

Inform action on:

Job crafting

Chloe Hodgkinson, Consultant at Karian and Box, explains how to redesign your role to take ownership of your work life

- ① Rethinking traditional approaches to job design
- ② Explore how job crafting addresses key employee experience challenges
- ③ Personalise your role and embed crafting in your organisation

**Listen better,
make meaning,
inform action**



Since the start of the pandemic, we have collected over a million survey responses from employees across the globe. Regardless of role type, industry or location, the most consistently reported sentiment was a sense of uncertainty and a greater appetite for meaning. Simply put, employees felt a bit 'meh'. Unprecedented amounts reported poor motivation, engagement and difficulty connecting with the purpose of their work.

This feeling translated to life outside of work too. In many senses, life has largely been put on hold and people have faced considerable and sometimes life-changing personal challenges. As a result, many took this time to take stock and redesign their lives with refreshed priorities; 2020 and 2021 saw record amounts upping sticks to move to the countryside, joining virtual workout classes and finally making time for hobbies they'd always wanted to try!

Given we spend around a third of our lives working, why not redesign our lives at work to make them more engaging and fulfilling too?

Job crafting offers the framework to do so – read this guide to understand how you can craft your role.



Chloe Hodgkinson

Chloe is a Consultant at Karian and Box who specialises in supporting clients with employee engagement and leadership assessment. Her approach focuses on translating psychological research and theory into practical tools and guidance.

Chloe is passionate about job crafting and has conducted award-winning research, published a book and has had her opinions on the topic published in *The Washington Post*, *Forbes* and *The Telegraph's Business Reporter*.

What is job crafting?

Job crafting describes the process of turning the job an employee does into one designed specifically for them.

Employees who job craft proactively shape how their roles are considered and conducted to better reflect their own strengths, interests and values.

In doing so, they flip the traditional process of job design on its head, shifting the responsibility away from managers and towards a DIY approach that employees own. In turn, crafting puts the real subject experts in the driving seat; the people who know both the job and the person doing it most intimately.

There are three areas where employees can take charge and craft their role:

- What they do
- Who they do it with
- How they think about it

So, it's about focusing on the work we love?

Whilst job crafting does involve creating more time and energy for the work employees love, it isn't about dropping the parts they least love to do!

It provides employees with a framework to identify and personalise those aspects of work in ways which make them more enjoyable and engaging. This enables them to put their stamp on their work whilst still fulfilling their responsibilities.

Why should we care about job crafting?

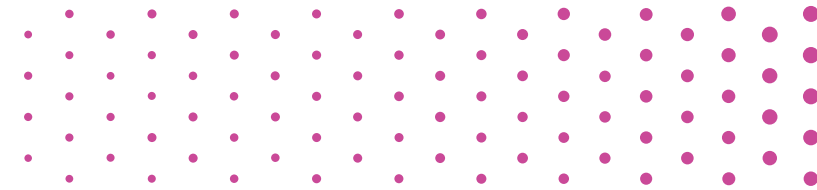
Because it's a win-win situation for employees and their employers alike! Research consistently finds it brings greater job satisfaction, higher engagement levels and commitment to an organisation – that's not to mention the positive impact it has on wellbeing, performance and happiness.

It also provides an opportunity to tackle one of the biggest D&I challenges: employees being able to genuinely bring their 'whole selves' to work. The process enables and empowers employees to incorporate who they are into what they do. And as they experience others crafting, to learn, celebrate and respect their colleagues' individual differences.

Job crafting also future proofs organisations and employees' roles in them. Job roles and descriptions are often said to be outdated by the time the metaphorical ink dries. Yet crafting enables these to evolve in reaction to ever-changing external conditions, guided by the very individuals navigating them.

Sounds good! How do I get started?

Use the ideas on the next page to design your first job crafting experiment. Note that crafting isn't a one-off event, it should be ongoing. So start small, review often and tweak as you go!



Case studies

1 Personalising tasks and interactions

Clare is a tech-loving and introverted administrator at a GP practice. She dreaded scheduling patient appointments: the calls always took too long and the conversations with patients were often emotionally charged.

She used job crafting to reimagine the 'what' and 'how' aspects of this part of her work to make it more engaging and manageable for her as an individual.

She researched and implemented an online tool onto which she could switch the booking system. Patients loved how quickly they could book appointments and it also made time for Clare to practice engaging with them in the waiting room. Here, crafting made for a better patient experience and taught Clare about her interaction preferences.



2 Thinking beyond job descriptions

In 1962, a NASA janitor famously told J. F. Kennedy that he was "helping to put a man on the moon." He had job crafted, reframing the 'how' aspect of his work by recognising how it contributed to NASA's broader purpose. Whilst rethinking how we see our jobs doesn't change anything on paper, the internal shifts in motivation and engagement are often visible to others.



Task crafting

Making changes to the number, type or nature of the activities and tasks that come together to form your role.

