

# Developments in Business Simulation & Experiential Exercises, Volume 9, 1982

## JOB ENRICHMENT<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

This paper describes a structured exercise useful for introducing and promoting discussion on job enrichment and the design of jobs.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To determine participants' views of what has made them most and least productive in past work situations.
2. To compare participants' responses with Fred Herzberg's theory of motivation.
3. To explore with participants conditions under which the principles of job enrichment would likely be most and least effective.

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Over the last decade, the design of jobs has been increasingly viewed as a critical factor affecting employee performance and satisfaction (3; 8; 9). A prevalent view asserts that designing jobs using traditional industrial engineering principles stressing work simplification, specialization, and routinization strips jobs of their potential for satisfying and motivating work which causes many employees to become alienated and less productive. Herzberg and others argue that these jobs need to be redesigned and enriched with motivational factors to overcome and prevent the effects of traditional job design (1;2;4;5;6;7;10). This exercise is intended to help introduce the subject of job enrichment with specific focus on Fred Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Model.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Chalkboard, chalk and eraser or newsprint, felt tip marker and masking tape.
- A copy of the Performance Work Sheet for each participant.
- One pencil for each participant.
- Tables and chairs or other surfaces suitable for participants to write on.
- Total time for the exercise is 50 minutes - four groups of 5-7 participants.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. The facilitator distributes a copy of the Performance Work Sheet to each participant, reads the accompanying instructions, answers any clarifying questions and directs participants to make their lists. Appendix I contains a copy of the Performance Work Sheet.
2. After all participants have prepared their list, the facilitator forms participants into small groups. Each group is instructed to prepare from individual listings a composite list of important factors agreed upon by the group for the two areas of "best" and "less than best" performance. Subgroups are asked to be prepared to give an example from one member's experience for each factor.
3. The facilitator now asks each subgroup to select a spokesperson. Next the facilitator asks each spokesperson, one at a time, to give a factor from the group's "best" list and writes it on the chalkboard. Examples may be requested for clarification. The procedure is repeated in turn until their lists are exhausted or the process becomes redundant.
4. The facilitator repeats the above procedure for the "less than best" factors.
5. The facilitator now gives a brief presentation of Fred Herzberg's theory of motivation and then compares subgroup responses with Herzberg's "motivation" and "hygiene" factors.

### DEBRIEFING THE EXERCISE

This exercise has been used with a large number of college undergraduates and graduates as well as practicing middle and first line managers. In all but one instance, comparison of subgroup responses were highly consistent with Herzberg's work.

However, the author uses the debriefing to point out that these results are not definitive and explores with participants the conditions under which Herzberg's model and its practical application in job enrichment would likely be most and least effective. Even if the results of the exercise differ from those of Herzberg, this same procedure is appropriate. One may also wish to discuss with participants some criticisms of Fred Herzberg's original study.

My experience has been that the exercise is a fairly easy and straight forward one for heightening involvement and learning about job enrichment and related motivational theory and applications.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from an exercise entitled "Motivation to Work," whose authorship is unknown to this writer.

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## APPENDIX I

### Performance Work Sheet

- Task 1. Think back on your work experience to a time when you were performing at your very best. What were the factors that accounted for your high performance? List them. (5 minutes)
- Task2. Think back on your work experience to a time when you were performing at less than your best or poorly. What were the factors that accounted for this? List them. (5 minutes)

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