

Animation 10.4

The work that an employee is given is not necessarily always the same. As processes develop, demand rises or falls, or new technology become available jobs may change and adapt. There are two main ways in which such job redesign may take place.

The first development could be to give the employee more tasks of the same type. This does not require the employee to learn new skills or take on a different level of responsibility, but it does increase their productivity. This approach is termed job enlargement.

A simple example of this could be an office cleaner who when first employed is expected to clean 10 offices, but after six months – having become proficient in the job – the cleaner is allocated 2 additional offices to clean. Linked to this enlargement of the job it may be that the cleaner also receives higher pay for this extra work.

The second way of developing jobs is achieved by assigning more tasks which give increased responsibility, autonomy or decision-making to the employee. This approach to changing job content is termed job enrichment.

Using office cleaning as an example again, job enrichment could be achieved by removing supervision of the office cleaner, and assigning responsibility for achieving the desired standards of cleanliness directly to the cleaner.

In chapter 8 you read about Ritz Carlton Hotels and their philosophy of ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen. During the 1990s this hotel chain had a strategy to improve its performance which included the adoption of both job enlargement and job enrichment.

Hence in the housekeeping department, detailed study of the room cleaning process led to employees being put into teams of three as this was more efficient. The number of rooms each team had to clean was increased above the number each employee had cleaned individually, so the job was enlarged.

At the same time, if after one month a team was error free, they would become a 'quality certified team' and no longer be checked by housekeeping supervisors. Hence the job was also enriched. Linked to this was a pay increase.