to learn about sales, client management, risk, and how to work across geographic locations and currencies. Employees in this rotation program will gain the skills and competencies needed to effectively assist clients in managing their cash and liquidity and in conducting seamless global transactions.

In addition to their rotation programs designed around specific business streams, HSBC also offers an array of programs focusing on global commercial banking, retail banking, markets, and wealth management. The rotation locations will vary and may be in an incumbent's home location as well as nationally and internationally.

To measure the effectiveness of the job rotation program, measurable goals and objectives are determined for each rotation phase prior to the employee entering the program as well as learning outcomes, which is similar to

#### **Job Rotation:**

A strategy in which employees systematically move through different jobs in an array of functional areas for training and development purposes.

any structured employee training and development program. Each employee will be assigned a mentor and buddy for guidance, feedback, and support throughout each rotation phase, and will also have the opportunity to network with other employees involved in the program. The employees can measure and assess their progress within each job rotation phase with their manager, and analyze how their experiences in all the rotation phases integrate to

better understand that particular HSBC business stream from a whole-system perspective. For HSBC, this job rotation strategy enables its employees to develop their knowledge and expertise around the company's core lines of business and hone critically important skill sets, which translates into a workforce talent investment that positions HSBC to remain competitive and agile regardless of externally driven economic trends and shifts.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

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- Workforce assessment is comprised of all the processes, systems, and tools used by an organization to make accurate, reliable, and effective decisions about the jobs needed to achieve business objectives, as well as the qualifications and performance expectations for the individuals working in those jobs.
- To understand how to develop assessment strategies necessary for job design and the recruitment and selection of talented and qualified individuals to successfully perform in an array of jobs across an organization, it is critical to first examine the organization itself, including its vision/mission, objectives, products, and services, in order to understand the type of work that needs to be performed.
- The rise of technology, major societal, economic, and demographic shifts, and globalization have resulted in all of us living and working in a much more complex and sophisticated world. Work cannot be organized and distributed in such simplistic ways anymore; there is much more of a variety of organizational needs that may require workers who range from semiskilled to highly skilled and possessing an array of unique knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- A job is a type of role within an organization comprised of a set of specific tasks and responsibilities that facilitate the achievement of targeted performance outcomes that should be directly or indirectly aligned with organizational objectives and short- and long-term goals. Each job is comprised of a unique set of qualifications that will be necessary to effectively perform the work involved, and they are referred to as KSAOs—knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics. A job family is a collection of jobs that are similar in function and scope and share common KSAOs.
- The logistics of how, where, and when work is performed is also an important consideration in work design and planning, and may result in the need for the creation of work teams, work shifts, and the flexibility of work being performed remotely as well as in a physical organizational environment.

- As organizational goals and objectives change based on internal and external influencing factors, trends, and challenges, jobs need to be evaluated and redesigned to continue to support the organization. Job redesign may be needed due to unpredictable and/or immediate needs, and it may also be strategically implemented to enhance existing jobs to contribute to the organization in more far-reaching, innovative ways. Two strategies for proactive job redesign are job enlargement and job enrichment.
- The HR function must continually balance strategic long-term organizational needs and goals with day-to-day planning and decision making. HR is responsible for all the information pertaining to an organization's jobs, though the employees performing the jobs are managed by the supervisors and managers within their respective department or functional area. For this reason, the alignment between HR and management is critical, and HR professionals must proactively build and sustain effective partnerships with managers.

## KEY TERMS

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Abilities 7	Knowledge 6	Skills 6
Employee Life Cycle 1	KSAOs 6	Standard Occupational
Incumbent 8	Management by Objectives 4	Classification System 8
Job 6	Occupation 8	Task 3
Job Enlargement 16	O*NET® Database 10	WIIFM 19
Job Enrichment 17	Other Characteristics 7	Work 2
Job Family 7	Position 8	Work Shift 13
Job Rotation 22	Scientific Management 4	Workforce Assessment 1