# What is job enrichment – How does it affect performance at work?

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Job enrichment involves providing an employee with more responsibility for a job and challenges the individual's skills at work. Enrichment involves increasing the decision-making authority and encouraging the employee with their tasks.  Providing employees with meaningful tasks will increase their performance compared to just 'pilling' on a lot of work and increasing the same type of work-load.

Job enrichment directly relates to motivation factors and employee satisfaction.  The concept of job enrichment was developed by Fredrik Herzberg in the 1950s. Previous studies have shown that job enrichment causes significant increases in employee job satisfaction, job involvement and increased internal motivation. Decreases in absenteeism was also found to be a result of increased job enrichment (Orpen, 1979).

Herzberg suggested the strategy of job enrichment and restructuring job roles in order to increase motivation at work. The ongoing process of increasing the intrinsic motivators for individuals at work has shown to increase productivity. However, this approach to job enrichment should be tailored to the specific person and the job role. This might be difficult in large organizations, but employees in companies should be treated as individuals. Providing individuals with separate choices regarding the design of their jobs, offering personalized programs for compensation, allowing flexible hours are some examples of job enrichment. Hackman and Lawler (1971) suggest that internal motivational factors have to be considered when discussing performance at work, not just the reinforcement factors of external rewards (e.g salary increase).

However, some studies have shown that performance at work is not directly related to increased job enrichment. Other factors of the job have to be considered when discussing the effect of enrichment on performance (Orpen, 1979).

References

Hackman, JR., Lawler, EE., (1971) Employee reactions to job characteristics. Journal of AppliedPsychology Monograph, 1971, 55, p 259-286.

Orpen, C. (1979). The Effects of Job Enrichment on Employee Satisfaction, Motivation, Involvement, and Performance: A Field Experiment. Human relations, 32 (3), p. 189.