Chapter 9
Successful Aging at Work: The Role of Job Crafting

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9.1 Introduction

As the proportion of older workers that comprise the active workforce continues to increase worldwide (Phillips & Sui, 2012), researchers have focused greater attention on how to manage and retain older workers (e.g., Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009). Consistent with early theories on aging (e.g., Cumming & Henry, 1961) that viewed individuals as passive recipients in the aging process, many organizational studies have viewed older workers as passive recipients or products of their work environment, such as HR practices. For example, Armstrong-Stassen and Ursel (2009) examined whether training and development practices that older workers receive influence their intention to remain. Similarly, Bal, De Lange, Jansen, and Van der Velde (2008) examined how older workers respond to psychological contract breach. Although these studies are important for understanding how older workers are likely to react to their work environment, they do not address whether and how older workers might actively shape their work environment.

Over the past two decades there has been increasing evidence from both the lifespan psychology and organizational psychology literatures to support the notion that older workers take an active role in shaping their environment. Findings in

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lifespan development, for example, show that people exercise agency in dealing with the biological, psychological, and social changes that occur across the lifespan (Featherman, 1992; Freund & Baltes, 2002; Ryff, 1989). Consistent with the notion, several researchers have shown that older workers use action-regulation strategies aimed at changing their environment to adapt to age-related changes (e.g., Wahl, Iwarsson, & Oswald, 2011). A second stream of research, on proactive work behavior (e.g., Frese, Garst, & Fay, 2007; Parker & Collins, 2010), provides further evidence for the notion that older workers exercise agency in the workplace (Ng & Feldman, 2013; Van Veldhoven & Dorenbosch, 2008). Proactive work behaviors are defined as self-initiated, future- and change-oriented behaviors (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010) that may be directed toward different targets at a variety of levels (individual/self, co-workers/team, and the organization; see, e.g., Grant & Ashford, 2008; Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007). Job crafting is a specific form of proactive work behavior defined as the self-initiated changes that individuals make in the task or in relational boundaries of their work that are aimed at improving person-job fit (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2012; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Job crafting has a positive influence on worker outcomes, such as engagement and performance (Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Hetland, 2012; Tims et al., 2012).

We propose that job crafting offers older workers a mechanism by which to age successfully at work by allowing workers to continuously adjust their job to intrapersonal changes that are part of the aging process. Although there have been a few studies that focus on proactive behavior among older workers, we are aware of no studies examining job crafting among older workers. We argue that this produces an important knowledge gap for the literature on successful aging at work, but also for the literature on job crafting. Since motives and abilities change with age (e.g., Kooij, De Lange, Jansen, Kanfer, & Dikkers, 2011) and people use strategies to age successfully in life (Baltes & Baltes, 1990; Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004), we will suggest below that older workers may craft their job differently than younger workers (see also Fried, Grant, Levi, Hadani, & Slowik, 2007), and that these specific activities and forms of job crafting are not considered in the existing job crafting literature (e.g., Ghitulescu, 2006; Tims et al., 2012).

This chapter aims to increase our understanding of older workers as job crafters by drawing upon literature on lifespan development and aging at work to propose specific activities and forms of job crafting relevant for older workers. The chapter is organized as follows. In the next section, we introduce the concept of job crafting, with an emphasis on the different forms of job crafting. Next, we discuss why job crafting is important for successful aging at work. We then elaborate on important lifespan theories that help to understand how work motives and abilities change with age and which crafting strategies older people use to deal with age-related losses. Based on this literature and the literature on (successful) aging at work, we conclude by proposing specific forms of job crafting that are likely to be most relevant for older workers.

9.2 Being Active at Work: Crafting the Job

Traditionally, job design models, such as the Job Characteristics Model (JCM; Hackman & Oldham, 1976) and the Job Demands – Resources Model (JD-R; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) have emphasized a top-down approach in the design of jobs (Hornung, Rousseau, Glaser, Angerer, & Weigl, 2010). In this approach, employees are selected to work in existing jobs designed by the organization. For example, the JCM proposed that stimulating jobs consist of five perceived job dimensions; skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback, whereas the JD-R model is a more generic model that states that every job contains specific job demands (e.g., workload) and resources (e.g., social support) to meet these demands and fulfill work goals.

