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COLLECTIVE JOB CRAFTING:

HOW GROUPS SHAPE THEIR IDENTITY AND WORK OVER TIME

A dissertation presented

by

Luciana Paola Silvestri

to

The DBA Program in Management

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Harvard Business School

Boston, Massachusetts

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COLLECTIVE JOB CRAFTING:

HOW GROUPS SHAPE THEIR IDENTITY AND WORK OVER TIME

ABSTRACT

The rising levels of ambiguity, uncertainty, and dynamism organizations face today prompt groups and their members to step outside of the boundaries of their formal job descriptions in order to fulfill the shifting demands of their work. This scenario opens up exciting opportunities for them to redefine who they want to become and what they wish to contribute to their organizations. In this dissertation, I explore the process of *collective job crafting*, which I define as the coordinated action by the members of a group to alter the tasks, relationships, and meanings of the work associated with the group's formal mandate. Through mechanisms that link the individual and group levels over time, collective job crafting enables the group to progressively enhance its knowledge base, to broaden its sphere of influence, and to define and enact a new identity.

My findings are grounded in a longitudinal inductive qualitative study of collective job crafting at Media Solutions, a unit at CLICK, a leading social media company. Through rich interview, observation, and archival data, I trace the collective job crafting trajectory of the unit throughout its 7-year history. What began as an isolated unit in charge of a very simple and specialized task transformed itself into one of the most interconnected groups at the organization, performing complex and impactful work. However, not all areas of the organization supported

Media Solutions' collective job crafting initiatives to the same extent. As time passed, the unit's view of the world and that of the top managers to whom it reported progressively differed. Questions such as "How should CLICK create and capture value?" "What are our strategic priorities?" "What type of work is considered valuable?" and "Who gets to do that kind of work?" received increasingly different answers. Media Solutions was eventually dissolved during the course of a larger reorganization process.

The ebbs and flows of Media Solutions' trajectory provide the raw materials for my theory of collective job crafting, which I develop from two complementary viewpoints. First, I examine the components of collective job crafting as an informal process, grounded in Media Solutions' proactive and adaptive behavior. Subsequently, I provide a longitudinal view of collective job crafting and analyze key instances throughout Media Solutions' self-driven evolution in which the unit negotiated formal ownership of different components of its collectively crafted job, with varying degrees of success.

This study contributes to the incipient literature on job crafting by exploring a form of job crafting that occurs at the group level (rather than at the individual or interpersonal levels) and unfolds both within and beyond group boundaries. My findings also provide a glimpse into how emergent organizational designs and strategies arise, gain traction, and are eventually thwarted by inertial forces.

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This dissertation is dedicated to the members of Media Solutions at CLICK, in gratitude for sharing their work lives with me over nearly three years. May you find in these pages something worthy of your generosity and faith. This work is 1% finished.

That you are here—that life exists and identity,
That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.

Walt Whitman
O Me! O Life!
Leaves of Grass (1892)

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

It's June 12th at noon. The setting is a large meeting room in the New York City offices of CLICK, a leading social media company. About 20 members of the Media Solutions unit, responsible for publishing ads on CLICK's social media platform, are gathered around the table, leaning against the window sill, or sitting on the floor. Another 20 or so members, located in other offices across the United States, have just joined through videoconference. Everyone is within everyone else's sight. The group's traditional weekly meeting is about to start. Duncan, a member of the unit, and Ralph, a manager, take the stage. Duncan introduces a tool both of them are building in collaboration with engineers so that Media Solutions members can more effectively preview ads before they are actually published.

Jamal: So this is different from the current preview?
Duncan: Yes. That one never works for me. This one will actually work.

Duncan goes through the tool's main functionalities one by one. Among them are special features associated with a newly-released ad product. Duncan shows a sequence of slides that depict the screens Media Solutions members will see when they program those specific ads. He then turns to describing the kinds of reports the tool can generate.

Duncan: There's a bunch of new features. You can view reach and frequency [of the ads] across any date range.
Anna: Oh my God.
Duncan: You can also view reach and frequency by location and placement, which is really cool.
…
Anna: Can we see it at the ad account level? That's something we never had before. It would be a huge game-changer.

After discussing these functionalities further, Ralph closes the presentation by asking everyone to "play with the tool" and to submit feedback. His goal is to synthesize the group's opinion and carry it over to the next meeting he and Duncan had scheduled with engineers.

Ralph:	This is the roll-out of the beta version we tried previously. The launch is on June 18th. Let's get as much feedback as we can … There is some feedback already there so let's add to it.
Janice:	When do you need the feedback?
Ralph:	I actually needed it yesterday but I told them [i.e., engineers] we'd be meeting as a team, so by end of day tomorrow.

An outsider observing this meeting would find nothing odd about the exchange among Duncan, Ralph, and the rest of the group. At first sight, they look like two officially appointed project leads updating their unit on their progress—except that neither Duncan nor Ralph was formally tasked with solving ad visualization problems at CLICK; collaborating with engineers was not on their job description; their working hours were not meant to be spent creating tools; and involving their entire unit in testing and reviewing those tools was not what the organization expected of them. Duncan and Ralph, like all members of Media Solutions, were formally in charge of *ad trafficking*, a common function within .com companies. It entailed the simple task of programming ads on behalf of advertisers. Ad trafficking was Media Solutions' sole area of competence. Duncan and Ralph's incursion into tool creation fell squarely beyond the scope of their responsibilities.

Management scholars have characterized individuals like Duncan and Ralph as *job crafters*: workers who proactively shape the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of their job, going beyond what is established in their formal job description (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Concretely, job crafters alter the content, number, duration, sequence, level of attention, and amount of energy they bestow on the tasks that compose their jobs; they change the number,

frequency, and nature of the relationships that bind them to others at work; and they adopt particular cognitive orientations that help them make their jobs more meaningful—the proverbial difference between laying bricks and building a cathedral. Research on job crafting challenges classic theories of work by positing that an individual's experience of a job is more closely related to how she approaches the job and what she actually *does* in it (Ghitulescu, 2007; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) than to the job's formal characteristics (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980). Rather than take their job as a given set of responsibilities, job crafters 'take charge' (Morrison & Phelps, 1999) and mold those responsibilities to better fit their interests and competences.

So far, most studies have analyzed job crafters who act individually. These studies have emphasized job crafters' personal motivations and the challenges they face as they alter the boundaries of their jobs (e.g., Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2013; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Yet, for Duncan and Ralph, enhancing their *own* job experience was a secondary motivation; their main drive was to help make *their unit* more knowledgeable, influential, and relevant at CLICK. They kick-started the construction of the ad preview tool in tandem with engineers in order to enable all Media Solutions members to work more efficiently. Their behavior benefitted their unit operationally but, at the same time, had more nuanced implications. Their initiative served to defy the image engineers held of the unit as a strict group of 'ad traffickers', contributed to positioning Media Solutions as a valid source of insight in engineers' eyes, and enabled the unit to influence the development of a key component of CLICK's advertising infrastructure.

This kind of behavior was not exceptional at Media Solutions; it was the rule. All Media Solutions members were actively involved in projects that exceeded their official job description

as ad traffickers. Members' primary goal was to advance a shared agenda: *to transform their unit from what it was formally designed to be into what members believed it could become*. Media Solutions was originally created as '*Ad Operations*'—the rather stigmatized name units in charge of ad trafficking held throughout the industry. Over a period of seven years, all members of the unit coordinated their efforts to progressively enhance its domain, both in terms of the variety and complexity of the tasks for which it was responsible and in terms of the relationships and interdependencies it held vis-à-vis other units and organizations in CLICK's environment. Members launched and/or self-selected into projects by identifying opportunities and devising solutions that proved both scalable to the rest of the unit and capable of generating impact at the organizational level. Through these concerted initiatives, the group sought to distance itself from ad trafficking and to constitute itself as a more knowledgeable, more influential, and more widely recognized contributor to CLICK's performance. In year 6, the unit autonomously changed its name to Media Solutions.

Media Solutions members routinely engaged in what I call *collective job crafting: the coordinated action taken by the members of a group to alter the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of the group's mandate*. Altering the task boundaries of the group's mandate implies making changes to the nature of the work the group undertakes; altering the relational boundaries of the group's mandate involves making changes to the number and kinds of relationships that bind the group to others during the course of performing the work; and altering the cognitive boundaries of the group's mandate involves redefining how the group interprets the significance of its work. Collective job crafting enables the group to mold the components of its mandate (tasks, relationships, and the meaning of work) so that they reflect the group's interests, preferences, and ambitions rather than top managers' designs.

Despite acknowledging the fact that job crafting is not strictly an individual-level endeavor and can, indeed, be performed at the group level, researchers must still elucidate the mechanisms through which this process unfolds. To date, the few extant studies of job crafting performed jointly by two or more individuals have focused on what authors have termed *collaborative job crafting*—an interpersonal, rather than collective, form of job crafting. Collaborative job crafting is defined as the process through which selected members of a group come together to customize how their work is organized and enacted (Leana, Appelbaum, & Shevchuk, 2009; Tims, Bakker, Derks, & Van Rhenen, 2013b). For example, collaborative job crafting may involve joint decision making that leads the member in charge of task A to try a new approach to carry out her work, the member in charge of task B to combine it with a new task, and the member in charge of task C to incorporate new materials and tools into it. It may also involve joint improvisation that leads the member in charge of task A to perform part of task B on an ad hoc basis, with the owner of task B's approval. In sum, collaborative job crafting is an interpersonal process that helps members of a group negotiate and alter the boundaries of their own jobs within the group.

Collaborative job crafters interact with their peers in order to fulfill both personal goals (e.g., to increase their job satisfaction) and the group's goals (e.g., to improve group performance). However, collaborative job crafting is not meant to alter the group's goals or the boundaries of its appointed mandate—it is intended to help the group deliver on this mandate more effectively. Collaborative job crafting may be found, for example, in autonomous work groups (Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Wall, Kemp, Jackson, & Clegg, 1986), self-managed teams (Bunderson & Boumgarden, 2010), and organizations with modular structures (Baldwin & Clark,

2000), where group or unit members are at liberty to define the boundaries of their jobs but rarely question or alter the unit's goals or the boundaries of its mandate.

In contrast, in collective job crafting members' job crafting efforts are directed primarily toward fulfilling the group's envisioned (rather than appointed) goals; the fulfillment of personal goals is a secondary motivation. Members proactively alter the boundaries of their own individual jobs as a vehicle to altering the boundaries of the group's mandate. Through mechanisms that connect the individual to the collective, members' individually-crafted initiatives become contributions that help transform the group in terms of of *who we want to become* (as opposed to who we are expected to be), *where we want to operate* (as opposed to where we are meant to operate), and *what we want to do* (as opposed to what we've been assigned to do). Specifically, each member informally alters the task boundaries of her own job and, in the process, develops new knowledge and skills. Through mechanisms that enable the transference of knowledge and skills from individual members to the group, the group can perform those crafted tasks at scale *Hence, by consistently working beyond the task boundaries of the group's mandate, members collectively enhance the group's knowledge base*. In parallel, each member informally alters the relational boundaries of her own job and, in the process, establishes ties to new agents within and beyond the organization. Through mechanisms that enable all other members to either access those ties or channel information toward them, the group is able to exploit new relationships at scale. *By consistently working beyond the relational boundaries of the group's mandate, members collectively grow the group's power and sphere of influence*. Lastly, each member informally alters the cognitive boundaries of her job and comes to interpret it as a personal contribution to fulfilling the group's intent to become something other than what its formal mandate prescribes. Through mechanisms that enable group members

to jointly envision a new collective identity and, later, to enact this identity in interactions with the rest of the organization, the group redefines its own and others' notions of the significance of its work. *By consistently displaying behaviors that defy the cognitive boundaries of the group's mandate, members collectively construct a new group identity*.

As a result, collective job crafting is about more than the simple aggregation of individual-level contributions. It involves coordination among all group members to, first, define how each member will contribute to the group and, later (or *while* developing initiatives—as the example of Ralph and Duncan presented above shows) to disseminate the outcomes of their job crafting efforts across the group. The goal is to collectively redefine what the group contributes to the organization. Through collective job crafting, a group may generate and claim unique knowledge and skills, grow its power and sphere of influence, and establish a new identity. The development of the group is tied to each member's own development and to mechanisms that foster mutual development. Hence, collective job crafting is a phenomenon that relies on the commitment and proactivity of most, if not all, group members. This dissertation aims to map the precise mechanisms through which collective job crafting unfolds.

Collective job crafting is, by definition, an informal endeavor—it stems not from a prescribed mandate but from the ingenuity of a group that aims to alter the parameters of what it was designed to be. Because groups rarely operate in isolation, but are socially embedded in organizational and environmental systems, collective job crafting usually requires the group to engage in what has been termed *adaptive behavior*. Adaptive behavior consists of working with or getting around challenges, problems, obstacles, or constraints that limit an individuals' or group's ability to fulfill their goals (De Jong & De Ruyter, 2004; Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007;

Pulakos, Arad, Donovan, & Plamondon, 2000). In the context of job crafting, specifically, adaptive behavior involves taking action to alter others' expectations so that whatever changes an individual or group introduces to the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of their job are seen by others as acceptable, desirable, or legitimate (Berg, Wrzesniewski, & Dutton, 2010b). Adaptive moves may involve, for example, seizing job crafting opportunities that yield outcomes valued by others or building trust with others in order to gain their support for specific job crafting initiatives (Berg et al., 2010b). Adaptive behavior thus enables job crafters to shape their work environments in ways that facilitate job crafting and to create the necessary conditions to unlock and seize job crafting opportunities. It is a form of 'creative problem solving' (Pulakos et al., 2000:613) that enhances job crafters' sense of agency, freedom, and autonomy to act informally beyond the boundaries of their prescribed job.

So far, adaptive behavior has been studied in connection with individual (Berg et al., 2010b) and collaborative job crafting (Leana et al., 2009; Orr, 1996). In the context of a particular job or team, these job crafters usually direct their adaptive behavior toward managers or coworkers. There is rarely need to involve other agents because the scope of these job crafters' activities is usually circumscribed to the specific contexts in which they work. In contrast, collective job crafting requires the group to engage with disparate agents across the organization and to deploy different types of adaptive moves in a coordinated and coherent fashion. This dissertation explores how groups use adaptive behavior as they seek to unlock and seize collective job crafting opportunities facing multiple audiences.

In parallel, this dissertation aims to establish how a group moves from adaptive behavior—which grants the group support from key agents to collectively craft the job in an *informal* fashion—to claiming and negotiating a new jurisdiction that incorporates collectively

crafted tasks and relationships into the group's *formal* mandate. This process may be relatively straightforward when decision makers clearly understand the group's collective job crafting initiatives, see them as valuable, and view them them as a natural extension of the group's formal mandate. In contrast, this process may prove difficult when the group's collective job crafting initiatives create dissonance in decision makers' minds. Several factors may trigger dissonance.

First, because collective job crafting involves challenging the parameters of the organization's formal structure, decision makers may find it hard to reconcile what they know to be true about the group's formally-appointed function and the jurisdiction it is now claiming. The group's jurisdictional claims may collide against inertial forces that push units to remain focused on their formally-assigned responsibilities (Benner & Tushman, 2003; Kaplan & Henderson, 2005). Second, because collective job crafting disrupts the workflow of the organization and alters the bases of 'who does what' and 'who knows what,' it often leads to an informal redistribution of power across the organization. A group engaged in collective job crafting may gain informal power by performing tasks that (1) enable it to acquire unique knowledge and skills (French & Raven, 1959) and/or (2) grant it a more central position in the organization's workflow (Hickson, Hinings, Lee, Schneck, & Pennings, 1971). Jurisdictional claims may be interpreted by decision makers as the group's bid to cement that power. As a result, these claims may collide against the interests of more powerful units. Lastly, in units whose members share the same occupation, collective job crafting often involves working beyond established occupational boundaries. When a group's collectively crafted job substantially exceeds long-standing occupational tenets, other units within the organization and actors in the organization's environment may experience dissonance. The group's jurisdictional claims over collectively crafted tasks and relationships may collide against what these audiences

understand is the proper domain and sanctioned identity of the group's occupation. In extreme cases, the group's jurisdictional claims may require the group to make a case for the existence of a new *idiosyncratic occupation*—one that corresponds to its collectively crafted job and identity. In this sense, the group may be likened to a budding *occupational community* (Van Maanen & Barley, 1982) which strives to have a job collectively crafted in an informal fashion to be formally recognized by the organization as a body of work worth formalizing and remunerating (Nelsen & Barley, 1997).

Given these considerations, a group's jurisdictional claims may come to be evaluated by agents whose goals, interests, and cognitive frames differ from those of the group. When jurisdictional claims are granted, the process leads to the redefinition of the organization's formal structure, which then reflects an updated group jurisdiction. When unsuccessful, however, the process may lead to the loss of part or all of the collectively crafted job and hinder the group's ability to continue engaging in collective job crafting. This dissertation aims to untangle the dynamics that contribute to having jurisdictional claims over a collectively crafted job granted or denied.

Job crafting has long been recognized as a process that unfolds over time (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). More specifically, proactive and adaptive behaviors in job crafting have been recognized as inextricably linked on a temporal basis. Rather than a discrete activity, job crafting should be understood as a "continuous process involving adjustments and change" in which "efforts to initiate or create change (proactivity) can shape and be shaped by responses to perceived challenges to making such change (adaptivity)" (Berg et al., 2010b:159). However, most studies have analyzed job crafting at specific moments in the work life of individuals and

groups, and have offered little opportunity to gauge the implications that job crafting performed today may have for job crafting to be performed in the future. In other words, studies of job crafting (at any level of analysis) have given us little sense of what a *job crafting trajectory* might look like and how it might be carved over time. My dissertation views collective job crafting through a temporal lens and puts special emphasis on the notion of trajectory as a cognitive resource through which groups engaged in collective job crafting maintain a sense of their own evolution, keeping a memory of the past and planning toward the future.

The complex nature of collective job crafting raises important issues which the literature, having so far focused on individual and interpersonal forms of job crafting and taken a cross-sectional rather than a longitudinal view, has not yet addressed. In particular, this dissertation responds to calls from job crafting scholars for research "focused on exploring collective and negotiated forms of job crafting that are team based" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001:197) and that show how "in addition to engaging in job crafting together, employees … perceive and adapt to the challenges in job crafting as a collective group" (Berg et al., 2010b: 182). In parallel, this dissertation offers a detailed view of how a group's collective job crafting trajectory unfolds over time, providing a "nuanced and processual account of how job crafting is initiated; how it is sustained and transformed in the work process" rather than "snapshots of features" captured at a given moment in time (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001:196).

At the same time, this dissertation provides a glimpse into the effects of collective job crafting over higher-order phenomena that are relevant at organizational level. In particular, collective job crafting may help us understand how emergent organizing takes shape in organizations, how the distribution of power and influence changes through groups' self-directed

behavior, and how emergent strategies arise, gain traction, and are eventually thwarted by inertial forces. These are effects that job crafting undertaken at individual and interpersonal levels are less likely to produce, because their outcomes are usually circumscribed to the particular contexts in which job crafting takes place. The literature has, therefore, devoted little attention to these matters, with some exceptions (Lyons, 2008; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). However, issues of organizational design, power, and strategy become salient when job crafting takes place at the collective level. How these issues are discussed and resolved throughout a group's collective job crafting trajectory has dramatic impact over the group itself, over the units with which it is interdependent, and over the organization.

In sum, I explore the phenomenon of collective job crafting by posing two complementary research questions:

1. *How does the process of collective job crafting unfold?* This question seeks to unearth the mechanisms involved in collectively crafting a job. I examine proactive and adaptive behavior displayed by the group itself and by individual members as they contribute to the group's collective job crafting efforts. I ground my analysis in instances of these behaviors exhibited by Media Solutions and its members.
2. *How do groups claim jurisdiction over a collectively crafted job?* This question seeks to shed light on the sensitive process of negotiating the transformation of an informally crafted group domain into a formal jurisdictional area. Taking a longitudinal look at Media Solutions' collective job crafting trajectory, I analyze dynamics that cause jurisdictional claims to be granted or denied.

I answer these questions through a longitudinal inductive qualitative study of collective job crafting at CLICK's Media Solutions unit. Base on rich interview, observation, and archival data, I follow the evolution of the Media Solutions unit from its origins as Ad Operations to its transformation through collective job crafting into an analytical and creative engine. In parallel, I also trace the positive and negative reactions that Media Solutions' collective job crafting initiatives elicited from other units at CLICK and the mechanisms through which Media Solutions negotiated its boundaries and jurisdiction in the face of both support and resistance.

The rest of this dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 2 lays out the theoretical background within which I situate my research questions. Chapter 3 describes how data were collected and analyzed. Chapters 4 and 5 address each of the research questions by inductively building theory, based on the experience of Media Solutions, about different aspects of the process of collective job crafting. Chapter 6 offers an in-depth discussion and conclusion.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical background that underlies the two research questions outlined in the introduction. I draw from the incipient literature on job crafting and complement it with selected insights from the literatures on organizational and job design, the construction and defense of identity at the individual and group levels, the emergence and legitimation of new occupations, the distribution of power in organizations, and organizational renewal vs. inertia.

RQ1. How does the Process of Collective Job Crafting Unfold?

In order to provide theoretical background to the first research question, I begin by summarizing extant research on job crafting, first at the individual level (where most work to date is situated) and later at the interpersonal level. Before making the leap toward collective job crafting, I present a reworked definition of 'job' and argue that a job may not only be performed by an individual, as its traditional definition indicates, but also by a collective. Later, I examine two fundamental dimensions of job crafting: *proactive behavior* (which refers to job crafters' actual altering of their job's task, relational, and cognitive boundaries) and *adaptive behavior* (which refers to actions job crafters take before and during job crafting to create the conditions so that other actors in their environment will support, permit, or facilitate their job crafting endeavors). I synthesize extant research on proactive and adaptive behavior at the individual and interdependent levels, and pose questions relative to their functioning in the context of collective job crafting.

The Fundamentals of Job Crafting

In order to understand the essence of collective job crafting, it is useful to start by synthesizing our extant knowledge of job crafting at the individual level, where most studies are situated. Collective job crafting relies, in part, on individual job crafting (albeit on a specific form of individual job-crafting, where individual job crafting efforts are directed toward the group rather than toward the job crafter herself). It is therefore important to understand job crafting from an individual perspective as defined in extant literature in order to appreciate the difference with the role individual initiative plays in the process of collective job crafting.

A job is a set of task elements grouped together under one title, designed to be performed by a single individual (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Classic theories of work propose that jobs exist prior to and independent from the individuals who occupy them (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Jobs antecede their incumbents "both logically and temporally" (Baron, 1984: 38). From a logical perspective, jobs arise from the division of labor, a manager-driven process of task decomposition and task allocation that takes place in response to specific organizational goals (Puranam & Raveendran, 2012). Jobs are designed under conditions of rationality, i.e. independently of any particular individual, and are arranged into a specific hierarchical configuration we usually refer to as the organization's formal structure (Blau & Scott, 1962; Gulick & Urwick, 1937; Weber, 1946). In a structure, jobs are connected to one another through linkages that denote a certain degree of interdependence (Nadler & Tushman, 1997; Thompson, 1967). In turn, from a temporal perspective, jobs are created before workers populate the organization's structure and they persist in time even if the individual who occupies them changes (Mooney & Reiley, 1937; Weber, 1946). According to this view, the experience of a job (i.e., what employees do and feel as they perform it) is shaped by two factors: the characteristics

of the job itself—including the nature of the tasks it contains, the variety of skills it requires, the degree to which it is interdependent with and connected to others, and the level of work autonomy (Griffin & Daft, 1986; Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980)—and the personal characteristics of the individual assigned to that job, such as her values, expectations, and need for growth (Dubin, 1956; Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978; Staw, Bell, & Clausen, 1986). When an individual takes a job, the expectation is that she will adapt herself to fit the particular demands of the job. In this sense, individuals are reactive to the job's requirements and work within the boundaries set by the formal job description. When individuals deviate from what has been prescribed, the assumption is that they do so in order to correct dysfunctional elements of the job or to overcome barriers to productivity (Frese, Kring, Soose, & Zempel, 1996; Staw & Boettger, 1990). Job redesign, if it occurs at all, is exclusively a manager-driven process (Campion & McClelland, 1993; Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

Recently, scholars have proposed an alternate theory that views individuals as active crafters, rather than passive recipients, of their jobs (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). This view recognizes that individuals often execute their jobs by following parameters that go beyond the requirements and expectations set in their job descriptions, and do so by virtue of their own initiative (Bell & Staw, 1989). *Job crafting* is a form of proactive behavior that enables individuals to shape their work in accordance to what they perceive are the demands of the moment and to tailor it to their interests and preferences (Crant, 2000; Grant & Ashford, 2008). Specifically, job crafters take action to draw and redraw the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of their job (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Research on job crafting challenges classic theories of work by posing that the experience of a job is more closely related to how individuals approach the job and what they actually do in it (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001;

Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2013; Ghitulescu, 2007) than to the job's formal characteristics (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980). The tasks, relationships, and meanings that compose the "lives" of individuals at work are the "raw materials" they use to construct the experience of their jobs and, ultimately, to recreate their own work identities (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001:179). Therefore, crafted jobs logically and temporally follow their incumbents . Crafted jobs would not exist in the forms that they do without the ingenuity and commitment of the individuals who enact them. They are *idiosyncratic jobs*, in the sense that they reflect the abilities, interests, priorities, and *selves* of the individuals who occupy them (Miner, 1987).

