

Bringing Job Crafting to Life:

Unleash Your People To Drive
Engagement and Performance



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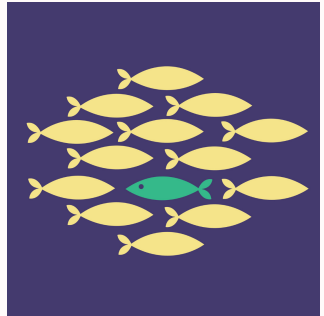


01

An Overview

Whilst most organisations still tell people how to do their jobs, allowing employees to shape, personalise and tailor their work has known benefits in terms of happiness, engagement and performance.

One way to bring the personal touch to work is through the concept of job crafting. Rather than looking externally for opportunities for growth and progression, job crafting encourages people to find and squeeze opportunities for development and innovation from inside the jobs they already have. And there are considerable benefits.



This report is a summary of the discussions amongst an esteemed panel of job crafting specialists, researchers and senior HR leaders about how to bring job crafting to life.

The panel were brought together by Tailored Thinking and Hive HR to celebrate the publication of Personalization at Work - a guide to bringing job crafting to life within organisations - written by Tailored Thinking's founder, Rob Baker.

In this report you will find evidence, stories and new ideas about how to stimulate and sustain an outstanding and personalised people experience.



02 An Introduction to the Panellists



ANDY DODMAN

Andy is the Chief People Officer at Leeds City Council. He is also the co-founder of Everyday Juice Ltd, an online platform and activities provider to boost employee's health and happiness.



JULES SMITH

Jules is the Founder and Director of People Science, a consultancy supporting organisations, teams and individuals to perform, engage and transform. Her illustrious career has spanned roles for Virgin Money, Sodexo and Orange.



ROB BAKER

Rob is the Founder and Chief Positive Deviant of positive psychology, wellbeing and HR consultancy, Tailored Thinking. He has presented his work on how people can bring their best selves to the workplace at academic and professional conferences around the globe and is the author of "Personalization at Work".





RYAN TAHMASSEBI

Ryan is the Director of People Science at Hive HR, an employee feedback platform specialising in improving employee engagement, experience and performance. He is passionate about creating workplace cultures that enable people to feel healthy and thriving.



SARAH DEWAR

Sarah is the Director of People at Connect Health, the largest, independent provider of integrated community musculoskeletal and physiotherapy services in the UK. Sarah has a broad range of human resources development experience.



VICKI ELSEY

Vicki is an Associate Professor of Occupational Psychology at Northumbria University. She holds a PhD also from Northumbria University in Occupational, Industrial and Organisational Psychology, and enjoys supporting and enabling individuals to develop to their full potential.



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An Introduction to Job Crafting

We personalise all aspects of our lives - from our clothes, to our choice of coffee. But one area of our lives we are not often encouraged to personalise is our work.

When we personalise something, we value it up to **two times** as much as something that comes off the shelf. Not only this, but research has shown that when we use a personalised item for a task, such as a personalised pen to complete an anagram task, or a personalised racket to play a game of tennis, we **perform better** at these tasks too.

So why aren't we applying this personalised approach to the world of work? In the past work has been designed as controlling and has been based around telling people what to do, rather than tapping into employees' talent and diverse experiences.

"Personalization is the missing piece in the puzzle when it comes to performance, wellbeing and engagement"

The most compelling way of taking a personalised approach to work is through a concept called job crafting. You can think of job crafting like a semi-tailored suit, where the structure, colour and fabrics have already been chosen for you, but you can make some changes to make it a better and more comfortable fit for you.



"Job Crafting encourages people to proactively personalise work to make it a better fit to, and make the most of, their individual strengths, passions and interests"

What is Job Crafting?

Job crafting activities can take different forms. The five core types of job crafting are:

- **Task crafting** - Tangibly changing aspects of how you undertake your work including designing, adding or removing tasks
- **Relationship crafting** - Shaping how you connect with other people and amplify the relationships which matter to you
- **Purpose crafting** - Reflecting on how you see the value of your work and how it aligns to your personal values
- **Skill crafting** - Finding opportunities to develop, refine or consolidate your skills and knowledge
- **Wellbeing crafting** - Finding ways to make your job healthier from a mental and physical perspective

Although around 140 papers have been written about job crafting, and it is a concept well known within research and academic circles, job crafting hasn't translated into practice, despite the overwhelming evidence that practising job crafting has a lasting effect on employee's **satisfaction, engagement and performance**.



