The Application of Job Rotation in End User Computing: Toward a Model for Research and Practice

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This paper applies the management literature on job rotation to current issues in end user computing (EUC). Perceived benefits of job rotation include: transfer of knowledge across organizational functions; reduced conflict across departments; organizational integration; creation of a climate conducive to innovation; and, challenging and maturing opportunities for employees. Job rotation between end user areas and EUC support staff is therefore proposed to yield the following benefits: increased knowledge and skill sets for end users and end user computing support; reduced communication gap between IS and users; improved organizational integration of end user computing; effective utilization of end user computing; and, more flexible staffing and career paths for end user computing support personnel. The resulting model for the implementation of job rotation between end user areas and EUC support staff includes five critical success factors. In addition to providing a foundation for research in this area, the model provides guidance for organizations seeking to implement such rotations.

End user computing refers to the development of computer applications by the people who have direct need for them (Brancheau & Brown, 1993). Such development of applications by end users is common in most organizations and can generate a number of management issues. Indeed, the major problems in end user computing (EUC) today tend to be of a managerial nature (e.g., ensuring the appropriate application of technology to business needs, and the training of end user support personnel) rather than of a technical nature. An examination of the management literature reveals a human resource practice that has been shown to successfully address issues similar to those currently being faced in the EUC environment. Job rotation, a human resource mechanism that facilitates continuous learning in the workplace, is a method that can help to address major issues in end user computing and, as a result, help to increase the value of end user computing in an organization.

This paper begins with an overview of job rotation and its benefits, then relates those benefits to major issues that currently exist in end user computing. Job rotation between EUC support staffs and end user areas is proposed as a way to achieve several EUC benefits. Problems associated with the implementation of job rotations are used to identify critical success factors for this type of rotation. The resulting model provides a basis for future research and guidance for organizations seeking to implement such rotations.

Job Rotation and Its Benefits

Job rotation is the lateral movement of employees from job to job within an organization (Campion, Cheraskin, & Stevens, 1994). In contrast to job promotion, job rotation refers to a temporary change in job assignment, usually indicated by a change in department or title, and does not include an upward movement within an organizational hierarchy or an increase in compensation grade level or status.
Job rotation has been used as an antidote to boredom and fatigue in repetitive production jobs (e.g., Miller, Dhaliwal, & Magas, 1973); as an orientation and/or placement mechanism for new professional employees (e.g., Wexley & Latham, 1981); and, as a training and development tool for employees throughout their careers (Campion et al., 1994). It is this latter role of job rotation that is considered in regard to end user computing issues.

As an employee development technique, job rotation provides many benefits to the organization and to the rotating employee. In a recent study of the outcomes associated with job rotation, Campion and his colleagues (1994) collected perceptual data from questionnaires completed by 255 employees of a large pharmaceutical company. From this data, they generated the following categories of job rotation benefits: organizational benefits related to increasing networks of contacts and transferring company culture; employee career benefits; stimulating work benefits; and, awareness benefits related to gaining insight into strengths, personal values, and management styles. Specifically, employees who had participated in rotation in this organization perceived a personal improvement in: business skills related to knowledge of other functions, business issues, and how the company operated; technical skills related to the functional area and its procedures; and, administrative skills related to planning, communication, and leadership.

Two other benefits of job rotation are often cited, though empirical evidence has not been provided. Job rotation is believed to reduce conflict across departments by facilitating an exchange of members. Neilsen (1972) identified the “exchange of members” as a method of resolving conflict between groups. Neilsen contends that exchanging members for a sufficient length of time allows them to become familiar with how the other group operates and the kinds of problems it faces on a day-to-day basis. When the exchanged individuals return to their own groups they are in a position to communicate the other group’s viewpoints to their cohorts. Neilsen notes that this tactic has been used by firms to prevent or reduce conflict between members of different functional departments, and that this sort of exchange can clear up important misconceptions and ultimately result in permanent attitude change so that the sources of conflict cease to exist.

Another benefit cited, but not yet empirically supported, is increased innovation. McCaffrey (1981) suggests that the use of lateral transfers such as job rotations can create a climate conducive to innovation, because the rotation participants can bring fresh ideas and new perspectives into work areas.

