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Making the shift to a harmonized and simplified Job Architecture

A combination of changing business environments, shifts in business strategy and changes to organizational structures often render established approaches to Job Architecture outdated. Frequent reorganizations and new ways of work lead to significant effort and costs to maintain a company's job structure. Therefore, leading companies have started to consider a more si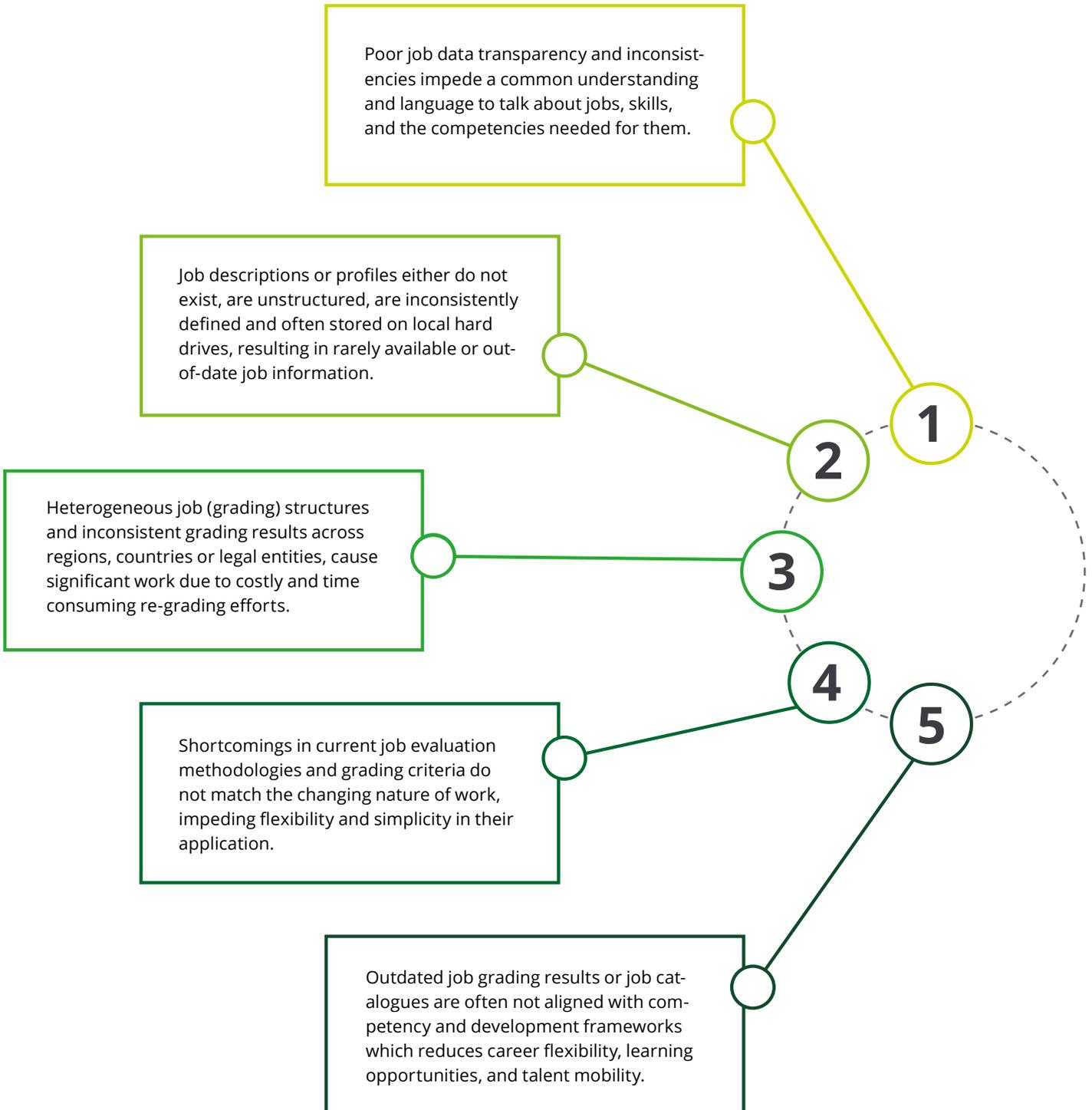mplified and holistic approach to Job Architec- ture that fits to both the future of work and provides greater transparency and autonomy to employees[1]. In addition, the implementation of new emerging technologies often implies opportunities to improve Job Architecture strategies, supporting organizational change.