Although earlier research (e.g., Katz, 1978) acknowledged that perceived job characteristics are not static but dynamic, more recent research also acknowledges that employees play an active role in changing their job characteristics over time (Fried et al., 2007; Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Since worker abilities develop and interests change over time, it is reasonable to expect that employees (try to) change their job characteristics in ways that permit a continuing good fit between job demands and worker resources. For example, workers may engage in job change negotiation, which refers to explicit attempts to negotiate changes to one's job so that it better fits one's skills and abilities (Ashford & Black, 1996). Parker and Collins (2010) labeled this type of job negotiation behavior as proactive person-environment (P-E) fit behavior, and defined it as 'changing oneself or the situation to achieve greater compatibility between one's own attributes and the organizational environment' (p. 638).

Since job crafting refers to changing one's environment to achieve a better fit between oneself and this environment, job crafting is also a type of proactive P-E fit behavior (Grant & Parker, 2009). Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001, p. 179) introduced the concept of job crafting, which they defined as 'the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work'. They argued that employees craft the boundaries of their jobs to improve their experience of work, particularly in terms of the meaning of work and their work identity. Job crafting is initiated by employees (i.e., bottom-up) and not explicitly authorized by the employer (Hornung et al., 2010). Hence, in the job crafting perspective, employees are not passive recipients of job tasks, but they actively alter their jobs, customizing the job to their personal characteristics (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). In line with this reasoning, we define job crafting as *the self-initiated changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work aimed at improving person-job fit* (see also Tims et al., 2012).

Forms of job crafting. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) proposed three forms of job crafting in their conceptual model; altering the type or number of tasks, altering the number or nature of interactions with others, and altering the view of the job. Task boundaries are changed when employees alter the type, number, content or

scope of tasks that they carry out. These changes may be in the direction of expanding one's job to include additional responsibilities, but also in the direction of narrowing one's job to the minimum necessary to get the job done. Employees can also alter their work routines by performing the same tasks in different or novel ways (Ghitulescu, 2006). Relational boundaries are changed when employees alter the range, nature, or number of their interactions at work (e.g., talking more with colleagues who are helpful and inspiring). Employees may choose to interact more or less frequently with some people, and their relationship closeness may range from very close to very distant ties, depending on personal preferences. Employees may also choose to establish more frequent or closer ties with members of certain occupational groups in the organization than with members of other groups (Ghitulescu). Finally, cognitive boundaries are adapted when employees alter their views on work. For example, employees can view work as a set of discrete tasks or as a whole piece, or they can view it as a trivial piece or as having broader significance for others, the organization, or society.

Since job crafting can have many forms in practice (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), recent studies have focused on further specifying different forms of job crafting (see Table 9.1 for an overview). In her dissertation, Ghitulescu (2006) measured the three forms of job crafting (i.e., task, relational, and cognitive crafting) as proposed by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) among special education teachers. Since no measure of task crafting was yet available, she conducted focus group discussions to understand the specific behaviors through which teachers craft the

Table 9.1 Job crafting forms

Authors	Forms of job crafting
Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001)	Task crafting: altering the type number, content or scope of tasks
	Relational crafting: altering the range, number or nature of interactions with others
	Cognitive crafting: altering the view of the job
Ghitulescu (2006)	Expanding job to include additional tasks
	Tailoring/customizing tasks
	Relational crafting
	Cognitive crafting
Tims, Bakker, and Derks (2012)	Increasing structural job resources
	Increasing social job resources
	Increasing challenging job demands
	Decreasing hindering job demands
Nielsen and Abildgaard (2012)	Increasing challenging job demands
	Decreasing social job demands
	Increasing social job resources
	Increasing quantitative job demands
	Decreasing hindering job demands
Kroon, Kooij, and Van Veldhoven (2013)	Crafting challenging job demands
	Crafting reduced workload

tasks related to their job. Results of the focus group discussions suggested two distinct forms of task crafting. The first form was tailoring (or customizing) tasks and the second form was expanding tasks. As described by Ghitulescu, job crafting through tailoring pertains to modifying teaching practices to meet the needs of the students in ways that are not specified by the job. For example, one teacher reported that she did not use flexible grouping in her class, because it did not work with her students. In contrast, job crafting via expanding tasks refers to activities that supplement or expand job boundaries. For example, one teacher reported that when teaching mathematics, she tried to create practical lessons for life, such as using money as an example for students to learn. Although these job crafting practices are aimed at achieving work goals rather than improving person-job fit, we do include them in our Table 9.1 on job crafting forms.

