

TITLE PAGE

**What is it like to be a
Work & Organizational Psychologist (WOP)?**

Lisa Feldhoff (I6026087)

Laura Uchtmann (I6036676)

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Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience

University of Maastricht

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Supervised by: Philippe Nelissen

Introduction

In today's organizations one of the biggest challenges is to stay competitive in a globalizing and rapidly changing market. In the last decades human capital was assumed to be the source of competitive advantage in organizations. The relationship between Human Resource Management (HRM) and the organizations' goals got analyzed more and more intensively and the system approach to HRM was developed. This approach sees the HRM practices as a system where the subparts and its decisions are integrated and influencing each other and where its practices can contribute to the organizations overall performance and productivity (Neal, West & Patterson, 2005, Cascio, Agunis, 2011).

Decisions in one phase of HRM, like for example in recruiting or selection can have influences on other phases, like training or development or performance management. With a successful HRM, human capital can be enhanced in all of these phases. The recruiting and selection phase is an essential phase in filtering high subsequent performers out of a pool of applicants. One aim in the selection process is to maximize valid positives and valid negatives while minimizing false positives and false negatives. This is done with means of several different selection methods, like interviews or work samples (Anderson, Salgado, Schinkel & Cunningham Snell, 2008).

When implementing the different HRM practices, like for example filtering out the best suitable applicants in the selection process in order to achieve better organizational performance, it is important to rely on a well-conducted job analysis (Landy & Conte, 2013). Job analysis consists of two important parts, the job description and the person specification. Job description analyses the nature of the work itself. What are the different tasks, tools and machines used? And what are the procedures and performance standards that define a certain work? Job descriptions can be work- or worker- oriented. The second part of a job analysis is the person specification. Person specification analyses the nature of the person conducting the work. It is defined by the KSAO's (knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics) that are required in order to perform well on the job (Bartram, 2008).

Hence, job analysis is an important prerequisite for a lot of Human Resources practices, for example for recruiting. If HRM practitioners know the KSAO's an individual needs in order to perform well on the task, it facilitates the process of finding the right employee for a certain job. Another example is compensation; if the performance standards

are defined by the job analysis, it alleviates the process of putting a monetary value on each performance dimensions (Landy & Conte, 2013). Thus, to summarize a well conducted and detailed job analysis is a fundamental building block in a successful HRM.

The aim of the present report is the conduction of a job analysis. Based on the job description and the person specification of this analysis it should be possible to choose an appropriate candidate for the analyzed occupation. A self-employed Job Coach for individual clients was chosen as the subject matter expert (SME) to be interviewed. A detailed job description and a person specification were obtained. This data was collected by generating a semi-structured interview. The interview was executed in a semi-structured manner to have more flexibility during questioning than in a structured interview (Anderson et al., 2008). The interviewed SME coaches his clients using a systemic framework. In systemic coaching the coach is helping his clients to recognize their unrecognized patterns of behavior, gives feedback and helps seeing their experiences from different view points (Ivis, 2008). Systemic coaching is a solution oriented approach to coaching. The coach further helps to improve his clients' employability (O*NET). Employability is a multidimensional approach caused by the reciprocal relationship between career identity, social and human capital and personal adaptation. Employability is a work specific proactive adaptability that facilitates the identification and realization of career opportunities (Fugate, Kinicki & Ashford, 2004). The SME in this report not only specialized on professionals but also on students. With the students he conducts potential analysis with the purpose of helping them to find an adequate study program. He thus has two very different kinds of clients, professionals on the one hand and students and their parents on the other hand.

Finally the report is evaluated in regard to the conducted job analysis. It is critically reviewed whether the results are similar to the job description of a job coach found in O*NET and whether a recruiting and selection of a candidate would be possible with the results found. In a concluding reflection of the report the skills of the interviewer are also critically evaluated. They are evaluated with regard to the quality of the beforehand preparation of the interview and their skills during the interview; like directive and non-directive probes.

