

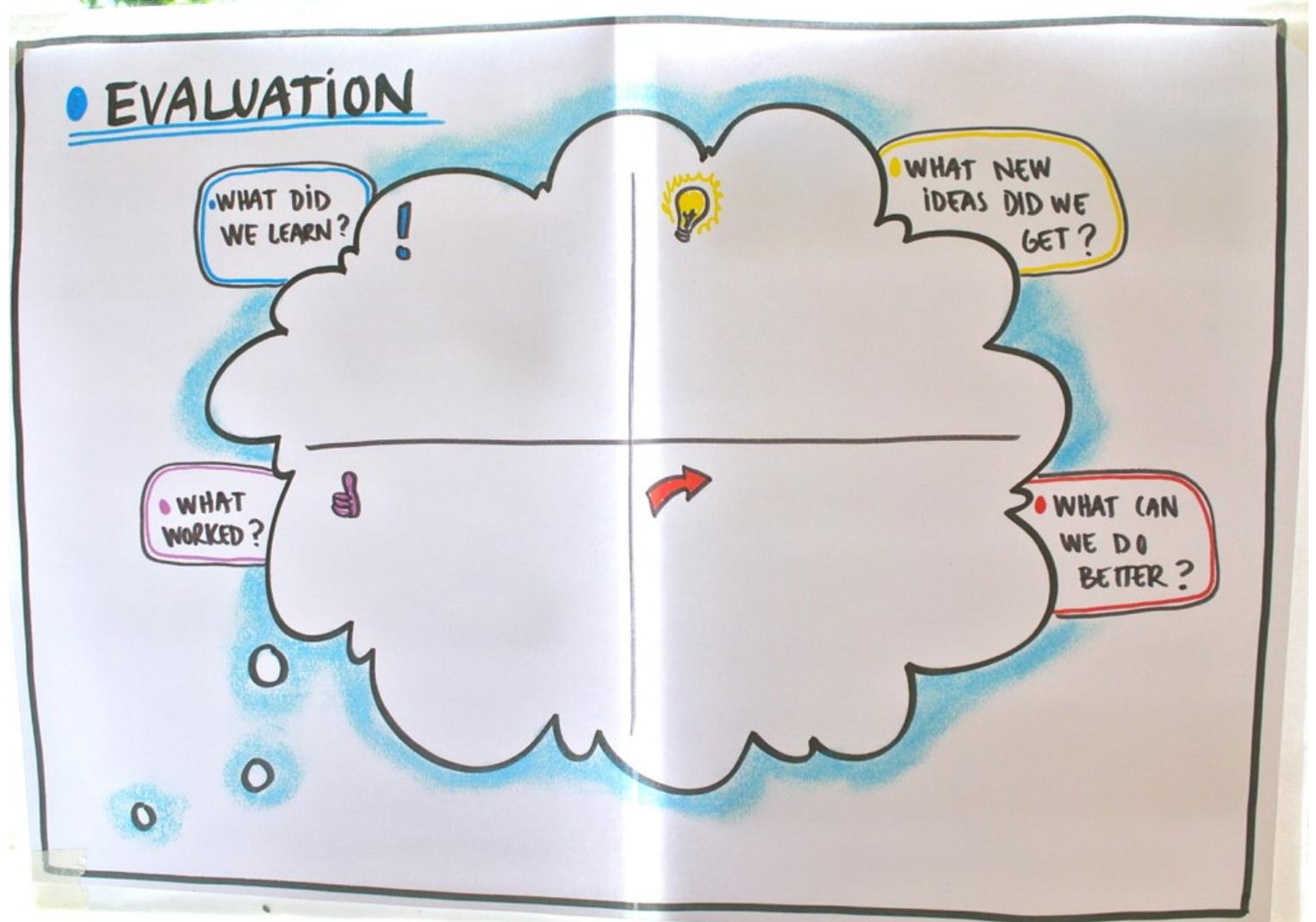


# JOB EVALUATION

# LEARNING OUTCOME

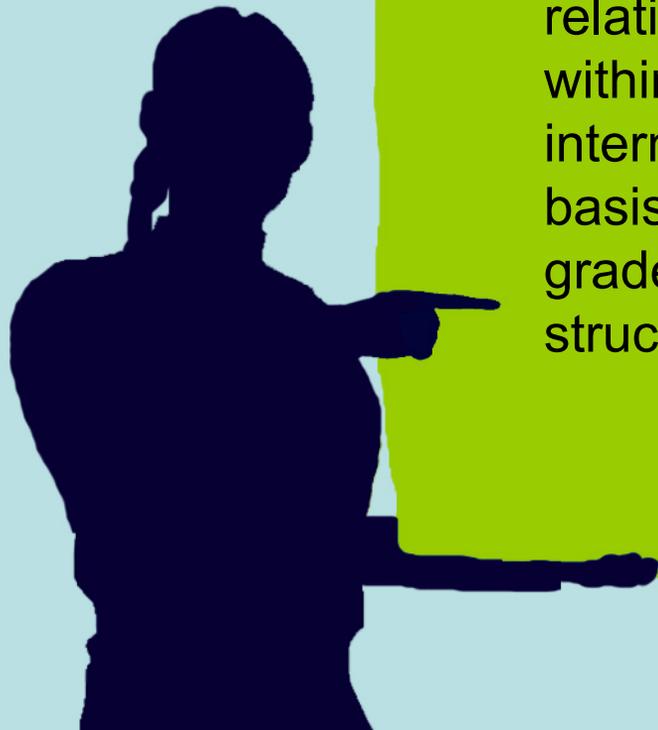
- Examine the aims of job evaluation
- Describe the approaches to job evaluation
- Examine analytical job evaluation schemes
- Examine non-analytical job evaluation schemes
- Define the terminologies market pricing, levelling.
- Define job and role analysis
- Examine computer-aided job evaluation

# WHAT IS JOB EVALUATION



## JOB EVALUATION DEFINED

A systematic process for defining the relative worth or size of jobs or roles within an organisation to establish internal relativities and provide the basis for designing an equitable grade structure, grading jobs in the structure and managing relativities.



## FEATURES OF JOB EVALUATION

- Maximise objectivity by basing judgements on factual evidence rather than opinion
- Aim to achieve consistency
- Provide a framework of defined yardsticks to channel judgements
- Evaluate the job not the person
- Concerned only with internal relativities, (applicable only to analytical or non-analytical job evaluation schemes)