We want to highlight the importance of thinking practically, yet holistically, about the concept of Job Architecture. This, if set up correctly, can support new ways of working which also then contributes to a positive employee experience. This is particular relevant since todays work- force is increasingly looking for a diverse and inclusive working environment that creates a fulfilling experience.

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[1] See also: 2017 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends. The organization of the future: The right Job Architecture can drive your transformation.
 https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/human-capital/articles/job-architecture-of-the-future.html

Frequently observed Job Architecture challenges

Poor job data transparency and inconsistencies impede a common understanding and language to talk about jobs, skills, and the competencies needed for them.

Job descriptions or profiles either do not exist, are unstructured, are inconsistently defined and often stored on local hard drives, resulting in rarely available or out-of-date job information.

Heterogeneous job (grading) structures and inconsistent grading results across regions, countries or legal entities, cause significant work due to costly and time consuming re-grading efforts.

Shortcomings in current job evaluation methodologies and grading criteria do not match the changing nature of work, impeding flexibility and simplicity in their application.

Outdated job grading results or job catalogues are often not aligned with competency and development frameworks which reduces career flexibility, learning opportunities, and talent mobility.

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Implications for Job Architecture design

Creating a harmonized and simplified Job Architecture is founded on the assumption that the job is the constant building block upon which the job structure is grounded. One of the key conditions to cope with a continuously changing work environment with its changing nature of jobs is to understand and identify the type and number of jobs needed today and in future. This also means understanding the implications for skills, competencies, careers, rewards and recognition. Establishing a consistent and streamlined job catalogue, sustained by a job evaluation system that is able to balance flexibility on the one hand and overall consistency on the other, is essential when designing the Job Architecture of the future. Instead of simply analyzing, classifying and listing jobs, companies have to merge grading, competency and career frameworks, reward structures and make use of the relevant HR technology.

Reducing complexity and ensuring flexibility will be key to cope with a dynamic and ever changing work environment.

Building a harmonized and streamlined Job Architecture framwork
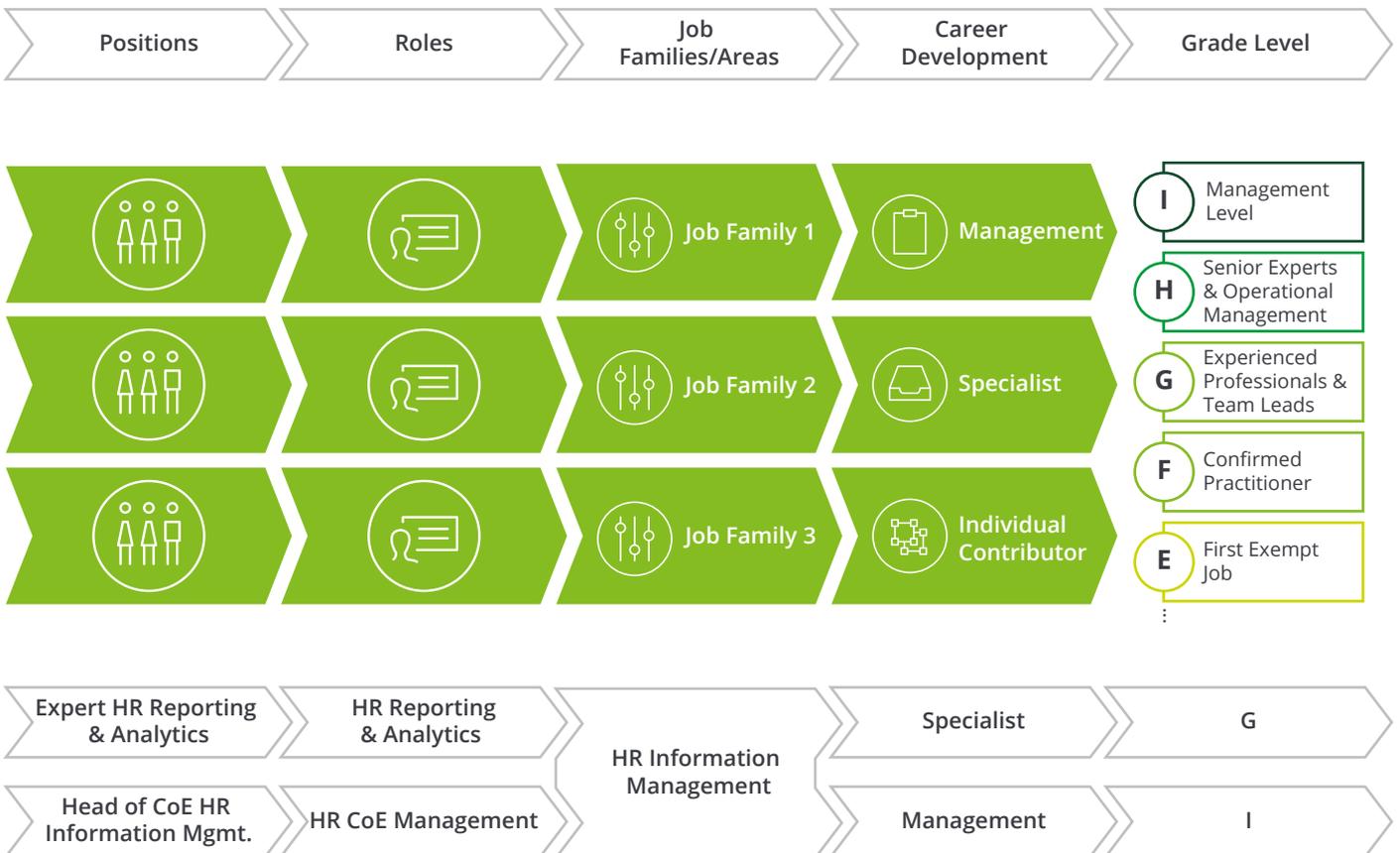
Key Elements of a harmonized and streamlined Job Architecture framework

