

De-jobbing



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INTRODUCTION

In ever changing modern world successful job candidates should know and do more than their job descriptions require. That is what global companies require from their employees these days. In other words by ‘reducing of workforce’ or ‘mass layoff’ global companies want to reduce their workforce. This however, has led to de-jobbing in many companies.

De-jobbing refers to the fact that jobs often change every day and cannot be specifically described in the traditional ways. Definition of de-jobbing cannot be found in many publications but according to ‘answers.com’ de-jobbing represents the gradual reverse of the process that created an employment driven economy now becoming obsolete as a result of globalisation and technological advancement which makes it unnecessary for every business unit to reinvent the wheel. (<http://wiki.answers.com>)

Nowadays knowledge is available in push of a button for everyone, for that reason organisations are looking for multi skilled employees in a flatter organisation.

This paper will discuss and debate if de-jobbing is ultimately a product of the rapid changes taking place in business today or not.

So why are companies and organisations trying to use de-jobbing more and more, what is the real reason behind it? To answer these questions the real world examples needed, some global and local organisations will be shown as examples to have better understanding of de-jobbing, to be more specific journal articles and newspaper publications about de-jobbing will be revealed.

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Job

Before making first steps towards de-jobbing process, what is the understanding of a 'Job' in our society? Business Dictionary describes it as a group of homogenous tasks related by similarity of functions. When performed by an employee in an exchange for pay, a job consists of duties, responsibilities, and tasks that are defined and specific, and can be accomplished, measured and rated. (businessdictionary)

In other words it is the activity which individuals do to earn money. Endless economic crises, bankrupted companies, unsuccessful businesses have taught both the employee and employer one very important lesson. For the employer to hire people who work well, who will add something to the organisation and for job seekers to look for that kind of job which will give them perfect career and good wages in return. At the end of the day everyone gets paid for what they do and how they do it.

Here is the important bit for companies who want to cut their labour costs but end up firing wrong people or by not organizing the downsizing accordingly.

De-jobbing

As continued from the 'Job' section of this paper it is important that organisations hire and fire right people. In many organisations today, jobs are becoming more nebulous or shapeless and more difficult to define and understand, meaning one thing, the trend is towards de-jobbing.

It is a broadening the tasks of the company jobs, and encouraging workers not to limit themselves to what's on their job descriptions is a result of the changes taking place in modern workplaces.

In other words one person does more than what they should normally do in the workplace, or doing many different things which were not even mentioned in job description. Companies need to tackle with ever changing trends such as technological change, competition with rivals, deregulation, political instability, social changes, and the shift in economy. Companies do these things to be more competitive, and responsive, and generally more flexible. In other words, the organisational methods managers use to complete this have helped weaken the meaning of job as well as a well defined and clearly described set of responsibilities.

Something dramatic is going on in our world, to be specific we are witnessing the disappearance of jobs. Not some particular jobs in certain that are disappearing but the very thing itself, " the job" that is fading away. It is not a joke or something like that but it is what happening these days, ' Yes'. Take for example farmers many jobs within that industry disappeared because of computerization or machinery. Robots do it for us, thus leaving people to look for something else to do. Very good example can be the services we use nowadays, in the banks when paying money in and out in many banks we cannot see cashiers anymore, computers can do it for you. There are many examples of such situations but those will be discussed in latter pages of this paper.

After few decades, modern world will marvel that we couldn't see more clearly what was happening. And then again looking 50 years back who would have imagined the world of today? We people will observe how fixated we were on the continuing rounds of layoffs, the growing use of temps, and the occurrence of outsourcing. The time will come when the job itself won't be good enough to accomplish a given task. There are and were predictions that there would be labour shortages in some parts of the world, and that there would be so many jobs that it would be workers market not the job givers, but that has not happened, and there are many reasons for that. One of the biggest reasons remains to be advancement in technology, or rapid advancement in technology, so fast that no one could predict it. And then there is constant migration of people, perfect example can be United Kingdom itself. When European Union expanded towards Eastern Europe many people from those countries moved to west Europe to work. Many companies benefited from this migration in many ways. All these have again proved specialists and so called experts wrong in their future predictions. The point is that there will always be people to do the jobs, but will those be the right people for those positions or slots.

