

**Hackman and Oldham job characteristics model**

- The job characteristics model, designed by Hackman and Oldham, is based on the idea that the task itself is key to employee motivation. Specifically, a boring and monotonous job stifles motivation to perform well, whereas a challenging job enhances motivation. Variety, autonomy and decision authority are three ways of adding challenge to a job. Job enrichment and job rotation are the two ways of adding variety and challenge.
  - It states that there are five core job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) which impact three critical psychological states (experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility for outcomes, and knowledge of the actual results), in turn influencing work outcomes (job satisfaction, absenteeism, work motivation, etc.). The five core job characteristics can be combined to form a motivating potential score (MPS) for a job, which can be used as an index of how likely a job is to affect an employee's attitudes and behaviors.
- Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics theory proposes that high motivation is related to experiencing three psychological states whilst working:

**1. Meaningfulness of work**

That labour has meaning to you, something that you can relate to, and does not occur just as a set of movements to be repeated. This is fundamental to intrinsic motivation, i.e. that work is motivating in an of itself (as opposed to motivating only as a means to an end).

**2. Responsibility**

That you have been given the opportunity to be a success or failure at your job because sufficient freedom of action has given you. This would include the ability to make changes and incorporate the learning you gain whilst doing the job.

**3. Knowledge of outcomes**

This is important for two reasons. Firstly to provide the person knowledge on how successful their work has been, which in turn enables them to learn from mistakes. The second is to connect them emotionally to the customer of their outputs, thus giving further purpose to the work (e.g. I may only work on a production line, but I know that the food rations I produce are used to help people in disaster areas, saving many lives).

In turn, each of these critical states are derived from certain characteristics of the job:

## 1. Meaningfulness of work

The work must be experienced as meaningful (his/her contribution significantly affects the overall effectiveness of the organization). This is derived from:

- **Skill variety**

Using an appropriate variety of your skills and talents: too many might be overwhelming, too few, boring.

- **Task Identity**

Being able to identify with the work at hand as more whole and complete, and hence enabling more pride to be taken in the outcome of that work (e.g. if you just add one nut to one bolt in the same spot every time a washing machine goes past it is much less motivating than being the person responsible for the drum attachment and associated work area (even as part of a group).

- **Task Significance**

Being able to identify the task as contributing to something wider, to society or a group over and beyond the self. For example, the theory suggests that I will be more motivated if I am contributing to the whole firm's bonus this year, looking after someone or making something that will benefit someone else. Conversely I will be less motivated if I am only making a faceless owner wealthier, or am making some pointless item (e.g. corporate give-away gifts).

## 2. Responsibility

Responsibility is derived from autonomy, as in the job provides substantial freedom, independence and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out)

## 3. Knowledge of outcomes

This comes from feedback. It implies an employee awareness of how effective he/she is converting his/her effort into performance. This can be anything from production figures through to customer satisfaction scores. The point is that the feedback offers information that once you know, you can use to do things differently if you wish. Feedback can come from other people or the job itself. Knowing these critical job characteristics, the theory goes, it is then possible to derive the key components of the design of a job and redesign it:

1. Varying work to enable skill variety
2. Assigning work to groups to increase the wholeness of the product produced and give a group to enhance significance
3. Delegate tasks to their lowest possible level to create autonomy and hence responsibility

4. Connect people to the outcomes of their work and the customers that receive them so as to provide feedback for learning

## **Stress, Health & Safety**

### **WHAT IS STRESS?**

- Stress is your mind and body's response or reaction to a real or imagined threat, event or change.
- The threat, event or change are commonly called stressors. Stressors can be internal (thoughts, beliefs, attitudes or external (loss, tragedy, change).

### **EUSTRESS**

Eustress or positive stress occurs when your level of stress is high enough to motivate you to move into action to get things accomplished.

### **DISTRESS**

Distress or negative stress occurs when your level of stress is either too high or too low and your body and/or mind begin to respond negatively to the stressors.

### **ALARM STAGE**

As you begin to experience a stressful event or perceive something to be stressful psychological changes occur in your body. This experience or perception disrupts your body's normal balance and immediately your body begins to respond to the stressor(s) as effectively as possible.

### **EXAMPLES**

**Cardiac** - increased heart rate

**Respiratory** - increased respiration

**Skin** - decreased temperature

**Hormonal** - increased stimulation of adrenal glands which produce an adrenal rush.

### **RESISTANCE STAGE**

During this stage your body tries to cope or adapt to the stressors by beginning a process of repairing any damage the stressor has caused. Your friends, family or co-workers may notice changes in you before you do so it is important to examine their feedback to make sure you do not reach overload.

## EXAMPLES

**Behavior indicators include:** lack of enthusiasm for family, school, work or life in general, withdrawal, change in eating habits, insomnia, hypersomnia, anger, fatigue.

**Cognitive Indicators include:** poor problem solving, confusion, nightmares, hyper-vigilance.

## EXHAUSTION STAGE

During this stage the stressor is not being managed effectively and the body and mind are not able to repair the damage.

## Health & Safety

### Mechanisms for Effects of Exercise on Stress Reduction

- Distraction
- Endorphin
- Thermogenic
- Self-esteem

### Types of Social Support

- Informational
- Material
- Emotional

### Coping with Stress

- **Problem-focused**
  - Problem Solving
  - Assertiveness
  - Seeking active social support
- **Emotion-focused**
  - Praying
  - Relaxing
  - Exercising
  - Seeking passive social support
- **Avoidant**
  - Ignoring
  - Escaping
  - **Appraisal-focused**

- Cognitive restructuring
- Knowledge/skills

### **Other Stress Reduction Techniques**

- Quick "time out"
- Jacobson's progressive relaxation
- Autogenic training
- Biofeedback
- Meditation / imagery
- Exercise

### **Quick "Time Out"**

- Deep breathing
- Take mind off of problems

### **Jacobson's Progressive Relaxation Technique**

- Involves alternate contraction and relaxation of muscles
- Teaches person to identify stress-related tension in the body
- Autogenic Relaxation Training
- Combines deep rhythmic breathing with soothing imagery
- Feelings of heaviness and warmth facilitate process

### **Biofeedback**

- Utilizes machines that monitor physiological responses
- Useful for decreasing tension headaches, asthma attacks, hypertension and phobias.

### **Meditation / Imagery**

- Relies on deep breathing
- Facilitated by images of peace and relaxation