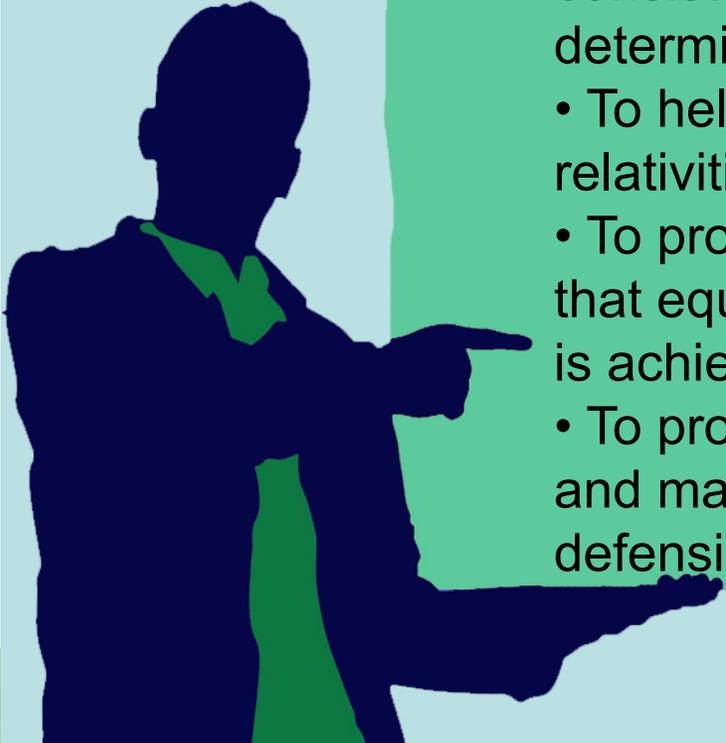


# WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF JOB EVALUATION

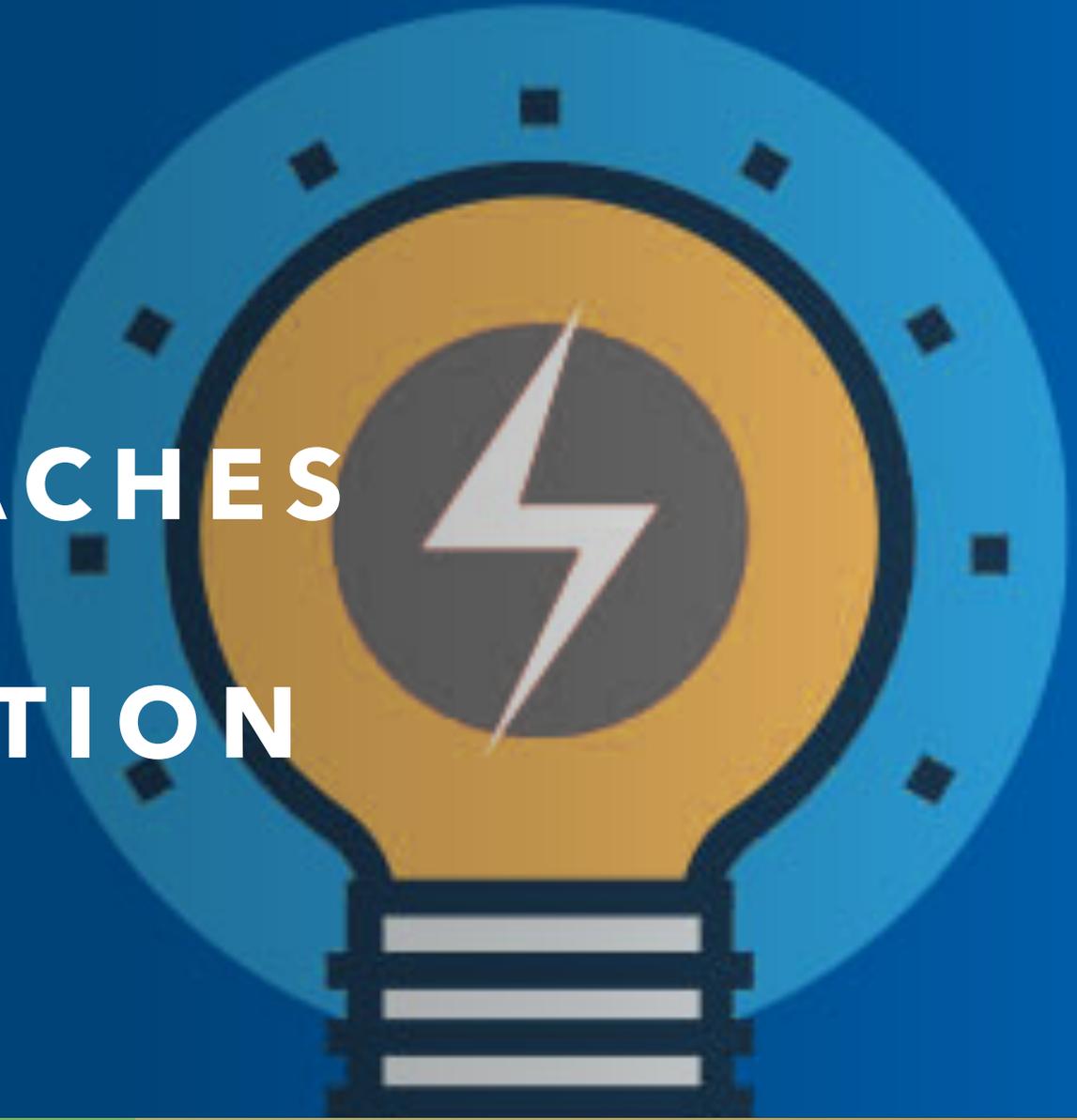
A circular inset image showing a hallway with the word "PURPOSE" written on the wall. The word is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The hallway is brightly lit, and the word is slightly out of focus, suggesting a perspective of looking down the hallway. The background of the entire slide is a gradient of green and brown colors, with a large, semi-transparent circular shape framing the inset image.

**PURPOSE**

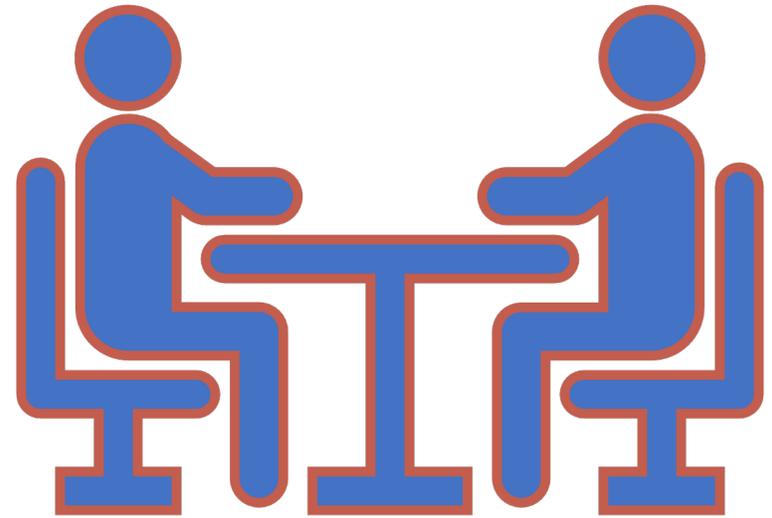
## PURPOSES OF JOB EVALUATION

- 
- To provide an equitable, fair, consistent and transparent basis for determining the relative value of jobs.
  - To help in the management of job relativities
  - To provide the basis for ensuring that equal pay for work of equal value is achieved.
  - To provide a basis for the design and maintenance of a rational and defensible grade structure.

# APPROACHES TO JOB EVALUATION



**THESE  
APPROACHES  
CAN EITHER  
BE FORMAL  
OR INFORMAL**





# WHAT ARE THE APPROACHES TO VALUING JOBS?

The Approaches to valuing jobs are namely:

- **Analytical job evaluation schemes (point-factor rating or analytical matching)**

decisions on the relative value or size of jobs are based on an analysis of the degree to which various defined elements or factors are present in the form of demands on the job holder.

