

Translating  
good  
work design  
into  
practice



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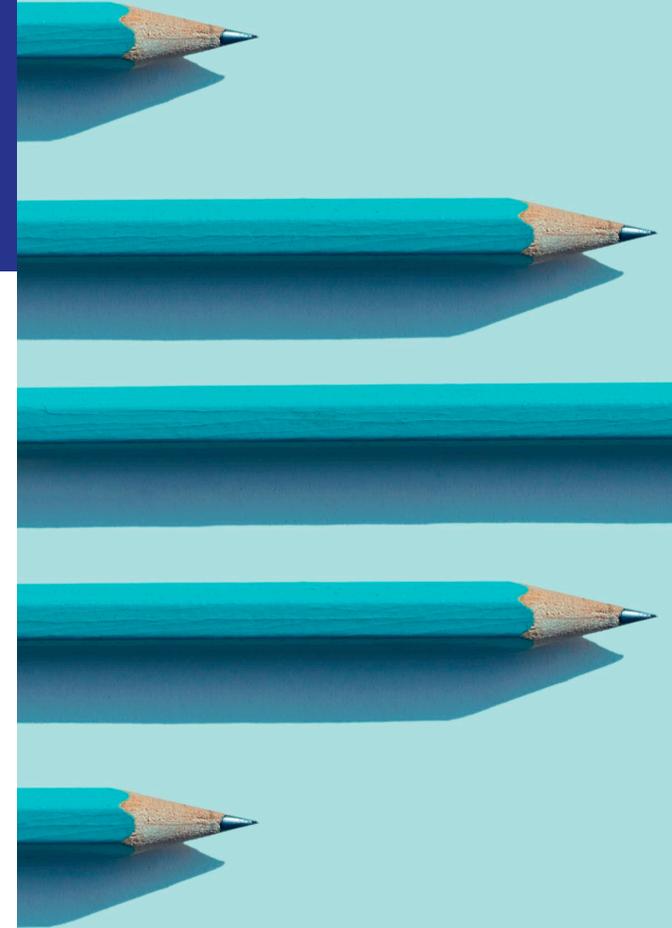
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# Outline of key topics

- What is work design?
- Why does work design matter?
- Work design characteristics
- Work design and Human Factors
- Assessing work design
- Stakeholders in work design
- Contributing to work design improvements