Role Profiles in an agile age: Consistent, generic and competency-based

Jobs change more rapidly in an agile work environment and hence need to be adapted to new requirements (e.g. project based work). In future, job tasks will change more frequently and cannot be as sharply differentiated. This raises the question of why to keep using job descriptions at all? While this may seem to be a legitimate reaction on first sight, role profiles will still be needed in a certain form for various recruitment, talent development and compensation processes. Replacing detailed job descriptions with competency-based role profiles which are usually described more generically is an effective way to cope with this dynamic and continuously changing work environment. As a result, there will be significantly less, more generic profiles needed to map all jobs in an organization. This, in turn, also reduces companies' efforts in maintaining profiles and grading relevant roles.

The use of a competency framework within the role profile allows management to detect capability gaps and to actively support talent management across the employee lifecycle. Companies should focus on a selection of core, functional and leadership competencies rather than a long laundry list which is difficult to maintain over time.

"Sumalytical" Job Evaluation Systems: Flexible and simple, but consistent

Companies want to reduce their workload when adjusting job grading to new agile work environment. Ever more companies demand simple, lean, easily usable as well as tailored job evaluation solutions avoiding costly and time consuming grading efforts. Companies want to be able to grade or re-grade positions at any time without incurring significant costs.

In order to assess roles on a more generic basis, this implies moving away from overloaded, fine-grained criteria as well as a fixation on quantitative measures (such as FTE or revenue). In order to still grasp the essence and complexity of a role, it is also ever more crucial to involve insights from business executives. Above all, involving different stakeholders ensures their acceptance and creates further value for the organization. Grading criteria and respective levels need to be designed broadly enough to capture current but also future jobs including new and emerging ways of work. For evaluation systems, this means being able to cover, for instance, new, less visible and more fluid forms of leadership, careers and collaboration. Also, systems need to be adjustable to local peculiarities while remaining consistently comparable across borders, intrafirm and with the external market.

Job Catalogue: Consistent, streamlined and integrated

A consistent global job catalogue, grouped by job family and/or career stream, contains the list of core role profiles, including information about tasks, competencies with proficiency levels, qualifications, and corresponding grading results. By connecting these elements and making sense of the data, the catalogue can further provide insights on possible career moves in order to support an integrated talent development program. In future, career paths will also need to include new pathways for re-skilling and job transitions to prevent an inflation of role profiles.

Above all, a standardized job catalogue serves as a platform for utilizing HR IT solutions, which enables HR and line managers to access workforce information at any time. This aids HR Business Partners to make value added fact based decisions.

