



University of
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Business
School

Empowering your people through job crafting

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Today's workshop

- The theory and evidence: we need to find ways of balancing people's **job demands** and **job resources** in the workplace. It's crucial for their engagement, wellbeing and innovation performance.
- Job crafting: what does it mean and how does it work?
- Job crafting: what does the evidence say?
- Activity 1: You are a job crafter... and facilitator.
- Activity 2: Identifying job crafting opportunities.
- Activity 3: Making a job crafting action plan.



Introducing job crafting

“**Job crafting** can be seen as a specific form of proactive behaviour in which the employee initiates changes in the level of **job demands** and **job resources** in order to make his or her own job more meaningful, engaging, and satisfying.” Demerouti and Bakker 2024

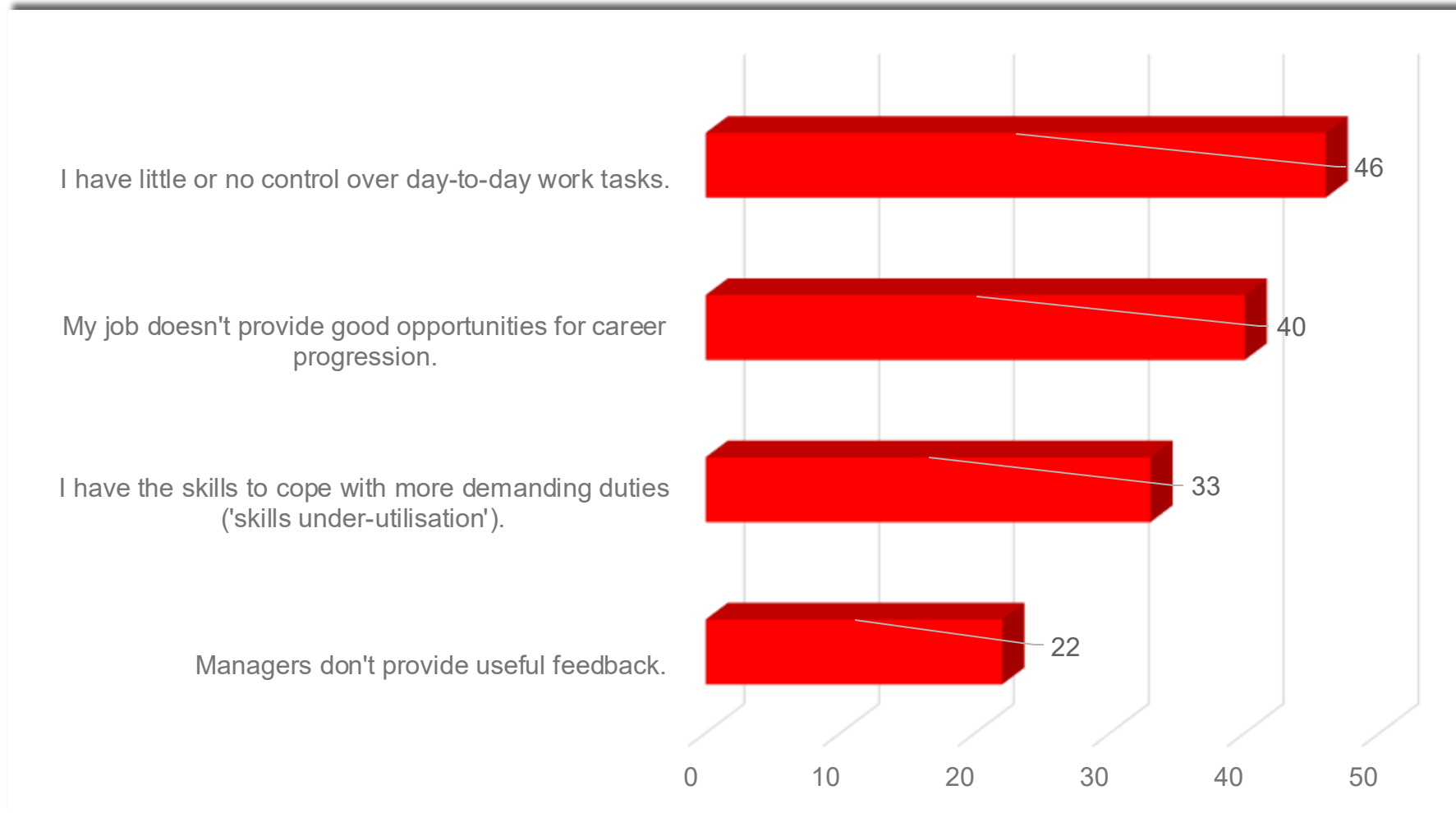
A growing evidence base suggests job crafting can drive engagement and innovation. And that we can empower people to do it!