The modification of task and relational boundaries is perhaps the most practical and easily observable aspect of job crafting. Individuals may incorporate new tasks, modify or abandon existing ones, change the sequence in which they execute them, alter the methods and the materials they use, or shift the level of attention and the amount of effort they devote, among other things. In turn, they may change the nature, content, intensity, or frequency of the relationships that bind them to others in the organization, forge new connections in the course of crafting their work, or discontinue ties altogether. These modifications to tasks and relationships may occur as part of individuals' in-role behavior (i.e., in the course of fulfilling the basic job requirements) or as extra-role behavior (i.e., in an attempt to redefine the role in the organization by identifying and using opportunities to broaden its scope) (Crant, 2000). For example, in a study of hospital cleaners, (Dutton, Debebe, & Wrzesniewski, 1999; Wrzesniewski, Dutton, & Debebe, 2003) found that, while some cleaners approached their job with minimum effort by minimizing the number of tasks and interactions, others engaged in job crafting by modifying or adding tasks to their day and by creating relationships to others they would not actively come in contact with during the course of their regular work. As regards in-role behavior, these cleaners

sought to make their units more efficient by timing their cleaning to support the nurses' scheduled workflow in and out of patients' rooms. In parallel, as regards extra-role behavior, they actively interacted with patients and their visitors so as to make their stay at the hospital more pleasant.

The modification of cognitive boundaries is a subtler yet equally important aspect of job crafting. Job crafters alter the way they approach and understand their work, for example by viewing it as a whole rather than as a collection of discrete tasks or by interpreting it as a calling rather than as a means to earn a living (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). They ascribe meanings to the job that go beyond what occupiers of the same job usually believe is true about it and what outsiders to the job usually perceive about it. This increased meaningfulness of the job is related to the value individuals see in the crafted job, both in regard to themselves and to others to whom it may directly or indirectly affect (Berg et al., 2013; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003; Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010). For example, Wrzesniewski et al. (2003)'s cleaners did not conceive of their job strictly as keeping the hospital clean but as an opportunity to help the sick and the hospital community. Through job crafting, they were able to build a connection between their job and the hospital's mission to heal.

While most research on job crafting has focused on individual job crafters, recent studies have begun exploring job crafting that takes place among two or more individuals, particularly within group, unit, or team settings. Thus far, research has focused on what has been termed *collaborative job crafting* (Leana et al., 2009). This is an *interpersonal* form of job crafting that takes place among two or more group members who usually hold different responsibilities and are bound by a certain degree of task interdependence. Under these circumstances, changes made by one group member while performing his job are likely to have consequences over other

members' ability to perform theirs. Consequently, group members are motivated to check in with their peers as they introduce changes to their work. Collaborative job crafting ensues when two or more members of a group make joint decisions or engage in joint improvisation in order to define how to carry out their respective jobs (Leana et al., 2009). This may result, for example, in members jointly deciding to change the materials, sequence, or methods of performing their respective tasks; group members dividing up work in ways that deviate from their assigned personal responsibilities but fit the demands of the moment (Leana et al., 2009); or assisting one another in the performance of their assigned work (Orr, 1996; Tims et al., 2013b).

The distinguishing feature of collaborative job crafting is that job crafting activities alter the internal functioning of the group to support the group's overall performance. However, they do not challenge the group's formal mandate—on the contrary, collaborative job crafting is directed at improving the group's ability to deliver on this mandate. When members engage in collaborative job crafting, the group seeks to be better at what it has been assigned to do by altering the way members organize and operate to do it. Collaborative job crafting speaks, for example, to the literatures on autonomous work groups (Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Guzzo & Dickson, 1996; Wall et al., 1986), self-managed teams (Bunderson & Boumgarden, 2010), and modularity (Baldwin & Clark, 2000; Sanchez & Mahoney, 1996), which posit that superior performance can result from granting groups autonomy to organize and manage their own work. While the overall task or mandate assigned to these groups, teams, and modules does not change through collaborative job crafting, the ways in which members define and perform the work components that have been assigned to them do.

Toward Collective Job Crafting: A Broader Definition of 'Job'

The exploration of collective job crafting requires a broader definition of the concept of 'job' than is usually present in the literature. As mentioned above, a job is generally defined as a set of task elements grouped together under one title, designed to be performed by a single individual (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). In their seminal work on job crafting, Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001) expanded this definition to encompass the tasks the job entails *and* the relationships and meanings individuals create in the situated practice of that job (Hutchins, 1991; Lave, 1988; Suchman, 1987). They posited that only by understanding the intimate connection between the pieces of work inherent to a job, the social context in which it exists, and the cognitive foundations upon which it rests can we begin to examine why and how individuals engage in job crafting. This expanded definition also served as the basis for the analysis of collaborative job crafting (Leana et al., 2009).

In the context of collective job crafting, however, this definition must be expanded once again to contemplate the possibility that a job may be performed not by an individual incumbent, but by a collective, such as a unit, a group, or a team. The matter is relevant beyond semantics. If a job is arguably 'designed to be fulfilled by a single individual,' to what extent can the ownership and performance of a job be something one shares and crafts with others *as a group*? Thus far, there has been little need to reflect on this issue: individual job crafting understandably deals with jobs that are defined at the individual level and whose boundaries are altered by the individual incumbent; in turn, collaborative job crafting deals with jobs that are defined at the level of particular group members and shaped through interactions among two or more of them.

A way out of this conundrum may be to consider how tasks are defined and where, precisely, task boundaries lie. Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001) suggest that job crafting may be

performed collectively in scenarios "where task boundaries are drawn around teams or collections of individuals" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001:197). In these situations, it is the group that owns the task writ large, and portions of this task are then assigned to its individual members. The group shares ownership and responsibility for the overall task, regardless of how interdependent members may be in the fulfillment of its parts. The group may then find "opportunities to revise, alter, and craft relational and task boundaries as part of collective improvisation on how work gets done" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001:197).

Based on these considerations, I will employ a broad definition of 'job' in this dissertation. I will speak of 'formal job' when referring to the set of tasks explicitly assigned to an entity by an organization and the relationships it owns on the organization's formal structure, and of 'crafted job' when referring to the tasks, relationships, and meanings that an entity actually enacts as a result of proactively modifying the tasks, relationships, and meanings the formal job entails. When that entity is a unit, the term 'job' will be akin to the unit's mandate. When that entity is an individual member of the unit, the term 'job' will refer to the portion of the unit's mandate that the individual has taken over.

Toward Collective Job Crafting: Proactive Behavior

Proactive behavior—self-started and self-directed action that impacts individuals and/or their environment—is a central component of job crafting (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Proactive behavior consists of the actions job crafters perform to alter the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of their job. These actions are tightly connected to the factors that motivate job crafting and to the outcomes job crafting initiatives produce.

Because job crafting has been most frequently studied at the individual level, we have a fairly good understanding of what prompts individuals to craft their jobs and what effects individual job crafting creates. Studies conducted among job crafters in a variety of settings, such as nurses (Jacques, 1993), cooks (Fine, 1996), hospital cleaners (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003), special education teachers (Ghitulescu, 2007), and salespersons (Lyons, 2008), report that individuals tend to engage in job crafting primarily for personal reasons. These include the individual's desire or need to increase his job satisfaction, to generate a positive self-image, and to experience the job in more meaningful ways, to name a few (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). For example, in a study of teachers and lecturers, (Berg, Grant, & Johnson, 2010a) found that these individuals engaged in job crafting motivated by the desire to fulfill a passion for an occupation unrelated to education. Job crafting served as a way to incorporate aspects of that occupation into their day-to-day lives. In one instance, a lecturer who was also a passionate musician altered the cognitive boundaries of his job by interpreting teaching as 'performing' and comparing his behavior in front of a classroom with his behavior on stage. He also crafted the task boundaries of his job by incorporating music into his lectures as a way to engage students.

Studies also point out that individuals may, as a secondary source of motivation, be driven to engage in job crafting in order to make a contribution to group- or organization-level goals. In the case discussed earlier in this chapter, Wrzesniewski et al. (2003)'s hospital cleaners demonstrated that their job crafting initiatives, while primarily geared toward increasing their own job satisfaction, were at the same time motivated by their desire to help others. These initiatives made their unit's functioning more efficient, nurses' lives easier, and patients' and visitors' days brighter. In this way, cleaners established a more direct connection between their job and the hospital's mission to heal.

Individual job crafting has been linked to a number of individual- and organization-level outcomes. For example, in her study of special education teachers Ghitulescu (2007) found that individual job crafting increases job satisfaction (a sense of personal fulfillment derived from the performance of the job), job effectiveness (the person's ability to fulfill the goals and expectations of her job), and organizational commitment (the person's psychological attachment to the organization), while reducing absenteeism. In turn, Bakker, Tims, and Derks (2012) and Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, and Hetland (2012) found a positive relationship between individual job crafting and work engagement (a positive state of mind characterized by vigor, absorption, and dedication to work) as they surveyed workers in a range of profit and non-profit organizations. Lastly, studies suggest job crafting enables individuals to experience their job as more meaningful and to develop and enact richer work identities, increasing their sense of purpose and self-worth (Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003; Wrzesniewski, LoBuglio, Dutton, & Berg, 2013).

In contrast to the above, we know little about the factors that motivate job crafting in entities beyond the individual and we have limited understanding of the effects that such forms of job crafting produce. Thus far, a small number of studies have addressed the antecedents and outcomes of collaborative job crafting, identified above as an interpersonal form of job crafting that takes place among two or more members of a group. Studies show that group members engage in collaborative job crafting to fulfill both personal goals (e.g., to increase job satisfaction) and group and organizational goals (e.g., to increase group performance).

For example, in their field study of child daycare centers, Leana, Appelbaum, & Shevchuk (2009) reported that teacher-aide dyads engaged in collaborative job crafting as a way to attain high quality of care (both a group and organizational goal) and to enhance their personal

capabilities and effectiveness at work (an individual goal). Teachers were formally responsible for creative and educational activities, such as introducing the children to mathematics, language, science, and the development of social skills, while aides were in charge of meeting the children's physical needs in terms of cleanliness and safety. The changing demands of the classroom provided occasions for teachers and aides to deviate from their pre-established roles and to engage in collaborative job crafting. Unexpected situations (e.g., a child falling sick during the course of the day) led teachers and aides to make joint decisions on the fly that brought about modifications to the task boundaries of each of their jobs. Aides jumped to finish tasks teachers started but could not finish given the unexpected situation or proactively took over tasks teachers could momentarily not attend to. This led to frequent co-teaching situations and considerable overlap in the actual work of teachers and aides, despite their formally appointed responsibilities. As a result, teacher-aide dyads were able to maintain high levels of care, impacting both group and organizational performance. At the individual level, the greatest impact was found among inexperienced aides, who improved their readiness to respond to unexpected situations and gained a better understanding of how their work impacted the quality of care.

Orr (1996) made similar observations in his ethnography of field service technicians and specialists at Xerox. He found that specialists and technicians working in small sub-units collaboratively crafted their jobs motivated by the need to attain high performance in machine servicing (a group goal) and by the desire to enhance their personal reputations among their peers (a personal goal). Technicians' formal jobs consisted of servicing machines in a given territory, while specialists were responsible for managing the sub-unit's technical expertise: they circulated current information about new problems, fixes, and updates, they monitored

technicians' proficiency, and they acted as consultants on difficult problems. The unpredictability of copy machine repair and servicing calls provided occasions for them to engage in collaborative job crafting in a variety of ways.

For example, technicians were formally appointed to service machines in a given territory. However, when demand exceeded their peers' capacity to perform their fixes in a timely manner, technicians jumped to service machines in other territories as required. Technicians and specialists met regularly to assess the calls that had come in for the next few days and define who would take them over. They balanced one another's workloads by assessing the number and complexity of each call and aiding those who stood at a disadvantage. They also exchanged information on fixes they had performed in one another's territories and alerted one another on any possible open ends. In a specific instance, for example, a technician in territory A who had serviced a machine in territory B reported to the technician responsible for that machine that the client was using another brand's toner. He believed the extraneous toner was responsible for the issues the machine was presenting. He added that he had proactively taken a bottle of the toner from the client site to have it analyzed. His peer had noted this before and alerted the client, but had not thought of having the toner analyzed. She made a note to take the results of the analysis into account the next time she serviced that machine.

Technicians also engaged in collaborative job crafting by anticipating future issues and going off script when they serviced machines. For example, technicians often ran out of specific replacement parts in the course of their workday. This forced them to interrupt a particular service call to go get the missing part. In order to avoid delays that may negatively affect their own or their peers' performance ratings, they devised workarounds that granted them flexibility to use other parts instead. In a concrete instance where the instruction manuals for a specific

machine model instructed technicians to cut off the redundant wire when replacing an old switch with a new one, a technician may choose to tape it and tuck it out of the way instead. Then, if he or one of his peers ever found themselves out of new switches, they could use an old one and not have to interrupt the call.

The initiatives that technicians and specialists devised increased the unit's effectiveness in servicing faulty machines. At the same time, they enabled technicians who performed especially difficult repairs and devised clever workarounds to enhance their reputations within the group.

The insights that these studies offer, while valuable, do not explain why or how *groups* act proactively to craft a job in a *collective* fashion. Collective job crafting, as I define it in this dissertation, involves concerted action by most (if not all) members of a group to alter the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of the group's mandate. While knowledge of how proactive behavior occurs at the individual and interpersonal levels may help illuminate aspects of the process of collective job crafting, the specific mechanisms that constitute proactive behavior at the collective level are still to be understood.

Elucidating what proactive behavior in collective job crafting entails requires examining, for example, what motivates a group to engage in collective job crafting, how group members coordinate to seek and share information about the organization's strategic goals, how they engage in discussions to define how the group may contribute to accomplishing them beyond what is established in its formal mandate, how they identify and capture opportunities to make these contributions tangible, how they share new knowledge among one another, and how they come to a renewed and shared understanding of the group's identity.

Toward Collective Job Crafting: Adaptive Behavior

Job crafting is a process that unfolds within a given social system: the organization in which that job is embedded. The blueprint that guides behavior in that system is the organization's formal structure. Formal structure defines the place in the hierarchy that individuals occupy, the tasks they have been formally assigned, and the relationships they have been formally entrusted to maintain—what (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977) referred to as *hierarchy*, *function*, and *inclusion*. Formal structure also provides what Thompson (1967) termed *domain consensus*: a state in which the units that compose the organization are aware of their own set of responsibilities and acknowledge those of others. Therefore, formal structure situates an individual's formal job in the eyes of the individual himself and in those of others, and positions a group's formal mandate in juxtaposition to the formal mandates of every other group in the organization.

Based on the parameters set by formal structure, individuals and groups in the organization develop notions and expectations about one another: they have predictive knowledge about one another's inputs and outputs (Puranam & Raveendran, 2012); they recognize one another's capabilities and knowledge (Puranam, Raveendran, & Knudsen, 2012); they know the degree of power and influence every one of them wields (Krackhardt, 1990), and they have a sense of one another's identities (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). When individuals and groups decide to engage in job crafting, they informally challenge and alter these parameters. Every new task they undertake, every new relationship they foster, and every aspect in which they redefine the meaning of their job alters the dynamics of the organization beyond the predictability of its formal structure.

Because job crafting involves disrupting, to higher or lesser degree, the parameters that govern the functioning of the organization, job crafters must ensure that others in the organization do not view this disruption negatively. To this end, job crafters must engage in *adaptive behavior* to alter others' perceptions about them and their work, both before they engage in job crafting and as job crafting unfolds (Berg et al., 2010b). In broad terms, adaptive behavior consists of working with or getting around challenges, problems, obstacles, or constraints that arise during the performance of work. Adaptive behavior was originally explored both at individual and team levels to explain how people cope with the dynamic and ill-defined work streams that characterize uncertain or unpredictable settings (De Jong & De Ruyter, 2004; Griffin et al., 2007; Pulakos et al., 2000; Zajac, Gregory, Bedwell, Kramer, & Salas, 2014). Berg, Wrzesniewski, & Dutton (2010) brought the concept into the job crafting literature to explain how job crafters get around perceived constraints that limit their ability to alter the boundaries of their job. In this context, adaptive behavior involves taking action to change others' views and expectations of what the job crafting individual or group can contribute to the organization (vs. what they are formally expected to contribute) and who they can become (vs. who they are recognized to be in connection with their formal job).

Studies of individual and collaborative job crafting found that job crafters exhibited different forms of adaptive behavior. Their adaptive moves included, among others (a) leveraging their strengths to seize job crafting opportunities whose outcomes are valued by others (Berg et al., 2010b; Leana et al., 2009); (b) engaging in direct communication with others likely to accommodate their job crafting intentions (Berg et al., 2010b; Orr, 1996); and (c) building trust with others in order to gain their support for their job crafting initiatives (Berg et al., 2010b; Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006). As expected, job crafters directed these adaptive

moves toward actors they believed would help them unlock job crafting opportunities and enable their job crafting initiatives. Among these actors were groups or individuals positioned higher in the organizational hierarchy or colleagues who sat that the same hierarchical level.

These findings provide a basis for studying adaptive behavior in collective job crafting, but are likely insufficient to encompass its complexity. Collective job crafting presents special challenges in adaptive behavior because, by definition, this form of job crafting challenges the group's formal mandate and, with it, the way it is viewed across the organization. While an individual job crafter might need support from her boss and a given job crafter within a team might require backing from fellow team members, a group engaged in collective job crafting must direct its adaptive behavior toward virtually every unit in the organization with which it interacts. These units may have different perceptions of our group and value its collective job crafting initiatives to different extents. This may require the group to target selected forms of adaptive behavior to different actors while maintaining consistency in the way it presents itself across the board.

Understanding these dynamics would entail assessing how a group attempts to challenge the status quo in its organization (both in terms of the division of labor: 'who does what' and in terms of hierarchy and power distribution: 'who has the right to do what'); how it takes action to create favorable conditions for collective change in tasks, relationships, and meanings; how it defines, frames, and sells the value of the job crafting opportunities it identifies to other units; how it engages these units' cooperation when its collective job crafting initiatives require others' input, attention, or resources; how it manages the visibility of its collectively crafted job vis-à-vis different actors in the organization; and how it fosters in others acceptance of a new, collectively crafted group identity. Lastly, because collective job crafting is a continuous process that unfolds

over time rather than a collection of discrete activities, understanding adaptive behavior in collective job crafting would entail assessing how the group's efforts to adapt others' expectations are renewed over time.

Proactive Behavior, Adaptive Behavior, and Perceived Job Crafting Opportunities

The conditions that enable job crafters to identify and seize job crafting opportunities has been examined at the individual and interpersonal levels. Studies posit that individuals' ability to perceive job crafting opportunities (either when acting alone or while embedded within a group) is, in part, linked to the sense of freedom or discretion they have in what they do in their job and how they do it. Discretion implies "autonomy to act … and some sense of ability or means to act" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001:183). It fosters feelings of agency and of self-determination that underlie the impulse to become a job crafter (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003; Vandewalle, Van Dyne, & Kostova, 1995). In a work environment where individuals and groups lack discretion, obedience and playing by the rules are emphasized over autonomy and self-directed experimentation. Hence, the less discretion would-be job crafters enjoy, the fewer opportunities they may be able to effectively seize (i.e., a negative effect on proactive behavior) and the more they may need to alter other actors' expectations and views as a way to gain support for their job crafting initiatives (i.e., the higher the need for adaptive behavior).

Studies of job crafting have found that discretion hinges on at least four factors: (a) the degree to which a person's job is interdependent with the jobs of other individuals or groups; (b) the person's rank on the organization's hierarchy; (3) the presence or absence of supportive supervision; and (d) the extent to which the person has access to strategic information.

Interdependence. Studies have identified task interdependence as a possible hindrance to job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). However, jobs may be bound by different kinds of interdependence simultaneously. Each layer of interdependence contributes to granting the individual who performs that job a greater or lesser sense of discretion. For example, two jobs may be bound by task interdependence, meaning that the completion of a task under the purview of job A is a critical input to a task under the purview of job B. In this scenario, changes in the state of job A's task will alter the state of job B's task (Puranam & Raveendran, 2012; Thompson, 1967). At the same time, jobs A and B may also be knowledge interdependent, in the sense that the individuals who perform them must rely on one another's knowledge and skills to successfully complete their respective tasks (Pennings, 1975; Sorenson, Rivkin, & Fleming, 2006). In this scenario, the degree to which these individuals or groups are willing to share, transfer, or integrate their knowledge will have consequences for their job performance (Carlile, 2002; Tsoukas, 1996). In parallel, jobs A and B could also be bound by role interdependence (Katz & Kahn, 1966; Pennings, 1975; Thomas, 1957), reward interdependence (Kelley & Thibaut, 1980; Wageman & Baker, 1997) or technological interdependence (Bailey, Leonardi, & Chong, 2010), among others.

Studies propose that individual job crafters whose jobs are bound to those of others through complex interdependencies experience less discretion to craft their jobs than job crafters who work fairly independently from their peers. The first set of job crafters will typically spend more time and attention ensuring coordination with others (Wageman, 1995) and find less freedom to experiment with the nature or the sequence of work processes (Van de Ven, Delbecq, & Koenig Jr, 1976; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Interestingly, studies have found that collaborative job crafters who share complex interdependencies find that this empowers them, rather than precludes them, from jointly engaging in job crafting. For example, kindergarten teachers who saw their work as highly interdependent with that of aides fostered an atmosphere of co-teaching in the classroom and opened more doors for aides to take over tasks they would normally not execute than teachers who drew clear lines between their work domain and that of their aides (Leana et al., 2009).

Rank. Studies conducted at the individual level have found that perceived discretion to engage in job crafting varies with the job crafter's position in the organizational hierarchy (Berg et al., 2010b). Higher-rank individuals occupy positions that grant them considerable levels of power and autonomy. They also perform tasks that are defined in broad terms, i.e., they are entrusted with ensuring certain general outcomes but are not beholden to specific methods in achieving those goals. Despite these apparently favorable conditions, higher-rank individuals experienced low levels of discretion to engage in job crafting. They often identified opportunities to craft their job, but were constrained in their ability to seize them because they felt compelled to use most of their time and energy working toward their prescribed goals. In contrast, the job descriptions of individuals who sit lower in the organizational hierarchy tend to include tasks defined in detailed terms and to prescribe specific methods and processes for carrying them out. While this scenario may not appear conducive to job crafting at first sight, lower-rank individuals experienced higher levels of discretion to engage in job crafting. While constrained by their job design's expectations on how to use their time and energy at work, they found it relatively easier to alter others' expectations and, thereby, to change their work environments in ways that would facilitate capturing job crafting opportunities.

Studies at the interpersonal level report similar results when it comes to lower-rank group members. In their study of child daycare centers, Leana, Appelbaum, & Shevchuk (2009) found that aides (lower-rank) tended to rely on collaborative job crafting to seize opportunities to redraw the boundaries of their job in the classroom. Given implicit hierarchical differences between teachers and aides, teachers often controlled or directed the work of aides. This made engaging individual job crafting, performed independently of the teacher, difficult for them. The unpredictable nature of childcare created opportunities for aides to alter teachers' expectations and, through collaborative job crafting, jump into roles they would normally not occupy. In contrast, teachers (higher-rank) were more prone to engaging in individual (rather than collaborative) job crafting compared to aides. Teachers enjoyed relatively high autonomy to introduce changes to their own work relative to aides, and altered the boundaries of their job without resorting to collaboration.

Supportive supervision. Discretion depends, in part, on the extent to which job crafters are monitored by managers. Supervision tends to be intense in organizations where hierarchy is rigid and salient and where workers are expected to conform to the specifications set in formally defined work processes (Gulick & Urwick, 1937; Weber, 1946). Individuals tend to find fewer opportunities to engage in job crafting, because the assumption is that 'the one best way' to perform the job has already been codified into the formal job description (Taylor, 1914). In these contexts, supervisors' main task often consists of ensuring that their subordinates are working according to the specifications of their job. Deviations from prescribed methods tend to be highly visible and less frequently tolerated (Ghitulescu, 2007; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

In contrast, organizations in which work streams are dynamic, job descriptions are able to articulate some job requirements clearly but often leave others unspecified (Davis, Eisenhardt, &

Bingham, 2009). The dynamic nature of the work streams that characterizes these settings makes close supervision both impractical and undesirable, as employees require certain degrees of freedom to respond to the changing requirements of their work. In these settings, supportive supervision—consisting of providing helpful feedback, being available to discuss work challenges, and granting necessary resources, among other traits—helps create a work environment in which employees tend to find and capture more opportunities to craft their jobs both individually or collaboratively (Leana et al., 2009; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). This is due, in part, to the fact that supportive supervision contributes to job crafters' sense of psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999), which encourages individuals to take risks and facilitates employee learning and innovation (Berg et al., 2010b; Leana et al., 2009).