These supported and suggested benefits of job rotation can be summarized as: (1) transfer of knowledge across organizational functions; (2) reduced conflict across departments; (3) organizational integration; (4) creation of climate conducive to innovation; (5) challenging and maturing opportunities for employees.
Relating Job Rotation Benefits to Issues in End User Computing

No published, empirical research on job rotation in the end user computing management literature was identified. However, the five benefits of job rotation recognized in the previous section directly map to five major issues in end user computing: (1) knowledge and skill requirements for end users and EUC support staffs; (2) the communication gap between IS and end users; (3) the organizational integration of EUC; (4) effective utilization of EUC; (5) staffing and career paths of EUC support personnel. These relationships are reflected in Figure 1.

In the following sections, each of the EUC issues is discussed in light of potential benefits that could be generated by job rotation between end user areas and EUC support staffs. This discussion focuses on organizations in which the EUC support staff is located within the IS division.

(1) Knowledge and Skill Requirements for End Users and EUC Support Staffs. Zmud (1983) identified six general areas of knowledge and skills needed by all employees: organizational overview, organizational skills, target organizational unit, general IS knowledge, technical skills, and IS product. In regard to IS professionals specifically, Todd, McKeen, and Gallupe (1995) examined newspaper employment advertisements and determined that business skills remain a top priority for analysts and appear to be increasing in importance for programmers. The business skills referred to by Todd and his colleagues include: functional and industry expertise; general management skills in leadership, project management, planning, controlling, training, and organizing; interpersonal and communication skills. It is interesting to note that many of these business skills (functional and industry expertise, leadership, planning, and communication skills) are areas in which employees participating in job rotation have perceived personal improvement (Campion et al., 1994).

Using Zmud’s framework of knowledge and skills needed by all employees, Nelson (1991) conducted an educational needs assessment of IS and end user personnel in eight different organizations. Nelson reports that IS personnel perceive a deficiency in their organizational knowledge, which by his measure includes knowledge of organizational goals and objectives, primary organizational functions, critical success factors, and environmental constraints such as government regulations and competition. Nelson found that end user personnel perceive a deficiency in their IS-related skills, which includes knowledge of IS policies and plans, use of software packages, data access, database development, privacy issues, and the preparation and use of documentation.

Nelson’s (1991) findings, along with the Todd et al. (1995) consideration of job qualifications for programmers and analysts, indicate the need for a transfer of knowledge between IS and end user areas. Levinthal (1992) contends that job rotation is a vehicle by which corporations can accomplish this transfer of knowledge across organizational functions, and this was supported by the results of the Campion et al. (1994) study.

A job rotation between EUC support and an end user area, specifically, can: disseminate technical knowledge (such as knowledge of software packages, application development practices, databases and networks) and knowledge of IS issues and concerns to the end user area; and, disseminate knowledge of the end user’s business unit and general end user issues and concerns to the EUC support staff.

(2) The Communication Gap Between IS and End Users. Delligatta (1992) sums up his view of the sentiment between IS and end users in this way:

“Support, as it has been furnished to date, usually involves setting standards, providing consulting and training, and successfully masking resentment as users infringe on traditional IS territory.”

A communication gap between IS and end users is frequently cited as a contributing source of conflict between IS and end user departments within the context of systems development in general (Boland, 1978; Smith, 1989). Smith and McKeen (1992) point out the common malady of: “users not being able to talk to IS personnel,” “IS personnel being in their own world,” “IS personnel not understanding anything about the business.”

One might ask: “Why would an IS manager want to temporarily trade a highly skilled technical person for an end user?” Some IS personnel are unaware of the level of technical expertise possessed by many of today’s end users. However, most IS managers recognize the value added to the IS function (and the organization) by personnel who are able to combine technical expertise with an understanding of the business needs and objectives of the organization. At the very least, job rotation to a user area can increase the effectiveness of a technical worker by providing a better understanding of the tasks and responsibilities of the end users with whom he or she works.

