

Job Crafting for Employee and Workplace Wellbeing

2021 PSYCHOLOGY WEEK REPORT SUMMARY

Psychology Week 2021

WORKING MINDS



The COVID-19 pandemic has ignited a seismic shift in Australian workplaces. Remote work, once thought of as experimental – even impossible – became the norm for many organisations overnight.

Workplaces are brimming with possibility, but with any significant change, there are challenges. There has never been a more important time to focus on workplace mental health and wellbeing.

What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing is the ability to feel good, function well and flourish. Happier employees are generally healthier, more engaged, and maintain better work relationships.

Workplace wellbeing is good for business, and good for people.

A recent analysis of 1,882,131 employees across 82,248 business units found that higher employee wellbeing contributed to increased business-unit level profitability.

Workplace wellbeing can be increased by:

1. Job crafting
2. Harnessing passion
3. Increasing psychological safety (healthy risk taking)

This is a summary of information from the research report Job Crafting for Employee Workplace Wellbeing. 193 Australian workers, mostly female, completed the online survey for this research. The sample consisted of employees of diverse ages, industries, and education levels.

To read the full report, including the context, research methods and sample, full results and recommendations, visit psychweek.org.au/2021-resources.



Job crafting

The informal ways you can shape your job so that it better aligns with your strengths, values and interests (Slemp, 2016).

Most Australian workers are already job crafting. But there's room to do more.

This can be done through:

Task crafting: altering the number or type of activities you complete

Relational crafting: proactively changing how, and who, you engage with at work

Cognitive crafting: changing the way you "see" your job, such as value or meaning

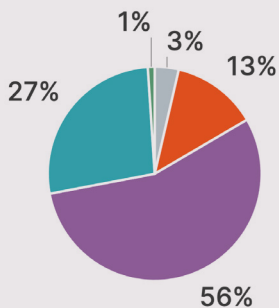
Strengthening an employee's sense of agency and passion for their work is a powerful tool to improve workplace wellbeing.

Increasing job crafting increases wellbeing and passion.

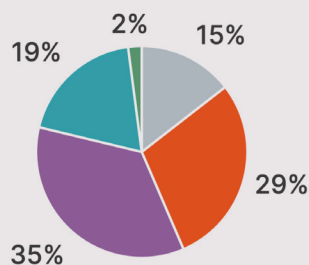
Key report findings

Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they engage in different types of possible job crafting behaviours.

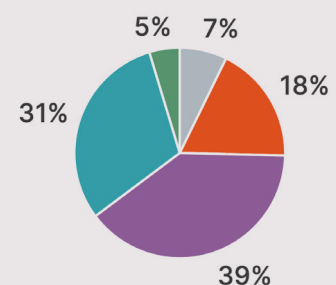
Task crafting



Relational crafting



Cognitive crafting



Never or Hardly Ever
 Occasionally
 Sometimes
 Often
 Very often



Passion for work

The enthusiasm, love, and drive you have for your work. Including: **harmonious passion** (your job is in harmony with your broader life) and **obsessive passion** (your job is in conflict with your broader life) (Vallerand, 2015).

Workers with higher levels of passion are more likely to have greater wellbeing.

And even more so for harmonious passion.

What about obsessive passion?

- It's complicated
- Moderate levels of obsessive passion can be helpful, in some circumstances
- But it may come at a cost, and increase the risk for burnout.

Are Australians passionate about their work?

48% mostly or strongly feel passionate

42% mostly or strongly feel harmoniously passionate

7% moderately or mostly feel obsessive passion

Is it harmonious or obsessive passion?

A harmoniously passionate worker

- ✓ Freely chooses to engage in their work, rather than feeling an uncontrollable urge to do so.
- ✓ Loves their job and experiences sustained enjoyment and concentration from working each day.
- ✓ Is able to mentally “switch off” after work, and enjoy engaging in hobbies, sports, or spending time with family and friends.
- ✓ Has a secure sense of who they are, what they want, and what they can achieve, and work does not overpower other areas of their life.

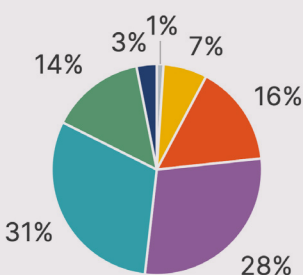
An obsessively passionate worker

- Feels an uncontrollable urge to engage in their work.
- Struggles to separate themselves from work, or mentally switch off from work, even though they may enjoy their job.
- Might frequently bring work home with them, work late into the night, potentially to the point that it impacts their sleep and others areas of life.
- May use work as a self-protective strategy or a source of pride, and as such;
- May react defensively when criticized and when things go wrong.