Method

Participants

Our Subject Matter Expert (SME) in this single case study is 46 years old and head and founder of the job and career coaching institute 'Kernfindung' in Cologne, Germany. He is working as a Job Coach since he founded his own company in 2005. After his A levels he went to a commercial college for graduates. Subsequently he did an apprenticeship as a banker and next he started his studies in Psychology at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster. He started to work as a personnel consultant at a German organization, where he was responsible for executive search processes. Five years later he changed the organization and worked as an HR Manager where he was in charge of HR development, recruiting and administration. Finally he founded his own organization 'Kernfindung' where he specialized in potential analyses for students and the coaching of executive and specialized staff.

Materials

Job analyses are conducted in order to determine the main tasks and responsibilities of a specific job (job description) and the most important knowledge, skills, attributes and other characteristics (KSAO's) that are necessary to perform those tasks efficiently (person specification) (Landy & Conet, 2013). In order to obtain the necessary information to create a job analysis, the method of an interview was chosen which is the most frequently used information gathering method in job analysis (Algera & Greuter, 1998).

The scheme of the interview was semi-structured, so that a certain degree of validity was assured but the interviewers were also still flexible in what questions were asked and in asking follow-up questions, to let the interviewee elaborate more on a topic if necessary (Anderson, Salgado, Schinkel, & Cunningham Snell, 2008). During the construction of our interview scheme (Appendix A) we were guided by Algera and Greuter's (1998) structural design of a job analysis. We developed the questions on basis of O*NET's occupation group "rehabilitation counsellors" where you can find "Job Coach" as a subtopic. However, due to our limited time frame we prioritized certain questions that were absolutely necessary for the conduction of a job analysis. Additionally the interviewers also had certain prior knowledge they could use in constructing their questions because they already did a three months intership at the organization. We divided our questions in three main topics: job description, person specification and general interest.

Procedure

The interview took place at the interviewees' office in Cologne. Because the interviewers were both former interns of the SME's institute 'Kernfindung' there was no need to introduce themselves into detail. Instead after welcoming each other, the interviewee was given general information about the aim of the study, which is creating a job analysis about a WOP for the course Human Resources of the Master in Work & Organizational Psychology at Maastricht University and thus getting an insight into the tasks and the required competencies of that job. Subsequently the SME was informed about that all information given during this interview would be handled anonymously and that his name would not be mentioned if he did not agree with doing so. The interviewers also gave a short overview about the topics that they would like to discuss during the interview. Before starting the interview it was mentioned that the whole interview would be recorded so that it can later be transcribed. Furthermore the Job Coach was advised that the interview was going to take approximately about 30 minutes. Regarding the interview questions the interviewers were mindful of asking open and non-suggestive questions in order to get more information of the SME and to avoid confirmation bias. Additionally interview techniques like active listening through non-directive (e.g. silence and neutral phases) and directive probes (e.g. clarification, repetition and confrontation) and facial non-verbal behavior (e.g. eye contact, facial expression) were included to give the SME feedback during the interview and to elaborate or clarify the interviewee's statements. After the interviewers gathered all necessary information they thanked the Job Coach and repeated prior agreements.

Analysis

To analyze the data the interview was recorded and later transcribed. This way it could be controlled for interpretation and quotation mistakes. The transcription was filtered with regard to information related to the job description and person specification. Information was separated regarding tasks and responsibilities of the SEM, data relating personal characteristics as well as general KSAO's needed for the job, and data about topics of our general interest. After all the findings were summarized under two subtopics of job description which include job coaching and potential analysis. Subsequently three subtopics of person specification were summarized: knowledge, skills, and other characteristics.

Results

Job Description

The main tasks and duties of this Job Coach can be clustered into two broad domains: job coaching of professionals like specialized staff or executives and potential analysis of students. Generally he uses aspects of systemic consulting and transactional analysis. His general duties not only comprise finding a better fitting job or indicating strengths and motivations of the clients (professionals as well as students) but also trying to help them better being able to function in complex „systems“ which include not only coworkers and supervisors but also family members, friends and relationships. By means of broadening the clients frame of reference, new ways of perceiving your surrounding emerge and the Job Coach supports the clients to better being able cope with his or her issues on a daily basis. Scrutinizing the clients motives and decisions for example to identify hidden dynamics of his or her issues are important aspects in systemic coaching. Furthermore the coach makes use of transactional analysis in order to make the client aware of his or her different ego states such as parent-like, childlike, or adult like ego, to enable the client to self-regulate him or herself in social situations such as the worksetting. Besides conducting coaching sessions, the job coach also has to deal with administrative tasks like billing and accounting and all tax matters due to his self-employment. He is also responsible for one or two interns that support him dealing with client inquiries, manage client records, doing research and preparing, revising and editing material.

