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ANTHONY HUYGHEBAERT
CHIEF HR OFFICER
BARCO





ARTICLE BY CHRIS FURNELL, ORGANISATION DESIGN CONSULTANT
& ANISSA OUKHIAR, ORGANISATION DESIGN CONSULTANT - ON THE MARK

PANTOLOGY

UPSKILLING AND MULTISKILLING DECISIONS ARE OFTEN MADE IN ISOLATION BY EACH FUNCTION OR TEAM IN A BUSINESS, WHICH CREATES COMPLICATION AND FRAGMENTATION, WHEN WHAT IS REQUIRED IS A DISCIPLINED APPROACH, WITH HR AN ACTIVE INFLUENCER AND COORDINATOR. SKILLING DECISIONS IS AN ISSUE OF WORK AND JOB DESIGN AND IT'S AN ESSENTIAL HR ACUMEN.

When job design decisions are made in isolation and to meet aspirations of a single person, across the business it manifests to narrow and specialised jobs, resulting in fragmented work, rather than holistic and satisfying work. Designing jobs to a single person also creates difficulty to repeat or backfill the work and so good job design is dependent on defining the work, roles, jobs and work allocation at an enterprise level. There are several practical guidelines on how to do this with discipline. The first is to understand the work that the strategy requires the business to do. Then, how that work is organised into boundaries and further into roles and jobs. Once the overall work design is complete, dependencies between jobs can be mapped, which is a key feature to understand future upskilling and multiskilling implications. The second guideline is to design for maximising the quality of working life. Humans have the capacity to do more than one task - we can be multi-functional and multi-skilled - and yet organisations are often designed to break down whole work into parts and assign people to those parts.

The third guideline is to be clear about the principles at both an individual and team level. At an individual level, jobs should be designed to increase skill variety and task identity. It should facilitate three things; experienced meaningfulness of work, responsibility for the outcomes of

the work and knowledge of the actual results of work activities. Jobs should be designed around whole work and involve planning, decision making and creativity to decrease the gap between doing and controlling. Behaviour is just as

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important, for example if 'always innovating' was a behavioural expectation, it might require the individual to always look for ways to upskill themselves, as well as the team relationship and work done for the business. But this can't be left as a wholly emergent property, good job design requires a mechanism to coordinate 'always innovating' behaviour to prevent fragmentation.

At a team level, collaboration is a key requirement and is improved by increasing the interdependence of tasks and goals. Goal interdependence means

team members have a common interest and incentive in achieving the team's goals. Task interdependence means that individual jobs should be complementary; no one team member is able to complete the team's task, but not everyone has to be there to complete it. A practical example is planning the next month of customer demand. Upskilling and multiskilling decisions in isolation often discount these key guidelines and result in overly complicated work systems, including more job levels than the business needs. When a high performer is identified at risk of leaving, to mitigate, the person is given more responsibility in the context of line management. They stay in the business, positive about upskilling to manage a direct report.

A holistic and integrated approach to (re)designing work and the job starts with four questions: Has business direction changed? Has the work in the value stream that creates value for customers changed? Has the way we put boundaries around the work in our operating model changed? What management mechanisms should be used and how? Without a holistic and integrated approach to work and job design, seemingly well intended decisions to change an individual's job creates a manifestation of fragmented work.

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