

Everything you need to know about Job Analysis

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What is job analysis?

As Oswald (2003), put it *job analysis* may be viewed as the hub of virtually all human resource management activities necessary for the successful functioning of organizations. According to Palmer & Valet (2001), [job analysis](#) is focused on the collection of work-related information for the job as it currently exists and/or has existed in the past. Ash (2002), stated that the procedure involves undertaking a systematic investigation of jobs by following several predetermined steps specified in advance of the analysis. The end product of *job analysis* is a document that summarizes information about the various job tasks or activities examined. This information is then used by HR managers in developing [job descriptions](#) and [job specifications](#), which in turn are used to guide performance and to enhance different HR functions, such as developing [performance appraisal](#) criteria or the content of training classes (Clifford 1994). The ultimate purpose of a job analysis is to improve organizational performance and productivity.

What factors trigger the need for job analysis?

The need for job analysis is triggered by so many factors that include but not limited to:

- [restructuring](#), downsizing, mergers, or rapid growth initiates job analysis.
- job content has undergone undocumented changes.
- new job demands arise and the nature of the work changes
- need to determine the appropriate compensation.
- automation, and such organizational transformations as a move from a quantity to a quality strategy or a change in emphasis from production to service.

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Related: [The importance of Job Analysis](#)

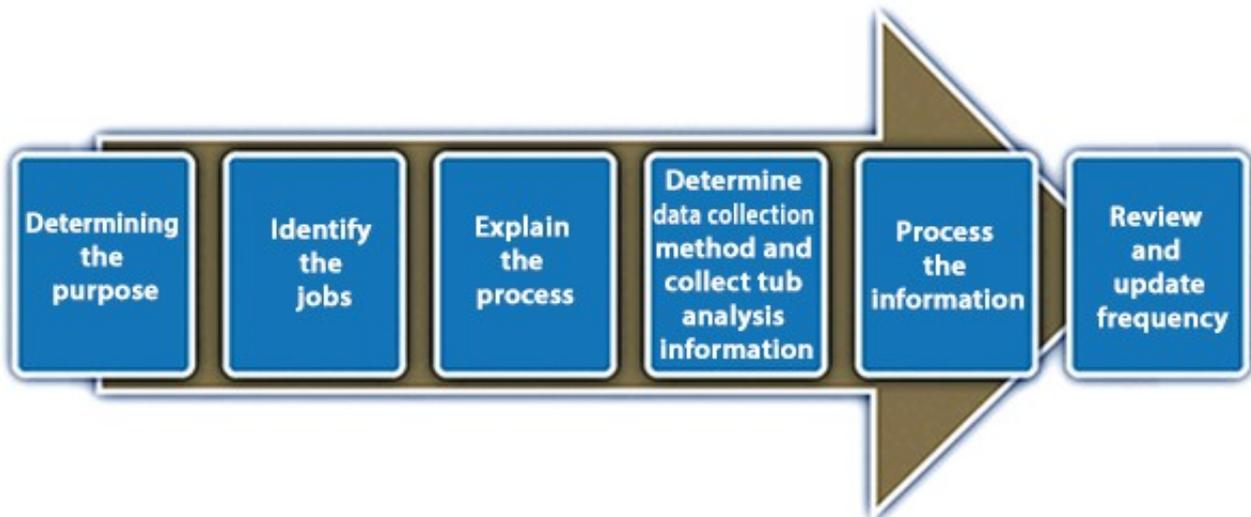
Why is job analysis important?

It is the consensus among most researchers that job analysis is the backbone and cornerstone of each human resource activity. *Job analysis* is one of the most important activities of [human resource management](#) and can perform multi-functions. According to Clifford (1994), companies that regularly conduct *job analysis* possess a much better knowledge of their strengths and limitations and can take timely corrective action to improve any deficiencies in their skills and job behavior. Sanchez and Levine discussed in 2000 that erroneous practice of the *job analysis* may affect other HR activities based on it. According to Bowin & Harvey (2001), job analysis is a strategic HRM practice linked with organizational performance.

An overwhelming body of literature reveals that *job analysis* has provided an informational base for a wide variety of organizational and managerial functions, including among others, selection and staffing (Cariess, 2007, Gatewood & Feild, 1994; Jenkins & Griffith, 2004; Schofield, 1993; Wernimont, 1988; WiJde,1993), training and development(Campbell,1989; Mitchell, Ruck, & Driskill,1988; Wooten, 1993), performance appraisal (Latham & Fry, 1988), [compensation and benefits](#) (Henderson, 1988; Taber & Peters, 1991; Weinberger, 1989), job descriptions and job design.

