

JOB ANALYSIS AND JOB DESIGN

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Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, the reader should be able to

- distinguish between job analyses, job descriptions, and job specifications;
- describe the methods by which job analyses are typically accomplished;
- discuss the relationship of job requirements (as developed through job analyses, job descriptions, and job specifications) to other human resources management functions;
- enumerate the steps involved in a typical job analysis as well as the methods of job analysis;
- address the relationship between job analyses and strategic human resources management; and
- understand the changing nature of jobs and how jobs are being redesigned to enhance productivity.

Introduction

The interaction between an organization and its environment has important implications for the organization's internal organization and structure. For example, the environment affects how the institution organizes its human resources to achieve specific objectives and to perform different functions necessary in carrying out the organization's mission and goals. The organization formally groups the activities to be performed by its human resources (HR) into basic units referred to as jobs.

A *job* consists of a group of activities and duties that entail natural units of work that are similar and related. Jobs should be clear and distinct from other jobs to minimize misunderstandings and conflict among employees and to enable employees to recognize what is expected of them. Some jobs are required to be performed by several employees, each of whom occupies a separate position. A *position* consists of different duties and responsibilities that are performed by only one employee. For example, in a hospital, 40 registered

nurses fill 40 positions, but all of them perform only one job—that of a registered nurse. Different jobs that have similar duties and responsibilities may be grouped into a job family for purposes of recruitment, training, compensation, or advancement opportunities. For example, the nursing job family may be performed by registered nurses, the nursing supervisor, and the director of nursing services.

Healthcare organizations are continually restructuring and reengineering in an attempt to become more cost effective and customer focused. They have put emphasis on smaller scale, less hierarchy, fewer layers, and more decentralized work units. As these changes occur, more managers want their employees to operate more independently and flexibly to meet customer demands. To do this, decisions must be made by employees who are closest to the information and who are directly involved in the service delivery. The objective is to develop jobs and basic work units that are adaptable and can thrive in a world of high-velocity change.

In this chapter, we define the terms job analysis, job description, and job specification; indicate the processes that may be used to conduct job analyses; and identify the relevance of and relationship between the results of job analysis (i.e., job descriptions and job specifications) and other human resources management functions. In addition, we emphasize that these job processes provide the organization with a foundation for making objective and legally defensible decisions in managing human resources. We discuss how healthcare jobs have been redesigned to contribute to organizational objectives while simultaneously satisfying the needs of the employees, and we review several innovative job design and employee-contribution techniques to enhance job satisfaction and organizational performance.

Definitions

Job analyses are sometimes called the cornerstone of strategic human resources management because the information they collect serves so many HR functions. *Job analysis* is the process of obtaining information about jobs by determining the job's duties, tasks, and/or activities. The procedure involves undertaking a systematic investigation of jobs by following a number of predetermined steps specified in advance of the analysis (Ash 1988). When the analysis is completed, a written report is created that summarizes the information obtained from studying 20 or 30 individual job tasks or activities. HR managers use these data to develop job descriptions and job specifications.

A *job description* is a written explanation of a job and the types of duties the job involves. Because no standard format for job descriptions exists, these documents tend to vary in appearance and content from one organization to another. However, most job descriptions contain the job title, a

job identification section, and a job duties section. They may also include a job specification section; sometimes a job specification is prepared as separate documents, but sometimes it is a part of the job description. A specific job description is a detailed summary of a job's tasks, duties, and responsibilities, emphasizing efficiency, control, and detailed work planning. This type of description fits best with a bureaucratic organizational structure, where well-defined boundaries separate functions and different levels of management.

A general job description, which is fairly new on the HR scene, emphasizes innovation, flexibility, and loose work planning. This type of job description fits best with an organization with a flat structure, where few boundaries exist between functions and levels of management (Leonard 2000). Only the most generic duties, responsibilities, and skills for a position are documented in a general job description (Johnson 2001).

A *job specification* describes the personal qualifications an individual must possess to perform the duties and responsibilities contained in a job description. Typically, the job specification describes the skills required to perform the job and the physical demands the job places on the employee performing it. Skills relevant to a job include education and experience, specialized knowledge or training, licenses, personal abilities and traits, and manual dexterity. The physical demands of a job refer to the condition of the physical work environment; workplace hazards; and the amount of walking, standing, reaching, and lifting required by the job. Appendix A (at the end of this chapter) provides an example of a combined job description/job specification document for the position of staff nurse in a hospital's labor and delivery department.

