



HRDIGITALPLAYGROUND • JOB ARCHITECTURE 101

Why Job Architecture Exists

The everyday problems it solves, and why companies care about it right now.

IN THIS DECK

The problem

The big idea

The building picture

Who it helps

What it does not do

Why now



September 2026
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Before You Start

What you will be able to do, the example we use, and the words you will meet.

YOU WILL BE ABLE TO

- ✓ Explain what job architecture is in one sentence
- ✓ Name the problems it solves for employees, managers, and leaders
- ✓ Use the building picture to explain families, levels, and jobs
- ✓ Explain why laws and changing work make it urgent

MEET THE EXAMPLE



Brightside Bakery

About 350 people making fresh bread and cakes. It grew fast without a plan for its jobs.



Bakery plant



20 shops



Delivery team



Head office

Made-up example

WORDS YOU WILL MEET

Job architecture

The framework that organizes a company's jobs

Job family

A group of jobs that share purpose and know-how

Level

The size and scope of a job

Career path

How people move from job to job

The colored tag on each page tells you what it is: an idea, an example, a practice, a warning, or a check.

Meet Brightside Bakery

A made-up company that grew fast without a plan for its jobs. You will help fix it.



Brightside Bakery

Fresh bread and cakes, made in one plant and sold in its own shops.



Bakery plant

120 people



20 shops

160 people



Delivery

40 people



Head office

30 people

Made-up example

WHAT THEY HAVE TODAY

190 job titles for 350 people

43 titles held by just one person

0 written descriptions of what makes a job senior

Illustrative

WHAT THEY NEED



Post pay ranges in job ads

A new state law requires it



Show people how to grow

Good bakers keep leaving



Pay fairly for similar work

Two shop leads, very different pay



Stop the title sprawl

New titles appear every month

Brightside's problems are common at every size. Job architecture is how companies fix them.

Picture a Company Without It

Brightside grew fast and nobody planned the jobs. Here is what people there say.



AN EMPLOYEE

“Two of us do the same work.
Why are our titles different?”



A MANAGER

“I want to promote Sam.
Promote Sam to what, exactly?”



SOMEONE IN HR

“Which of our 190 titles are really
the same job?”



THE CFO

“Are we paying fairly? Nobody
can tell me for sure.”

WHAT IT COSTS



Slow hiring

Every new job ad starts from scratch



Pay gaps nobody can explain

No clean way to compare like with like



People leave

They go where the next step is clear



Endless debates

Every promotion is argued from zero

Without a shared structure, every title, pay, and promotion question turns into a debate.

Job Architecture Is a Map of Every Job

It organizes every job in the company using two simple questions.

IN ONE SENTENCE

Job architecture is the framework a company uses to organize its jobs by the kind of work and the size of each job.