There is a change coming to our understanding of jobs and the way we do them. People are afraid of change, for some it is difficulties, difficulty to learn something new to stay in his/her position, but for some that change is opportunity; opportunity for those who know how to turn change, to their advantage. Furthermore it will be opportunity for people who believe in themselves and how they will take their chances. Even if jobs or businesses of those people are not innovation minded in those conditions, they will need

to deal with that sooner or later, because that will be the defining moment for future of their jobs or businesses.

The change which we are talking here is ‘ de-jobbing’ which is already happening. There are many examples of modern institutions which have taken big steps towards de-jobbing their jobs.

How should businesses respond to these new realities? Good answer will be to teach and educate employees about what company is trying to attain, and show them where their piece of work stands in the bigger picture. However, this may take time and outcomes might be disappointing. Management would say that employees just don’t get the idea of what we are trying to do, but better answer is to address the issue straight that people holding on to their jobs. But in reality what management fails to see is that, management themselves directing people and showing them what to do, how to do it and then paying them for that.

Nowadays we can see many people getting paid for their innovations, technology and computing sector leading the way. Those people manage themselves; there are no supervisors or managers checking their performance and work rate. And the interesting thing about is that they work for companies not themselves and still get paid much better. That is not what we used to mean when describing a job, but there are people who do those kinds of jobs.

So what are the chances that in future many people will do that kind of jobs? Throughout centuries we were looking for faster production, faster distribution, faster service and what makes that possible? Special minds,
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innovative minds gives us such advantage, it was and will be like that for decades to come. The jobs are vanishing as a result of these things, this is where de-jobbing happens. One person does multiple tasks on its own, and in some cases does it much better than two or group of people of course by help of machinery, robots, and computers and so on.

For that reason organisations right to give their employees multiple tasks, because in some organisations there are many small things need to be done that management cannot just go and hire someone else to do that job for them. There are organisations which are cutting their expenses by taking such actions which are profitable for them. Or some of them are reducing management levels, there are many companies which have taken such actions and succeeded with it. Let's look at some types of organisations where such things can be done.

The Boundary less Organisation:

In 'Boundary less' organisation the widespread use of teams and cross-functional task forces reduces and makes more permeable the boundaries that typically separate departments such as customer services and sales, and hierarchical ranks. In such organisations foster responsiveness by cheering employees to liberate themselves of 'it is not my job' attitude which naturally create walls between one employee and another. Instead the focus is on concentrating on project or task at hand in terms of the overall best interests of the organisation, thereby further reducing the thought of a job as a clearly defined set of duties.

Reengineering

Re-engineering is the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of the business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical contemporary measures of performance, such as cost, quality, service, and speed. ([http://www. citeman. com](http://www.citeman.com))

The old ideas and rules of the company should change fundamentally, at the same time beliefs which shaped the main structure and management of business for many years like divided work groups or divisions within the organisation should be retired.

Jobs can be reengineered in many ways, for example one way is to assign group of people for few relatively enlarged and enriched jobs. This makes whole group responsible for the result rather than one person. It will give more responsibility to the group, results can be judged by the performance of that group. By doing so team will become more responsible and there will be mutual respect within the individuals.

Downsizing

It is the way of life in many organisations these days. If organisation loses money, or is not performing well, downsizing comes to mind. Many managers think that by downsizing company can improve its overall performance and that it will make huge profits by doing so. But in experience it is not really effective, results are not encouraging enough to say that by downsizing business will do better. It is intended to show positive results, but it does more harm than good to some businesses and their workforce.

Downsizing is reduction in size of workforce as all staffing levels, to survive a downturn, improve efficiencies, or become a more attractive candidate for acquisition or merger.

(businessdictionary)

Main reasons behind the downsizing are to reduce expenses and costs, reduce the management hierarchy to fasten the decision making in management level, sharpen focus on core competencies, satisfy the shareholders and increase the productivity. While organisation might or might not benefit from downsizing is yet to be seen, but it surely leaves some effects within the organisation and externally as well.