Access to strategic information. Lastly, discretion also hinges on the extent to which managers communicate the organization's strategy and foster employee inclusiveness in strategic matters. In organizations where hierarchy is salient, strategic decisions tend to be made at the top and trickled down vertically down the chain of command on a needs-to-know basis (Gulick & Urwick, 1937; Weber, 1946). Individuals' involvement is usually circumscribed to implementation and many perform their work with incomplete or imperfect understanding of what the organization is trying to achieve. This makes impactful job crafting—either at the individual or the interpersonal level—difficult, as individuals lack sufficient information to draw connections between potential job crafting opportunities and organizational goals (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

In contrast, organizations where strategic goals are communicated broadly and where individuals are encouraged to participate in strategic discussions provide fertile grounds for job crafters. Access to strategic information may allow job crafters to deeply understand the

interconnections between job crafting opportunities and organizational performance (Leana et al., 2009). This makes them more likely to identify and seize impactful opportunities to expand their role and to contribute to organizational performance.

Given these considerations, it is important for would-be job crafters to engage in adaptive behavior in order to increase the levels of discretion they enjoy at work. Adaptive behavior helps job crafters ease the constraints created by complex interdependencies, their job's hierarchical rank, the quality of the supervision they receive, and the degree to which they are privy to strategic information—all of which benefit their ability to deploy proactive behavior to identify and seize job crafting opportunities. I expect these considerations to hold for collective job crafting. However, I also anticipate that collective job crafting performed consistently over time—as was the case in Media Solutions' self-driven evolution—may reveal additional challenges. Therefore, understanding a group's ability to identify and seize collective job crafting opportunities may require not only considering interdependence, rank, quality of supervision, and access to strategic information, but also higher-order matters such as the degree of formalization and stratification of the organization's structure (Baron, 1984) and the presence or absence of 'empty spaces' (Hatch, 1999), environmental demands associated with the stage of the industry life-cycle the organization is traversing (Klepper, 1997), and the degree of flexibility of the cognitive frames, routines, and reward systems that underlie strategy definition and implementation (Benner & Tushman, 2003; Kaplan & Henderson, 2005).

RQ2. How do Groups Claim Jurisdiction over a Collectively Crafted Job?

In order to support the second research question, I first contrast adaptive behavior and jurisdictional claims as two devices a group may use to alter its environment in ways that favor

its collective job crafting endeavors. While adaptive behavior induces other actors to alter their perceptions and expectations about the group so it can engage in collective job crafting on an informal basis, jurisdictional claims attempt to gain other actors' endorsement so that crafted tasks and relationships can be codified into the group's formal mandate. Later, I analyze the challenges groups face when their collective job crafting efforts start colliding with organizational and occupational tenets and with notions of who should have power in the organization. I conclude by posing questions regarding how a group may transform an informally crafted mandate into what I call an *idiosyncratic occupation*—a unique body of work sanctioned by the organization so that it reflects the capabilities, interests, preferences, and identity of the group that created and enacts it.

Adaptive Behavior vs. Jurisdictional Claims

By definition, collective job crafting in an organization begins as a series of informal initiatives carried out in a coordinated fashion by the members of a group, with the shared intent of altering the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of the group's mandate. Because collective job crafting defies the boundaries of what the group has been formally assigned to do, it usually leads the group to operate beyond its appointed jurisdiction[1].

As discussed earlier, a group's collective job crafting activities may remain informal over time as long as the group is able to alter other units' perceptions about who the group is and what it may contribute to the organization—what Berg et al. (2010b) describe as *adaptive behavior*.

[1] Note the difference between 'mandate' and 'jurisdiction'. A mandate is a group's overall job or mission, which can be expressed in one or a few sentences. In contrast, a group's jurisdiction is the collection of tasks and relationships the group owns by virtue of its mandate. Then, while a mandate can be formal or informal (i.e., crafted), a jurisdiction is always formal. A group can perform tasks by virtue of its crafted mandate that it doesn't own, i.e., that lie outside of its jurisdiction.

However, operating informally may eventually prove problematic. The more a group's collective job crafting endeavors modify the nature of the work it performs and the organizational spaces in which it operates, the more difficult it may be for the group to rely solely on adaptive behavior and the more motivated it may become to claim jurisdiction over collectively crafted tasks and relationships.

This is, perhaps, particularly so for groups whose formal mandates or appointed jurisdictions in the organization coincide with or closely mirror occupational jurisdictions long-established in the industry or in society at large (Abbott, 1988, 1993), as was the case with Media Solutions. When the organizational and occupational dimensions of a job reinforce one another, actors in the organization and the organization's environment have pre-conceived notions about who the group is and what it is meant to do not only because the organization's formal structure says so, but also because that is what individuals who hold group members' occupation do everywhere else (Ghitulescu, 2007). Collective job crafting activities that significantly modify how a group enacts its mandate and how its members perform their jobs may, ultimately, create dissonance in observers' minds from an organizational design perspective (i.e., the group operates beyond what is established in the organization's formal structure) *and* from an occupational perspective (i.e., the group operates beyond the norms that govern a given occupation) (Anteby, Chan, & DiBenigno, 2016). In both of these instances, observers may have reservations in terms of the organizational spaces the group has come to occupy through collective job crafting (i.e., spaces that should remain beyond the group's reach, given its formal mandate and occupational tenets) and in terms of the degree of informal power the group may have gained (i.e., power that groups with similar formal mandates and occupations tend not to wield in other organizations).

Under these circumstances, then, the group can only sustain its collective job crafting activities over time if it succeeds in convincing actors in the organization and the organization's environment that its collectively crafted job is legitimate both organizationally and occupationally. While this is certainly possible to achieve informally through adaptive behavior, claiming jurisdiction over collectively crafted tasks and relationships may help cement that legitimacy, so that actors come to see the group's work as a sanctioned 'exception to the rule'. In this vein, I postulate that gaining jurisdiction over a collectively crafted job equates having the organization acknowledge the collectively crafted job as an *idiosyncratic occupation*.

The notion of idiosyncratic occupation at the group level finds a correlate in the concept of 'idiosyncratic job' at the individual level, first developed by Miner (1987). The tasks and relationships contained in an idiosyncratic job reflect the interests and abilities of the individual who occupies them. As such, an idiosyncratic job is specific to the organization where the practice of that job is situated (Hutchins, 1991; Lave, 1988; Suchman, 1987). The basis upon which the organization sanctions an idiosyncratic job is the recognition that an informally crafted or "evolved" job, as Miner (1987:327) calls it, is considered legitimate and worthy of formalization. Similarly, an idiosyncratic occupation can be conceived of as an occupation that finds its roots in the interests and abilities of the group that holds it and whose jurisdiction results from formalizing a collectively crafted job. This jurisdiction entails rights for the group to formally operate in collectively-crafted spaces it had thus far occupied informally and grants the group a level of formal power commensurate with the power the group wielded informally in association with its collectively crafted job.

Transforming a Collectively Crafted Job into an Idiosyncratic Occupation

To date, we have little insight into how groups claim jurisdiction over collectively crafted tasks and relationships. Specifically, we lack knowledge of the process through which groups whose collective job crafting initiatives have created significant distance between their organizational and occupational mandates and the actual practice of their job transform their collectively crafted job into an idiosyncratic occupation. To explore this process, I draw from the literature on occupations (Barley & Kunda, 2001; Durkheim, 2014 [1933]; Nelsen & Barley, 1997; Van Maanen & Barley, 1982), which has explored in depth the mechanisms through which these emerge and are institutionalized in society. Elements of this process may help shed light on how groups claim jurisdiction over a collectively crafted job within an organization and transform it into an idiosyncratic occupation.

Nelsen & Barley (1997:619) posit that the construction of an occupational mandate requires two elements:

> First, there must exist a group of practitioners who are sufficiently self-conscious to pursue collective action. Second, and more easily overlooked, members of the culture must acknowledge an activity as a form of work before anyone can meaningfully contest who shall perform it. At least in modern Western cultures, acknowledging an activity as a form of work means that it must be seen as worthy of remuneration.

Hence, occupations emerge from the initiative of a group of practitioners who act collectively to perform a novel body of work and thereby add enough value to warrant monetary rewards. Previous studies show that the tasks that occupational pioneers claim as part of the occupation's jurisdiction are usually the result of the introduction of a new technology (e.g., Barley, 1986; Leonardi & Barley, 2010) or of a process of "hiving-off," whereby an established occupation transfers its most routine duties onto another (e.g., DiBenigno & Kellogg, 2014; Freidson, 1974; Nelsen & Barley, 1997). Performing those tasks grants occupational members

specialized knowledge (Carlile, 2002) and the opportunity to enact prized identities (Anteby, 2008; Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006).

Occupations are often enacted within organizations, where occupational jurisdictions overlap with individuals' job descriptions (Cohen, 2013). A given occupation can, therefore, be understood as "a category of work that is concretely instantiated as particular jobs in particular organizations under particular job titles" (Anteby, Chan, & DiBenigno, 2015:9). When individuals with the same job description are formally grouped into a unit, as is the case of the group under study in this dissertation, occupational jurisdictions also coincide with the unit's job, mandate, or domain.

Occupations, in the same way as formally-designed units, are interdependent among one another and tend to deploy mechanisms to assert, defend, and negotiate their jurisdictional boundaries within the organization (Barley, 1986; Bechky, 2003a, b; Lamont & Molnár, 2002). In other words, occupations strive for *self-control* (Van Maanen & Barley, 1982): they want to establish their own values and norms, dictate how to organize, and define how to perform and evaluate their work. Achieving and retaining self-control can be problematic when the occupation is embedded within an organization, because occupational preferences may be at odds with organizational demands. In particular, self-control decreases when managers use hierarchical authority to direct occupational members' work in ways that contradict occupational tenets. These are circumstances in which "rational or administrative principles of control (e.g., codification, standardization, hierarchical discipline, etc.) compete with traditional or communal principles of control (e.g., peer pressures, work ideologies, valued symbols, etc.)" (Van Maanen & Barley, 1982:5). Self-control also decreases when other groups in the organization attempt to secure access to what the occupation considers proprietary knowledge (Child & Fulk, 1982).

Some of this knowledge can be codified and is therefore relatively easier to access by non-members of the occupation, decreasing the occupation's self-control, while some is based on skills or forms of know-how that remain tacit and are therefore less apprehensible, maintaining or enhancing occupational self-control.

Occupations that transcend organizational boundaries deploy tactics such as unionization and professionalization to achieve self-control and to keep others from encroaching on their jurisdiction (Van Maanen & Barley, 1982). Because idiosyncratic occupations are unique to a given organization, the practices groups deploy to claim jurisdiction over collectively tasks and relationships and to sustain the new occupation's self-control over time can be expected to differ. These tactics must enable the group to make the case for why the existence of a new occupation is necessary and, at the same time, debunk the need for its original occupation to persist. Despite these differences, the categories discussed above in the construction of an occupational mandate (e.g., a set of tasks discovered and performed by a motivated group of individuals; specialized knowledge; a prized identity; the use of technology; power, influence, and control; material rewards, and others) can be expected to apply regardless of whether the occupation in question is idiosyncratic or meant to exist across organizations, in society at large.

CHAPTER 3. METHODS

An Inductive Journey

The theory presented in this dissertation was developed inductively with a grounded approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I entered the field with the following research question: *How do individuals experience the process of organizing*, i.e., the ongoing construction of fluid, emergent, sometimes impermanent structures in organizations? At the time, I was deeply embedded in the literature on organizational design, which offers valuable high-level insights into the process of organizing (e.g., Child & McGrath, 2001; Davis et al., 2009; Hernes, 2007; Schreyögg & Sydow, 2010; Weick, 1979, 2012), yet often ignores its micro-foundations: the motivations and struggles of the individuals on the ground who actually *do* the organizing.

The process of organizing is particularly relevant in organizations that operate in industries characterized by dynamism (the high speed or rate at which new opportunities emerge) (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997) and ambiguity (the lack of clarity that makes interpreting or distinguishing opportunities particularly challenging) (Davis et al., 2009; March & Olsen, 1979). In these settings, formal structure can only imperfectly support the rapidly shifting nature of the work. As a result, employees must often 'fill the void' by organizing in a fluid and organic fashion around the unique demands of their work streams (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Scott & Davis, 2015 [2006]). While the process of organizing has been studied from an organizational viewpoint for decades, the experience of organizing as lived by individuals has received significantly less attention. I was curious to learn how individuals managed the ambiguity, the uncertainty, and the excitement of working in environments characterized by rapidly shifting work streams. I sought to understand how individuals made sense of what to do, whom to

connect with, and how to coordinate in the presence of unclear, incomplete, or faulty road maps. And I wanted to know how individuals constructed their work identities when the essence of their day to day work went far beyond what was established by the organization's formal structure. My intention was to create a theory of organizing rooted in individuals' discovery of the nature of their work and the construction of their identity. My goal was to connect individual sense- and decision-making in terms of 'who I am' and 'what I do' at work with the higher-order process of organizing at the firm level.

My research question brought me to CLICK (a pseudonym), a leading social media company. I gained access to the company through a friend. She introduced me to Nigel Wright (again, a pseudonym), who led a unit at CLICK called Media Solutions (the unit's actual name, used with permission). Our mutual friend told me that Media Solutions members carried out some of the most complex and interconnected work in the organization without much of a supporting structure. At the time, the social media industry was booming and CLICK was at the forefront of its development. Ambiguity and uncertainty abounded. Sensing that this would be an ideal setting in which to find answers to my research question, I seized the chance to come in and study the experience of organizing through Media Solutions members' eyes.

As is often the case in grounded theory, however, I did not exactly find what I was looking for. What I observed, instead, was a process of self-determination at work that contributed to—yet went beyond—organizing, and that involved individuals, units, and the organization at large. I saw individuals who purposefully and consistently drew and redrew the boundaries of their job in terms of tasks, relationships, and meanings. They systematically created and recreated a vision of what was it possible to do in the job, they sought opportunities to turn this vision into reality and, in the process, created the building blocks organizing is made

of: new tasks, newly discovered interdependencies, and new relationships to others across the organization. These individual-level dynamics, however, were performed in a coordinated fashion by all members of the Media Solutions unit and were primarily meant to benefit the unit rather than the individual. Moreover, these individual-level dynamics were coupled with group-level dynamics that allowed the unit to work cohesively internally and to present a united front externally. Members altered the nature of their job in order to jointly erase the formal mandate their unit received when it was first created and to informally establish a new mandate—one that would enable the group to increase its knowledge base, to enhance its sphere of influence at CLICK and the marketplace, and to enact a more meaningful group identity. Media Solutions members *transformed themselves and their work in order to transform their unit* and, thereby, to grant it a more prominent place in shaping CLICK's evolution as a social media platform. I labeled this process *collective job crafting.* I found that collective job crafting had far-reaching consequences for the group, its members, and the organization. As my theory emerged, I adjusted my data collection and analysis to capture the phenomenon of collective job crafting as faithfully and comprehensively as possible. Because narrating these adjustments in detail would prove too lengthy and complex, what follows is an account of the methodology I employed once I centered my theory on the phenomenon of collective job crafting.

Research Design

My examination of the process of collective job crafting is the result of an in-depth longitudinal inductive qualitative study. Given our limited knowledge of forms of job crafting that occur at the group level, inductive qualitative methods are appropriate for two main reasons. First, these methods facilitate exploration by allowing the researcher to dive deeply into the

phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Locke, 2001; Pratt, 2009). This is especially useful in areas where categories and processes are not yet well understood and where the researcher aims to build and elaborate, rather than test, theory (Edmondson & McManus, 2007; Gephart, 2004; Golden-Biddle & Locke, 2007). Second, these methods allow the researcher to understand the world from the perspective of the study's protagonists and to "make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln 2008:4). These considerations are consistent with Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001)'s remarks in their seminal work on job crafting. They recommend taking "methodological care" when studying this phenomenon and note that inductive qualitative methods may be the most adequate to employ, precisely because they yield data that is imbued with the meanings individuals ascribe to their work and to themselves in it (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001:197).

In turn, a longitudinal approach is indicated because the dynamics that lie at the core of my phenomenon of interest unfold over long periods of time. A cross-sectional analysis of these processes would capture an incomplete picture of the phenomenon's true nature (Burgelman, 2011; Langley, 1999; Pettigrew, 1990). My study encompassed a total of three years, during which I was able to observe and document the ebbs and flows that characterize collective job crafting as it unfolds over time. This methodological choice is also consistent with (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001)'s view of how job crafting should be studied. While early models of job crafting provide "snapshots of features that are conducive to the occurrence of this behavior," a longitudinal take on the phenomenon like the one I present here would afford "a more nuanced and processual account of how job crafting is initiated [and] how it is sustained and transformed in the work process" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001:196).

My research strategy relied on the use of a single case study (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1981, 1984). Case studies are well suited to examining phenomena that occur within organizations, as they afford a view that is both in-depth and holistic. In particular, single cases are adequate when the study focuses on a phenomenon-driven research question and the phenomenon under study is rare and/or complex (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Under these circumstances, a single case can prove revelatory and thereby constitute "a very powerful example" (Siggelkow, 2007:20). I performed a deep dive into a single unit (Media Solutions) at a single organization (CLICK). My methodological choice allowed me to maintain close proximity to the field, to gain deep knowledge of the research context, and to gather extremely rich data from various sources. This enabled me to leverage the strength of each source and, thereby, to generate triangulated insights from my single field site over time. In selecting a single case, my purpose was not to focus on its unique features but to use it for analytical purposes, i.e., for obtaining findings that can be generalized beyond the particular case (Langley, 1999).

Qualitative research remains "open to unanticipated events," and is therefore "often designed at the same time it is being done" (Gephart, 2004:455). When I started this research project, I was aware of the dynamism and the ambiguity that characterized the social media industry and CLICK in particular, but was as surprised as the members of Media Solutions at the unexpected events that unfolded. I stepped into the field during what eventually became year 6 of the unit's existence. I focused on understanding Media Solutions' collectively crafted work, its emergent relationships with agents across and beyond the organization, and its efforts to organize internally to better execute on its self-appointed mandate. Issues related to claiming jurisdiction over Media Solutions' collectively crafted job (i.e., issues connected with asserting formal ownership of the unit's collectively crafted tasks and relationships) came up in my discussions

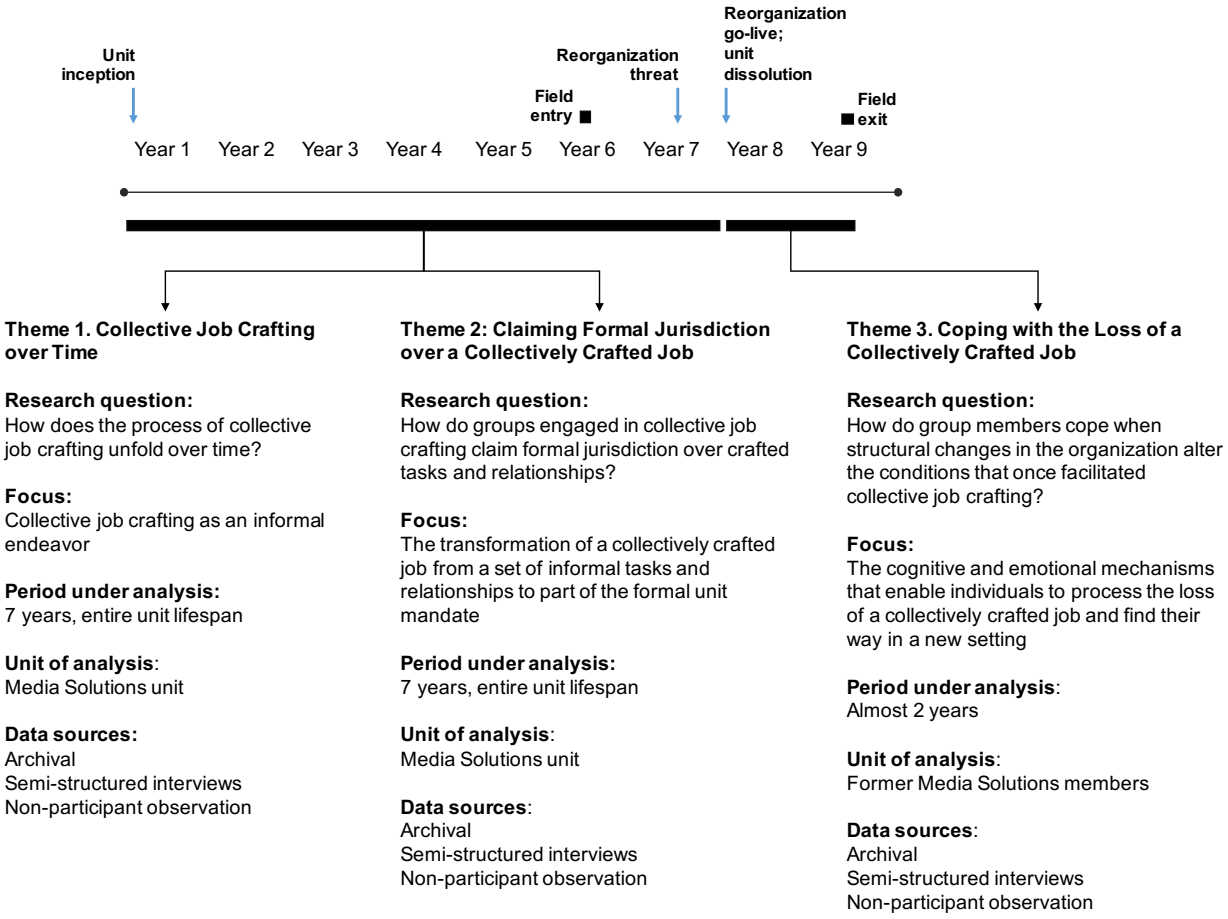
with managers inasmuch as they created coordination problems with other units or shortage of resources to support the unit's growing body of work, most of which was being performed on an informal basis, without ownership or compensation.

About a year into my field work and during year 7 of the unit's lifespan, rumors surfaced of a reorganization that would eliminate Media Solutions, Account Management, and other small Sales-oriented units from CLICK's structure and reassign all their members to a newly created function. These rumors precipitated efforts by Media Solutions managers to induce Sales leaders to keep their unit intact. The possibility that the reorganization may come to pass as planned provided an occasion to renew the unit's jurisdictional claims not only to streamline coordination or guarantee the availability of resources, but to ensure the unit's survival. This extreme situation, which extended over a 4-month period of intense negotiation, made the unit's jurisdictional struggles throughout its entire history salient and relevant. Media Solutions' efforts ultimately failed and reorganization went live on January 1st, year 8. The implementation of the new structure marked the end of both Media Solutions and of its members' collective job crafting activity. The reorganization proved momentous for former Media Solutions members because their work identities were tightly interwoven with the evolution of their unit's crafted identity and work. I resolved to continue following former members in their post-reorganization roles in order to capture the experience of coping with the loss of a collectively crafted job.

The reorganization threat and its subsequent implementation prompted me to center my data collection and analysis around three main themes: (1) the process of collective job crafting as a process that unfolds informally over time; (2) the process of claiming jurisdiction over a collectively crafted job at distinct moments in time; and (3) the process of coping with the loss of a collectively crafted job. Themes 1 and 2 constitute the core of this dissertation and can be

mapped to research questions 1 and 2 in the previous chapter. While theme 3 lies beyond the scope of this work, data collected after the reorganization informed the theories I present here. I am, therefore, laying out the complete research design in order to provide full visibility of the context in which data were collected and analyzed. Figure 3.1 shows the full timeline of my study, the research questions I pursued, the level of analysis at which I worked, and the data sources I relied on.

Figure 3.1: Research Timeline



Theme 1. Collective job crafting over time. In mapping how the process of collective job crafting unfolds over time, my goal was to understand how Media Solutions members

coordinated over a period of seven years to informally alter the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of the unit's mandate. The unit of analysis at this stage was Media Solutions as a group, with a secondary focus on individual members. Because some of the events I studied occurred before I entered the field, I supplemented retrospective accounts of the unit's evolution between years 1 (unit inception) and 6.5 (field entry) with archival data. To map current events between years 6.5 and 8 (reorganization go-live), I made use of interview, non-participant observation, and archival data alike. Finally, I counterbalanced any risk of retrospective bias in data collected after the reorganization by comparing these accounts with archival data and insights from interview and non-participant observation collected between years 6.5 and the dissolution of the unit.

