REPORT ON THE ENGINEER/ELECTRONICS AND RESEARCH MANAGER CLASSIFICATION RELATIVITY STUDY

RAPPORT DE L'ÉTUDE DE RELATIVITÉ SUR LES INGÉNIEURS ET LES TECHNICIENS SPÉCIALISES EN ÉLECTRONIQUE

SPRING 1996

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REASONS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary reasons for conducting a classification review are as follows:

1. There was an increasing difficulty in classifying the relative levels of positions at CRC, especially within the senior engineer and electronic technologist groups. This is partially due to the fact that the classification standards are written more for an operational organization than a research centre. The former President of CRC (PCRC) decided that we had reached a point where we had to take a careful and comprehensive look at classification decisions in order to identify existing problems and to avoid making mistakes in the future.

2. Many job descriptions were outdated and the organizational context had changed, making it almost impossible to determine the relative value of jobs or the factors common to jobs at each level. The relativity study compelled managers to update all job descriptions. This was especially true for the EL group, which required the evaluation of all existing positions against a revised Classification Standard, issued in April 1993.

3. Managers were starting to try to recognize individual accomplishments by submitting reclassifications which were not supported by the organizational structure. In non-incumbent driven positions such as engineers, the assignment of additional duties to one person may diminish the scope of responsibility in other positions (or the manager) within the same group. Often, this was not being considered by the supervisor.

4. Some classification decisions were made in isolation at headquarters before CRC became an institute and these were becoming a sore point within the research community. They had to be identified and rationalized relative to the rest of the organization before corrective action could be taken.

The objectives of the study are:

1. To ensure that positions regarded as being of equal value are assigned to the same classification level.

2. To identify and recommend solutions to other issues and problems revealed as a result of the study.

3. To better prepare ourselves for the proposed new classification system by becoming more aware of our organization and its problems. CRC is a relatively small and unique player within government as a fairly autonomus research institute. The more information

we have, the better positioned we will be to react to the coming changes.

METHODOLOGY

Basically, updated job descriptions were requested for all CRC engineer and electronic technologist positions, and these were evaluated against the standards. An internal classification committee comprised of one Research Branch VP, two Directors and two Human resources staff looked at those positions which were contentious. Interviews with Managers were conducted in most of these cases.

It should be noted that this exercise was ***NOT*** undertaken as a downward reclassification or cost-savings measure. In each case which was proposed for downward reclassification, managers were given several opportunities to provide additional information and documentation, or to reorganize their working units in a way to give more responsibilities to the employee. In those very few cases where downward reclassifications were confirmed, it was felt that we would be doing CRC a disservice by maintaining levels which were not justified relative to other employees in a similar situation. If anything, there is probably more overall scope for advancement as a result of the study to date.

The Business Development Office has not been examined yet because it was decided that the new Director of that unit should first be given the opportunity to organize his division as he sees fit, and to issue updated job descriptions.

COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

This excercise is considered an important fact finding step by PCRC and the CRC management team, and is designed to solve some of the problems raised by employees and managers. The development of efficient, cost-effective organizational structures, assignment of duties, classification of positions and ongoing monitoring and assurance of relativity is considered part of our managerial responsibilities.

ROLE OF CONSULTANTS

One consultant was used to assist in the writing and classification of some positions and to provide advice. The total cost was about $16K over 2 years.

DURATION

The study should be finished by the end of 1996.

NUMBER OF POSITIONS DOWNGRADED BY COMMITTEE

Engineers: Ten identified, one confirmed. Of the nine others identified for downward

reclassification, four have been re-evaluated based on job description re-writes and/or managerial presentations, and confirmed at their existing levels; four have been abolished as a result of downsizing (employee cash-out); and one vacant position requires a job description re-write.

Electronic technologists: Twelve identified, one confirmed. Of the eleven others identified for downward reclassification, four have been re-evaluated and confirmed at their existing levels, and seven have been abolished as a result of downsizing (employee cash-out).

NUMBER OF POSITIONS RECLASSIFIED UPWARDS BY COMMITTEE

Engineers: Three identified, three confirmed.

Electronic technologists: Five identified, four confirmed.

OTHER RESULTS

1. An Eng 5 expert level has been established and two upward re-classifications have resulted to date.

2. REM 1 and REM 2 re-classifications will be considered for the majority of project manager/director positions. In future, no managerial/administrative duties will be assigned to research scientists. Existing RES managerial positions will not be affected but will be "grandfathered".

   The criteria for advancement within the RES group will be examined by a committee comprised of four senior research scientists and chaired by VPRB, with a view to clarifying and communicating more specific promotional requirements at each level, relative to CRC research.

3. It was found that there were no suitable benchmark positions in the EL Standard which would be a good fit with our senior research technologists. A chart which describes the factors for EL's at various levels, appropriate for CRC, was prepared as a guideline for managers and the classification committee. This will better define what is expected to be achieved at each level.

4. A complete set of up-to-date job descriptions now exists to better prepare us for the upcoming changes in the classification system.

THE FUTURE

Treasury Board is proposing a new unviersal classification standard for all employees of the public service (excluding EX). The S&T community is being treated as a separate group, and the outcome may be that staff in research labs could occupy incumbent driven positions. If this is

the case, there will be a level playing field for all groups, and people will be assigned a level according to their individual accomplishments and track record. CRC is part of the team developing this system. The relativity study has provided valuable background information for our members participaing on the Treasury Board Committees.