IT HAS THREE PARTS



Groups

Jobs that do similar work, called families



Steps

How big each job is, called levels

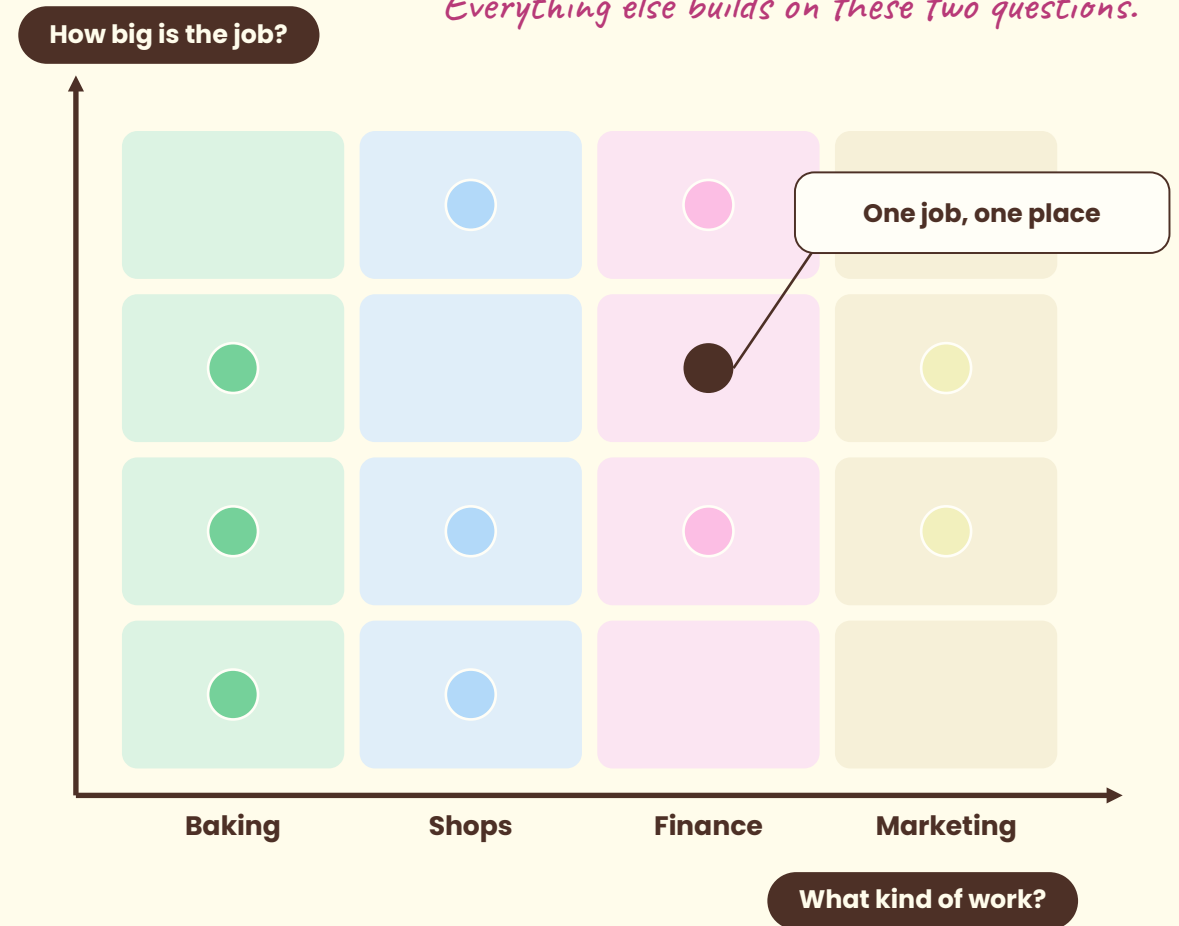


Paths

How people move from job to job

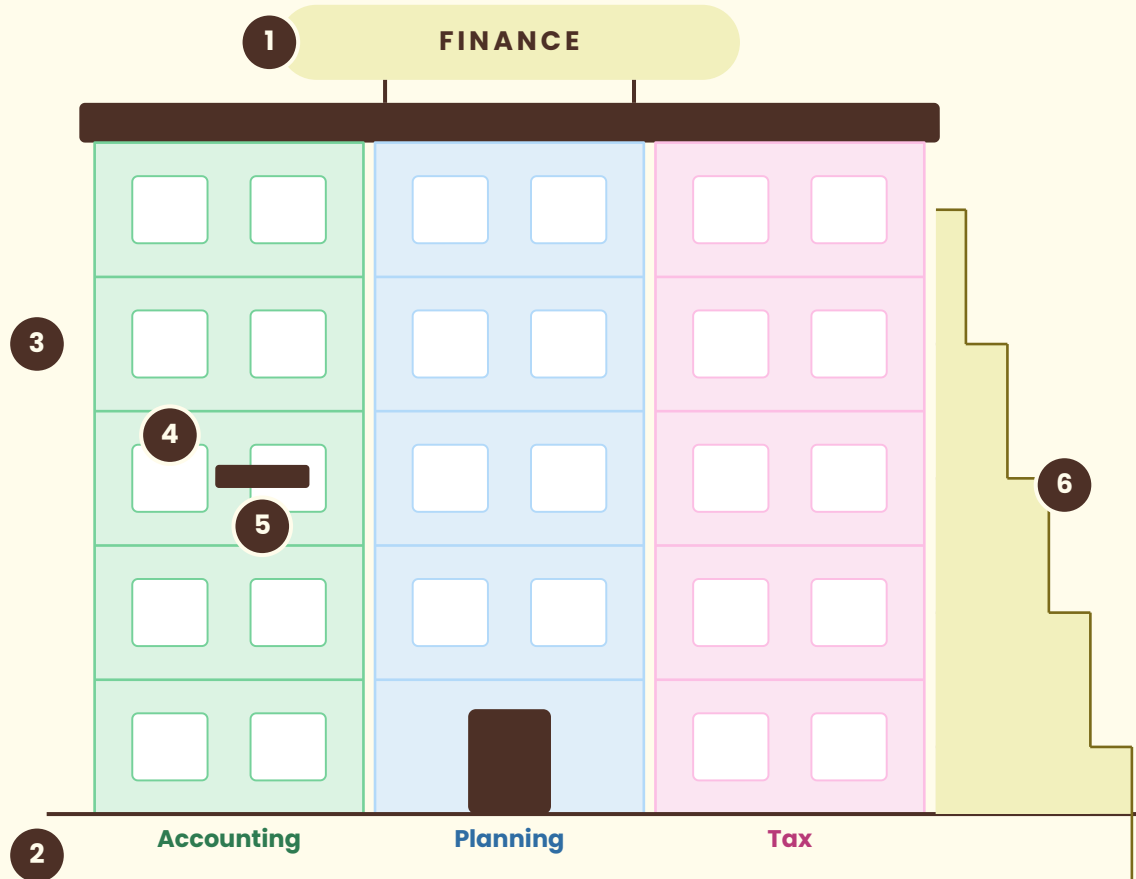
Two questions place every job: what kind of work is it, and how big is it?

