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**THE COMPLETE  
GUIDE ON HOW TO  
MOTIVATE  
EMPLOYEES WITH  
JOB DESIGN AND  
MEANINGFUL WORK**



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# The Complete Guide on How to Motivate Employees with Job Design and Meaningful Work

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*Job design is not a new concept. The theories behind job design were suggested as early as the 1900s as an approach to offering skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and ongoing feedback.*

**Rastogi, 2005**

## What is Job Design and How Can it Help?

Job design entails designing the job to suit the employee and the organization. This process can help motivate employees, improve their performance, and make them happy. Job design also changes how organizations hire, manage, and motivate employees. Often, due to uncertainties in the



economy, marketplace, and most recently, the era of the great resignation, there is substantial interest and consideration for expanding enrichment in job design. Not only does job design propose to advance employee performance and motivation, but there is also a sense of sustainability during the ebb and flow of turbulent times.

The goal of job design is to create an environment where employees are motivated to work hard and are happy in their jobs. Job design can help organizations attract and retain top talent, increase

employee engagement, improve customer service, and increase productivity. Additionally, a well-integrated job design approach further creates long-term succession and progressive behaviors leading to higher retention rates and a concentrated effort by the organization to revive antiquated structures for a more futuristic organization.

A study by Gallup (2021) found that only 36% of U.S. employees and 20% of global employees are engaged. That means they are not satisfied with how they spend their time at work and do not feel like they are making an impact in their organization. One of the reasons for this could be the lack of job design.

Rai & Maheshwari (2020) analyzed responses to a survey questionnaire by a sample of 622 employees of a public sector bank. The findings implied that job characteristics positively influence work engagement, organizational engagement, and job satisfaction. They highlight the criticality of providing employees with recognized and significant tasks and autonomy in decision-making and feedback.

Individuals benefit from motivational job design because it increases control and perception of internal forces (such as self-efficacy) and improves job satisfaction (Bargsted et al., 2019). The mediating effect of work design factors (task, knowledge, social, and environmental characteristics) in the link between professional self-efficacy and job satisfaction was explored by Bargsted et al. (2019). 353 Chilean employees completed a self-reported survey, and the findings revealed that tasks and social characteristics of work design mediate the connection between professional self-efficacy and job satisfaction.



Job design helps motivate employees to do better at work, to make them happy and satisfied with what they are doing, leading to better performance for themselves and the organization. Whether intrinsic or extrinsic motivation exists for the employee, motivation is critically relative to the psychological elements that can influence and further drive the work achievements for creating organizational successes.

### **Design Jobs Around Purposeful Work That is Proactive Instead of Reactive**

As job design occurs and purposeful work elements are recognized, employees may also feel empowered within their environment to apply new learning and skills, unlock new knowledge, promote expertise, and reinforce central workplace values.

Purposeful work is a critical factor for employee happiness.

Purposeful work is when people feel like their work positively impacts society and they are making a difference in the world.

Four elements can be used to create purposeful work: 1)

**Personalization**, when people have autonomy in their job and can make decisions without having to answer to someone else 2)

**Meaning**, when people feel like they are making a difference in the world or their work matters 3)

**Mastery**, when people have the opportunity to learn new skills and grow as an individual over time and

4) **Impact**, when people see that their job has a significant impact on society or customers.

*A proactive management style is a management strategy that focuses on the future. It is also known as "future-oriented management" and involves making decisions based on the company's goals. This type of management style requires an individual to be very creative and ambitious because they need to think about what will happen in the future and how their decisions will contribute to those outcomes. The proactive management style is very effective in managing uncertainty because it allows managers to take control of what may happen in the future. To further promote a proactive management style, a leader must remain cognizant of the mindset for future performance through cooperative efforts such as implementation and*

and planning performance in the future, creating positive disruption through innovation and creativity, and the continual efforts of sharing the future vision of the organization with employees (White-Thomas, 2022).

*A reactive management style* responds to situations as they arise. This style of management is typically more common in small firms. A reactive manager typically does not have a plan going into a situation but will instead adjust based on what the situation needs. This strategy can be a successful way of managing if the environment stays consistent and predictable but can also lead to problems if it does not. The traditional mindset of work is reactive. It is a response to something that has happened and waiting for the opportunity to arise. However, a proactive mindset is about anticipating what might happen and creating opportunities for success.

