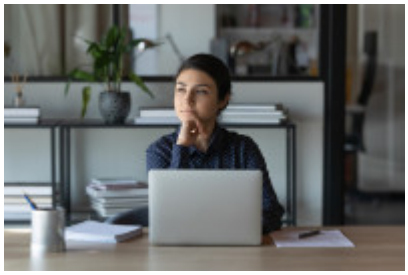
JOB CRAFTING

Difficulty: MODERATE | Frequency: VARIABLE | Duration: 1 HOUR



WHY YOU SHOULD TRY IT

Our jobs aren't always as satisfying as we want them to be; in fact, research suggests that only 34% of Americans find a great deal of meaning at work, and 29% find little to no meaning.

But for a variety of reasons, we still may not want to leave our job. Rather than resigning ourselves to feeling stressed and unfulfilled, Job Crafting allows us to take active steps toward greater feelings of purpose and well-being at work. Research suggests that engaging in job crafting can make us more engaged and more satisfied at work, with a greater sense of meaning in what we do. It can also improve our performance and our resilience to stress.

While there are exceptions, many workplaces will welcome job crafting—particularly in an era when employees are expected to be flexible, proactive, and multitalented. Job Crafting lets you be a "job entrepreneur," more in control of your own professional fate.

TIME REQUIRED

Job Crafting takes place over time. Carve out an hour to work on your initial plan, then start implementing it one step at a time.

HOW TO DO IT

If you're looking for more meaning and purpose at work, that doesn't mean you have to change jobs. The Job Crafting exercise allows you to reconfigure the job you already have to be more satisfying, engaging, and meaningful.

Follow these steps to come up with a plan.

1. Create a "Before" sketch: Diagram all the tasks you do and separate them into three categories based on how much time, energy, and attention they require (high, medium, low).

2. Identify your motives, strengths, and passions: Reflect on what drives you, what you're good at, and what you care about. For example, maybe you're highly motivated by personal growth, you have great attention to detail, and you love using new technologies.

3. Create an "After" diagram: Diagram a more ideal (but still realistic) version of your job, splitting tasks up into the same three categories. Put a circle around groups of tasks that serve a common purpose that you care about, like learning or empowering others.

4. Make an action plan with specific goals and strategies: Your job won't change overnight, but you can take

small steps to move it in the right direction. In doing so, there are three different ways you can make changes.

- Task crafting: Add new tasks, change how much time you spend on certain tasks, or change the way you do them to be more meaningful. For example, a history teacher who loves music could incorporate period-appropriate music into his curriculum.
- Relational crafting: Build new relationships with people you enjoy interacting with, or focus on a new purpose for your existing relationships. For example, you might start mentoring less experienced colleagues.
- Cognitive crafting: Change the way you perceive your job by connecting it to a larger purpose, focusing on the aspects that are most meaningful, or linking it to activities you enjoy. For example, zookeepers could focus less on the messy, exhausting work of cleaning and feeding animals and more on their larger goal of protecting and caring for living beings.

You can also check out the official Job Crafting(TM) Exercise, an interactive tool that includes more detailed, step-by-step instructions to lead you through this process.

EVIDENCE IT THAT WORKS

Tims, M., Derks, D., and Bakker, A. (2016). Job crafting and its relationships with person–job fit and meaningfulness: A three-wave study. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 92, 44–53.

Employees who engaged in more job crafting experienced a greater sense of fit with their jobs, which in turn led to more feelings of meaningfulness at work.

WHY TO TRY IT

Often, our jobs are more flexible than we assume. Job Crafting allows us to tweak our jobs so they align better with our interests and skills.

Relationships, in particular, are crucial to our happiness at work and can be a fruitful area for change. When people have high-quality connections at work, they tend to be more committed, have more positive attitudes, and bounce back better from difficulty. Anyone who's worked with a difficult boss—compared to a kind, supportive leader—knows the power of relationships at work.

SOURCES

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This practice is part of Greater Good in Action, a clearinghouse of the best research-tested methods for increasing happiness, resilience, kindness, and connection, created by the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley and HopeLab.