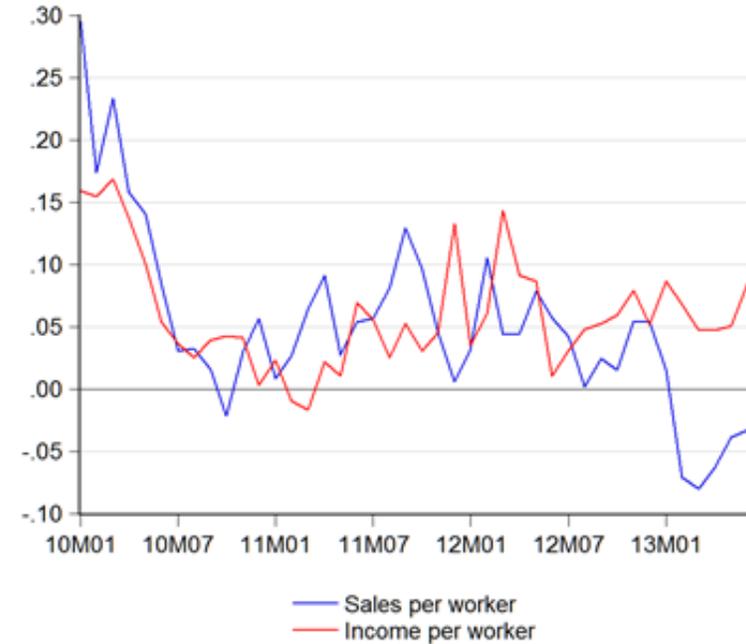
- ***Non-analytical job evaluation schemes (job classification or ranking)***

whole jobs are described and compared to slot them into a defined grade or place them in a rank order or without analysing them into their elements. The elements are:

- ❖ Market Pricing
- ❖ Job Leveling
- ❖ Job and Role Analysis

# WHAT IS MARKET PRICING?

- **Market pricing** – jobs are placed in pay structures entirely on the basis of external relativities, ie market rates (a method of pricing jobs).





**LEVELLING**



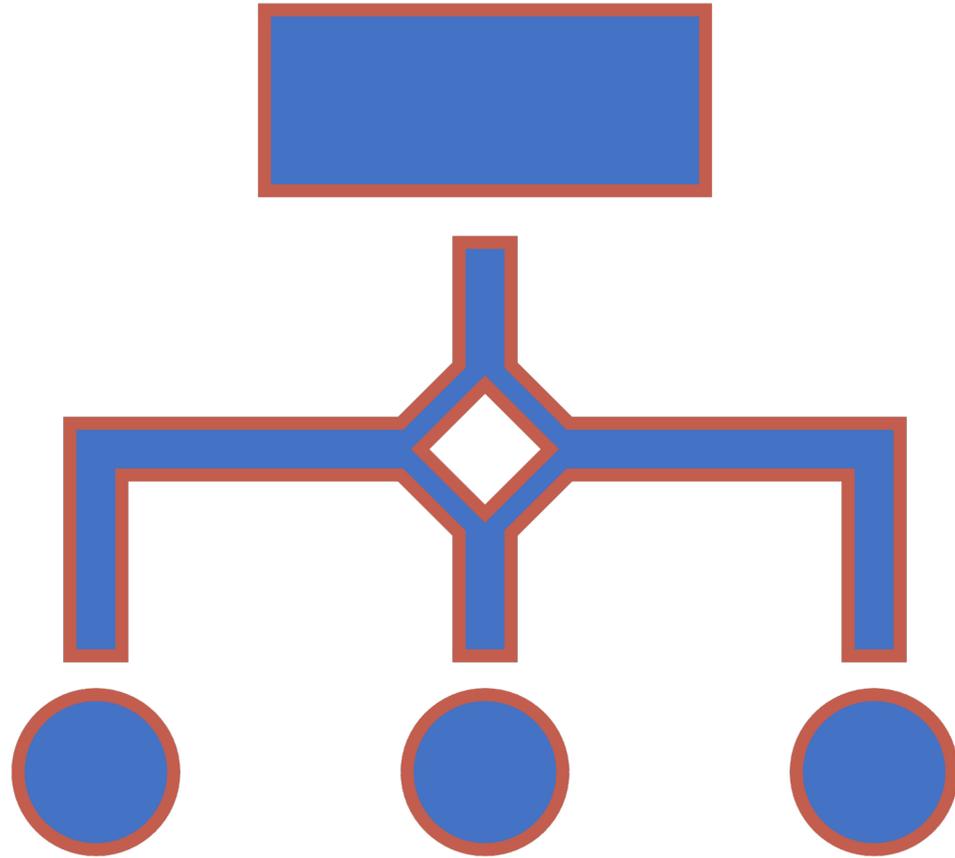
## **WHAT IS LEVELLING?**

- Job evaluation can be regarded as a method of defining the levels of work
- 'Levelling' is a term increasingly used by consultants to describe this process.
- It may serve as the basis for a pay structure but increasingly, levelling



**WHAT IS THE  
DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN  
ANALYTICAL AND  
NON-ANALYTICAL JOB  
EVALUATION  
SCHEME?**

JOB AND  
ROLE ANALYSIS



# JOB AND ROLE ANALYSIS

- All formal job evaluation schemes are based on an analysis of jobs or roles to produce job descriptions or role profiles.



# CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JOB AND ROLE ANALYSIS.



## JOB DESCRIPTION

When used to inform analytical job evaluation they should include an analysis of the job demands in terms of each of the factors or elements in the scheme.





# ROLE PROFILES

# METHODS OF JOB AND ROLE ANALYSIS





## **THE DIFFERENT METHODS OF ROLE AND JOB ANALYSIS**

The methods are:

- Job descriptions or role profiles
- Questionnaires
- Structured interviews
- Interactive computer-aided systems

# COMPUTER-AIDED JOB EVALUATION





# HOW TO DEVELOP A POINT- FACTOR SCHEME



# **P O I N T - F A C T O R   R A T I N G   M E T H O D O L O G Y**

- Select and define job evaluation factors (a factor is a characteristic or element of a job which is present in all the jobs being evaluated but to different degrees)
- Define the levels or degrees at which each factor can be present
- Decide the maximum points to be allocated to each factor (these may be weighted according to their relative significance)
- Divide the maximum points for each factor between the levels - each level therefore has a points score attached to it
- Analyse jobs in terms of the factors
- Refer to factor plan (factor and level definitions) and decide on score for each factor
- Add factor scores to determine total score for the job

# A FACTOR PLAN

Factor	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Expertise	20	40	60	80	100	120
Decisions	20	40	60	80	100	120
Autonomy	20	40	60	80	100	120
Responsibility	20	40	60	80	100	120
Interpersonal skills	20	40	60	80	100	120

# JOB EVALUATION SCORING

Factor	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Expertise	20	40	60	80	100	120
Decisions	20	40	60	80	100	120
Autonomy	20	40	60	80	100	120
Responsibility	20	40	60	80	100	120
Interpersonal skills	20	40	60	80	100	120

Total score = 360

## **FACTOR DEFINITION: EXPERTISE**

The level of professional, technical, administrative or operational knowledge and skills demanded by the work.