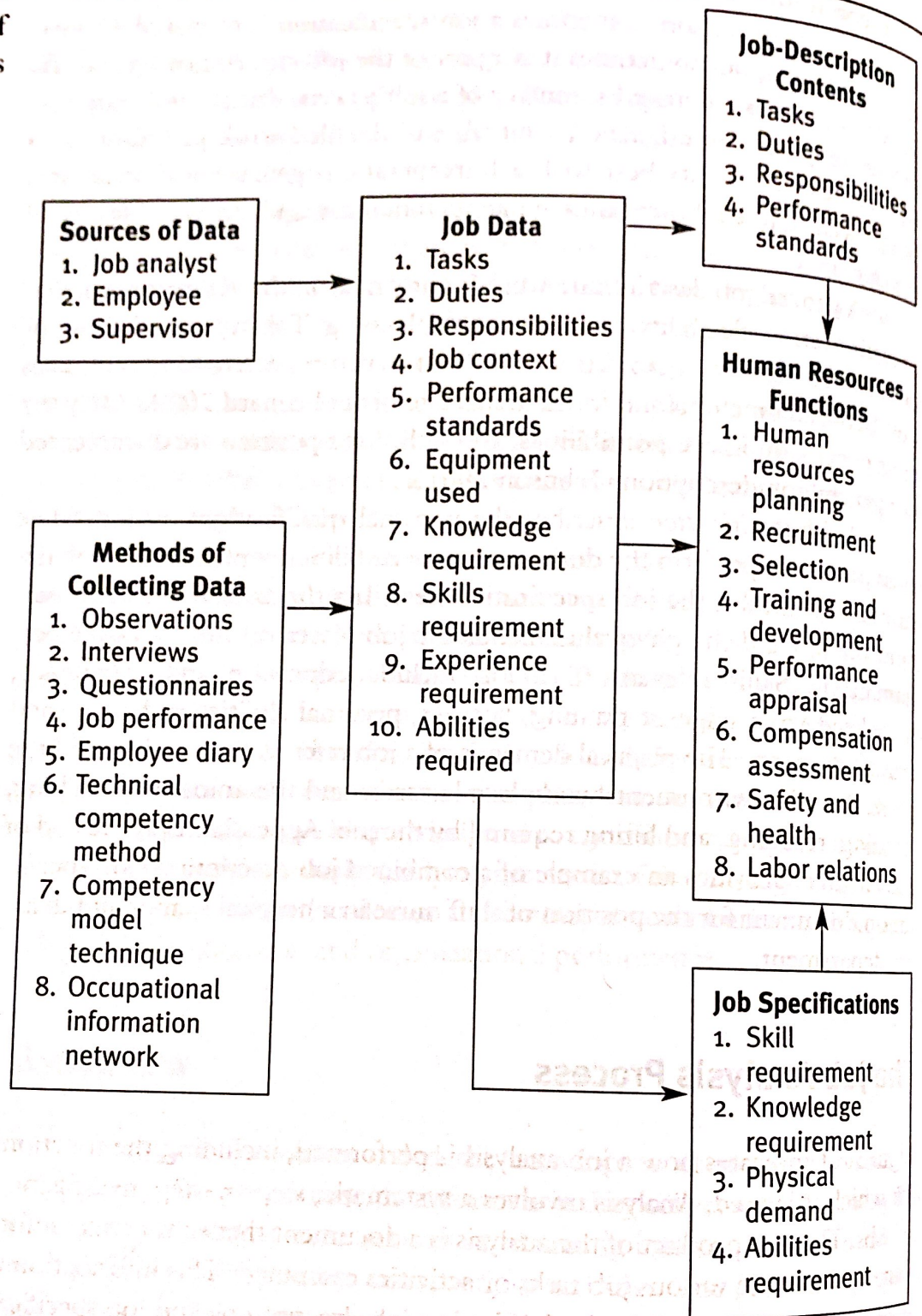
The Job Analysis Process

Figure 7.1 indicates how a job analysis is performed, including the functions for which it is used. Analysis involves a systematic, step-by-step investigation of jobs. The end product of the analysis is a document that summarizes information about the various job tasks or activities examined. This information is then used by HR managers in developing job descriptions and job specifications, which in turn are used to guide performance and to enhance different HR functions, such as developing performance appraisal criteria or the content of training classes (Clifford 1994). The ultimate purpose of a job analysis is to improve organizational performance and productivity.

Steps

The process of conducting a job analysis involves a number of steps. Although healthcare organizations may perform their job analysis differently,

FIGURE 7.1
The Process of
Job Analysis



they follow a general guide such as that listed below (Anthony, Perrew, and Kacmar 1993):

1. *Determine the purpose of the job analysis.* As a result of rapid growth or downsizing, jobs may have changed in their content. Such changes may cause employee salaries to be inequitable. The purpose of conducting the analysis should be explicit and tied to the organization's overall

- business strategy to increase the probability of a successful job analysis program.
2. *Identify the jobs to be analyzed.* All jobs are analyzed if no previous formal job analysis has been performed. If the organization has undergone changes that have affected only certain jobs or if new jobs have been added, then only those jobs are analyzed.
 3. *Explain the process to employees, and determine their levels of involvement.* Employees should be informed of who will conduct the analysis, why the analysis is needed, whom to contact to answer questions and concerns, when the analysis will take place, and what roles they are expected to play in the process. In addition to receiving good communication, employees may elect a committee to serve as a verification check and to reduce anxiety. Such a committee can also help answer employee questions and concerns.
 4. *Collect the job analysis information.* Managers must decide which method or combination of methods will be used and how the information will be collected. Various alternatives are discussed in the next section of this chapter.
 5. *Organize the job analysis information into a form that will be useful to managers and employees.* This form consists of job descriptions and job specifications. The job descriptions can vary from very broad to very specific and precise; the level of detail depends on the needs of the organization. The job specifications must be linked directly to the job description—that is, they must be relevant to the job.
 6. *Review and update the job analysis information frequently.* Particularly in a dynamic environment such as healthcare, jobs seldom go unchanged for long periods of time. Even if no major changes have occurred within the organization, a complete review of all jobs should be performed every three years (Mathis and Jackson 1985). More frequent reviews are necessary when major organizational changes occur.

Data Sources and Data-Collection Methods

Conducting job analyses is usually the primary responsibility of the HR department or the individuals charged with this function. Although job analysts are typically responsible for the job analyses program, they usually enlist the cooperation of the employees and supervisors in the departments in which jobs are being analyzed. These supervisors and employees are the sources of much of the job information generated through the process.

Job information is collected in several ways, depending on the purpose identified by the organization. Typically, the organizational chart is reviewed to identify the jobs to be included in the analysis. Often, restructuring, downsizing, merger, or rapid growth initiates the job analysis. A job may be selected because its content has undergone undocumented changes. As new job demands

arise and the nature of the work changes, compensation for the job also may have to change. The employee or the manager may request a job analysis to determine the appropriate compensation. The manager may also be interested in documenting change for recruitment selection, training, and performance appraisal purposes.

Managers should consider a number of different methods to collect information because it is unlikely that any one method will provide all of the necessary data needed for a job analysis. Among the most popular methods of data collection are observing tasks and behaviors of jobholders, interviewing individuals or groups, using structured questionnaires and checklists, performing the job, reviewing employee work diaries, asking job experts through the technical conference method, using a competency model, and referring to the Occupational Information Network. Each method is described as follows:

- *Observations* require job analysts to observe jobholders performing their work. The observations may be continuous or intermittent based on work sampling—that is, observing only a sampling of tasks performed. For many jobs, observation may be of limited usefulness because the job does not consist of physically active tasks. For example, observing an accountant review an income statement may not provide valuable information. Even with more active jobs, observation does not always reveal vital information such as the importance or difficulty of the task. Given the limitations of observation, it is helpful to incorporate additional methods for obtaining job analysis information.
- Employees who are knowledgeable about a particular job (i.e., the employee holding the job, supervisors, or former jobholders) may be *interviewed* concerning the specific work activities of the job. Usually a structured interview form is used to record information. The questions correspond to the data needed to prepare a job description and job specification. Employees may be suspicious of the interviewer and his or her motives, especially if the interviewer asks ambiguous questions. Because interviewing can be a time-consuming and costly method of data collection, managers and job analysts may prefer to use the interview as a means to get answers to specific questions generated from observations and questionnaires.
- The use of *structured questionnaires* and *checklists* is most efficient because it is a quick and inexpensive way to collect information about a job. If possible, it is desirable to have several knowledgeable employees complete the questionnaire for verification. Such survey data often can be quantified and processed by computer. Follow-up observations and interviews are not uncommon if a questionnaire or checklist is chosen as the primary means of collecting information. The questionnaire must be extremely detailed and comprehensive so that valuable data are not

missed. Compared to other methods, questionnaires are cheaper and easier to administer but are more time consuming and expensive to develop. Management must decide whether the benefits of a simplified method of data collection outweigh the costs of its construction.