Theme 2. Claiming jurisdiction over a collectively crafted job. In mapping how Media Solutions claimed jurisdiction over its collectively crafted job, I focused on instances throughout the unit's 7-year history where the unit argued for ownership of some or all of its collectively crafted tasks and relationships. My analysis took place at the unit level. To examine jurisdictional claims that took place before I entered the field, I took the same provisions in examining the data as for theme 1. I was able to capture jurisdictional claims in real time while I was present in the field, with one exception: during the 4-month period in which the unit made jurisdictional claims to argue for its survival, I was unable to join a handful of meetings that took place between Media Solutions managers and Sales leaders due to lack of access[2]. However, a

[2] As explained in the first section of this chapter, I gained access to Media Solutions via Nigel Wright, U.S. Head of Media Solutions, with the intent to study the unit. At the particular moment in time when meetings took place to determine the survival or dissolution of Media Solutions, Nigel and I agreed that it would be best for me not to attend. These meetings faced Media Solutions managers and senior members with Sales leaders that operated in the U.S. and globally, several levels higher in CLICK's hierarchy. The presence of an extraneous person, coupled with the emotions that the possible dissolution of their unit elicited in Media Solutions members, would have been counterproductive. As explained above, I became privy to the content of those meetings during interviews with 6 different Media Solutions members. While their reports may have been biased, the interviews yielded extremely similar accounts of the meetings. Insights were complemented with dozens of emails to and from Sales leaders.

substantial part of the negotiations took place via email exchanges. Media Solutions managers made these email threads available to me and related to me the events that transpired at each meeting during interviews. I was also privy to the rich archival data upon which Media Solutions based their arguments.

Theme 3. Coping with the loss of a collectively crafted job. Media Solutions' attempt at gaining jurisdiction over its collectively crafted job eventually failed. The reorganization went live at the beginning of the following calendar year. As a result, Media Solutions was merged with other units and members assigned to a specialized Sales-oriented function. This change in circumstances led me to refocus my study from the unit (which no longer existed) to the individual, and from collective job crafting (which was no longer feasible as once performed) to former members' personal responses to the change, some of which included elements of individual job crafting. My research centered on the mechanisms individuals used to cope with the loss of a collectively crafted job, with the loss of the sense of community their unit provided, and with the loss of an identity they had jointly constructed. I followed this process for almost 2 years, relying on interview, archival, and observation data. As stated earlier, insights garnered to answer this research question are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Research Setting

The research setting was the Media Solutions unit at CLICK. According to the organization's formal structure, the unit was in charge of *ad trafficking*, i.e., of programming ads onto the CLICK platform on behalf of clients. Each Media Solutions member worked alongside sellers and account managers on one or more small client account teams across nine industry verticals: auto, consumer products, e-commerce, entertainment, financial services, quick service

restaurants, retail, telecommunications, and travel. In parallel to their work in client account teams, members informally participated in projects in one or more complementary areas of specialization: the creation of new tools, the design of new business processes, or the creation of new ad products. These projects, and the changing responsibilities they derived in for individual members and for the unit as a whole, constituted the essence of Media Solutions members' collective job crafting efforts.

Throughout its 7-year history, the unit employed an estimated total of 70 people. Because Media Solutions had one of the lowest attrition rates at CLICK, I had exposure to the vast majority of individuals who, at one time or another, were part of the unit. I was able to either interview or observe 60 active members and two former members who had been among the unit's first employees. 27 of these 62 individuals were women. Members were distributed among five offices in the United States: Austin, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Silicon Valley, and I was granted access to collect data at all locations. Each local office had one or more managers, depending on its size. All local managers reported to Nigel Wright, who was the Head of Media Solutions in the United States. Nigel reported to Dylan Brown, who led Media Solutions worldwide. Dylan reported to top executives in CLICK's Sales organization. Table 3.1 shows descriptive statistics about the Media Solutions unit in the United States. Figure 3.2, in turn, provides a simplified organizational structure to situate Media Solutions within CLICK.

Table 3.1: Descriptive Statistics of the Media Solutions Unit

POSITION			LOCATION			GENDER			TENURE IN UNIT			INDUSTRY VERTICAL		
Lead	2	3.2%	Austin	8	12.9%	Female	27	43.5%	Less than a year	13	21.0%	Auto	2	3.8%
Manager	8	12.9%	Chicago	3	4.8%	Male	35	56.5%	1 to 3 years	24	38.7%	Consumer products	10	19.2%
Member	52	83.9%	Los Angeles	4	6.5%				More than 3 years	23	37.1%	e-commerce	2	3.8%
			New York City	29	46.8%				Former member	2	3.2%	Entertainment	4	7.7%
			Silicon Valley	13	21.0%							Financial services	4	7.7%
			Various locations	5	8.1%							Quick service restaurants	3	5.8%
												Retail	7	13.5%
												Telecommunications	3	5.8%
												Travel	1	1.9%
												Various verticals	16	30.8%
TOTAL	**62**			**62**			**62**			**62**			**52**	

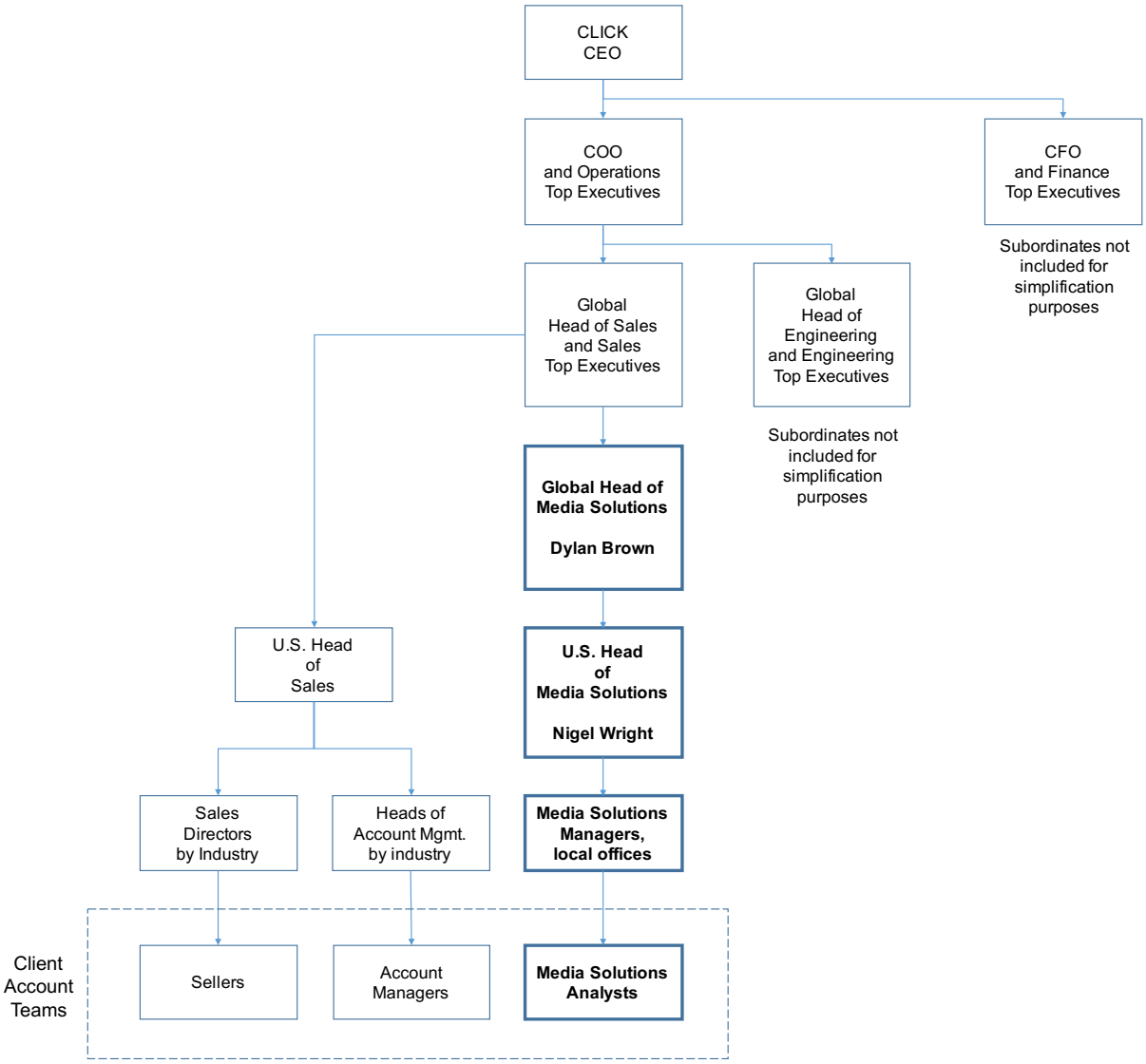
"Various locations" implies the member switched office locations during the study.

Tenure in unit is measured at the time I left the field if the person was still a member of the unit, and at the time she left if no longer a member.

Industry vertical count does not include managers or leads.

"Various verticals" implies the member switched verticals or straddled verticals during the study.

Figure 3.2: A Simplified Organizational Structure—Media Solutions at CLICK



Data Collection

Data collection spanned three years. I entered the field during year 6 out of the 7 that comprised the Media Solutions unit's lifetime, and left nearly two years after the unit's dissolution. I gathered both real-time and retrospective data from diverse sources: semi-

structured interviews, non-participant observation, and written documentation[3]. Data collection took place at the five CLICK offices in the United States where Media Solutions members were based.

During the first two years of research, I spent an average of three to five days in the field every other month, and gathered data over the phone and email in between visits. During the final year, I made one last field site visit and maintained contact over the phone and email with about 10 key informants. In total, I spent 52 days in the field. Table 3.2 shows the structure of my data.

Table 3.2: Structure of the data

DAYS IN THE FIELD	
Austin	4
Chicago	6
Los Angeles	1
New York City	34
Silicon Valley	7
TOTAL	**52**

Days in the field are commesurate with the size of the Media Solutions teams in those locations. Teams in all locations were established before I entered the field, with the exception of Los Angeles.

[3] All non-participant observation was performed in real time in physical proximity to members of the unit. Archival data contained real-time information at the time it was produced, with the exception of emails Media Solutions members wrote specifically to me making sense of key events. These emails sometimes blended real-time accounts with accounts of the past and projections of the future. The same was true for interviews: most conversations touched on a mix of past events, present circumstances, and future expectations.

Table 3.2: Structure of the data (Continued)

INTERVIEWS						
By type of interviewee		**By location of interviewee**	**In person**	**Phone/VC**	**By era**	
With Media Solutions members	**260**	Austin	13	17	Media Solutions (before reorganization)	117
With members of other units	**17**	Chicago	11	5	Media Solutions (reorganization threat)	10
Sales	4	Los Angeles	5	5	Sales Solutions (after reorganization)	150
Account Management	7	New York City	146	29		
Engineering	3	Silicon Valley	33	13		
HR - Recruitment	1	**SUBTOTAL**	**208**	**69**		
Business strategy	1					
Business operations	1					
TOTAL	**277**			**277**		**277**

Table 3.2: Structure of the Data (Continued)

NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION	Participants	Events	Time
Media Solutions weekly meeting	All Media Solutions members	14	12 hours and 15 minutes
Media Solutions small group meeting	Selected Media Solutions members	7	5 hours and 30 minutes
All Sales meeting	All sellers All account managers All Media Solutions members	7	5 hours and 40 minutes
Client account meeting	Seller(s) assigned to the account Account manager(s) assigned to the account Media Solutions member(s) assigned to the account	9	7 hours
Media Solutions general meeting with Engineering	All Media Solutions members Member of Engineering group/area	7	6 hours and 30 minutes
Media Solutions general meeting with Agency	All Media Solutions members Agency representatives	1	1 hour
Media Solutions recruitment interview	HR recruiter and/or Media Solutions manager Candidate	2	1 hour and 5 minutes
Media Solutions informal activities	Selected Media Solutions members	11	10 hours
TOTAL		**58**	**49 hours**

Table 3.2: Structure of the Data (Continued)

DOCUMENTS	Number of items	Number of pages
Presentations drawn by Media Solutions members	8	282
Reports written by Media Solutions members	4	50
Emails between Media Solutions members exclusively	59	62
Emails between Media Solutions members and members of other units at CLICK	52	46
Emails between Media Solutions members and myself	7	8
Management documents, Media Solutions	6	23
Management documents, CLICK Sales organization	2	31
TOTAL	**138**	**502**

Emails between Media Solutions members and myself include only those emails that contain data coded for the purposes of my study. Other emails (for example, those concerting interviews or field site visits) were disregarded.

Semi-structured Interviews. I conducted a total of 277 semi-structured interviews. 260 of these were conducted with Media Solutions members: 105 before the reorganization, 10 while Media Solutions negotiated with top management to gain formal jurisdiction over its crafted work, and 145 after the reorganization. Out of the 60 individuals who were active members of the unit at different times during my fieldwork, I was able to interview 59 and one former member who now held another role. I made a point of interviewing members as regularly as possible in order to capture their ongoing thinking and experiences. Interviews aimed to access the subjective experience and meaning-making processes of these individuals (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), first as they engaged in collective job crafting and later as they argued for the formalization of their collectively crafted work. Interviews typically lasted between 30 and 90 minutes, with some extending up to 120 minutes. I digitally recorded and transcribed the vast majority of them. During those that could not be recorded, I took verbatim notes to the best of my ability.

For the purposes of context, I also conducted 17 semi-structured interviews with 14 individuals in other roles at CLICK with whom Media Solutions members interacted frequently: sellers, account managers, and representatives of other units at the organization. Twelve of these interviews were performed before the reorganization and five thereafter. Finally, I carried out periodic informal conversations with four key informants (two Media Solutions managers and two members) to reflect on my ongoing interpretation of the phenomena under analysis. Whenever possible, I recorded these informal talks and in all cases took notes either during the conversations or immediately afterwards.

Non-participant Observation. I performed 39 hours of active non-participant observation by joining a total of 47 work-related events. These included Media Solutions weekly meetings,

client account meetings, meetings with engineers, product managers, and other Engineering-oriented internal roles, and recruitment interviews, to name a few. During these events, I sat unobtrusively in a corner of the room except when invited to join the table. I took detailed notes, seeking to capture verbatim quotes. In addition, I spent 10 hours taking part in 11 informal activities with Media Solutions members such as lunches, company-sponsored social events, and get-togethers after work. These kinds of activities, which took place frequently, enabled me to become familiarized with the culture of the group. I wrote down my impressions during the events whenever I could and immediately afterwards otherwise. I also took notes whenever I caught conversations on the fly among Media Solutions members or between Media Solutions members and members of other units. These included occasions where one individual asked another for advice, vented about a situation she was going through with a client, or made a joke related to work matters that others responded to.

Archival data. I gathered 138 high-quality documents totaling over 500 pages. These included presentations and reports prepared by Media Solutions members, email threads where information was exchanged among Media Solutions members and/or Media Solutions members and members of other units, and other substantial internal documents where milestones in the evolution of the unit were discussed. Some of these documents were produced before I entered the field. They proved invaluable to counterbalance any retrospective bias contained in the interviews and aided me in reconstructing the early years as faithfully as possible. Documents that referenced current events allowed me to gauge members' ongoing sensemaking of the situations their unit underwent. Lastly, throughout the research project I gathered press articles and publicly-available reports in order to familiarize myself with the vast ecosystem that is the social media industry and to understand CLICK's relevance in it.

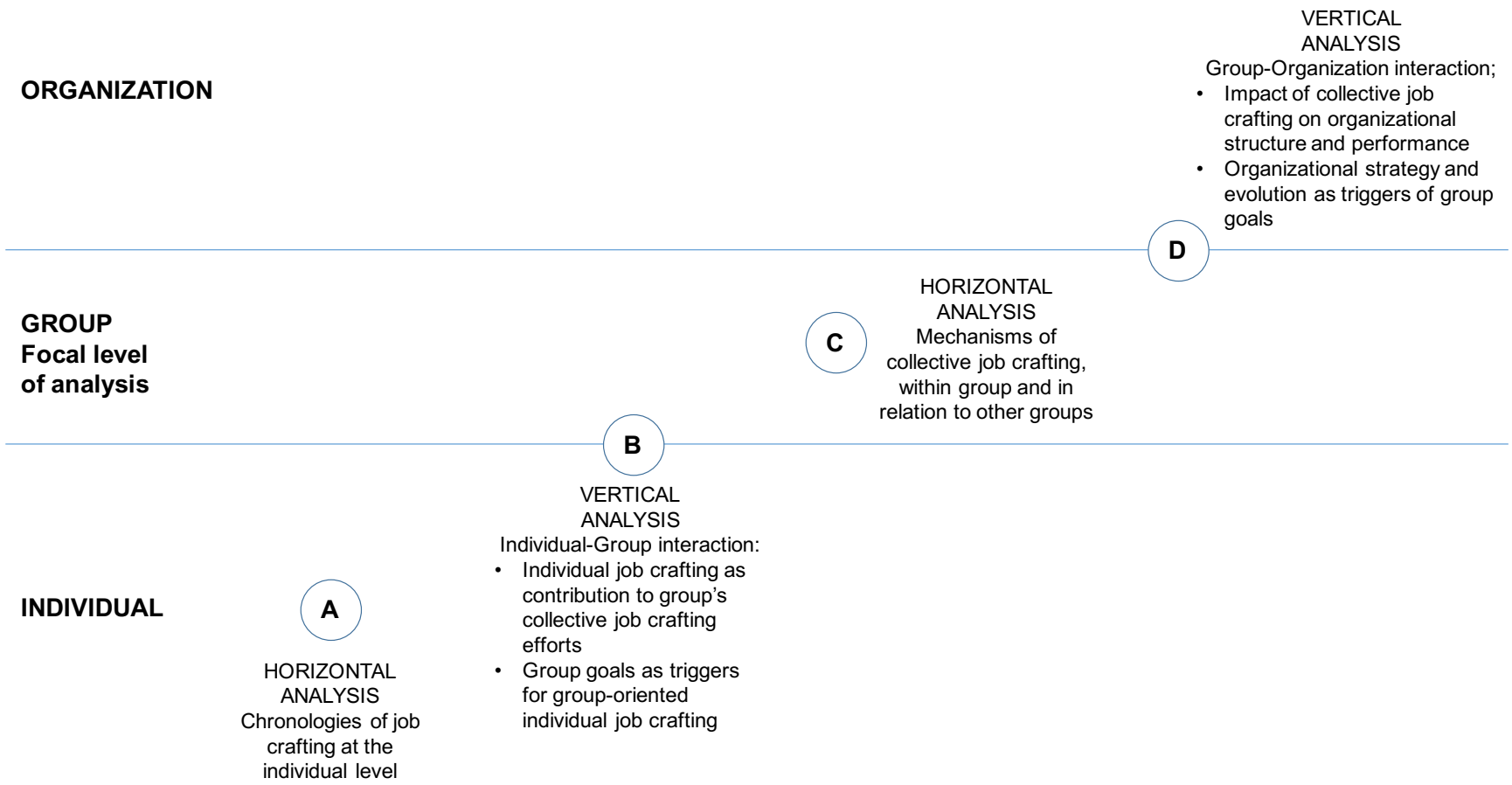
Data Analysis

Theme 1: Mapping the Process of Collective Job Crafting

The multidimensional nature of collective job crafting implied the pursuit of three goals in data analysis: (1) to uncover broad temporal patterns of job crafting at the collective level, as the group moved away from its formal mandate; (2) to capture the ongoing micro-processes through which group members made sense of, gave meaning to, and organized their day-to-day work to contribute to the unit's job crafting efforts; and (3) to shed light on the mechanisms through which collective job crafting impacted organization-level processes and outcomes. Fulfilling these goals implied tracing the process of collective job crafting through "messy" data (Langley, 1999:691) that spanned multiple contexts (Dreier, 1999) and often blurred the boundaries between levels of analysis (Pettigrew, Woodman, & Cameron, 2001).

I embarked on data analysis following a *contextualist* approach (Pettigrew, 1985a, b, 1990). This approach is especially well-suited to analyze process data that span levels of analysis and extend over long periods of time. It views process as continuous rather than episodic and therefore aims to capture and explain process as it occurs in context rather than through snapshots taken at different moments in time. A contextualist approach requires the researcher to analyze data in two directions: (1) vertically or across levels of analysis, in order to gauge the interconnections of categories between them, and (2) horizontally or across time, in order to ascertain how phenomena are sequentially interconnected over time. Figure 3.4 synthesizes my use of contextualist analysis at this stage.

Figure 3.4: RQ 1. Contextualist Data Analysis



I began my analysis at the individual level and worked my way up. I gathered all interviews, observations, and documents I had for each of the individuals in my sample and developed chronologies describing their experience of the job across time (for however many years they worked at Media Solutions) and across contexts (both within the unit and beyond, such as in client account teams and projects) (node A in Figure 3.4) (Langley, 1999). I used the main categories identified by Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001) in their seminal work on job crafting at the individual level (tasks, relationships, meanings ascribed to the job, and identity) as initial guidelines. After noting each member's background and date of entry into the unit, I first mapped the tasks she undertook over time and the connections she established with other individuals and units at CLICK and in its environment, and coded both as 'individual proactive behavior.' I also remarked on the challenges members faced in the particular contexts in which they worked and remarked on the tactics they used to remove obstacles or gain support from others as they engaged in job crafting, and coded these as 'individual adaptive behavior.' This horizontal (i.e., longitudinal) analysis at the individual level allowed me to contrast the growing scope of the job each individual crafted over time vis-à-vis the quasi-rigidity of the formal job definition.

I subsequently performed narrative analysis to understand the experience of job crafting from the point of view of each individual (Pentland, 1999; Vaara, Sonenshein, & Boje, 2015). Narratives evidence how individuals make sense of their world and of their place in it (Gergen & Gergen, 1997). Individuals' actions, in turn, may be considered 'enacted narratives' (Czarniawska, 1997). I therefore analyzed both what individuals *said* in interviews and written communication and *did* during my observations of them. I focused especially on words and actions that conveyed the meanings individuals ascribed to their crafted job and their evolving

sense of identity. Two insights emerged from this analysis. First, Media Solutions members understood job crafting at the individual level as a contribution to fulfilling the unit's goals. Second, members' own sense of work identity was closely intertwined with the unit's envisioned and enacted identity.

At this point, I moved to vertical analysis (node B in Figure 3.4) and examined the interaction between individuals and the group. Looking vertically at the individual chronologies, I mapped the evolution of Media Solutions' crafted domain over time, noting the tasks the group undertook and the relationships it established by virtue of its members' initiative. As this map took shape, I pinpointed the organizational position the unit crafted for itself within CLICK. I remarked on pivotal moments in the evolution of the unit's crafted domain and position and bracketed it into different analytical stages (Strauss, 1993 [1993]). At the same time, I noted the instances where the definition of the group's goals provided individuals with pathways through which to engage in group-oriented individual job crafting. Goals ranged from high-level declarations of the unit's self-appointed mandate to specific lower-level tactics.

I subsequently focused my analysis at the group level, moving again in a horizontal fashion to examine the mechanisms through which the process of collective job crafting unfolded (node C in Figure 3.4). This analysis revealed that Media Solutions' collective job crafting efforts revolved around three continuously evolving elements: (1) the breadth of the group's knowledge base; (2) the degree to which the unit was able to exercise influence over other units' and agents' priorities and decisions; and (3) the definition and enactment of a new group identity. I noted that 'enhancing the group's knowledge base' and 'defining a new group identity' took place in contexts to which only Media Solutions members were privy (e.g., weekly unit meetings, online wikis). Both of these activities were intimately connected with the actual

construction of the collectively crafted job and I therefore labeled them as 'group proactive behavior.' Similarly, 'growing the group's sphere of influence' and 'enacting a new identity' took pace in contexts where the group interacted with high-level representatives of other units (e.g., all-hands sessions). Both of these activities were directed at removing obstacles or securing support for the group's collective job crafting efforts. I therefore labeled them 'group adaptive behavior.'

Lastly, I moved vertically (node D in Figure 3.4) to examine the interrelations between the group and the organization. I found that the outcomes of collective job crafting transcended the boundaries of the group and impacted the organization in two main ways: the shape of its enacted structure (both in terms of the division of labor: 'who does what' and of the distribution of power and influence in the organization: 'who has the right to do what') and the organization's performance. As regards structure, these insights stemmed from narratives of job crafting initiatives where Media Solutions members spoke of establishing and maintaining relationships with numerous units at CLICK and with external actors not listed among their formal ties on the organization's structure. In turn, insights on the effects of collective job crafting on organizational strategy emerged from narratives where members spoke of the impact their initiatives produced, either in terms of gained efficiency or of incremental revenue for the organization.

