

## How to manage a Job Evaluation Project

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[Job evaluation](#) assesses the relative worth of a job in a particular organization. The keyword is the relative value of a job to a specific organization. This means the role grades are not transferable. Some organizations that have embarked on job evaluation may not implement the results for various reasons. My assessment is that such disastrous ends result from the poor management of a job evaluation project.

As long as you employ staff at some stage, you need a job evaluation system in your organisation. The job evaluation system, when implemented well, can bring immense value to the organisation. The opposite is also true. When a job evaluation project is mismanaged, it can bring serious industrial relations problems. At the same time, I have observed the emporia when a job evaluation project is enounced. I have also noticed that very few organisations have a structure for managing the process.

It is also important to note that all job evaluation results must be ultimately be linked to some form of pay structure. If you carry out a job evaluation and fail to link it to a [pay structure](#), you will have wasted time and money. The end game in job evaluation is an equitable and competitive pay structure or pay framework.

### Below I share key issues you need to note as you implement your job evaluation project

1. Why would an organization embark on a job evaluation project? There are many reasons. Here are some of the noble reasons why an organisation should embark on a job evaluation project:
  - a. The organisation has gone through a restructuring that has affected the content of jobs.
  - b. The employee population has lost confidence in the current system due to mismanagement of the system.
  - c. When the organisation has grown enough to warrant having a job evaluation system.
  - d. When many new jobs have been added to the structures.

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Some organizations embark on a job evaluation for political reasons, e.g., fixing one to two people they do not like. Imagine the cost that an organization can go through to fix individuals. I do not think there is any other noble reason besides the ones I have given above.

2. Choosing a job evaluation system – Who selects the job evaluation system for you? Is it the Consultant, or it's yourself? Be extremely careful when selecting the system. Most of the systems on the market are all the same. As you may be aware, the correlation between major job evaluation systems is over 90%(0.9). From my experience, the system you choose is immaterial to the success of a job evaluation project. I urge you not to waste time debating on which system to use.

3. Inception meeting – at this inception meeting, the Consultant and the client must agree on the approach and key deliverables expected from this exercise. It would help if you lay out the project scope. You must agree on key success indicators for the project. One way to approach this initial stage of the project is for the Consultant to present to the executive team to enable both parties to raise any issues of concern before the Consultant can produce an inception report. The inception report will also outline the full work plan for the project. Both parties must sign off this important document.

4. As part of the work plan, the initial work should incorporate a change management framework as the whole project involves many changes. Including this will ensure that the outcome of the process is accepted by key stakeholders, such as the Workers Committee and the generality of the employees.

5. Risk Management framework – At the onset, you must ensure a project risk management framework is in place. This framework will ensure that all the risks in a job evaluation project are taken care of as the project is in motion. Here are some of the risks that may immerge as the project is running:

a. Lack of buy-in from key stakeholders – As part of the project, set aside a full day to train key managers and the worker's committee members. The training must focus on reasons for undertaking this project and detailed training on the chosen job evaluation system. The aim here is that these key stakeholders must be knowledgeable enough to such an extent that they can advocate for the project and the system chosen. Besides these, set aside half-day to train employees on the same. Train employees in groups on the aims of the project. Include detailed training on the selected system, e.g. the Castellion system. All this is meant to ensure that every employee hears about the project's thrust direct from the Consultant.

b. After (a) above, developing job descriptions is the second biggest risk to any job evaluation project. From my experience, this process is poorly done, mostly out of ignorance by both managers and employees. Who is going to do the job analysis to enable the preparation of job descriptions? My view is that if your industrial relations is characterized by high trust, the Consultant can train an internal job analyst to carry out the job analysis. If there is mistrust between employees and management, use the Consultant to conduct a job analysis. The major risk in this process is employees inflating their duties because they know job evaluation results will ultimately be linked to pay. I find it most annoying when managers approve the job descriptions before checking, only to complain when the grade is announced. I will advise you to spend 80% of your time fine-tuning the job descriptions before you embark on the actual job evaluation.

c. Job evaluation Committee or Consultant - The choice between using a Consultant team to evaluate jobs or using an internal team largely depends on the relations between employees and management. A Consultant would come in handy when there is low trust between the parties. An internal job evaluation committee would work very well when there is high trust in the organisation. If you make a wrong choice here, this could bring disastrous consequences.

d. Expectations that job evaluation will lead to pay increases – There is a general misconception that a job evaluation system would lead to salary increases. This is not always the case. Salary adjustments can arise when an organisation is less competitive and decides to address this at this stage. They may choose to continue with their market pay position even if not competitive. Salary adjustments can also arise if many roles were undergraded in the previous grading system. Remember, the ultimate aim of a job evaluation project is to bring equity in grades and pay and not to adjust salaries. If this message is not communicated clearly at the onset, you may end up with the employees rejecting the job evaluation results.

e. Transfer of knowledge – Before the end of the job evaluation project, ensure that the Consultant has trained enough employees who will sit on a job evaluation committee as you go into the future. This committee must have clear terms of reference, including selecting people of high integrity into the committee.

6. Get acceptance of the job grading results first before proceeding to a pay structure. Once the job grading is completed, present the results first to senior management and then to the rest of the employees. Open a window for employees to launch appeals if aggrieved by the outcome. Be very clear on the terms of reference for the appeal process.

7. If the Consultant is knowledgeable, they should design a pay structure to support the job evaluation process. The Consultant should develop various pay structure options based on the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, and 75<sup>th</sup>. As an employer, choose the option that will allow you to pay competitive salaries that are affordable and sustainable.

8. Document the whole process you followed. In addition, the Consultant should share with you the job evaluation policy and pay structure administration policy.

These are not all the risks you will face in a job evaluation project. Instead, I shared with you the key and high-priority risks. If you take care of these risks, your project should run smoothly and bring value to your organization.

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