

## JOB DESIGN AT PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

The Graziadio School of Business and Management (GSBM) at Pepperdine University is one of the largest business schools in the country and has the third largest part-time MBA program. The school also provides graduate education aimed at different markets including an executive MBA (EMBA), a presidential/key executive MBA (PKE), and a specialized master's degree in organization development (MSOD). The MSOD program's curriculum consists of 10 four-unit classes over 22 months. Eight of the classes are conducted off-site during eight-day sessions at both domestic and international locations. The MSOD program office consists of a faculty director, a program administrator, and an administrative assistant. In response to cost-cutting initiatives at the university level, a proposal was being considered to alter the job designs of the MSOD program staff.

The MSOD Program Administrator, the focus of this application, was responsible for marketing and recruiting new students, managing the delivery logistics of the off-site program, managing the students' registration and financial relationships with the university, and maintaining relationships with the MSOD alumni. The marketing and recruiting duties involved working with the Program Director and the Director of Marketing for GSBM to develop marketing tactics including advertisements, brochures, conference marketing and support, and other market development activities. The recruiting process involved explaining the curriculum to prospective applicants, overseeing the application process for each applicant, working with the faculty to have qualified applicants interviewed, and managing the admissions process. This too had to be coordinated with the director and the administrative assistant. Once a class was admitted, the Program Administrator worked with various off-site facilities to establish room and board rates and catering services; managed the faculty's travel and teaching requirements; managed various intersession activities including the final exam; managed the students'

enrollment and graduation processes including their interface with the university's registrar and finance office and the school's financial aid office; and coached students through the program. After graduation, the Program Administrator served as an unofficial placement service, hooking up eligible graduates with prospective employers who called looking for MSOD talent, provided career guidance, and worked with the program's alumni organization to sponsor conferences and other alumni activities.

Each of the above activities was somewhat programmable; they occurred at specific times of the year and could be scheduled. However, because each applicant, student, class, or graduate was somewhat unique, the specific tasks or actions could not always be specified in advance and there were a number of exceptions and unique situations that arose during each day, month, or year.

The MSOD Program Administrator has worked with the MSOD program for over 15 years and was a fixture in both the MSOD and the general OD communities. Year over year, the Program Administrator delivered qualified applicants in excess of available space although that task had become increasingly difficult in the face of tuition increases, increasingly restrictive corporate policies on tuition reimbursement, and the ups and downs of the economy. He handled both routine and nonroutine administrative details professionally, displays and reports a high level of job satisfaction and commitment to the program, and has been complimented formally and informally by the students in the program. In fact, each cohort develops its own relationship with the administrator and he becomes a de facto member of almost every class. The alumni considered the Program Administrator a key and integral part of the MSOD program. The set of duties described above has evolved considerably over the Program Administrator's tenure. In particular, he has become more involved and responsible for marketing and recruiting activities, and the alumni relations

duties have been added in response to alumni requests that cannot be filled by traditional university departments.

In an effort to improve efficiencies, and in recognition of the MSOD Program Administrator's outstanding productivity, a proposal was being considered by GSBM administration to change the design of his job. The proposal suggested that the MSOD Program Administrator continue to perform all of the current duties of the position and, in addition, provide administrative support to two PKE classes from their initial class to graduation. The duties of administering the PKE program would be similar in nature to the delivery aspects of the MSOD

program, including working with faculty to support their teaching efforts, managing textbook ordering processes, and providing different facilities logistics activities. It would not include marketing, recruiting, and alumni development activities. The Program Administrator would receive additional compensation for the increased responsibilities and a title change. The new position would include joint supervision, with the EMBA program administrator, of an assistant program administrator, who would in turn manage a pool of administrative assistants. In addition, the new program administrator job would report to both the MSOD program director and the director of EMBA/PKE programs.

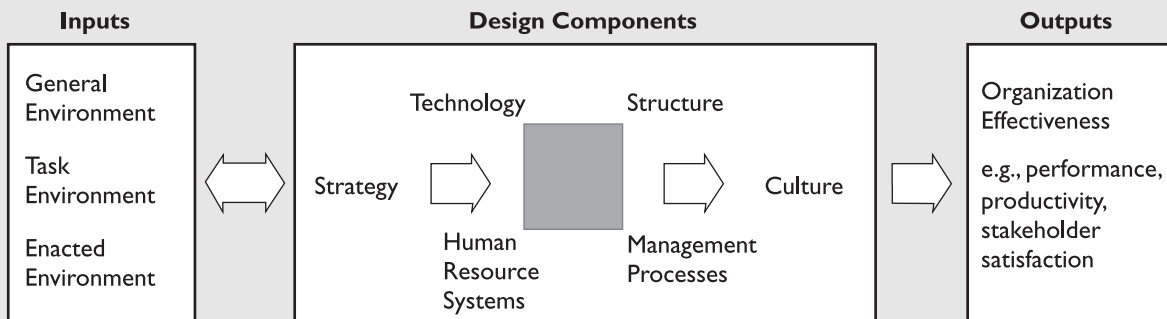
Diagnosis of individual-level inputs answers the following questions:

