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Module Name: Human Capital Management

Module Code: LCMB7023

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Word Count:2444

Term 1

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PART 1: Re-Engineering Performance and Job Design at Aether Innovations

1. Introduction

Aether Innovations is a technology company that employs 300 workers and currently faces stagnant growth while experiencing increasing staff departures and decreasing client satisfaction. Organisational strategy and innovation requirements become misaligned when human capital systems experience implementation issues (Boxall, Purcell and Wright, 2022). The performance and innovation capacity of knowledge-intensive industries depends on three factors which include employee motivation and collaboration and skill utilization. The existing performance appraisal systems and fixed job

frameworks restrict these abilities. Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) shows that organisations need to implement their HR practices as integrated systems to achieve sustained competitive advantage (Delery and Roumpi, 2017). The report recommends that Aether should revamp its performance management system and leadership job frameworks to boost innovation capabilities and employee commitment and organisational effectiveness.

2. Performance Appraisal Practices in Technology Firms

2.1 Traditional Performance Management Systems

Performance evaluations in the past used annual performance assessments which line managers conducted to evaluate employee performance. The evaluation system uses established performance targets and required competencies and productivity assessment benchmarks to measure employee performance. The administrative decision-making functions of the system enabled organizations to make decisions about employee promotions and salary increases but system users now report that it becomes less efficient in fast-moving organisational settings (Aguinis, 2021).

Annual reviews typically assess employee performance for extended timeframes but they deliver feedback to employees only after operating results become available. The annual performance evaluation method fails to assist employees in technology companies because their product development processes require continuous innovation (Armstrong and Taylor, 2023). Traditional appraisal systems evaluate personal performance through their measurement system which assesses individual achievements in contrast to group performance metrics.

The research shows that various organizations understand these limitations. Companies failed to show any productivity improvement through their performance management systems according to research from Deloitte (2022). The performance systems in technology companies need to support continuous learning and innovation while assessing previous work performance.

2.2 Emerging Performance Management Approaches

The performance management system requires operational changes to achieve better results because technology companies need to establish

systems that provide ongoing performance feedback through joint assessments which support organizational objectives. The Objectives and Key Results (OKR) framework provides a common way to create measurable goals which organizations need to implement their strategic plans at all levels (Doerr, 2018).

The system of OKRs establishes performance expectations through its process of connecting organizational goals with measurable performance targets. The strategic goal for innovation requires organizations to achieve specific results through their new product feature launches and their actual customer engagement figure increases. Research shows that structured goal-setting frameworks boost employee performance because they establish performance targets which enhance work output (Locke and Latham, 2019).

The practice of 360-degree feedback has become more popular because it gathers performance data from multiple sources which include supervisors and coworkers and direct reports. The evaluation method which uses multiple sources of information helps leaders develop better leadership skills because it identifies their behavioral patterns which assessment through hierarchical

methods would overlook (London and Smither, 2020). The system requires implementation to create evaluation standards which protect assessment integrity while eliminating assessment bias.

Modern performance systems present multiple advantages yet they also come with specific drawbacks. Organizations face two major problems when they try to track performance through excessive measurement because it creates two competing demands which increase both administrative work and employee workload (Aguinis and Burgi-Tian, 2021). Organizations need to create performance systems which establish responsibility for outcomes and provide staff members with opportunities for professional growth..

3. Proposed Performance Management System for Aether Innovations

Aether Innovations requires a contemporary performance management system which will connect three essential components OKRs and continuous feedback and multi-source evaluation to solve its existing organizational problems. The organization needs to establish quarterly OKR cycles which will connect individual work to its main business goals for innovation and customer satisfaction. OKRs differ from standard appraisal systems because

their evaluation method depends on measurable results instead of assessing completion of work tasks.

Table 1: Example OKR Structure for Aether Innovations

Strategic Objective	Key Results
Improve innovation capability	Launch two new product features per quarter
Enhance customer satisfaction	Increase customer satisfaction score by 15%
Strengthen collaboration	Increase cross-team project participation

Aether needs to establish quarterly performance evaluation meetings between its staff members and their supervisors. The sessions need to focus on coaching and professional development instead of evaluating past performance. Employees can use ongoing feedback to modify their work performance according to the evolving needs of the organization. The organization needs to implement 360-degree feedback assessments for its leadership positions twice each year. The multi-source evaluation method enables organizations to obtain more valuable information about how their

leaders perform and how well their teams collaborate, which are essential skills for organizations that focus on innovation.

