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Diagnosing Your Job

This questionnaire challenges you to examine the motivating potential in your job. If you are not currently working, complete the questionnaire for any job you have ever held for which you want to examine the

motivating potential. For each of the following five questions, circle the number of the most accurate description of the job. Be as objective as you can in describing the job by answering these questions.

1. How much *autonomy* is there in the job? That is, to what extent does the job permit a person to decide *on his or her own* how to go about doing the work?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Very little; the job gives a person almost no personal say about how and when the work is done.

Moderate autonomy; many things are standardized and not under the control of the person, but he or she can make some decisions about the work.

Very much; the job gives the person almost complete responsibility for deciding how and when the work is done.

2. To what extent does the job involve doing a "*whole*" and *identifiable piece of work*? That is, is the job a complete piece of work that has an obvious beginning and end? Or is it a small part of the overall piece of work, which is finished by other people or by automatic machines?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The job is only a tiny part in the overall piece of work; the results of the person's activities cannot be seen in the final product or service.

The job is a moderate-sized "chunk" of the overall piece of work; the person's own contribution can be seen in the final outcome.

The job involves doing the whole piece of work, from start to finish; the results of the person's activities are easily seen in the final product or service.

3. How much *variety* is there in the job? That is, to what extent does the job require a person to do many different things at work, using a variety of his or her skills and talents?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Very little; the job requires the person to do the same routine things over and over again.

Moderate variety.

Very much; the job requires the person to do many different things, using a number of different skills and talents.

4. In general, how *significant* or *important* is the job? That is, are the results of the person's work likely to affect significantly the lives or well-being of other people?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at all significant; the outcome of the work is *not* likely to affect anyone in any important way.

Moderately significant.

Highly significant; the outcome of the work can affect other people in very important ways.

(continued)

5. To what extent *does doing the job itself* provide the person with information about his or her work performance? That is, does the actual work itself provide clues about how well the person is doing—aside from any feedback coworkers or supervisors may provide?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very little; the job itself is set up so a person could work forever without finding out how well he or she is doing.			Moderately; sometimes doing the job provides feedback to the person; sometimes it does not.		Very much; the job is set up so that a person gets almost constant feedback as he or she works about how well he or she is doing.	

To score your questionnaire, place your responses to Questions 3, 2, 4, 1, and 5, respectively, in the blank spaces in the following equation:

$$\text{Motivating Potential Score (MPS)} = \frac{Q\#3 + Q\#2 + Q\#4}{3} \times Q\#1 \times Q\#5 = \underline{\quad}$$

If the MPS for the job you rated is between

> 200 and 343, it is high in motivating potential.

> 120 and 199, it is moderate in motivating potential.

> 0 and 119, it is low in motivating potential.

SOURCE: J. R. Hackman and G. R. Oldham, "The Job Diagnostic Survey: An Instrument for the Diagnosis of Jobs and the Evaluation of Job Redesign Projects," *Technical Report No. 4*, 1974, 2-3 of the Short Form. Reprinted by permission of Greg R. Oldham.

low growth need strength respond less favorably to such jobs. The job characteristics theory further suggests that core job dimensions stimulate three critical psychological states according to the relationships specified in the model. These critical psychological states are defined as follows:

1. *Experienced meaningfulness of the work*, or the degree to which the employee experiences the job as one that is generally meaningful, valuable, and worthwhile.
2. *Experienced responsibility for work outcomes*, or the degree to which the employee feels personally accountable and responsible for the results of the work he or she does.
3. *Knowledge of results*, or the degree to which the employee knows and understands, on a continuous basis, how effectively he or she is performing the job.

In one early study, Hackman and Oldham administered the JDS to 658 employees working on sixty-two different jobs in seven business organizations.²⁰ The JDS was useful for job redesign efforts through one or more of five implementing concepts: (1) combining tasks into larger jobs, (2) forming natural work teams to increase task identity and task significance, (3) establishing relationships with customers, (4) loading jobs vertically with more responsibility, and/or (5) opening feedback channels for the job incumbent. For example, if an automotive mechanic received little feedback on the quality of repair work performed, one redesign strategy would be to solicit customer feedback one month after each repair.



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