Whereas Ghitulescu (2006) focused on job crafting in terms of the process and scope of activities for achieving work goals, Tims et al. (2012) focused on job crafting directed toward improving person-job fit. Tims et al. defined job crafting as the self-initiated changes that employees may make to balance their job demands and job resources with their personal abilities and needs (Tims & Bakker, 2010), and identified four forms of job crafting; (1) increasing the level of structural job resources (i.e., those aspects of the job that are functional in achieving work goals, or stimulate personal growth, learning, and development; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), such as variety, opportunities for development, and autonomy, (2) increasing the level of social job resources, such as social support, supervisory coaching, and feedback, (3) increasing the level of challenging job demands (i.e., all aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort or skills but that are also experienced as rewarding; LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005), such as new projects, and (4) decreasing the level of hindering emotional and mental job demands (i.e., all aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort or skills and may therefore be associated with physical or psychological costs; Bakker & Demerouti), related to working with people and working with knowledge (Tims et al.). Tims et al. also developed and validated a scale to measure these four job crafting forms.

Using the Tims et al. (2012) scale, Nielsen and Abildgaard (2012) developed and validated a job crafting scale for the assessment of job crafting behavior among blue collar workers. Building upon interviews with blue collar workers, Nielsen and Abildgaard proposed five (rather than four) forms of job crafting: increasing challenging job demands (i.e., individual's crafting to engage in new activities), decreasing social job demands (i.e., individual's active attempts to avoid emotionally challenging situations), increasing social job resources (i.e., individual's job crafting to maximize feedback from the social context), increasing quantitative job demands (i.e., individual's active attempts to create more work for him or herself), and decreasing hindering job demands (i.e., individual's active attempts to organize work such that it was the least stressful).

A final distinction in forms of job crafting was proposed by Kroon, Kooij and Van Veldhoven (2013). In their study on the influence of team context on job crafting, they distinguished between crafting challenging job demands (similar to the

Tims et al. dimension of increasing challenging job demands) and crafting directed toward reducing one's workload (i.e., reducing task responsibilities or seeking help from colleagues to reduce the workload).

Effects of job crafting. Despite the differences in operationalization of job crafting, individuals who engage in job crafting are more likely to experience their job as more meaningful and engaging (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2008; Petrou et al., 2012; Tims et al., 2012, 2013; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Further, recent research has demonstrated that job crafting is positively associated with job performance (Ghitulescu, 2006; Tims et al., 2012). Workers who craft their job are more committed to the decisions they make, the problems they solve, and the goals they set in their work, and are thus more motivated to perform (Ghitulescu). In addition, job crafters have a better understanding of their job, the tasks involved and how these tasks relate to each other, are able to make higher quality decisions in their work (Ghitulescu), and may work more efficiently and be more productive (Leana, Appelbaum, & Shevchuk, 2009). In addition, job crafting is positively associated with employability (Tims et al., 2012). Workers who craft their job are better able to continuously fulfill, acquire or create work.

However, the influence of job crafting on worker outcomes depends on the form of job crafting. For example, Tims et al. (2012) found that job crafting focused on decreasing hindering job demands was not associated with employability and performance, and was even negatively associated with engagement. Similarly, Kroon et al. (2013) found that job crafting focused on reducing workload was unrelated to engagement. Finally, Nielsen and Abildgaard (2012) found that, over time, only job crafting forms directed toward increasing challenging job demands, increasing quantitative job demands, and increasing social job resources positively affected engagement and satisfaction (see also Tims et al., 2013). Nevertheless, research on (the influence of) different forms of job crafting is in its infancy, and current research on job crafting mainly focuses on crafting more stimulating and challenging jobs (Fried et al., 2007). However, older workers are likely to craft their jobs in other ways.

9.3 The Importance of Job Crafting Among Older Workers

Agency refers to the process of becoming a change agent in one's own life by means of intentional and proactive behaviors (Bandura, 2001). These processes of agency are also evident in theories of aging. The environmental proactivity hypothesis, for example, suggests that older adults are not simply pawns of their environment but can proactively change environments to meet their own needs and to maintain independence (Lawton, 1989; Wahl et al., 2011). Similarly, Featherman, Smith, and Peterson (1990) recognize the changing relationship between the self and the environment. Featherman et al. (1990) propose that successful aging involves adaptive competence, which refers to a generalized capacity to respond with resilience to challenges arising from one's body, mind, self, and environment. In the same line of

reasoning, Ouwehand, De Ridder, and Bensing (2007) argue that older people do not simply cope with decline, but also continue to actively develop themselves and strive for personal goals by creating environments that make success possible.