In a reactive management style, employees are given the freedom to do their work the way they think is most efficient. Companies often use this style to create an



environment where employees can be creative and innovative. The reactive management style is also known as the "hands-off" style. It includes providing little to no direction to employees and letting them do whatever they want. While the reactive management style conveys a leader that permits employees to be creative and innovative, the leader must not lose sight of utilizing their interpersonal power to remain authentic to leading and enlisting others and ensuring accountability and responsibility (White-Thomas, 2022).

Jobs are often created from a reactive mindset because they respond to their client's needs or the situation's needs. However, job roles should be proactive and anticipate what skill sets are needed, what type of personality would thrive in the role, the tools necessary for the incumbent to succeed, and reasonable expectations. In the context of proactive and reactive management styles, organizations must continue encouraging leaders towards an exploratory process of ensuring effective job design personalization that will contribute to sustained motivation in which employees feel meaning, mastery, and impact.

The proactive management style is the most effective way of managing a team. It is beneficial for the company and the employees. The proactive management style is better than reactive management because it evaluates and anticipates the needs of employees. The proactive management style creates a positive environment that motivates employees to work harder, increasing productivity. Leaders of the organization play a vital role. Even more critical is the

prerequisite for openness and trust that continues to be beneficial for future workforce planning for a company and the employees.

## ***How to Create Meaningful Work and Inspire Employee Performance***

Meaningful work is a job that has a purpose, where one feels like they are contributing to something bigger than themselves. It provides both personal and professional fulfillment. It is a form of work that engages the mind and the heart. Meaningful work is any job that impacts other people's lives or society.

The first step in creating meaningful work for employees is to define the organization's core values and goals. Employees feel like they are contributing to something bigger than themselves, so their work should align with the organization's values and goals.

Next, it is essential to consider what motivates each employee. Some people may be motivated by creativity, while others may be motivated by stability or financial security. Every job should have

some aspects of these motivators to be seen as meaningful work by the employee.

As discussed above, all aspects of creating inspiring work for increased satisfaction in whole or in part are related to the psychological work characteristics in which employees experience the meaningfulness of the job (cognitive satisfaction), experience the autonomy (personally responsible), and the ability to know the results (breadth and depth of knowledge) (Rastogi, 2005).

Most job redesign efforts take a "top-down" strategy, in which management optimizes work demands and resources to achieve practical organizational objectives (Demerouti et al., 2019). These methods are not always successful. The effectiveness of programs in which individuals proactively optimize their work environment to increase their well-being, motivation, and performance is unclear. Job crafting is one such job redesign technique. It is a proactive behavior that allows people to tailor job characteristics to their requirements and preferences by seeking resources, pursuing challenges, and lowering demands.

Whether the approach to job crafting is performed in private or public sector organizations, such crafting characteristics are critical to the overall quality of work-life and socio-technical designing. The job crafting intervention is a potential strategy for assisting organizations in supporting and maintaining employee well-being and performance, even during organizational change.



### ***How to Put Together a Great Employee Onboarding Plan and What Elements Should be Included?***

The goal of an effective employee onboarding plan is to help new

hires become productive members of the team as quickly as possible. This means that there should focus on getting the new hires up-to-speed with their responsibilities and providing them with the training they need.

The onboarding process also welcomes new employees to the organization and makes them feel comfortable. It is also an opportunity for the organization to introduce its policies, procedures, and culture. Onboarding plans can be done in many ways depending on the type of business and the goals. The onboarding process should be customized to the needs of each individual, but some things should be included in every plan. There are a few key points that need to be included in any plan:

- **Introducing company culture through mission, purpose, and values**
- **Tour of the workspace**
- **Introducing team members and colleagues in other departments**
- **Meetings with managers**
- **Introducing IT systems**

- **Training on systems and tools**
- **Explaining benefits and perks**
- **Providing all resources that contribute to role success**

A great employee onboarding plan should include a welcome email sent to the new hire within 24 hours of their first day. It should also include an introduction to the organization and its culture, a workspace tour, and a meeting with the manager. Onboarding is a cyclical process that is well-defined and structured, allowing the organization and the employee the opportunity for continuous efforts at becoming acclimated with culture, compliance, and fostering workplace connections.

