CHAPTER 3

Defining Competencies and Critical Requirements for a Job

# 

# Personal Learning (PL) Activities

Personal Learning (PL) Activities 1

PL 1: Enriching your job and life. 1

Pl 2:Jumping for the Jelly Beans 2

PL 3: X-Y Questionnaire 2

PL 4: Deming’s Management Method 3

Background reading: Early approaches to job design and motivation 4

References 9

# PL 1: Enriching your job and life.

Review Herzberg's job enrichment and his suggestions for enrichment in Chapter 4. Even though your organization might not be interested in job enrichment, the ideas are relevant as you can do many things to change your job and career without a formal job enrichment program.

We are making the assumption that, even if your job is constraining, you can do things which provide you with learning and growth. For example, even though you might not have an opportunity to improve your learning on the job, you might take the initiative and enroll in courses which improve your skills and make you more attractive to your present and future employers.

Also, you might think of ways to apply job enrichment to your life and career. In doing this, you might involve yourself in volunteer work, something where you have personal accountability for the outcome of a project.

***Task:***

Take each enrichment suggestion and brainstorm how you might apply them in your job and life. Complete the table.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Suggestions for Enriching Job | Suggestions for Enriching Life |
| Direct Feedback |  |  |
| Client Relationship |  |  |
| New Learning |  |  |
| Scheduling |  |  |
| Unique Expertise |  |  |
| Control Over Resources |  |  |
| Direction Communications |  |  |
| Personal Accountability |  |  |

# Pl 2:Jumping for the Jelly Beans

Connect to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtYi4102OvU>

Listen to Part 2 of Fredrick Herzberg's Two Factory Theory of motivation and Job Enrichment. Explained by the man himself in a very atmospheric smoke-filled 1970s lecture theatre. Part 1 of this lecture is also available on youtube.

# PL 3: X-Y Questionnaire[[1]](#endnote-1)

Directions: Use the scale below and rate each of the 10 items.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Really try to do this! | Generally avoid this | Not sure | Generally avoid this | Really try to avoid doing this! |

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_1. Closely supervise people and sure they do the job right.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_2. Develop goals for others and guide them as much as possible.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_3. Look for ways to give people more responsibility.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_4. Use punishment to correct undesirable behaviour.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_5. Encourage people to set their own goals and objectives.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_6. Take over the group whenever things are slipping.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_7. Allow others to share in making important decisions.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_8. Use rewards as a way to get others involved.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_9. Give others as much freedom as much as possible.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_10. Find ways of providing others with more challenge and learning in their work.

**Scoring**

If you scored 4 or 5 to questions 1, 2, 4, 6, or 8 add one (1) point for a Y subtotal\_\_\_\_\_ of 5 or less.

Then, if you answered 1 or 2 to questions 3, 5, 7, 9 and 10 add one (1) point for a Y subtotal\_\_\_\_\_ of 5 or less.

Then, add the subtotals to get your Y score. Your Y score should be between 0 and 10.

Y Score \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Now if you answered 1 or 2 to questions 1, 2, 4, 6, or 8 add one (1) point for a X subtotal\_\_\_\_\_ of 5 or less.

Then, if you answered 4 or 5 to questions 2, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 10 add one (1) point for a X subtotal\_\_\_\_\_ of 5 or less.

Then, add your subtotals to get your X score. Your X score should also be between 0 and 10.

X Score \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Review Theory X and Theory Y in the reading below.

# PL 4: Deming’s Management Method

Deming's Management Method can be summarized by 7 factors: visionary leadership, internal and external cooperation, learning, process management, continuous improvement, employee fulfillment, and customer satisfaction.[[2]](#endnote-2) Each of these factors can be represented by a question. In applying this framework, think of a job you are working in, a relationship or a team you are involved with, or a job you think you will be working at. Answer each question.

1. What strategies do you use to encourage a clear vision and long term orientation?

2. What cooperative strategies do we need to use to engage (others in your team) employees & suppliers?

3. How do we nurture learning and growth with others?

4. What strategies to you use to improve the process rather than the results oriented methods?

5. What strategies encourage continuous improvement?

6. What strategies should you engage in to encourage job satisfaction and commitment?

7. What strategies should you engage in to encourage better customer relationships?

# Background reading: Early approaches to job design and motivation

The early history of job design illustrates two schools of thoughts. One school of thought was based on engineering principles of specialization, division of labour and work simplification, principles which emerged during the industrial revolution in the 18th century. Psychologists and managers represented a second school of thought. They felt that these industrial design principles were dehumanizing because they treated workers like they were parts of a machine. The basic principles of each of these schools are summarized below.

## Principles of Specialization and Division of Labour

Management theorists learned a great deal about specialization and division of labour from the military and leaders like Frederick the Great, who ruled Prussia from 1740 to 1786. The army he commanded was made up of unmotivated conscripts, criminals, paupers, and foreign mercenaries. Fascinated with the workings of mechanical toys, and the practises of the Romans and European armies of the sixteenth century, he developed many innovations, which reduced his soldiers to robot-like automatons. His quest was to develop a reliable and efficient fighting force using principles of standardization of regulations, specialization of tasks, standardized equipment, a common language for communication, and training to improve efficiency.