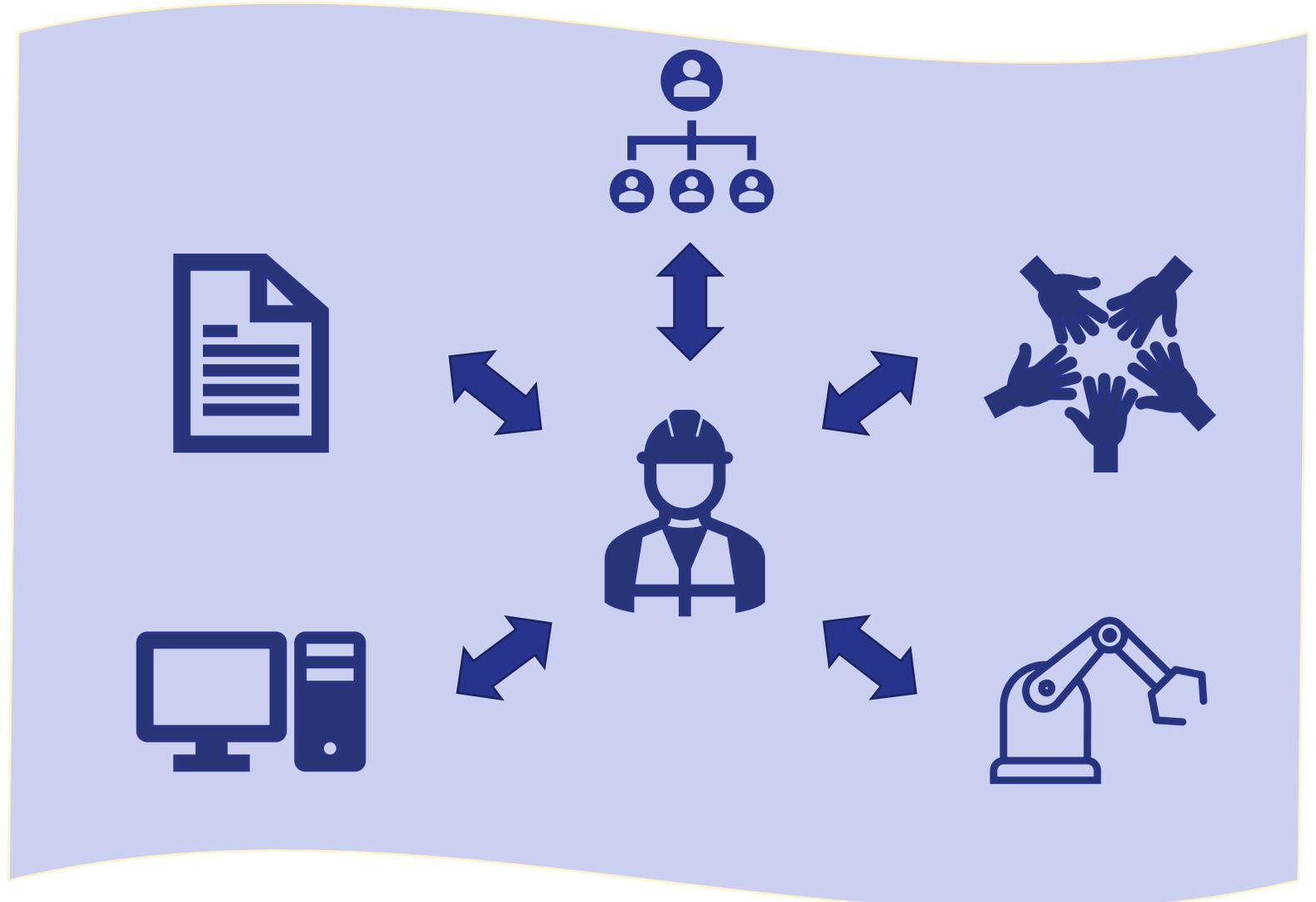




# What is **work design?**

# Definition of work design:

The content &  
organisation  
of one's  
work tasks,  
activities,  
relationships &  
responsibilities  
*(Parker, 2014)*





# Why does work design matter?

# Outcomes of work design

Mental health

Physical health

Safety

Motivation &  
engagement

Job  
satisfaction

Productivity

Lower  
turnover  
intentions

Organisational  
commitment

# Why should safety professionals know about work design?



Poorly designed work is a workplace hazard



# Work design **characteristics**



**slido**



**Job likes and dislikes**





# Work design characteristics

## Resources

- Autonomy
- Support
- Meaningfulness
- Variety
- Feedback
- Role clarity
- ...

## Demands (challenges vs hindrances)

- Workload
- Time pressure
- Physical hazards
- Emotional demands
- Conflict
- ...



*(cf. Job Demands-Resources model,  
Bakker & Demerouti, 2014)*



# Work design and Human Factors

# Work design vs. human factors

## Work design

- Focus on motivational & social job characteristics
- Focus on wellbeing & thriving

- Concerned with cognitive & physical capabilities/limitations
- Concerned with impact of work context

## Human factors

- Focus on reliability
- Focus on health & safety



# Assessing work design

# Assessing work design



OBSERVATIONS



INTERVIEWS



SURVEYS



JOB ROLE  
DESCRIPTIONS



# Work Design Questionnaire

## Morgeson & Humphrey (2006)



- Available via <http://www.morgeson.com/wdq.html>
- Can use only selected subscales if interested in particular characteristics only

# Example questions

5 point response scale strongly disagree – strongly agree



- The job gives me a chance to use my personal initiative or judgment in carrying out the work.
- People I work with take a personal interest in me.
- The results of my work are likely to significantly affect the lives of other people.
- I receive a great deal of information from my manager and coworkers about my job performance.