Nelson (1991) notes that as IS and end users become increasingly interdependent, it will become increasingly important that each group be more cognizant of the other’s environment and more sensitive to the other’s problems. Similarly, Karten (1990) encourages a move from an oftentimes adversarial relationship to an alliance of end users and EUC support working together to capitalize on the strengths of each group.

A job rotation between the EUC support staff and an end user area would operate as an “exchange of members” (Neilsen, 1972). By allowing the employees to become familiar with how the other group operates and the kinds of problems it faces, conflict can be reduced and understanding increased between the end user area and the EUC support staff. In addition, job rotation between IS and end user areas could increase the level of respect each area has for the expertise and
efforts of the other. Also, Lacity and Weiss (1989) see job rotation between IS and user areas as a way to reduce the formal boundaries between IS and the rest of the company. The placement of EUC support personnel in user areas and end user personnel in the support area can facilitate and encourage informal communication.

(3) The Organizational Integration of EUC. In a study of the status and direction of EUC in more than 100 firms, McLean, Kappelman and Thompson (1993) found that the long-standing distinction between EUC and corporate computing has blurred considerably— that the activities and technologies involved in EUC and corporate computing have converged to the point where there may be very little difference. They contend that management problems in EUC and corporate computing are the same, and encourage a partnership of shared responsibility and shared authority between end users and IS professionals within an organization. In a survey of end users and IS professionals, Kwan and Curley (1989) found that IS and end user respondents agreed that the most likely future scenario for the IS - EUC relationship is one of shared responsibility and interdependence.

Organizational integration was noted as a perceived benefit of job rotation in the Campion et al. (1994) study. Thus, job rotation is one way to encourage the partnership between end users and IS professionals that is recommended by McLean et al. (1993), as well as encourage the use of common procedures and standards in application development across IS and end user departments. Also, now that much of the end users’ anxiety toward computing has been relieved, Karten (1990) asserts that our focus needs to be on generating business value from EUC. Job rotation between EUC support and end user areas is one way to directly integrate the organization’s business expertise with its technical expertise. Indeed, Lacity and Weiss (1989) suggest that a rotation of IS personnel to end user areas can result in higher quality products that are completed sooner.

Some organizations may be considering a decentralization of EUC support (Brzezinski, 1987; Greenberg, 1988; Mundell, 1988), which involves an organizational restructuring to place many of the EUC support tasks in end user departments. For organizations considering such a decentralization, job rotations between EUC support staff and end user areas can provide a way to “test the waters” for how effective a formal localized EUC support structure might be at this time in the organization. It may also provide insights into how best to establish the “division of labor” if the centralized EUC support staff is dispersed (e.g., what tasks and functions might be easily moved out into the user areas, what might need to remain in an IS or EUC central support area) and may help to point out where coordination mechanisms would be needed.

(4) The Effective Utilization of EUC. In order for an organization to effectively utilize end user computing, EUC technology needs to be diffused throughout the organization. In addition, end users need to understand how it can be applied effectively and responsibly to their business needs.

Brancheau and Wetherbe (1989) offer tactical guidelines for diffusing new technology in the organization. They assert that EUC support personnel need to establish effective communication channels with potential users, and that this will require a great deal of personal contact with users and an understanding of their situation. They indicate that informal communication with peers, and others who are in close proximity, is very influential in an end user’s decision to utilize a new technology. Brancheau and Wetherbe (1989) also note that modeling and demonstration can play an important role in spreading new ideas, and that these are most effective when they take place in the end user’s work environment and are conducted by peers.

Job rotation between EUC support staffs and end user areas can help to operationalize many of the tactics suggested by Brancheau and Wetherbe (1989). The exchange can help to establish effective communication channels and can facilitate modeling and demonstration of new technology in the user’s environment and directed toward the user’s needs.

In addition, the person rotating into the new area (as well as the person returning from a rotation) provides a vehicle for diffusing new ideas and new ways of doing things. As McCaffrey (1981) pointed out, the use of lateral transfers such as job rotation can create a climate conducive to innovation by bringing fresh ideas and new perspectives into work areas.

