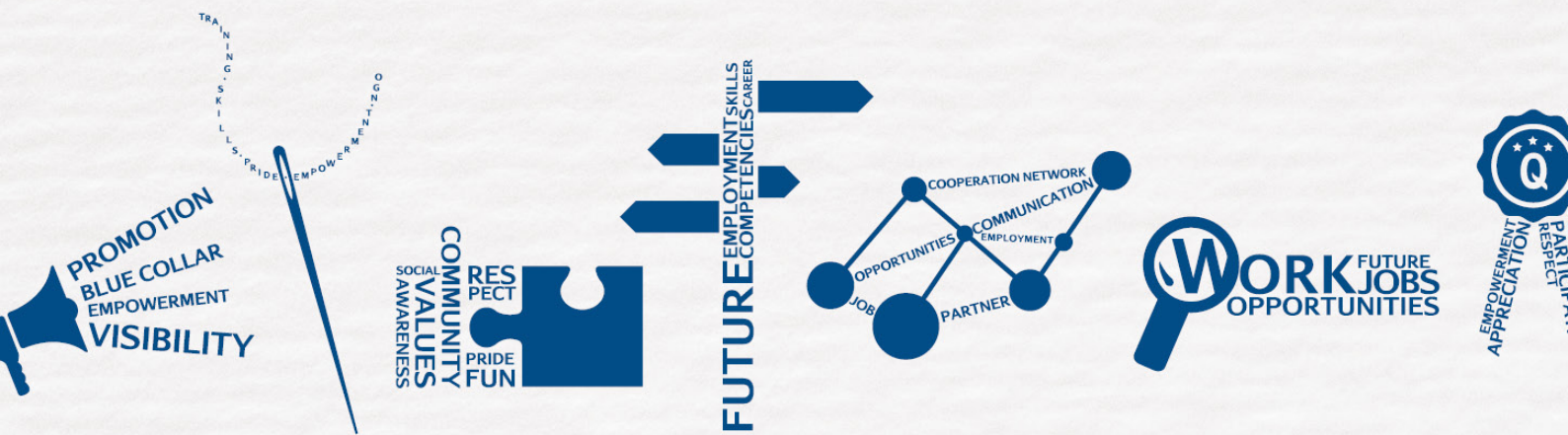




5.1 HOW TO IMPROVE BLUE COLLAR JOB QUALITY WITHIN COMPANIES



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What Is It Useful For

Improved job quality is a **win-win situation for both employers and employees**. On the one hand, businesses can benefit significantly from the positive effects of enhanced job quality, such as from lower staff turnover, **enhanced productivity and competitiveness**, improved staff motivation and morale, more reliable business partnerships and better worker-manager communication. On the other hand, job quality has an impact on employees' job satisfaction and **motivation**, skill development and psychological well-being.

Measures to enhance job quality for Blue Collar workers can be undertaken in various fields, including work organisation, workplace arrangement, knowledge and skills development, wages and benefits, health and safety as well as employees' engagement and representation.

This tool will describe how to develop, implement and evaluate effective measures for job quality enhancement.



What Is Needed

- One person steering and managing the overall process
- Human and financial resources for job quality improvement measures



Examples

The approach has been successfully applied in the following two fields in Greater Cairo, Egypt:

- The competition "Better Business with Job Quality" organised by the National Employment Pact (NEP), an initiative of the Egyptian-German Business Community in cooperation with the German-Arab Chamber of Industry and Commerce (GACIC), covering a broad range of sectors
- Logistics / Transportation / Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG)



How Long Does It Take

6-9 months for development and implementation of relevant measures



When To Use

The tool should be used by companies that wish to attract and maintain more qualified and motivated Blue Collar workers through improved job quality.

Job quality enhancement measures can help to raise the attractiveness of Blue Collar work places and enhance the retention rates among workers, by improving their work satisfaction and overall situation and position (i.e. acceptance and respect) within the company. At the same time, it can also help to raise overall productivity and economic success of the company.



WHAT TO DO

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives, the following steps should be undertaken:



1

ASSESS JOB QUALITY AND EMPLOYEES' NEEDS AND DEMANDS

Project experience shows that job quality enhancement measures can only be effective if they are actually tackling the employees' most urgent needs and demands.

Thus, as a starting point, the company should clearly assess the following questions:

- Which company-internal measures are required to raise the **motivation** of Blue Collar employees?
- Which company-internal measures are required to raise the **productivity** of Blue Collar employees?
- Which company-internal measures are required to raise the overall well-being of Blue Collar employees?
- Which company-internal factors typically lead to **termination of work contracts by Blue Collar workers, and above-average leave/sickness rates?**

During the assessment, it will be important to **involve Blue Collar workers within the company as source of information**. Even though HR managers and supervisors usually have a good insight into the demands and needs of the employees, a direct inquiry typically reveals unexpected new insights. Furthermore the employees can later also serve as change agents promoting and supporting the process.

