Effectively Resourcing the Hospitality Organization

Job design

Although the term 'management' (in its abstract sense) has almost as many definitions as there are managers, it is generally understood to refer to the art or practice of achieving required results through the efforts of others. Drucker says that management is a practice rather than a science (*Professional Manager*, 1993). There is today, however, considerable debate about what precisely it is that motivates people to achieve the results required of them. At one extreme there are those of the scientific school of management (see Chapter 2) who believe that all that is necessary is to select the right people, give clear directions and enough money, and the required results will be achieved. On the other hand there are those from the human relations school (see Chapter 2) who believe that organizational objectives will only be achieved by recognizing to the full the needs and expectations of working people. Whichever view prevails, however, it is generally held that people produce their best performances when they know clearly what is expected of them. W. Edwards Deming, one of America's great management gurus stated, 'People need to know what their jobs are' (*Personnel Management*, June 1992). Consequently if an undertaking's objectives are to be achieved, it follows that all its managers and work people must know clearly the results they are expected to produce. Such a statement of an organization's expectations of its employees can be made either orally or in writing. There are many who believe that the written word is less likely to be misunderstood and that the need to think carefully before putting words to paper generally produces more logical and effective results than oral statements.

It is for such reasons that clear, precise job descriptions are given to people at work, because once a job is clearly described on paper there should be little room for subsequent misunderstandings. As a result the job should be performed more efficiently. Having said this, in the hospitality industry, with its large number of small establishments, there are many work people who do not have or need job descriptions. Furthermore there is a view that job descriptions and the related hierarchies merely serve to slow down effective communication. Tom Peters says that the only way to compete in an ever-faster world is for 'a revolution in structure to create a world with no barriers between functions' (*Financial Times*, 23 February 1990).

However, before producing job descriptions it is essential to realize that the job description should be the result of a process referred to as job design (Figure 3.1). First, job design can be seen as the process by which the employer sets out to maximize the output of the workforce – a scientific-school-of-management approach. For many employers this remains the sole objective. Second, there is increasing recognition that if job design is to be effective, the resulting jobs must satisfy a variety of stakeholder interests.
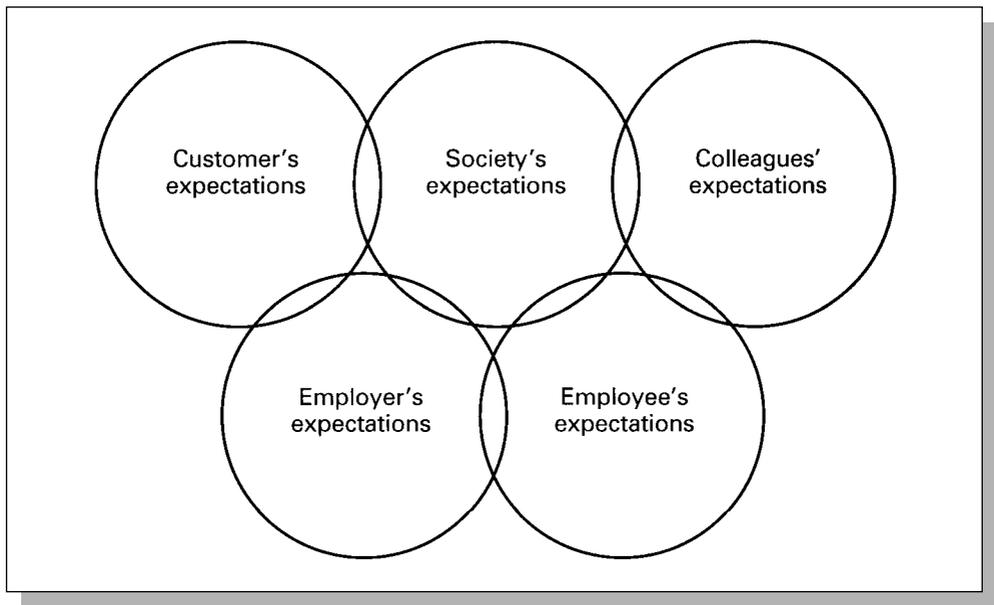

