**Job Design – Line Manager Guide**

The following key factors need to be taken into consideration when designing roles:

**Variety**

Greater variety in a job can improve the role holder's interest, challenge and commitment to the task. Doing the same repetitive tasks may offer little challenge and can lead to role holders losing interest or becoming dissatisfied.

Variety means more than simply adding an extra but similar duty. For example, processing different forms would not make the work more meaningful as there may be no extra challenge. Therefore, some other types of relevant activity may be worthwhile incorporating into the job.

Alternatively, too much variety can also be frustrating and a source of conflict and dissatisfaction. The optimum amount of mixture will differ from person to person and will depend on the level of the position, and the needs of the job.

**Responsibility**

Individuals need to feel responsible for their work, individually or as part of a team. Their work should be clearly identified so they can see that they are personally accountable for the outcomes (successes and failures) that result from their actions.

If the responsibilities are clear, then the role holder and their supervisor will be better able to know if the position’s accountabilities are being delivered. The employee should be able to understand the significance of the work they undertake and where it fits into the organisation’s purpose.

**Autonomy**

This goes hand in hand with responsibility. Autonomy means giving more scope to individuals to regulate and control their own work within the parameters set for the job. The role holder will need to have some areas of decision-making that they can call their own, within the overall framework of their job. For example, this might include scope for exercising some discretion over their method of working to deliver.

**Task Identity**

Individuals often receive more satisfaction from doing a ‘whole’ piece of work. This is more likely to occur when a task or job has a distinct beginning and end which is clearly apparent to the role holder and others who work around them. It is highly desirable that people see the end results of the work they have produced, either on their own or as a part of a team.

**Feedback**

Everyone benefits from information on how they are doing and this helps role holders feel motivated and contributes to their development in the role.

Providing genuine feedback is primarily the responsibility of the line manager and can be built into the formal working relationship through, for example, regular Check-In meetings to discuss work objectives.

**Participation in Decision Making**

Most people want to take part in decision-making about matters that directly affect their work. As a result of experience, they also have considerable potential to contribute. People are, generally, far more likely to act upon and own decisions that they have had a part in making. Being told about matters affecting people and the job they undertake is clearly better than no communication at all, but it doesn't allow for effective involvement which in itself can be motivational. Interchange of ideas is better still and unless people can participate in the discussion of matters that affect their work, they may not be satisfied in their job, or contribute to their full potential. Participation and contribution to wider-ranging issues can be encouraged through things like institutional meetings and specialist subject discussions.

**Recognition and Support**

People usually aspire to have jobs contributing to self-respect, particularly through acceptance and recognition by fellow workers and supervisors. Jobs need to encourage sound working relationships between individuals, provide clearly defined areas of responsibility, and support teamworking where possible. This can reduce an individual's feeling of isolation, which may result in negative feelings about work and the workplace.

**Working Environment**

A job must be designed to support a safe and healthy working environment that is inclusive, non-discriminatory, free from harassment and occupational health and safety hazards.

**Summary**

The following questions may be useful to consider when designing a job:

* How suitable is the amount of variety in the position?
* How much responsibility is there in the position?
* How much opportunity does the position give for autonomy?
* To what extent are the duties and tasks to be performed ‘whole’ tasks?
* How much feedback is provided about performance?
* How much opportunity is provided for participating in decisions?
* To what extent does the position provide for support and recognition?
* Is there a safe and healthy work environment?

The following checklist may also be helpful in the process of job design:

**Does the Position:**

* Carry out tasks using a range of knowledge and skills?
* Have clear objectives?
* Combine a variety of tasks which together form a coherent whole?
* Constitute a significant contribution to the total function of the organisation, which can be readily communicated to the staff member?
* Provide problem solving opportunities, appropriate developmental growth potential and a reasonable degree of challenge?
* Allow for an appropriate level of discretion and decision making by the role holder?
* Optimise the utilisation of existing skills?
* Optimise potential for the acquisition of new skills which improve opportunities for career development?
* Incorporate working arrangements that provide for tasks covering a variety of subject matters, pace and method of work, experience and training?
* Ensure in its design, the job is directly responsive to the needs of the organisation?
* Assure occupational health and safety and the well-being of the role holder within the design of the job?
* Achieve physical and social integration with other positions and staff in the workplace?
* Achieve neutrality in relation to assumptions about sex, race or other possible discriminatory factors unless a particular job needs this?