Theme 2: Claiming Jurisdiction over a Collectively Crafted Job

In order to elucidate how Media Solutions sought to formalize its collectively crafted job, I initially coded my interview data for narratives where members explicitly referenced efforts the unit made throughout its 7-year history to be granted formal ownership of collectively crafted

tasks and relationships. I subsequently coded documents directed at CLICK's top managers or at managers of other units (e.g., presentations, reports, and emails) where Media Solutions members conveyed the unit's intent to formalize the unit's collectively crafted work. Following the literature on occupations (Nelsen & Barley, 1997), I classified these instances as 'jurisdictional claims'.

I examined each claim in detail to infer common patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I coded for a variety of descriptive categories, which serve to summarize characteristics of the phenomenon at hand. These included the moment in time when each jurisdictional claim was made; the kind of crafted work (in terms of tasks and relationships) it entailed; the kinds of rewards, if any, associated with it; and the audience that would either grant or decline the claim. From this analysis, two kinds of jurisdictional claims emerged. I labeled jurisdictional claims that sought ownership of one task, one relationship, or a set of tightly linked tasks and relationships as 'local' because the responsibilities they entailed appeared to be at stake in a particular context and their granting depended on the approval of context-specific audiences. Conversely, I labeled jurisdictional claims that spanned the entire breadth of the collectively crafted job as 'global' because the responsibilities they entailed were at stake in multiple contexts simultaneously and their granting depended on the approval and/or the support of multiple audiences across contexts. I noted that the unit tended to make local jurisdictional claims during the first five years of its lifespan, when it was known as Ad Operations. In turn, the unit made global jurisdictional claims during its last two years of existence, when it was known as Media Solutions.

In a second round of coding, I delved more deeply into the nature of local and global jurisdictional claims. I coded for a variety of inferential and potentially explanatory categories,

which help evaluate possible mechanisms behind the phenomenon at hand. These included the unit's motivation to make the claim; the historical circumstances that surrounded each claim (such as the stage of the industry life cycle during which the claim occurred, the rate of entry of new competitors, the degree of competitive pressure CLICK was facing, and the complexity of the ecosystem that surrounded the organization); and organizational factors prevalent at the time the claim was made (such as the degree of complexity of CLICK's structure and its level of specialization). I noted that the unit tended to make local jurisdictional claims when the social media industry was in the nascent and early development stages: at the time, social media was being tested as an advertising medium and CLICK, in particular, still had to demonstrate its value to clients and media agencies. At the same time, the unit tended to make local jurisdictional claims when CLICK's organizational structure, while centered on specialized functions, featured numerous gaps. Multiple tasks lacked a concrete owner, while links among interdependent functions were missing. Hence, I labeled the nature of these claims as mostly 'opportunistic'. In contrast, the unit tended to make global jurisdictional claims when the social media industry was developing rapidly and competitors were seeking to position themselves favorably ahead of the maturity stage. Competitive pressure was palpable, with multiple social media platforms offering users distinct experiences and vying for their time and attention. At the same time, the unit tended to make global jurisdictional claims when the degree of specialization of CLICK's organizational structure was rising and boundaries between functions were being actively negotiated. Therefore, I labeled the motivation underlying these claims as mostly 'defensive' of the unit's crafted territory.

In a third round of coding, I analyzed the specific mechanisms underlying each claim from the perspective of the unit. Three categories emerged from this analysis, which I classified

as jurisdiction-seeking practices. I found that some claims were based on technology the unit had developed (such as proprietary tools) or built upon (such as the Selfie system). I labeled this 'leveraging technology'. Narratives in which this practice was evident portrayed the unit as the natural owner of certain tasks based on its perceived ability to develop or make use of those technologies more effectively than any other team.

Other claims relied on the unit's informally-crafted organizational position, which changed as time went by. Narratives initially linked the unit's intended ownership of certain tasks to its unique ability to communicate with both Sales and Engineering. Narratives portrayed these two realms of the organization as antagonistic. I labeled these claims as 'leveraging a crafted position as internal bridge'. Later, after the unit became client-facing, narratives linked the unit's jurisdictional claims to the knowledge it derived from being deeply embedded in client teams and in engineering-oriented projects. I labeled these claims as 'leveraging a crafted position as internal-external bridge'. Lastly, as the unit developed multiple ties to internal teams and external agents, narratives linked the unit's jurisdictional claims to its reportedly unique ability to synthesize and execute on information it derived from informally overseeing the entire media cycle at CLICK. I labeled these claims as 'leveraging a multi-dimensional bridging position'.

Finally, a third set of claims were anchored on the the way the unit defined itself over time and narrated its identity to the various audiences it interacted with. I characterized these practices as indicative of the unit's process of 'self-presentation', elevating the term introduced by Goffman (1978) from the individual to the group level. I noted that these claims leveraged the unit's renaming from Ad Operations to Media Solutions. Narratives associated with these claims portrayed tasks as naturally belonging to the unit given the attributes its new name denoted.

Deeper analysis of this category revealed that unit's self-presentation was not only connected with the will to enact a certain group identity and own a certain jurisdiction, but also with the intent to have those two acknowledged jointly as what I termed an *idiosyncratic occupation*, in line with the individual-level concept of 'idiosyncratic job' developed by Miner (1987). I noted that global jurisdictional claims relied heavily on leveraging the unit's self-presentation while local jurisdictional claims relied on leveraging technology. The practice of leveraging the unit's crafted organizational position applied to both kinds of jurisdictional claims.

At this point, I brought all categories together to probe their interrelations and, after several iterations, arrived at a process model of jurisdictional claims over a collectively crafted job. I analyzed whether each claim had been granted or not, and coded the narratives for factors unit members mentioned as critical to the claims' success or failure. Two main categories emerged from this analysis. First, members identified the support from other units (both those granting the claim and other interested parties) as critical to a claim's success. Second, members signaled the unit's own ability to communicate the value of owning specific tasks and relationships to jurisdiction-granting audiences as critical to a claim's success. I noted that granted claims seemed to satisfy both conditions, whereas unsuccessful claims failed to satisfy at least one of them. I included both categories in my process model as moderators.

As a final step, I employed a temporal lens and analyzed the effects of sequences of granted and denied jurisdictional claims on the unit. Several new categories emerged at this stage of the coding process, such as availability/unavailability of resources for collective job crafting, visibility/invisibility of job crafting initiatives to decision-making audiences, presence or absence of recognition and rewards, and cognitive alignment/misalignment. Bringing these categories together in parallel causal chains, I determined that successive granted jurisdictional claims gave

rise to collective job crafting trajectories that prove generative for both the unit and the organization, whereas successive denied jurisdictional claims tend to lock the unit into a collective job crafting trajectory that speaks to the unit's goals but collides with organizational goals.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS:

THE PROCESS OF COLLECTIVE JOB CRAFTING

How do you reprogram this whole thing and how do you create something totally new? That is what we do as a team. We consistently create and recreate ourselves.

(Interview excerpt, manager)

Chapter 4 reports findings on the process of collective job crafting. Inductive qualitative analysis of longitudinal interview, observation, and archival data reveal (1) the specific mechanisms involved in collective job crafting, in terms of individual- and group-level proactive and adaptive behavior[4], which distinguish it from forms of job crafting that take place at the individual and interpersonal levels, and (2) the complex nature of collective job crafting as an endeavor that relies on the interplay between the group and the individual, and which unfolds both within and beyond group boundaries. I synthesize my findings in a process model of collective job crafting. I ground the description of each element in the process in behaviors pulled from different instances in the evolution of the Media Solutions unit.

While collective job crafting is not meant to be narrated longitudinally in this chapter, some temporal aspects inevitably do creep into the narrative—enough to provide context that speaks of the sophistication of collective job crafting initiatives and of the challenges involved in removing obstacles or securing the support of other units as those initiatives came to life. A full longitudinal account of collective job crafting at Media Solutions will be presented in Chapter 5.

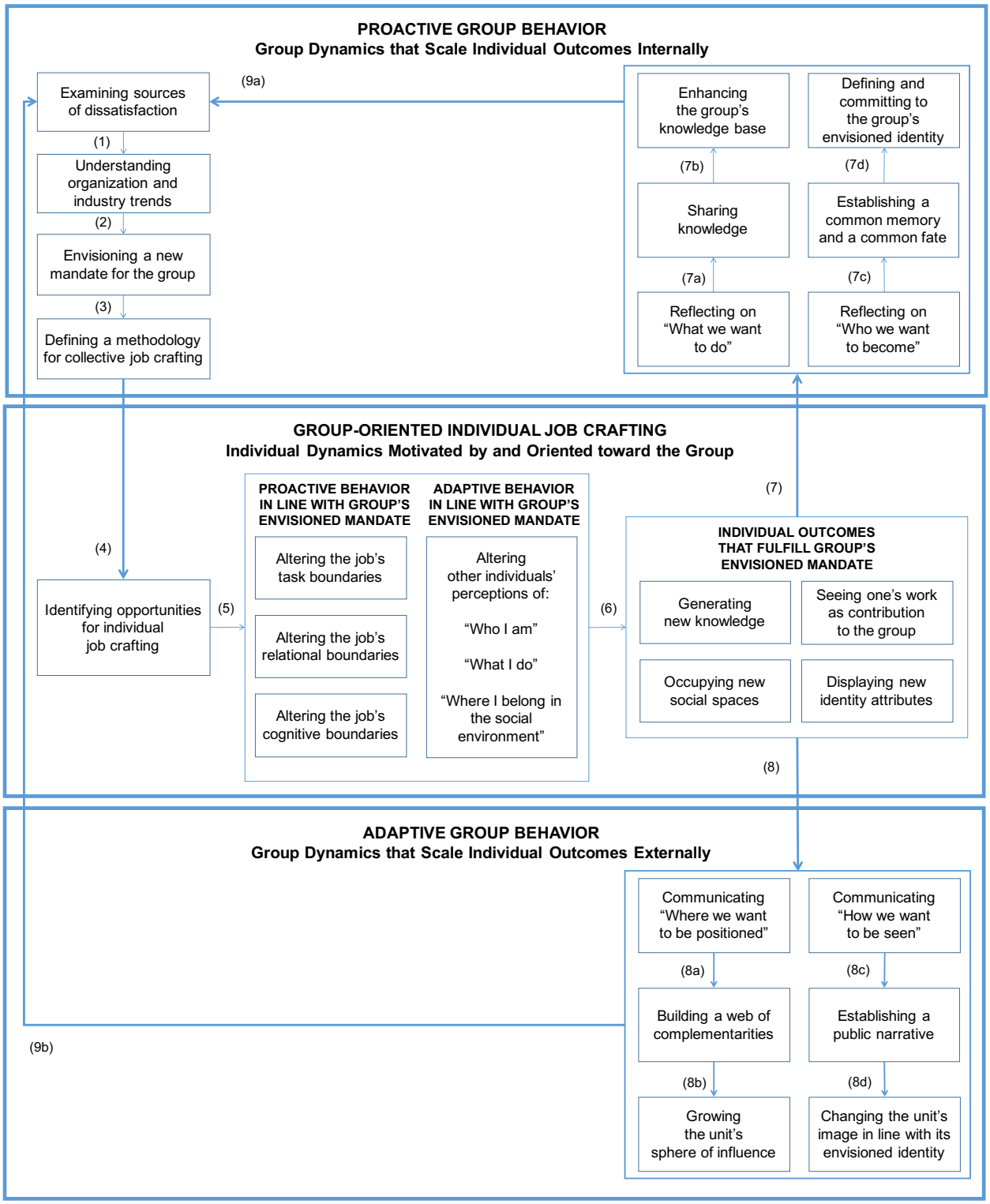
[4] As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, proactive behavior refers to self-started and self-directed action conducive to seizing opportunities to alter the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of an individual's job or a group's mandate. Adaptive behavior refers to action taken by individuals or groups to create the conditions to be able to engage in job crafting. It includes inducing others to alter their views and expectations about what the individual or group is meant to do and to elicit support for job crafting initiatives.

As a segue way into Chapter 5, the last section of this chapter briefly analyzes how proactive and adaptive behavior in collective job crafting co-evolve over time and introduces the notion of 'collective job crafting trajectory.'

A Process Model of Collective Job Crafting

Collective job crafting is the process through which a group alters the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of its mandate. Figure 4.1 provides a graphic representation. The process relies on four kinds of behaviors: (1) group proactive behavior; (2) group adaptive behavior; (3) individual proactive behavior; and (4) individual adaptive behavior. From the boundaries of the group inward, group proactive behavior enables members to reflect on the group's identity, make plans, and learn together; beyond those boundaries (i.e., in interactions with other groups in the organization) they enable the group to communicate an envisioned identity. Group adaptive behavior enables the group to alter other groups' expectations and to exercise influence. Individual proactive and adaptive behaviors constitute the essence of what I term 'group-oriented individual job crafting'. It takes place in the particular contexts in which each individual member performs her job. Individual proactive behavior consists of self-directed action associated with the initiatives each member carries out as a way to contribute to the group's collective job crafting effort. Individual adaptive behavior consists of self-directed action performed to alter others' expectations regarding what the focal member is meant to do and who she is meant to be in her job.

Figure 4.1: A Process Model of Collective Job Crafting



The four of collective job crafting components unfold over time in the following way:

Group proactive behavior. The motivation to engage in collective job crafting begins with shared dissatisfaction by the members of a group with one or more aspects of the group's formal mandate (i.e., with one or more features of the job the group has been assigned, which is often tied to its position in the organization's formal structure and which generally causes the group to be perceived by others in a given way). This dissatisfaction leads the group to assess the strategic direction of the organization and the trends that may affect the industry in the future, as a way to identify collective job crafting opportunities (arrow 1). Initially, these opportunities may just constitute occasions to expand what the group does. Eventually, however, they may coalesce to reveal a new, self-defined mandate for the group. This crafted mandate may differ from the group's formal mandate in the number and kinds of tasks it contains, the number and kinds of relationships that support the performance of those tasks, and the significance the group attaches to the work. In other words, this crafted mandate denotes what the group believes it can truly contribute to the organization, as opposed to what it is currently assigned to do (arrow 2). In order to bring this new mandate to life, the group may subsequently define a collective job crafting methodology. This methodology involves expanding, altering, and/or reducing the set of tasks and relationships for which the group is responsible through different means at different points in time. It results from synthesizing the ways in which members of the group have collectively crafted the job thus far and evaluating their effectiveness (arrow 3). From that moment on, members act separately yet in a coordinated and complementary manner.

Individual proactive and adaptive behavior. Individual proactive and adaptive behavior are part of what I have termed 'group-oriented individual job crafting'. It constitutes job crafting activity that members carry out individually with the intention of benefitting the

group. Group-oriented individual job crafting leads members work in a separate yet coordinated fashion, each tapping different opportunities articulated at the group level (arrow 4). When the group has already defined a new mandate for itself, individual proactive behavior seeks to fulfill a specific portion of this mandate by targeting opportunities in a given area of specialization. Members' efforts are meant to be complementary and the outcomes scaled to the rest of the group. Through individual proactive behavior, each member alters the boundaries of his own work by adding, changing, and/or eliminating tasks and relationships from his own day-to-day activities (arrow 5). Members individually generate new knowledge and come to occupy social spaces to which they previously had no access. Individually-generated knowledge and connections later provide the bases to build group-level assets. Members also gain new meaning from their experience of the job: each members' work transcends his own individual goals and becomes a contribution to fulfilling the group's vision. Members come to see themselves as co-creators of a new incarnation of their unit.

In parallel, through individual adaptive behavior, each member seeks to alter the views and expectations of members of other units with whom he comes in contact while crafting his individual job (arrow 6). Expectations may be associated with who he is, what he is supposed to do in his role, and what position he should occupy in the organization's social environment. Changing other people's expectations will be harder the more rigid job boundaries are in the contexts where the job crafter operates. If successful, the member effectively helps advance the group's agenda at a very micro level: he gains new knowledge and skills that are useful to the unit; he sets a precedent for occupying a position someone belonging to the unit wouldn't normally enjoy, and he gets to display attributes that defy other people's pre-conceived notions of who someone belonging to his group is.

Group-oriented yet individually-crafted tasks, relationships, and meanings about the work provide the raw materials to broaden the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of the group's mandate. In doing so, the group becomes more knowledgeable, influential, and valued throughout the organization.

Group proactive behavior. Group proactive behavior involves *sharing knowledge* and *constructing a new group identity*—activities that transform how the group thinks and feels about itself (arrow 7). Members gather in contexts that bring them together (e.g., regularly scheduled meetings, immersion and training sessions, and group-specific intranet sites) and that invite reflection about who the group aspires to become and what it aspires to do. These contexts provide occasions for group members to share their knowledge and skills with the rest of their peers (arrow 7a), thereby enhancing the group's established knowledge base (arrow 7b). Similarly, these contexts create atmospheres where the group can narrate and re-narrate its history (thereby creating a collective memory) and jointly look to the future (thereby creating a sense of common fate) (arrow 7c). This motivates the group to define and commit to a new identity (arrow 7d).

Group adaptive behavior. Group adaptive behavior involves *wielding influence* and *generating a new group image* in the organization and the marketplace—activities that transform how the group is perceived and valued by others (arrow 8). Group adaptive behavior takes place in contexts that bring the group or specific representatives in contact with senior members of other units. In these contexts, the group's goal is to challenge and adapt other groups' perceptions and expectations about who the group is, what it does, and where it belongs in the organization's social environment. In order to facilitate group adaptive behavior, members form a web of complementarities: each of them gathers feedback from the group on issues in one or

more key areas of specialization, making sure all areas are covered, synthesizes the group's position on these issues, and acts in representation of the group to influence other groups' priorities in the group's interest (arrow 8a). In this way, these members carry the voice of the group to domains of the organization and the marketplace where it normally wouldn't be heard, growing the group's sphere of influence (arrow 8b). At the same time, these members establish a public narrative for the group in line with the group's envisioned mandate. They argue for the group to be seen as something other than what its formal mandate suggests (arrow 8c), thereby changing the group's image in the eyes of the organization and of agents in its ecosystem (arrow 8d).

The dynamics described thus far refer to the main elements of collective job crafting (proactive and adaptive behavior at the individual and group levels) and constitute the core of this chapter. While it is not my intention to go deeply into the longitudinal dynamics of collective job crafting, the process *is* meant to be recursive, in the sense that adaptive and group proactive behavior exhibited at one moment in time can trigger new waves of group-oriented individually-crafted work that continues to feed the group's knowledge base, sphere of influence, and collective identity. The group can take input from both group-level behaviors (arrows 9a and 9b) to reassess its original sources of dissatisfaction and/or evaluate new ones, refine its envisioned mandate and collective job crafting methodology, and send its members out into the organization again in pursuit of job crafting opportunities that benefit the group. Over time, this recurrence enables the group to carve a unique collective job crafting trajectory for itself—a course of action that reflects the contingencies, shared meanings, actions, and interactions that contribute to the evolution of the group's collectively crafted job. As noted above, basic details

about this trajectory are discussed in the last section of this chapter, and a full analysis offered in Chapter 5.

Collective Job Crafting: From Ad Operations to Media Solutions

Media Solutions was established under the name "Ad Operations" three years after CLICK was founded. At the time, the company was still a start-up with about 200 employees. The unit was formally responsible for publishing ads onto the CLICK platform—a rudimentary and operational set of tasks known across the industry as *ad trafficking*. This formal mandate changed relatively little over the unit's 7-year lifespan. In contrast, the scope of the work the unit effectively carried out at CLICK evolved radically over time. Over seven years of collective job crafting, ad trafficking came to represent only a fraction of the unit's workload. Most of the time, the unit informally acted as an analytical and creative engine that brought forth new ad products, new tools and systems, and new business processes to improve how clients planned, bought, ran, and measured advertising at CLICK. What was once an isolated unit in charge of a simple task, informally came to perform one of the broadest sets of tasks and was among the most interconnected groups at CLICK. In Year 5, the unit autonomously changed its name from "Ad Operations" to "Media Solutions." In Year 7, the unit was eliminated during the course of a reorganization.

In the following sections, I illustrate my analysis of each component of the process of collective job crafting in instances of group- and individual-level proactive and adaptive behavior exhibited by the unit and its members at different times in its evolution. I speak of "Ad Operations" when I describe initiatives that took place before the group's renaming and "Media Solutions" when I mention initiatives that took place thereafter. The analysis is organized as

follows. First, I describe the sources of dissatisfaction that led the unit to engage in collective job crafting. Second, I describe the unit's first foray into collective job crafting as a 'vignette' that encapsulates how group- and individual-level proactive and adaptive behavior operate around one specific opportunity. Understanding the unit's first foray into collective job crafting is important because it reveals how a group comes to realize the potential of this process to self-transform and self-disrupt. Third, I examine each of the components of collective job crafting at a moment in the unit's evolution where it operated according to a self-defined new mandate and followed a specific collective job crafting methodology to target multiple opportunities at once. The level of sophistication of the initiatives increases and so do the stakes in terms of knowledge development, power and influence generation, and identity construction. Lastly, I offer a brief analysis of collective job crafting viewed from a longitudinal perspective, as an introduction to the dynamics I analyze in Chapter 5.

The Motivation to Engage in Collective Job Crafting

The motivation to engage in collective job crafting was rooted in members' dissatisfaction with the unit's formal mandate and with its position on CLICK's organizational structure, both of which imposed a limited knowledge base on the unit, a reduced sphere of influence, and an identity with which members did not identify.

Media Solutions was established under the name "Ad Operations" three years after CLICK was founded[5]. At the time, the company was still a start-up with about 200 employees.

[5] Please note that the narrative in this section is not intended to be chronological, but to illustrate the beginning of the unit's collective job crafting process and the different directions in which collective job crafting unfolded from then on. Much of the unit's evolution took place under the name 'Ad Operations'—the change to 'Media Solutions' happened in year 6. Whenever I include examples, I speak of 'Ad Operations' or 'Media Solutions' depending on the moment in time when the initiatives to which the examples refer took place.

Until then, ads had been managed on an ad-hoc basis by one of the organization's earliest members. He devoted "*a fraction of his time*" to programming "*very rudimentary banner ads*" onto the platform. "*It was one of these random things he did when he wasn't doing bugs, making the company work, getting lunch, getting pizza, whatever it was*", reported another early member. When the first few large companies began showing interest in CLICK as an advertising medium, the organization came to recognize ads as a serious source of potential revenue and saw the need to formally establish a unit in charge of ad programming. Across the budding social media industry and other .com businesses, the set of responsibilities connected with programming ads—technically referred to as *ad trafficking*—was usually in the hands of a function called *Ad Operations*. CLICK hired Jeremy, a 22-year-old who worked in Ad Operations at a major competitor, to run its own Ad Operations unit. As the Head of Ad Operations at CLICK, Jeremy initially led a team of three Ad Operations Analysts (himself included) and reported to the organization's Chief Revenue Officer.

Jeremy was instructed to set up Ad Operations at CLICK by mirroring proven industry practices. The unit's mandate was formally established as 'ad trafficking'. Each Ad Operations analyst was in charge of manually programming ads for a given set of clients. In order to do so, he interfaced with two sets of CLICK employees: *sellers* (who were in charge of defining a strategy for each client to advertise on CLICK) and *account managers* (who were in charge of media planning and interfaced with clients and their media agencies). In broad terms, the process ran as follows: sellers and account managers interfaced with clients to sell ads on CLICK; clients confirmed their ad purchases through *insertion orders*[6]; sellers and account managers transferred

[6] Insertion orders are a buying mechanism used in traditional and online media whereby a client or media agency commits to running a campaign at a publisher's print medium, broadcasting network, or website. An insertion order for digital media usually details the number of ads, the frequency of publishing, targeting goals, etc.

the insertion orders to an Ad Operations analyst along with the ads' assets (e.g., copy for the ads' text, images); finally, the Ad Operations analyst took those assets and manually programmed the ads onto the CLICK platform. Ad Operations analysts generated a high-level report for each client on a monthly basis, noting all the ads that had been published and their click-through rate. Ad Operations analysts at CLICK never interfaced with clients, in line with the standard definition of the job across the industry.

As was usually the case with Ad Operations units, Ad Operations at CLICK had a relatively limited knowledge base, a very small sphere of influence, and an image (i.e., an identity as understood by other groups) tightly connected with ad trafficking. Jeremy explained:

> We were totally internal. We just ping-ponged back and forth [with Sales] … There was no connection [beyond Sales]; the concept of a client was just foreign … The process was basically like, stuff got sold, stuff got signed, we would get some assets and … our goal was just 'deliver the ads'.