According to Karten (1990), the emphasis in EUC today should be on generating business value from technology. Users need to learn to do the right computing in the right way so that they can effectively apply technology to their business needs. A job rotation between EUC support and an end user area can disseminate knowledge of technology and knowledge of IS issues and practices to the end user area, and disseminate knowledge of the end user’s business unit and general end user issues to the EUC support staff. The knowledge gained by the end user area can help to move end users toward “responsible” computing; the knowledge gained by the EUC support staff can help to move them from a product orientation to a business orientation. Both are goals in Karten’s vision of where EUC support should be heading, and such movement should help organizations to more effectively apply EUC to their business needs.

(5) The Staffing and Career Paths of EUC Support Personnel. When Hammond (1982) initially addressed the staffing issues of EUC support, he suggested that end users who have utilized the support function may perform well as members of the EUC support staff. However, in a study of 20 firms that had operationalized Hammond’s Information Center model of EUC support, Carr (1987) found that only one-third of the total number of EUC support staff members had non-IS backgrounds and, in most cases, the non-IS individuals had been hired into the firm as opposed to transferring in from another department. These findings led Carr to suggest that the end user area appears to be more of a potential source than an exploited source of EUC support staff members. In their study of the Information Center career, Rainer, Carr, Snyder,
and Frolick (1989) found that EUC support professionals see their jobs as lacking in career pathing and promotion. Additionally, they found that most EUC support personnel are still coming from IS. As indicated by the Campion et al. (1994) study, job rotation can provide task and skill variety and stimulation for employees. Rotation to end user areas can provide the EUC support personnel with an opportunity to do something new and challenging. Gaining experience in an area of the organization outside of IS may also help to position them for promotion possibilities (Lacity & Weiss, 1989). Similarly, job rotation to the EUC support staff can provide end users with an opportunity for new and challenging work, and may help to position them for promotions in the organization.

Also, adaptability of employees is important to organizations in the context of current business and economic environments (Northcraft & Neale, 1992). Job rotation provides an opportunity for employees to learn to adapt to different work situations and work groups, and to incorporate a cross-functional approach to their work.

**Potential Problems Related to Job Rotation**

Potential problems associated with the use of job rotation have also been identified in the research and practitioner literature. Campion et al. (1994) identified three perceived “costs” of job rotations. First, the learning curve required for rotated employees in their new position may be considered a cost to the company. It takes time for the new employee to learn the job, and errors may be made while learning. Also, formal training costs for the new employee may be incurred.

Second, the movement of an employee between areas was perceived to result in an increased workload for the rotated employee, as well as other employees in those areas (Campion et al., 1994). The increase in workload for the rotated employee is likely to be tied to the learning curve required for the new position, and may also reflect parts of the “old job” that the rotated employee may have continued to carry for a while. The perceived increase in workload for coworkers implies that the rotations are perceived to create more work for others in the areas, or that the rotations are perceived to create interruptions that distract the coworkers from their regular work.

The third “cost” of job rotations identified by Campion and his colleagues was decreased satisfaction and motivation of coworkers of rotated employees. Campion et al. (1994) speculate that this may be due to additional work that might have been taken on by coworkers to support the rotation, or may even be due to envy on the part of the coworkers (that is, they wish they were rotating).

Lacity and Weiss (1989) explored the potential of rotating IS professionals into user areas in a roundtable discussion involving participants from large firms with large IS departments. Three of these organizations had utilized job rotation between IS and user departments and eight had not. The panel identified two potential problems associated with moving IS personnel into user areas: problems in compensating, evaluating, and supervising the rotating employee; and the IS professional’s fear of losing technical skills. Campion et al. (1994) also expected rotated employees to report a perceived decrease in their functional skill base, but their results showed an opposite effect. However, because the majority of respondents in the Campion et al. study were not coming from IS, loss of functional skills may still be a valid problem for IS professionals, especially those who have been supporting leading-edge technology.

Potential problems discerned from the literature (Campion et al., 1994; Lacity and Weiss, 1989) can be summarized as: (a) a long learning curve for the rotated employee; (b) increased workloads for the rotated employee and coworkers; (c) decreased satisfaction and motivation of coworkers; (d) problems in compensating, evaluating, and supervising the rotated employee; and, (e) the IS professional’s fear of losing technical skills.