Job coaching.

A job coaching is a matter of various sessions divided upon several weeks so that the coach is able to support the coachee in the long run. It has the objective of helping professionals who are not content with their current job situation, to find their unique person-job fit, driving motives and personal strengths, and to identify certain ways to obtain those goals.

In order to conduct a proper job analysis the first step is creating a lifecycle together with the coachee to understand how the coachee became who he or she is today. The coach works with a model from C.G. Jung and R. Steiner, which states that every person changes every approximately seven years. During the different development phases everyone is confronted with ambiguous or interfering situations which needs to be worked out and overcome in order to master the subsequent life phase successfully. During the first sessions the coach clarifies with the clients how he or she perceived each stage subjectively and discusses major life events. Thereafter the SME needs to clarify the coachees objectives of the

coaching. The coach needs to clarify five questions with the coachee which are crucial for the following process:

1. What is the coachee's requests? Why is he or she here?
2. What needs to happen during the coaching sessions so that the coachee is content with the coaching?
3. What does the coachee need to do to help the coachee with the request?
4. What will the coachee do to solve his issues?
5. Why just now? Why not some time ago, or some time in the future?

To assess the coachee's perceptions of the different domains contributing to his or her issues, the coach makes use of several subjective rating scales. For example the coachees have to indicate on a scale from 1 to 10 how content they are with their current work in order to measure job satisfaction. Another tool the coach is working with is the career anchor, which gives him an indication of what are the driving factors for the coachee in his career choices. Building on those insights the coach and the coachee mutually agree upon a "Fahrplan" (set of objectives and milestones of the coaching). During the following sessions they work with this method in order to keep track of and evaluate the progresses or regressions the coachee made.

Potential analysis.

Potential analyses are a way to help young (college) students to find a job or subject of study that fits to their strengths and interests. A preliminary clarification discussion is always the first step in administering a potential analysis. In the case of young students facing their imminent A levels the coach often conducts this with the parents of the student in question, in person or via telephone. When the expectations and concerns are clarified and everything is settled, the student takes several test procedures in order to indicate the student's potential, away from the school or university grades. Subsequently the coach enhances the coachee to broaden his framework of reference and to take a look at all the possibilities the student may have by means of transactional analysis. During a one or two day session the strengths and interests of the client are identified and after a thorough discussion of possible perspectives, eventually a dialogue with the students parents takes place to discuss the outcomes of the potential analysis and possible career steps.

Person specification

Knowledge.

The interviewed Job Coach mentions a psychological basic formation as essential knowledge foundation for his occupation. Afterwards he did a systemic coaching education and he further advises subsequent trainings in order to specialize in a psychological approach for coaching. The interviewed SME mentions his qualification in transactional analysis (TA) as his specialized knowledge for the coaching. He indicates to use different models from TA for all his clients, students as well as professionals. It is necessary choosing for concrete models which are solution oriented and available and understandable for the client. Basic knowledge in psychological methodology for evaluating data and test results is also required. Knowledge of human nature is inevitable in order to assess and evaluate people and their concerns. The Jobcoach further mentions ethical knowledge and attitude to be necessary when working with human beings.

Skills.

One important skill is highlighted by the participant several times, the communication skill. First of all in order to coach other people, being capable of eloquent speaking and selling yourself is necessary. As a Job Coach specialized in individual clients, contact with a lot of different kind of people is happening on a daily basis. Clients are differing in age, position and sometimes also culture. Every client is an individual and thus a new challenge in regard to the communication approach. How can I on the one hand address parents and their children, how can I address an experienced managers on the other hand? What is the best way to talk to each individual in order to connect with them and in order to be understood? In order to address a huge spectrum of all kinds of different people, which are reaching from a young student who just graduated from school to an experienced manager being the head of a team of over 100 people, good communication skills and being able to switch between different kinds of them is required.