Similarly, Remy, who joined Ad Operations' original three members soon after, noted that "*the typical role of someone in Ad Operations is internal, [doing] the back end execution, kind of the nerdy guy that doesn't know how to speak to clients*." In turn, Jillian, another early member, said that the work was "*just operational: setting up ads, that was our main day to day, pulling reports, and that's it.*" Because Ad Operations worked toward the end of the media cycle (i.e., in the ad programming and measurement stages), the function tended to be implicitly subordinated to that of sellers and account managers, who worked at the beginning of the media cycle (i.e., in the planning and buying stages). Across the industry, the implicit hierarchy among sellers, account managers, and Ad Operations analysts was fairly established. The same thing happened at CLICK. Benjamin, another early member, noted:

> We were at the bottom of the totem pole. It wasn't preached this way, but it came across as, the sellers, they were like the boss, and the account managers were like the helpers on the account, and to execute their big ideas they would throw it over

> to Ad Operations … [and we would] put the ads up on the site *one by one by one by one*. (his emphasis)

Jillian noted that sellers and account managers across the industry tended to be dismissive of Ad Operations analysts due to the routine nature of their work and their position in the media cycle. In some cases, like at her previous employer, the relationship between the functions could be rather antagonistic. She explained:

> People don't care about the Ad Operations teams in other companies. They get the wrath on everything. If anything goes wrong, it's their fault. We are a lot of times the last person, I guess. They sell the products, pass it on, and we are the last ones to set it up and make sure [they run], so yes, it seems like you are the last person to blame … At [my previous employer], no one cared about us. People were like, "*ugh*." (her emphasis)

While she recognized that the unit at CLICK didn't face that degree of antagonism, sellers and account managers at the company did abide by that implicit hierarchy and identified Ad Operations strictly as *a group of ad traffickers*. This image contrasted starkly with Ad Operations members' own understanding of their identity. None of them identified as ad traffickers; in effect, they rejected that identity. Ad Operations analysts across the industry were usually detail-oriented people who were comfortable executing a fairly repetitive job. While most early members had experience in media and some, like Jillian, even came from Ad Operations units at CLICK's competitors, Ad Operations at CLICK was composed of individuals who had a strong drive to learn rather than execute. August, an early member, said:

> When you think about the Ad Operations position across other companies, they are not necessarily looking for the sharpest people. They are looking for people who can get in the weeds and get a lot of work done. We have always had a high bar for this team, even when the role was very trafficking-focused and very basic.

In the same vein, Jeremy stated:

> When I think of the qualities of people we were hiring, it was not people who wanted to get stuff done but people who wanted to learn, and that was a big thing

> ... We hired a lot of people who I felt really wanted every day to end with the feeling like, 'I learned something'.

The unit felt that Ad Operations' formal mandate imposed an identity as ad traffickers that didn't quite fit its members. In this regard, Isaac wrote in his notes to a presentation:

> We were [ad] 'traffickers', plain and simple … We were ridiculously scrappy and intellectually curious traffickers who knew how to do tons of things, but the majority of our day-to-day was comprised of trafficking nonetheless.

He remarked on the unit's drive to move beyond ad trafficking by saying in an interview:

> We were obviously 'Ad Operations' at the time, but … intellectually we were more than an operations team … [Moving beyond ad trafficking] was in our blood and in our DNA.

The group soon grew dissatisfied with its situation. In members' minds, given the transactional nature of the work and its focus on execution, Ad Operations wasn't adding value beyond making sure that ads ran. Given its limited ties and lack of exposure to clients and other groups at CLICK, Ad Operations had practically no opportunities to influence organizational processes or outcomes beyond ad trafficking. Lastly, given its strong industry-tied image as a group of ad traffickers, Ad Operations had next to no legitimacy to challenge that image by operating beyond its formal mandate. Given this scenario, Jeremy believed the unit wouldn't have much of a future at CLICK if it continued to focus solely on ad trafficking. He explained:

> I looked at what the team was doing back then, which was entirely internal. No concept of what a sales pitch was, what a client was, what an agency was. And I thought, 'This is going to be gone in 3 years if we don't try to get essentially in another field' … [The unit] would be sitting in Hyderabad or somewhere where an anonymous queue [of insertion orders for ads] just got churned in and out.

The time was nigh for a redefinition of the unit's reason for being. Remy recalls that the group was "*struggling at CLICK in the sense that they were trying to figure out an identity that they could be a little more prideful of*." Jeremy believed that the way to expand the unit's knowledge base, increase its sphere of influence, and position it as something other than a group

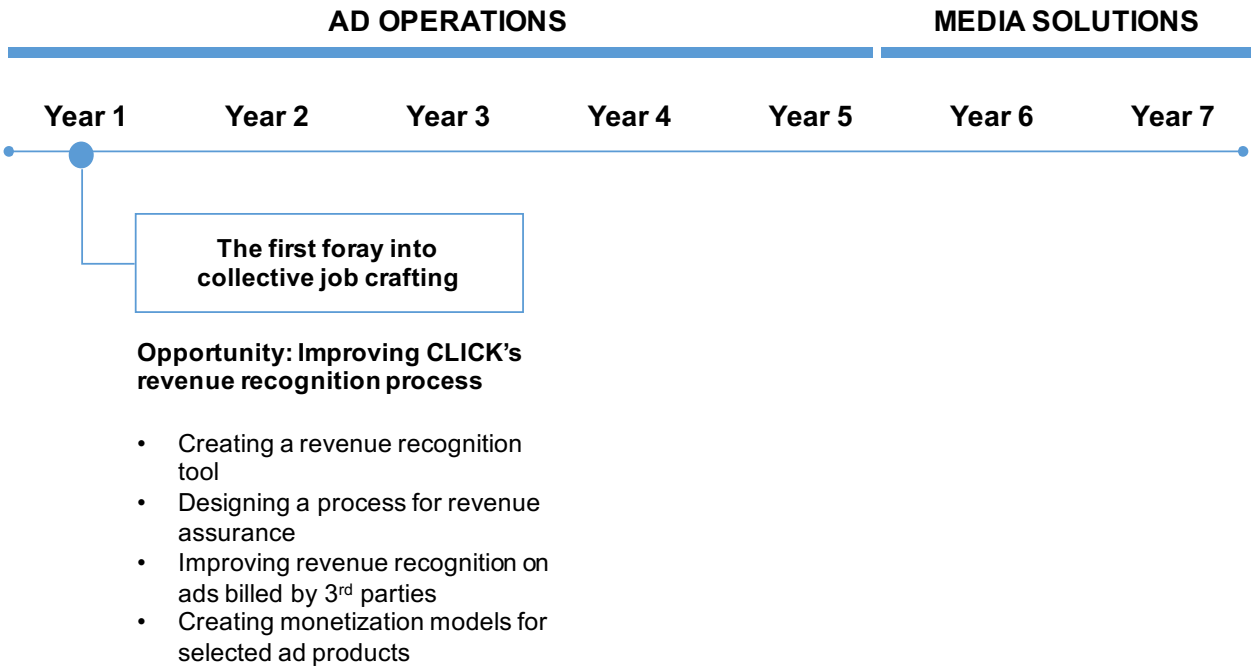
of ad traffickers was to get a sense of where the industry and the organization were going (something on which Ad Operations had very limited visibility) and to look for opportunities for Ad Operations to become a more impactful contributor to CLICK's performance. He said:

> Everyone was, all three of us [wondering] 'How do we figure out exactly what is going on, how do we spend time with people in [other units] so we can position ourselves to figure out what the next few phases look like … and start inserting [ourselves] in the conversation?'
>
> Jeremy's determination led to the group's first foray into collective job crafting.

The First Foray into Collective Job Crafting

The first opportunity to engage in collective job crafting came soon after the unit's creation. Figure 4.2 positions this initiative on a timeline, alongside the different initiatives the opportunity spawned.

Figure 4.2: Timeline: The First Foray into Collective Job Crafting



The opportunity was rooted in problems with CLICK's revenue recognition[7] process and tools. Jeremy explained:

> I remember that the first day of the first full quarter I was there for, I walked in … and the entire Sales and Account Management teams are there. Papers are flying ... [They were acting like] chickens running around and freaking out [laughs] ... And I am just sitting there wondering, 'what are they all freaking out about? Can we help?'

Until then, revenue recognition was done manually by Sales and Account Management. There was no proper Revenue Recognition unit. According to Jeremy, the process "*literally shut business down*", took days to complete, and kept sellers and account managers from paying attention to their accounts. He noted:

> The Chief Revenue Officer was our boss at the time and he kept telling me, 'if we don't recognize revenue, this company doesn't matter … you can't pay the bills unless you show that this ad ran'.

At that moment, Jeremy determined that the Ad Operations unit would get involved in the revenue recognition process and try to improve it. He continued:

> I was like, '*we can do this'*, you know? *This is the team that is going to get it done* … And so I remember I was really into Excel macros at the time, which shows how cool I was [laughs] and I said, 'I am going to build this really funky spreadsheet'. (his emphasis)

Jeremy's spreadsheet became CLICK's first revenue recognition tool. While rudimentary, the tool made a considerable difference in the company's operations and garnered Ad Operations its first accolades. According to Jeremy, Ad Operations got "*a shout-out from the CFO saying how you can actually recognize revenue and she can sleep at night*". His intervention spawned a frenzy among Ad Operations members to continue making improvements to the revenue recognition process. According to a report, as Ad Operations

[7] Revenue recognition is the point at which income becomes accrued or officially acknowledged in an organization's accounting system.

members further analyzed the process, they discovered that CLICK was "*routinely losing 80 cents on the dollar*" on ads billed by third parties, i.e. CLICK's external partners. They found that this occurred because third party tracking mechanisms did not work properly on the CLICK platform. Moreover, the reconciliation process for ads billed by third parties was still manual, leading to further errors. Benjamin took action to remedy this issue. He explained:

> At the end of every month we have to reconcile all the data that we have for that month, because invoices and such go out. When we run campaigns that are third-party billed … we would have to go into the system manually and pull those numbers for each campaign, put it into a spreadsheet, send it to Finance, and then Finance would pull the same reports, verify the data, and if something was off, it took us a month at least to close the previous month in our books. It was super, super stressful. There was a lot of human error in there.

Benjamin knew of a start-up that had created a system that would enable CLICK to automatically log all third-party data and reconcile it, taking most of the human element out of the process. He negotiated approval from Sales leadership (to which Ad Operations reported through Jeremy) and from Engineering and licensed the system. According to a report, "*Ad Operations worked hand-in-hand with Engineering ... to rectify*" CLICK's interfaces with external partners so the process would run unencumbered. He stated:

> I worked on that project for about 6 months, 7 months. And doing that one project was able to bring our books from a month close down to a week, week and a half, which was a *huge win for our team*. (his emphasis)

According to a report, Ad Operations also discovered that CLICK was *"leaving double-digit revenue (as a percentage of monthly revenues) uncollected in certain months*" due to "*negligence*" in verifying that all ads that ran on the platform were actually connected to a valid insertion order. Jeremy provided an example of the lack of oversight the unit found:

> I had this campaign … I set it up every month. Same assets. Same set of reports once a week … Turns out at the end of the year I … go to the account manager and I say, 'hey, the client hasn't said anything'. And she said, 'oh yeah. We were doing due diligence and it turns out they never signed the insertion order. That was a

> proposal. We never got it signed.' [laughs] There was absolutely no oversight. Nothing that said, 'did this go through revenue assurance? Is this even a real deal?'

These mishaps significantly affected the revenue recognition process and alerted Ad Operations to further opportunities for job crafting in this area. August, an early member, coordinated with CLICK's incipient Legal department and established a protocol for clients to follow before ads could be placed. This protocol included monetary guarantees that were deposited in clients' accounts before ad campaigns ran, and thereby served as 'revenue on hold'.

Building on this knowledge, Nigel began creating monetization models for CLICK's rudimentary suite of ad products. He leveraged the ties to Engineering his peers had already established and collaborated with engineers to design, test, and launch a tool to manage the booking process for what was CLICK's #1 ad product at the time. Nigel then figured out a way to optimize the pricing of that product by contrasting the daily inventory of those ads that had already been booked with the total availability. He came up with the concept of 'last-minute pricing' which, according to a document, "*enabled CLICK to manage a calendar that was consistently sold through*." This functionality proved valuable enough to CLICK's budding Monetization team that this unit continued relying on Ad Operations whenever the organization needed to test pricing for a new ad product. Jeremy explained:

> Nigel came up with pricing [for #1 ad product]. This guy Connor, who was one of our Monetization guys, nervously grabbed Nigel and I in New York and he was like, 'I need some way to price [this other ad product]. What do you think?' And we were like, 'We'll need a bunch of data … I guarantee you'll get 120 million impressions for 250 CPM[8]' … That was a huge leverage point. He and his team always had a lot of respect for us because we would help them figure out these ridiculous [issues].

[8] CPM or Cost per Mille is a commonly used measurement in online advertising. It refers to the cost an advertiser pays for one thousand views or impressions of an ad.

Improving the revenue recognition process constituted Ad Operations' first attempt at collective job crafting. It was a first step in making the unit more relevant and more integrated to the larger organization. Individual members such as Jeremy, Benjamin, August, and Nigel took action to make this process more efficient by expanding the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of their own jobs as ad traffickers and venturing into the design of new tools and processes. They took on new tasks, they created ties to members of units they would normally not interact with, and they began finding richer meaning in their jobs: it was no longer just about trafficking ads; it now included solving a crucial problem for the organization. Yet, these Ad Operations members did not get involved in revenue recognition simply to enhance the experience of their own jobs: *they did so, primarily, to benefit their unit*. Through their ingenuity, Ad Operations informally expanded its domain to cover more than just ad trafficking.

The unit's foray into revenue recognition through collective job crafting had three major group-level effects. First, it *grew the unit's knowledge base*, as it enabled everyone at Ad Operations to gain expertise on revenue recognition. Jeremy, Benjamin, and August trained their peers (about seven other people) on how to use and apply the solutions they had designed. Ad Operations members later resorted to this knowledge when new client accounts were being set up and made sure all guarantees were in place before insertion orders started coming in. Members also relied on this knowledge at the end of each month, when they pulled ad revenue data from the specific clients they trafficked ads for and aggregated it to send to Finance. Finally, and most importantly, enhancing the the unit's knowledge base gave Ad Operations members platform expertise so far only held by engineers. Jeremy noted:

> The revenue assurance process is not the sexiest way to go about getting more involved but if we are really going to learn how to help [others] on a day to day basis … it is actually a good place to start, because you now understand the intricacies of … how the business actually works behind the scenes.

In Jeremy's mind, this knowledge would enable Ad Operations to further engage in collective job crafting by tackling new problems. He stated:

> [Back-end expertise] was the strong suit of the group. From knowing the overall CLICK monetization page, all the way down to how does this image get uploaded, how do I pull a query, and what are all the steps in between? … And once we got to that point [when] somebody's big bugs came up, all of a sudden there was someone on our team who would say, "*here is what it is*". (his emphasis)

Second, these initiatives *grew the unit's sphere of influence*. Venturing into revenue recognition enabled Ad Operations to gain exposure vis-à-vis other areas at CLICK, such as Finance, Legal, and Engineering. Jeremy, Benjamin, August, and Nigel represented Ad Operations in their dealings with these units for as long as their projects lasted, but those ties persisted in time. For example, August became the informal point of contact for these units to interface with Ad Operations when it came to matters of revenue recognition. In this capacity, he obtained information and feedback from everyone in the unit, synthesized it, and communicated the unit's point of view in each interaction. This enabled Ad Operations to have a voice later on, when these tools and processes were updated.

Lastly, these initiatives enabled Ad Operations to begin defying other units' perceptions of the unit and *constructing a new identity*. Most units' perceptions of Ad Operations at CLICK were heavily influenced by the image other Ad Operations units held throughout the industry. The unit's initiatives challenged the notion that Ad Operations at CLICK was merely a group of ad traffickers and began positioning the unit as a reliable source of insight and solutions to organizational problems. The perceptions of other units such as Finance, Engineering, and Monetization were especially meaningful because, under normal circumstances, none of these units would be prone to dialoguing with a regular Ad Operations team. Engineers at CLICK, for example, tended not to have a lot of respect for functions connected with Sales. According to

Jeremy, "*back then you'd say the words 'sales' or 'monetization' and these guys were foaming at the mouth*". Ad Operations' contributions to the revenue assurance process allowed the unit to begin changing engineers' perceptions. The same thing happened with the newly-created Revenue Assurance team, whose leader, Barry, was especially supportive of Ad Operations' crafted work. Jeremy stated:

> [Our initiatives] allowed us to get really good with the Revenue Assurance team and get to know those guys … Barry came from [big competitor,] where he was the enemy of Sales. Big Bad Barry. But he came and he was like, 'We want to help you guys. We want to help make your lives easier'. And we were like, 'Hey, we want to make sure someone in this company can recognize all this work we are doing. What is the point of selling [these many] million bucks if it doesn't count?'

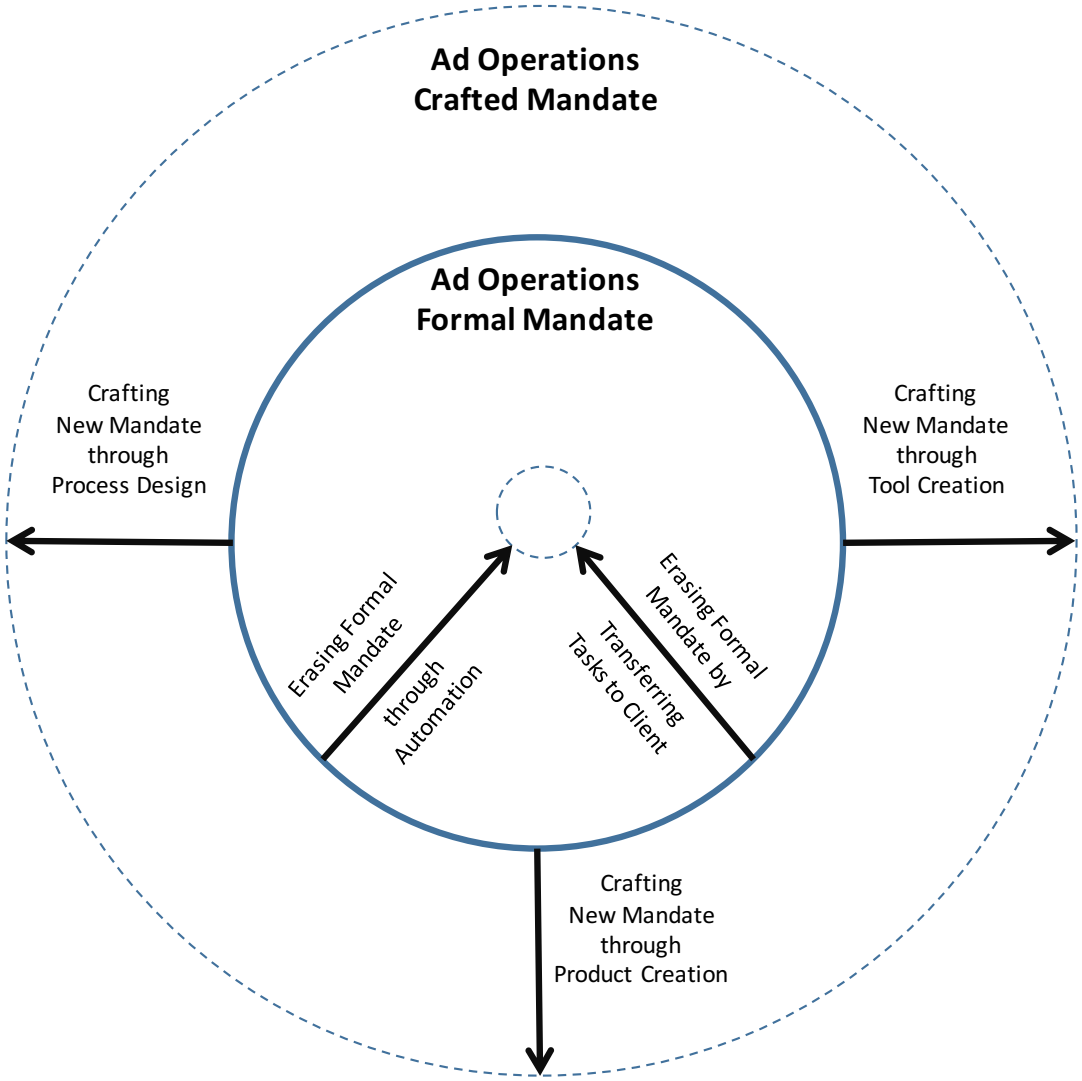
This first foray into collective job crafting set the stage for fluid collaboration between Ad Operations and other units at CLICK. Jeremy saw these relationships as a lever that would enable Ad Operations to become a trusted voice throughout the organization, to get involved in tasks beyond ad trafficking, to exercise more influence, and to communicate an identity that deemphasized 'a group of ad traffickers' in favor of 'a group of problem solvers'.

A Collective Job Crafting Methodology

The first foray into collective job crafting spun a methodology that Ad Operations would apply over the next seven years. The unit worked in two complementary directions to alter the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of its mandate: (1) the unit set out to "*erase*" its formal mandate by (a) automating or (b) transferring to the client as many of the manual tasks involved in ad trafficking as possible, and (2) the unit unilaterally defined and enacted a new mandate: "*to maximize advertiser return on investment through data-driven services and partner management*".

This crafted mandate prompted Ad Operations to analyze data in non-trivial ways and to foster close relationships with other units at CLICK and with external actors to make a positive impact on the way clients planned, bought, ran, and measured ad campaigns at CLICK. The crafted mandate spun numerous projects which fell into three main areas of specialization: (a) process design; (b) data management and tool creation; and (c) business insights and product creation. Figure 4.3 illustrates this approach.

Figure 4.3 Media Solutions' Collective Job Crafting Methodology



This collective job crafting methodology was put into action on three fronts: (1) group-oriented individual job crafting (containing individual proactive and adaptive behaviors), performed by each member of the unit in client account teams and engineering projects; (2) group proactive behavior, which brought the unit together for knowledge sharing and identity building; and (3) group adaptive behavior, which brought the unit face to face with leaders of key groups at CLICK to exercise influence and communicate the unit's crafted identity. Over time, these initiatives enabled Ad Operations members to informally transform an isolated unit with a limited scope of action into one of the most knowledgeable, interconnected, and recognized groups at CLICK, which they eventually renamed *Media Solutions*.

Group-oriented Individual Job Crafting

Ad Operations members engaged in group-oriented individual job crafting by working coordinately on initiatives that fulfilled different aspects of the unit's self-appointed mandate. Each member became an individual job crafter by proactively capturing opportunities to expand the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of his own job as an Ad Operations analyst. *These individual job crafting efforts, however, were primarily directed toward benefitting the unit rather than the person and occurred in areas with potential to optimize the functioning of the unit as a whole and to contribute to the larger organization.* Nigel, a member who later became the Head of Ad Operations after Jeremy retired, explained:

> You have to find ways to optimize the entire team … There are people who are really interested in process optimization stuff … They are trying to improve everybody's ability to be able to drive revenue without having to deal with hurdles … And then there are other people … [who] are basically building things to scale for the rest of the team to improve everybody's ability to work with data … They have rolled out all sorts of crazy stuff that come from data mining … And then there is a third thing: people who really love client service … They

> visualize data in awesome ways … They are trying to improve everybody's ability to drive revenue by having these really cool business insights.

Nigel noted that, through the specialization that resulted from group-oriented individual job crafting, each member was "*like a different profile of person*". In the same vein, Martin said that "*everybody*" in the unit "*has a different role based on how they defined it for themselves*". However, there was "*this weird glue*," as noted by Nigel, that kept the unit working cohesively. Through the initiatives that they took on, members specialized in a given area connected with the unit's self-defined mandate and viewed those initiatives as their individual contributions to making that mandate come alive. Ralph, who became an expert in data management and tool creation, summarized group-oriented individual job crafting in these terms:

> We see a problem and solve it ... There is a business need … [and I think] 'I need to solve for this'. Why don't I build a tool? But wait a minute ... I am sure lots of other people on our team are faced with the same challenge. So let me, whatever I am doing to solve this, let me think of the entire team and create something that everyone can benefit from … And that is the kind of stuff that we encourage. You see a problem, solve it, and *solve it for everybody*. (his emphasis)

Similarly, Benjamin said:

> Whatever the problem is, I have that flexibility to go out and say 'Hey, you know what? I am going to go ahead and solve this problem. This is a need for the company [and] it's going to help my team out'.

As a result, members' reliance on one another to coordinately fulfill the unit's self-appointed mandate made them highly interdependent. Jacob, an early member specialized in building tools, said:

> It's one thing to want to build your own career, but this team specifically doesn't survive without each other. You need each other to survive. Pretty much everyone on the team recognizes that because we recognize where our strengths are, where our weaknesses are … We need that collaboration.