Conclusion

In light of current challenges as well as the future of work, it is necessary to re-think current approaches towards Job Architecture. Making the shift to a harmonized and simplified Job Architecture can reduce efforts, leverage IT system functionalities, improve the employee experience, and help HR act as a strategic partner. To do this, bringing the different concepts together is key. Deloitte Consulting offers a global team of experienced subject matter experts in Job Architecture to support companies in this transition. We have developed our Job Evaluation System (JES) to be flexible in coping with the dynamic nature of jobs and changing work environment, serving as a backbone for diverse HR initiatives.
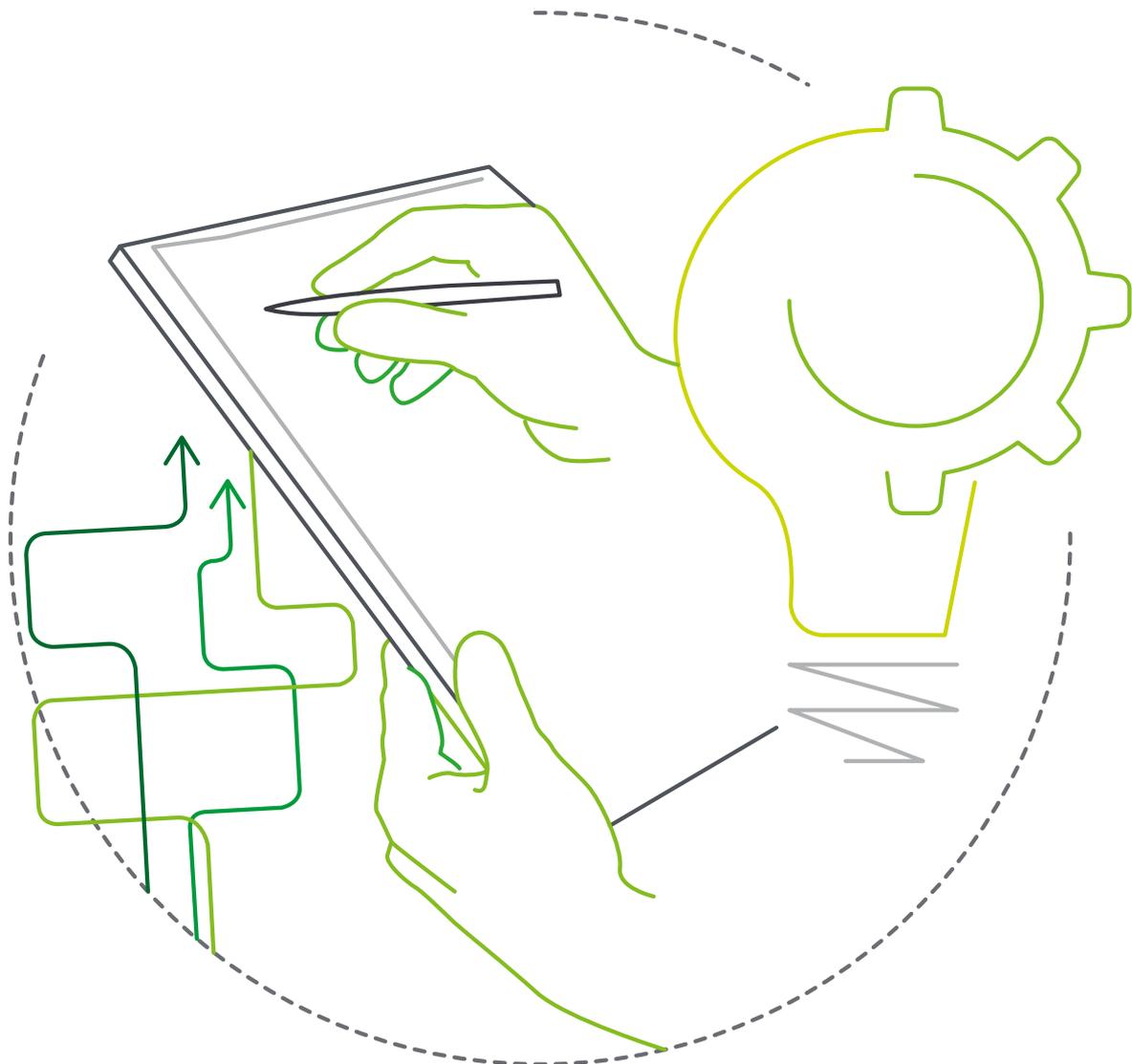
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