



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
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Student name: Rambhai Modhavadiya

Student ID number: 2516705

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- **AMO** — Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (to contribute)
- **AI** — Artificial Intelligence
- **CoE(s)** Centre(s) of Excellence
- **CFO** — Chief Financial Officer
- **CIO** — Chief Information Officer (*or Chief Innovation Officer, as used in this report*)
- **CIPD** — Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
- **CTO** — Chief Technology Officer
- **DevEx** — Developer Experience
- **GenAI** — Generative Artificial Intelligence
- **HR** — Human Resources
- **HRBP(s)** — Human Resource Business Partner(s)
- **IP** — Intellectual Property
- **JCM** — Job Characteristics Model
- **JD** — Job Description
- **KPIs** — Key Performance Indicators
- **L&D** — Learning and Development
- **MBO** — Management by Objectives
- **NPS** — Net Promoter Score
- **OKR(s)** Objective(s) and Key Result(s)
- **PM** — Performance Management
- **R&D** — Research and Development
- **UK** — United Kingdom
- **WEF** — World Economic Forum
- **360° (feedback)** — multi-source / 360-degree feedback

1 PART 1: INTEGRATED HUMAN CAPITAL BLUEPRINT (OPTION 1): RE-ENGINEERING PERFORMANCE & JOB DESIGN AT AETHER INNOVATIONS

1.1 CONTEXT AND DIAGNOSIS

Aether Innovations (300 employees) demonstrates three interrelated issues: flat growth, high turnover, and declining customer satisfaction. These results are often found in fast-scaling technology companies, where (a) performance management becomes backward-looking, compliance-focused, (b) roles are broken up into low-autonomy busy work with weak feedback, and (c) leadership capacity fails to keep pace with scale (Cappelli and Tavis, 2016; McKinsey, 2024). The HR strategy therefore must integrate a modern appraisal system with job design that increases motivation and innovation, because performance is shaped by both the system (goals, feedback, fairness) and the work itself (task meaning, autonomy, learning) (Hackman and Oldham, 1976).

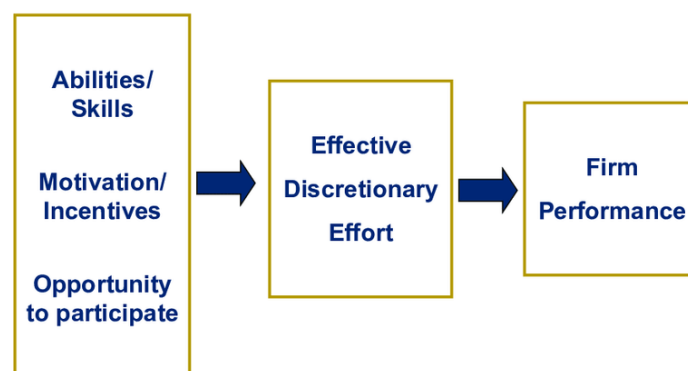


Figure 1 AMO Model

Source: (Boxall & Purcell, 2016)

This report applies AMO theory performance depends on Ability, Motivation and Opportunity to contribute (Boxall & Purcell, 2016) to build a joined system:

- **Ability:** skills-based job specifications + development signals in reviews.
- **Motivation:** meaningful goals, autonomy, recognition, fairness (JCM + justice theory).
- **Opportunity:** cross-functional “line of sight”, decision rights, and resources.

The HR strategy therefore must integrate a modern appraisal system with job design that increases motivation and innovation, because performance is shaped by both the system (goals, feedback, fairness) and the work itself (task meaning, autonomy, learning) (Hackman and Oldham, 1976).

1.2 CURRENT PRACTICE IN TECH: PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND JOB DESIGN

Performance appraisal trends. In tech, performance management is increasingly replacing annual ratings and forced ranking with continuous, coaching-based check-ins that emphasise goal clarity, “feedforward” and learning agility (Cappelli and Tavis, 2016; Giamos, 2024).

