

# May the „characteristics of well-designed working tasks“ (DIN EN ISO 9241-2) be applied to interactive tasks as well? – A Pilot Study

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## ABSTRACT

International and European standards (DIN ISO EN 9241-2; DIN EN 614-2) demand the design of „complete“ (vs. partialized), „well-designed tasks“, since such tasks have proven to be advantageous for (intrinsic) work motivation, job satisfaction, and mental strain. However, the standards have been developed for work associated with machine operation and visual display units (VDU); most of the studies dealing with these characteristics investigated non-interactive jobs in manufacturing or administration. The question therefore is whether the standards apply to jobs including client or customer interaction as well. Exemplarily, 95 jobs in retail sales were examined using observation-based and subjective measures. As retail tasks consist of tasks both with and without customer interaction, the core concept „task completeness“ was extended and the characteristics of „well-designed tasks“ were adapted for their application to interaction-centered subtasks. Hence, the retail jobs could be grouped in reference to the completeness vs. partialization of their object-centered *and* their interaction-centered subtasks, and be compared with regard to perceived task characteristics.

The results approve the usefulness of the proposed modifications, and thus recommend the applicability of the standards to (interactive) retail tasks as well. Ongoing research is needed to examine the transferability of the standards to other kinds of interactive tasks as well.

## Keywords:

task characteristics – task completeness – interactive tasks – retail sales