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Who Should be Responsible for Job Crafting?

An Academic Perspective

Vicki Elsey shares some insight from an academic perspective as to who should be responsible for job crafting. She argues for job crafting as a bottom-up process, which employees have to engage with by themselves rather than being told to by their managers. Dr Elsey argues it's important for organisations to create an environment which allows employees to job craft. It's those organisations with a culture of trust and support rather than a reliance on command and control that will foster a personalised approach to work and subsequently get the most from their employees.

Vicki teaches job crafting to students on the MSc Occupational Psychology programme at Northumbria University and believes that education also may play a role in fostering job crafting. By changing individuals' mindsets and expectations of what work should be like, it would be anticipated that we would see almost a demand for organisations to start thinking about work differently, relieving some of the pressure on HR and business leaders to be solely responsible for encouraging role development and individual progression.

"The pressure's got to come from within, rather than people or managers saying, "do this." It's got to be "encourage your team to do this" and your team have to want to do it"



Vicki Elsey

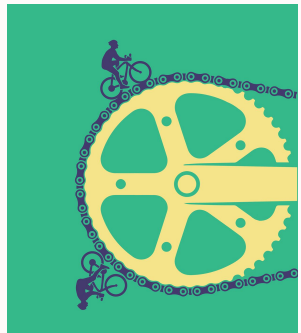


An Organisational Perspective

Andy Dodman, Chief People Officer for Leeds City Council, sheds some light on the logistics of creating a personalised approach to work in a large public sector organisation. Leeds City Council employs around 28,000 staff working right across the city in a large range of different roles. Andy agrees that a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach is needed when it comes to job crafting, and acknowledges the tendency for HR strategies to be "done to" rather than "developed with" employees.

Despite the majority of organisations recognising their people as being their competitive advantage and the key to their success, employees are told how to do their jobs, how to carry out tasks, the hours they work and what their career structure should be. Robust frameworks developed by HR leaders outline strategies, policies and procedures. Increasingly over the last few years, employees have even been told what kind of culture, values and competencies to adhere to.

The problem with all of this, Andy explains, is that this approach focuses primarily on an organisation and its processes and mechanics, and is not really about the individual. At Leeds City Council they are trying to change this by taking a more individual and personal approach.



"If you actually enable people to have a bit of trust and choice over how they develop and frame their own role.... then we would hope people will flourish and thrive as a result. Then you gain the kind of performance and commitment which everybody in that community wants"



Andy Dodman



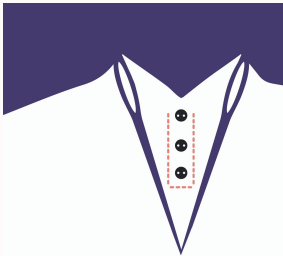
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Encouraging Job Crafting

A Practitioner Perspective

One of the main ways of initiating job crafting is through workshops. Typically, workshops involve exploring and sharing the concepts and benefits for individuals to shape and personalise their role. They also encourage reflection about when participants themselves may have previously job crafted without even being aware of having done so.

A lot of people will intuitively make changes to how they approach their job, that taps into the things that they're interested in. However, this is often not done deliberately, or with purpose and productivity in mind. Reflection on past projects or initiatives that fostered a sense of pride, happiness and engagement for the individual encourages the identification of opportunities to experiment with job crafting.



During workshops, Rob motivates participants to decide which way of crafting their job they want to explore, to set a clear goal and to identify the benefits they are hoping to see as a result of that. He points out the importance of creating a playful environment which invites employees to do this and experiment.



Some managers are scared about employees using job crafting to substantially alter their work, but the evidence and my experience suggests that the majority of job crafting activity that people do are small in scale and typically take 10 minutes a day to an hour a week. If people try to find small changes they can make, they're more likely to be successful and stick.



Rob Baker

An HR Leader Perspective

Sarah Dewar is the Director of People at Connect Health, an independent healthcare provider that is part of the NHS family. Sarah describes Connect Health's introduction to job crafting as beginning when the organisation was thinking about reviewing their performance management system. They wanted to change their traditional system to a quarterly meaningful conversation, and wanted something to base these conversations on. On discussion with Tailored Thinking, job crafting seemed fit really well with Connect Health's performance management approach.

Aware they needed to give guidance to employees to enable them to job craft, they developed four job crafting activities to take place over each quarter of the year, based on different job crafting themes. They ran face to face and remote sessions to equip managers with the skills and confidence to have better conversations within their teams about how to improve their existing jobs and make changes which positively support their wellbeing.



