

How to Be a Job Crafter and Why You Should Be: **STEPS FOR MAKING YOUR JOB, YOURS**



What you should learn from this article:

- What is job crafting?
- Examples of job crafting
- What managers can do?

INTRODUCTION

Employees may have the same job title and the same exact job tasks, but each employee brings something different to their role. In fact, it is common for employees to adapt their role and personalize it. In academic literature, redesigning your job to fit you is referred to as job crafting. The benefits of job crafting include personal development and providing meaning for employees. Research has also shown that job crafting can be related to work engagement (Demerouti, 2014). In this paper, we outline how you can make your job yours and how managers can assist their teams in personalizing their roles.

WHAT IS JOB CRAFTING?

Job crafting is a way for employees to customize their roles to maximize their interests and goals. It is “a job redesign at the individual level,” (p. 1, Tims & Bakker, 2010) where employees slightly alter their pre-determined tasks to make their job more meaningful. According to Berg, Dutton, and Wrzesniewski (2008; 2013), there are three ways in which employees can engage in job crafting:

Task Focus Changes

What tasks do you work on? How long do you take on certain tasks? How do you carry out tasks? Specific types of task focus changes include (Berg et al. 2013):

- **Adding Tasks:** Employees can add whole new projects. For example, an HR professional may be interested specifically in compensation and benefits and ask to take ownership of those tasks.
- **Emphasizing Tasks:** Employees focus on and put the most effort into job tasks that they get the most meaning from. For example, an employee who works in fast food requests to be on cash because they like speaking to customers.
- **Redesigning Tasks:** Employees alter existing tasks. For example, when an employee gets shadowed, their job tasks are both to teach the task, and to complete it.

Relationship Focus Changes

Who do you interact with? What is the nature of your relationships? Specific types of relationship focus changes include (Berg et al. 2013):

- **Building relationships:** Employees can foster relationships to create a sense of meaning. For example, developers speaking to a designer who created what they are building to help realize why what they are making matters.
- **Reframing relationships:** Employees learn more about their coworkers, in terms of their full selves, rather than only their professional self. For example, when asking people about their hobbies, people can develop further when they learn more about coworkers’ interests and ideas.
- **Adapting Relationships:** Employees can leverage existing relationships and have the opportunity to help others in their role and learn from them. For example, a coworker asks for your feedback in a writing piece, and you learn more about a topic from reading new content.

Cognitive Focus Change

How do you think about your role in terms of making an impact? What do you enjoy about your role? Specific examples of cognitive focus changes include (Berg et al. 2013):

- **Expanding perceptions:** Employees think about their role or job tasks in the big picture. For example, a farmer understanding that cleaning horse stalls contributes to the overall health of the animals.
- **Focusing perceptions:** Employees thinking about what parts of their job they enjoy and how the other “less enjoyable” parts are worth it because of the parts they like. As an architect, perhaps you enjoy designing more than overseeing the team build your design, but you remind yourself that the team allows the design to come alive. You also acknowledge that when the building is finished, you will design again.
- **Linking perceptions:** Employees highlight any part of their job that links with their identity. For example, feeling passionate about the environment and working reception at a company that focuses on environmental causes. You may enjoy learning what people are working on and feel good that you’re assisting in their endeavors.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CRAFT YOUR JOB?

(Based from Berg et al., 2008)

- To feel that work is meaningful
 - When employees focus on aspects of work that they are most passionate about or find meaningful, it allows them to find their entire job more meaningful.
 - Developing in multiple ways (beyond one’s job role) can build meaning.
- To form human connections
 - Job crafting may involve getting to know colleagues more or focusing on customer relations. Through these experiences, employees can gain deeper human connections.
- To develop beyond direct job role and tasks
 - Job crafting can result in learning more than only what is within one’s direct job duties.
 - Employees can learn more about their coworkers roles and/or hobbies to develop further professionally and personally.
- As a way to deal with difficulties or stress (also Tims & Bakker, 2010)
 - Using some of the job crafting strategies, such as focusing on favorite parts of the role, may help to handle the more stressful parts of the job.
 - Being able to focus on the goals can lead to resilience and serve as a buffer for stress.
- A sense of control (Demerouti, 2014)
 - Being able to change up how tasks are completed is important for employees to have a sense of control.

WHAT MANAGERS AND LEADERS CAN DO TO ENCOURAGE JOB CRAFTING

Despite not having direct control on whether or not employees craft their jobs, managers can create an environment where employees feel motivated to job craft (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

- Managers can provide employees autonomy over their role
- Managers can build ways for employees to make tasks their own or suggest ways in which they can develop their role more to focus on what they want to develop
- Managers can encourage relationship building and connect employees from different departments together
- Managers can inform employees about job crafting techniques and why it is helpful

CONCLUSION

There are a variety of ways to job craft at work, no matter what job role or position employees are in. Job crafting can help employees manage stress, build meaning into a job role, help employees develop, and cultivate human connections. Managers can help create an environment where employees can job craft, which can result in better performance and more fulfilled employees.

References

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