Figure 3.1 Aspects of job design

This second approach recognizes Drucker's view that it is important to distinguish between efficiency and effectiveness: 'Managers must in the end be measured by their economic performance, though this is not necessarily synonymous with maximum profits . . .' (Kennedy, 1991). Designing jobs for short-term efficiency may result, for example, in high labour turnover with a drop in customer satisfaction and hence in long-term effectiveness.

Third, of course, job design must result in customer satisfaction. Fourth, most people work in teams or groups, so colleagues' expectations have to be considered. And, finally, the job must be designed in such a way that society's expectations (e.g. health and safety, pollution) are satisfied (see Figure 3.1).

Approaches to job design

In setting out to design any job, therefore, it is essential to recognize the expectations of all stakeholders involved. The actual approach adopted will depend on an amalgam of these sets of expectations; for example, where customers and employers want fast service with minimum personalized contact, such as in many fast food operations, the resultant job may emphasize speed at the cost of job satisfaction. The consequence may be high labour turnover, which may well be acceptable, even desirable, to the employer where there is a steady supply of replacement labour.

Job specialization

This approach to organizing work has been around for thousands of years and has led to civilization as we know it today. However, as an approach to organizing modern industrial production it was developed by a number of practitioners and theorists, including F. W. Taylor the founder of scientific management. Major principles resulting from the scientific management approach are as follows.

Science of work

The need for scientific methods of observing, measuring and analysing work activities to replace existing unsystematic approaches.

Standardization

Using the resulting knowledge, efficient working methods and performance levels can be set for work.

Selection

Systematic and scientific approaches to selecting workers with relevant qualities and abilities, together with planned training for the work involved.

Specialization

Both management and workers should concentrate upon specific functional activities involving a limited range of tasks for which the individual's abilities and training enable expert performance. (From Torrington and Chapman, 1983.)

There have been two main consequences of the application of these ideas. First, areas of expertise and responsibility have become much more specialized, particularly in the technical and management areas. There are now many more specialists in management than there were fifty years ago, even ten years ago. Second, and in contrast, particularly at an operative level, job content is simplified through reduction of the number of tasks each operative performs to a very limited number so that the need for skill and training is minimized.

The apparent economic benefits of job simplification, however, were accompanied by many problems, such as industrial strife and alienation, the causes being put down to that same job simplification. In contrast, the findings of

behavioural scientists were showing that work people could not be treated as mere components of machines: instead they had a range of needs to be met by the work they performed. As a consequence other approaches to job design became necessary.

Job rotation

One reaction to job simplification was job rotation. This provides individuals with some variety in either the working conditions (i.e. where or when the basic job is done) or the actual tasks performed. The jobs, however, remain simple; they may provide little stimulation and may not satisfy self-esteem needs.

Job enlargement

Job enlargement, in contrast, extends the range of tasks performed and is aimed at reducing boredom, increasing interest in work and increasing self-esteem. Job enlargement, however, brings about the very problems that work simplification sets out to eliminate, such as the need for greater knowledge, skill and training.

Job enrichment

Job enlargement, as described above, extends horizontally the range of tasks to be performed by an individual by adding tasks of a similar nature. It does not, however, meet the more complex expectations such as the need for autonomy. Job enrichment instead extends vertically the range of tasks by increasing an individual's responsibility and autonomy through adding elements of the job which may have been the responsibility of supervisors or management, such as planning, organization and control. Such an approach has been adopted by a number of leading companies in the hospitality industry. For example, room attendants have been given additional responsibilities, resulting in reduction in the number of supervisors.