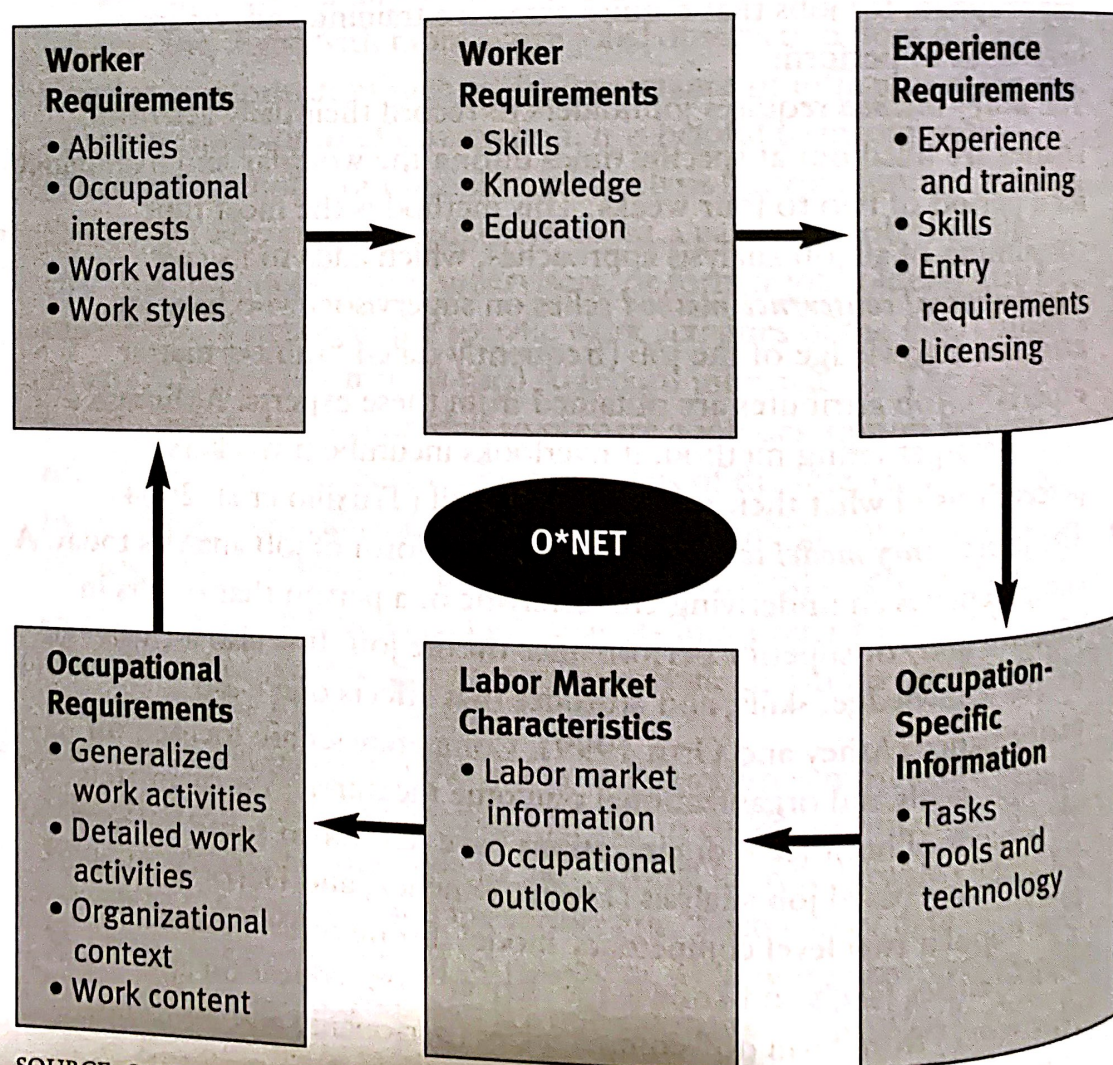
- Strategically, managers favor methods of data collection that do not require a lot of work and up-front costs if the content of the job changes frequently. Another option may be to adopt an existing structured questionnaire. Among the more widely used structured questionnaires are the Position Analysis Questionnaire, the Management Position Description Questionnaire, and the Functional Job Analysis. Regardless of whether the questionnaire is developed in-house or purchased from a commercial source, rapport between analyst and respondent is not possible unless the analyst is available to explain items and to clarify misunderstandings. Without such rapport, such an impersonal approach may have adverse effects on the respondent's cooperation and motivation.
- The job analyst can *perform the job* in question. This approach allows exposure to the actual job tasks as well as the job's physical, environmental, and social demands. This method is appropriate for jobs that can be learned in a relatively short period of time. However, it is inappropriate for jobs that require extensive training and/or are hazardous to perform.
 - The *diary method* requires jobholders to record their daily activities. Diaries are filled out at specific times during the workday and maintained for a period of two to four weeks. This method is the most time consuming of all job analysis approaches, which adds to its cost.
 - The *technical conference method* relies on supervisors who have an extensive knowledge of the job (frequently called "subject matter experts"). Job attributes are obtained from these experts. Although a good data-gathering method, it overlooks incumbent workers' perceptions of what their jobs actually entail (Truxillo et al. 2004).
 - The *competency model technique* is a popular form of job analysis today. A competency is an underlying characteristic of a person that results in effective and/or superior performance on the job. It is also a cluster of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that affects one's job performance (Athey and Orth 1999). Competencies are focused on strategic goals and organizational outcome measures. Approximately 75 percent of healthcare organizations have developed some form of competency-based job analysis (Livens, Sanchez, and Décorte 2004). One popular two-level competency model distinguishes "can do" competencies (skills and knowledge derived from education and experience) from "will do" competencies (personality and attitudinal characteristics that reflect an individual's willingness to perform) (Schippmann 1999).