Everything else builds on these two questions.



Think of It Like a Building

One picture to hold the whole idea: functions, families, levels, jobs, titles, and paths.



1 The building → **A function**
A broad area of work, like Finance or Operations

2 A wing → **A job family**
Work that shares purpose and know-how, like Accounting

3 A floor → **A level**
How big the job is. Higher floor, bigger job

4 A room → **A job**
One standard body of work, like Tax Analyst

5 The nameplate → **The job title**
The label on the door. Labels can vary for one room

6 The stairs → **A career path**
How people move up, or across to another wing

If you can find a room in this building, you understand the core of job architecture.

What It Answers for Everyone

The same structure answers different questions depending on who is asking.



Employees

- ✓ What is my job, really?
- ✓ What is my next step?
- ✓ How is my pay decided?



Managers

- ✓ How do I explain a promotion?
- ✓ Is my team leveled like others?
- ✓ What does good look like at each step?



HR and Rewards

- ✓ Which jobs are really the same?
- ✓ How do we compare pay to the market?
- ✓ Are titles used the same way?



Leaders and Finance

- ✓ Are we paying fairly?
- ✓ Do we have too many layers?
- ✓ Which skills will we need next?

One structure answers different questions for different people. That is why everyone should care.

What Job Architecture Does Not Do

It is a shared structure, not a magic answer to every people question.

ON ITS OWN, IT DOES NOT



Rate an employee's performance



Guarantee equal pay



Set one person's salary



Replace organization design



Replace workforce planning



Replace a skills framework



Replace market pricing



Write business strategy



Judge whether a person is good at their job



WHAT IT DOES INSTEAD

It creates a shared structure that those processes can use.

Reviews use what each level expects

Pay decisions use grades and ranges

Org design uses the job catalog

Workforce plans count jobs, not titles

Job architecture is the shared structure other processes use. It does not make their decisions for them.



Why Companies Are Doing This Now

Four pressures are pushing companies to get their jobs in order.



PAY TRANSPARENCY

Pay ranges in job ads

More than a dozen US states plus DC require pay ranges in many job postings. Ranges are easier to set consistently when each job has a defined level.



EUROPE

Equal pay for equal value

The EU Pay Transparency Directive expects pay structures that compare work of equal value on objective, neutral criteria. A documented job architecture can support that.



CAREERS

People want a next step

People leave when they cannot see where to grow. Levels and paths make the next step visible.



AI AND AUTOMATION

Work is changing fast

To redesign work around automation, a company first needs to know which jobs it has and what they involve.



SOURCES United States: state pay transparency laws, for example Colorado Equal Pay for Equal Work Act, California Labor Code 432.3, New York Labor Law 194-b, Washington RCW 49.58.110. European Union: Directive (EU) 2023/970, Article 4. • Last verified September 26, 2026. General education, not legal advice.

Laws, fairness, careers, and changing work are all easier to handle with clear jobs and levels.

Look at Your Own Company

Five quick questions. Answer for the company you work for, or one you know well.

	Yes	Not sure	No
1 Could you list every job at your company in one place?	☐	☐	☐
2 Do people doing the same work have the same title?	☐	☐	☐
3 Can an employee see what the next level up requires?	☐	☐	☐
4 Could you explain why two jobs are paid differently?	☐	☐	☐
5 Is someone responsible for keeping titles and levels tidy?	☐	☐	☐

WHAT YOUR ANSWERS MEAN

Mostly yes

You have a foundation. Now test and tune it.

A mix

The most common result. Start where the gaps hurt most.

Mostly no

You have the most to gain. Start with one job list.

No wrong answers here.

Keep your answers. Every gap on this page is something job architecture is built to fix.



Quick Check

Three questions. Answer from memory first, then look back if you need to.

1 QUESTION 1

Job architecture is mainly about...

- A** The org chart and who reports to whom
- B** How jobs are grouped and sized
- C** How well each person performs

2 QUESTION 2

Which two questions place every job?

- A** Who is the boss, and where do they sit?
- B** What kind of work is it, and how big is it?
- C** How long has the person been here, and how good are they?

3 QUESTION 3

What does job architecture do on its own?

- A** Sets each person's salary
- B** Creates a shared structure for all jobs
- C** Rates each person's performance

Answers, with the reason behind each one, are on the next page.

Remember

The whole deck in three lines, plus the quiz answers.



THREE THINGS TO KEEP

- 1** Job architecture organizes jobs, not people.
- 2** Two questions place every job: what kind of work, and how big.
- 3** It is a shared structure other processes use, not the answer to every question.

You already know the core idea.



CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

1B

It groups and sizes jobs. The org chart shows reporting lines, and performance belongs to people.

2B

Kind of work gives the family. Size of the job gives the level.

3B

It gives every job a place. Pay and performance decisions are made by other processes that use it.

Job architecture gives every title, pay, and promotion question a shared starting point.





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Published September 2026 · hrdigitalplayground.com



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