Sociotechnical systems

This approach to job design sets out to bring together an employer's technical system (e.g. buildings and equipment) and the social system comprising the work people. This is because the scientific school aimed to maximize the technical system, seeing the work people as components. In contrast, the human relations theorists concentrated on maximizing the satisfaction of human needs. These two approaches can be seen to be incompatible. It is necessary to look at an organization as a sociotechnical system which compromises between technical efficiency and group needs.

In the sociotechnical system of job design three major factors are considered. These are: first, the need to recognize the needs that are met by formal and informal groups; second, work is allocated to groups that are able to identify clearly with the work; third, the group is given a high degree of autonomy over its work. Such an approach can be seen in the increased autonomy of many work groups (see the discussion of empowerment).

Quality circles

Quality circles (QCs) trace their origin to post-war Japan and the Japanese desire to change the image of Japanese products as cheap imitations of Western products. Quality circles evolved as a result of an increasingly literate workforce being able to participate in problem solving. The quality circles movement spread from Japan to the USA in the 1970s and to the UK in the late 1970s.

The principles of QCs are:

- QCs should be introduced in a totally voluntary way and should only grow as and when volunteers wish to join.
- QCs are based on a McGregor theory Y (see Chapter 2) concept of working people; i.e. they are willing and able to participate in solving problems that affect them.
- QCs should be unbureaucratic and need only brief action notes following each meeting.
- QCs, as with any other crucial approach to management, need middle and senior management commitment.
- QCs focus problem solving at the point at which problems occur, and therefore release middle and senior management time.

Quality circles are based upon the working group. Groups of about four to ten volunteers who work for the same supervisor meet about once a week, for about an hour, to identify, analyse and solve their own work-related problems. Discussions should be free from hierarchical restraints. Members take ownership of departmental issues and no longer see problems as other people's problems. Quality circle members will need some training in appropriate techniques, such as brainstorming, used to identify and suggest solutions. In addition they will need to be trained in problem-solving techniques. In some cases smaller numbers of employees may be involved, in which case such groups are sometimes referred to as 'quality bubbles'.

The benefits of QCs may be at least threefold: first, problems are solved; secondly, attitudes that identify with the organization's goals are developed; and thirdly, the quality of supervision and communications is improved.

Obviously it can be seen that if QCs are developed and operated effectively their influence on job design can be very significant. In particular, job design becomes a dynamic process with the possibility that jobs could be constantly changing in detail.

Job design, therefore, is the process that sets out to harness the energies of human resources in order to achieve an organization's objectives. In turn, job descriptions are the written results of the process of job design.

In some cases, particularly in the industry's smallest establishments, written job descriptions are not used and may be too formal and rigid. In other situations brief descriptions only may be sufficient, whereas in yet others quite detailed and complex documents are called for. The degree of detail needed in describing the various elements of a job varies from job to job and from organization to organization. There are, however, two main documents: job descriptions and job specifications. They are described below. In addition a brief description of management by objectives is included in this chapter because it describes a methodical and systematic approach to the design and description of jobs and setting of objectives.

Empowerment

In the last few years the word 'empowerment' has entered the management vocabulary. Other words are sometimes used, such as 'enabling'. The French use the word *responsabiliser*: 'to make responsible'. The concept has had a mixed reception, partly because empowerment has been associated with reduction in the layers of management of many organizations.

This reduction in the number of layers of management is partly the result of recession, new technologies and also competitive pressures. An associated reason has been the development known as 'business process re-engineering' (BPR) by which many organizations have analysed closely the way they carry out their organizational functions. Consequences of BPR have included delayering, i.e. reducing the number of levels of management; empowerment, i.e. giving more responsibility lower down the hierarchy; and outsourcing, i.e. subcontracting non-core activities.