One of the big sufferers of downsizing is workers within the organisation. Downsizing can bring stress and motivation disruptions in the workplace. Workers will be in constant stress of being the next person to leave the company. This can increase the anger and fear among workers. Employees will have low commitment to work due to constant fear, such things might negatively impact on customer service department and can leave negative impact on productivity and the quality of the job done. While, survivors of such actions might experience more stress of long hour shifts and more responsibility added to their work, and anxiety about future downsizings.

Downsizing plays big part in de-jobbing process, and many companies have no choice but downsize first and do de-jobbing afterwards. Experts say downsizing is not good for the overall performance of the company, but then again organisations do downsize no matter what experts say. The results are yet to be seen as world goes through one of the biggest crisis's of all time,

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and many companies downsizing, the real effect of downsizing will be seen in 2 or 3 years time. Why? Because 'Credit Crunch' era many companies applied downsizing and that there will be more cases after this crisis to discuss rather than now.

Examples

Here are some examples from worlds global and local businesses on how they have experienced the de-jobbing process and have they succeeded with their actions or not:

Prezzo PLC - there were numerous changes in many sections of the company, notably in restaurants of the company. The management decided that everyone must do more than what their job responsibilities are. Such as waiters doing the jobs of assistant managers and chefs must order the stock. Workers of course wouldn't get payed more money for their efforts but there were arguments within the staff that 'this is your job and that is yours' kind situation, which creates disorder in working place.

Lloyds TSB Bank - the bank announced that it will cut 5000 jobs in order to cut its expenses and be more competitive against their rivals. The remaining staff would replace the ones who left. (The Guardian, 2009)

BBC - the BBC is to cut 2050 jobs aimed at saving hundreds of millions pounds a year. Cuts will include 420 in news, 66 in sport, 150 in drama, 735 in the regions, 58 in new media and 424 in factual and learning. That will follow the previous 1730 job cuts. Director general said that there were risks in undertaking change on such a large scale. But underlined they have staff in place to replace them. (Evening Standard, 2009)

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Versace - is to slash one quarter of its workforce which is 350 jobs worldwide by the middle of the next year. In a statement, group said that it was preparing a comprehensive corporate reorganisation designed to increase efficiency, return the group to profitability in 2011 and ensure its future growth prospects. (The Times, 2009)

Ericsson - is to axe up to 700 jobs, more than 17 percent of its UK workforce. Company announced that this move is part of Ericsson's ongoing global cost reduction activities and is subject to consultations with trade unions and employee forums. (The Times, 2009)

Fujitsu - Company announced plans to cut 1200 jobs in UK. The company said today that the cuts will come at its services business, saying that action is necessary to ensure that the company remains competitive in the difficult global economic climate and is in a solid position for future growth when the economy starts to recover. (The Telegraph, 2009)

Rolce Royce - the defence and aerospace group, plans to cut 140 jobs in the UK as part of a move to axe 2000 jobs globally. Company statement says that they are determined to maintain their focus on cost reduction and competitiveness as the world economy enters a challenging period. However, it was too early to determine the precise effects of the global economic downturn. (The Telegraph, 2008)

Scania - the Swedish heavy vehicle and engine manufacturer plans to dismiss 70 employees from its factory in Brazil. Company spokesman described the situation by stating they had an excess of workers and that they had to reduce. (nordicbusinessreport)

British Airways is to cut 1700 cabin crew jobs and freeze pay as it continues to slash costs. The change will cut the number of cabin crew jobs by 1700 reducing the current total of 14000. And also airline confirmed that it was planning two year pay freeze on the basic pay. All of which company says are efforts to change the overall structure of Airlines business strategy. (the Independent, 2009).