- The *Occupational Information Network (O*NET)* of the U.S. Department of Labor is an Internet database that includes about 20,000 occupations from the earlier printed *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* as well as an update of more than 3,500 additional occupations. The database job descriptions provide employee attributes and job characteristics, such as skills, abilities, knowledge, tasks, work activities, and experience-level requirements. The database is continually updated and is useful for a variety of HR activities, including job analysis, employee selection, career counseling, and employee training.

Figure 7.2 shows the content model for the O*NET, which uses both job-oriented and worker-oriented descriptors. The model also allows occupational information to be applied across jobs, sectors, or industries and within occupations. O*NET's six-domain content model attempts to provide a descriptor framework for describing jobs in greater detail. Not only is O*NET free to any organization, but it also provides comprehensive information on a wide variety of occupations. The website (see www.doleta.gov/programs/onet) also offers downloadable detailed job analysis questionnaires that can be applied to various purposes.

FIGURE 7.2

The Content Model Forming the Foundation of O*NET



SOURCE: O*NET Resource Center, www.onetcenter.org/content.html

A combination of data-collection methods is often appropriate. The job analyst should employ as many techniques as needed to develop valid and accurate job descriptions and job specifications.

Relation to Other HR Functions

Job analysis provides the basis for tying all the HR functional areas together and for developing a sound HR program. Not surprisingly, job requirements as documented in job descriptions and job specifications influence many of the HR functions that are performed as part of managing employees. When job requirements are modified, corresponding changes must be made in other HR activities. Job analysis is the foundation for forecasting future needs for human resources as well as plans for such activities as recruitment, selection, performance appraisal, compensation, training, transfer, or promotion. Job analysis information is often incorporated into the HR information systems.

Before attempting to attract capable employees, recruiters must know the job specifications for the positions needed to be filled, including the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for successful job performance. The information in the job specifications is used in job-opening notices and as a basis for attracting qualified applicants while discouraging unqualified candidates. Failure to update job specifications can result in a flood of applicants who are unqualified to perform one or more functions of the job. Until 1971, job specifications used in employee selection decisions often were unrelated to the duties to be performed under the job description. In the case of *Griggs v. Duke Power Company* (401 U.S. 424) (1971), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that employment practices must be job related. When discrimination charges arise, employers have the burden of proving that job requirements are job related or constitute a business necessity. Today, employers must be able to show that the job specifications used in selecting employees for a job are specifically associated to that job's duties.

Any discrepancies between the knowledge, skills, and abilities demonstrated by the jobholders and the requirements contained in the job description and specification provide clues for training needs. Career development is concerned with preparing employees for advancement to jobs at which their capabilities can be used to the fullest extent possible. The formal qualifications set forth in the job specifications for higher-level jobs serve to indicate how much more training and development are needed for employees to advance. The requirements contained in the job description are the criteria for evaluating the performance of the jobholder. The appraisal may reveal, however, that certain performance criteria established for a particular job are not completely valid. These criteria must be specific and job related. If the criteria used to evaluate employee performance are overly broad, vague, and not job related, employers may be charged with unfair discrimination.

The relative worth of a job is one of the most important factors in determining the compensation for performing a job. This worth is based on what the job demands of an employee in terms of skill, effort, and responsibility as well as the conditions and hazards under which the work is performed. Information derived from a job analysis is also valuable in identifying safety and health considerations. If a job is hazardous (e.g., poses a possibility for contracting AIDS), the job description and specification should reflect this condition. Employers need to provide specific information about such hazards to enable jobholders to perform their jobs safely.

Job analysis information is also important to the employee-relations and labor-relations functions. When employees are considered for promotion, transfer, or demotion, the job description provides a standard for comparison of talent. Regardless of whether the organization is unionized, information obtained through job analysis can often lead to more objective HR decisions. Job analysis can be used in employee selection to determine whether an applicant for a specific job should be required to take a particular kind of test. The performance standards used to judge employee performance for promotion, rewards, discipline, and loyalty should be job related and based on the job description. Job analysis information can also be used to compare the relative worth of each job's contribution to the organization's overall performance. Finally, job analysis can be used to determine training needs by comparing current employee skills to skills identified in the job analysis. Training programs can then be put in place to reduce employees' skill gaps.

Legal Aspects

Although HR managers consider job descriptions a valuable tool for performing HR functions, they encounter the following problems when using these documents (Grant 1988):

1. They are often poorly written and offer little guidance to the jobholder.
2. They are generally not updated as job duties or specifications change.
3. They may violate the law by containing specifications that are not related to job performance.
4. The job duties included are often written in vague, rather than specific, terms.
5. They can limit the scope of activities of the jobholder in a rapidly changing environment.

A major goal of job analysis is to help the organization establish the job relatedness of its selection and performance requirements. Job analysis helps employees to meet their legal duties under equal employment opportunity law. Section 14 C.2 of the "Uniform Guidelines for Employee Selection Procedures" states that "There shall be a job analysis which includes an analysis of the important work behaviors required for successful performance. . . . Any

job analysis should focus on work behavior(s) and the tasks associated with them" (EEOC 1978). Today's legal environment has created a need for higher levels of specificity in job analysis and job descriptions. Federal guidelines now require that the specific performance requirements of a job be based on valid job-related criteria (EEOC 1978). Employment decisions that involve either job applicants or employees and that are based on vague and non-job-related criteria are increasingly being challenged, and the challenges have mostly been successful. Managers of small healthcare organizations, where employees may perform many different job tasks, must be particularly concerned about writing specific job descriptions.

When writing job descriptions, employers must use statements that are terse, direct, and worded simply, excluding unnecessary phrases and terms. Typically, the sentences that describe job duties begin with verbs (see Appendix A). The term "may" is used for those duties performed only by some workers on the job. Excellent job descriptions are of value to both the employee and the employer. For the employee, job descriptions help them learn their job duties and remind them of the results they are expected to achieve. For the employer, job descriptions can minimize the misunderstandings that occur between supervisors and subordinates regarding job requirements. Good job descriptions also establish management's right to take corrective action in the event that the duties specified in the document are not performed at all or are performed at an inadequate or inappropriate level.