In its simplest form, empowerment is a management philosophy that allows work people to take on responsibilities that were once the prerogative of management. This might include making operative staff responsible for the quality of their own work or whole teams of staff responsible for organizing how they work as a team. Examples include major hotel chains eliminating assistant housekeepers and making the room attendants totally responsible for the quality of the work they do. In another company the restaurant teams were given the responsibility of organizing the whole of the restaurant service operations. Management roles change in such a situation, managers becoming coaches, counsellors and facilitators rather than supervisors (see Ashness and Lashley, 1995). As Lashley and McGoldrick (1994) write, 'an increasing number of firms are considering employee empowerment as part of their human resource strategy for competitive advantage'. They go on to point out, however, that it is not the only strategy open to employers, suggesting that some have taken a too simplistic view of empowerment as a business solution.

Job descriptions

Job descriptions are a broad statement of the scope, purpose, duties and responsibilities involved in a job. Their main purposes are to

1 give employees an understanding of their jobs and standards of performance
2 clarify duties, responsibilities and authority in order to design the organization structure
3 assist in assessing employees' performance
4 assist in the recruitment and placement of employees
5 assist in the induction of new employees
6 evaluate jobs for grading and salary administration
7 provide information for training and management development. (Figure 3.2)

There are two distinct but equally important parts to the full description of jobs. The first is the statement of conditions for which employees contract to do work; some time ago in the UK it was recognized that the definition of conditions was not generally adequate, with the result that the Contracts of Employment Act became law in 1963. Now the Employment Rights Act 1996 requires that certain information about conditions of employment such as hours of work, job title and length of notice be
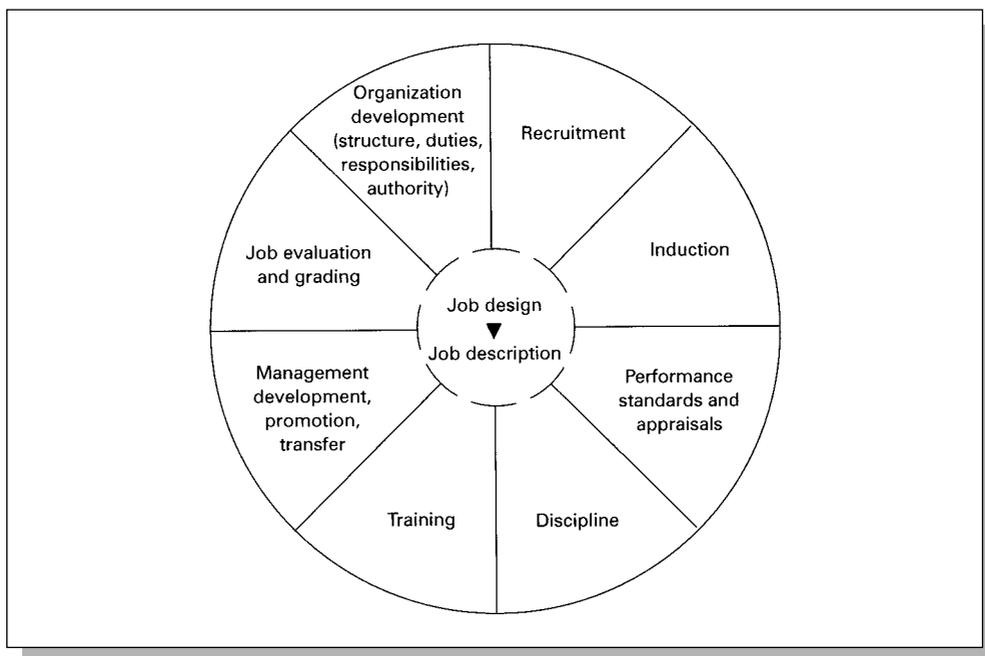
Figure 3.2 Job descriptions: the hub of personnel management

given to employees. This subject, together with other legal reasons for producing and issuing comprehensive job descriptions, will be dealt with in subsequent chapters.

The second part of describing jobs requires the provision of information to employees, which specifies clearly what results are expected of them and indicates how their performance will be measured.

