

3. Job analysis

A proper match between the job and employee capability is essential if the organisation is to achieve its organisational goals. It is therefore imperative that the organisation has a thorough understanding of the demands of each role and the skills required to perform this job at the required level. Job analysis provides the foundation for developing this understanding.

3.1 Job analysis

The foundation for human resource planning is set by job analysis which is the study of job facts regarding what is done, when, where, how, why, and by whom. Job analysis also looks at existing and potential new jobs and related tasks, duties and responsibilities, relationships to other jobs, conditions under which work is performed, and personal capabilities required for satisfactory performance.

Job analysis is the objective recording of the current and actual accountabilities and requirements of a job. Job analysis is desirable in the following circumstances:

- > creation of a new position in the organisation
- > no previous job analysis has taken place
- > job content for established positions has changed dramatically since the last job analysis
- > evidence of increasing incidence of employee grievances regarding job content and/or working conditions
- > changes to technology, processes or machinery
- > long-serving employees have exited, necessitating a job/role review.

The purpose of job analysis is to answer these questions:

- > What relationship is there between the job and the business goals; in other words, why does the job exist?
- > What are the specific tasks required from the job?
- > When and where is the job performed?
- > What skills/competencies/qualifications/attitudes are required to perform the job?
- > What physical and intellectual activities are undertaken to perform the job?
- > What machinery or equipment is used to perform the job?
- > What constitutes successful performance of the job?

3.2 Elements of job analysis

Job analysis provides information about the job content, job requirements and job relevance or context.

Job content – describes the duties and accountabilities of the job. Some of the duties may be at the strategic level, or broad statements, while some are very specific job tasks which detail procedural steps.

Job requirements – list the specific skills, knowledge, abilities, qualifications and experience required to perform the job at the required level.

Job relevance – describes where the job fits into the organisation, its purpose, level of resources managed (i.e. financial, people, material resources). It also refers to details about the level of supervision provided and the level of responsibility for supervision, the physical setting and demands.

3.3 Uses of job analysis

The information produced by the job analysis process can be used extensively across the HR function. In fact, it is impossible to accurately match candidates to jobs, train and evaluate performance without undertaking some form of job analysis.

Naturally, the more accurate and thorough the job analysis process, the more useful and beneficial the information will be. Specifically, job analysis is essential to the following HR functions:

a) Job (or position) description

This is a document that defines the content of the job. It clarifies the activities to be done by the incumbent by providing the job title and a written summary of the key duties, responsibilities, accountabilities (and may include competencies) of the job.

b) Person (or job) specification

A document that identifies the skills, knowledge, abilities, qualifications, experience, personal qualities and any special requirements of the person needed to perform the job.

c) Organisational structure and design

By indicating relationships between jobs and clarifying the job requirements, a broad understanding of the organisational structure can be obtained, thus promoting efficiency and minimising overlap.

d) HR planning

Job analysis is essential to the process of HR planning. It helps to identify the numbers and types of people required in the short-term and long-term. The HR or line manager can then identify whether they need to consider moving some employees and/or training employees in new skills.

e) Recruitment and selection

Job analysis assists with identifying what skills are required by an organisation. It assists the HR manager to identify who to recruit and how and where to recruit them, by establishing the job requirements that must be filled to meet organisational goals and business objectives. It also helps ensure that the HR manager does not breach Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) guidelines by identifying key selection criteria which are inherent to the performance of the job. This means that candidates are screened based on pre-determined, objective criteria and this helps minimise potentially discriminatory decisions.

f) Performance management

Job analysis is essential to the development of performance standards. Without this information, acceptable levels of performance cannot be identified or an accurate measure of actual performance obtained. With well-defined standards of performance measurement, individual performance can also be enhanced by providing clearer guidelines about expectations and enabling the HR or line manager to coach the incumbent specifically in the areas they need to improve.

g) Training and development

The person specification defines the knowledge, skills and abilities required for successful job performance. This enables the HR manager to develop training and development objectives, design/select relevant programs, and determine whether an employee needs further training.

h) Career planning and development

The HR manager, mentor or other managers are better equipped to provide career counselling, advice and planning if they have an accurate understanding of the types and extent of jobs available in the organisation.

i) Remuneration and benefits

If the relative worth of a job can be determined, it makes the process of salary and benefits administration simpler and more equitable. Without this information, it is impossible to accurately estimate a job's worth to the organisation, or to make comparisons with similar jobs in the marketplace.

j) Employee relations

Misunderstandings about job content and responsibilities are a major source of industrial disputes between employers, employees and unions. Job analysis provides the organisation with essential information to minimise such disputes and grievances because it is armed with the information necessary to make and articulate sound decisions about jobs and responsibilities.

3.4 Areas involved in job analysis

Three basic questions must be asked: **What** is done? **Why** is it done? **How** is it done?