Finally, ensuring that the employee feels included in all aspects of their work environment is essential. This includes introducing them to their colleagues and giving them access to all necessary information about the organization. This can happen in person, on the phone, or online through video or chat. New employees need to get acquainted with their coworkers and



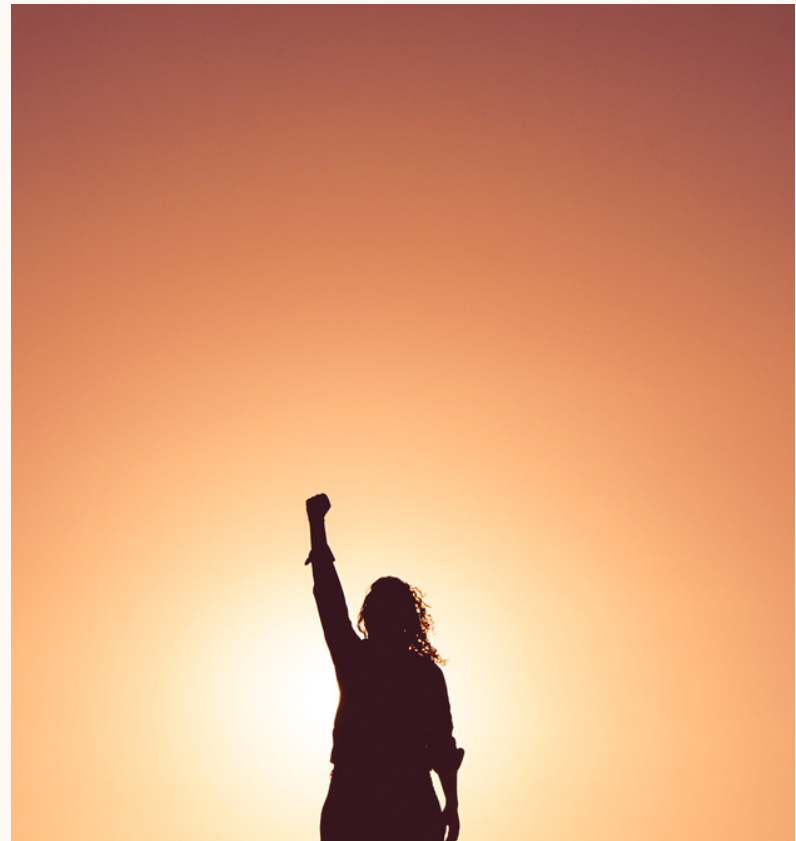
supervisors to learn what they need from them.

Managers should meet with new hires consistently to set expectations, create goals, communicate boundaries, and ensure employees have all their resources. Meeting with employees consistently builds psychological safety and trust between the employee and manager, critical factors in employee engagement and job satisfaction.

### ***Optimizing Job Design Using Entrepreneurial and Intrapreneurial Approaches***

One last consideration for optimizing job design and unlocking the organization's potential is the concept of entrepreneurial or intrapreneurial work design, allowing the employee to create, embrace challenges, and take risks within an established organization.

In addition to the goal of job design which considers employee motivation, improved performance, and happier employees, organizations may consider entrepreneurial work design. This concept also contends to be an



approach in which job customization, business success, and implementing design strategies for the further promotion of organizational agility.

The entrepreneurial or intrapreneurial approach is focused on the organization's expertise, growth, and agility. With this approach to job designing, areas such as operational customization, enhancements in information technology, product and development emphasis, knowledge management practices, or communication facilitation may be defined. Again, the goal is to motivate the employee to

contribute with high performance while maintaining job satisfaction in a more defined organizational approach.

## **Optimizing Job Design to Unlock Your Organization's Potential and Motivate Employees**

In conclusion, job design is identifying and matching the right tasks to the right people. It is also about designing jobs, so they are motivating and fulfilling. Job design can be done differently depending on the organization's needs.

The most crucial aspect of job design is understanding that it needs to be flexible and adaptive. This means that job design should be able to change with time and with changes in the workplace or organization.

The key to unlocking an organization's full potential and motivating employees is to design jobs for the task at hand and the people doing them. Organizations need to optimize their job design and create a culture of innovation.



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