Job descriptions should contain the following main elements:

Job identification

This section identifies the job by title, department and level in the hierarchy.

Scope of job

This section provides a brief description of the scope of a job.

Content

This section is a detailed statement and normally includes a list of duties and how these are performed, and what standard of performance is required.

Conditions

This section describes any particular conditions that make the job more, or less, difficult; for example, if a public house is situated in a rough area, this will need to be highlighted.

Authority

This section describes any limits to the employee's authority such as cash limits, authority to make contracts on behalf of the employer, and authority to engage or dismiss subordinates.

Figure 3.3 shows a typical job description for a chef and Figure 3.4 shows one for a waiter/waitress. A major criticism of many job descriptions is that, by prescribing tasks and responsibilities, they can work against the overall objectives of the organization. This is particularly so in service organizations where staff need to understand that their role is to provide a service, even when it is not in their job description. Martin Kaye (1995) writes, 'rigid job descriptions . . . are becoming redundant. People increasingly do not have a "job" they have a "role" and to keep up with this new industrial revolution it is necessary to turn away from job analysis towards role analysis.' An example of role analysis might specify that members of staff have customer satisfaction as one of their roles. In this way staff might take on (or own) a customer's problems rather than decide that the problem is not in their job description and try to pass the problem and the customer on to someone else.

Title	Chef
Department	Food and Beverage
Scope	All hotel food preparation operations
Responsible to	Food and Beverage Manager
Responsible for	1 *Personnel*: all kitchen staff including kitchen manual staff 2 *Equipment*: all kitchen fixed and removable equipment and kitchen utensils
Lateral communication	Restaurant Manager, Front Office Manager, Head Housekeeper
Main responsibilities	The planning, organization and supervision of food preparation in the hotel including: 1 Menu compilation according to agreed costed recipes 2 Purchasing of foodstuffs, kitchen materials and equipment from nominated suppliers within agreed budget levels 3 Portion and waste control 4 Control of labour and other variable costs within budget levels 5 Arrangement of staff rosters 6 Training of new staff 7 Hygiene and cleanliness 8 Fire precautions 9 Security of all kitchen supplies, equipment, utensils and silverware
Limits of authority	Engagement and suspension of all subordinates until circumstances can be reported to the Food and Beverage Manager
Hours of work	As agreed with Food and Beverage Manager

Figure 3.3 Job description for a chef

JOB DESCRIPTION

Name:
Hotel:
Job Title: Waiter/Waitress
Department:
Responsible for: Stock/Equipment/Staff
Responsible to:
Internal Contacts: Kitchen/Laundry/Porters/Maintenance/Reception/Bar
External Contacts: Clients/Laundry/Suppliers
Overall Objectives: Prepare and clear down the Restaurant for service. Warmly welcome clients. Order, serve and clear both food and liquor, selling up at all times.

KEY TASKS	HOW MEASURED
1. Preparation of the Restaurant for Service	All requirements to be clean and available
2. Welcoming and seating of the guests	Correct greeting and acknowledgement
3. Taking food/drink orders and selling up	Clear explanation of dishes. Increasing sales
4. Service of food and drink	Speed and courtesy. No accidents
5. Providing the correct accompaniments	Avoiding guests' having to ask for them
6. Offering a high standard of help and service	No complaints
7. Receiving payment for goods provided	All items charged and paid for
8. Farewell to guests	Seeing them return
9. Observing Hygiene, Health, Fire and Safety Regulations	EHO: Hazard and Accident Reports - cleanliness and safe working practices

Areas personally responsible for but not delegated

Constraints
No smoking/drinking whilst on duty
Access to other public areas is forbidden without prior permission

Other duties may be added from time to time according to business needs and at the discretion of management.

Name of Job Holder   Name of Supervisor/Manager

Signature (Job Holder)   Signature (Supervisor/GM)

Date: Date

JDwaitQa/DTP/8/96

Figure 3.4 Job description for a waiter/waitress
Source: Reproduced by courtesy of Choice Hotels.