Figure 1: Evolution of Performance Management

(Source: Adapted from Deloitte, 2022; Aguinis, 2021)

The combination of these mechanisms enables Aether to create a performance management system which enables organizations to achieve both accountability and their learning objectives.

4. Job Design in Technology Organisations

Job design functions as the primary element which determines how workers will experience their work and their capacity to develop innovative solutions.

Many technology companies define their job functions through specific technical expertise because that method has been used since their establishment. The use of specialisation helps organizations achieve higher productivity levels but too many segmented job functions cause workers to lose their ability to work independently while they also miss chances to develop innovative solutions (Oldham and Fried, 2016). The Job Characteristics Model (JCM) provides a useful framework for designing motivating work environments. The model demonstrates that five job characteristics will determine how workers perform their tasks and their levels of motivation throughout the workday.

Table 2, Core Dimensions of the Job Characteristics Model

Job Characteristic	Impact
Skill variety	Encourages creativity and learning
Task identity	Strengthens ownership of work
Task significance	Enhances perceived purpose
Autonomy	Supports innovation and initiative

Research shows that work environments which provide employees with high autonomy and diverse skill development opportunities result in better job performance and improved company results (Parker, Morgeson and Johns, 2017). Employees in technology companies need to maintain sufficient freedom to test out their innovative concepts and work with different teams because innovation represents a core requirement for their business operations.

Organizations now prefer to implement skills-based job design systems which focus on assessing employee capabilities instead of using traditional job description methods. Skills-based systems enable businesses to move their staff members between different assignments while promoting cross-team information exchange (World Economic Forum, 2023).

5. Job Analysis and Leadership Role Design

Aether should establish new leadership structures which will enhance its organizational ability to innovate through increased executive freedom and

partnership development and strategic business alignment. The job analysis process defines the essential work tasks and skill requirements for each position in the organization while verifying that these elements match the organizational goals.

Table 3. Leadership Roles and Responsibilities at Aether Innovations

Role	Key Responsibilities	Required Competencies
CEO	Strategic leadership and innovation culture	Strategic vision, change leadership
CFO	Financial strategy and investment oversight	Financial analytics, risk management
CTO	Technology development and engineering leadership	Technical expertise, agile management
Chief Innovation Officer	Innovation strategy and experimentation	Design thinking, venture development
HR Director	Talent development and organisational culture	HR analytics, leadership development
Head of R&D	Research programmes and product innovation	Scientific leadership, experimentation

These roles should incorporate high levels of autonomy and collaboration to support innovation. The Chief Innovation Officer needs to lead all cross-departmental innovation projects which work together with internal entrepreneurship initiatives. The HR Director needs to spend his time developing leaders while he should also work to increase employee participation in their HR executive duties.

6. Integrating Job Design and Performance Management

Performance management and job design need to function as a unified system which helps organizations achieve their operational goals. The staff members need autonomy in their work which includes different skills and they must understand the importance of their assignments because these elements make OKR performance measurements serve as vital resources for driving both innovation and employee engagement.

Figure 2: Integrated Human Capital System

(Source: Author's framework informed by SHRM literature)

Research demonstrates that organizations using integrated HR systems achieve better productivity and financial results than those which rely on separate HR activities (Jiang and Messersmith, 2018). Aether Innovations can establish an environment where workers invent new solutions through performance management by connecting their job design work with their performance evaluation duties.

PART 2—REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS

8. Reflective Learning Journey (Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle)

8.1 Concrete Experience

The learning process begins at its first stage when students acquire their first direct experiences. The module's main educational experience included the assessment of how human resource management functions as a strategic tool which drives organizational performance. The Aether Innovations case study demonstrated that organizations suffer from three main problems which arise because their human capital systems contain fundamental flaws instead of actual operational problems. The experience showed that HR functions serve as a strategic asset which builds organizational capacity and boosts innovation capabilities.

The examination of technology company innovation management revealed that successful innovation depends on two factors which include cross-departmental teamwork and staff who have decision-making power. Knowledge-based organisations rely heavily on employee creativity and problem-solving ability. Organizations that support employee development and learning achieve higher levels of innovation and productivity according to

research (World Economic Forum 2023). The concepts demonstrated how HR systems either facilitate or obstruct innovation while the study showed that human capital practices should match organizational strategy to create effective HR systems.