# Australian surveys for assessing work design

1. SMART work design:  
<https://www.smartworkdesign.com.au/>
2. People at Work survey:  
<https://www.peopleatwork.gov.au/>





# Stakeholders in work design

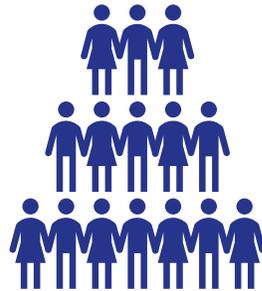
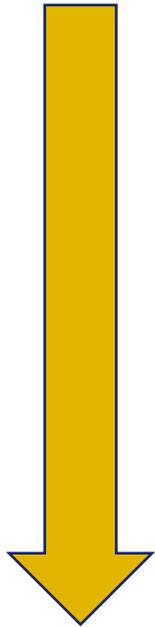
# Stakeholders in work (re-)design





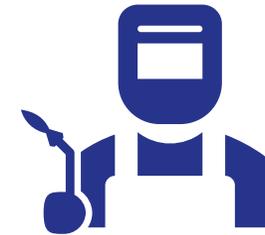
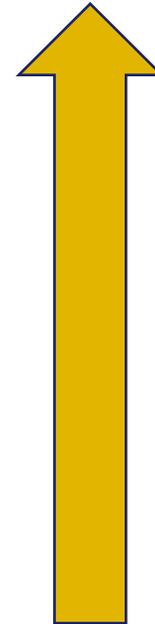
# Contributing to work design improvements

# Work re-design: Two types



By managers/team leaders/HR

i.e., for others



By those who are actually in the  
job

i.e., for self

# Job crafting



## Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001)

Job crafting is the process of employees redefining and reimagining their job designs in personally meaningful ways

Job crafting involves changing **cognitive, task, and/or relational boundaries** to shape interactions and relationships with others at work

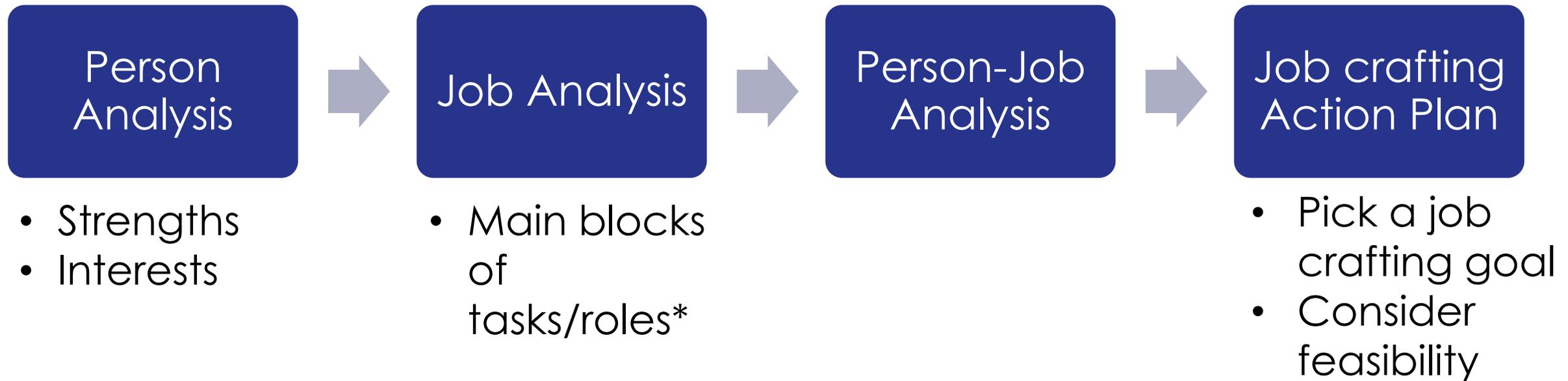


## Tims, Bakker & Derks (2012)

Job crafting is defined as the self-initiated changes that employees make to **balance their job demands and job resources** with their personal abilities and needs, to attain and/or optimize their personal (work) goals



# Job crafting interventions



\* Sort by amount of time and effort spent on these: large, medium, small

# Wrap-up

Safety professionals are well-placed to assess psychosocial risk and provide suggestions for managing this

Work design knowledge plays a key role in being able to do so

This introduction to work design has equipped you with some key insights into work design relevant to your role

# Thank you!

## Learn more?

- OHS Body of Knowledge chapter on work design:  
<https://www.ohsbok.org.au/>
- SMART work design:  
<https://www.smartworkdesign.com.au/>
- People at Work survey:  
<https://www.peopleatwork.gov.au/>
- Contact: [lissette.kanse@uwa.edu.au](mailto:lissette.kanse@uwa.edu.au)