Job specifications

In many cases more detail than is normally contained in a brief job description may be necessary for a job to be performed satisfactorily. A detailed statement of the job may be required, specifying the precise skills and knowledge needed to carry out the various component tasks of the job. This information may be contained in a document, often referred to as a job specification. Alternatively, the information may be contained in such documents as manuals of operation, operating instructions and the like. Extracts from a job specification for a waiter/waitress are shown in Figure 3.5.

Duties		Knowledge	Skill	Social skills
1	Preparation			
1.3	Preparation of butter, cruets and accompaniments	1 Correct accompaniments for the dishes on the day's menu	Operation of butter pat maker. Preparation of sauces, e.g. vinaigrette	
3	Service of customers			
3.3	Taking orders	1 Procedures for taking wine and food orders 2 Menu and dish composition 3 Procedure for taking requisitions to kitchen, bar dispense and cashier		1 Assisting customers with selection in order to maximize sales 2 Informing customers of composition of dishes
8	Wine dispense	Product knowledge 1 Suitable wines for dishes on the menu 2 Suitable glasses for different wines 3 Correct temperatures for red, white and rosé Licensing law 1 Young persons 2 Drinking up time	1 Presenting bottle 2 Opening bottle 3 Pouring wine	1 Assisting customers with selection 2 Dealing with complaints 1 Refusing service 2 Asking people to 'drink up'
11	Preparation for cleaners after last customers have left			
11.3	Stripping tables	1 Safe disposal of ash tray contents 2 Disposal of cutlery, crockery, linen, cruets		

Figure 3.5 Extracts from a job specification for a waiter/waitress

Within the last few years job descriptions and specifications have become much more highly developed in the hospitality industry. Many companies use training booklets which serve several important purposes, including the provision of

• job descriptions
• trainers' programme
• trainees' *aides-mémoire*
• list of duties
• list of tasks
• standards of performance
• interviewer's checklist
• training checklist.

Not only are these booklets very useful for selection, induction and training purposes, they may also be useful for discipline purposes and even for 'due diligence' in cases of prosecution or litigation. If someone has been trained to do something, and the fact is recorded, then certain standards can be expected.

Job analysis

This is sometimes considered to be a document describing a job in detail, but the term is more commonly used when referring to the technique of examining jobs in depth.

Preparation of job (or role) descriptions and job specifications

Some managers like to prepare job descriptions and other such documents with the employees concerned, and, generally speaking, this is by far the best approach. Frequently, however, this principle can apply only to supervisory and management grades, because the jobs of operative grades are often so clearly defined that discussion, apart from explanation, would only raise hopes that would be disappointed when it became apparent that no changes were forthcoming. Furthermore, it is not always possible to involve the employee concerned, because the need for job descriptions often does not make itself apparent until a person has to be recruited. Even so, with the increasing development of participative approaches such as QCs and empowerment, it is very likely that the involvement of operative staff in the design of their own jobs will increase in the hospitality industry as in other sectors.

The preparation of job specifications normally requires a more skilled approach than that needed for the preparation of job descriptions. The uses to which such documents are to be put should determine who prepares them; for example, if job specifications are to be used for training purposes, they should be prepared by training specialists and the line management concerned. On the other hand, if they are to be used as a basis for work measurement, work study specialists should work with line management.

Whatever form the description of jobs takes, however, vague terms such as 'satisfactory levels of gross profit' should be avoided and, instead, actual quantities

or levels should be specified, such as 'a gross profit of 65% is to be obtained'. It is good practice also to incorporate budgets and forecasts into job descriptions, since these set specific and quantified targets. Additionally, documents such as manuals of operation or training booklets may be directly related to job descriptions.