A job analysis that leads to a positive drafting of a job description and person specification will cover the following areas:

- > a general inquiry as to where the job fits into the organisation, reporting channels and a summary description of the job itself
- > a precise inquiry into the tasks and responsibilities of the job; responsibility here being defined as 'those areas of activity for which the job holder is held accountable'
- > an analysis of the competencies required to effectively meet all of the job requirements
- > time devoted to specific tasks
- > an analysis of the management support or back-up provided (i.e. is the job closely supervised)?
- > a precise inquiry as to the specific 'authority' that goes with the job. Authority in this context means being empowered to deal with, or dispose of, organisational resources without recourse to any higher authority
- > identification of the special or unusual characteristics of the job (e.g. unusual hours of work)
- > an inquiry into the personal requirements of the ideal person for the job as perceived by those involved, namely the job incumbent, the immediate supervisor, and/or the work group, and/or previous incumbent. Such an analysis will include the skills and abilities required, at what levels, and the knowledge and qualifications required.
- > whether there are employee and employer responsibilities
- > an analysis of the salary that goes with the job
- > an analysis of any specific training requirements of the job.

3.5 Methods of job analysis

There are a variety of methods of job analysis, varying in complexity and effectiveness. More than one method can be combined which will draw out different information. Ultimately, the method chosen depends on the purpose of the job analysis, the sources of the information and the methods used to analyse and report the data.

The most common methods of job analysis are: observation, employee diary/log, interviews and questionnaires.

3.5.1 Observation

This involves the job analyst observing and recording the activities of the employee doing the job. The analyst records a description of the tasks and duties performed. This method is used primarily for repetitive, short job cycle, or manual jobs. Jobs that consist of primarily manual actions are suited to analysis by observation. This method is not suitable for jobs that involve analytical and cognitive work.

Observation by a job analyst can create an uncomfortable situation for the employee, which may affect their behaviour. This is exacerbated if the employee is aware that the result of the analysis is to determine the job grade and level of remuneration appropriate to the position.

It is important that the job analyst observes a representative sample of incumbents to avoid inaccurate descriptions and recommendations. It is also important that the observer communicates openly with the employee being observed in an effort to alleviate fears and anxiety that the employee may be feeling about and/or during the process.

3.5.2 Employee diary/log

Each employee maintains written records (a diary or log) of what they do in performing their jobs. The entries are made at set intervals during the day, or notes are taken each time a task is performed. When the diary or log book is current and accurate, it is a valuable source of information. Time logs are also a valuable way to help employees understand where they spend their time and what they do each day.

The diary/log method does, however, take considerable effort and time to complete accurately. In addition, some employees may lack the skills necessary to accurately define and record what they do in a concise and useful manner.

3.5.3 Interviews

Information for job analysis can be obtained by interviewing the employee and their supervisor. Interviews are especially useful for managerial or complex jobs that may be difficult to observe. Follow-up interviews with the supervisor are important to clarify and validate the information given by the employee.

Interviews can be conducted with a single employee, a group of employees or with a manager who is familiar with the job. A structured questionnaire should be used to conduct the interview and to facilitate comparisons.

The validity of the information depends on the job analyst's ability to ensure that accurate and objective information is recorded. For this reason, it is recommended that other methods be used in addition to the interview.

3.5.4 Questionnaires

Questionnaires can be both structured and unstructured. Questionnaires completed by the employee can also form the basis of the job description. The major advantage of the questionnaire method is that information can be collected on a large scale in a relatively short period. For this reason, it is the most economical and efficient method of job analysis. The major disadvantage is that some employees may take a long time to complete and return it, and the responses may not be entirely accurate.

Care should be taken to ensure employees understand the questions and provide all the information needed in the proper form.

3.6 Practical concerns of job analysis

There are several practical concerns that should be considered in assessing each of the job analysis methods, as described.

Schuler, Dowling and Smart conducted significant research work in 1991 which still serves to form a useful framework for considering the approach to job analysis. According to their research, consideration in any job analysis process should be given to:

- > versatility/suitability – the method’s appropriateness for analysing a variety of jobs
- > standardisation – the extent to which the method yields norms that allow comparisons with different sources of job analysis data collection, and at different times
- > user acceptability – the user’s acceptance of the method, including the forms
- > user understanding/involvement - the extent to which those who are using the method, or are affected by its results, know the purpose and value of the method, and are involved in the collection of the job analysis information
- > training required – the degree of training needed by those involved in using the method
- > readiness to use – extent to which the method is ready for use
- > time for completion – the time required for the method to be implemented and the results of the method to be obtained
- > reliability and validity – the consistency of the results obtained by the selected method in relation to the costs incurred
- > purposes served – the number of purposes (as listed above) which the method will serve
- > utility - the amount of overall benefit or value to be gained by using the method in relation to the overall costs.