However, the part in coaching where most elaborate skills are required is not the part where facts are conveyed, but where comprehension for the client and his situation needs to be expressed. The participant mentions a high degree of empathy to be necessary in order to build a bridge to your clients and be accepted by them, so that they are opening up to you. The Job Coach needs to be a good listener and to have a high degree of social perceptiveness. The job coach indicates providing the 'three P's' to clients as an important skill. 'Three P's'

means; protection, permission and potency. The participant further mentions several kinds of necessary soft skills. Those include, basic skills, like being able to speak in front of groups and to hold presentations. Furthermore, it is necessary to clarify things discussed during the session with the use of different tools for example like drawing schemes on a flipchart. For being able to work as a self-employed Jobcoach it is also necessary to have some basic mathematical skills to fulfill all the administrative tasks and some degree of leadership skills for the sake of leading for example interns or freelancer.

Others.

There are several other characteristics necessary in order to operate effectively as a Coach. It is important to be willing to update soft skills continuously because technological tools are developing rapidly and they can be a good aid in the coaching sessions. It is important to have a special kind of attitude. The SME mentions one perspective from TA here, namely the idea that ‘I am ok, you are ok’ meaning to accept each others opinions and reactions in order to operate in an objectively manner and to reduce tension.

The participant further indicates that a certain degree of experience in other workpsychological occupations is very helpful. This is not only important for being accepted by the client but also for developing social perceptiveness, to being able to understand the reactions and perspectives of different kind of people in different life stages or in different organizational positions.

Job description	Person Specification
Job coaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifecycle • Clarify objectives • Rating scales • Frame of reference • Career anchor • “Fahrplan” 	Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of psychology • Knowledge about coaching and knowledge of models for coaching (Transactional analysis) • Knowledge of methodology for assessing and evaluating data and test results • Knowledge of human nature • Ethical knowledge

<p>Potential analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary clarification • Test procedures • Frame of reference • Range of perspectives • Post discussion with parents 	<p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Empathy • Social perceptiveness and appropriate reactions • ‘Three P’s’ • Active listening • Speech clarity • Presentation skills • Leadership skills • Mathematical skills
<p>Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax matters • Billing and accounting • Lead and guide interns 	<p>Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate attitude • Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to learn and to be up to date in methods and technology
<p>→ Provide person-job / person-study fit</p>	<p>→ Combining social perceptiveness with communication skills and psychological models</p>

Discussion

The job description and person specification we conducted provide all necessary information to understand the basic tasks, duties and KSAO's of a Job Coach. We provided a thorough overview over the daily work of the interviewee and described in detail what the different methods used by the Job Coach entail. Based on the information we gathered we could be able to recruit and select a candidate for the job. The generell tasks and work aspects of the Job Coach we interviewed are in accordance with what is stated on professional sources of job description (O*NET).

Summarized the main tasks of the interviewed Job Coach are conducting job coachings for professionals and executives and potential analyses for students (school and college). During both, job coachings and potential analyses, the most important point is to clarify the objectives of the clients because otherwise the expectations of both parties are unclear and the coach can rarely meet the coachees' demands. It is an important aspect of the coaches' work to assess the clients' needs adequately and to be able to use tools for the sake

of identifying and evaluating core issues in the clients' home or work environments and eventually monitoring their progress during sessions. A great deal of the knowledge and skills for this job were acquired learning by doing but the several additional educations like in systemic coaching and transactional analysis facilitate his work to a great deal and his prior psychological education provides the foundation of being able to make use of research based and valid methodologies. One of the most important skills are being able to communicate with all kinds of people, ranging from top managers, to young students facing their imminent graduation to their parents, which are often more concerned about the students future than the students themselves. Interestingly the interviewee described the contact with the parents as one of the most challenging aspects of his job, especially when he started his business. He does not only have to satisfy the students' demands but he also has to convince their parents. Another interesting finding was that the most valued aspects from the Job Coach were working together with different and intercultural individuals and never experience the same day again. However what is perceived to be missing from time to time is exchanging information with colleagues which he cannot realise on a regular basis due to his self-employment status.