In addition, Sarah and Rob collaborated to produce a podcast for each quarter focused on how to be effective in encouraging job crafting.



*Sarah
Dewar*

Getting executives to craft their own roles is a good way of getting their buy-in at the very start. Senior leaders are more likely to be enthusiastic about encouraging job crafting when they themselves have experienced its impact first-hand.

At Leeds City Council, they are starting to see people's expectations of the workplace changing quite rapidly. Consequently, they've had to adapt to this, quickly and thoughtfully. Andy explains that they've found that their employees are demanding more choice and flexibility in their role, and in response to this, Leeds City Council have shifted away from a demarcated and structured approach.

The world of work is changing rapidly, with a stronger focus on digitisation, and the only way to embrace this change of pace is to enable individuals to take more choice and lead some of that change within the workplace themselves.



*Andy
Dodman*

Jules began her job crafting journey when working at Virgin Money, where she was responsible for employee engagement.



Whilst looking for creative and innovative ways of keeping employees engaged, Jules began conversations with Tailored Thinking about creating a more personalised people experience. Recognising that a few areas of the organisation weren't doing as well as they could in terms of development, they piloted job crafting in two parts of the business, through workshops run by Tailored Thinking.

One of the areas where we piloted job crafting was in the contact centre, where employees' levels of loving their jobs were relatively lower. There was not deemed to be much scope for personalising work in the contact centre, due to there being less autonomy and freedom in their tasks and activities. However, the results of this workshop were hugely successful, in terms of job satisfaction, and personal and professional benefits.

"The data really spoke for itself"



Jules Smith



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The Benefits of Job Crafting

The impact of job crafting activities can be huge, having a lasting effect on our happiness, engagement and performance in the workplace. Our panellists shared some of the benefits they have seen from encouraging job crafting, both from an academic and organisational perspective.



Research has shown that job crafting can support and amplify wellbeing and health, and can reduce burnout at work.



Vicki Elsey



Jules Smith

Following the workshops 98% of people said they would benefit professionally and personally from job crafting, 88% successfully applied job crafting, and job satisfaction increased by 34%, which was way beyond anything we could ever anticipate.



From a recent survey with our colleagues, we've seen a real improvement in how people feel valued as a person and not just for the tasks that they do.

"From an NHS and clinician perspective, job crafting has been very well received and very well taken up. In our recent survey with our NHS Services colleagues, it's come across incredibly positively"



Sarah Dewar

A Job Crafting Story

Encouraging individuals to share their job crafting stories and experiences not only gives them the opportunity to reflect on how they got on, but also provides tips and inspiration for other employees.

A hugely positive but unintended side effect of the crafting workshops was the sharing of strengths, interests and skills that occurred between workshop participants. Jules explained that this sharing enabled the team to understand more about their collective talents, and who in their team would thrive doing certain aspects of work.



We had somebody in our mortgage application team who had a strength of precision and exactness. She went through the job crafting workshop and set herself the small goal of tidying up customer notes at the end of a call. She did this because she was constantly frustrated that customer notes were not as structured and clear as they could be. And this was something that was important to her.

When she told us that story it occurred to me that not only was she working in a way that mattered to her, but her crafting efforts were benefiting her colleagues and ultimately our customers too.

"What was really powerful for me were the stories that came out of it"



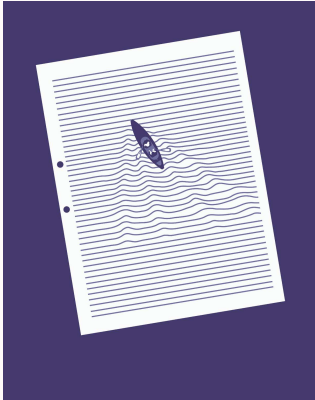
Jules Smith



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Getting the Right Balance

How Dynamic and Fluid is Job Crafting?



Job Crafting is not something that can be forced or imposed onto employees. It needs to be done by and with them. Whilst some individuals are successfully crafting their jobs and thriving as a result, Andy identifies an issue of simply building on their successes and not reaching those who are not yet crafting their job. This leads to the question of how job crafting can be broadened and widened to include the entire organisation.

Andy suggests having ongoing conversations with the patience to provide autonomy to employees to make it happen.