**Relating Job Rotation Characteristics to Potential Problems**

To increase the likelihood that a job rotation will generate the expected benefits, potential problems must be proactively addressed in the definition and planning stages of the rotation. Based primarily on the job rotation study by Campion et al. (1994) and the IS study by Lacity and Weiss (1989), five job rotation characteristics that are expected to minimize the occurrence of potential problems are identified. These characteristics are: (1) the rotated employee has “volunteered” for the rotation; (2) the rotated employee can be immediately productive; (3) the responsibilities and expectations of the job rotation position have been deliberately defined and documented; (4) procedures for the management of the rotated employee have been clearly defined; and, (5) coworkers have been thoroughly prepared for the integration of the new rotating employee. Figure 2 summarizes the potential problems addressed by each of the five job rotation characteristics, and a discussion of each characteristic follows.

**The Rotated Employee Has “Volunteered”**

In regard to the employee selection process used in job rotation programs, Farrant (1987) asserts that job rotation works best when employees volunteer for the rotation. This method ensures that the rotating employee is eager to take on the new assignment. The volunteer method also makes the job rotation opportunity available to all employees and, thus, should reduce perceptions of unfairness related to rotation opportunity on the part of coworkers of rotating employees. The Lacity and Weiss (1989) panel suggests that an initial pool of candidates for the rotation positions be identified, then the managers involved interview and select the employees. One way to combine the two recommendations would be to allow...
employees to volunteer for the rotation, then have the managers interview the pool of volunteers to make their selection. Incorporating a “volunteer” element in the selection process should help to ensure the satisfaction and motivation of the rotating employee. It should also minimize the occurrence of coworker dissatisfaction and motivation problems that arise from envy on the part of the coworker. In addition, the volunteer element should minimize the issue of the IS professional’s fear of losing technical skills because individuals who see the job rotation as a threat to their skill set will simply not volunteer for the assignment.

The Rotated Employee Can Be Immediately Productive

The Lacity and Weiss (1989) panel recommends that the positions selected not require intensive training before the rotated employees can be productive. The ultimate goal would be to match a rotating employee to a position in which he or she could be productive to some extent on the first day of the new job. This would suggest that “local experts” which are often found in end user areas (Munro, Huff, and Moore, 1987; Lee, 1986; Rockart and Flannery, 1983) are especially likely candidates for rotation into EUC support. In regard to the other direction of the job rotation, the technical skills of the EUC support person could be tapped immediately by the end user area through assignment to tasks or projects that can use these skills. Incorporating this type of work in the responsibilities of the individual rotating from the EUC support staff should help to allay fears he or she might have regarding loss of technical skills.

In summary, designing the job rotation so that the rotating employee can be immediately productive in some dimension of the new position can help to: minimize the learning curve; avoid increased workloads for coworkers and, thus, avoid the decreased satisfaction of coworkers that might arise from this burden; and, counter a possible fear of losing technical skills by utilizing the EUC support worker’s technical abilities in the end user area.

Deliberate Definition of the Job Rotation Position

The duration and job responsibilities for each rotation position should be well defined and documented before the rotation takes place (Lacity and Weiss, 1989). An appropriate duration period for a job rotation between an end user area and EUC support staff might be as short as three months or as long as two years. In determining an appropriate duration for a particular job rotation, the primary question to be answered is “what time frame will best support the objectives of this job rotation?”

The responsibilities and expectations for the rotation position should be documented and be detailed enough to provide a foundation for the evaluation of the rotated employee’s performance. The optimum utilization of an employee rotating into an area may not exactly match an existing position in the department. Managers are encouraged to consider the current workloads and needs of the area collectively, to discover a set of work that can capitalize on the skills and knowledge of the person coming in. Also, managers should avoid allowing parts of the rotating employee’s “old job” to move with him or her, or at least keep this to bare minimum. If too much of the “old job” moves with the worker, the rotating employee may experience workload problems and/or may not have the opportunity to fully assimilate into the new work area which, in turn, could lead to a loss of the anticipated benefits of the job rotation.