Job analysis is surrounded by several legal constraints largely because it serves as a basis for selection decisions, compensation, performance appraisals, and training. These constraints have been articulated in the "Uniform Guidelines for Employee Selection Procedures" and in several court decisions. Again, as the guidelines state, "Any job analysis should focus on work behavior(s) and the tasks associated with them." To determine this, organizations should assess job skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to perform the jobs. After this is known, selection procedures can be developed (Thompson and Thompson 1982).

Job analyses that were not performed in organizations have resulted in the successful challenge to the validity of the organizations' selection decisions; see *Albermarle Paper Company v. Moody* (422 U.S. 405) (1975). Numerous court decisions regarding promotion and job analysis also exist. In *Rowe v. General Motors* (325 U.S. 305) (1972), the court ruled that a company should have written objective standards for promotion to prevent discriminatory practices. In *U.S. v. City of Chicago* (573 F. 2nd 416 [7th Cir.]) (1978), the court ruled that the standards should describe the job for which the person is being considered for promotion. In both cases, these objective standards can be determined through job analysis (Nobile 1991).

Before the "Uniform Guidelines" and the associated court cases discussed earlier, labor contracts required consistent and equitable treatment of

unionized employees. The information provided by job analysis is helpful to both management and unions in contract negotiations and in avoiding or resolving grievances, jurisdictional disputes, and other conflicts. For these reasons, unionized employers have found it advantageous to prepare written job descriptions and job specifications. The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) also had a major impact on job analysis. Managers must now adhere to the legal mandates of the ADA when preparing job descriptions and job specifications (Mitchell, Alliger, and Morfopoulos 1997). The ADA requires that job duties and reasonabilities be essential functions for successful job performance. If the job requires the jobholder to perform certain essential physical and mental tasks, these requirements should be stated in the job description. Section 1630.2 (n) of the ADA provides three guidelines for rendering a job function essential (EEOC 1992):

1. The reason the position exists is to perform a function.
2. A limited number of employees are available among whom performance of the function may be distributed.
3. The function may be highly specialized, requiring needed expertise or abilities to complete the job.

Managers who write job descriptions in terms of essential functions reduce the risk of discriminating on the basis of disability. Once the essential functions of a job are defined, the organization is legally required to make a reasonable accommodation to the disability of the individual.

The job analysis process is the basic method used to identify essential job functions. An *essential job function* is one that is fundamental to successful performance of the job, while a *marginal job function* is incidental to the main function of the job (i.e., it is a matter of convenience and not a necessity). Qualified individuals with disabilities are persons who have a disability but meet the skill, education, and experience of the job requirements and can perform the essential functions with or without reasonable accommodation. *Reasonable accommodation* means the employer may be required to alter the accommodations of a particular job to enable a partially disabled person to perform all essential functions. However, employers cannot be required to make an accommodation that imposes undue hardship.

Other legislation that requires a thorough job analysis includes the following:

- The Fair Labor Standards Act categorizes employees as exempt and non-exempt based on the job analysis.
- The Equal Pay Act requires equal pay for equal work. When pay differentials exist, job descriptions can be used to show whether jobs are substantially different in terms of skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions.

- The Civil Rights Act often requires the use of job specifications to defend against charges of discrimination, initial selection, promotion, and other HR decisions.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Act requires that job applicants are shown in advance the job descriptions that specify the elements of the job that may endanger employee health or are considered distasteful.

The Changing Environment

The traditional approach to job analysis assumes a static job environment, where jobs remain relatively stable apart from incumbents who hold these jobs. It assumes jobs can be meaningfully defined in terms of tasks, duties, processes, and behaviors necessary for job success. Unfortunately, these assumptions discount technological advances that are often so accelerated that jobs that are defined today may be obsolete tomorrow. In a dynamic environment where job demands change rapidly, job analysis data can quickly become outdated and inaccurate. Obsolete job analysis information can hinder an organization's ability to adapt to change. Several approaches to job analysis may respond to the need for continuous change.

First, adopt a future-oriented approach to job analysis. This strategic analysis of jobs requires managers to have a clear view of how duties and tasks can be restructured to meet organizational requirements in the future. One method to this approach was performed by researchers in one study. They asked experts on a particular job to identify aspects of the job, the organization, and the environment that might change in the next few years and how those changes might affect the nature of the job (Schneider and Konz 1989). The collected data were then used to describe the tasks, knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for doing the job in the future. By including future-oriented information in job descriptions, healthcare organizations can focus employee attention on new strategic directions (Priem, O'Brien, and Gamble 2004).

For example, one organization decided to change its strategic focus to increasing its "customer-consciousness" orientation (George 1990). Job descriptions were then amended to include tasks, knowledge, skills, and abilities related to customer contact and responsibilities. These new job descriptions focused more on what the organization wanted to be doing in the future.

Second, adopt a competency-based approach to job analysis that places emphasis on characteristics of successful performers rather than on standard job duties and tasks (Hunt 1996; Van Wart 2000). These competencies will match the organization's culture and strategy and will include such things as interpersonal communication skills, ability to work as part of a team, decision-making capabilities, conflict resolution know-how, adaptability, and self-motivation (Carson and Stewart 1996; Van Wart 2000). This technique enhances a culture of continuous improvement, as organizational improvement is a constant aim. Both the first and second approaches to change-oriented job

analysis have potential impracticalities, including the dependence on the ability of managers to accurately predict future job needs, the uncertainty that the analysis will comply with EEOC guidelines, and the ambiguity in job descriptions as a result of creating them based on estimates.

Third, conduct a generic job analysis. The traditional job analysis approach serves to constrain desired change and flexibility by compartmentalizing and specifically defining presumably static job characteristics. It impedes shifting decision making downward in the organization, cross-training employees, and getting employees involved in quality improvement efforts (Blayney 1992). Reducing the number of job titles and developing more generic job descriptions can provide needed flexibility to manage unanticipated change.

For example, Nissan Motor Company has only one job description for hourly production employees. This description is generic and gives the organization the opportunity to use employees as needed. Cross-training and multiple job assignments are possible with this approach. However, employees may experience more conflict and ambiguity with generic job descriptions. Undoubtedly, most jobs are getting bigger and more complex.

The last item on a typical job description is often "any other duty that may be assigned," and this is increasingly becoming *the* job description. This enlarged, flexible, complex job changes the way virtually every HR function is performed. For example, in recruitment and selection, individuals who possess the technical skills required to perform the job are not viewed as ideal candidates anymore. HR managers are also looking for broader capabilities such as competencies, intelligence, adaptability, and an ability/willingness to work in teams.