1. **What are the design and culture of the organization within which the individual job is embedded?** Although the example says little about the organization's design and culture, a number of inferences are possible. The business school's administration was attempting to reward the Program Administrator with a more enriched job. This suggests that the culture of the organization was supportive of employee involvement. However, the proposed change also was being considered as part of an efficiency drive. The school is large, hosting the third largest part-time MBA program in the United States. This helps to explain why a specialized master's degree in OD has been paired with two EMBA programs and differentiated from the large, part-time MBA program. To the extent that the MSOD program has different students or different marketing, delivery, and alumni relations processes than the EMBA programs, there may be difficult points of integration between the two types of programs.
2. **What is the design of the group containing the individual job?** Three individual jobs were grouped together according to the type of program. In this case, a faculty director, program administrator, and administrative assistant comprise the program office. The office is clearly dependent on other university and school functions, such as the registrar's office, financial aid, and the teaching faculty. Each of the three jobs has specific duties, but there is a clear sense that all three jobs are highly interdependent. The Program Administrator must coordinate with the faculty director on marketing, admissions, and curriculum decisions and with the administrative assistant on recruiting, program delivery, and routine administrative processes. Interaction during task performance is thus intense, and although partly scheduled, the work involves a high number of exceptions.
3. **What are the personal characteristics of the jobholder?** The application provides some clues about the Program Administrator's personal characteristics. First, he has stayed in the position for more than 15 years; this speaks to a loyalty or commitment to the OD program. Second, his job has evolved considerably and suggests at least a moderate amount of growth needs strength.

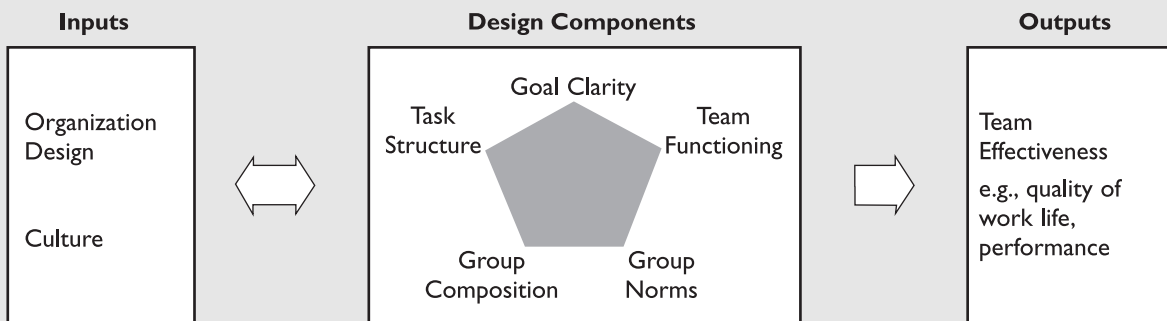
**FIGURE 5.2**

**Comprehensive Model for Diagnosing Organizational Systems**

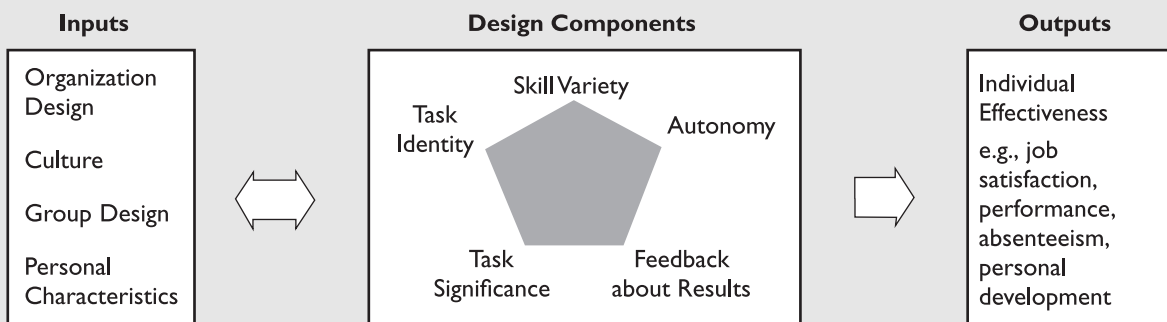
**A. ORGANIZATION LEVEL**



**B. GROUP LEVEL**



**C. INDIVIDUAL LEVEL**



The environment is the key input to organization design decisions. Organization design is an input to group design, which in turn serves as an input to job design. These cross-level relationships emphasize that organizational levels must fit with each other if the organization is to operate effectively. For example, organization structure must fit with and support group task design, which in turn must fit with individual-job design.