

JOB ENRICHMENT: CHALLENGE OF THE 70's

*making the work itself
motivational to meet
the needs of the
new era of the
motivated man*

One of the biggest questions facing industry today is the people question. Just how do we motivate employees to achieve the goals of a company and at the same time meet the employees' needs. The manager of today has a more difficult role because he frequently deals with partially automated jobs difficult to enrich.

What makes people work? At first glance the question seems elementary. Since the question was first posed fifty years ago, a definite answer has proved elusive for U.S. industry. In the past it was felt that employee motivation stemmed from a loyalty to an organization, and that productivity was increased by expanding fringe benefits: company softball teams, picnics, generous sick leave and vacation pay, etc.

It has been found that these practices are not working and that employee turnover is increasing every year. Young people are demanding a sense of participation and responsibility in the institutions of today's society. By 1980 the number of young adults in the population (20-34) will increase by 46% to 58.0 million as compared to 39.7 million today. More than two-thirds of the growth in the U.S. population will come from this group that is already striving to change the large organizations confronting them. This has already been seen in the universities and is now spreading to the corporation.

The Labor Department finds that 73.4 million job-holders surveyed last year had been on their jobs an average of 3.8 years, a decrease from 4.2 years in 1966 and 4.6 years in 1963. One reason for the shorter job tenure is the growing number of young people in the labor force. The average tenure for workers between 16 and 24 years old was only 8½ months in the latest survey. Men surveyed had spent an average of 4.8 years in their jobs, while the average woman had been in her position for half that long.

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SATISFACTION IN WORK

Lately, behavioral scientists have come to the conclusion that it is the Work

Itself that might be the problem and the key to job satisfaction. They say that too many jobs are divided and functionalized and that we do not use people to their maximum. As a job becomes familiar and routine, the person seeks challenge elsewhere. Jobs as we know them can be restructured into meaningful modules of work that are more satisfying. To be motivated, employees must have jobs that have opportunities for personal achievement, responsibility, recognition, growth and advancement. Each employee is challenged to grow and develop just as far as his abilities will take him. According to Frederick Herzberg of Case Western Reserve University, these are called long term motivators, as compared to working conditions, company policy, etc., that are maintenance items or non-motivators. Several companies recently involved in job enrichment experiments, have shown improvement in employee turnover and increased quantity and quality of work:

1. In the Shareholder Relations Department, with 120 correspondents, A.T.&T. was able to bring about a 27% reduction in the termination rate and a production cost savings of \$558,000, over a 12-month period. Since this initial effort in 1966, there have been 19 other formal studies and more than 10,000 employees in jobs ranging from Line Repairmen to Service Operators in which motivation changes have resulted in productivity increases.

In 12 districts where the program was first tried with service representatives, resignations and dismissals dropped by 14 percent. Applied on a System basis this improvement alone could mean an annual saving of \$10 million in operating costs.

2. In an assembly line work group of young women, all recent high school graduates, Texas Instrument Company was able to reduce considerably the assembly time for an intricate navigation instrument from a level significantly above "standard" (138

hours per unit) to an average production time in successive quarters of the year of 75 hours, 57 hours and finally to 32 hours per unit.

3. In the Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd. the "scientific contributions" of laboratory technicians and the productivity of salesmen were raised sharply over a period of 12 months. With one experimental group of salesmen, production increased 19 percent over the previous year. During the same period, salesmen in two control groups were producing 5% less than the previous year.

In each of these situations, a key factor was a carefully planned and executed program to modify the participant's job to make better use of the individual's capabilities, providing him with an understandable task over which he could exercise greater control and have some means of being aware of this progress.

THE BELL SYSTEM PROGRAM

By far the most successful experiment was the Bell System's program under the direction of Dr. Robert N. Ford. Their approach is two-fold:

1. The management team of a particular unit was recalled for a period of two days. The first half-day was spent in learning the motivation theory and how it applied to employees. The rest of the day was spent thinking of items that could be included in the job as motivators. The second day was spent in revising the list and planning the implementation.
2. The second part was the implementation of the items and the application of the theory. This is probably 90% of the job and requires professional help. The companies used several "Key Men," specially trained in the details of the implementation process. They worked with the management team on subsequent meetings and consulted on a regular basis.

JOB ENRICHMENT

The jobs were viewed in terms of vertical loading vis-a-vis horizontal loading. The difference between horizontal and vertical loading is that horizontal loading is simply the enlarging of the job or the rearranging of its parts, while failing to make it more challenging to the human abilities of the workers.

Horizontal loading does not enrich the task. The purpose of job enrichment is to vertically load the job providing true work motivation by improving the work itself, that is, feeding into the task additional opportunity for motivation so that employees have the opportunity to reach their full potential. This was accomplished in the following manner:

THE TASK	THE MOTIVATOR INVOLVED
a. Giving a person a whole, natural unit of work (module, exchange district, division, area, etc.).	Responsibility, achievement and recognition.
b. Assigning specific or specialized tasks to individuals, enabling them to become experts.	Responsibility, growth and advancement.
c. Making periodic reports directly available to the worker himself rather than to the supervisor.	Internal recognition.
d. Increasing the accountability of individuals for own work.	Responsibility and recognition.