Midwest Airlines - announced its plans to reduce its workforce by about 1200 employees, or 40percent of staffing levels. The reductions will take the form of furloughs or position eliminations, depending on job function. Company also informed that reductions are spread throughout the airline's flight operations and in-flight operations. This action is taken to reduce the costs and improve the competitiveness of the company. (Journal of Transportation, 2008)

Compaq the personal computer group blamed the sharp slowdown in Europe would lead to an additional 1500 job cuts. Company statement said that economic slowdown is spreading overseas, and that company will move more swiftly and go even deeper in their structural cost reduction programmes, by doing which company aims to achieve maximum competitiveness in such situations. (The Independent, 2009)

BT - revealed to axe up to 15000 posts in the coming year. BT said it was aiming to cut the jobs through natural wastage, non replacement and voluntary redundancy. And that BT would do all it could to protect the jobs of its permanent staff, pledging that some workers would be redeployed and retrained. Company also announced that there will also be more flexible

work patterns introduced, including call centre staff based at home rather than in an office. (The Journal, 2009)

Novastar - a residential mortgage lender and portfolio investor today announced a reduction in workforce to align its organisation with changing conditions in the mortgage market. It will affect about 17% of the company. The actions focus on the company's wholesale loan origination group and related functions, including employees in its headquarters. This particular action focuses on new rules company will implement in market. (Business wire, 2007)

AOL - The American internet service provider plans to shed 5000 employees, almost quarter of its workforce, as it goes through a radical restructuring intended to reinvent the business in the face of falling subscribers. This restructuring will see many people doing de-jobbing in the face of these changes. (The Guardian, 2006)

Barclays - Banking giant is to axe 188 jobs at call centres in Liverpool as it moves to an automated system for issuing ISA accounts. The bank said staff previously carried out the work are no longer needed and the job losses will affect call centres in Liverpool city centre. (ITN , 2009)

EMI - music giant is to axe up to 2000 jobs as part of a drive to save future of the company. The cuts will be focused on the group's recorded music division, and that company was struggling for challenges posed by digital media. (Yorkshire Post, 2008)

Sainsbury's - were expected to axe 350 of its top managers this week. Those losses will be from London head office and will unusually include 80 senior executives as the group attempts to sweep away bureaucracy generated by its top heavy management. (The Birmingham Post, 1999)

Vodafone - is all set to part company with 450 employees from its operations in the UK. Vodafone is to dismiss a fifth of its senior head office managers even as the firm would be recruiting about 500 sales and retail staff.

Vodafone tells that they want to shift the emphasis from administration to sales. (PTI, 2008)

NTL - were to axe 600 jobs from its workforce by the end of 2007. The cable giant said it would be outsourcing a significant number of jobs as well as cutting posts as part of its integration strategy following the merger with Telewest in March. (The Guardian, 2006)

Shell - oil giant yesterday announced that it plans to axe almost a fifth of its offshore workforce, sparking industry fears about the safety of North Sea platforms. Company said job losses on 16 platforms in the Northern and Central North Sea would lead to improvements in safety, production and efficiency and that only a small proportion of the cuts would be maintenance related. (The Scotsman, 2003)

De la rue - in 2004 despite making significant profit, worlds biggest banknotes and chequebooks producing company said that it will axe 350 jobs. De La Rue said it planned to return the expected 8 million a year savings to investors through a combination of progressive dividends.

(Evening News Scotland, 2004)

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Glaxo Smith Kline – Britain’s biggest pharmaceuticals company, plans to axe 6000 jobs around the world as it faces up to the growing challenges in the industry. Competition from generic manufacturers and doubts about company’s pipelines are posing a serious threat to the sector. (PTI, 2009)

Scottish Water – in 2003 wanted to cut 900 jobs, the company had struggled with high costs arising from Scotland’s Victorian drainage system and has been told by the regulator that it needs to make cost cuts. Spokesman for Labour Party in Scotland described situation as company trying to become more efficient and remain in public sector. (The Telegraph, 2003)

Conclusion

All in all, de-jobbing is what we are facing these days. And if we want to be successful we as individuals must be alert for all the changes taking place around us. The world is on the brink of something big, in terms of change. Yes! Change important but can we keep up with the change which is happening around us or not that is the important point. As it was discussed in de-jobbing part of this paper, jobs as we know them are disappearing or vanishing.

Who knows after a century there won’t even be a word called job. De-jobbing is the word most companies like and would like to apply in their companies, because it allows organisations to get more than one thing from its employee.

The style and the way we do our jobs are changing rapidly and it won’t be a surprise to see one person doing multiple tasks a century from now.

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