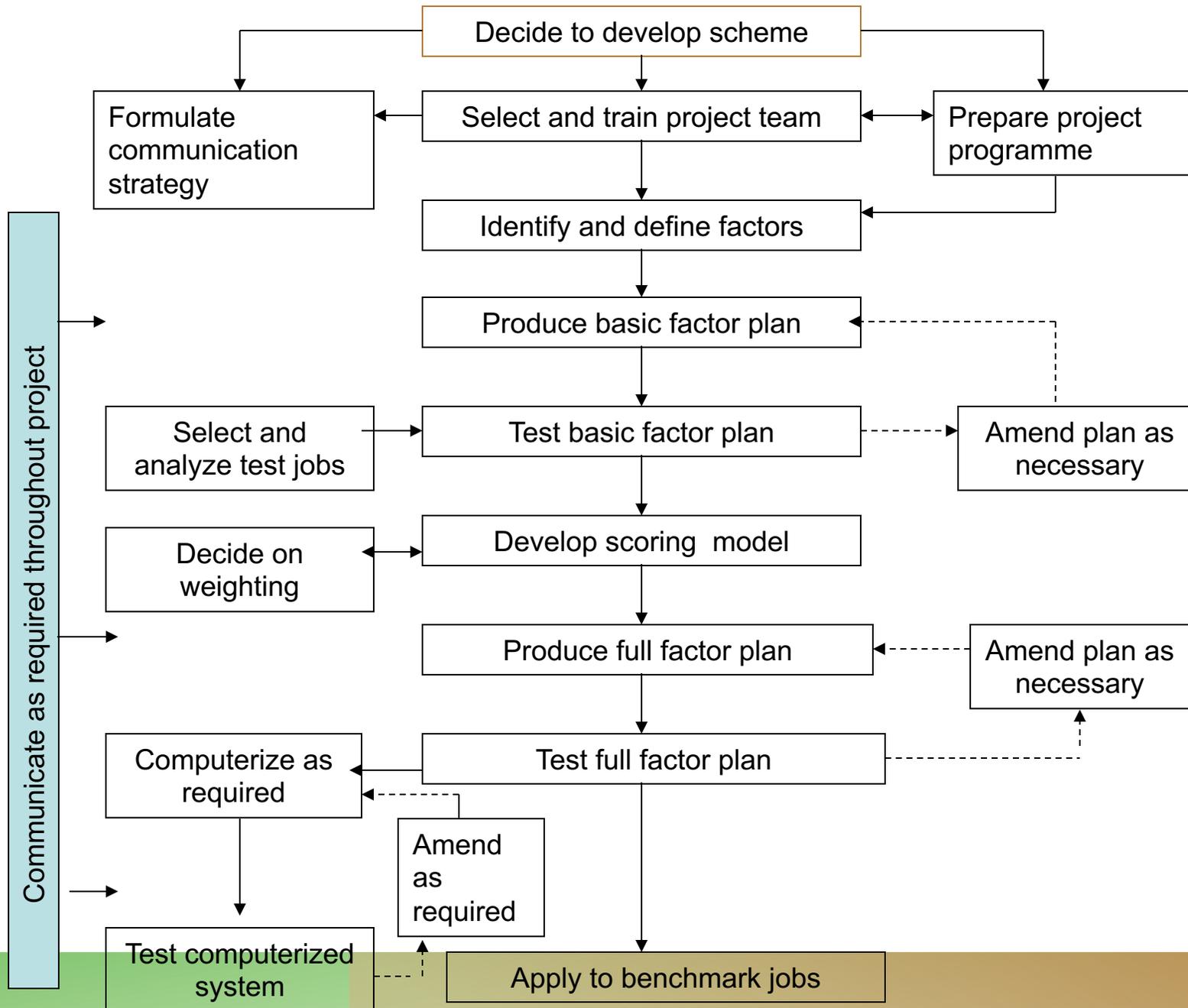
# FACTOR LEVEL DEFINITIONS: EXPERTISE

- Level 1 The use of basic skills to carry out routine administrative or operational work
- Level 2 The application of administrative or operational knowledge and skills to carry out straightforward administrative procedures including maintaining records and answering routine queries, or to operate specialised but not unduly complex machines.
- Level 3 Advanced administrative work or operational work which may involve using complex equipment, maintaining complex records, dealing with non-routine queries or analysing data.
- Level 4 Proficiency is required in a professional, administrative or specialist field involving the understanding and application of fairly advanced practices, procedures or principles.
- Level 5 Considerable competence in a managerial, professional or highly technical field in order to understand or apply advanced practices, procedures, concepts or principles.
- Level 6 A very considerable degree of competence is required to direct and control activities at the highest level.

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Factors to cover range of job features in each of the main job categories
- Levels clearly defined and graduated
- Minimise double counting
- Avoid gender bias (sex discrimination)

# POINT-FACTOR JOB EVALUATION SCHEME DESIGN SEQUENCE

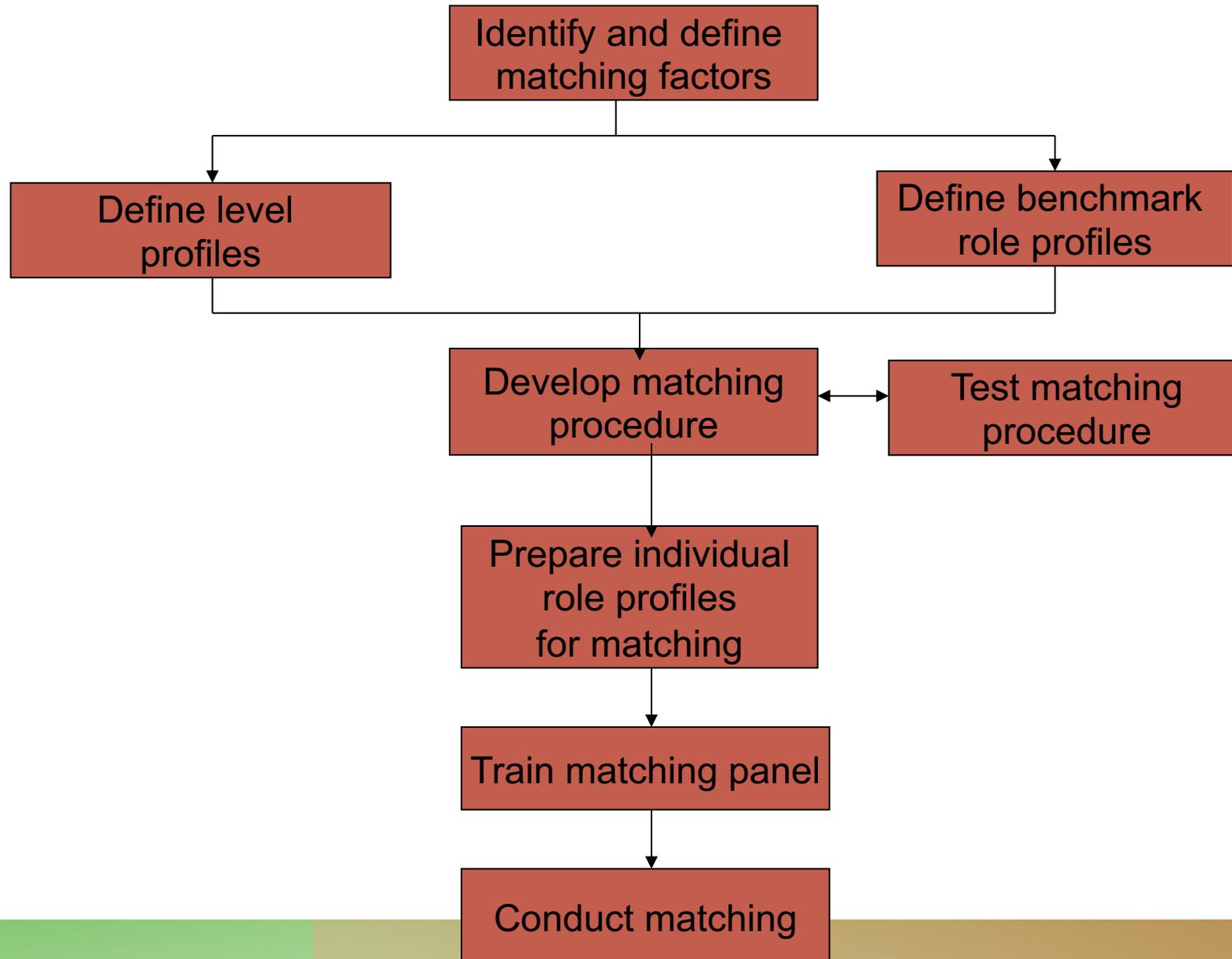


# HOW DOES THE POINT-FACTOR JOB EVALUATION SCHEME WORK?

- Jobs are broken down into factors.
- Each factor is divided into a hierarchy of levels.
- Evaluators consult the role profile or job description, which should ideally analyse the role in terms of the scheme's factors.
- A maximum points score is allocated to each factor.
- The total score for a factor is divided between the levels to produce the numerical factor scale.
- The complete scheme consists of the factor and level definitions and the scoring system (the total score available for each factor and distributed to the factor levels).
- Jobs are 'scored' (ie allocated points) under each factor heading on the basis of the level of the factor in the job.
- The separate factor scores are then added together to give a total score, which indicates the relative value, each job and can be used to place the jobs in rank order.