8.2 Reflective Observation

The analysis of experiences through reflective observation enables researchers to discover essential insights which describe the knowledge gained from their experiences. The module revealed that employee engagement functions as the main driver which determines how well organizations achieve their objectives. Employee engagement results in organizations achieving three benefits which include higher productivity rates and better customer results and increased innovation capabilities according to evidence from Gallup (2024). Organizations need HR systems which help employees stay motivated while they proceed in their careers and gain independence.

The process of designing jobs holds critical importance for organizations which operate in knowledge-intensive sectors according to research findings.

Employees in technology firms often perform complex tasks that require creativity, collaboration and continuous learning. The research shows that employees who have more control over their work and who can apply their knowledge to tasks display higher engagement levels and commitment to their organization according to Parker, Morgeson and Johns (2017). The Aether Innovations situation analysis demonstrated that badly constructed job responsibilities restrict both creativity and employee contentment. Job structures and performance systems need to support both learning and teamwork and provide employees with the chance to engage in meaningful work according to organizations.

8.3 Abstract Conceptualisation

The process of observing at the third stage of Kolb's model leads to the development of theoretical knowledge. The module included critical HR theories which established theoretical frameworks to analyze organizational performance challenges. The Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) theory shows that HR practices must tie to business strategies to create a market advantage according to Delery and Roumpi(2017). The HR

management domain handles administrative tasks but also functions as a strategic resource which delivers critical organizational efficacy.

the Job Characteristics Model explains how job design affects the motivation of workers. The model shows that workers who control their tasks through autonomy and task importance and daily assessment of their work achievements will become more dedicated to their jobs and perform better (Hackman and Oldham 1976). Current research proves that these principles remain crucial for organizations which rely on knowledge-based systems according to Parker, Morgeson and Johns (2017). The contemporary performance management system uses Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) to establish links between employee contributions and the strategic goals of the organization. The establishment of explicit performance targets will boost both organizational performance and employee motivation according to goal-setting theory (Locke and Latham 2019).

8.4 Active Experimentation

The last stage of Kolb's learning process requires learners to apply what they have learned in their upcoming professional responsibilities. The module

highlighted that organizations should create unified HR systems instead of executing separate HR programs. I intend to integrate performance management with job design and leadership development so that these HR activities work together to achieve business goals in my future career.

The management of team innovation needs to follow this next step. Knowledge-based organizations require their leaders to build work environments which support both experimentation and teamwork and ongoing employee education. I want to create roles through Job Characteristics Model principles which give workers the freedom to work independently while they develop skills and receive regular assessment of their progress. Organizations can achieve their operational goals through modern performance management systems which include OKRs and continuous feedback systems. The practices of organizations support their ability to adapt to change while they develop their employees and create new ideas and achieve better results in the long term.

9. Staying Relevant in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

The implementation of artificial intelligence technology is transforming work processes in various industries. AI technologies increasingly perform tasks that were traditionally undertaken by human professionals which include data analysis and recruitment screening and performance monitoring. HR analytics platforms now enable organizations to assess employee engagement data for predicting turnover threats and they can automate candidate shortlisting procedures (Davenport and Mittal, 2022). The operational tasks which AI can improve work efficiency because the technology currently has difficulties automating several human abilities. The leadership and organizational management fields require professionals to develop skills that include strategic thinking and creativity and emotional intelligence and ethical decision-making. Research shows that organizations prefer employees who can connect analytical results with human understanding and who can lead collaborative teams (World Economic Forum, 2023). Professionals should view AI as a tool which enhances their human capabilities instead of treating it as a danger. AI-based decision support systems offer organizations valuable workforce planning and talent development insights. Organizations can use

predictive HR analytics to discover their skill deficiencies and create effective training programs. To maintain relevance in the current AI environment workers should develop human abilities which work together with their technological equipment. Professionals who can analyze information and demonstrate creativity and lead others while understanding ethical consequences will achieve success in work environments which rely on technological advancements. Humans should view AI as a tool which assists them in making better decisions throughout their work. The AI system will improve decision-making because it uses human expertise to create better knowledge and strategic planning.

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