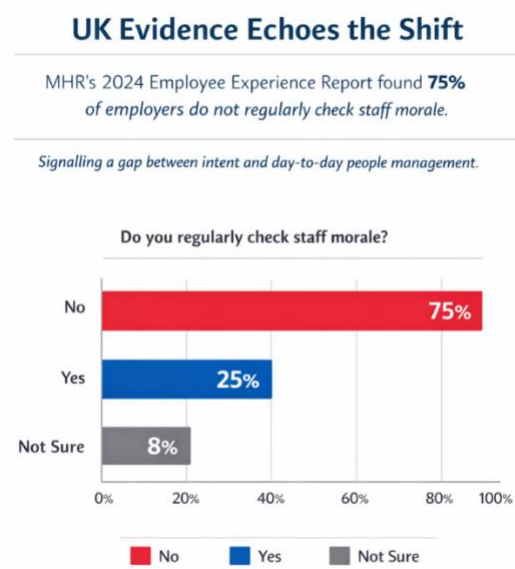


Figure 2 UK Evidence Echoes the Shift: Regular Checking of Staff Morale (MHR Employee Experience Report, 2024)

Source: (MHR, 2024).

UK evidence echoes the shift: MHR's 2024 Employee Experience Report found 75% of employers do not regularly check staff morale, signalling a gap between intent and day-to-day people management (MHR, 2024). However, continuous systems fail when feedback quality varies by manager; organisational justice theory predicts that perceived procedural and interpersonal fairness drives commitment and retention (Colquitt, 2001; Giamos, 2024).

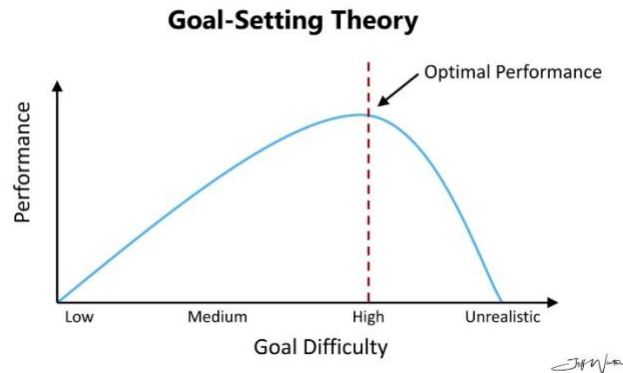


Figure 3 Goal-Setting Theory

Source: (Locke and Latham, 1990).

OKRs in tech. OKRs operationalise Goal-Setting Theory: specific, challenging objectives and measurable key results focus attention, energise effort and support persistence (Locke and Latham, 1990). They also reflect Control Theory/cybernetic feedback, where frequent reviews surface performance gaps and trigger corrective action well suited to agile iteration (Armstrong and Taylor, 2020). When lightweight and transparent, OKRs improve coordination and prioritisation (Stray et al., 2022) and can strengthen middle-manager alignment work (Wowerath et al., 2026). But if imposed top-down or tied rigidly to pay, they can reduce autonomy and intrinsic motivation (Al-Saadi et al., 2023).