# ANALYTICAL MATCHING JOB EVALUATION SCHEME DESIGN SEQUENCE



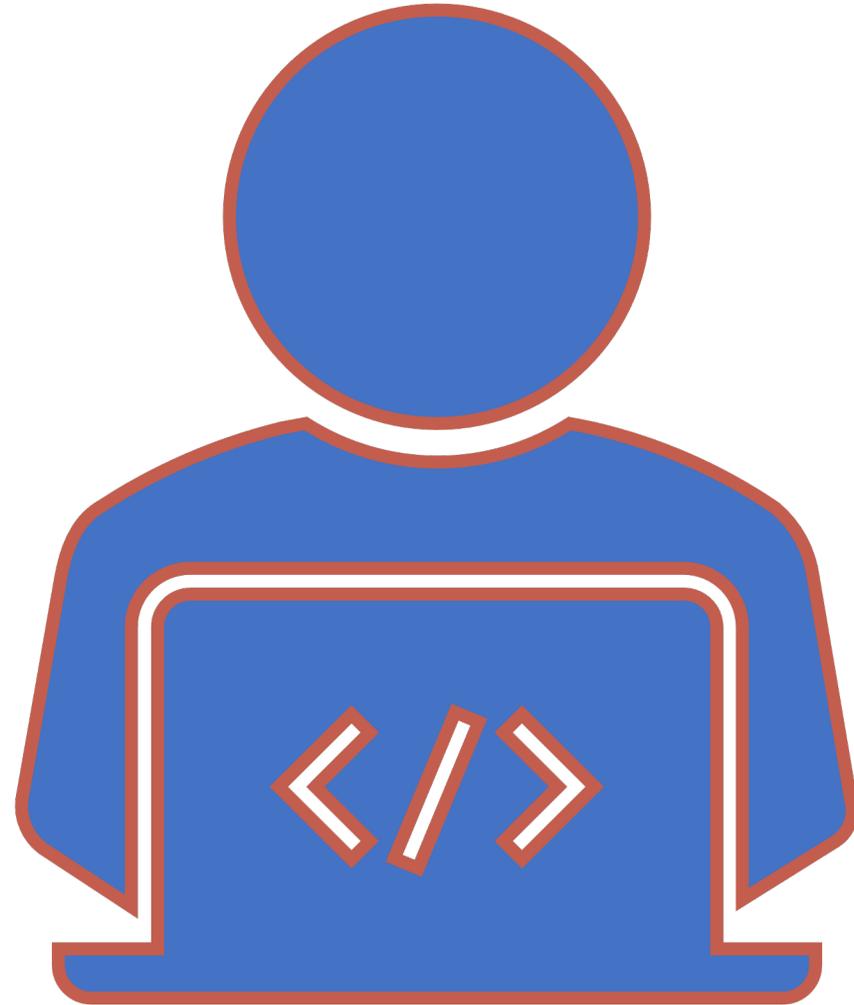
# Criteria for choice of a job evaluation scheme

- Thorough in analysis and capable of impartial application
- Appropriate for the jobs to be covered by the scheme
- Comprehensive – cover all jobs in the organization
- Transparent
- Non-discriminatory
- **Easily administered**
- Not subject to decay
- Provide a defence in an equal pay case

# WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FORMAL AND INFORMAL JOB EVALUATION

- Formal approaches use standardized methods to evaluate jobs, which can be analytical or non-analytical.
- Informal approaches price jobs either on the basis of assumptions about internal and external relativities.

WHAT IS THE  
DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN  
ANALYTICAL  
AND NON-  
ANALYTICAL  
JOB  
EVALUATION  
SCHEME?



# RESPONSIBILITY FOR REWARD





## **CLASS ACTIVITY**

- What is the role of the Reward Specialist and what are the skills and expertise do they need to design and manage complex systems, which meet the needs of users?

RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR REWARD



# ROLE OF LINE MANAGERS



# LINE MANAGERS?

- Line managers have responsibility for directly managing individual employees or teams. In turn, they report to a higher-level manager on the performance of those employees or teams.
- The term 'front-line manager' or 'first-line manager' normally refers to those who supervise and manage employees who themselves have no supervisory responsibilities, but a role title need not have 'manager' in it to have people management responsibilities.

# RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LINE MANAGERS AND PEOPLE FUNCTION (HR)

- The individualisation of the employment relationship has placed new burdens and opportunities in the hands of line managers. An obvious example is, with collective pay-setting provisions giving way to individual performance-related pay awards in many organisations.
- Line managers partner with HR and some now have the responsibility to maintain records, input data and manage routine HR activities such as staffing requests, booking training or submitting payroll information.



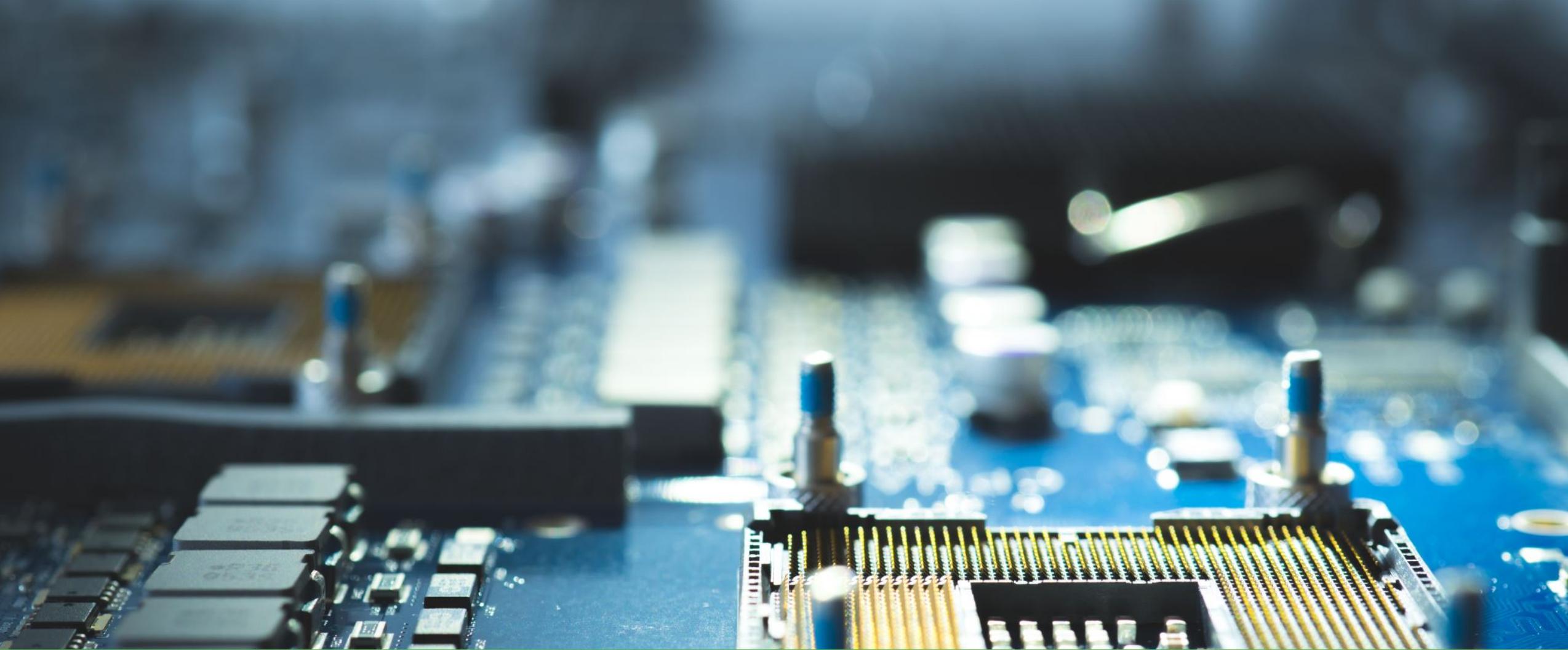
**ROLE OF LINE MANAGERS IN IMPLEMENT HR PROCESSES.**