What is the Process of Job Analysis?

Steps of Job Analysis



The process of conducting a job analysis involves many steps. The [process of a job analysis](#) typically begins with a description of the major job functions, the activities in which a job incumbent regularly engages—the reasons why the job exists.

Step.1. Determine the Purpose of the Job Analysis

The purpose of conducting the analysis should be explicit and tied to the organization's overall business strategy to increase the probability of a successful *job analysis* program.

Step.2. Identify the jobs to be analysed

All jobs are analyzed if no previous formal job analysis has been performed. If the organization has undergone changes that have affected only certain jobs or if new jobs have been added, then only those jobs are analyzed.

Step.3. Explain the process to employees and determine their level of Involvement

Employees should be informed of who will conduct the analysis, why the analysis is needed, whom to contact to answer questions and concerns when the analysis will take place, and what roles they are expected to play in the process. In addition to receiving good communication, employees may elect a committee to serve as a verification check and to reduce anxiety. Such a committee can also help answer employee questions and concerns.

Step.4. Collect the Job Analysis Information

Managers must decide which method or combination of methods will be used and how the information will be collected.

Step.5. Organize the job analysis information into a form that will be useful to managers and employees

This form consists of [job descriptions](#) and job specifications. The job descriptions can vary from very broad to very specific and precise; the level of detail depends on the needs of the organization. The job specifications must be linked directly to the job description—that is, they must be relevant to the job.

Step.6. Review and update the job analysis information frequently

Particularly in a dynamic environment, jobs seldom go unchanged for long periods. Even if no major changes have occurred within the organization, a complete review of all jobs should be performed every three years (Mathis and Jackson 1985). More frequent reviews are necessary when major organizational changes occur.

Approaches to Job Analysis

There are several different methods that can be used to collect information because it is unlikely that any one method will provide all of the necessary data needed for a *job analysis*.

1. Self-Report

The most obvious and readily available sources of information about a job are the incumbents currently holding that job. All too often, however, incumbent reports are the only source used to analyze a job, because this approach is subject to attempts to inflate the importance of one's job and a variety of other contaminating influences. This is especially the case when incumbents are asked to prepare in writing their job description with few guidelines and little supervision.

2. Direct Observations

Many jobs can be studied by observing an incumbent performing the job. To reduce the “audience effect” of having an intrusive observer involved, a video camera can be used to record an incumbent doing the job. Direct observation, however, is most useful with jobs that involve obvious physical

activity, activities that are the core of the job. For primarily cognitive jobs, direct observation provides little useful data. For instance, observing a market analyst or a theoretical physicist at work would provide us with little information about the nature of their work.

3. Interviews

Employees who are knowledgeable about a particular job (i.e., the employee holding the job, supervisors, or former jobholders) may be interviewed concerning the specific work activities of the job. Usually, a structured interview form is used to record information. The questions correspond to the data needed to prepare a job description and job specification. The limitations of self-report and direct observation have led to the use of interviews as the most widely used approach to job analysis. These interviews must be conducted by a skilled, trained interviewer who has both some understanding of the job being analyzed and the nature of work in general, as these provide the necessary background for asking questions and probing answers for more detailed and complete answers from those being interviewed.

4. Document Reviews

The archives of most organizations contain a variety of documents that are useful in conducting job analyses. These include analyses of output, performance appraisals, reports by both internal auditors and external consultants about workplace issues, and prior job descriptions. Customer complaint records are another highly useful source about employee job behaviors that are of particular importance to customers. Internal memoranda about unusual events, difficulties encountered by workers on a job, or problems in recruiting applicants for a particular job, among many such issues, can provide worthwhile insights into a job

5. Questionnaires and Surveys

Using a *job analysis* questionnaire can substantially reduce the burden on incumbents and Subject Matter Experts for developing the information needed for a job analysis. Instead of starting from scratch, those involved in providing information about the job answer a series of questions about the job. The job analyst typically asks the respondents individually to rate the importance of a variety of tasks in the job under scrutiny. The next step is to pick out from a list of the requirements necessary to perform, and, finally, to identify the range of job performance using a rating scale. Among the more widely used structured questionnaires are the *Position Analysis Questionnaire*, the *Management Position Description Questionnaire*, and the *Functional Job Analysis*.