![Figure 2: Designing Job Rotations to Minimize Potential Problems](image-url)
A deliberate and thorough design of the role and responsibilities of the rotating employee should result in not only an optimal workload for the rotating employee but optimal workloads for the existing workers in the area as well. In fact, the manager of an area expecting to receive a rotating employee is encouraged to involve existing workers in the identification of tasks and responsibilities that would be appropriate for the new rotating employee. Based on group decision-making research (e.g., Maier, 1967; Locke and Schweiger, 1979), participation in planning the workload of the rotating employee can help to reduce or prevent coworker dissatisfaction problems and, at the same time, aid the manager in determining an optimal design of workloads for the area.

It should also be noted that careful matching of the skill set of the rotating employee to the responsibilities of the rotating position will help to minimize the learning curve for the rotating employee. In addition, an employee’s fear of losing technical skills can be alleviated by assigning responsibilities to the employee that will utilize his or her technical abilities.

**Clearly Defined Procedures for Managing the Rotated Employee**

Lacity and Weiss (1989) identified three human resource management issues that should be addressed prior to the rotation: compensating, evaluating performance, and supervising the rotating employee. In regard to compensation, it is important to stress the non-monetary rewards to the rotating employee (e.g., personal improvement in business, technical, communication and other skills, job variety, challenge, and positioning for advancement within the organization). These rewards are likely to be salient to employees who volunteer for the rotation. The Lacity and Weiss panel suggests that rotating employees be equally or better compensated than their peers who remain in the department, as encouragement for participating in the job rotation. This additional compensation could take the form of a bonus or an off-cycle salary increase. However, it is important to note that, depending on employee interest in the non-monetary rewards of the job rotation, a significant salary compensation for participating in the job rotation may not be necessary.

The Lacity and Weiss panel recommends that the procedure for evaluating the performance of the rotating employee be defined prior to the rotation. The performance evaluation instrument typically used in the area may need to be tailored to the responsibilities and expectations of the rotation position. In addition, the Lacity and Weiss panel suggests that the instrument include an assessment of how well the employee assimilates into the new area.

The supervision, or day-to-day management, of the rotating employee should be carefully considered before the rotation begins. The question of who the rotated employee will report to during the rotation period should be answered in light of the purpose and length of the job rotation. Typically, however, the rotating employee will report to the supervisor of the area into which he or she is rotating. The Lacity and Weiss panel recommends that, regardless of who the rotated employee is reporting to, the IS department (EUC support) and the user department communicate on a regular basis and provide immediate feedback and guidance to the rotated employee.

In addition, Wilbur (1993) recommends that managers consider the event that a rotated employee does not like the new job or proves unable to function well in it. He encourages organizations to allow rotating employees the right to request a return to their original job. Wilbur suggests that the first three months of the rotation be considered a trial period for the rotating employee; at the end of the trial period, the employee may request a transfer back to the original department or management may decide to transfer the employee back.

**Thorough Preparation of the Coworkers**

Good communication can go a long way toward preparing workers in an area to receive and utilize a rotating employee in a positive and effective manner. Members of the Lacity and Weiss (1989) panel stressed the importance of informing coworkers of the job rotation and its purpose and informing them of the role and responsibilities of the new rotating employee. thorough communication with workers in the area, both prior to and during the rotation, can help to control for the decreased satisfaction and motivation of coworkers that was reported in the Campion et al. (1994) study. As previously mentioned, involving coworkers in the planning and design of the job rotation can greatly enhance the receptivity of coworkers to this change.

**A Model for Research and Practice**

A proposed model for the successful implementation of job rotations between end users and EUC support is shown in Figure 3. Because the job rotation characteristics identified in the previous section are proposed to reduce or prevent the occurrence of potential problems that have been noted by researchers and practitioners, these characteristics can be considered critical success factors in the implementation of job rotations between end users and EUC support. Simply stated, the incorporation of these job rotation characteristics should minimize potential problems and, thus, increase the likelihood that an organization will attain the anticipated benefits of the rotation.