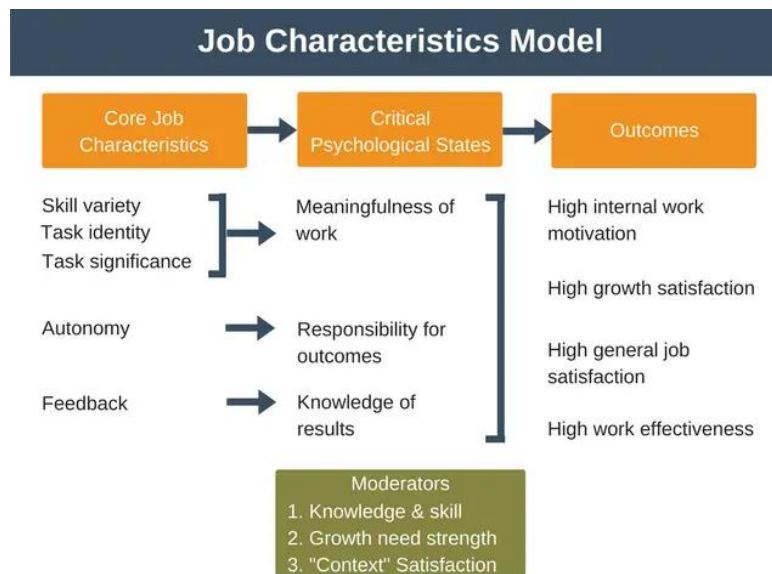


Figure 4 Job Characteristics Model

Job design practices. Tech firms often adopt “squad” models and flatter structures, but roles can still suffer from low task identity (owning only a slice), weak customer line-of-sight, and poor feedback (Deloitte, 2025). The Job Characteristics Model (JCM) predicts that increasing skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback strengthens meaningfulness, responsibility and knowledge of results drivers of motivation and performance (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). Recent evidence continues to link job resources (including autonomy and feedback) to engagement outcomes (Kucharčíková et al., 2021).

Implication for Aether: the organisation needs an integrated system that (1) aligns strategy-to-work through OKRs and continuous feedback, (2) strengthens leadership behaviour and fairness through structured multi-rater input and calibration, and (3) redesigns key roles to increase autonomy, skill use and innovation capacity (Budhwar et al., 2023).

1.3 PROPOSED GROWTH-FOCUSED PERFORMANCE SYSTEM (OKRs + CONTINUOUS COACHING + 360)

1.3.1 Design principles (why this works)

- **Strategic alignment:** translating corporate priorities into team and role outcomes (Deloitte, 2025).
- **Motivation and clarity:** specific, challenging, accepted goals increase performance (Locke and Latham, 1990).
- **Fairness and consistency:** transparency, calibration and clear evidence reduce bias and improve trust (Giamos, 2024).
- **Development-first:** separate coaching feedback from compensation decisions to avoid defensive behaviour (Cappelli and Tavis, 2016; McKinsey, 2024).

1.3.2 System architecture (what Aether implements)

Quarterly OKR cycle (company → function → team → individual contribution).

- 3–4 Objectives per quarter (outcome-focused), each with 3–5 measurable Key Results.
- “Commit” OKRs (core delivery) vs “Aspirational” OKRs (innovation bets) to protect experimentation.
- Public dashboards for alignment and cross-functional visibility (Stray et al., 2022).

Weekly or fortnightly check-ins (manager ↔ employee).

- 15–25 minutes, structured agenda: progress, obstacles, support needed, learning, wellbeing.
- Captures continuous performance evidence and enables rapid course correction (Applied Psychology, 2025).

Quarterly Growth Review (no forced rankings).

- Output: (a) achievement narrative against OKRs, (b) capability growth plan, (c) next-quarter priorities (Kravchuk, 2025).
- **Calibration panel** per function (HR + leaders) to reduce bias (halo/recency) and ensure equity across teams (Giamos, 2024).

360-degree feedback (twice yearly) for leaders and senior specialists.

- Focus: behaviours that drive collaboration, inclusion, coaching, and customer orientation (Ly et al., 2024).
- Used **for development**, not direct pay decisions, to increase honesty and learning (Giamos, 2024).

Reward linkage (balanced).

- **Pay Review relies on wider evidence:** sustained contribution, market standards, role scope, and values-based behaviours; OKR completion informs but does not mechanically regulate pay (McKinsey, 2024).

This minimizes gaming and safeguards psychological security required in the innovation.