But first...
Why bother about job crafting?

Because we have a problem...

Too many Scottish workplaces constrain employees' capacity to innovate and perform



Source: CIPD 2026 representative survey of 1,000 Scottish employees.

Why bother about job crafting?

**Because it matters for
engagement and innovation...**

What does the evidence say?

Bakker (2018): 5,000+ health professions: job crafting... reduced 'hinderance' demands; improved job resources (e.g. feedback; development opportunities) and engagement levels.

Dubbelt et al. (2019): 360 education professionals: engaging in a job crafting intervention was associated with higher levels of engagement, performance and career satisfaction.

Tianzhou et al. (2020): research with 300+ employees in six manufacturing companies in China: job crafting associated with engagement and innovative work behaviours.

Rafiq et al. (2022): research with 477 employees in three manufacturing companies in Pakistan: job crafting associated innovation performance.

Findlay et al. (2025): our own research with 3,665 employees across 30 firms found that job crafting was the single most important driver of innovation.

Our research with 30 organisations and 3,665 employees demonstrates link between workplace practices and innovative work behaviours



Our job crafting workshops seem to have made a difference!

ProPEL Hub and Strathclyde Business School: helping Hawksmoor work smarter not just harder

By Ceri Gott - Posted on 27 March 2025



How has it helped us to get better?

We also learnt practices to help us continue to evolve. The Strathclyde Business School team identified the opportunity for enhancing 'job crafting' to improve both employee engagement and productivity. The term job crafting was new to me, but has become my number one technique for driving efficiencies – it's as simple as asking people what changes they want to make to enhance their efficiency and enjoyment. By helping people take control and improve the quality of their jobs, it empowers people and encourages innovation from the bottom up. Win win. The Strathclyde team equipped us to embed this in the business with two interactive workshops they ran for managers at one of our London restaurants. Since then, it has lived on in our management programme, review questions and annual workshops.

Colin made it easier for us by bringing the research out of the university and sharing it in a way that made sense to our restaurant managers, chefs, and leaders with actionable exercises. We already had plenty of practices in place but a fresh perspective and evidence-based approach from the Strathclyde team, helped us evolve. It reaffirmed my belief in the value of collaborating with the university sector.

Outcomes and reflections

Feedback from our workshops also identified a range of practical, 'crafting' actions that the teams agreed to take forward: from seeking to streamline the approval of CT scans to improving job plans and exploring an extension of the use of electronic prescribing. Of course, as with all attempts to drive change in challenging organisational contexts, there were some 'wins' but other suggestions for improvement that were more difficult to take forward.

We came up with quite a long 'To Do' list of things we would like to change to improve our day-to-day lives that didn't involve much extra money. We have accessed the senior management team and they have taken that on board. Some are going to be easier than others but they are already acting on them. Dr Rosemary Stevens, Clinical Oncology Consultant

A final reflection shared by NHS leaders attending the events related to the practical value of engaging intensively with academic researchers like the ESRC ProPEL Hub team, researchers who are committed to sharing high quality evidence on 'what works' in an accessible and actionable form.