The rapid pace of change in healthcare makes the need for accurate job analysis even more important now and in the future. Historically, job analysis was conducted and then set aside for a reasonable time. Today, however, job requirements are in such a constant state of flux that job descriptions and specifications must be constantly reviewed to keep them relevant. By one estimate, people may have to change their entire skill sets three or four times during their careers (Snyder 1996). If this projection is right, the need for accurate and timely job analysis is becoming even more important. Organizations that do not revise or review job descriptions and specifications may recruit new employees who do not possess the needed skills or may not provide necessary training to update employee skills.

Managerial Implications

Several challenges may limit the impact and effectiveness of job analysis in healthcare organizations. Top management support of job analysis may be lukewarm or nonexistent, and updating job descriptions and job specifications may not occur. The reason for these may be a lack of understanding of and appreciation for the job analysis process and its significance in supporting the

effective implementation of all HR functions. As a result, job analysis is not performed and job descriptions and specifications are not modified as jobs evolve over time. The organization, in turn, operates with outdated information, which adversely affects employee and organizational outcomes.

These aforementioned situations may create the following challenges (followed by possible strategies):

1. *Only single methods of job analysis may be used.* A combination of methods might provide better and more reliable data. In addition, input from job incumbents, supervisors, and experts may provide more usable and valuable data for job descriptions and job specifications.
2. *The jobholder and supervisor may be excluded from the job analysis process.* Because of their extensive knowledge of the relative importance of various job functions, both jobholder and supervisor should be involved in the process.
3. *Sometimes the employee is involved in the process but is not allowed sufficient time to complete the job analysis with any level of quality.* This often results in a poorly written, insignificant, vague, and nonspecific job description or specification that is of little value to the organization and may create legal liability. Obviously, employees should be allowed sufficient time during work hours to complete their input into the job analysis process.
4. *Because neither managers nor employees are trained or motivated to generate quality data, their data may be distorted.* This could be overcome through training, making employees aware of the importance of the process, and providing desired rewards for good data.
5. *Sometimes job descriptions imply that the job incumbent will only perform those job duties outlined in the description.* This could foster an "it's not my job" philosophy. Consequently, the last duty shown on the job description should be phrased as "any other duty that may be assigned." This is increasingly becoming the job description. Healthcare executives can no longer select individuals who possess narrow skills required to perform a job. They must go deeper, and seek other competencies such as ability to adjust and willingness to work in teams. Such qualities should be incorporated into job specifications.
6. *Many job analyses do not go beyond the initial phase of reporting what the jobholder currently does.* The job should also be critiqued to determine whether it is being done correctly and whether other job functions may enhance the jobholder's contributions to achieving the organization's strategic objectives.

Finally, speed is of the essence. Job requirements are changing so rapidly that they must be constantly reviewed to keep them relevant. Yet the time that can be devoted to job analysis has been diminished. Recently, "job

analysis at the speed of reality” has been developed as a shorter version of the interview method. Through this process, a validated job analysis can be completed in between two and three hours (Hartley 2004).

Job Design

Job design is an outgrowth of job analysis and is a process of structuring jobs to help improve organizational efficiency and employee job satisfaction. The process involves changing, eliminating, modifying, and enriching duties and tasks to capture the talents of employees so that they can contribute to the fullest and develop professionally. Job design should simultaneously facilitate the achievement of organizational objectives and recognize the capabilities and needs of those who perform the job.

Job design encompasses the manner in which a given job is defined and how it will be conducted. This involves such decisions as “will the job be handled by an individual or by a team of employees?” and such determinations as “how does the job fit into the overall organization?” Organizing tasks, duties, and responsibilities into a unit of work to achieve a certain objective requires a conscious effort. Each job design process must acknowledge any unique skills possessed by a number of employees of a given profession and must incorporate appropriate professional guidelines or task limitations. In healthcare, most professionals are constrained by which functions and tasks they may legally perform and under what type of supervision. For example, many technical functions require the performance either by a physician or by another professional under the direct supervision of physicians. Such legal constraints obviously reduce the flexibility of healthcare executives in designing jobs.

Specialization in Healthcare

As a result of technological change, increased specialization, and the emergence of the hospital as the central focus of the healthcare system, approximately 700 different job categories exist in the healthcare industry. The most rapid growth in the supply of the healthcare workforce has occurred in new categories: More than two-thirds of all healthcare employees work in nontraditional allied health or support service positions (U.S. Census Bureau 1998).

Researchers have concluded that specialization has inherent limitations and has been taken to extremes in healthcare (Fottler 1992). Because of the inherent disadvantages of specialization, new approaches to organizing work and job design are needed. The foremost criticism is that specialized workers may become bored and dissatisfied because their jobs may not offer enough challenge or stimulation. Boredom and monotony set in and absenteeism

rises, bringing in a possibility that the quality of work will suffer. To counter the problems of specialization and to enhance productivity and employee job satisfaction, healthcare executives have implemented a number of job-design and job-redesign options to achieve a better balance between organizational demands for efficiency and productivity and individual needs for creativity and autonomy. Four alternative redesign approaches are (1) job redesign (i.e., enlargement, enrichment, and rotation), (2) employee empowerment, (3) work-group redesign (e.g., employee involvement groups, employee teams), and (4) work-schedule redesign. Each of these approaches is explored below.

Job Enlargement

Job enlargement involves changes in the scope of a job to provide greater variety to the employee. It is a *horizontal expansion* of duties with the same level of autonomy and responsibility. Alternatively, job enrichment adds additional autonomy and responsibility and is a *vertical expansion of duties*. One specific profession that was developed in response to either job enlargement or job enrichment is the *multiskilled health practitioner* (MSHP). The MSHP is a "person cross-trained to provide more than one function, often in more than one discipline" (Vaughan et al. 1991). These combined functions can be found in a broad spectrum of healthcare-related jobs and range in complexity, from the nonprofessional to the professional level. The additional functions (skills) added to the original worker's job may be of a higher, lower, or parallel level.