1.3.3 Implementation of roadmap and measurement (90-day rollout + dashboard)

Area	What happens	Owner(s)	Timing	Measures / evidence
Phase 0: Mobilise & baseline	Diagnose current PM, set success criteria, capture baselines	CEO, HRD, CFO	Wks 1–2	Turnover/regretted attrition, CSAT/NPS, cycle time, engagement, mobility (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020)
Phase 1: Design & policy	Define OKR rules, check-ins, growth reviews, calibration, AI/data guardrails	HRD, CEO, Legal, CTO	Wks 3–5	Approved policy pack, playbook, fairness/privacy checks (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016; Colquitt, 2001)
Manager capability training	Coach skills, feedback quality, bias, goal quality, evidence use	HRD + L&D, Heads	Wks 4–8 (+ quarterly)	Completion, competence checks, check-in adherence, fairness pulse (Giamos, 2024; Colquitt, 2001)
Pilot (2–3 functions)	Run 1 OKR quarter + check-ins + growth reviews + calibration; test workflow	HRD, pilot Heads	Wks 6–14 (Q1)	OKR quality/completion, pulse scores, early retention, cycle time (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016)
Governance & calibration	Monthly governance; quarterly calibration to reduce bias/recency	HRD, CFO, Leaders	Monthly + quarterly	Calibration logs, variance checks, equity indicators (Giamos, 2024)

Scale to whole business	Roll out to all teams; publish OKR dashboard; escalation routes	CEO, HRD, CTO	Q2	Adoption rate, dashboard usage, alignment score (Stray et al., 2022)
Job redesign (6 roles)	Confirm decision rights/interfaces; update JD/specs; link KPIs to OKRs	HRD + Execs	Wks 6–12	Updated JD/specs, role clarity survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Taylor, 2014)
Measurement dashboard	Balanced scorecard (people + delivery + customer + quality), monthly review	HR Analytics, CFO, HRD	Live by Wk 8	Turnover, mobility, time-to-fill, engagement, pay equity (Boxall & Purcell, 2016)
Delivery & quality metrics	Track flow + quality to avoid “admin PM”	CTO, Product	Monthly	Lead time, defects, incidents, rework (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020)
Customer outcomes	Link OKRs to customer value and experience	CEO, CS, CIO	Monthly + quarterly	CSAT/NPS, retention, churn, resolution time (Deloitte, 2025)
Continuous improvement	Quarterly retros; refine tools; close gaps	HRD, Governance	Quarterly	Actions closed, friction reduced, sentiment improved (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016)

1.4 JOB ANALYSIS, REDESIGNED JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND SPECIFICATIONS (6 KEY ROLES)

Job analysis method (how): combinations (a) document review (strategy, KPIs, customer metrics), (b) critical incident interviews, (c) stakeholder workshops to elucidate results, and interfaces (Taylor, 2014). The designs of the role deliberately enhance autonomy, skill variety, and feedback loops and entrench innovation responsibilities (Hackman and Oldham, 1976; Deloitte, 2025).

The following are brief JDs and person specifications on a skills-based (capabilities over narrow credentials) basis, which promotes internal mobility and accelerated reskilling (WEF, 2025; LinkedIn, 2024).

Table 2. Key roles (summary JD + specification)

Role	Job purpose (JD)	Core accountabilities (JD)	Person specification (skills-based)
CEO	Restore growth via customer-led innovation and execution rhythm	Set strategic narrative; approve quarterly OKRs; sponsor culture (psych safety, accountability); remove cross-functional blockers	Systems thinking; strategic execution; stakeholder leadership; coaching capability; data-informed decision-making
CFO	Fund growth responsibly and build performance transparency	Growth/retention unit economics; investment governance for R&D/product bets; workforce analytics with HR; risk controls	Financial modelling; scenario planning; business partnering; governance; ability to translate finance into product decisions
CTO	Build scalable tech platform enabling speed,	Platform strategy; engineering standards; DevEx; technical talent	Architecture; engineering leadership; security-by-design;

	reliability, and learning	development; measurable reliability and velocity	mentoring; outcome-based delivery in agile environments
CIO (Chief Innovation Officer)	Expand innovation pipeline and time-to-market	Portfolio of experiments; innovation OKRs; intrapreneurship process; cross-functional “squad” enablement; customer co-creation	Design thinking/lean experimentation; facilitation; portfolio management; influence across functions; commercial curiosity
HR Director	Integrate talent, performance, and culture to reduce turnover and lift capability	Own OKR/PM system; workforce planning; skills architecture; leadership development; employee listening and action	Strategic HRM; analytics; organisational design; coaching and change leadership; employment relations knowledge
Head of R&D	Convert research into valuable products and IP	Research roadmap aligned to OKRs; lab-to-product handoff; partnerships; capability building; quality and ethics	Research leadership; product collaboration; experimentation rigour; knowledge management; talent development