However some information about working conditions like working hours is missing. This would be an important aspect to know for conducting a proper job advertisement and recruiting candidates. Another aspect interesting for prospective candidates would be a salary range, however we did not perceive this question to be adequate because it was only a hypothetical attempt of conducting a job analysis. Furthermore it would be interesting to get some more information about the work environment, like the place of work, ergonomics and working climate. The lack of questions concerning these topics might be due to the prior involvement of the interviewers with the organization which could have biased them. The further section elaborates more on the interviewer skills and possible improvements.

Reflection

Generally the preparation for the interview scheme was adequate and sufficient as all necessary information in order to conduct a job description and a person specification of the job in question were gathered. The interviewers used directive (e.g. clarification, repetition and confrontation) as well as non-directive probes (e.g. silence and neutral phases) to be engaged as active listeners. For example, summarizing what the interviewee said about working with different clients and cultures is an adequate probe. A too extensive silence on

the other side might have irritated the interviewee because he could have been insecure about the reason of silence (letting room to talk or lack of understanding). Another bias might have also been, as previously mentioned, that the interviewers have been too much involved in the processes of the organization in order to provide a subjective interview. Certain aspects seemed self-evident for the interviewers but would have needed further attention and elaboration. Furthermore the interviewee tended to rather describe incidents of the daily business than reporting general tasks, methods and processes used as a Job Coach. The interviewers could have guided the interviewee more for the sake of a more comprehensive picture. Future interviews should thus ideally include a greater number of probes to signal the interviewee that what he said was understood and provide guidance and interventions in order to keep a better time-management and get even more comprehensive information.

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Appendix A

Interview scheme

Job Description.

- 1) What exactly is your job title? ¹
 - a. What degrees did you obtain to reach this title?
- 2) Can you describe your career path briefly until that year when you founded 'Kernfindung.'
 - a. How long have you been working in each of your jobs?
- 3) What factors did influence your decision on becoming self-employed?
 - a. Can you describe briefly the process of founding 'Kernfindung'?
- 4) What were your goals in founding 'Kernfindung'?
 - a. Do you think you achieved those goals?
- 5) Which are the different services you offer as a Coach at 'Kernfindung'? (*Clients*)
 - a. Which are the specific tasks you are executing for each of those services?
 - b. What are the greatest differences between those services?
 - c. Can you briefly describe the typical course of a day were you execute a potential analysis or a job coaching?
- 6) What methods and materials do you use on a regular basis in your job?
 - a. How do you collect and interpret information about your clients?
 - b. Do you use different methods and materials for different services?
 - c. What are the goals of these methods?
 - d. Which theories of psychology do you usually take into account in your coaching?
 - e. Which methods translate easily from theory into practice?
 - f. What kind of changes have you experienced in your methods over time?
- 7) Could you describe what kind of other social contacts you are working with (beside your clients)?
 - a. How do you cooperate with those people? Can you describe a typical situation of you working together with other people and departments?
- 8) Which challenges do you encounter in your job?
- 9) What were the greatest changes in your job since you started 'Kernfindung'?

Person Specification.

- 1) What skills/knowledge (pc skills, presentation skills, knowledge about psychology, ability to convince people) would you say are especially important in order to do the job as a Coach effectively?
 - a. Example situation
- 2) What kind of characteristic traits are a must have for a coach have in your opinion?
 - a. Example situation
- 3) Is there a certain level of experience needed in order to be able to work as a job coach?

General Interest.

- 1) Would you choose the same career path again?
 - a. What would you do different?
- 2) What motivates you the most about your job?
 - a. Would you rather say it is intrinsic (helping people) or extrinsic (money)?
- 3) What would you consider as your biggest achievement so far?
- 4) Were you ever in a difficult situation you had to handle?
- 5) Do you like to work alone or would you rather prefer a team?
- 6) What do you like most about your job? Why?
- 7) What do you like least about your job? Why?
- 8) Would you be okay with giving us an annual salary range?