Most theories of job enrichment stress that unless jobs are both horizontally and vertically enriched, little positive impact is made on motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction (Lawler 1986). Because the MSHP concept may involve horizontal, vertical, or both types of enrichment, whether it should be expected to enhance organizational outcomes is unclear. Research on the concept reveals that the outcomes have been positive in terms of enhanced productivity, job satisfaction, and patient satisfaction (Fottler 1996). However, those positive outcomes depend on many "contingencies," such as whether the "right" employees are chosen for the program (i.e., those with higher-order needs for personal growth), implementation processes, available training opportunities, legal constraints, and continuing top-management commitment.

Employee Empowerment

Various job enlargement/job enrichment approaches, such as the MSHP, are programs by which managers and supervisors formally change the job of employees. A less structured approach is to allow employees to initiate their own job changes through the concept of empowerment. Ann Howard of Development Dimensions International defines empowerment as "pushing down decision-making responsibility to those close to internal and external customers" (Simison 1999). To support empowerment, organizations must share with the workforce information, knowledge, power to act, and rewards.

Empowerment encourages employees to become innovators and managers of their own work and gives them more control and autonomous decision-making capabilities (Ettore 1997).

Empowerment can involve employee control over the job content (i.e., functions and responsibilities), the job context (i.e., the environmental conditions under which the job is performed), or both (Ford and Fottler 1995). Most healthcare organizations are not ready for both and are advised to implement empowerment on an incremental basis. For empowerment to thrive and grow, organizations must encourage participation, innovation, access to information, accountability, and a culture that is open and receptive to change (Garcia 1997). Examples of organizations that have successfully implemented employee empowerment include Cigna Healthcare, the State of Illinois, Mesa (Arizona) Community College, and the State of Kentucky.

Work-Group Redesign

Table 7.1 outlines the six forms of work groups or teams currently being used in healthcare. Teams are groups of employees who assume a greater role in the service process. They provide a forum for employees to contribute to identifying and solving organizational problems. With work teams, managers accept the notion that the group is the logical work unit to resolve organizational problems and concerns.

Regardless of which team structure is employed, several team processes have been identified with successful teams. These include commitment to shared goals, motivated and energetic team members, consensus decision making, open and honest communication, shared leadership, a climate of trust and collaboration, valuing diversity, and acceptance of conflict and its positive resolution. A good team also requires that employee selection partially consider the potential employee's interpersonal skills and that extensive training for team members be provided (Bohlander and McCarthy 1996). The manager must also adapt to the role of leader (rather than supervisor) and not be threatened by the growing power of the team.

Because many teams fail to operate at full potential, organizations must be aware of several obstacles to the effective functions of teams, including overly high expectations, inappropriate compensation, lack of training, and lack of power (Levy 2001). For example, new team members must be retrained to work outside their primary functional area, and compensation systems must be constructed to reward individuals for team achievements. New career paths to general management and/or higher clinical positions must be created from the team's experience. Finally, managers who feel threatened by the growing power of the team and reduced power of management may need further training or incentives to work with teams (Yandrick 2001). Complete training would enhance skills in team leadership, goal setting, conduct of

TABLE 7.1
Types of
Employee
Teams in
Healthcare

Type	Description
Cross-functional team	A group staffed by a mix of specialists (nurses, physicians, and managers) and formed to accomplish a specific objective. Usually, membership on this team is assigned rather than voluntary.
Project team	A group formed specifically to design a new service. Members are assigned by management on the basis of their ability to contribute to team success. The group normally disbands after task completion.
Self-directed team (or autonomous workgroup)	A group of highly trained individuals who are accountable for a whole work process that provides a service or product to an internal or external customer. Members use consensus decision making to perform job duties, solve problems, or deal with internal or external customers.
Task force team	A group formed by management to resolve a major problem. This team is responsible for developing a long-term plan for problem resolution that may include a change for implementing the proposed solution.
Process improvement team (or employee involvement group)	A group made up of experienced employees from different departments or functions and charged with improving quality, decreasing waste, or enhancing productivity in processes that affect all departments. Members are normally appointed by management.
Virtual team	A group with any of the above purposes that uses advanced competitor and telecommunication technology to link geographically dispersed team members.

meetings, team decision making, conflict resolution, effective communication, and diversity awareness (Bell and Smith 2003).

Work-Schedule Redesign

The goal of work-schedule redesign is to give employees greater control over their time. Various types of adjustments in work schedules alter the normal workweek of five eight-hour days in which everyone begins and ends

their workday at the same time. Such adjustments are made to improve organizational productivity and morale by giving employees increased control over their work schedules. By allowing employees greater flexibility in work scheduling, employers can reduce some of the most common causes of tardiness and absenteeism—that is, the time pressures of life. Employees can adjust their work schedules to accommodate their lifestyles, reduce pressure to meet a rigid schedule, and gain greater satisfaction. Employers can enhance their attractiveness when recruiting and retaining personnel while improving their customer service (poor service is a direct result of low levels of employee satisfaction). Productivity and quality may also be enhanced (Gale 2001a, 2001b).

Under the *compressed workweek* scheme, the number of days in the workweek is shortened by lengthening the number of hours worked per day. The four-day 40-hour week (4/40) is the most common form of compressed workweeks, and the three-day 39-hour week (3/39) schedule is less common. The compressed schedule accommodates the leisure-time activities and personal appointments of employees. Potential barriers to this schedule design are the stringent rules under the Fair Labor Standards Act that require the payment of overtime to nonsupervisory employees who work more than 40 hours a week. Long workdays may also increase the amount of exhaustion and stress for employees and managers. A 2006 survey by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) reported that 35 percent of the employer respondents offered some type of compressed workweek (Thompson 2006).

Flextime, or flexible working hours, allows employees to choose daily starting and quitting times, provided that they work a certain number of hours per day or week. Typically, there is a “core period” during the morning and afternoon when all employees on a given shift are required to be on the job. In healthcare, flextime is most common in clerical or management functions, such as claims processing, health insurance, and human resources. However, flextime is not appropriate for patient care positions, because these functions must be staffed at all times, while communication and coordination are a continuing challenge in other positions. The 2006 SHRM survey found that 57 percent of the employer respondents used some form of flextime (Thompson 2006).

Job sharing is an arrangement whereby two part-time employees share a job that otherwise is held by a full-time employee. Job sharers sometimes work three days a week to create an overlap day for face-to-face conferencing. Job sharing can be scheduled to conform to peaks in the daily or weekly workload. However, more time may be needed to orient, train, and develop two employees who share one role.