1.5 JCM IMPROVEMENTS EMBEDDED ACROSS ALL SIX ROLES

- **Autonomy:** roles in decision making made clear (e.g., CTO owns platform standards; CIO owns experimentation portfolio).
- **Skill variety:** every role will be technical/commercial/people leadership in an attempt to avoid silo thinking.

- **Task identity & significance:** clearly defined end-to-end results based on customer value (e.g., retention, NPS, time-to-market) (Cai et al., 2024).
- **Feedback:** Review cadences and dashboards are fast sources of performance information (Hackman and Oldham, 1976).

1.6 HOW JOB DESIGN + PERFORMANCE SYSTEM CREATE A PERFORMANCE-DRIVEN CULTURE

The integrated logic is:

- **OKRs + Goal-setting theory** generates focus, alignment and actionable results (Locke and Latham, 1990).
- **Continuous check-ins** operationalise learning and eliminate the “annual surprise, which is in line with the changes of modern PM (Cappelli and Tavis, 2016).
- **JCM-based role redesign** enhances intrinsic motivation and innovation capability by autonomy, meaningfulness and feedback (Hackman and Oldham, 1976).
- **Justice safeguards** defend trust and retention essential in constrained technological labour markets as perceived fairness shapes engagement and performance.

Collectively, they enhance AMO: ability (skills), motivation (meaning/autonomy/fairness), and opportunity (decision rights and resources), and drive improved customer performance in the form of high quality of execution and innovation throughput.

2 PART 2: REFLECTIVE LEARNING JOURNEY USING GIBBS' REFLECTIVE CYCLE

2.1 INTRODUCTION



Figure 5 Gibbs' Reflective Learning Cycle

Source: (Gibbs, 1988).

This reflection applies the Reflective Cycle of Gibbs (description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, action plan) to organize my learning and apply theory to the creation of a practical L&D roadmap (Gibbs, 1988). The module repackaged to me Human Capital Management as an HR administration, rather than a strategic and evidence-led capability determining performance, culture and long-term organisational sustainability. I was taught to critique the decisions of HRM by connecting Michigan/Harvard/Guest models to organisational trade-offs like control versus commitment, and rhetoric versus reality (Devanna et al., 1984; Beer et al., 1985; Guest, 1997; Legge, 2005).

2.2 DESCRIPTION

Over the weeks, I have gained three related insights: (1) HRM needs to be aligned with the strategy and be ethically credible (Storey, 1995; Boxall and Purcell, 2016); (2) performance management is best applied as the continuous circle accompanied by goals, feedback and fairness, as opposed to the annual event (Armstrong and Baron, 2005; Buchner, 2007); and (3) innovation requires the way work is designed and how teams are

led and supported, particularly in the multicultural environment (Hackman and Oldham, 1976; Brett et al., 2006).

2.3 FEELINGS

In the beginning, I thought that innovation was primarily a creative attitude. My confidence has increased as I am now able to view innovation as a system output that job design, team dynamics, capability building and fair people processes can generate. Meanwhile, I am challenged by the rhetoric vs reality tension that organisations may profess commitment-based HRM but perform cost-based practice (Legge, 2005; Storey, 1989).