The Scottish economist, Adam Smith, in his 1776 publication *The Wealth of Nations* [[3]](#endnote-3) highlighted the principle of division of labour in dividing up a complex job into several simpler tasks. Smith used the example of the manufacture of pins. Instead of one individual making the entire pin, the process is broken down into several tasks:one person draws the wire, one straightens it, one cuts it, one points it, and so on. The independence of the worker is reduced in favour of specialization and division of work and new procedures are introduced to supervise and coordinate workers doing independent tasks. Specialized workers could work faster because they could become more proficient at performing simpler tasks.

Early approaches to job design are also connected to Henry Ford’s assembly-line for manufacturing cars, probably the most visible example of specialization and division of labor in action. Ford got the idea when he was watching meat packers who performed their work moving large carcasses along a conveyor belt. Within a year of introducing the assembly line at Ford in 1913, the time it took to produce a Ford chassis was reduced from 12 hours-plus to 93 minutes. The Model T’s price was reduced from $950 in 1909 to $360 seven years later, even though he increased wages for workers from $2.50 per hour in a nine hour day to $5.00 an hour for eight hours work. By 1926, Ford was producing half the motor vehicles in the world.

Ford's assembly-line set the tone in improving productivity and efficiency in many sectors of the economy over the next 50 years. Many customer products in today's market place – cars, refrigerators, stoves, and toasters – are cheaper and more effectively made because of the ideas that began with Ford's assembly-line and the many scientific management practices surrounding it.

Frederick the Great’s vision of a mechanized army was elaborated by others, including the 20th century management theorist, Frederick W. Taylor, who pioneered what became known as *scientific management.* Taylor was an American engineer who provided principles of scientific management: (i) organization of work should be the manager’s responsibility. The manager’s job is planning and design; the workers’ job is implementation, (ii) scientific methods can be used to study the exact steps, operations or motions and the most efficient way to do the work, and to determine the best way that work can be performed, (iii) choose the right people to do the work, (iv) train the workers, and (v) monitor performance for efficiency and errors.[[4]](#endnote-4) It is possible to develop scientific ways to accomplish every task involved in producing any good or service and that scientific methods should be the basis for selecting, training, teaching, and developing workers.

By his death in 1915, Taylor had gained a reputation as an “enemy of the working man,” and was summoned by a committee of the U.S. House of Representatives to defend his system. As a prominent spokesperson of a scientific approach to job design, he was often criticized and scorned as an organizational theorist. On the other hand, some scholars who have closely examined Taylor’s work suggest he was not really an enemy of the working person, but was really concerned with using his scientific method for improving their lot in life.[[5]](#endnote-5) Nonetheless, he has probably been one of the most influential organizational theorists, as his principles of scientific management became the foundation for work design throughout the early part of the twentieth century and, in many work settings, Taylor’s ideas are very much alive today.

Applications of Taylor-like approaches to job design are found in numerous public and private organizations. In hospitals, there are standardized routines for patient safety and health care. Fire safety, risk management, and police procedure illustrate Taylor-like standards and practices in which industrial engineers or work experts have analyzed the various processes, developed efficient and safe procedures, and then recruited and trained people so that they could do the jobs in an effective way. As an example, check the long list of government guides on standards for handling food.

Principles of specialization and division of labour are well known for guiding many service and office organizations. Insurance companies, benefits and pension management offices, and banks divide their work into cases and assign agents to deal with cases or files. In a pension management division, when an employee wants information about her pension benefits upon retirement, she might first talk to an agent on the telephone who refers her to the office that manages her pension plan. Another employee at that office would assist in completing a request form containing background information and assign her a case number. Her file would later be assessed by a pension advisor and then be evaluated. The file would go to many different people, especially if she wanted to query the decision or ask for other information. Organizations like this are “office factories” where employees work at different desks and cubicles performing a specialized part of an overall process.

Principles of specialization and division of labour are still central for many jobs today, and they are not always associated with negative effects. Examples of specialized jobs include medical specialists (i.e., anaesthesiologists and obstetrician, gynaecologists and psychiatrists), actuaries, a gunner in an armoured vehicle, attorneys, computer programmers, and others. The work of musicians, artists, authors, teachers, entertainers, and athletes is highly specialized and often lonely and time consuming.

Some jobs are highly specialized and routine and demand varying levels of skill, such as a Starbuck’s barista and Disneyland service staff. Olympic rowers endure hours of concentrated exercise in the gym and on water, and the only thing that seems to sustain them is a motivational drive to perform and win. Although specialized and routine, jobs can provide meaning and significance because of the long-term career benefits, autonomy, discretion and other characteristics.