Among notable healthcare organizations that have developed a physician job-sharing program is HMO Kaiser Permanente in northern California. This program allows physicians to job share. Job sharing is best suited for

employees who wish to work part time and older workers who wish to phase into retirement. Job sharing can reduce absenteeism because it allows employees to have time to accommodate their personal needs even when employed. It also aids retention of valuable employees.

A 2005 survey by the Families and Work Institute found that 46 percent of respondent organizations with 50 or more employees allowed some employees to job share, while only 13 percent of the respondents allowed all employees to do so (*HR Focus* 2006a). A survey of 1,020 employers by Hewitt and Associates showed that slightly more than 25 percent of the respondents offered job sharing (Bach 2006).

Job sharing may pose problems for employers. Among the possible concerns are the time required to orient and train a second employee and prorating of employee benefits between the two job sharers. The key to making this approach work is good communication between partners through phone calls, e-mails, voice mails, or written updates (Schultz, McCain, and Thomas 2003). It also helps if the two partners have worked in the organization together before they decide to share a job.

One of the most significant work-schedule innovations is telecommuting (Conklin 1999). *Telecommuting* is the system of performing work away from the office with the use of computers, networks, telephones, and fax machines. In 2000, an estimated 25 percent of the U.S. workforce were telecommuting either full time or part time. The number of telecommuting employees increased from an estimated 19 million in 2000 to 31.5 million in 2002 (Garvey 2001). The 2006 SHRM survey revealed that 26 percent of the employer respondents offered some type of telecommuting (Thompson 2006).

The most important reasons that employers use telecommuting are to reduce costs (33 percent), improve productivity (16 percent), increase employee retention (16 percent), boost employee morale (15 percent), and enhance customer service (11 percent) (Reilly 1997). It also decreases overhead costs as it eliminates or minimizes the need for office space. The two most important advantages of telecommuting are increased flexibility for employees and improved ability for organizations to attract workers who may not otherwise be available (Wells 2001). Drawbacks of telecommuting include the potential loss of employee creativity because of lower levels of face-to-face interaction, the difficulty of developing appropriate performance standards and evaluation systems, and the challenge of formulating an appropriate technology system for telecommuting (Capowski 1998). Telecommuting may also negatively affect employee-supervisor relationships (Wells 2001; Janove 2004). In addition, if some employees are denied the opportunity to work from home, they may pursue legal action or become dissatisfied employees. Telecommuting is obviously more appropriate for companies that are not engaged in direct patient care. Recent evidence indicates that, when given a

choice, employees prefer a mix of working part of the time from home and part of the time at the employer's premises (Garchick 2006).

Another work-schedule innovation is the use of *contingent workers*. The U.S. Department of Labor separates contingent workers into two groups: (1) independent contractors and on-call workers, who are called to work only when needed, and (2) temporary or short-term workers. Both of these groups have been growing and represent approximately 10.7 percent and 4.1 percent, respectively, of the U.S. workforce (*HR Focus* 2005; *HR Focus* 2006b). The reasons to use contingent workers include seasonal fluctuations in customer demand, project-based work, acquisition of skill sets not available among current employees, hiring freezes, rapid growth, and inadequate supply of certain occupations (e.g., registered nurses). Contingent workers may pose managerial challenges, such as unclear management reporting relationships, lack of accountability for performance, high relative compensation, low retention rates, variable attitudes and work quality, and inadequate orientation and training.

In sum, the healthcare industry can and does use all of the work-schedule design approaches discussed here for positions that do not involve clinical care of patients. Positions that involve direct patient care must be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A compressed workweek or job sharing are the most appropriate work-schedule adjustments for employees in such positions.

Summary

Job analysis is the collection of information relevant to the preparation of job descriptions and job specifications. An overall written summary of the task requirements for a particular job is called a job description, and an overall written summary of the personal requirements an individual must possess to successfully perform the job is called a job specification. Job analysis information developed in the form of job descriptions and job specifications provides the basic foundation for all human resources management functions.

Some combination of available job analysis methods (i.e., observation, interviews, questionnaires, job performance, diary, technical conference, competency model, and O*NET) should be used because all have advantages and disadvantages. Key considerations regarding the choice of methods should be the fit between the method and the purpose, cost, practicality, and an overall judgment on the appropriateness of the method for the situation in question. The primary purpose of conducting a job analysis should be described clearly to ensure that all relevant information is collected. In addition, time and cost constraints should be specified before choosing one or more of the available data-collection methods.

Healthcare executives should follow these steps when conducting a job analysis: (1) determine purpose, (2) identify jobs to be analyzed, (3) explain

the process to employees, (4) collect job analysis information, (5) organize the information into job descriptions and job specifications, and (6) review and update the documents frequently. Job descriptions and job specifications, as derived from job analyses, must be done and their processes must be valid, accurate, and job related. Otherwise, the healthcare organization may face legal repercussions, particularly in the areas of employee selection, promotions, and compensation. The "Uniform Guidelines" and associated court cases provide standards to help executives avoid charges of discrimination when developing documents from job analysis data. In today's rapidly changing healthcare environment, healthcare executives should consider the potential advantage of future-oriented job analyses when change is more predictable and generic job analyses when change is less predictable. Both of these concepts may have legal or practical limitations that must be considered before the concepts are fully adopted.

Various new approaches to job design are required as healthcare organizations strive to overcome the effects of excessive specialization. Among the most significant of these are job redesign approaches such as the multiskilled health practitioners, employee empowerment, various team concepts, and work-schedule redesign.

Discussion Questions

1. Why should healthcare executives conduct a job analysis? What purpose does it serve?
2. What are job descriptions and job specifications? What is their relationship to job analysis? What will happen if a healthcare organization decides not to use any job descriptions at all?
3. Consider the position of the registered nurse in a large hospital. Which of the eight methods of job analysis will you use to collect data on this position, and why?
4. Describe the steps involved in the job analysis process.
5. How can the existence of a high-quality job analysis make a particular human resources function, such as employee selection, less legally vulnerable?
6. Are healthcare jobs static, or do they change over time? What may cause a job to change over time? What implications does this change have for job analysis?
7. Describe and discuss future-oriented job analysis and generic job analysis. How may each be used to help healthcare executives cope with a rapidly changing and competitive environment? What are some potential pitfalls of each approach?
8. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using multiskilled health practitioners?
9. Access information on work teams at www.workteams.unt.edu. What types