Building on this lifespan literature, we argue that older workers will also exercise agency at work and will adjust their jobs in ways that permit sustained correspondence between their jobs and age-related changes in work-related motives and abilities. Moreover, we propose that job crafting is a crucial mechanism by which older workers may exercise agency and foster successful aging at work. Because work motives and abilities change with age (e.g., Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004; Kooij et al., 2011; Kooij, De Lange, Jansen, & Dikkers, 2013; Warr, 2001), person-job fit may shift over time among older workers with long job tenure. For example, work-related growth motives and physical abilities decrease and intrinsic work motives and crystallized intelligence increase with age. Hence, as for instance utility workers age they are more likely to experience difficulty performing the more strenuous physical tasks associated with the job, but are more likely to have critical job knowledge that facilitates problem-solving. At the same time, job mobility among older workers is low (Hansson, DeKoekkoek, Neece, & Patterson, 1997). Reduced job mobility suggests that older workers are more likely to stay in their current job, resulting in potential person-job misfit over time (Edwards, 1991; Kanfer, Beier, & Ackerman, 2013). In line with this reasoning, Robson, Hansson, Abalos, and Booth (2006) argue that successful aging at work involves adjusting the job to what individual employees want and still can do. Through job crafting, older workers are able to realign job demands with age-related changes in personal resources, which in turn may enhance work motivation (Kanfer et al., 2013). Job crafting may also enhance work motivation by allowing older workers to increase the psychological challenge associated with job performance. For example, among older workers who have been in the same job for a long time, tasks that once were personally challenging and motivating can become routine and boring (Hornung et al., 2010; Robson & Hansson, 2007). At the same time, older workers are more likely to experience career plateauing than younger workers (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008). Since job crafting increases older workers' person-job fit and their interest in the job, they will age more successfully at work.

The second reason why job crafting is crucial for successful aging at work is the individualized, bottom-up approach of job crafting (Hornung et al., 2010). Although changes in work motives and abilities are similar among older workers, individual differences increase with age, making it harder for organizations to develop standard policies for this heterogeneous group of older workers (Bal, De Jong, Jansen, & Bakker, 2012; Greller & Simpson, 1999; Hansson, Robson, & Limas, 2001; see also Chap. 8 of this book). This notion is supported by personality research in which it is argued that the personality of an individual is shaped over time, resulting in increased differences in preferences, dislikes, attitudes, and inclinations as people develop over the life course (Caspi, Roberts, & Shiner, 2005; Nelson & Dannefer, 1992; Van Lieshout, 2000). Furthermore, due to their long work experience and job tenure, older workers know their own abilities and motives and the tasks and requirements their job involves (Sanders & McCready, 2009). As such, the individualized

approach of job crafting is the most appropriate approach for older works to adapt the job to age-related changes they experience, and to age successfully at work.

A number of studies indeed suggests that job crafting may result in successful aging at work. For example, Shkop (1982) found that older managers continue working when they can modify their job (e.g., enrich their jobs with special assignments, such as consulting or training younger employees) or change jobs. Similarly, Robson et al. (2006) found that older workers' strategies to adjust the job to what they can and want to do, is positively correlated with self-perceived successful aging (see also Robson & Hansson, 2007). In addition, earlier studies (e.g., Abraham & Hansson, 1995; Yeung & Fung, 2009) found positive effects of applying action-regulation strategies at work, such as delegating low priority responsibilities to others, on self-reported ability, performance maintenance, goal attainment, and sales productivity among older workers. In sum, job crafting may be important for successful aging at work. However, based on the literature on lifespan development and aging at work, we expect that older workers will use different activities and forms of job crafting than younger workers.

9.4 Older Workers as Job Crafters

In order to understand how older workers will craft their jobs, we need more insight in age-related changes and strategies older individuals use to deal with these changes. Therefore, we use Kanfer and Ackerman (2004) framework on aging and work motivation and the Selection Optimization and Compensation (SOC) model (Baltes & Baltes, 1990) to identify different job crafting forms and activities of older workers (see Table 9.2 for an overview).