Working in a coordinated fashion, Ad Operations members proactively sought to move their unit "*from a strictly [ad] trafficking-focused role to a more client-facing role that looks*

holistically at an advertisers' long term strategy and is able to provide consultative feedback," as synthesized by August. However, the initiatives that they took on required adaptive behavior on two fronts: toward the market (sellers, account managers, clients, media agencies, etc.) and toward CLICK's back end (ad engineers, product managers, monetization experts, etc.). As noted above, adaptive behavior was important because, in the early days, many agents viewed Ad Operations at CLICK as they would any Ad Operations unit across the industry, i.e., as an ad trafficking engine that was not meant to be client-facing or possess engineering capabilities. Hence, they saw Ad Operations members as ad traffickers. The adaptive moves Ad Operations members displayed are consistent with Berg et al. (2010b)'s analysis of adaptive behavior in job crafting performed by lower-status individuals: they leveraged their strengths to generate outcomes valued by others; they engaged in direct communication with others likely to accommodate their job crafting initiatives; and they built trust with others to gain their support. While members used some of these adaptive moves before engaging in job crafting, they often resorted to adaptive behavior during—or even after—working on job crafting initiatives. In Jeremy's mind, proactive behavior that yielded value to the organization constituted the best adaptive behavior. He said:

> Let's take a bunch on, let's expand our role, let's make sure we are not this little pigeonholed team and in doing so prove to all these other groups—[trails off] … let's just show these guys that we are the team to go when you need to [solve a problem].

Table 4.1 summarizes the group-oriented individual job crafting initiatives described throughout this section, both in terms of proactive and adaptive behavior.

Table 4.1: Selected Group-oriented Individual Job Crafting Initiatives at Media Solutions

Collective Job Crafting Goal	Targeted Problem	Proactive Behavior (Initiatives)	Adaptive Behavior (Tactics)	Results for Organization and Unit
Erase the formal mandate through automation	Ad trafficking tool is inefficient	Created new ad trafficking tool, Syllabus	***To Sales***: leveraging strengths to generate outcomes valued by others ***To Engineering***: leveraging strengths to generate outcomes valued by others	***CLICK***: Reduced ad go live time from one week to a day ***Knowledge***: Gained familiarity with CLICK's back-end infrastructure ***Influence***: Gained recognition from small and over-extended Ad Engineering unit; began articulating dialogue between Sales and Engineering ***Identity***: Helped develop Sales' and Engineering's perception of Ad Ops as 'team of problem solvers'
	Ad trafficking process is inefficient	Created database where clients and agencies could upload and validate ad assets Moved to become client facing to coordinate ad-related interactions Introduced ad frequency caps for ad publishing	***To Sales***: engaging in direct communication with others likely to accommodate initiatives ***To Account Management***: leveraging strengths to generate outcomes valued by others ***To Clients and Agencies***: building trust to gain support for initiatives ***To Engineering***: leveraging strengths to generate outcomes valued by others	***CLICK***: Fewer errors, less ad rework; Freed up 75% of AMs' time dedicated to interaction with clients on ad errors; Contributed to CLICK winning first global account ***Knowledge***: Continued to gain familiarity with CLICK's back-end infrastructure; Developed expertise in ad sales process ***Influence***: Gained recognition from all agents, especially AM; began articulating dialogue between Sales and Engineering ***Identity***: Promoted acceptance of Ad Ops as a client-facing function at CLICK; Extended Sales' and Engineering's perception of Ad Ops as 'team of problem solvers'

Table 4.1: Selected group-oriented individual job crafting initiatives at Media Solutions (Continued)

Collective Job Crafting Goal	Targeted Problem	Proactive Behavior (Initiatives)	Adaptive Behavior (Tactics)	Results for Organization and Unit
Erase the formal mandate through transferring tasks to the client	Ad trafficking process creates bottlenecks	Promoted adoption of Selfie within client accounts Offered Selfie support to clients, agencies, and Marketing Developers Created Selfie Handbook	***To Sales***: engaging in direct communication with others likely to accommodate initiatives ***To Clients and Agencies***: building trust to gain support for initiatives ***To Marketing Developers***: leveraging strengths to generate outcomes valued by others ***To Engineering***: leveraging strengths to generate outcomes valued by others	***CLICK***: Increased Selfie adoption; Freed up Ad Ops' time to engage in more sophisticated forms of job crafting ***Knowledge***: Developed expertise of Selfie infrastructure ***Influence***: Continued articulating dialogue between Sales and Engineering ***Identity***: Promoted acceptance of Ad Ops as a consultative function in client accounts (Selfie experts); Extended Engineering's perception of Ad Ops as "team of problem solvers" (promoters of ad trafficking efficiency)
Enact crafted mandate through new ad products	Prevailing notion that CLICK is meant to be a display advertising platform	Created, tested, and deployed Direct Response ad products	***To Sales***: engaging in direct communication with others likely to accommodate initiatives; leveraging strengths to generate outcomes valued by others ***To Clients and Agencies***: building trust to gain support for initiatives; leveraging strengths to generate outcomes valued by others ***To Engineering***: building trust to gain support for initiatives	***CLICK***: Changed perception of CLICK in the market as a direct response advertising platform; Created incremental revenue streams (to date, about 25% of all revenues) ***Knowledge***: Developed product expertise ***Influence***: Articulated dialogue between Sales, Engineering, and Product Management ***Identity***: Enhanced perception of Ad Ops as a consultative function in client accounts (product experts); Extended Engineering's perception of Ad Ops as 'team of problem solvers' (very few Engineering resources needed for direct response initiatives)

Table 4.1: Selected group-oriented individual job crafting initiatives at Media Solutions (Continued)

Collective Job Crafting Goal	Targeted Problem	Proactive Behavior (Initiatives)	Adaptive Behavior (Tactics)	Results for Organization and Unit
Enact crafted mandate through new processes	CLICK has no way of vetting, training, and coordinating with Marketing Developers	Created Marketing Developers standards and processes—"the Marketing Developers Handbook"	***To Sales***: engaging in direct communication with others likely to accommodate initiatives ***To Marketing Developers***: leveraging strengths to generate outcomes valued by others	***CLICK***: Created community and certification for vetted Marketing Developers; Set the basis for engagement with CLICK ***Knowledge***: Developed expertise of CLICK's external ecosystem ***Influence***: Established position as first point of contact for Marketing Developers in client accounts; articulated dialogue between Marketing Developers and CLICK ***Identity***: Enhanced perception of Ad Ops as a consultative function in client accounts and with Marketing Developers (systems experts)
Enact crafted mandate through new tools	CLICK's targeting capabilities are basic	Created Target Assembler tool	***To Sales***: engaging in direct communication with others likely to accommodate initiatives ***To Clients and Agencies***: leveraging strengths to generate outcomes valued by others ***To Engineering***: building trust to gain support for initiatives	***CLICK***: Improved CLICK targeting capabilities, from demographic to behavioral targeting ***Knowledge***: Developed further expertise of CLICK's infrastructure ***Influence***: Articulated dialogue between Sales and Engineering ***Identity***: Further enhanced perception of Ad Ops as a consultative function in client accounts (enhanced user insight capabilities); further enhanced perception as 'team of problem solvers' from Engineering

Erasing the Formal Mandate. Ad Operations members coordinated to collectively eliminate the ad trafficking function by capturing opportunities to automate or transfer to the client numerous manual tasks involved in ad trafficking. "*Erasing*" the formal mandate became a necessity early on. As CLICK grew as an advertising medium, the number of incoming insertion orders to program ads escalated. Having to program each ad manually meant that Ad Operations was at risk of becoming the bottleneck in CLICK's media cycle. Ad Operations scrambled on a daily basis to get every ad onto the platform. Remembering the stress of those days, Benjamin likened the situation to "*trying to take a drink of water out of a fire hydrant. It would be coming at you, coming at you all the time*".

Two elements made manual ad trafficking inefficient and difficult to scale: the actual ad trafficking process and the ad trafficking tools available. Nigel described the ad trafficking process as "*quadriplegic*". He explained:

> It generally takes several days to get everything done … the advertiser has to send you what's called the asset or what they want to run, they'll send you creative or the image and the body copy, and the title, and tags … Our team then compiles all this stuff, makes sure it is [indeed] the appropriate creative, then copies and pastes it into a system, then presses a button to make sure the ads go live, and makes sure the days are ok when they have to start running … [It] is just the worst possible process. It takes days—*days*. It's ridiculous. (his emphasis)

The process was long and tedious, and simple situations, such as receiving the wrong assets from the client, often caused further delays. It was not uncommon for an ad to take a week or more to go live.

In parallel, the tools Ad Operations relied on for manual ad trafficking were far from ideal. Benjamin said: "*The ad server that we were using was made by a 20-year old intern … It was a shit show, everything broken, bugs everywhere*". Because ad trafficking was done

manually on the server, there was a lot of margin for human error during programming. Jeremy explained:

> You would literally get all of these images from the client … They named some of these images 'girl_running_beach(1)'. The most stupid file name. And you would have to go into the back end FTP server where everything on CLICK was served. There were thousands of client names, profile pictures, every single asset *ever*, and literally create a folder, put the image back into the back-end and then type the file name *just right* when you were setting up the ads so that the system would know where to go … I thought that some of that stuff was just so broken. (his emphasis)

The tools Ad Operations used for reporting were also inadequate. Jeremy stated:

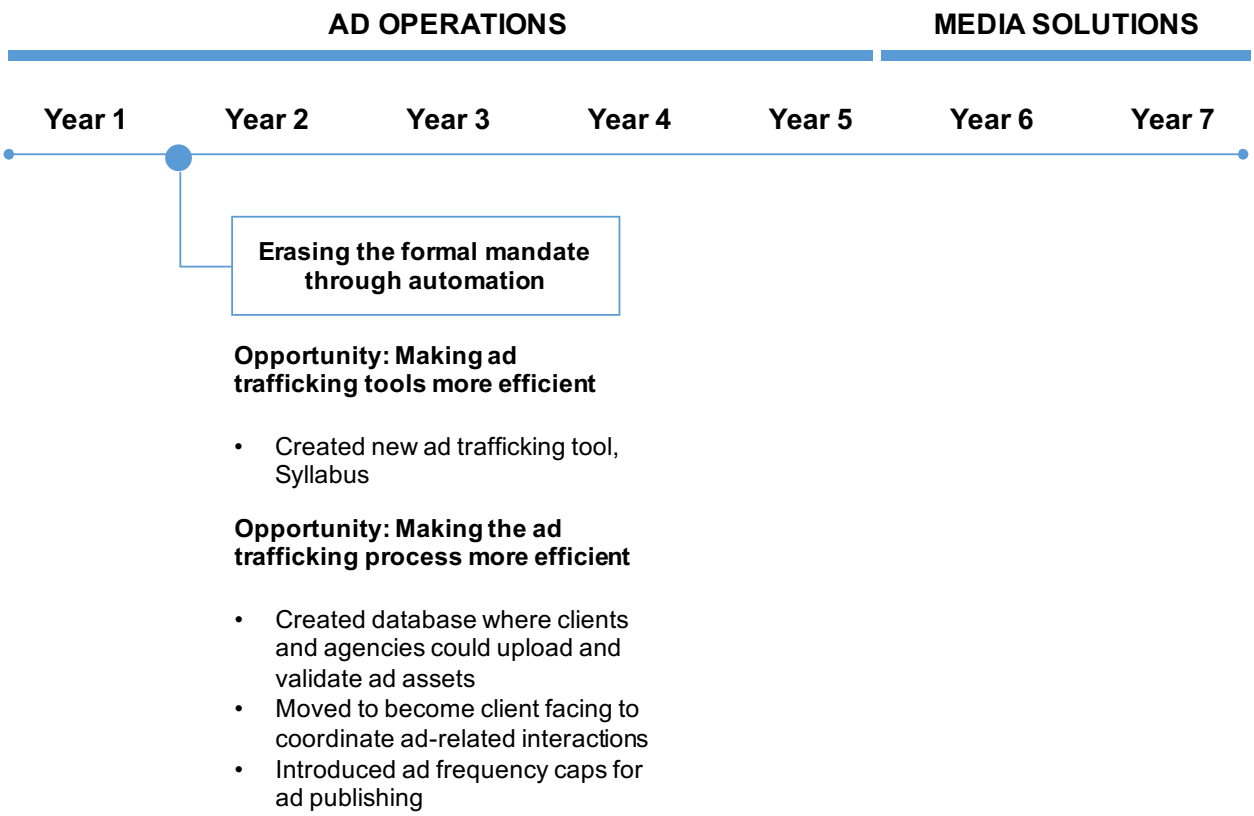
> Everything was Excel. Reporting was just copy pasting … All you would send clients was number of impressions[9] you did [and] click-through rate … We would literally do Excel sheet after Excel sheet of 'how many impressions did [this ad] run?' Copy paste. 'How many clicks?'

When Jeremy launched an activity tracking study for the unit, he discovered that Ad Operations members were spending 60% of their time copying and pasting and 30% dealing with bugs in the ad trafficking system. "*Think about just how much time you spent doing the most ridiculous things,*" he noted. Erasing the unit's formal mandate would help make the unit progressively more efficient. In Jeremy's words, "*it was always efficiency for the team's sake.*"

Erasing the Formal Mandate through Automation. Several Ad Operations members engaged in job crafting to automate portions of the ad trafficking process that consumed inordinate amounts of time when performed manually. Figure 4.4 positions the initiatives that resulted from automation on a timeline.

[9] The term "impression" in online advertising refers to the instance in which an ad is displayed on a web page and/or is seen by the user. The number of impressions of a particular ad is determined by the number of times the web page is loaded and the ad is "called" to appear.

Figure 4.4: Timeline: Erasing the Formal Mandate through Automation



One set of initiatives was directed toward creating processes and tools that would simplify the way CLICK received and validated the assets clients sent in to build ads. Until that moment, account managers were in charge of receiving the assets and forwarding them to Ad Operations analysts. Isaac stated:

> While we were trafficking ads, the account managers were the only ones who were actually client-facing. Technically, they just acted as middlemen: they would collect stuff from the client, they would send it to us, it would be wrong, we would tell them, it would go back to the client. They weren't really adding any value on that.

According to a report, these back-and-forth interactions could comprise "*over 75% of most account managers' workload*." Isaac continued:

> So one of the first key evolutionary things we did … was [to say,] 'Hey, instead of you being the only client-facing person on this, let us interact directly with the client.'

Sales was initially reticent to have Ad Operations become a client-facing function, even in the presence of potential efficiency gains, as it went against the usual industry practices. Isaac explained what a difficult negotiation that was:

> It sounds like an obvious thing now but it actually took quite a bit of finagling at the time … It caused us to have to switch expectations with the [Sales] team and say, 'Hey, we are not just back end operational personnel, we need to be able to interact directly with clients.'

Initially, only a few Ad Operations members began interfacing with clients, as a sort of test. The change not only affected sellers and account managers, but also clients and media agencies. Jeremy explained:

> We stated doing it in some test account teams … Travis tried this out and Nadia tried this out. Once we started to do that, obviously it was a bunch of us moving over … At that point it was clear this was an easier process.

Ad Operations members began interfacing directly with clients to receive and validate assets. In order to streamline this process, Sam, an early member, took action to design a tool that solved the problem of messy asset management. According to archival data, he worked alongside IT and Engineering to allow assets to be entered directly into a web-based system. This "*enabled a number of key validations and opened the door to more scalable asset-related solutions*". The same documents state that Sam subsequently worked together with IT and Engineering to evolve this asset management tool into a more comprehensive media trafficking tool I will refer to as *Syllabus*. Resources were scarce at the time and the tool was far from perfect, but its fast adoption across Ad Operations "*significantly reduced trafficking time*" for everyone in the unit. Syllabus was used for years despite its shortcomings and became a symbol of Ad Operations' early efforts to gain efficiency.

In another set of initiatives, Ad Operations members sought to introduce features into CLICK's platform that may enable the unit to optimize ad delivery. One of those was an automated frequency caps[10] feature. Initially, CLICK's platform did not take ad publishing frequency into account. This caused users to see the same ad over and over again. Jeremy explained:

> We didn't have any frequency caps or anything like that back then … so you would put this ad in and it would stay in this person's feed until it was processed out. So if you entered the ad on the 30th of June and that wasn't a very active user, it would still show in like August.

Sales later defined a frequency cap of 5 and communicated it to clients, but the platform lacked the functionality to verify that the cap was actually being taken into consideration on any given campaign. Capping was performed manually and led to costly mistakes. Initially, Ad Operations analysts took the total number of ads each client bought, divided it by 5, and programmed the ads to run at the expected frequency. As they attempted to verify the effectiveness of this method, they realized that CLICK's platform was built in such a way that the system delivered the ads 25 to 30 times per user. Ad Operations informed Barry, the Head of Revenue Recognition, who was understandably upset. Jeremy said:

> For the first time our Revenue Assurance team saw this frequency cap of 5 was just this lie and we spent the next three months contacting every single client and being like, 'Sorry, you delivered [these many ads] but with a frequency cap of 5 it was like [this amount]' … So that was a couple of months of fun.

After this negative experience, Ad Operations started advocating for an automated monthly frequency cap solution. Finally, Walter, a member of the unit, took the lead in its development. According to a report, he worked alongside Engineering to build it and alongside Finance and Marketing to communicate it to clients. Solving the frequency cap problem also

[10] The concept of "frequency" refers to the number of times an ad reaches an average user in a given a period of time. A frequency cap establishes the maximum number of times a user should see the same ad.

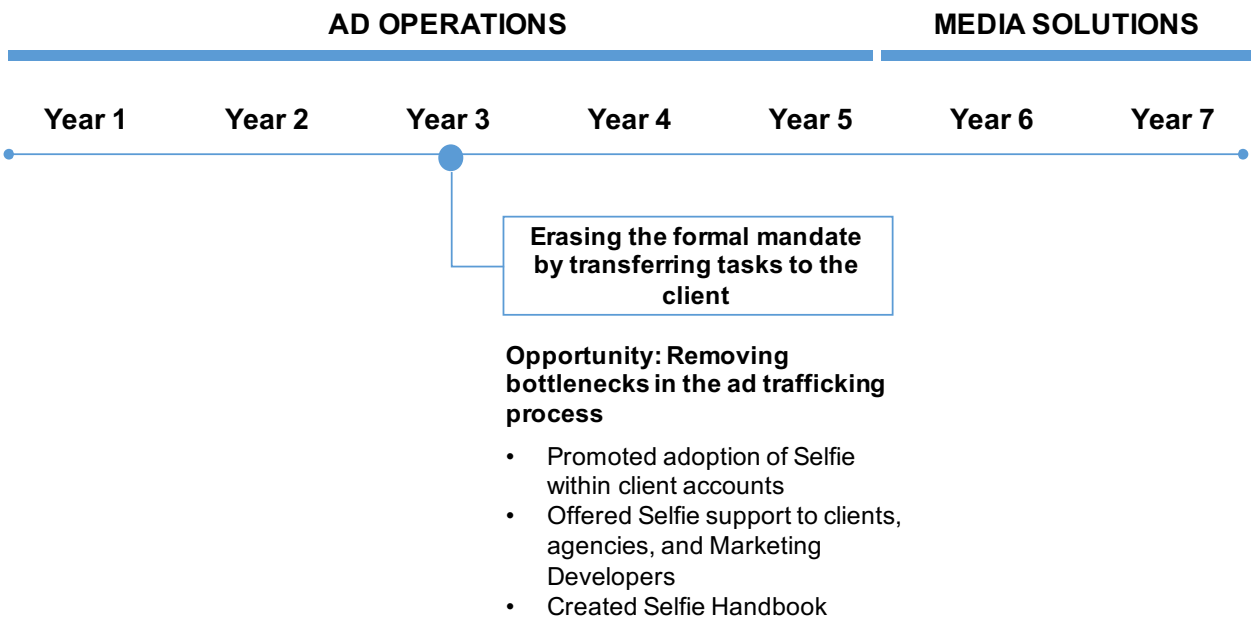
contributed to increasing CLICK's attractiveness as an advertising medium for large advertisers at a time when CLICK was still proving itself as a viable platform. According to the same document, among other deals this automated feature "*enabled CLICK's Sales team to close [large advertiser's] first ever global digital media partnership, which has grown into one of the company's most crucial relationships.*" Lastly, solving this problem solidified Ad Operation's already strong relationship with Revenue Recognition.

Erasing the Formal Mandate by Transferring Tasks to the Client. Despite improvements such as those listed above, Ad Operations' attempts to automate the ad trafficking function offered increasingly fewer efficiency gains. As CLICK's client base grew, Ad Operations continued to be flooded with insertion orders. According to Nigel, in discussions about how to make the interface between sellers, account managers, and Ad Operations analysts run more smoothly, Sales executives would tell him, "*Well, we need to make sure that we create electronic insertion orders*". Nigel reportedly responded: "*No. Why don't we make it so that we don't have to traffic anything ever again?*" In an interview, he stated:

> We don't want to spend time doing this. How can we erase this? We don't need people doing this kind of crap … People just wouldn't think about this the right way. Anyways, that is what we decided to focus on. Let's make this thing something that we don't have to do *ever again*. (his emphasis)

Job crafting opportunities in this direction came from CLICK's Engineering unit. Figure 4.5 positions these opportunities on a timeline.

Figure 4.5: Erasing the Formal Mandate by Transferring Tasks to the Client



Engineers had quietly rolled out a system I will refer to as *Selfie*, which enabled clients to buy a variety of ad products at auction and to program those ads themselves onto the CLICK platform. The system was a game-changer in the industry for several reasons. For example, the cost of advertising through Selfie was a fraction of what clients paid to have Ad Operations do ad programming for them. This increased CLICK's attractiveness as an advertising medium, as every other social media platform continued to rely on insertion orders. Additionally, Selfie enabled CLICK to scale up its advertising capabilities, i.e., to serve many more clients without facing the bottlenecks its traditional process created. For clients, this was a faster and more efficient way to run ads on the CLICK platform. In this regard, Isaac wrote the following in his notes on a presentation on Selfie he delivered to Ad Operations members:

> Regardless of what tools we have, we'll never be able to scale things manually in the same way that a third party building on our platform can. And that … underscores why Selfie is as important as it is and why it deserves our focus. It's all about scalability.

Lastly, for Ad Operations in particular, the introduction of Selfie put the unit closer than it had ever been to erasing its formal mandate. The expectation was that, if clients were programing ads by themselves, Ad Operations members would be able to move away from ad trafficking and to devote more of their time to what they considered higher-value-adding activities. Everyone at Ad Operations was excited when the system launched and vowed to help clients adopt it quickly. Sellers and account managers, on the other hand, were reticent to recommend Selfie to their clients. Sam observed:

> We actually saw the data that the smarter advertisers were moving into [Selfie] … We kind of saw where the numbers were pointing and we kind of accelerated getting there … From the Sales side, they are not data driven. … it's very driven by what they know. 'I've been selling insertion orders for 20 years at [competitor,] that's just the way to do it'. They are not very innovative. They are not willing to change.

On the one hand, Sales appeared to have technical concerns regarding Selfie. Ad Operations was confident in this regard because Cameron and Jacob, two highly experienced members of the unit, had been working alongside Engineering to design the actual interface clients used to traffic ads through Selfie. Cameron and Jacob had been influential in determining the functionalities the interface offered. Jacob explained:

> I was on the team since it [i.e., Selfie] was first created … I've been providing feedback to the engineers from the very beginning, like, 'this is what we need to see for it to be successful, for it to actually work' … Once those things get pushed, [I say] 'here are the bugs, this is what is not working, this is the way it is expected to work' … I am really proud to say that I have been on that team to lead that charge.

Both Jeremy and Nigel engaged in frequent conversations with Sales leaders to reassure them and to encourage them to transition their clients to the new system. Jeremy stated:

> It took a lot of convincing to get people ok with [it]. That was a major fight Nigel and I would deal with a lot, because some people in the Sales world thought it

> was a threat. 'These bad Marketing Developers[11] will come in and cannibalize or change what we want to do with the client'. And we were like, 'No, this is *awesome*. This just means that Syllabus can finally go into the background'. (his emphasis)

On the other hand, Sales leaders appeared to be worried about the possibility that revenues would become more volatile because Selfie, unlike insertion orders, didn't require clients to commit funds ahead of time. Clients had more room to experiment with different kinds of ads, targeting options, and other parameters and had the chance to alter their media plans depending on what results they got. Sam explained how this affected sellers:

> It's more comfortable for them to sell insertion orders because that's booked [revenue] and you know ahead of time what you are going to get. It's not as in flux, performance-based as Selfie. So, understandably, they were scared, [thinking] … 'I may not hit my number this quarter'.

Given these concerns, sellers continued to push insertion orders and decided not to offer support to clients who chose to run their ads through Selfie. Ad Operations disagreed. In the unit's opinion, leaving Selfie users to fend for themselves risked losing the client altogether rather than encourage them to continue buying ads the traditional way. Sam stated:

> The Sales team was like, 'No, we don't want to support that' ... and we were like, 'If we don't support that it's going to kill us … If they [i.e., clients] are not finding success here in the Selfie piece, they are going to stop spending on insertion orders … If they were blindly trying to do Selfie themselves without getting any sort of feedback or best practices and they don't find success, they would just stop spending and take that to [our main competitor] … So on the ground we worked with the advertisers to find success there, otherwise spend was just going to go away.