2.4 EVALUATION

Integration of models and practical dilemmas worked well in my learning. The concept by Ulrich that HR ought to emerge as a value-added unit also made me realize why HR ought to establish a reputation as a strategic collaborator and at the same time maintain employee experience (Ulrich, 1997; Ulrich and Brockbank, 2005). I also liked the performance management cycle and underpinning theories since they transformed feedback into a behavioural control procedure (Locke and Latham, 1990; Bandura, 1986; Hirschi, 1969). One weakness that I also observed is that line manager devolution of HR delivery may lead to inconsistency and perceived unfairness where capability is poor (Truss, 2001; Marchington and Wilkinson, 2012).

2.5 ANALYSIS

My self-growth point of reference has become more definite: both innovation and growth mindset need motivation and opportunity. The performance formula created by Boxall and Purcell (ability x motivation x opportunity) shows that I need to acquire skills and create the conditions that would allow me to use them (Boxall and Purcell, 2016). The job design theory reveals that I need to pursue jobs/projects that have autonomy, feedback and skill-variety so that I can be intrinsically motivated (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). To achieve team effectiveness I came to know that cultural differences can be addressed as design issues which can be addressed through norms, structural interventions and conscious trust-building (Brett et al., 2006). In the case of L&D, systematic training design will be utilized, and results will be assessed not only in terms of satisfaction but also in terms of

learning transfer and effect according to the levels proposed by Kirkpatrick (Kirkpatrick, 1967; Salas et al., 2012).

2.6 CONCLUSION

In general, the module provided me with a strategic and ethical approach to people management: align HR to organisational goals, design equitable processes, and develop capabilities to sustain performance and innovation (Beer et al., 1985; Boxall and Purcell, 2016). It also demonstrated that my growth mindset is not simply attitude alone but rather with the support of feedback, challenging goals and learning structures (Locke and Latham, 1990; Bandura, 1986).

2.7 ACTION PLAN

1. **Quarterly OKR-style self-goals** with learning key results (goal-setting theory) (Locke and Latham, 1990).
2. **Monthly 360-style feedback** from peers/mentors to reduce blind spots and build self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986).
3. **Job-crafting choices**: prioritise tasks with autonomy, feedback and skill variety to sustain motivation (Hackman and Oldham, 1976).
4. **Structured learning cycle**: apply training design and evaluate using Kirkpatrick, focusing on transfer (Kirkpatrick, 1967; Salas et al., 2012).
5. **Line-manager readiness** (for my future leadership): train in fair, consistent people practice avoiding HR “implementation gaps” (Truss, 2001; Marchington and Wilkinson, 2012).

3 STAYING RELEVANT IN AN AI-ENABLED WORKPLACE (PERSONAL PLAN)

To remain pertinent with AI acceleration, I am approaching it as an addition tool instead of the replacement of my professional value. According to the forecast of the World Economic Forum, 39 percent of the main skills that workers will use in 2030 will be different, which implies that my employability will rely on constant reskilling and so-called learning agility rather than a one-time qualification (World Economic Forum, 2025). I will

then focus on my development by having (1) AI literacy (how GenAI works, its limits, hallucinations, bias and data risks), and (2) human advantage capabilities judgement, ethics, stakeholder influence, coaching, and conflict-handling that are difficult to automate and which are central to credible HR practice (CIPD, 2025).

An application of AI in my daily work will be in high-volume and less-risk tasks when speed is important: drafting preliminary versions of HR policies and communications, summarising research evidence, generating structured interview questions, creating learning content outlines, synthesising research survey themes, and creating alternative things to do in lieu of okr or competency wording (Chawla et al., 2025). This will be followed by my value addition of accuracy, legality, fairness, tone, and organisational fit checking before anything is utilised. It is consistent with CIPD recommendations that HR ought to be leaning into GenAI but ensure responsible and ethical use through a clear policy and communication (CIPD, 2025).

I will also implement a strict human-in-the-loop policy on any decision with a significant impact on people (selection, performance ratings, pay, discipline) to make sure that AI serves me instead of terminating me. AI will serve to inform decisions, but I will be responsible to the ultimate decision, the standards of evidence, and the equitable results that safeguard confidence and professional reputation (CIPD, 2025).

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