

Design Your Own Job – The Benefits of Job Crafting

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Creating and maintaining a happy workspace has become an extreme sport for employers. At present, Australian workers are experiencing high levels of [stress](#) and burnout, and it's affecting their enthusiasm for work as well as their mental health.

As highlighted in the [2023 State of Workplace Burnout Report](#), burnout is impacting more young workers earlier in their careers, and the gap between the wellbeing of those experiencing burnout and those who are not, is growing. "This is a clear sign that we need to re-design the way we work," says Hazel Stewart, MD of Innovate Learn, a Melbourne-based distributor of solutions from Wilson Learning Worldwide.

"Instead of employing workers into a pre-determined and fixed job role/function, designed by the organisation, we could enable workers to craft their own job roles. This aims to bring out the best in the individual and create optimal engagement and fulfilment, an approach called 'job crafting'".

What is 'job crafting' and how does it benefit an organisation?

Employees are given the flexibility to adapt their job role and tasks in line with their interests and their strengths. For example, an accounting clerk who has an interest in social media marketing might take on responsibility or have input into creating and maintaining the company's social media platforms. Similarly, an office security guard who is detail-oriented and adept at customer service, could take on a customer service or concierge role and potentially transition into an office manager position.

"The key here is that this initiative is not directed by the employer or the manager, but is led by the employee, with the support of the manager or employer. Workers are more motivated and satisfied, and are less likely to find the demands of the role stressful," explains Hazel.

She points to the [findings](#) of Michelle Falzon (an Australian specialist in Positive Organisational Psychology and Positive Psychology Coach) that job crafting leads to increased job satisfaction and engagement, improved worker wellbeing and the enhanced organisational outcomes associated with improved employee retention and performance.

How to implement job crafting

Job crafting has its limitations. Not all job roles can be adapted to the individual. And sometimes, the adaptations desired by an employee don't fit the company's goals or operations. In addition, implementing job crafting in a large business where different functions and roles are interlinked can be risky. "When it's poorly managed, job crafting could worsen burnout by placing too much responsibility on a worker – either directly or indirectly," cautions Hazel.

She outlines these recommendations to get started:

- **Make it a whole-company initiative:** Inviting everyone to participate, share ideas and discuss strategies to support this process, is important. It also facilitates discussion around what might or might not be feasible.
- **Have a clear framework:** It's not about giving employees more rules, but rather about preventing their job crafting from negatively impacting others on the team, or affecting company performance.
- **Start small:** Invite employees to start with small changes to their responsibilities or tasks, with the aim of making their job better for them.
- **Adapt and improve:** Continuous reflection on what works and what doesn't, is essential.
- **Support ongoing growth through development:** Don't neglect employee skills development, just because employees are now doing more of what they're already good at or enjoy. Invest in skills development training that further develops their capabilities and expertise.

"Ultimately, job crafting can go a long way to help employees work in a way that is more meaningful and enjoyable. This benefits both the workers and the business," concludes Hazel.

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