In my role it is important to look at ways of creating headspace for our teams. These workshops, facilitated by Colin and Nicola, supported this and – based on positive feedback from our teams – we would be keen to organise more. NHS professionals value evidence, so it was important that Colin and Nicola were convincing in talking about the robust evidence behind their work on Job Crafting. But it was just as important that they were able to talk about Job Crafting in terms of practical examples of what can be done to improve our people's jobs. Dr Ioanna Nixon, Clinical Director, Oncology

Job crafting: the theory...

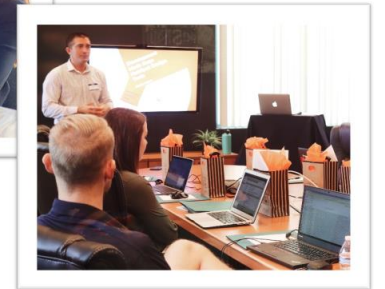
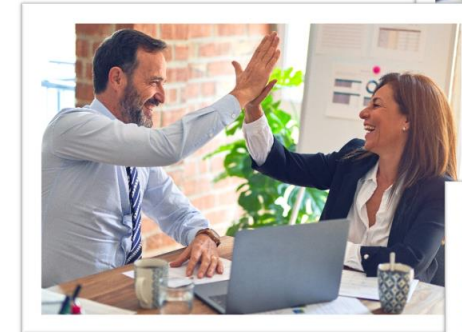
The theory: Job Demands-Resources Theory

- **Job demands** are defined as the physical, psychological, social, or organisational aspects of the job that require effort and are associated with certain physical and/or psychological 'costs'.
- Excessive job demands can lead to burnout and negative wellbeing impacts.



The theory: Job Demands-Resources Theory

- **Job resources** are defined as the physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of the job that motivate people, that are helpful in achieving work goals, that mitigate the impact of job demands, and that stimulate learning and personal growth.

