



WHY JOBS STILL MATTER

PART 1

Over the coming months, we will explore why jobs will remain a key HC component, even in the skills centric environment we find ourselves. We will delve into the critical purpose of the concept of Jobs, explore how the architecture of Jobs is evolving to enable a skills centric approach, as well as dig into technological considerations that drive these ever-evolving practices.

In recent years, a tremendous amount of attention has been focused on shifting away from the traditional concept of a Job towards a more individualized, skills centric focus as the basis for developing and delivering talent management strategies.

The benefits for such a shift are cited as:

- 1. Enhanced productivity:** When employees are selected, trained, and assigned based on their skills, it can lead to improved performance and productivity as they are more likely to excel in tasks they are skilled at.

2. Better talent acquisition and retention:

Focusing on skills allows organizations to tap into a wider talent pool during recruitment. It also aids in talent retention as employees value the opportunity to utilize and improve their skills.

3. Increased flexibility: Skills-based organizations can adapt quickly to changes in the business environment. They can easily reassign employees based on the skills needed for new tasks or projects.

4. Improved employee engagement and satisfaction: Employees are more engaged and satisfied when they can use their skills effectively and see a clear path for skill development and career progression.

5. Effective workforce planning: A skills-based approach allows for more strategic workforce planning. Organizations can identify current skill gaps and future skill needs, which aids in training, development, and hiring decisions.

As this trend matures, it is becoming apparent that the adoption of a skills centric approach is more easily achieved for certain organizational functions than others. The functions where a Skills-Based organizational strategy adoption is easier include Information Technology, Engineering and certain vocational/technical functions where individual skills have taken center stage for many years.

This then begs the question, is there still a place for “Jobs” in this modern Human Capital age? To answer this question, it is important to clarify what we mean by “Job”.

We define a Job as a structured set of responsibilities, duties and tasks, and, yes, skills that has traditionally served as a foundation for organizational functioning. Jobs have served the following purpose historically:

1. Contextual understanding: A job provides a context that helps employees understand their role within the organization and how their work contributes to the overall business objectives. It provides a clear delineation of responsibilities and expectations that can guide employees in their daily tasks and long-term career growth.

2. Structural framework: Jobs offer a structural framework that helps in organizing the workforce. It aids in creating a hierarchical system, defining reporting lines, and establishing channels of communication. This structure is essential for maintaining order and efficiency in the organization.

3. Performance evaluation: Jobs serve as a basis for evaluating performance. They provide a set of defined responsibilities against which an employee’s performance can be measured and rewarded. This aids in maintaining accountability and motivating employees towards achieving their goals.

4. Career progression: The concept of Jobs plays a vital role in career progression. It provides a clear pathway for advancement, from entry-level roles to senior positions. This pathway helps employees envision their career trajectory within the organization.

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5. Compensation and benefits: Jobs help in determining compensation and benefits. They allow organizations to benchmark salaries and benefits against similar roles in the industry, ensuring fair and competitive remuneration.

6. Legal and regulatory compliance: Compliance with employment laws and regulations is often structured around Jobs. Jobs help define working hours, overtime eligibility, and other factors that are critical for legal compliance.

Reading these, you may argue that each of them remain relevant functions in today’s workplace. How then do we address these elements if Jobs are being replaced by skills? And therein lies the “catch”. While this shift in focus towards skills yields undeniable benefits in the modern workplace, they don’t replace nor diminish the importance and function of the broader concept of Jobs.

Instead, this focus on skills adds a new dimension to how we structure and utilize Jobs. Due to the fact that skills very rarely exist and evolve in isolation, there still remains the need for a broader contextual setting, a “home” that brings multiple skills together and defines how they interplay. The focus on skills therefore will likely lead to a need for a more flexible and dynamic approach to Job design. Jobs will need to



cater more effectively for roles that are rapidly evolving to meet changing business needs, by more effectively articulating the skills (and levels of proficiency) required to successfully deliver the role purpose, rather than the traditional focus on tasks required to deliver outcomes.

Look out for the second part of the series where we explore the emerging trends of the evolution of job architecture in skills centric environments and how HCM systems such as Workday are facilitating that progress.

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