At the same time, such an assessment should be organised and implemented in a way that allows the interviewed persons to **express their actual concerns and needs**. In general, **conducting structured interviews with carefully selected Blue Collar workers** is the best option. The selection of interviewees should ideally reflect the overall Blue Collar workforce, and include representatives which stand out in terms of performance and commitment as well as most critical positions.

Taking into consideration that employees might consider such inquiry as a **delicate issue** (i.e. they might fear that straightforward answers could have a negative effect on their work situation), it can be a good idea to **mobilise external resources** for the data collection and analysis, for a more neutral approach.

2

IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT MOST RELEVANT MEASURES FOR JOB QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Based upon the outcomes of step 1, the company can then decide which measures to undertake for an enhanced job quality. In principle, this can cover the following elements:

- Adequate **health and safety** conditions including appropriate work spaces, tools and clothes
- **Knowledge and skills development** (e.g. technical on-the-job-training and learning)
- **Positive appreciation** of Blue Collar workers (e.g. visibility and awareness activities)
- Positive and interactive **working environment** (e. g. recreational/ social areas)
- Good **accessibility** of workplace for workers (transport, housing)
- Appropriate working conditions for **women** (e.g. child care unit, separate sanitary rooms)
- Appropriate staff **benefits** and awards (incentives, remuneration, gifts)
- Employees' **engagement and representation**

As a source of inspiration, in [tool 5.2](#) as well as in the annex a set of **readily developed creative job quality tools** is provided:

- [Tool 5.2](#) presents a selection of practical examples of job quality measures as realised within Egyptian companies.
- [Report of the NEP Competition "Better Business with Job Quality"](#), with tested job quality measures as undertaken by 14 Egyptian companies in various sectors and regions.
- ["Intelqaq Partner's Guide"](#), with a range of job quality measures developed for the FMCG sector.

Once the most relevant measures have been selected, actual implementation can start.

WHAT TO DO

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives, the following steps should be undertaken:

3

LINK JOB QUALITY IMPROVEMENT MEASURES TO PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Project experience proves that best effects can be achieved when combining job quality enhancement measures with promotional activities. This can be done through company internal as well as external communication channels:

- Company internal:** The information about the design and implementation as well as positive effects of the job quality related measures should be broadly disseminated within the company. This can range from simple information sharing (e.g. in internal bulletins, during meetings and company events) to more sophisticated promotional and visibility activities (e.g. photo stories or poster of committed Blue Collar workers in new recreational areas etc.). Any promotional activity should however target all hierarchical levels and departments. Thus, on the one hand, consciousness among employees about the company's commitment for their workers will be enhanced. At the same time, visibility and positive appreciation for Blue Collar workers will be fostered. Participants of the needs assessment could be further used as change agents and communicators.
- Company external:** The information about high job quality standards within the company should also be communicated during the recruitment process as well as for information and orientation of job-seekers, graduates, students and youth in general. It should be included in relevant activities, such as job advertisements, employment fairs, company events as well as when communicating with (technical) schools and training institutes. It will contribute to an overall positive image of the company, which cares for its employees and is willing to invest into their well-being. Thus, more qualified and committed Blue Collar workers can be attracted, employed and maintained. At the same time, regular exchange among companies working on job quality enhancement can be valuable to transfer lessons learnt and best practice models.



4

REGULARLY EVALUATE JOB QUALITY IMPROVEMENT MEASURES

Periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of the job quality enhancement measures undertaken is highly important. It will provide valuable feedback of the target group, to which extent the activities have an actual positive influence on the well-being of the employees. It will also help to identify further need for improvement, which can serve as a basis for the implementation of further job quality measures. By collecting the feedback of the employees the importance of their assessment is emphasised.

In general, relevant data for the evaluation can be collected through:

- Interviewing employees** in line with the recommendations formulated in step 1 (i.e. interviews of selected employees)
- Collect spontaneous feedback** during relevant company events, meetings etc.
- Assess key figures** and their development since start of job quality initiative (e.g. staff turnover, ratio of qualified applications, productivity, leave days etc.)
- Assess changes in the effectiveness of workflow and production** processes, including the number of deviations, errors, rejection rates etc. (e.g. in case of measures in the field of skills development and safety)



WHAT TO OBSERVE

The following lessons learnt should be observed:

ALCULATIONS · STAKEHOLDER
 DER WORK · YOUTH · SUPP
 ONSIBLE CSR · OPPORTUNI
 OR MARKET · EGYPT · LABOR M
 AL COST CALCULATIONS · STA



Make sure that the measures undertaken are not only a short flash in the pan, but rather a **continuous effort to support the well-being of the employees**. Trustworthiness and credibility of the job quality measures are the most important preconditions for success.

In general, it can be recommendable to focus on measures which have a **high visibility for all employees** (such as recreational areas). Typically, such measures are highly cost efficient, and generate quick results and positive appreciation among all employees. At the same time, such measures should not be used per se, but need to be **validated through employees' needs assessment**.

For measures on the field of **skills and knowledge development, consider using external resources and know-how**. Project experience shows that developing training programmes takes considerable resources, while at the same time such materials might already be available at training institutes, specialised consultancies, development institutions or professional associations.