

Questions for Review

1. What is the job characteristics model? How does it motivate employees?

Answer: The job characteristics model is the Hackman and Oldham's concept that any job can be described through five core job dimensions:

- a. Skill variety – Requirements for different tasks in the job
- b. Task identity – Completion of a whole piece of work
- c. Task significance – The job's impact on others
- d. Autonomy – Level of discretion in decision making.
- e. Feedback – Amount of direct and clear information on performance

The way elements in a job are organized (job design) impacts motivation, satisfaction, and performance.

2. What are the three major ways that jobs can be redesigned? In your view, in what situations would one of the methods be favored over the others?

Answer: Job Rotation - The periodic shifting of a worker from one task to another

Job Enlargement - The horizontal expansion of jobs

Job Enrichment - The vertical expansion of jobs

Job enrichment would be favored when employees need to be able to handle a customer issue from start to finish. Individuals can feel more of a sense of accomplishment and accountability while becoming an expert in a number of areas.

3. What are the three alternative work arrangements of flextime, job sharing, and telecommuting? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

Answer:

- a. Flextime - Employees work during a common core time period each day but have discretion in forming their total workday from a flexible set of hours outside the core.
- b. Job Sharing - The practice of having two or more people split a 40-hour-a-week job
- c. Telecommuting - Employees do their work at home at least two days a week on a computer that is linked to their office.

The advantages are that each offers alternative work options so flexibility can be built into an employee's schedule. They all often reduce absenteeism and turnover for a company. Flextime is not applicable to every job. It reduces traffic congestion, increases autonomy, increases productivity, etc. Job sharing allows a company to use more than one person for a job and increases flexibility. The drawback is locating compatible workers. Telecommuting allows companies to select from a larger labor pool. It increases productivity, reduces turnover, improves morale, and reduces office-space costs. The downside is the lack of direct supervision of employees by managers. Also, feelings of worker isolation can be a problem.

4. What are employee involvement programs? How might they increase employee motivation?

Answer: Employee involvement programs are a participative process that uses the input of employees to increase their commitment to the organization's success. They can increase motivation by increasing worker autonomy and control over their work lives/involvement in organizations through programs like participative management, representative participation like work councils and quality circles, a group that regularly meets to discuss their quality programs and take corrective actions.

5. What is variable pay? What are the variable-pay programs that are used to motivate employees? What are their advantages and disadvantages?

Answer:

- a. Variable pay is a portion of an employee's pay that is based on some individual and/or organizational measure of performance.
 - b. Piece Rate:
 - i. Workers are paid a fixed sum for each unit of production completed.
 - ii. Weakness: not feasible for many jobs
 - c. Merit-Based:
 - i. Based on performance appraisal ratings
 - ii. Gap increasing between average and top performers
 - iii. Weaknesses: validity of system based on annual appraisals, pay pool can be small, unions strongly resist
 - d. Bonuses:
 - i. Rewards recent performance
 - ii. Weakness: employees consider this a pay
6. How can flexible benefits motivate employees?
- Answer:** Flexible benefits allow employees to tailor their benefit program to meet their personal need by picking and choosing from a menu of benefit options. Consistent with expectancy theory, flexible benefits individualize rewards by allowing each employee to select the benefits that fit his or her current needs.
7. What are the motivational benefits of intrinsic rewards?
- Answer:** Intrinsic rewards stimulate intrinsic motivation through personal attention given to employee approval and appreciation for a job well done. This is growing in popularity and usage.