

10 Misconceptions about Job Evaluation

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[Job evaluation](#) is a process that establishes a rank order of jobs based on the relative importance of each job to the organisation. The more critical jobs will be ranked higher than the less important jobs. The result in any job evaluation exercise is the design of an [equitable pay structure](#). If you are familiar with job evaluation projects, you may have noticed that organizations can spend money on job evaluation, but results are not implemented. In my view, the non-implementation of job evaluation results from the key stakeholders having misconceptions about job evaluation and what it should achieve. Here are some of the misconceptions I have discovered in my experience leading job evaluation projects:

1. There is a misconception that when people are being interviewed to create a job description, they must put qualifications and experience they hold as the incumbent. The correct position is that the [job description](#) used in job evaluation should capture the primary duties and responsibilities of the job and the minimum qualifications required for someone to perform that job competently. It does not matter whether the incumbent holds higher qualifications and experience than the minimum. They must always put the minimum qualifications and experience required to do the job competently. If this process is not handled correctly, it could lead to an inflation of grades. The inflation of grades would lead to individuals occupying those grades being overpaid.
2. There is a misconception that job evaluation evaluates the volume of work that someone handles. That misconception leads people to think that their job should be graded higher if they handle large volumes of work. The correct position is that a job evaluation process is concerned with grading the job minus the person who holds that job. If the person handles a high volume of work, that issue should be raised outside the realm of job evaluation.
3. Some people think that job evaluation evaluates the performance and ability of the job holder. This is not correct, as the job evaluation process is not concerned with the performance or ability of the job holder. As outlined above, the job evaluation process evaluates the job without considering any attributes of the job holder. When conducting a job evaluation, always be on the lookout for people who mention people's names when evaluating a particular job. Considering the attributes of jobholders in the job evaluation process leads to the improper grading of jobs.
4. People often create the hype around job evaluation because they think it will lead to lucrative salary adjustments. While this is possible that some individuals may end up having their salaries adjusted, this is not the ultimate goal of job evaluation. When job evaluation results are presented, and people do not get huge increases, the evaluation process often gets discredited. When leading a job evaluation project, clarify that the process will not result in salary adjustments. A job evaluation exercise aims to create internal equity among various jobholders. The job evaluation can result in two scenarios happening when it is combined with the pay structure. One scenario is that there may be a few individuals who were over graded and ending being overpaid. If you get such individuals, you put them in the correct

grade, but you do not reduce their salaries. This is what is often referred to as the "person to holder" roles or grades. With time, such people will fall into the acceptable [salary range](#). The second scenario is where certain roles were under-graded. Such positions often get a minor adjustment to put them in the correct salary range. To achieve this kind of perfection, always utilise [compa- ratios calculations](#) by individual employees.

5. There are others out there who believe a job evaluation is a tool used for restructuring. They often look at the realignment of wrongly graded jobs as a way of restructuring. The correct position is that job evaluation is not a restructuring exercise, and it should not be used as a restructuring exercise. Inexperienced managers or executives may use the job evaluation process to start a restructuring exercise, but that is wrong and should be stopped.

6. Others think that all the people who fall in the same grade after job evaluation must earn the same salary. This is a wrong understanding of the purpose of job evaluation and [pay structuring](#). After job evaluation has been completed and accepted by the stakeholders, the next step is to design a pay structure. A pay structure has a range of salaries per grade. The salary range allows the organisation to differentiate the salaries of individual employees based on performance. In some cases, other organisations differentiate employees based on qualifications and level of experience.

7. There is a big misconception around who should sit on the job evaluation committee. Here organisations make big mistakes when constituting the grading committee by taking members of the workers' committee and an equal number of the managers. Once the job evaluation committee is set that way, it becomes adversarial. The committee goes into the job grading exercise to bargain for grades and not objectively grade the jobs. A job evaluation committee should be set up as a project team given a task to grade jobs objectively. Its members must be drawn from employees across the levels of the organisation based on their knowledge of the organisation. If workers committee members happen to be selected, it should be by coincidence and not by design. Once you do it this way, you will realise the project will go well and be accepted by the key stakeholders.

8. Others get selected to be on the job evaluation committee, but unfortunately, they promise people that they will push for their jobs to be in higher grades. If the job evaluation committee is selected well and with a clear mandate and terms of reference, which everyone must sign, no individual member of the job evaluation committee can influence any grade.

9. Others think that the job evaluation process is a waste of time because the grades are predetermined in advance. If you find any management team that invests in job evaluation and then predetermines the grades, it's useless management probably already running down the organisation. Any inclusive and open job evaluation process has no room to predetermine grades.

10. Others in leadership think that job evaluation will address low pay and make the organization's pay competitive. This is not true. Job evaluation has nothing to do with the competitiveness of your remuneration. However, once job evaluation has been completed, pay competitiveness can be checked when designing a pay structure.

The above misconceptions, if not addressed, can derail a noble job evaluation project. As you plan for your next job evaluation project, ensure that these issues are addressed.

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