Because of the vital part played by job descriptions and specifications, particularly in such things as induction, training, job evaluation and performance appraisal, their preparation should be monitored by one person or department to ensure consistency. They should be regularly updated and a copy should be held by the jobholder, by his or her superior, sometimes by the superior's boss as well and, of course, by the personnel department (where one exists).

Some job-design tools

Job design, as indicated above, can involve a number of different skills and techniques. These can include the following.

Work study

This divides into method study and work measurement.

Method study

A part of work study concerned with recording and analysing methods and proposed methods of work, the purpose being to develop more effective ways of doing things.

Work measurement

A technique used to measure the time an experienced worker will take to perform a task or job to a predetermined standard. Measurement may be carried out by direct observation, by sampling or by using 'synthetic' values, i.e. times determined for particular movements.

Ergonomics

The study of the relationship between a worker and his or her work equipment and environment. In particular it is concerned with the application of anatomical, physiological and psychological knowledge to working situations. The aim of ergonomics is to produce safe and effective equipment for working people, using physical and psychological knowledge.

Management by objectives

Management by objectives (and various similar approaches) is an approach to management which, if operated effectively, influences all levels and activities of an organization. By concept it is typical of a democratic style of management, although, in practice, it is often introduced by other types of manager. It usually

relies heavily on specially designed job descriptions and similar documents. It seeks to integrate all of an organization's principal targets with the individual managers' own aspirations.

Management by objectives requires the establishment of an undertaking's objectives and the development of plans to achieve these objectives and of methods for monitoring progress. At the same time each manager must be personally involved in the preparation of his or her own department's targets and in the means of achieving these targets. Objectives should not be handed down by superior to subordinate, but should be agreed between the two after all factors have been considered.

Only the critical areas (key result areas) of each manager's job are defined, the objectives where possible are quantified and means of checking results, or identifying obstacles, and of achieving objectives are developed. Planning and improvement go on continuously through review meetings between superiors and subordinates held at regular intervals. The procedure is illustrated in Figure 3.6 and an extract from an MbO job description is shown in Figure 3.7.
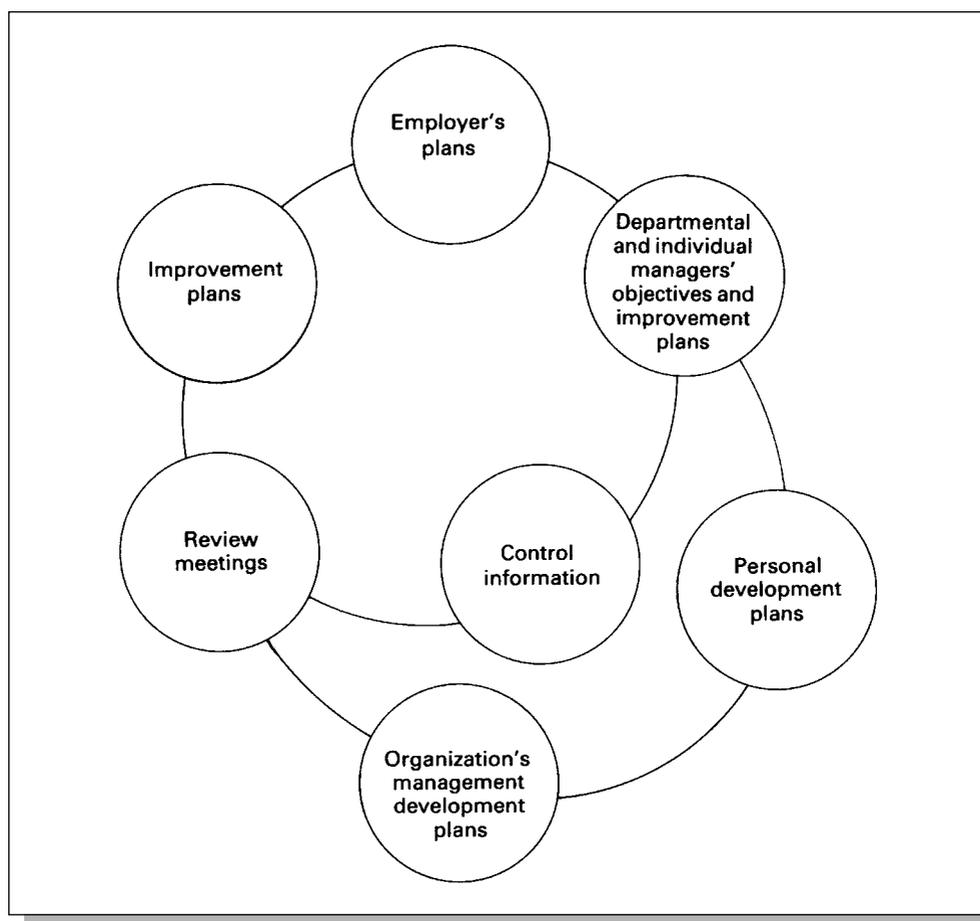

