

Job Architecture and Agility

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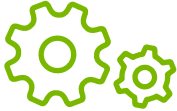
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Agility is the new business buzzword



- : **Agility is the new business buzzword –**
- : **organisations are increasingly pushing toward**
- : **‘agile’ transformation, to ensure that they are able**
- : **to respond to today’s VUCA environment (Volatile,**
- : **Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous). However,**
- : **job levelling and job architecture approaches**
- : **are typically driven by a need for consistency,**
- : **uniformity and structure. How can organisations**
- : **ensure their approach to job architecture does not**
- : **stifle the requirement for agility?**

Ways of working have changed



The term 'agile organisation' can mean a multitude of things, but typically expresses a desire for an organisation that can adapt with speed and flexibility; one that thrives on change and learns quickly.

In order to become more agile, organisations are increasingly reviewing the way they deliver products and services. This has an impact on how jobs are delivered, structured and measured. This is in turn amplified by the additional pressures created by the ongoing growth of the gig economy, which is leading organisations to rethink their definition of what actually constitutes a job. The traditional rules are being challenged and with this comes a need for even more flexibility. This permeates right down to the basic building blocks of an organisation – its jobs.

Some key changes in the ways of working are:

Scrums...

Quick thinking, collaborative working across multiple teams; rapid iteration and experimentation

Agile Labour...

Work based around people not jobs; fast movement through different types of roles; flexible resource allowing teams to be formed and dissolved swiftly

End-to-end...

Focus on end-to-end accountability for process, service, customer, not siloed into 'functions'

Outcome-based...

Less task and responsibility focused; more performance focused with accountability held at lower levels

Information Transparency....

Increased free flow and transparency of information, driving faster, more fluid decision making



Continuous Learning....

Knowledge and capabilities shared across units, identify and pursue opportunities to improve day to day working processes



As Millennials start to take on leadership positions, they are driving a lot of the fresh thinking:

- Millennials have different views on hierarchy
- They don't want to wait for promotion
- They expect clear career paths
- They demand openness and transparency
- Deference to leaders is replaced by extreme directness, and an expectation to be consulted*

Becoming an 'agile' organisation therefore requires individuals with different kinds of skills than are found in the leadership of some large organisations. They need 'entrepreneurs' with strategic thinking skills, change management expertise, and cross-functional capability.

Top Behavioral Skills Required 2017



Source: Radford Global Talent Pulse Survey Radford is part of Aon plc

* Talent 2021: Aon

What does this mean for job architecture?



- **Even in this agile world, our client conversations**
- **continue to reflect a desire for consistency and**
- **stability in job levels and job architecture.**

The reason companies implement levelling and job architecture approaches is driven by that very need for consistency. This approach is also encouraged by an external legislative and political environment requiring that organisations demonstrate fairness of treatment. HRIS (Human Resource Information System) solutions demand a consistent jobs 'backbone' to operate effectively.

Employee engagement research also tells us that clarity about future career paths and perception of fairness are elements which are crucial to building an engaged workforce. Employee engagement can be an organisation's great differentiator in times of stability or in times of rapid change.

So, in an agile world is job architecture still the right answer? We would argue 'Yes' – for all these very good reasons.





Companies are therefore continuing to evaluate and redesign job architectures to:

- Evaluate and ensure that existing job families are relevant to current and future business needs
- Align the number and type of job levels with the competitive market
- Create robust, meaningful leveling criteria that clearly outline responsibilities, scope and expectations
- Standardise job titles as much as possible both within and across functions
- Develop clear career paths and key success measures to support career development
- Provide a scalable model that anticipates future growth and can successfully underpin a competitive rewards structure

An agile organisation needs to be both dynamic and stable. It needs extremely stable elements – a solid backbone and agile elements. Agile units specifically benefit from:

- Shared digital platforms and tools
- Use of common language and common tools' *

We believe that a robust and flexible job evaluation and job architecture approach is a crucial tool to provide this organisational backbone of stability.

* 'Agility, it rhymes with stability': Wouter Aghina, Aaron De Smet, and Kirsten Weerda of McKinsey

How can you ensure your job architecture supports organisational agility?



- **A well-designed job architecture therefore**
- **provides the stability to enable agility. So what can**
- **organisations do to ensure their job architecture**
- **supports agile transformation, rather than stifles it?**

- Move away from a job, title and level for every occasion to broader, globally-consistent versions with increased cross-functional emphasis and robust criteria that make it easy to differentiate roles. There is a trend to emphasising knowledge & skills, impact / value creation, problem-solving, influencing & networks.
- Renew the focus on effectively communicating job and level criteria and expectations through multiple pathways (training, online resources, etc.) to provide clarity and direction for managers and employees.
- Develop consistent review processes and success profiles for job levels that represent career steps changes to ensure organisational consistency and that business needs are reflected in role expectations.
- Emphasise both lateral and vertical movement to provide growth and development opportunities for employees, to challenge the concept that the only way is up. Avoid 'siloing' and develop a more strategic business perspective. Establish development paths and 'trajectories' as part of the job architecture that align with business needs, ensure employees have visibility into career options, and outline the requirements to get there.
- Consider increasing local autonomy, where appropriate. Increasing freedom and autonomy at a local level is key to agility but it requires effort in education and audit.

Job architecture and agility



A well-designed job architecture is a requirement for agility. It provides the essential stable backbone or 'operating system' to support the implementation of dynamic people processes.

The most effective job architecture models reflect and help to embed an organisation's desired culture and behaviours and will not stifle them.

They allow agility to flow through the enablement of core elements that the architecture supports; mobility, transparency and accountability.

Now is the time to be taking a critical look at your job architecture, to be sure it is fit for the future.

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Employees | Greater transparency on role results and better support for more individually driven, diverse career paths; allowing employees to explore new ways to grow and build a robust capability portfolio |
| Leaders | Empowerment through greater freedom, accountability and insights into how they develop people and teams |
| HR | Continuing the move toward a more consultative, future-focused role, strengthening HR's collaboration with the business by providing flexible frames, greater management accountability and the data to drive insights and decisions |
| Organisation | A stable basis providing consistency in managing jobs, performance and people |
| Equal | The right capabilities in the right places. Providing flexibility and agility |

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