There are tremendous benefits of specialized and simplified jobs in improving productivity and safety, reducing costs, and developing standardized products that are reliable. With these principles, we are able to do things more efficiently, faster, and cheaper. This has become more essential in the last few decades as we recognize that many tasks are becoming more complex and require specialized knowledge in order for firms to compete.[[6]](#endnote-6) Some of the least satisfying jobs in the world are waiters, labourers (except construction labourers), bartenders, hand packers, apparel clothing salespeople, and cashiers. Interestingly, while workers in these jobs are less satisfied than workers in other jobs, at least 25% of these workers still report being very satisfied.[[7]](#endnote-7) This suggests that people might respond differently to specialized jobs and that some of these jobs have other features – such as varied tasks, team relationships, and feedback – which enhance their meaningfulness for employees.

## Principles of Human Relations and Motivation

The view of the importance of people in organizations gained a great deal of momentum based on landmark study of work behaviour at the Western Electric’s Hawthorne Works plant outside Chicago. The study was large in size and scope lasting from 1924 to 1933 and it generated a massive amount of documents including hourly performance charts and thousands of interview notes. The study, carried out by Professor Elton Mayo and his protégé Fritz J. Roethlisberger, provided a great deal of momentum for the human relations movement in the recognition of a human perspective on work.[[8]](#endnote-8) One of the more referenced Hawthorne studies sought to understand if workers would become more productive in higher or lower levels of light. As researchers increased the level of lighting, they observed an increase in productivity, which also occurred when the level of lighting was reduced. The conclusion was that the attention given to employees was the major reason for the changes in productivity. The Hawthorne studies included different experiments such as one in the bank wiring room involving the effects of payment incentives and the surprising result that productivity decreased.

While scientific management attempted to use a narrow version of science to how people worked, Mayo’s work recognized the prominence of communication and individual motivation. Later, researchers concluded that the changes in motivation were the result of the interest and sympathy given by the research, and the term ‘Hawthorne Effect’ became known as an experimenter effect where the changes occur because of the attention given by the researchers.

The ‘call to arms’ for the human relations movement is also connected to academic writers like Douglas McGregor and Abraham Maslow[[9]](#endnote-9) who articulated popular ideas about human needs and the nature of motivation. ***McGregor’s theory X and Y*** asked us to review our assumptions of motivation. If you were a Theory X manager, you would think your employees dislike their work, seek to avoid responsibility, and want job security above all else. As a result, the best way to motivate people is by providing incentives and disincentives. A Theory Y manager generally makes an assumption that employees like their work, and will encourage their own self-direction in the pursuit of organizational objectives, without the external controls of specialized jobs or overly directive supervisors. People will accept and seek responsibility and will use their ingenuity and imagination in solving organizational problems.

In a similar sort of way, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs nicely illustrates the five sets of needs that a human relations manager might try to respond to: physiological, safety, love and affiliation, esteem, and self-actualization. These needs are arranged in a hierarchy that begin with basic physiological needs and ends with self-actualization. This hierarchy is probably one of the best known theories of motivational needs and was often used as a framework for encouraging managers to recognize and address human needs in how they manage and design work. To manage or design work is to focus on satisfying human needs at the bottom part of the hierarchy first.

The scientific management and human relations views of designing work display two perspectives on design and each has different assumptions about how managers motivate people and help them be more efficient and productive. The following perspectives on job design, for example, the job enrichment perspective, move the focus away from management to designing a job that is efficient and intrinsically motivating. Motivation comes from the job rather than the manager.

# References

1. Adapted from McGregor, D, 1960, The human side of enterprise. NY, McGraw Hill.) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. This is based on Anderson, J.C., Rungtusanatham, M., Schroeder, R.G. (1994). A theory of quality management underlying the Deming method. Academy of Management Review, 19, 472-509. , [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Smith, A. (1937) *The Wealth of Nations.* New York: Random House. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Taylor, F. W. (1947) *The principles of scientific management*. New York: Harper and Row, p. 117. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Weisbord, M. (2011) 'Taylor, MacGregor and me.' *Journal of Management History,* 17:165-177;

   Wrege, C , & Greenwood, R. (1991) Frederick W. Taylor, the father of scientific management: Myth and reality. Homewood. IL: Irwin. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Jacques, E. (1990) In praise of hierarchy. *Harvard Business Review*, January-February: 127-133; Leavitt, H.J. (2003) Why hierarchies thrive. *Harvard Business Review,* March: 96-102. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. University of Chicago News Office, (2007) *Looking for satisfaction and happiness in a career? Start by choosing a job that helps others.* Chicago: General Social Survey (GSS) at the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Mayo, E. (1933) *The human problems of industrial civilization.* New York: MacMillan; Roethlisberger, F. J., & Dickson, W.J. (1939) *Management and the Worker: An Account of a Research Program Conducted by the Western Electric Company, Hawthorne Works, Chicago*. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. MacGregor, D. (1960) *The human side of enterprise*. New York: McGraw Hill; Maslow, A.H. (1954) *Motivation and personality.* New York: Harper. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)