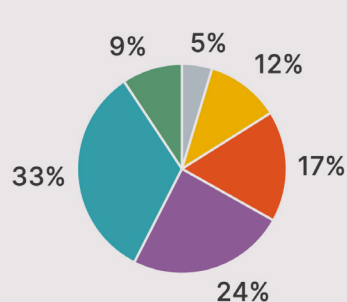
Key report findings

Respondents were asked to measure their passion for working, from general passion e.g. "I love my job" which was then narrowed down to harmonious passion (e.g. "My work is in harmony with the other activities in my life") and obsessive passion (e.g. "I have difficulties controlling my urge to do my work").

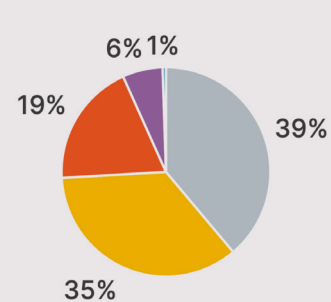
General passion



Harmonious passion



Obsessive passion



Legend: Disagree (light blue), Very Slightly Agree (yellow), Slightly Agree (orange), Moderately Agree (purple), Mostly Agree (teal)



Psychological safety

Your belief that it is safe to take interpersonal risks in your organisation, like speaking up and asking for help (Edmondson, 1994).

Think of psychological safety like healthy risk taking.

Psychologically safe workers are more likely to:

- Job craft
- Experience harmonious passion (and passion more generally)
- Have greater wellbeing



1 in 4 workers feel their workplace isn't safe to take interpersonal risks

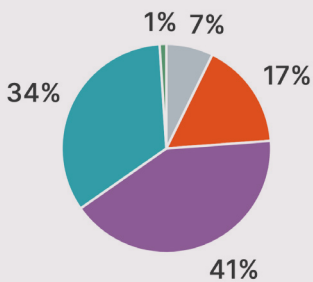


1 in 5 workers find it difficult to ask colleagues for help

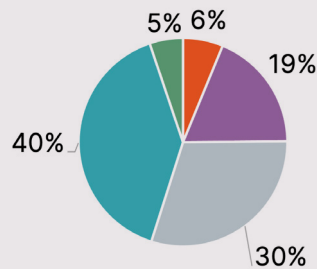
Key report findings

Respondents were asked about the extent to which they feel safe enough to take inter-personal risks in their organisation

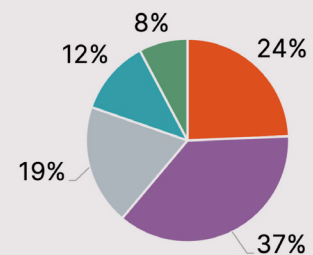
Psychological safety



"It is safe to take a risk at this organisation."



"It is difficult to ask other members of this organisation for help"



■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Neutral
 ■ Agree
 ■ Strongly agree

Worker comparisons



Older workers are:

- **Cognitively crafting more** than younger employees. Cognitive crafting significantly increased with age, while task and relational crafting was not significantly related to age.
- **More passionate about their jobs.** Harmonious passion and general passion significantly increased with age, whereas obsessive passion was not significantly related to age.
- **Happier.** Flourishing and positive affect significantly increased with age, while negative affect decreased with age.

Highly educated workers are:

- **Task crafting more frequently** than less educated workers. Task crafting significantly increased as years of formal education increased.
- **More passionate** about their jobs... in an obsessive way. Obsessive passion and general passion significantly increased as education level increased.

Workers in healthcare and telecommunications are:

- **Job crafting more frequently** than workers from other occupations. Healthcare and telecommunications employees reported the highest levels of task, relational and cognitive crafting.
- **The most passionate workers.** They reported the highest levels of general, harmonious, and obsessive passion.

Managers are:

- **Job crafting more frequently** than non-managers.
- **More passionate** about their jobs than non-managers, both in harmonious and obsessive passion.
- **Experiencing fewer negative feelings** than non-managers.

Female workers are:

- **Higher cognitive and relational crafters** than men.
- **More harmoniously passionate** about their jobs. General passion between men and women did not differ.

Creating workplace wellbeing

Top down, bottom-up approach

Every worker holds a unique set of skills, values and perspectives that can be harnessed to shape their workplace experiences, individual wellbeing, and potentially even the collective wellbeing of their team and organisation.

Job crafting is employee-driven, however leadership plays an important role in nurturing, encouraging and enabling this behaviour.



Employees should:

- consider how they can creatively use job crafting to align work with inner strengths, values and interests.






Employers should:

- create a workplace culture where employees feel psychologically safe to do so.

For more information on what you can do as an employer or employee to create workplace wellbeing, explore our [tip sheets](#).

The Australian Psychological Society Limited
PO Box 38, Flinders Lane, VIC, 8009

Telephone: (03) 8662 3300 or 1800 333 497
Email: contactus@psychology.org.au
Web: psychology.org.au

Find us on social media   

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