Kanfer and Ackerman (2004) identified four types of intra-individual change as people age; losses, gains, reorganization, and exchange. Losses occur, for example, in physical abilities and in fluid intelligence, such as working memory and processing of new information. Gains occur, for example, in crystallized intelligence, such as general knowledge, vocabulary, and verbal comprehension (Ackerman, 1996). These age-related changes have important implications in the work setting and are likely to influence job crafting activities. Kanfer and Ackerman, for example, proposed that work motivation among older workers might be enhanced via strategies aimed at tailored reconfiguration of work roles. Older workers might compensate for declines in fluid intelligence by avoiding tasks that require speed in working memory and by focusing more on job tasks that require high levels of job knowledge. For example, older information system analysts may be more effective than younger analysts and thus may take on more tasks in sales or service work that demands high level of broad job knowledge, but less effective than younger workers and so reduce tasks that demand rapid troubleshooting of complex new software (Sharit & Czaja, 2012).

The third and fourth type of normative, age-related change pertains to a gradual reorganization and exchange in the constellation of motives that support work-related

Table 9.2 Job crafting forms and activities of older workers

Kanfer and Ackerman (2004)	SOC model	Job crafting forms (existing forms)	Example job crafting activities
Loss	Loss-based selection and compensation	Accommodative (decreasing hindering and social job demands/ crafting reduced workload/ increasing social job resources)	Reduce work volume by taking on fewer clients (Meltzer, 1981)
			Take on assistant (Birren, 1969)
Gains	Optimization	Developmental (expanding job to include additional tasks/increasing challenging and quantitative job demands/ increasing structural and social job resources)	Use professional colleagues to aid new learning (Birren, 1969)
			Regularly take on assignments outside of specialty (Robson & Hansson, 2007)
Reorganization and exchange	Elective selection	Utilization	Participate in mentoring coworkers to retain knowledge and skills (Robson & Hansson, 2007)
			Taking on tasks that activate unused skills and resources (Freund & Baltes, 1998)[a]

[a]Although Freund and Baltes (1998) categorize this as compensation, activating unused skills and resources refers to the utilization of existing skills and resources, and thus to utilization job crafting

action. One example of such a reorganization is the age-related shift in social motives that often occurs in mid and late work life. As proposed by Carstensen's (1995) Socioemotional Selectivity Theory, observed shifts in social motives away from behaviors aimed at gaining resources and toward behaviors aimed at obtaining affective rewards and supporting one's identity occur as a consequence of age-related changes in the perception of time-from perceptions of time during the first half of life as expansive and open-ended to perceptions of time during the last half of life as more limited. As older people perceive their future time as more limited than younger people, they are likely to give higher priority to emotionally meaningful social interactions and goals, such as generativity and emotional intimacy (see also Lang & Carstensen, 2002), and to focus on positive experiences which makes them better at regulating their emotions (Charles & Carstensen, 2010). In the context of work and aging, the reorganization of social motives suggests that older workers are more likely to prefer social interactions that affirm their competencies than social interactions that offer future opportunities for career progress.

In addition, the Selection, Optimization and Compensation (SOC) model (Baltes & Baltes, 1990) suggests that motives change with age. According to the SOC model people will Select viable outcomes, Optimize resources to reach these

outcomes, and Compensate for resource losses. The model's underlying assumption is that limited internal and external resources (e.g., mental capacity, physical strength, social support) require people to make choices regarding the allocation of those resources. According to the SOC model, resources allocated to growth (i.e., reaching higher levels of functioning) will decrease with age, whereas resources for maintenance (i.e., maintaining current levels of functioning in the face of new challenges) and regulation of loss (i.e., functioning adequately at lower levels) will increase with age (Baltes, Staudinger, & Lindenberger, 1999; Baltes & Baltes). This proposition is supported by Freund (2006), who found that during young adulthood the dominant goal focus was on optimization (i.e., growth), but that older adults showed a stronger focus on compensation goals directed toward prevention of further resource loss (see also, Ebner, Freund, & Baltes, 2006).