**Implications for Research**

It should be noted that very few organizations have implemented job rotations between IS and end user areas. Thus, research is needed to determine the magnitude and prevalence of potential costs and benefits in such job rotations. An important next step in this stream of research will be the empirical testing of the proposed model (Figure 3). Objective
measures of the potential benefits reflected in the model, to be used in conjunction with the perceptual measures of Campion et al. (1994), need to be developed. Then the job rotation characteristics can be operationalized and data can be collected to investigate the relationships proposed in the model. Further research should provide insights into the extent to which anticipated benefits of the job rotations are realized by organizations, as well as the extent to which the job rotation characteristics identified in the model control for potential problems.

The examination of job rotation between end users and EUC support also elucidates needed research in the general area of job rotation. One area of potential research is the identification of characteristics of employees likely to participate in job rotation. The mobility literature, which examines the voluntary movement of workers between jobs both within and across organizations, may provide some insights. This literature suggests that younger, less tenured, and early career stage employees have higher mobility expectations, receive more mobility opportunities, and more readily accept the opportunities (e.g., Moore, Miller and Fossum, 1974; Landau and Hammer, 1986; Veiga, 1983). Attitudes such as involvement in work (Brett and Reilly, 1988), dissatisfaction with advancement in the current job (Veiga, 1983), and anticipation of stimulating work in the new job (Landau and Hammer, 1986) may also contribute to the likelihood of participating in job rotations. Noe and Ford (1992) also suggest further research to assess the effects of job rotation on participants’ motivation, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors. Another important area of potential research is the congruence of individual characteristics and the job rotation experience. According to London (1989), there are two types of learning situations — incremental and frame-breaking. Incremental learning situations are those in which time to clarify role expectations is provided, and flexibility for self-paced learning is available. Frame-breaking learning, of which job rotation is an example, places the individual in a difficult position requiring the acquisition of a large number of new skills in order to be successful with little initial preparation. It is likely that individual characteristics influence the success of a frame-breaking experience such as job rotation, and research is needed to identify those individual differences.

Noe and Ford (1992) indicate that further research is needed to determine the optimal length of job rotation assignments. Lacity and Weiss (1989) suggest a rotation duration period of three months for job rotations between IS and end user areas. Campion et al. (1994) recommend a duration of 1 to 5 years when job rotation is being used for training and development purposes. Wexley and Latham (1991) advocate the length of time be determined by how fast the participants are learning — that is, rather than set a predetermined duration, end the job rotation when its objectives have been met. Also, an organization may have a traditional time pattern for the movement of employees that should be taken into account. More studies are needed to determine the optimal length of job rotation assignments and to identify the importance of various factors in the choice of a duration period.

**Implications for Practice**

In addition to providing a foundation for future research, the proposed model provides guidance to organizations seeking to implement job rotations between end users and EUC support. Given the proposed relationship between the design of job rotations and the attainment of benefits, an organization is encouraged to begin with a pilot effort. A pilot project can facilitate direct examination of the benefits and potential
problems considered most relevant to the organization. In addition, a pilot effort is amenable to evaluation (e.g., did the pilot rotation generate the expected benefits?) and learning (e.g., what needs to be done differently in future job rotations?).

An initial pilot effort might consist of a simple swap of one employee from the EUC support staff and one employee of an end user area. In this type of exchange, no area is being asked to “give up something for nothing.” A team of functional level managers, including the managers of the areas involved in the rotation, should define and oversee the pilot study. Representative non-management employee(s), not intended to be rotated, might also be included as members of this team. Definition of the pilot effort would include the identification of rotating positions and employees, the determination of the duration of the rotation, and the definition of objectives for each rotation.

Conclusion

This paper integrates the existing literature in job rotation and EUC to develop a research model of the successful implementation of job rotations between end user areas and the EUC support staff. In addition to setting the stage for future research, the model elucidates five critical success factors that can provide guidance to organizations implementing such rotations.

The evolution of end user computing continues to force IS and end users to reassess their traditional roles and relationships. Recent recommendations encourage a “partnership” of IS and end users in the management of EUC (McLean et al., 1993; Karten, 1990; Kwan and Curley, 1989). This paper proposes the use of job rotations between end user areas and EUC support staffs as a step toward such a partnership.

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