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Job Satisfaction Is a "Win-Win" for Employees & Employers

Due to rapid and ongoing changes in the global marketplace, ever-changing technologies, and significant competition across industries, gone are the days of paternalistic organizations. Employers expect their workers to be self-directed and responsible for their own career development. A critical component in establishing a "win-win" relationship between employers and their employees is having a mutual understanding of the **importance of job satisfaction.**

- **Job Satisfaction:** *The Organization's View*

    Employers hire people to perform specific tasks that help them achieve their vision, mission, organizational, and business goals in a profitable manner. As such, the process of selecting employees is dependent on accurate job descriptions, reasonable expectations, and an influx of realistic, self-aware applicants. When an organization hires a candidate who "fits" the job requirements, enjoys and is skilled in the tasks required to meet the organization's goals, and appreciates the organization's salary / benefit strategy, it's a "win-win" for the employer and employee.

    Historically, the focus of organizations has been to establish a generally-acceptable organizational culture. **Organization-provided satisfiers** (org-ps) — such as competitive salary / benefit packages, training, opportunities for advancement, flexible work schedules, good working conditions, etc. — are offered to employees in exchange for outcomes the organization considers valuable — such as high levels of performance, achievement of organizational goals, etc.

- **Job Satisfaction:** *The Employee's View:*

    In addition to the organization-provided satisfiers, your overall level of job satisfaction as an employee is highly correlated to **job-related satisfiers** (job-rs)**.** Job-related satisfiers have to do with your desire to use abilities to make a contribution, to do meaningful work, and to be valued. As such, these satisfiers are directly related to how much you enjoy your day-to-day tasks and your role in the organization.

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The Job Satisfaction Model

It goes without saying that your ability to perform your daily tasks well has a direct impact on your productivity. The annual performance review is typically the main conversation to explore productivity and satisfaction. Since these conversations focus more on evaluation of performance, goal attainment, and salary adjustments (org-ps), they seldom allow for meaningful conversations about your satisfaction with your work tasks or the "fit" of the current or future work itself (job-rs).

Also, managers juggle multiple demands to achieve organizational goals. So they may sometimes under-appreciate the powerful influence that job-related satisfiers have on your overall job satisfaction. By taking the initiative to communicate with your manager, you can help ensure that he / she is better able to provide the necessary guidance, tools, and resources to support your needs.
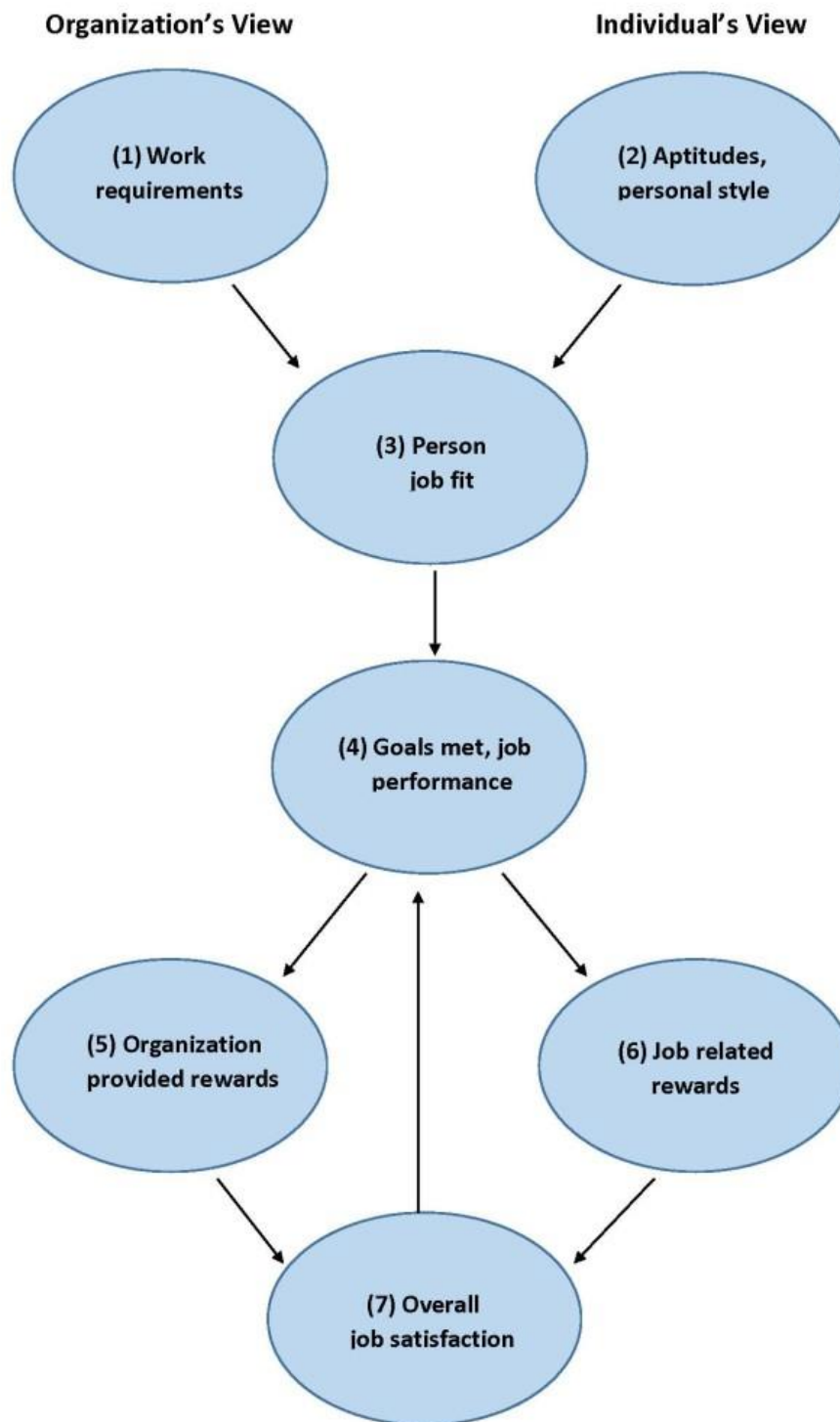
From a company perspective, it can be challenging for an organization and manager to identify and promote employee satisfaction at an individual level. Yet, doing so can have a significant impact on productivity and goal attainment because job-related satisfiers are highly-motivating when met — *and de-motivating when not met!* Therefore, job-related satisfiers are at the center of productivity and performance.