"Our view is, it just takes time. You have to be patient, you have to let people experience it and learn from it and find their own way"



*Andy
Dodman*



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The Role of Job Crafting in Recruitment

An interesting question for the future is whether a personalised approach to working, and job crafting in particular, could potentially change the world of recruitment, both in terms of the way in which people put themselves forward for jobs and the way opportunities are articulated.

Some organisations have already begun to use job crafting to recruit, by asking for talented candidates with a broad set of skills, without having a specific role for them yet, and then creating options for the successful candidate to craft this job.



Rob Baker

If you give this opportunity for individuals to job craft when they are just starting in an organisation, and they feel as though they have personalised their job, they're more likely to value it and to remain in the organisation, because they're doing the things they enjoy doing.

There is an opportunity for organisations to talk about the importance of bringing your personal self to work throughout the recruitment and onboarding process. Managers can positively support this by having coaching style conversations with new recruits about how they can shape their roles and their experiences within the organisation.



Jules Smith



At Connect Health, we reviewed the success of job crafting with a group of managers after around nine months. We found that the managers asked if they could maintain job crafting, as they found it a massive differentiator at recruitment stage, and an effective hook into the business. We are really open about the roles we recruit - although we outline the required skill sets, we give candidates the autonomy to come to the organisation with how they think they could make it work.

"We use it as a key selling selling point and differentiator and it helps us attract people with that creative, innovative mindset that we want"



Sarah Dewar

There may be opportunity through recruitment to pitch to the talent pool about the organisation's passion for embedding their culture, providing scope for individuals to tell these organisations about how they will be able to contribute to, and compliment this culture. Job crafting can also be implemented during the onboarding and integration process.

"The first few months in an organisation are absolutely key to maintain that initial engagement level"



*Ryan
Tahmassebi*



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Will Job Crafting Influence Who Future Leaders Are?

The breadth of skill and ability to have more nuanced and subtle conversations with employees will be key for future leaders and managers. Job crafting may help influence who those future leaders and managers are, by allowing HR to pick up earlier the individuals who are going to have a more authentic appetite to lead people, and who will enable employees to thrive and flourish rather than just demanding the technical delivery.



*Andy
Dodman*

It's important for leaders and managers to really enjoy the people aspect of leadership, rather than just being eager to gain managerial responsibility because of the remuneration benefits. There may be another dynamic to this too, in enabling more technically orientated managers who don't enjoy or engage with these softer skills - these people and engagement skills - to progress and develop their roles to accommodate perhaps not feeling as comfortable with this side of leadership. It's important to recognise there's nothing wrong with people not being particularly comfortable or happy with that kind of skill set and that these individuals still have a really essential role in the organisation.



*Ryan
Tahmassebi*



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The Future of Job Crafting in a Post Covid-19 World

With the uncertainty brought about by Covid-19 and lockdown, organisations have been forced into remote and flexible working arrangements. Jules highlights the ambiguity and lack of clarity surrounding the future of work that this situation has created.



Jules Smith

People are going to be contemplating the impact, meaning and purpose of their work, and there's a platform for job crafting to really make an impact in this area, particularly through purpose crafting. I believe that a personalised employee experience is going to become more important than ever post-pandemic era.



Vicki believes the key is going to be how we handle the transition back to the workplace and use this as an opportunity rather than just allowing things to go back to the way they were and reverting to typical behaviours.

The increase in trust this global pandemic has required from leaders of their employees and the relinquishing of control has shown that if you trust your people, they will deliver more than you ever thought was humanly possible.



Vicki Elsey



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Bringing Job Crafting to Life in Your Organisation

We've put together some resources for those who are curious about exploring job crafting within their organisation, or who simply want to learn more about personalising work.

[Why does job crafting matter?](#)

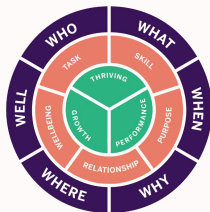
[What are the different types of job crafting?](#)

[How can you job craft?](#)

[Why you should let staff craft their own jobs](#)

[Job Crafting Panel Discussion Webinar](#)

[Job Crafting Guide](#)



It's time to get personal about work.

About Tailored Thinking

Tailored Thinking is a positive psychology, wellbeing and HR consultancy. We work with organisations to make work better, and make better work. Our core services include supporting organisations with lifting wellbeing, performance and growth through:

[Positive Leadership](#)

[Buoyant Wellbeing](#)

[Job Crafting](#)

[Positive Performance](#)



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We hope you found this e-book helpful and thought-provoking. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or queries, just drop us a line at hello@tailoredthinking.co.uk.

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