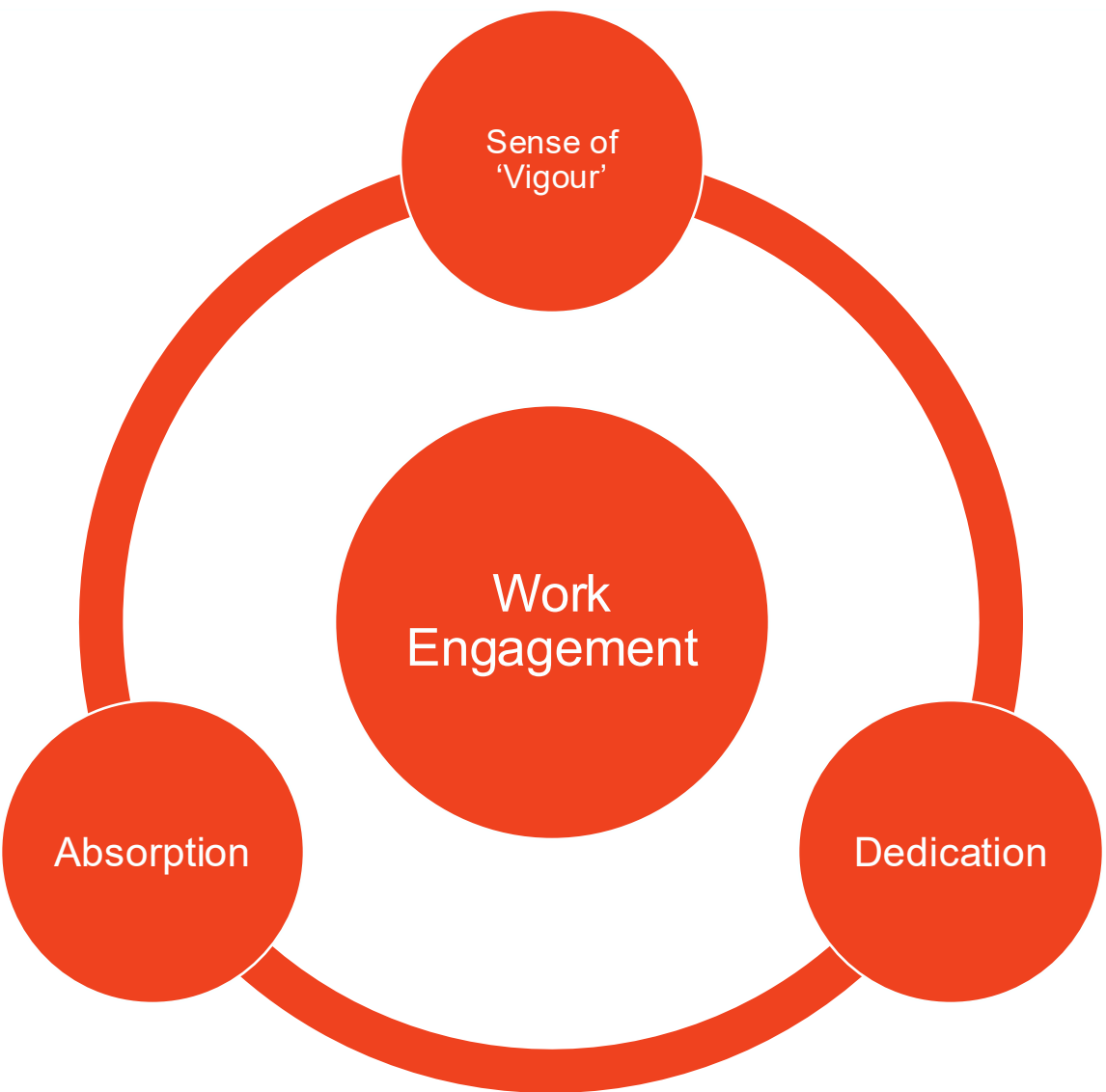


Job Demands and Resources: some examples

Job demands	Job resources
Work pressure (e.g. too much work; not enough time; pressing deadlines).	Control/autonomy (e.g. control over how work carried out; voice in decisions; flexibility).
Cognitive demands (e.g. mentally straining; requiring constant attention).	Social support (e.g. supported by colleagues; valued by team).
Emotional demands (e.g. demanding clients; dis-respectful treatment; touching moments).	Feedback (e.g. clear information about expectations and performance).
Role conflict (e.g. conflicting requests from different people).	Development (e.g. opportunity to learn new things; able to build on strengths).
Hassle (e.g. red tape; having to navigate hassles to get things done).	Supervisory support (e.g. supervisor helps me solve problems; shows consideration).

**Balancing job demands and
resources matters for people's
'work engagement' and
[innovation] performance**

How engaged are you in your job?