Figure 3.6 Management by objectives (MbO)

Manager, White Hart Restaurant: Objectives for six months ending 30 June

Key result area	Performance standard	Current level of achievement	Control information	Improvement target	Improvement plan
1 Gross profit					
(a) catering	63%	58%	Monthly stocktake	Achieve budget	Review selling and purchase prices, introduce more high-yield dishes, by 30 April.
(b) liquor	60%	58%	Monthly stocktake	Achieve budget	Alter sales mix, introduce premiumpriced beer, discontinue sale of cheaper draught beer.
2 Sales volume	£60,000 per month	£66,000	Takings sheets	Increase to £84,000	Promote new private function room, spend £2000 on promotion during first quarter.
3 Labour	23%	26%	Weekly wages sheet	Reduce to budget, 23%	Increase staff only for booked functions, no more staff to be recruited except to replace those who leave.

Figure 3.7 Management by objectives: example of performance standards and improvement plans

Where MbO concepts have been used in hotels and catering to set standards, it is generally found that the performance standards of operative staff are 'guest centred', i.e. they are concerned with identifying the standards of service to be provided to the guest. The performance standards of heads of departments, on the other hand, are 'profit centred', i.e. they identify the cost criteria for producing the services for the guest. Heads of departments are, however, directly responsible for ensuring that the operational performance standards are met by department staff, so their performance standards may incorporate quality management standards as well as profit-centred standards.

Current issues to be faced in job design

With the rapidly changing nature of the workforce and labour market, including skills shortages and the raised expectations of working people, job design now has to consider a wider range of factors than merely designing the task and work content of jobs. Job designers, i.e. most managers, will need to focus more than before on the conditions of work rather than just the job content. Such issues will include more flexible working hours, providing support for women returners, more autonomy, etc. in addition to eliminating menial tasks and tasks requiring scarce skills. Other dimensions include the need to ensure that forms of discrimination are not created or perpetuated, intentionally or unintentionally, through job design.

Job design in hospitality operations

At one extreme, job design can simplify work so that little skill and training are needed. Trends in this direction are very apparent in the hospitality industry in several sectors including fast food operations and the use of cook-chill and cook-freeze in many different operations, including schools, hospitals, banqueting and flight catering. A major reason why the process is sometimes referred to as 'decoupling' is that the production and service elements are totally separated – pre-prepared meals being produced away from the service point. Such systems are concerned mainly with the 'production elements' of many products. However, because of the significant 'customer contact' element, it is difficult to 'simplify out' many of the tasks that customers expect as part of the service and which employees themselves find rewarding, such as tasks involving social interaction.

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Questions

1 Describe the different approaches to job design.

2 Discuss the various influences that need to be taken into account when designing jobs.

3 Discuss what future influences are likely to influence job design.

4 Discuss how job design may differ when applied to management and non-management jobs.

5 Evaluate the approach to job design used by an employer you know well.