Since motives and goals change with age, work motives also change with age. Sterns and Huyck (2001, p. 452) argue that evidence is accumulating that "intrinsic rewards of work, satisfaction, relationships with coworkers, and a sense of participating in meaningful work become more important as an individual ages". Kooij et al. (2011) found indeed that work-related growth and extrinsic motives (e.g., advancement and compensation) decrease, and that work-related intrinsic motives (e.g., accomplishment, use of skills, helping people, generativity, contributing to society, and autonomy) increase with age (see also Kooij et al., 2013; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). Kanfer and Ackerman (2004) argue that individuals change their work role in accordance with age-related reorganization and exchange of motives for action. Therefore, older workers are likely to craft their jobs by increasing skill-variety (see also Zaniboni, Truxillo, & Fraccaroli, 2013), accepting increased responsibility for the totality of assignments to increase task identity, taking on increased latitude in decision making, and taking on tasks through which they can build meaningful relationships, increase the amount of help and mentoring provided to others, and impact other people, the organization, and society to make lasting contributions that benefit future generations (Fried et al., 2007; Grant & Wade-Benzoni, 2009).

The four types of age-related change as identified by Kanfer and Ackerman (2004) are closely related to self-regulation strategies as distinguished in the earlier mentioned SOC model (Baltes & Baltes, 1990; see column 2 in Table 9.2). Since self-regulation strategies involve goal selection and pursuit (Zimmerman, 1998), Freund and Baltes (2002) placed the SOC model within an action-theoretical framework, emphasizing the importance of goals. Within this framework selection is primarily concerned with setting and selecting goals based on what one still can (loss-based selection) and what one prefers to do at work (so called elective selection). In the work context, selection involves, for example, choosing to focus more on those aspects of the job that are considered the most interesting or challenging, abandoning goals and tasks that are unattainable or cannot be accomplished anymore, reducing overall workload, involving others in less central tasks, delegating low priority responsibilities, or committing to one or two important goals.

Optimization involves means to achieve these goals. Optimization refers to the obtainment, improvement, and coordinated use of personal resources, such as time

and energy, to achieve important goals. Specific optimization behaviors in the workplace include polishing rusty skills and abilities, focusing efforts on maintaining and maximizing job skills and abilities, practicing, modeling successful others, and investing more time and effort into goal pursuit. Finally, compensation refers to the acquisition and use of alternative means to reach goals. Older employees might use compensation strategies at work, such as taking additional breaks, asking coworkers for help, hiring an assistant, or taking advantage of opportunities to demonstrate special skills and abilities to supervisors and coworkers (Abraham & Hansson, 1995; Bal, Kooij, & De Jong, 2013; Young, Baltes, & Pratt, 2007; Zacher & Frese, 2011).

In addition to the use of SOC strategies at work, researchers have identified other strategies older workers use to successfully age at work (see also column 4 in Table 9.2). Birren (1969) interviewed 100 older professionals about work behaviors and found that older professionals take on an assistant and use professional colleagues for advice and assistance to keep up with the field or aid new learning (Park, 1994). Meltzer (1981) examined strategies that older lawyers used to reduce stress at work. Meltzer found that these older lawyers reduced their work volume, by taking on fewer clients and working fewer hours, and began to specialize in more routine, less conflicted areas of the law, by avoiding the courtroom and restricting representation to former clients with whom they had a comfortable relationship.

More recently, Robson and Hansson (2007) aimed to identify self-directed strategies to successfully age at work. They asked participants aged 23–61 to list up to five activities or strategies they have used to maintain or develop their status in five potentially important areas, namely intellectual abilities, adaptability, positive relationships, personal security, and occupational growth. Strategies that participants mentioned were, among others, seek help from coworkers, participate in professional organizations, assist others when needed, take tough assignments that no one else wants, turn down extra work if it would prevent meeting deadlines, delegate certain tasks to coworkers, tackle one project at a time, regularly attend workshops to sharpen knowledge and skills, regularly take on assignments outside of specialty, and often participate in mentoring coworkers to retain knowledge and skills.

In sum, the literature on lifespan development and successful aging at work hints at possible job crafting activities that older workers might engage in. The strategies mentioned earlier suggest that older workers initiate changes in their job that enable them to fulfill their changed motives and to adapt to changed abilities, thereby restoring their person-job fit.