UWES-9 engagement measures

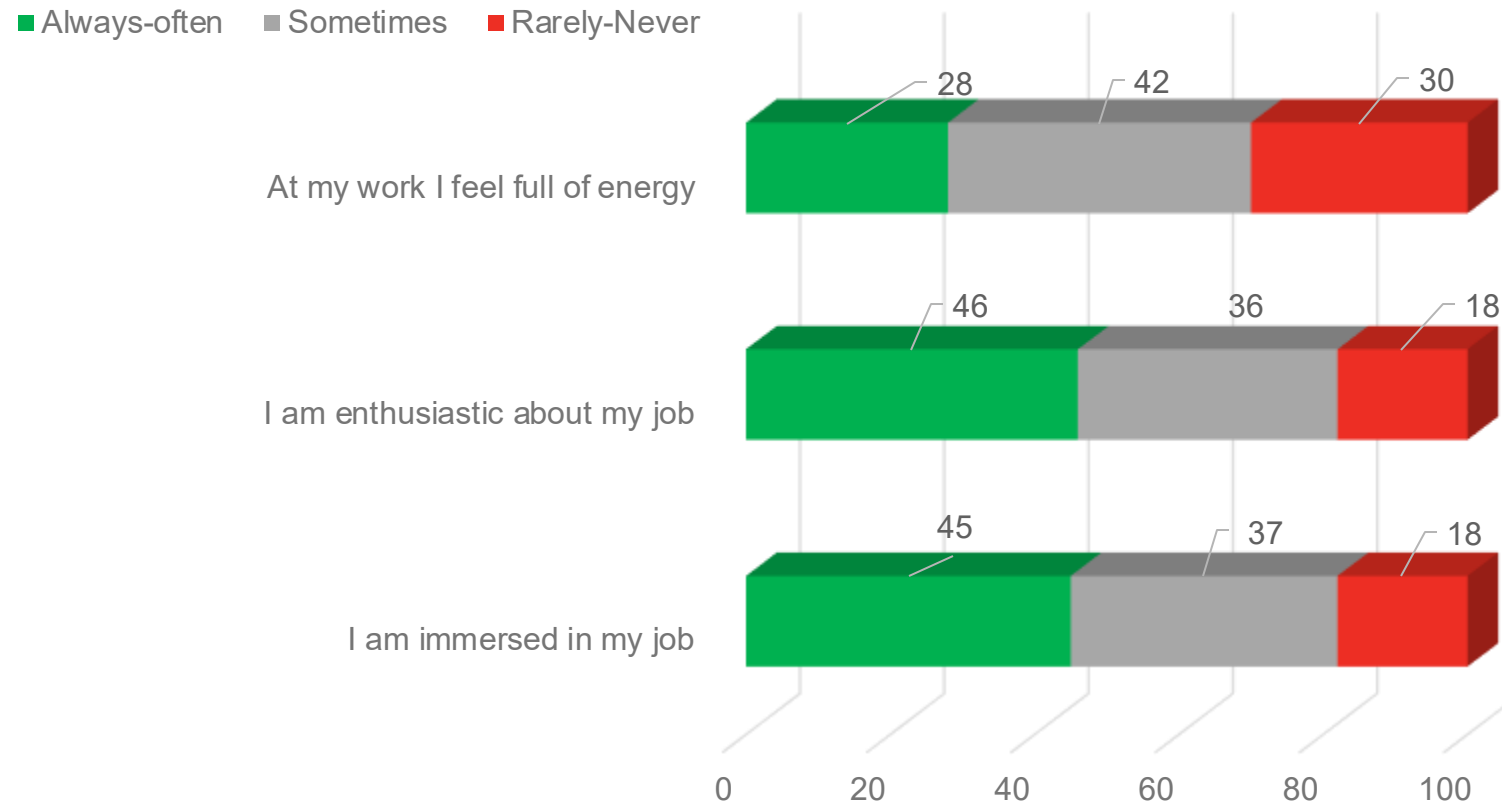
	Never	Almost never	Rarely	Some- times	Often	Very often	Always
VIGOUR							
At my work, I feel bursting with energy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
In my job, I feel strong and vigorous	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
DEDICATION							
I am proud of the work I do	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
My job inspires me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am enthusiastic about my job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
ABSORPTION							
I feel happy when I am working intensely	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am immersed in my work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I get carried away when I am working	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

How engaged are you in your job?

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	Never	Almost never	Rarely	Some- times	Often	Very often	Always
VIGOUR							
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I am immersed in my work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

How engaged are you in your job?



Source: CIPD 2026 representative survey of 1,000 Scottish employees.

Why job crafting matters...

- Excessive **job demands** risk burning out your people.
- (Manageable) job demands that challenge people can be positive. Demanding work needs to be balanced with **job resources**.
- Investing in people's job resources (as well as creating positive challenges) is important to **work engagement**, wellbeing, employee performance and **innovative work behaviours**.
- But what if employees don't have the **job resources** (e.g. autonomy, learning, feedback) that they need to drive innovation and avoid burnout? What if they do not feel sufficiently challenged?
- Job crafting is a **proactive behaviour** where your employees craft better job resources and manage job demands from the bottom-up.

Slight problem... what if your people are not job crafting?

- So, an emerging evidence says job crafting can be important for IWBs and lots of other ‘good stuff’...
- Slight problem: if it is “a self-initiated, proactive strategy” (Knight et al. 2021) based on “employees’ personal initiative” (Bakker et al. 2023) then only proactive or privileged people get to do it, right?
- Much early research focuses on proactive behavioural measures: “I ask for more tasks when I finish work.”...
- But we are increasingly confident that **you** can empower people at all different levels and roles to job craft...