6. The Occupational Information Network (O*NET)

It is the database of job descriptions that provides employee attributes and job characteristics, such as [skills](#), [abilities](#), [knowledge](#), tasks, work activities, and experience-level requirements. The database is continually updated and is useful for a variety of HR activities, including job analysis, employee selection, [career counseling](#), and employee training

Types of Job Analysis

1. Strategic Job Analysis

The goal of a strategic job analysis is a specification of the tasks to be performed and the [knowledge, skills, and abilities \(KSAs\)](#) required for effective performance for a job as it is predicted to exist in the future. Any time frame for the future may be an appropriate frame of reference since this may vary as a function of the job in question and as a function of known or predicted strategic redirection of the organization.

The approach taken here is called “Multimethod Job Analysis”. In a seminal paper, Schneider and Konz (1989) build on traditional job-analytic approaches in what they term a "multi-method job analysis" procedure. There is nothing particularly unique in their eight-step approach until the stage of collecting information about the future and revising tasks and KSAs in light of future expected changes. The eight stages identified are:

1. collect information on the current job;
2. specify job tasks and build task clusters;
3. develop and administer task surveys;
4. conduct statistical analysis of task survey responses;
5. conduct the knowledge, skills, and abilities process;
6. develop and administer the KSA surveys;
7. gather information about the future; and,
8. revise tasks and/or task clusters, and KSAs and/or KSA clusters in light of future changes.

2. Functional Job Analysis

Functional Job Analysis (Fine, 1989, Fine & Cronshaw, 1999), specifies (1) an action verb, which describes the action performed in observable terms; (2) the outcomes or results of that action; (3) the tools or other equipment used; and (4) the amount of discretion allowed the worker in that action. Olson, Fine, Myers, and Jennings (1981) are credited for discussing the purpose and process of this technique. They state that the first one needs to examine the purpose and the goals of the work being done. These goals are then broken down into smaller tasks and responsibilities. Through this process, what an individual does and how he or she does it is discovered. The specific tasks and responsibilities of the job are then well documented so that the analysis may be used in the future in a variety of contexts.

3. Personality-Based-Job Analysis

Job analysis has traditionally been used in personnel psychology to determine which knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs) are important for successful job performance. Although personality characteristics such as conscientiousness play an important role in job performance across jobs (see Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001 for a second-order meta-analytic review), personality characteristics are usually excluded from job analytic studies (Hogan, 1998). This oversight has led some researchers to propose using a *personality-based job analysis* (PBJA) instrument in conjunction with traditional job analysis instruments to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the requirements for a job. A search of the literature only turned up four published studies that specifically addressed PBJA. The earliest study, conducted by Arneson 276 JOURNAL OF BUSINESS AND PSYCHOLOGY (1988), used a checklist called the Worker Characteristics Inventory (WCI) to identify the personality characteristics that are important for performing a job. More recently, Su`mer, Su`mer, Demirutku, and C, (2001) used PBJA to identify personality traits required for Turkish armed forces officer job performance. Based on a content analysis of subject matter expert (SME) responses during a semi-structured interview, 79 personality traits were identified as relevant to successful job performance.

In another study, Jenkins and Griffith (2002), found that a test developed to reflect the results of the Personal Requirements Survey (a PBJA technique) had higher criterion-related validity and more positive applicant reactions than an off-the-shelf personality measure (i.e., the 16PF). Finally, Raymark, Schmit, and Guion (1997a) developed the Personality Position Requirements Form (PPRF) as a tool that can be used to assess and identify aspects of work that could be related to personality. The authors reported that the PPRF instrument has been successfully used to generate hypotheses regarding which personality traits are related to successful performance on the job and in training.

4. The Critical Incident Technique

According to Flanagan (1954), the critical incident technique is another method of collecting information about a job. With this method, the researcher gains information about examples of positive and negative performance for a job.

5. Competency-Based Job Analysis

The competency model technique is a popular form of *job analysis today*. A [competency](#) is an underlying characteristic of a person that results ineffective and/or superior performance on the job. It is also a cluster of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that affects one's job performance (Athey and Orth 1999). Competencies are focused on strategic goals and organizational outcome measures. One popular two-level competency model distinguishes "can do" competencies (skills and knowledge derived from education and experience) from "will do" competencies (personality and attitudinal characteristics that reflect an individual's willingness to perform) (Schippmann 1999).

6. Work Oriented Job Analysis

In work-oriented [job analysis](#), the researcher examines the tasks and duties of a job.

7. Worker-Oriented job analysis

In worker-oriented job analysis researchers focus on collecting information on the [KSAOs](#) that are important for a job. The Fleishman Job Analysis Survey (Fleishman & Reilly, 1992) is an example of a worker-oriented job analysis instrument. Another example of a worker-oriented job analysis technique is PBJA, which is used to identify which personality characteristics are important for a particular job.

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