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# IS YOUR APPROACH TO JOB DESIGN WORKING IN OUR CURRENT WORK CONTEXT?

In a recent panel discussion hosted by OPRA on Transitioning to a New Normal, Christian Frederiksen of global real estate services firm JLL stated “The purpose of the firm is many things, but certainly one of them is to achieve financial returns for our shareholders. Does wellbeing come into that? Is it something that we should be doing as a firm? I think this pandemic is making it very clear that wellbeing absolutely is something that we should be doing very strongly, very proactively.”



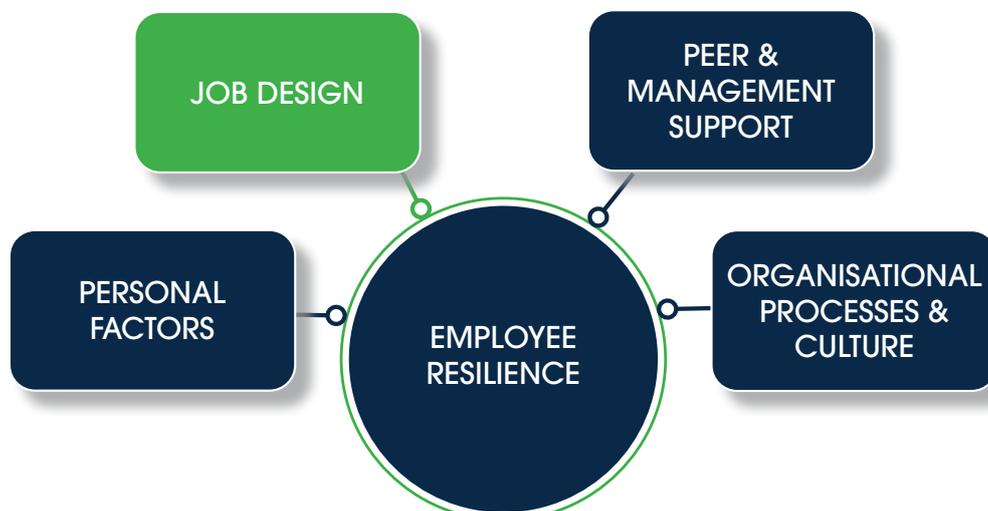
This is a sentiment that OPRA is seeing echoed across our clients irrespective of industry. Employee wellbeing and resilience is critical to a business’s capacity to survive, even thrive, through periods of prolonged uncertainty and change.

## So, what are the different factors that affect employee resilience?

Much of the discussion to date has focussed on individual psychological responses to stress, on interpersonal support, and on organisational processes. Another aspect to supporting employee resilience is **job design** – which leads us to the question, what are you doing to improve job design in your organisations’ new normal?

Job design describes a wide range of role related factors from workflow, to the physical work environment and workspace ergonomics, through to role flexibility.

Most people will have had at least some aspect of their job and associated duties shift as a result of COVID-19 related disruptions.



[Click here to listen to the conversation by Christian Frederiksen on Transitioning to a New Normal.](#)

Organisations looking to be proactive about improving employee resilience going forward are recommended to consider some of the following job design questions:

- **Participation & Decision-Making:** Are employees feeling heard? How do you know?
  - An example of this is when organisations make decisions around when to begin working from home and when to move back to the office. Are employees included in the decision process which affects their work lives and safety?
  - How can you effectively capture the true perspective of your staff?
  - What to do about it once you have?
  - Have your decisions been communicated in an effective and meaningful way?
- **Performance Metrics:** How are you measuring performance in remote work arrangements or in shifting role types?
  - Many organisations and managers use productive time as a way of measuring performance or have KPIs that are based on observable behaviour. This may not work in an environment that relies on employees to self-motivate, and where performance can no longer be directly observed by supervisors.
  - Consider outcomes-based management as a more robust and effective alternative. This supports staff independence and has been shown to improve productivity.
- **Feedback:** With reference to the above, it can be difficult for employees to understand how well they are adapting to shifting role demands. Are they being given clear behavioural feedback on their performance? Have leaders in the business adjusted and realigned expectations clearly for themselves as well as employees?

## HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE DOING JOB DESIGN WELL WITHIN THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT OF CHANGE?

Employee Engagement and Motivation has been found to be a good predictor of good Job Design. If your employees are engaged and satisfied, it suggests you are doing something right.

Next time you run an engagement survey, think about what you can do to tailor the survey to assess job design more closely. And critically, how are you showing employees that you are learning and improving based on their feedback?

OPRAs custom engagement and culture surveys can target critical areas for the business, and our experienced team of Psychologist's will ensure you maximise the opportunity provided by the responses given, highlighting the importance of employees in the success of your business.

Contact a local OPRA consultant to discuss further, [contact@opragroup.com](mailto:contact@opragroup.com).