Introducing job crafting

Introducing job crafting (again!)

“Job crafting can be seen as a specific form of proactive behaviour in which the employee initiates changes in the level of job demands and job resources in order to make his or her own job more meaningful, engaging, and satisfying.” Demerouti and Bakker 2024

Three key approaches to job crafting

- **Seeking job resources** (e.g., feedback, advice from colleagues or managers, learning opportunities) can be viewed as a form of coping with job demands or a means of enhancing the resources needed to complete tasks and achieve goals.
- **Seeking challenges** at work includes looking for new tasks once one finishes work or taking on more responsibilities, and focusing on the challenging aspects of that change in responsibilities. Mastering successively more complex challenges helps people adjust to change and fosters personal growth and development.

Three key approaches to job crafting

- **Optimising demands** involves the simplification or optimisation of work processes to make them more efficient. This might involve proactively replacing inefficient or dysfunctional work processes with an alternative, more efficient way of working. It might involve eliminating duplication of effort, inefficient steps in processes or unnecessary sign-offs. Or perhaps swapping with colleagues to offload work that you are not good at or change shifts that don't work for you?

Supporting your people to engage in job crafting

Job crafting in your team or organisation... **Is it okay?**

Seeking Resources: Do members of your team proactively seek more **job resources**? – e.g. more or better feedback/supervision; different ways of gaining team support; opportunities to grow or diversify their skills... Do they feel that it is okay to ask?

Seeking Challenge: Do members of your team seek out additional(!!) work that grows and challenges them? – e.g. covering for a team leader; shadowing other teams... Is it okay to ask?

Optimising Demands: Do members of your team act autonomously to find efficiencies in their day-to-day work, 'manage out' tasks that they struggle with/are inefficient... Is it okay to act or to ask?

Activity 1: Share a 'win' that you have achieved when job crafting or supporting others to craft... What were the key facilitators of success?

1

+ Resources

Seeking more, better or different:

- Mentoring
- Career development
- Opportunities to learn beyond job role
- Training and development
- Feedback
- Networking opportunities with other disciplines/teams
- Autonomy over day-to-day practice and tasks
- Workspace improvements
- IT, tools and equipment

2

+ Challenge

Seeking to:

- Join new inter-disciplinary meetings
- Develop proposals for improvement
- Learn new processes to take on different roles
- Volunteer for a special project
- Lead a team or activity
- Implement new approaches
- Learn for future career development
- Feed in information of benefit to the team's performance