# THE ROLE OF LINE MANAGERS IN IMPLEMENTING HR PROCESSES.

- Line managers can make a significant difference in:
- enabling HR, OD and L&D policies and practices and 'bringing them to life'
- enabling learning solutions to happen
- identifying learning needs and embedding learning in the workflow
- acting upon advice or guidance from HR, OD and L&D
- controlling the workflow by directing and guiding the work of others
- greater collaboration between the line and the people profession to support change.

# LINE MANAGERS AND INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

- Front-line managers play a pivotal role in terms of implementing and enacting HR policies and practices.
- Where employees feel positive about their relationship with their front line managers, they're more likely to have higher levels of job satisfaction, commitment and loyalty – which are in turn associated with higher levels of performance or 'discretionary' behaviour.
- Line managers' are crucial role in balancing the levels of challenge at work – which motivate and engage employees – with the right levels of support – which can reduce stress and support employees' well-being.



# HOW TO DEVELOP LINE MANAGERS

# CLASS ACTIVITY

- Watch this Podcast: Development Line Managers Case Study

<https://www.cipd.co.uk/podcasts/training-line-managers>

REWARD  
CONSULTANTS



# REWARD CONSULTANTS

Reward consultants are frequently engaged to help with major development projects by providing expertise and additional resources. To make good use of them it is necessary to:

- Spell out terms of reference, deliverables and the timetable;
- Take great care when selecting them to ensure that they have the expertise and experience required;
- Meet and vet the consultant who is going to carry out the work, not just the senior consultant who presents the proposal;

# CONT...

- Agree up front how they will work alongside line management, HR and trade unions and the basis upon which the project will be monitored and controlled;
- Ask for regular reports and hold 'milestone' meetings in order to review progress and costs.

# **QUESTION!!!**

- What approach should be adopted by HR or reward specialists to advising managers on reward management matters?

18 Jun 2020

# Job evaluation and market pricing

Understand the fundamentals of job evaluation and market pricing, as well as how to choose and implement the right scheme for your organisation

## Introduction

Job evaluation and market pricing help HR teams gather data, internally and externally, on the roles in their organisation and equivalent jobs in other employers or sectors. Interpreting this data effectively is key in ensuring pay structures are both fair and competitive. Job evaluation and market pricing exercises need reviewing regularly to make sure they continue to meet changing business needs, jobs and work.

This factsheet introduces the fundamentals of job evaluation and market pricing. It provides guidance on choosing the right type of job evaluation scheme (analytical or non-analytical) and gives examples of the sorts of factors often assessed. It suggests issues for organisations to consider when implementing their chosen job evaluation scheme. It also outlines the different approaches to market pricing and offers information on the various sources of pay data.

## What are job evaluation and market pricing?

Job evaluation and market pricing assess the role, not the person doing it, and should be based on a fair, transparent system that is effectively communicated and understood by employees.

### Job evaluation

Acas defines job evaluation as 'a method of determining on a systematic basis the relative importance of a number of different jobs'. It's useful because job titles can be misleading, either unclear or unspecific, and in large organisations it's impossible for people professionals to know each job in detail.

Job evaluation is typically used when:

- Determining pay grades in pay structures.
- Ensuring a fair pay system in an organisation.
- Comparing pay rates against the internal or external job market.

## Market pricing

Market pricing is a way of collecting data on the pay rates for similar jobs in other organisations to establish their market rate and track movements in those rates. The aim is to set the employer's own pay rates at an appropriate level to recruit and retain the staff it needs.

Although the concept of a market rate for a job is common, there's no such thing as an accurate single rate of pay for a job or role, and rates may vary within the same occupation and in the same location.

It's important for employers to consider how to interpret the data collected and where the organisation wants to position its salary and total remuneration levels in relation to the market.

## Internal and external approaches

Job evaluation can be used as a way of matching jobs to enable market pricing to take place (although other approaches exist to compare jobs). However, there are tensions between job evaluation and market pricing approaches.

Job evaluation has an internal focus as it ranks jobs and their relative importance within an organisation, whereas market pricing has an external focus as it aims to compare organisation pay rates with those in the wider labour market.

Employers need to resolve such tensions if they wish to ensure that pay rates remain both internally equitable and externally competitive. For example, where a job commands higher earnings in the external market than justified by an internal job evaluation exercise, one approach is to use temporary market supplements to top up earnings for that role.

# Choosing and implementing job evaluation schemes

Employers operate job evaluation schemes for a range of reasons, including the development of clear and orderly pay and grading structures and to help counter equal

pay claims, as well to assist with market pricing where required.

A single job evaluation may be implemented to cover the whole workforce or employers may operate different schemes for varying groups of employees. The former approach is often favoured as this is likely to help counter any potential equal pay issues.

## Types of job evaluation

There are two main types of job evaluation: analytical schemes, where jobs are broken down into their core components, and non-analytical schemes, where jobs are viewed as a whole. The use of analytical schemes is more popular because of the capacity to help provide a defence against equal pay claims.

### Analytical schemes

These offer greater objectivity in assessment as the jobs are broken down in detail. Examples of analytical schemes include 'points rating' and 'factor comparison' approaches.

- **Points rating** - the key elements of each job, which are known as 'factors', are identified by the organisation and then broken down into components which may also be weighted. Each factor is assessed separately and points allocated according to the level needed for the job. The more demanding the job, the higher the points value. Examples of factors commonly assessed include:
  - knowledge and skills
  - people management
  - communication and networking
  - decision-making
  - working environment
  - impact and influence
  - financial responsibility.
- **Factor comparison** is also based on an assessment of factors, though no points are allocated. Use of this method is less widespread than 'points rating' systems as the latter approach enables many jobs to be ranked at a time.

### Non-analytical schemes

These are less objective than analytical schemes, but are often simpler, cheaper and quicker. Methods include job ranking, paired comparisons and job classification.

- **Job ranking** puts jobs in an organisation in order of their importance, or the level of difficulty involved in performing them or their value to the organisation.

- **Paired comparisons** compares each job in turn with another in an organisation. This takes longer than job ranking as each job is considered separately.
- **Job classification** also known as **job grading**. Before classification, an agreed number of grades are determined, usually between four and eight, based on tasks performed, skills, competencies, experience, initiative and responsibility. Clear distinctions are made between grades. The jobs in the organisation are then allocated to the pre-determined grades.

