

INFORMATION ABOUT THE THEORY OF JOB ROTATION

What do we mean by 'job rotation'?

"Job rotation means taking on similar or different tasks in a different organisational unit within the same company. It always involves transferring into a different organisational unit, i.e. team, department, division. It is *not* job rotation if the tasks change but the position remains the same. In order to use the term job rotation, the employee must move from one organisational unit into another. Mere restructuring measures or 'getting rid of unpopular workers' are not valid as job rotation measures. (see Winkel 2001a: 4)." Quoted from Eva Winzenried in: 'Job Rotation, Konzeptionelle Erkenntnisse – Fallstudie – Gestaltungsempfehlungen' ('ob Rotation, Conceptual Findings – Case Study – Recommendations'), Licentiate Thesis, Economic and Social Studies Faculty, University of Bern, 2005.

Demarcation of the term 'job rotation'

The related terms *job enrichment* and *job enlargement* are different from job rotation, although they may have aspects in common, e.g., that they promote learning processes and innovation or make work less monotonous (see Jörger 1987: 263). Seiwert (1979: 130) understands *job enlargement* as a horizontal and quantitative extension of the tasks associated with a position by grouping several different, but structurally similar part tasks to make a whole. He sees *job enrichment* as a vertical and qualitative enrichment of the set of tasks assigned to a position, by combining structurally different work elements and functions to form a larger unit of action. According to Morick (2004: 349), *job enrichment* increases the job satisfaction of employees because it gives them new opportunities for gaining recognition, making a personal contribution to the job and improving their level of qualification. Job enrichment according to Morick makes the work less monotonous and reduces unbalanced/repetitive strain by introducing variation into the work activities. Besides job rotation, job enrichment and job enlargement, Rosenstiel (2000: 98 ff.) mentions the *semi-autonomous work team* ('*teilautonome Arbeitsgruppe*') as another way of structuring work activities. He defines semi-autonomous work teams as "small groups that are given a set of tasks but who work out how to do these among themselves, so that all the activities and interactions done by the group are subject to norms set by the group. The semi-autonomous work teams are truly leaderless work groups whose members all share responsibility for carrying out the group's assigned task".

See also:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_enrichment
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_enlargement
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_rotation

Literature

Jörger, Gernot (1987): Job Rotation – oft propagiert, selten praktiziert. In: VOP – Verwaltung, Organisation, Personal, 9. Jg. 1987, Nr. 6, S. 262 - 267

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Rosenstiel, Lutz von (2000): Grundlagen der Organisationspsychologie. Basiswissen und Anwendungshinweise, 4. überarbeitete und erweiterte Aufl., Stuttgart 2000

Seiwert, Lothar (1979): Moderne Formen der Arbeitsorganisation (I): Job Rotation, Job Enlargement, Job Enrichment. In: Wirtschaftswissenschaftliches Studium, 8. Jg. 1979, Nr. 3, S. 129 - 131