Some specific items are mentioned here and categorized under the motivators. Most of these could be applied to any office or group of people. These items are by no means complete and merely give examples of what we are discussing.

ACHIEVEMENT

Giving the employee a sense of achievement might mean letting him participate in decisions and functions usually delegated to management. Employees want goals and the satisfaction of attaining them.

- Make decisions about one's own work.
- Sign forms and approve items formerly left up to management.
- Make decisions previously made by management.

- Discuss with employee various objectives in the job environment that are possible to reach. This might be done by breaking down overall objectives to individual ones.

RECOGNITION

Today's employee wants to be recognized for a job well done. Satisfaction stems from many sources: internal, supervisors and customers. An important aspect of the effectiveness of recognition for producing high job attitudes is some achievement as a basis for the recognition:

- Recognize consistently.
- Relate the recognition to task-oriented accomplishments rather than

the human relations approach.

- Establish a reward system based on recognition for accomplishment.
- Recognition is best accomplished by giving employee a higher order task or promotion.

WORK ITSELF

For a job to be satisfying, it must have tasks that are motivators:

- Have clerks personalize letters instead of using a standardized form-letter approach.
- Frequently direct an individual's work to the customer, bypassing the supervisor. This procedure relieves a dependency on the supervisor, in addition to giving a sense of responsibility and personal achievement.
- Review work of experienced employees less frequently than those of inex-

perienced ones. The experienced employee will be more accountable for his work and have a feeling of achievement and responsibility.

- Appoint a subject matter expert within a particular unit. The other members would consult with the expert before seeking supervisory help.
- Advise an employee after training that he will be held fully accountable for his work, instead of depending on supervisors.

RESPONSIBILITY

The employee is allowed to work without supervision being responsible for his own and the work of others:

- Instead of working on a mass of non-defined work with overlapping responsibility, a module might be set up designating total responsibility within certain areas.
- Re-structure the job enabling the employee to have as much of the total as possible. Separate functions might be joined so that employee has complete responsibility for a given item of work.
- Responsibility must be combined with accountability and feedback on individual performance.

GROWTH AND LEARNING:

Most employees want to grow in their jobs and advance to a higher order task:

- They will work considerably harder in an environment that gives them an opportunity to grow as individuals in their jobs.
- Supervisors must structure the job so that the growth opportunity is present.
- The goal of personal growth must be posited by allowing the freedom and tools to attain it.
- An employee's growth can be viewed as a building block with the lowest order of task on the bottom and the highest order on top. During this process the employee must be given feedback and full accountability.

MAN AND MACHINES

The challenge of job enrichment becomes even more difficult when we look at the revolutionary changes involved with the computer. As the computer becomes more complex, the human function becomes routine and tends toward the functional. Machines are being designed with no thought to the needs of the individual operating it. The automation of a routine task makes eminent sense as our individual capacities increase. Although not keeping pace with the computer, humans too are progressing. Young people are more sophisticated and smarter than their elders and will not accept the denuded jobs offered them. Tomorrow's manager will not assume that a computer-related job is intrinsically desirable and will look instead at the job itself - that is, the presence of the motivators.

On the other hand, when management has enriched the job task, he will be able to use cybernated activities to allow freedom from normal supervisory controls. The feedback becomes more sophisticated, and if used with proper guidelines can lead to motivation and the setting of personal goals by employees. In this way the supervisor becomes the developer rather than the super checker. An awareness of this fact can save millions of dollars in the designing of computer systems and programs. During the next decade, business information systems will be in the planning stage and in some quarters, they will be planned from management's point of view. The function of the real user and client must be defined. Is it the person actually doing the work or is it the manager who presumes what the user wants?

By relegating decisions downward and giving responsibility where it belongs, people will participate in decisions usually left up to management. Might the real user influence the designer of the specifications? When we plan our computer program and the human jobs associated with it, the human aspect cannot be forgotten. The best people to plan a new job are those most familiar with it.

ERA OF THE MOTIVATED MAN

When the complexity of today's automated society and the demands of its youth are considered, a calculated risk on a proven theory of work is imperative. For the first time in history, there are more jobs than people. The employee today can choose his job. He will remain with the company offering him the best chance for meaningful work.

We have passed the era of the organization and economic man, and we are now in the era of the motivated man. We must meet that challenge.

We're Sorry we didn't meet you at the convention.

Either we just missed you, or you weren't there at all. What we wanted to tell you is this:

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HAVE YOUR RESUME...
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SIDERED FOR SOME OF
OUR CURRENT OPENINGS
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