## Developing job evaluation schemes

Whether adopting an analytical or a non-analytical approach, organisations have three main options over scheme design and development:

- a scheme may be developed in-house
- a consultancy's off-the-shelf package may be purchased
- a consultancy may tailor its package to suit the organisation's needs.

The system selected will depend on the size of the organisation and the aim of the job evaluation exercise. The Korn Ferry Hay Group Guide Chart–Profile method a widely-used scheme, but the following large consultancies also offer off-the-shelf or tailor-made schemes:

- Aon Hewitt
- Mercer
- PricewaterhouseCoopers
- SHL
- Willis Towers Watson.

Many smaller independent consultancies also offer job evaluation services.

## Other factors to consider

Job evaluation can be a complex and time-consuming task and many organisations draw on the expertise of external organisations to help. The key issues to consider include:

- The process is often as important as the results.
- Job evaluation is an ongoing process.
- An appeals procedure should be established before the evaluation begins.
- Clear, detailed and up-to-date job descriptions must be available or created.
- The more complex the scheme, the more detailed the job description needed.
- Accurate records of decisions must be kept.
- The results must be checked to see if there are any pay anomalies.
- Effective communications are essential, as employees may have concerns over their

future job grading and pay.

## Approaches to market pricing

Market pricing exercises involve the use of some form of job matching to enable pay rates in the organisation to be compared with equivalent jobs in other employers, with a view to setting appropriate rates to attract and keep staff. A range of options for comparing jobs exists from basic analysis using job titles or job descriptions through to the use of job evaluation schemes.

Employers must also decide what type of reward they wish to compare, for example, basic salary, total earnings (including bonuses, location allowances, and so on) or the wider package (including such elements as pension provision, private medical insurance, and so on).

### Gathering pay data

Giving jobs a 'price' is a separate exercise to the job matching process, requiring the gathering of appropriate pay and benefits data.

Sources of pay data can also vary from specifically collected survey information to more general commercial data. Data sources are not mutually exclusive. For example:

- National survey data might help set and maintain pay structures and rates for management grades.
- Locally collected data might be useful to set rates for secretarial, clerical and process staff.
- Occupation-specific data can help inform pay decisions for groups such as marketing staff or accountants.

Market pricing exercises may assume that comparable pay data exists that is easily obtainable and accurate. This is not always the case. For instance, some jobs may be so specialised that few, or even no, external comparators exist, and assumptions have to be made about 'comparable' job content, which may compromise data accuracy.

### Choosing a pay policy

Because employees have varying skills, attributes and abilities, and employers themselves vary in terms of their cultures, performance and ability to pay, there is often a range of pay rates in the market, even for the same jobs. Therefore, people professional must help their organisations decide where it wants to position itself in the labour market to achieve its business and staffing objectives.

For example, pay policies might be positioned to pay at the median level for the sector, occupation or locality. Others might use market data to feed into reference points in pay ranges, with rates for individual employees set according to factors such as performance - see our [performance-related pay factsheet](#) for more.

## Organisational practice

There's very little published information on organisations' market pricing practices. In general, private sector companies tend to benchmark against their own industries, and against companies of similar size (internationally as necessary). They also often 'age' pay databases up to a common date by applying a multiplier based on annualised salary movements, although such approaches are not invariably accurate. Some companies match generic jobs to a management consultancy database.

## Sources of pay data

For the purposes of job pricing, there are four main sources of pay data:

- **Published data** from pay surveys and similar organisations can give some indication of going rates. The degree to which this data is useful is limited because of problems in comparing like with like, but they can help with periodic reality checks on levels and movements, and are particularly valuable sources of data on specific occupations or localities.
- **Pay clubs** of employer groups that regularly exchange information on pay levels. These generally only allow participants access to the data.
- **Special surveys** funded by individual organisations from specialist pay consultancies but access is usually limited to the contractor and participants.
- **Consultants' pay databases** containing data collected on a systematic or ad hoc basis which they relate to the results of their job evaluation schemes to compare pay rates across organisations on a common basis: this ability is one of the attractions of job evaluation for many organisations. To be viable it is important that the factors measure common job/role characteristics and can enable comparisons to be made across different jobs/roles and organisations; the data is based on an adequate sample; and the job analyses are carried out systematically and conscientiously.

## Further reading

## Books and reports

ARMSTRONG, M. (2018) *Armstrong's job evaluation handbook: a guide to achieving fairness and transparency in pay and reward*. London: Kogan Page.

*Job evaluation and market pricing practices*. (2013) Scottsdale, Az: WorldatWork.

Visit the [CIPD and Kogan Page Bookshop](#) to see all our priced publications currently in print.

## Journal articles

ARMSTRONG, M. and BROWN, D. (2017) Job evaluation versus market pricing: competing or combining methods of pay determination? *Compensation & Benefits Review*. Vol 49, No 3. pp153-160.

GILBERT, K. (2012) Promises and practices: job evaluation and equal pay forty years on! *Industrial Relations Journal*. Vol 43, No 2, March. pp137-151.

JOHNSON, P., MCMULLEN, T. and ROYAL, M. (2015) Job evaluation: relevant, robust and reimagined. *Workspan*. Vol 58, No 9, September. pp26-30,32.

TORRENCE, M. (2019) Gather, measure, repeat. *TD: Talent Development*. Vol 73, No 2, February. pp65-68.

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Members and *People Management* subscribers can see articles on the [People Management](#) website.

This factsheet was last updated by Charles Cotton.

12 Nov 2020

# Line managers' role in supporting the people profession

Learn about the role of line management and its relationship to an organisation's people practices

## Introduction

Line managers have a very important role to play, not only in managing people and operations day-to-day, but also in implementing HR and other organisational policies and in supporting their team's development. This is particularly the case in organisations which devolve these activities to line managers. It's therefore important to give proper thought to how line managers are appointed, managed and developed to make sure they are successful in their role.

This factsheet outlines the roles and responsibilities of line managers and explores their relationship with people professionals, including opportunities to work together to support organisational strategy. It stresses the need for positive relationships between line managers and their team members, and for supporting line managers in developing their own people management skills.

## Who are line managers?

Line managers have responsibility for directly managing individual employees or teams. In turn, they report to a higher-level manager on the performance of those employees or teams.

The term 'front-line manager' or 'first-line manager' normally refers to those who supervise and manage employees who themselves have no supervisory responsibilities, but a role title need not have 'manager' in it to have people management responsibilities.

Typically, the management responsibilities carried out by line managers (particularly front-line managers) might include:

- Day-to-day people management.
- Managing operational costs.
- Providing technical expertise.
- Allocating work and rotas.
- Monitoring work and checking quality.
- Dealing with customers/clients.
- Measuring operational performance.
- Developing their people.

Managers are also responsible for supporting the wellbeing of their teams, preventing ill health, monitoring workloads and ways of working when required, and seeking support from occupational health services to deal with cases of ill health. Our Health and wellbeing survey found that, although the number of sick days recorded by employers has dropped, 'presenteeism', where employees feel the need to work when unwell, and 'leaveism', where employees use their holiday allowance to work, are widespread. These attitudes are informed by the organisation's and team's culture and line managers can play a key role in shaping them.

## The evolving relationship between line managers and the people profession

There are number of areas of people management practice, where the processes may be designed by HR or L&D or OD specialists, but cannot be delivered by them in part or in full. These include, for example, performance management and recognition, employee engagement, enabling employee voice, creating and maintaining a learning culture, and achieving employee work-life balance. Our 2019 report Professionalising learning and development showed that 78% of L&D professionals feel that traditional views of line managers is a blocker to implementing better ways to improve organisational performance.