Consequently, when you are able to communicate to your manager how your unique work profile (*i.e.,* aptitudes / abilities, interests, personality style, and values) can meet the organization's work–related requirements and opportunities, you are better-positioned to engage in meaningful and satisfying work — and achieve greater success.

The flowchart below shows the components of the Job Satisfaction Model.

Organization's View   **Individual's View**

- (1) Work requirements
- (2) Aptitudes, personal style
- (3) Person job fit
- (4) Goals met, job performance
- (5) Organization provided rewards
- (6) Job related rewards
- (7) Overall job satisfaction

Here is a closer look at each component of the Job Satisfaction Model:

- **Organization-provided satisfiers**: the **left side** of the model shows what the employer wants (circle 1) and what it offers as rewards (circle 5).

- **Job-related satisfiers**: the **right side** shows what the employee contributes to accomplish specific tasks (circle 2) and the resulting rewards (circle 6).

- **Person-job fit** (circle 3), **job performance** (circle 4), and overall **job satisfaction** (circle 7) are at the **center** of the model because they comprise the core of a "win-win" relationship between employer and employee.

The more self-aware an individual is about their aptitudes, personal style, and values, the greater the potential to identify and select jobs that fit.

In other words, when you are relatively satisfied with your salary, vacation time, and other organization-related rewards *and* you find a fit with and enjoy your work, feel appreciated, and understand how you contribute to the big picture, you are more motivated to achieve your performance goals; in turn, you experience higher levels of job satisfaction (circle 7).

Collectively, when individuals achieve higher levels of job satisfaction and performance, the organization is better positioned to meet its goals with improved productivity and profitability.

What Happens When the Job No Longer Fits?

Maybe you are in a position that was an excellent fit for you at one time. You are performing well, enjoy the work, and the benefits and rewards are in an acceptable range. But, over time, things are beginning to change. Perhaps the work no longer allows you to use a full range of aptitudes / abilities. Or the introduction of technology has altered the way you do your work, making it less enjoyable than it was before. Maybe you will need new knowledge or skills to accomplish the tasks in the future. These types of changes and others may have a negative impact on job satisfaction.

When this occurs, it is important to take a step back, conduct an evaluation of what has changed, and identify what is affecting your level of satisfaction:

- ✓ First, determine whether any of the actual work requirements and expectations, or organization-provided satisfiers have changed. You may discover that the *job* is still satisfying, but the organization may be facing increased competition or costs

that have impacted their profitability and capability to maintain its current salary and / or benefit strategy, impacting your satisfaction with the way the organization rewards its employees.

In today's changing economy, a situational analysis should include industry trends to determine if the changes are specific to your organization or are industry-wide. Depending on your analysis, you may determine that it is best to look for another job in a similar role with a different employer.

✓ Second, since there are many aspects of job satisfaction, it may be time to re-evaluate what is most important for you. Needs change over time. You may have experienced changes in your personal life or entered a new stage of life. (*For more information:* Career Vision Job Satisfaction Survey; Career Vision Work Values Survey.)

✓ Finally, if the job itself has become unsatisfactory, determining what has changed is critical to planning effective next steps in your career decision making process (including a possible career change). Unfortunately, without an analysis of what is contributing to our personal level of satisfaction, many of us make uninformed choices that don't actually improve our circumstances or satisfaction.

Tips for Managing Job Satisfaction

• Be proactive in managing your career.

• Conduct an annual career checkup.

• Become more self-aware. Learn about your aptitudes / abilities, preferences, values, interests, and emotional intelligence. Be prepared to articulate what's most important to you and how and where you can best contribute.

• Specifically identify what is contributing to your satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Make a list and take time to analyze the information. Identify the root causes of the issues. (*For more information:* Career Vision Job Satisfaction Survey; Career Vision Work Values Survey.)

  - What items relate to the organization, department, or your position? Talk with your manager about what types of projects you enjoy. Identify and discuss roles

that are appealing to you. Also, share your thoughts about what you don't enjoy and why. (Yet, keep in mind that everyone has some assignments or work tasks that are not satisfying at times.)

- Is there something you need to learn or change to improve the situation? How will you go about addressing the gaps?

- Practice using both personal and organizational information to analyze and evaluate different work requirements to help you assess good fits for you. Since most professional jobs today are a composite of projects, some will be more inviting to you than others. By understanding what you want and discussing it with your manager, you are more likely to gain access to projects that are attractive to you.

- Benchmark the type of work you perform in your organization with comparable work in similar organizations. This broader context will enable you see trends and help you to evaluate the organization-provided rewards more objectively.

- Build / nurture / maintain a professional support network to keep current on your field.

- Find a mentor (inside or outside of the organization) to give you feedback and help you find developmental opportunities that more closely fit your work profile.

- Consult with a career professional. (To find out how Career Vision can help, call 630.469.6270 or go to our website at Career Vision.)

- Last but not least, e*xpect* things to change. It is inevitable! Pay attention to trends as they relate to your career — now and in the future.