- **Do what you love.** Generate more demand for it. Up-sell the product it serves or offer to teach colleagues how to do it. Consider what it is that you love about those tasks – can you incorporate that elsewhere?
- **Bring your whole self to work.** Are there ways to bring more of your strengths, values or interests to what you do?
- **Redesign tasks.** Why does it grind your gears? What needs changing to make it less frustrating? Could it be automated? Could you incorporate your why?
- **Task swap.** Ever wonder why colleagues complain about their work? Ask if they'd be open to a swap – they may be thinking the same!
- **Advocate for yourself.** On the flip side, are there any tasks or projects you wish you could do? Speak to those involved and tell them how you could add value.



Relational crafting

Modifying your social environment at work in terms of the number, type and intensity of interactions you have.

- **Prioritise those who energise you.** How could you spend more time and strengthen relationships with them? Find opportunities to collaborate, invite them to virtual coffee or swap interactions from email to Zoom.
- **Who are your people?** Why are they energising? Could you get this from others? If it's about shared interests, try joining / starting a working group.
- **Explore mentoring.** Approach the person in the role you aspire to have. If altruism is a personal value, offer to mentor someone you feel you could support.
- **Manage draining relationships.** Establish boundaries and rethink interactions. Zoom fatigue is real: could that weekly check-in be an email? Would someone else enjoy working with them more? Do they really need your personal number?



Cognitive crafting

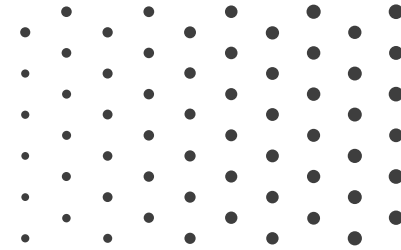
Reframing your perspective in terms of how you think and feel about your work to build meaning and purpose.

- **Zoom out.** Step back from seeing your job as a set of tasks and relationships, acknowledge how they form a constellation of elements serving a wider meaning and purpose (think like the NASA cleaner).
- **Live your values.** Consider how your role enables you to. If you value success, what have you achieved today? If you are altruistic, how does your work help others?
- **Find your why.** Try and remember a really great day at work where you felt happy, energised and excited. What happened, why did you feel like this? Remind yourself of your why.
- **Redefine your title.** Job titles and descriptions that speak to the purpose and meaning of the role encourage employees to live these through their work. Is yours up to date? If a formal change is out of scope, create a personal manifesto.

What if I don't have time to job craft?

You do, crafting takes very little time. Research shows that over 74% of job crafting employees take part for less than 12 minutes per day!

Supporting your employees to job craft



First things first, employees cannot be made or told to job craft! Job crafting is an inherently employee-led, bottom-up process. Whilst it has to come from the employee, organisations, leaders and managers can play a key role in creating cultures which cultivate crafting.

Research into the cultural enablers of crafting conducted by our Consultant Chloe established four key ways to encourage employees to craft:



Give employees permission to craft

Crucially, employees want to know that they're allowed to craft. Grant this explicitly and infer implicitly through organisational processes such as including job crafting conversations in 121s with managers and integrating reviews of crafting experiments into performance management processes.



Create capacity to craft

Whilst crafting needn't take long, crafters will need the headspace to think imaginatively about the art of the possible and explore ideas. Help create that space by ensuring workloads are manageable and role boundaries are clear, and encourage them to put aside protected crafting time each week (even if just 30 minutes).



Create psychologically safe spaces

Psychological safety promotes crafting as it enables the open sharing of ideas, experimentation with unexplored methods and the freedom to try, fail and adapt without fear of reprisal – all of which are key aspects of job crafting!



Put employees behind the wheel

They need to feel genuinely in control to make crafting feel possible. Ensure they have sufficient autonomy and feel trusted to make independent decisions and manage their own workload.

Further reading

Read Chloe's book:

Work-Life Matters: Crafting a New Balance at Work and at Home.
Springer International Publishing.
Authors: Chloe Hodgkinson, David Pendleton & Peter Derbyshire

Read more about job crafting:

[What is Job Crafting and Why Does It Matter?](#)

Watch the TED Talk:

[Amy Wrzesniewski on creating meaning in your own work](#)

Read the HBR article:

[Managing Yourself: Turn the Job You Have into the Job You Want](#)

Read the Forbes article:

[How To Make Flexible Working Work? Try Job Crafting](#)

Read the MIT Sloan article:

[How Job Crafting Can Make Work More Satisfying](#)

As employee insight and engagement specialists working with the likes of Barclays, bp, BT, Co-op, Diageo, GSK, HSBC, Nestlé, the NHS, Royal Mail, Sainsburys, Tesco, Vodafone and many more, we have enabled companies to listen to their people and create a culture that supports all employees.

If you want to discuss how you can better support and help your people craft their roles, please do not hesitate to get in touch by email or connect with me on LinkedIn.

Visit our website to keep up with the latest insights, including our future Inform action guides authored by our consulting team.

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