9.5 Conclusion

As many scholars have noted, two of the most striking differences between work during most of the twentieth century and work at the start of the twenty-first century pertain to the nature of work and the nature of the workforce. Consistent with the

industrial economies dominant through much of the twentieth century, jobs were designed largely by organizations based on principles of production and market efficiency. That is, workers were selected for jobs based on the perceived fit of knowledge, skills, and abilities to job demands at the time of hire, and job demands were largely considered non-negotiable. In this "top-down" approach to employment, workers might have some discretion on how the work was performed but typically had little influence on the work role itself. During the past few decades, however, the flattening of organizational structures and the increased use of teams, for example, have dramatically changed the way that jobs are designed and developed. Although workers are still hired into jobs largely on the basis of perceived fit of their competencies to job demands, there is growing recognition and interest in understanding how workers shape their work role, and the effects that this proactive crafting of one's job may have on individual and organizational outcomes.

At the same time, the workforce is aging and the proportion of older workers is increasing. For many of these workers, age-related changes in person attributes have created varying degrees of misalignment in person-job fit. For some individuals who have performed the same work role for decades, misalignment may manifest in boredom and lack of task engagement. For other older workers engaged in physically demanding jobs, misalignment may result as a consequence of age-related changes in physical capabilities and health. Job crafting, or reorganization of the work role to promote better person-job fit, represents a key method by which to sustain older worker motivation and work ability in their current workplace.

In this chapter we summarized major developments in the nascent field of job crafting and integrated this work with the more well-developed literatures on adult development and workforce aging. Specifically, building upon the Baltes and Baltes (1990) SOC model of lifespan development and Kanfer and Ackerman (2004) analysis of age-related changes related to work, we suggest three primary forms of job crafting among older workers:

(1) Accommodative crafting, which refers to crafting activities directed toward regulating losses (Baltes & Baltes, 1990), such as hiring an assistant, delegating low priority responsibilities, looking for other ways to achieve goals, and using a professional network for advice and assistance;
(2) Developmental crafting, which refers to crafting activities that are directed toward learning new skills (Robson et al., 2006) or growth (Baltes & Baltes, 1990), such as taking tough assignments, participating in professional organizations, and regularly attending workshops to sharpen knowledge and skills;
(3) Utilization crafting, which refers to crafting activities focusing on utilizing existing skills and knowledge, such as focusing on most interesting tasks that optimize existing knowledge and skills, taking on tasks that activate unused skills and resources, focusing on new attainable goals, and taking on tasks through which one can build meaningful relationships and increase the amount of help and mentoring provided to others.

Future research should explore these specific job crafting activities and forms among older workers and their effects on successful aging at work. As demonstrated

in Table 9.2, the existing literature on job crafting does not focus on utilization crafting. In addition, the scarce research on SOC strategies at work (e.g., Zacher & Frese, 2011) does not focus on SOC strategies aimed at utilizing existing knowledge or fulfilling changed motives. Therefore, this job crafting form needs specific attention.

We also note that job crafting activities and forms may differ between different occupations. As a result, it is important that future research examines job crafting across a range of occupations, including nurses, construction workers, and managers. A related issue pertains to the process and outcomes of job crafting among older workers across ranks. For example, although findings in the SOC literature suggest that SOC strategies in the workplace can only be effectively applied when an individual has some degree of job autonomy (Abraham & Hansson, 1995; Baltes & Dickson, 2001), Berg, Wrzesniewski, and Dutton (2010) found evidence of job crafting taking place at all ranks in the organization. Another area in which additional research is sorely needed pertains to the criterion construct space. To date, research on job crafting has focused on the effects of job crafting on worker attitudes and affect. In order to effectively expand this research topic to older workers, research is needed to examine the effects of older worker job crafting on a broader set of consequences, including for example, job stress, work-nonwork conflict, job withdrawal behaviors (e.g., absence), and time to retirement.

A final research direction pertains to understanding the constellation of person and situational characteristics associated with more and less effective job crafting behavior among older workers. In research on job crafting less attention has been given to understanding the person and situational factors that contribute to worker engagement in job crafting. In contrast, research on older workers derived from theories of aging provides rich suggestions for the person-job conditions in which older workers are most likely to benefit from job crafting, and the effects that job crafting can be expected to have on worker outcomes. It is also unclear how organizational and human resource policies affect the incidence of job crafting. Although job crafting is typically initiated by employees and not explicitly authorized by the organization, Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) argue that organizations can stimulate job crafting behavior through Human Resource Management (HRM). By stimulating older workers to adapt their job to age-related intra-individual changes, organizations can help their older workers to successfully age at work.

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