3

- Optimise

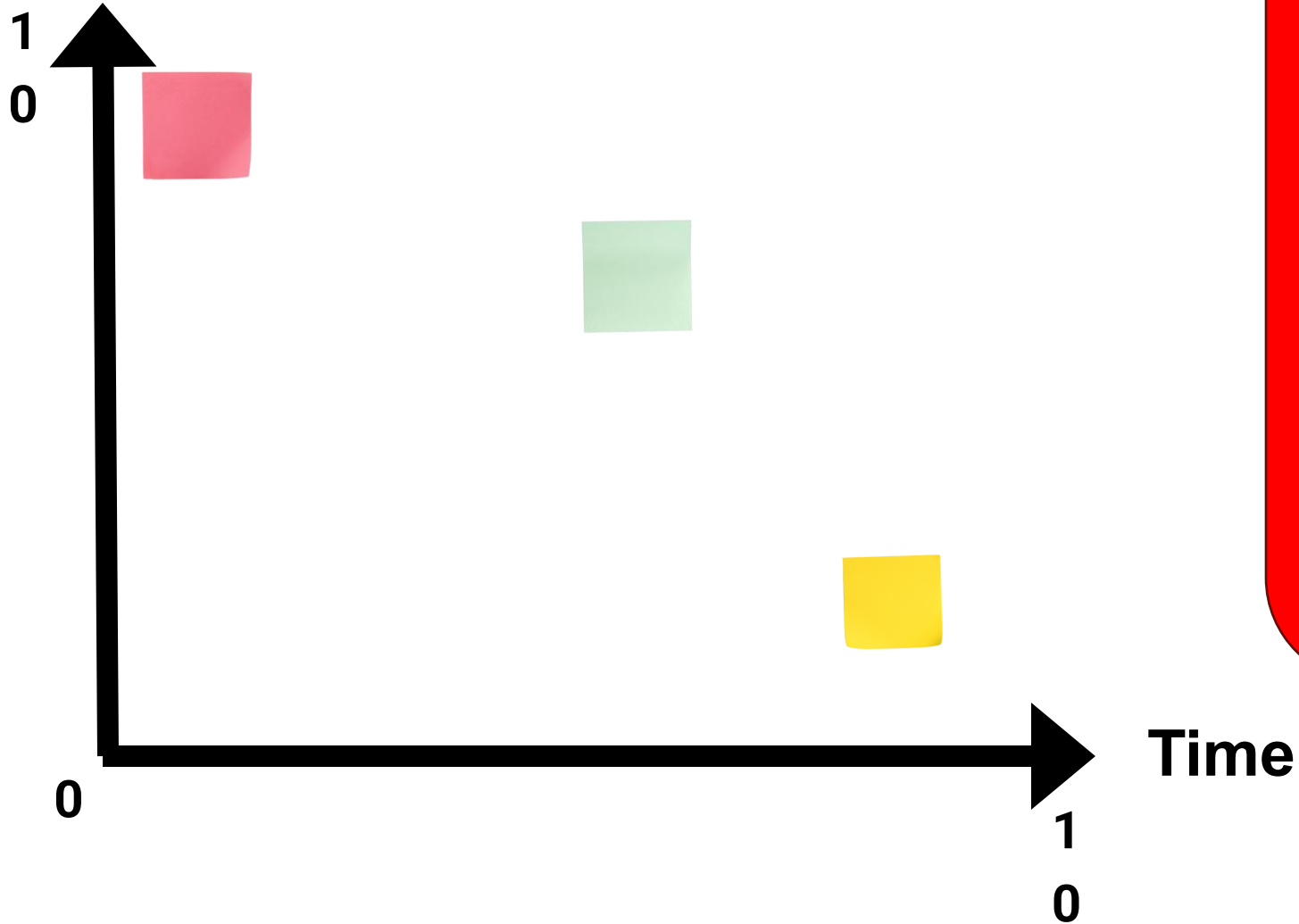
Seeking to:

- Redistribute/swap tasks with colleagues
- Streamline/make more efficient tasks to spend less time
- Reduce steps for efficiency
- Eliminate unnecessary sign-offs
- Suggest efficiency improvements to line managers/team leaders

But how does it work?
Well, let's think about your job...

Activity 2 Mapping meaningful jobs

Purpose/Meaning



In your groups:

1. Each choose a colour of post-it note
2. Write some tasks on your post-its
3. Stick your post-its where you think they belong on the graph

Purpose/Meaning

Choose one task from your graph and discuss ways you could improve its position through job crafting:

- Seek Resources
- Seek Challenges
- Optimise Demands

10

Bright sparks

Sweet spot

- Optimising Demands

+ Seek Resources

+ Seek Challenge

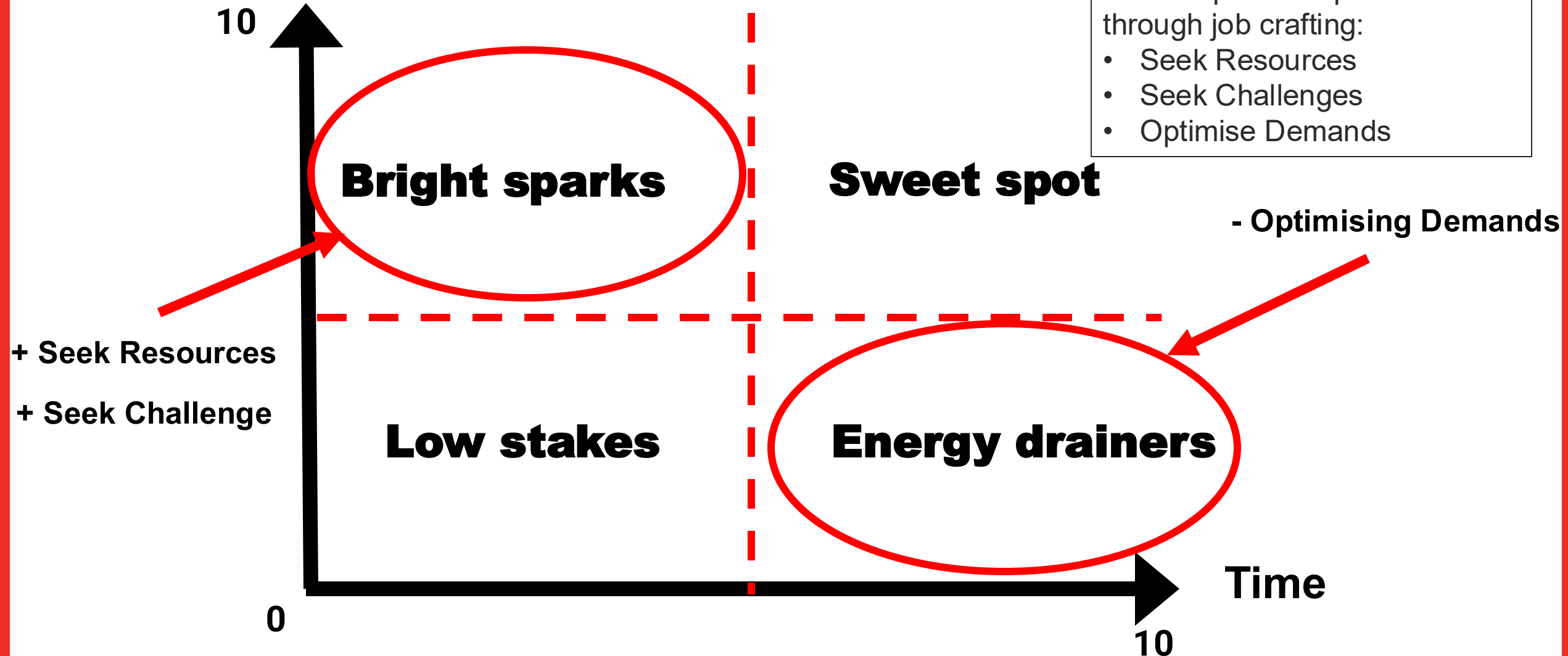
Low stakes

Energy drainers

Time

0

10



Activity 3 Time to make a job crafting action plan

What?

What are you going to do? (And what type of job crafting is it: resource seeking, challenge seeking, demand optimising?)

Why?

What are the goals and potential benefits to you/your team or organisation (now and in the future)?

When?

When are you going to try this? Commit to a timeline.

Who?

Whose support do you need? (e.g. manager, team, changes in organisational processes, etc.)

Key takeaways

We can support your teams' job crafting!

- We're always keen to learn from engaging with businesses through our job crafting workshops!
colin.lindsay@strath.ac.uk



- Or access free training for your teams by joining the world's largest job crafting RCT – 'WISHES'!
At: wishes.uk.com



Workplace Intervention for
Sustainable Health &
Employment Support

WISHES is a £1.8m three-year NIHR funded applied
research project running Apr 2025 – Mar 2028

Key takeaways

- Job crafting is a simple, promising area of practice that can help your people to manage demanding jobs and promote innovation.
- Consider using/sharing the examples of good practice identified in Activity 1. Could you use Activity 1 with your team to consider how you can support each other's job crafting?
- Work with your team to reflect on the opportunities like those you identified in Activity 2.
- Try out your job crafting action plan from Activity 3!
- Job crafting is not a panacea for organisations under pressure. But there is evidence that it can make a small but important difference in promoting engagement, performance and innovation.



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Thank you!