### **Relationship between HR and line managers**

The relationship between the HR function and line managers has been subject to a number of changes and tensions in recent years. Adjustments in the delivery of HR have shifted responsibility for many core activities, such as recruitment or objective setting, away from HR. Furthermore, the trend towards individualisation of the employment relationship has placed new burdens and opportunities in the hands of line managers. An obvious example is, with collective pay-setting provisions giving way to individual

performance-related pay awards in many organisations, the role of each employee's line manager has become increasingly influential in determining individual pay increases.

The practice among many organisations of outsourcing transactional HR activities has also had the effect of devolving more responsibility to line managers to maintain records, input data and manage routine HR activities such as staffing requests, booking training or submitting payroll information. When outsourcing is working well, and managers have appropriate resources, it enables them to access better and more timely information and support to carry out people management tasks and manage their staff more effectively. At the same time, where managers' workloads do not allow them time to collect relevant information, or the systems used to keep records are cumbersome or inaccessible, there is a risk that the organisation does not have an accurate grasp on people data.

## Relationship between L&D and line managers

The relationship between the L&D function and line managers has also seen a shift. Previously, with L&D as course providers, managers had no role within learning, even though it could be argued managers need to show interest in embedding learning in the workplace. Managers are also expected to have a coaching role with their teams and people development has become part of their responsibility. L&D's role in this relationship is to facilitate the 'upskilling' of the line managers, to allow embedding to take place. Our 2018 research with Towards Maturity on the link between learning and performance highlights the important relationship between L&D professionals and line managers. See also our factsheet on a range of learning solutions to fit individuals' and team needs.

## The role of line managers in implementing HR and L&D processes

Line managers can make a significant difference in:

- enabling HR, OD and L&D policies and practices and 'bringing them to life'
- enabling learning solutions to happen
- identifying learning needs and embedding learning in the workflow
- acting upon advice or guidance from HR, OD and L&D
- controlling the workflow by directing and guiding the work of others
- greater collaboration between the line and the people profession to support change.

## Line managers and individual performance

Research carried out for us by a team at Bath University found that front-line managers play a pivotal role in terms of implementing and enacting HR policies and practices. Where employees feel positive about their relationship with their front line managers, they're more likely to have higher levels of job satisfaction, commitment and loyalty – which are in turn associated with higher levels of performance or 'discretionary' behaviour. Discretionary behaviour is defined as that which goes beyond the requirements of the job to give the extra performance that can boost 'the bottom line' (or profit levels). Our subsequent work with Bath University explored the role that line managers play in people management in two key areas: reward and learning and development.

Our review of evidence on [effective performance management approaches](#) also points at the critical role of line managers in assessing and recognising performance. Practices include setting specific and challenging goals, monitoring progress and providing feedback, and assessing performance on a regular basis.

## **Line managers and employee engagement**

The increasing focus on [employee engagement](#) in the workplace means that this aspect of the line manager's role in people management can be particularly influential. Our work on the [relationship between line management and employee engagement and well-being](#) highlights line managers' crucial role in balancing the levels of challenge at work – which motivate and engage employees – with the right levels of support – which can reduce stress and support employees' well-being. It's therefore especially important to pay close attention to how the organisation selects, develops and manages the performance of line managers. Again this puts onus on the L&D function to ensure line managers are able to carry out this new responsibility. The report resulted in development of a series of practical tools for developing line managers to support employee engagement, health and well-being.

## **Supporting line managers**

To deliver good people management, line managers themselves need to be managed within a strong, supportive framework to enable them to develop self-confidence and a robust sense of their own role in the organisation. This further emphasises the need for appropriate training and development for those newly-appointed in a line management role. If managers are the 'face' of the people profession to employees, the people profession must be part of ensuring this framework is in place.

## **Developing line managers**

The critical role that line managers play in enabling employee performance and well-being

emphasises the need for appropriate development for those newly-appointed in a line management role. Yet front-line managers are often promoted from operational roles and might not have any formal management education at the time of their appointment. Furthermore, our 2016 Absence management survey showed that less than half of organisations participating in the survey provided training for dealing with short-term and long-term absence to line managers.

Our [podcast on training line managers](#) discusses the importance of developing line managers and the different strategies organisations have found successful. A general overview on all aspects of [management development](#) can be found in our factsheet.

Many of the qualities and skills that are associated with higher quality line management focus on the behaviours of the line managers involved. However, it's not enough to educate line managers in the behaviours required; organisations must also ensure they're developing the environment and culture in which line managers are actively encouraged and permitted to exhibit the identified behaviours. Our [Leadership: easier said than done](#) report outlines the key barriers to management and leadership within the organisational environment. L&D professionals are increasingly seeing their work move into this cultural impact area as they move away from simply booking courses.

Our report [Real-life leaders: closing the knowing-doing gap](#) provides information on the gaps in line managers' skills from the point of view of managers themselves, as well as HR and L&D practitioners.

## The role of business partnering

There's a growing emphasis in both HR and L&D on business partnering, where business partners are closely involved with supporting business strategy. This has enhanced the people management aspects of the line manager's role. Line managers have the opportunity to develop responses and solutions to HR issues together with [HR business partners](#) with more immediacy and alignment to business strategy. For L&D, this ability to respond readily to line manager needs for their team creates a much closer and relevant function of the L&D team.

This enables both people and business issues to be considered in a wide range of decisions that will impact on organisational effectiveness. Because the relationship is ongoing, both sides build a better understanding and develop long-term strategies and solutions rather than the HR and L&D functions being brought in to manage issues as they arise. This proactive rather than reactive approach offers better support to operations and impact on the bottom line.

## Leading line managers

Well-managed line managers are more likely to go on to lead high-performing teams. Senior management support and action on the development of line managers is critical. The relationships between line managers and their own managers and with senior management tend to make a significant difference to their willingness to display discretionary behaviour in their own management activities, as they reflect the culture of an organisation in their behaviour. For HR and L&D initiatives to be truly successful with line managers, they need to be offered with full senior stakeholder engagement and endorsement.

Generally line managers are more likely to display the positive behaviours associated with higher levels of performance from those they are managing if they experience:

- good working relationships with their own managers
- good career opportunities and support to progress their careers with effective people development
- a positive work-life balance
- the capacity to participate and feel involved in decision-making
- an open organisational culture that enables them to air a grievance or discuss matters of personal concern
- a sense of job security.

## Further reading

### Books and reports

ACAS. (2016) *Managing people*. London: Acas.

LOPEZ-COTARELO, J. (2011) HR discretion: understanding line managers' role in human resource management. In: *Academy of Management annual meeting, 12th-16th August 2011, San Antonio, Texas*.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CLINICAL EXCELLENCE (2016) *Workplace health: management practices*. London: NICE.

### Journal articles

HASSAN, F. (2011) The frontline advantage. *Harvard Business Review*. Vol 89, No 5, May. pp106-114.

TRULLEN, J., STIRPE, L, BONACHE, J. and VALVERDE, M. (2016) The HR department's contribution to line managers' effective implementation of HR practices. *Human Resource Management Journal*. Vol 26, No 4, October. pp449-470.

TRUSS, C., SOANE, E. and ALFES, K. (2013) The relationship between line manager behaviour, perceived HRM practices, and individual performance: examining the mediating role of engagement. *Human Resource Management*. Vol 52, No 6, November/December 2013 pp839-859.

WHITEHOUSE, E. (2019) Will we ever build better line managers? *People Management* (online). 25 April.

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