3.7 Job description

The job description is a document that is derived from the job analysis. A job description, also referred to as a position description, sets out the responsibilities of the jobholder, what they actually do, the purpose of the job, and under what conditions it is performed. Job descriptions vary considerably in format and style. The preferred format depends on what the manager anticipates are the uses of the job description. Most job descriptions should, however, contain the following information in some form:

- > purpose statement
- > job identification

- > job summary
- > duties and responsibilities
- > competencies required for the job
- > weight or value of each task, to distinguish those which are considered more important or which take more time
- > key performance indicators
- > relationships to other roles
- > reporting line
- > skills, experience and knowledge
- > number of direct reports
- > location
- > incumbent/supervisor signatures and review date.

Purposes of the job description

- > clarifies the 'job' to be done by the position incumbent or prospective incumbent
- > establishes clear expectations for both the employee and employer
- > an essential tool for conducting performance reviews
- > critical in determining remuneration and benefit levels
- > distinguishes one job from another and helps to identify overlap or inconsistencies
- > used in the recruitment process for writing advertisements, developing selection criteria, and interviewing and selection
- > used to assess training and development needs by identifying gaps between the requirements of the job and the incumbent's skills and knowledge.

3.8 Person specification

The person specification, sometimes referred to as the job specification or job requirements, is derived from the job analysis. It identifies the skills, knowledge, abilities, qualifications, experience, personal qualities and any special requirements of the person needed to perform the job.

The main use of the person specification is to list the key selection criteria for use in recruitment and selection activities. Preparing a person specification assists in identifying the 'essential' qualities from the 'desirable' ones. It helps to identify what kind of candidate to recruit and identifies the factors on which to assess the candidate.

Together, the job description and person specification provide a clear summary of a job and its incumbent. Both documents should be reviewed regularly to ensure that they continue to accurately describe the job and the personal requirements required. This helps to maintain the integrity of the documents, and employee confidence in the process.

It is recommended that documents such as the job description and person specification be tailored to the organisation's specific needs.

If you require expert advice, a Victorian Chamber consultant can assist you.

3.9 Competencies

A competency is defined by Parry (1994) as a cluster of knowledge, attitudes and skills working together to produce outstanding performance in a given area of responsibility. The principle of developing competencies among employees is based on a greater understanding of the relationship of skills, knowledge and attitudes that contribute to a person's overall performance. Competencies are those elements a person brings to a job that are not as visible as the skills and knowledge they possess, yet they are fundamental to their performance in the job.

Competencies can include the ability to work in teams, being focused on achievement, having the ability to solve problems rapidly, having strong interpersonal skills, strategic thinking, initiative, analytical thinking and an ability to build relationships. Competencies that will help an organisation reach its strategic goals are those that add value and help predict success.

A competency approach can add value to an organisation by providing greater insight into the skills, attributes and qualities that result in excellent performance. Competencies can be used in many HRM functions, including recruitment and selection, performance management, and training and development.

Developing a relevant set of competencies requires identifying qualities, attributes and behaviors demonstrated by the excellent performers in the organisation.

Competencies can be included in the position description and/or person specification and used effectively in the recruitment and selection process.

3.10 Key Result Areas (KRAs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Key Result Areas (KRAs) reflect primary job responsibilities, and within each of these is a set of quantifiable measures that an organisation uses to gauge or compare performance in terms of meeting their strategic and operational goals.

Key performance indicators are measures focusing on the levels of performance expected of a person in a job – these measures must be specific, realistic, measurable, achievable, time framed and clearly understood by all parties. KPIs are usually expressed in terms of outputs (i.e. quantity and/or quality) which are measured by the organisation.

A KPI should:

- > reflect the job's contributions to the business objectives provided by the corporate plan and the department's business plan
- > reflect the overall purpose of the position
- > focus on the broad areas of results expected from the position rather than tasks required to achieve the results (i.e. usually reflect an output of a job or a finished task)
- > reflect a contribution to the manager's performance plan
- > be measurable.

Note: It is important to establish KPIs before the work is performed so that all those involved will understand the level of accomplishments expected.

3.11 Personal attributes

Personal attributes, under the *Employability Skills Framework*¹, describes a set of non-skill-based behaviours and attitudes that employers value as important as the employability skills and other technical or job specific skills. The *Employability Skills Framework* incorporates the following personal attributes that contribute to overall employability:

Loyalty	Reliability
Commitment	Personal presentation
Motivation	Adaptability
Honesty and integrity	Common sense
Enthusiasm	Sense of humour
Ability to deal with pressure	Balanced attitude to work and home life

The key skills identified in conjunction with the personal attributes that make up the Employability Skills Framework are:

- > communication skills that contribute to productive and harmonious relations between employees and customers
- > team work skills that contribute to innovative outcomes
- > initiative and organising skills that contribute to long-term and short-term strategic planning
- > self-management skills that contribute to employee satisfaction and growth
- > learning skills that contribute to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and organisational operations
- > technology skills that contribute to effective execution of tasks.

3.12 Documentation

3.12.1 Job Analysis Form

3.12.2 Position Description Generic Templates

¹ A major research project undertaken by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and Business Council of Australia – the Victorian Chamber was a major participant and is a member of ACCI.