

Answers to discussion questions

[Psychology](#), [Motivation](#)



Case Study7: Answers to Discussion Questions

1. Using the Job Characteristics Model, analyze and discuss the work design implications of The Coca-Cola Company's approach to creating jobs for improved performance.

In the 'job characteristics model' originally proposed by Richard Hackman and Greg Oldham (1976), it is assumed that certain job characteristics lead to specific psychological states that, in turn, lead to advantageous effects or outcomes. The five core job characteristics of skill variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy, and feedback would lead to positive psychological states and outcomes, once positive job characteristics are encouraged within the environment.

As for The Coca-Cola Company, by creating meaningful and involving jobs, the employees become responsible and potent, and this goes for motivation through better quality, satisfaction, and a lower turnover. The five core job characteristics are enhanced in implementing the company's work design, which revolves around motivation and improvement of knowledge and skills. Giving the employees a 'voice' and a right to take part and be heard, they are encouraged to contribute their ideas and apply their knowledge and skills for better management and profits, even when it comes to decision making that, in the usual, is given only to the higher levels of employees. For this goal, there are special projects and activities, such as the weekly open discussions with the senior leaders, the 'no-agenda brown bag' that takes place in the company headquarters, what they call the 'biennial employee insights survey', as well as the employee forums (McCuddy, 2006, p. 490).[1] All these motivate the employee into taking

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part with the organization, and it is one way of enhancing improved performance by way of the job characteristic model. This is similar to what is presented in Figure 1 at page 5.

2. How can the social information-processing model be applied to understanding The Coca-Cola Company's approach to creating jobs for improved performance?

The Coca-Cola Company's approach is also an implementation of what is called the 'social information-processing' model. In this theory, it is assumed that information processing within a group or society involves six stages that are the following: (1) encoding of cues, (2) interpretation of cues, (3) goal clarification, (4) response access, (5) response decision, and (6) behavioral enactment (Georgia Association of School Psychologists, 2007).

[2] This was first introduced by Crick and Dodge in 1994, and it is assumed that each of these six steps take place gradually from step 1 to step 6. Cues leads to certain goal, which then leads to certain response and behavior. To arrive at a certain response and behavior, five elements should interact together (Figure 2 at page 6).

The social information-processing model of Crick and Dodge (1994) was used by The Coca-Cola Company in creating jobs for improved performance by means of using the correct cues that would lead to the right response and behavior. For example, by using cues like the opportunity of being heard or listened to, employees interpret the signal as an opportunity of being able to speak or express their thoughts and sentiments. Having been clarified that the company looks forward to meaningful and involving jobs, the immediate response is to take that opportunity and start considering what they can do

for the sake of self-improvement, company development, and better quality. Thus, the employees make the decision to go with the tide, and this leads to positive behavior that leads to motivation, skills and knowledge, as well as better performance. It is important, however, that the exact goals are clarified, and the right cues are specified given a certain data base most prevalent within the group or organization. Certain cues do not blend well with certain data base, which is why culture and norms appear to be very important.

3. What alternative work patterns does The Coca-Cola Company offer its employees, and why does it use them?

The Coca-Cola Company implements alternative work patterns to its employees to be able to encourage further learning, better interaction, increased knowledge and skills, as well as motivation and a higher overall satisfaction. As each employee is accountable when it comes to the development and the future of the company, employees are given a voice using open discussions, surveys, forums, and the no-agenda brown bag wherein senior leaders and small groups of employees interact with one another in the company headquarters. There is also the performance feedback that, according to McCuddy (2006), is “an essential element of Coca-Cola’s human resource practices” (p. 490). There are also flexible working schedules that depend on the personal needs and lifestyles of the employees, as well as job sharing that is most useful to certain positions or areas of the department. Committed to offer its working class with the opportunity to grow, learn, and be heard, The Coca-Cola Company continues to offer its employees with the most meaningful and fulfilling working

environment that would encourage their best and full potential, which would then lead to performance excellence in particular.

With diversity and multiculturalism hanging around its corners, it is important that the company implement the best work design possible that would push the best and full potential of the employees. Thus, their approach lands on “[e]ncouraging performance excellence by creating meaningful and involving jobs” (McCuddy, 2006, p. 490). By bringing out the best in every employee while improving their knowledge and skills, the company hopes to achieve improved performance and profits. Since the company’s overall revenue usually comes from the international sector—70% of it, to be exact (McCuddy, 2006, p. 490)—a very good work design is needed to manage a very diverse environment in more than 200 countries that are scattered around the globe.

Appendix

Figure #1:

Source: Finholt, 1999, slide 1

Figure #2:

Source: Georgia Association of School Psychologists, 2007

References

Finholt, T. (1999, January 5). Job characteristic model (slide 13). Threats to group performance. Retrieved June 22, 2007, from the University of Michigan, School of Information database: http://www.si.umich.edu/Classes/505/Lectures/SI505_Week3/sld013.htm.

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[1] McCuddy, M. (2006). Case Study 7: Creating jobs for improved performance: the Coca-Cola way. In D. Nelson and J. Campbell (Ed.), *Organizational behavior, foundations, realities & challenges*, 5th ed. (pp. 490-491). Boston, MA: Thomson South Western.

[2] Georgia Association of School Psychologists. (2007). Social information processing model. Retrieved June 22, 2007, from its official database: http://www.gaspnet.org/adobe_pdf/SocialINFOModel.PDF.