In cases like these, Sam said, Ad Operations "*oftentimes … would kind of have to go around Sales*" to engage in collective job crafting. The unit decided to take on Selfie support despite Sales' approval. Each Ad Operations analyst took the initiative to answer questions and

[11] Marketing Developers were companies that offered the service of manual ad programming for clients using Selfie. They performed the same job as Ad Operations, only they were external agents.

provide advice to clients and media agencies in the context of the accounts they served. In this way, Ad Operations began claiming an identity as a group of problem solvers in the market, beyond CLICK's organizational boundaries. The unit relied on shared knowledge that a few members had put together into a *Selfie Handbook* after carrying out a full-scale audit of undocumented Selfie management processes and consolidating all technical, operational, and commercial aspects of advertising via Selfie into one document. Ad Operations also created a wiki where members shared information about the issues their respective clients were encountering as they used Selfie and how they had resolved them.

In part thanks to Ad Operations' support, Selfie adoption increased rapidly among advertisers. It went from contributing 10% of CLICK's revenues in the year of its release, to 40% the next year, to inching past insertion orders 51% vs. 49% in the third year, to moving ahead 60% vs. 40% in the fourth, to finally represent about 90% of CLICK's revenues in the fifth. In time, clients' growing engagement with Selfie freed up considerable amounts of time that Ad Operations members traditionally devoted to manual ad trafficking. As Ad Operations' formal mandate was progressively erased, the group continued its collective job crafting by establishing a new mandate.

Enacting a Self-defined Mandate. As the unit worked to erase its formal mandate, Ad Operations leaders informally defined a new one: they tasked the unit with maximizing advertiser return on investment via two mechanisms: data analysis and partner management. Contrasting Ad Operations' self-appointed mandate with its formal mandate of ad trafficking, Nigel noted that the former had "*an appropriately broad scope*" so that members of the unit "*get fulfilled and don't feel like they are doing just one tiny little annoying stupid task* ***all the time***"

(his emphasis). He noted: while affording the group richer possibilities than a restrictive task like ad trafficking.

> The [mandate] for my group is to maximize ad revenue through data driven services. Everything that we do should be moving toward that end and should be about knocking down hurdles that keep us from optimizing our ability to do that.

Remy noted that the unit's self-appointed mandate leveraged three skills Ad Operations already possessed but could not exercise in the job as formally defined: the ability to interact effectively with other units and agents, the ability to perform complex data analysis, and the ability to link that analysis with the generation of incremental revenue. According to him, the new mandate served as a way to frame the unit's goals in terms of 'who it aimed to become' and 'what it aimed to do' at CLICK. He explained:

> The [Ad Operations] leadership at the time recognized that the members of the team were actually very externally facing. They had a lot of experiences early on and have seen success as it relates to moving the needle on revenue. We have been able to generate incremental revenue as a result of sharing data driven insights. So, they saw this as a great opportunity to kind of frame it [i.e., the mandate] and change the way in which Ad Operations folks do their jobs at CLICK as opposed to everywhere else.

In terms of proactive behavior, Ad Operations members captured opportunities to launch or join projects to solve problems across the entire media cycle at CLICK: planning, buying, running, and measuring ad campaigns. Back then, most of these tasks were formally in the hands of sellers and account managers. Ad Operations owned the 'running' stage through its formal ad trafficking mandate (which the unit aimed to 'erase') and informally performed some 'measuring' with the production of reports. Members' projects yielded new tools, new business processes, and new ad products, many of which had significant impact on CLICK's performance and attractiveness as an advertising medium. They also enabled individual members to expand the scope of the tasks they performed, to forge new relationships with members of other units at

CLICK and external actors in the environment, and to find new meaning in their work. Lastly, these projects allowed Ad Operations as a whole to further expand its knowledge base, to enhance its sphere of influence, and to more perfectly enact an envisioned identity as a group of problem solvers.

In terms of adaptive behavior, however, this self-defined mandate was not communicated widely across the organization. Instead, it was shared selectively by Nigel with managers of other units in a slow process where he sought to adapt those managers' expectations of what Ad Operations could contribute to CLICK. In parallel, individual members attempted to adapt the expectations of the units and agents with whom they interacted, e.g., sellers, account managers, clients, media agencies, and engineers. While some quickly adopted a perception of Ad Operations in line with what the unit was attempting to become, others continued to see Ad Operations strictly as an ad trafficking engine and their perceptions were more difficult to adapt.

Creating New Tools. The creation of new tools was geared toward automating business processes and incorporating novel functionalities onto the platform in order to enhance the value that clients found in CLICK as an advertising medium. One of the most impactful tools created by Ad Operations, the *Target Assembler*, was the brainchild of James, a member whose many contributions to the unit's collective job crafting efforts came through incisive data analysis and mining. Figure 4.6 positions the Target Assembler on a timeline.

Figure 4.6: Timeline: Creating New Tools

Seeing that the targeting capabilities CLICK offered clients for their ads were relatively rudimentary compared to what the company's wealth of user data could afford, James took the initiative to build a new ad targeting tool. The Target Assembler enabled advertisers to move beyond self-reported demographic parameters in targeting (e.g., a user's gender, age, geographic location, or interests) and to rely on more nuanced behavioral parameters (i.e., parameters that emerged from the ways users engaged with the platform on an ongoing basis). This move would improve the quality of clients' ad delivery and help them "*hit the right user*". James explained:

> One of the things that the company had been doing but in a very primitive way was … building these cohorts of users, at the time based on keywords or interests, ... to allow advertisers to target them … I thought there was an opportunity to potentially blow that out, … start looking at the vast amount of data that we have on users … [and] infer those audiences to make [targets] more sophisticated than they were at the time. And by identifying that opportunity myself, Remy, and Benjamin worked together to map out exactly what this would look like … What that turned into was this concept of *target assembly*.

James, Remy, and Benjamin started assembling unconventional targets such as "new mothers," which clients across the board may find attractive and would be willing to pay premium prices to reach. Once assembled, a target could be used by any advertiser. The tool

quickly became one of CLICK's most successful premium offerings. Given the rising number of requests, Ad Operations set up an informal support structure so that every office would have a target assembly expert available to assist other members. James explained:

> Part of what we were working on was also defining the process and how we would take these requests in, prioritize them, organize them, execute on them, roll them out, but also figuring out a way to scale it so that we weren't the bottlenecks to building all these targets. After we announced this type of capability to the greater Sales organization, it was a matter of time for advertisers to start catching on to this type of offering. So as a result, once demand started coming in, it was a matter of … having key points of contact in each office to manage and distribute the work load, so we would be able to handle all the requests coming in.

The Target Assembler tool raised Ad Operation's profile at CLICK as a unit that possessed sophisticated data analysis capabilities. It particularly enabled Ad Operations analysts to take over tasks connected with targeting in their client accounts and to have a stronger voice in the process of media planning, until then the exclusive realm of account managers. Reflecting on the impact that the tool had had over Ad Operations' collective job crafting effort, James said:

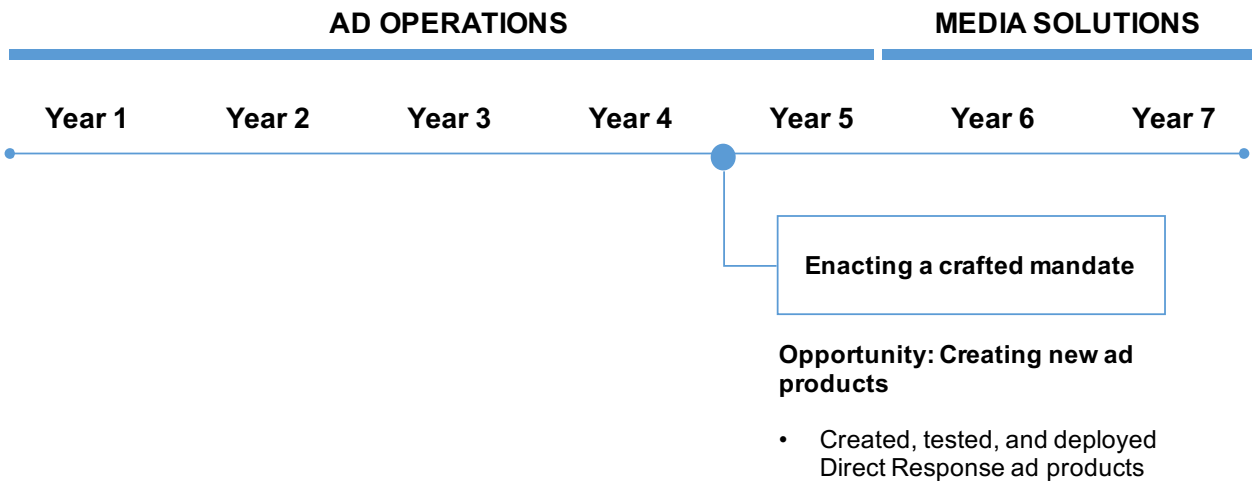
> As a result of identifying this opportunity, we were able to drive one of the core aspects of CLICK advertising … Now advertisers are *asking* for these assembled targets. It's something that they have been requesting globally ... I don't want our team to take all the credit, but I think the fact that we were able to push this new concept [is remarkable]. (his emphasis)

In sum, the widespread use of the Target Assembler and other tools built *by* and *for* the unit helped it generate new knowledge, participate in processes across the organization it did not have access to before, and cause other groups to view Ad Operations as something other than a group of ad traffickers.

Creating New Ad Products. The creation of new ad products was intended to make CLICK a more attractive and effective advertising platform for its clients and to open up new revenue streams for the organization. One of the most impactful initiatives was led by Nigel,

Jeremy, and a small group of Ad Operations members who drove the creation of *direct response* ad products. Figure 4.7 positions direct response ad products on a timeline.

Figure 4.7: Timeline: Creating New Ad Products



Direct response ad products enabled users of the platform to buy goods and services on CLICK. The concept was novel because, until then, CLICK had focused strictly on *display advertising*, i.e., on developing ad products that sought to raise awareness about a product. The generalized view was that the company could not succeed in direct response, an area dominated by its main competitor. Isaac noted:

> All of our marketing messaging was that we were a brand-focused company. 'We cannot compete in the direct response space, nor should we try because [our main competitor] will always win at that'.

As a result, CLICK had not really developed capabilities to track whether advertising on the platform actually translated into sales for its clients. Nigel explained:

> [Tracking] is something that people weren't really doing on CLICK because nobody ever decided to put a program around it … Sales didn't know to ask [clients] questions like, 'How are you measuring the effectiveness of your campaigns? What are your KPIs?'

According to Nigel, Sales leadership was wedded to display advertising and incentivized sellers to focus on pushing "*premium, expensive products*" to clients with "*very tactical*"

tracking capabilities. Nigel thought this was a faulty practice, especially for clients in specific industries (such as telecommunications, financial services, and travel) who had a concrete interest in performance tracking and direct response advertising. He stated:

> If we charge somebody 50 dollars for an ad, and they are trying to sell phones that cost maybe 100 dollars, that's probably not a good thing when they go back and ask, 'How effective was CLICK? Not very effective, because it costs us a ton of money to sell phones'.

Direct response, in Nigel's mind, was "*something we [i.e., CLICK] should at least start to try testing*". Isaac remarked that Nigel, Jeremy, Nolan, and other early members "*put together a plan back then and started driving this stuff. We started attacking it*". As part of that plan, Nigel designed a program that incorporated a tracking functionality into ads and obtained Product Management's support to develop it. Isaac explained:

> In order to capture future revenue, we needed to allow [tracking], which is something that hadn't been pushed before. Nigel put together a proposal for Garth [a Product Management leader], sold it to Product, and I helped blow it out on the execution level.

With the tracking functionality in place, the plan consisted of taking a set of non-premium, inexpensive ads and create different versions of the same ad in order to figure out which ones led to sales. Subsequently, Nigel managed to convince a telecommunications client (a company that was a leader in the industry, yet devoted only a small percentage of its advertising budget to CLICK) to test the concept. It was a tricky process because, for Ad Operations to assert the link between an ad and a purchase, the client needed to share with CLICK some sensitive proprietary data. Nigel explained:

> So I go in there. I am not a salesperson, but I go in there and I say, 'Look [client], here is an opportunity for you. We are going to run this really cheap inventory and we are going to sell a lot of phones for you … We need all these different permutations of copy, we need a ton of different titles for your ads, a ton of different images for your ad, a ton of different body copy, so that we can mix and match all those things and figure out the ones that are driving the most sales. And

> to figure out the ones that are driving the most sales, we need access to your back-end data … Are you comfortable with that?

The client initially refused. Ad Operations reached out to engineering, legal, and policy experts at CLICK to make sure the data, if received, would be kept safe and used appropriately. After a series of conversations, the client granted CLICK access to the data. Nigel continued:

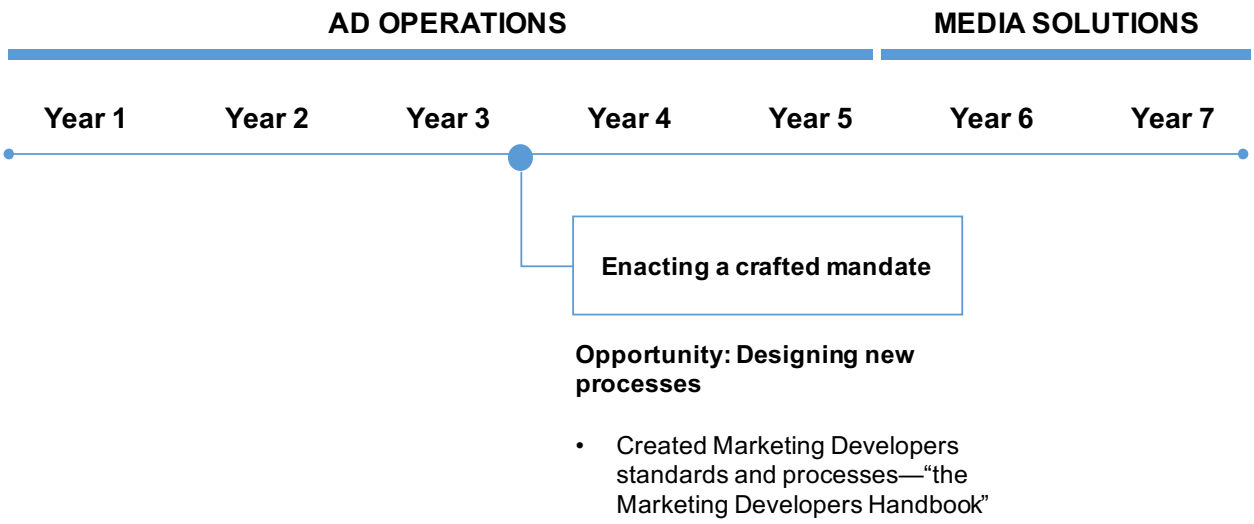
> So they gave us a feed of all that data and we went to town creating all these ads and pushing them out and optimizing towards the ads that were doing the best to try to drive down the amount of money they had to pay to get people to buy their phones. And this was a huge success … Before you know it, [client] is one of our biggest advertisers and they are driving all of their money through this thing.

Direct response ads quickly caught on with advertisers in different industries and brought in, by the time I left the field, about 25% of CLICK's revenues. Ad Operations became the main referent for direct response at CLICK. Offices catering to a large number of clients who did primarily direct response advertising had an Ad Operations direct response expert on site. These experts developed materials so that all Ad Operations members could train their clients and media agencies on direct response ad products. Experts also acted as point persons vis-à-vis units like Product Engineering and Legal as the suite of direct response ad products grew. Members of the unit often devoted time in weekly meetings to sharing best practices on how to introduce direct response to their client accounts and to keeping abreast of new developments in direct response offerings. In the context of client accounts, direct response ad products enabled Ad Operations analysts to gain a more preponderant role in media planning and in defining the client's advertising strategy on CLICK, until then the sole realm of sellers and account managers.

Designing New Business Processes. The design of new business processes was intended to articulate interactions between different groups at CLICK and between CLICK and external actors that remained unspecified. Ad Operations jumped to design processes when changes in the media cycle (planning, buying, executing, and measuring ad campaigns) created decision-

making voids or inconsistencies. One of the most impactful processes was designed by Isaac in the wake of the implementation of Selfie. When Ad Operations took over Selfie support, unit members realized that advertisers and media agencies were outsourcing the task of ad trafficking to Marketing Developers. According to Isaac, Marketing Developers "*were this new group of folks who were becoming increasingly influential and with whom the Sales team and all these other groups didn't know how to work*". Given that Ad Operations already managed Selfie support, the unit moved to informally manage the relationship between client accounts and Marketing Developers. Figure 4.8 positions this initiative on a timeline.

Figure 4.8: Timeline: Designing New Business Processes



Ad Operations considered that vetting and training Marketing Developers was important, as they would be working with client data and assets on the CLICK platform itself. Designing a process to evaluate, select, and articulate the relationship between the company and Marketing Developers would contribute to data security and consistency in ad delivery. It would also allow Ad Operations to keep Marketing Developers informed on CLICK's frequent ad product launches and changes. Isaac formally wrote this process down on what he called the *Marketing Developer Handbook*. He stated:

> [The Handbook contained] more detail than the Sales team would like. It is 40 pages long and essentially outlines everything you need to know about Marketing Developers and how we should go about embracing execution level detail, how our team should go about working with them. Based on that, we essentially took on the Marketing Developer relationships … and started managing and controlling those.

Isaac took time during weekly meetings to present the handbook to the rest of the unit. The initial version was so detailed that its roll-out lasted 6 weeks. Isaac's intent was for the handbook to become an open document that members of the unit could edit by adding best practices and lessons learned in actual client engagements. In the kick-off meeting, he stated:

> The ultimate goal here is to make sure that the document itself evolves and that it's based in and on actual client problems. And that it's completely collaborative … The best and most useful document that we can produce will not be borne of a singular and individual effort, but rather of a compilation of everyone's reality-based ideas. That's really the key here … After the roll-out, we'll make sure the document is cleaned up and also make sure we have quarterly audits in place going forward to keep it up-to-date.

Managing Marketing Developer relationships enabled Ad Operations to raise its profile among relevant agents in CLICK's environment and to influence the way they interacted with the organization. In this way, Ad Operations enriched its own web of external relationships, adding Marketing Developers to clients and media agencies, for whom the unit had already established itself as a trusted source of advice. In the context of their client accounts, Ad Operations members interacted almost daily with their clients' Marketing Developers, providing support and troubleshooting issues they encountered as they built ads on Selfie.

So far, we have traced the origins of collective job crafting at Ad Operations, laying out the unit's motivation to move beyond its formal mandate and describing its job crafting methodology (erasing the formal mandate through automation or by transferring tasks to the client, and enacting a new mandate by creating new tools, processes, and ad products). We then

saw how members used this methodology in specific group-oriented yet individually-crafted initiatives. Next, we turn to analyzing how the results of these individual initiatives were scaled to the rest of the unit.

Group Proactive Behavior

Group proactive behavior at Ad Operations consisted of *sharing knowledge* across the unit and jointly *defining and committing to a new group identity*. These dynamics involved joint reflection and action on what the unit aimed to do (as opposed to what its formal mandate prescribed it should do) and who it aimed to become (as opposed to the identity members felt the formal mandate imposed upon them).

Ad Operations members saw themselves as contributors to the unit's collective job crafting effort. In terms of knowledge, this meant that all individual job crafting activities they engaged in were meant to be complementary and scalable to the rest of the unit. Knowledge-sharing dynamics enabled Ad Operations to act as a tight-knit learning community where members were keenly aware of what they could teach to and learn from one another. By disseminating one another's knowledge, training one another to acquire new skills, and fostering the unit-wide adoption of solutions members had individually created, Ad Operations members elevated critical intangible assets from themselves to the group, and thereby enhanced the unit's knowledge base.

At the same time, Ad Operations members saw themselves as co-creators of a newly envisioned unit identity—an ideal of what they could collectively achieve. Identity-building dynamics enabled Media Solutions members to jointly reflect on the group's past, present, and future and to construct a common narrative. Through these narratives, the unit established a

common memory that members adopted regardless of when they joined the group, a shared assessment of where the unit stood at present, and a sense of common fate.

Across its 7-year lifespan, the unit created a series of contexts where group proactive behavior regularly took place. Among these were weekly meetings, an immersion program I will call *Basic Training*, and intranet wikis. Table 4.2 synthesizes key aspects of group proactive behavior at Ad Operations.

Table 4.2. Practices and Contexts in Group Proactive Behavior

	Weekly Meetings	**Basic Training**	**Intranet Wikis**
Sharing knowledge obtained through group-oriented individual job crafting	Training the rest of the unit on ad products, tools, or processes individual members developed as part of group-oriented individual job crafting Sharing "How I did it" stories of successful adaptive behavior in client account teams and engineering projects	Training recruits on the tasks and systems that made up Ad Operations' collectively crafted job Educating recruits on the informal position Ad Operations occupied in CLICK's social environment, i.e., crafted relationships	Offering expert advice to fellow unit members on ad products, tools, or processes individual members developed as part of group-oriented individual job crafting Building a knowledge repository members could resort to when using ad products, tools, or processes developed by peers
Building a collectively crafted group identity	Reminiscing on the unit's progress in collective job crafting, i.e., the distance between the formal job and the collectively crafted job Laying out plans for future collective job crafting	Socializing recruits to absorb and display the unit's crafted identity attributes Prompting recruits to 'find a niche' to contribute to the unit's advancement through group-oriented individual job crafting	Interpreting the quality of the knowledge contained in the wiki as reflective of the unit's collectively crafted identity

Weekly meetings. Hour-long weekly meetings provided regular instances where the entire unit could gather either in person or via videoconference. Each week's agenda was circulated in advance and all meetings were recorded so that members of the group who could not attend could catch up on what was discussed. Minutes and any materials presented during the meetings were also made available. Meetings were usually led by a manager but members frequently took over during specific segments where their work was featured. A typical meeting included presentations peppered with open discussion.

Knowledge sharing and identity construction often intertwined during these meetings, as knowledge was often transmitted in tandem with a narrative that showcased the unit's self-views and self-driven growth over time. For example, in a meeting where James was scheduled to give an overview on his work on direct response ad products, Isaac (by then a manager) started by reminiscing on the unit's self-crafted evolution and direct response's place in it. He said:

> Before we get into the specifics of how we should be approaching direct response right now, it's important to take a look back at the history of direct response advertising at the company to see how it's evolved. [Our unit] has really been instrumental in driving these initiatives and making them a priority along the way, so I thought it'd be useful to provide a little context on that here.

He remarked on the adverse organizational context Ad Operations had faced when a group of members first began working on direct response initiatives and stressed both the proactive and the adaptive work they had engaged in on behalf of the unit. He continued:

> It was actually assumed by many that we would never be able to compete [in the DR space] … When those were the thoughts permeating much of the rest of the company, it was actually a few folks in our group who went against the norm and … started experimenting …, starting small, to see if we [i.e., CLICK] could actually prove an efficient [advertising] channel for the DR [clients].

Isaac then laid out some of the early complexities the unit had overcome in order to run the first direct response ads onto the CLICK platform. As explained previously, the project had

required dedicated adjustments to the platform, which Nigel and other early members had initially produced by hand and later convinced Engineering to automate. He also explained how, as direct response began to grow, Ad Operations was able to influence other units such as Product Engineering and Measurement to hire dedicated direct response staff. He concluded by stressing the significance of direct response to the unit as it looked to the future. He said:

> As [we] have methodically captained these initiatives along the way, it's given rise to a ton of other interest from within the company … I just wanted to be sure to impress upon you the importance of our team in always driving direct response along the way. It's really something that we helped to build at the company, and it's something that we will be expected to continue to own … As a result of the fact that our skillset naturally lends itself to [coming] up with answers that are truly rooted in data, we are the perfect team, not only to have started it, but also to continue owning it going forward.

Isaac then gave the floor to James, who introduced a play-by-play guide he had developed to help Ad Operations members present direct response ad products to their respective clients. His presentation outlined a methodology based on James' and others' experiences, from estimating the size of the direct response opportunity at a given client, to setting up and running an introductory meeting, to creating a detailed action plan for campaigns, and finally measuring their results. He illustrated each step with concrete examples, answered questions, and gave advice to peers who were already trying to get their clients involved with direct response ads and were encountering difficulties. Other members jumped in to complement his comments. For example, following James' recommendations for running the initial meeting, Isaac stated:

> Be wary of being overly prescriptive in recommendations to clients right off the bat. Frame the discussion as a learning exercise around their goals, data, and methodologies, and then focus on potential test solutions that might work for them. Make sure that we're approaching this as an exercise in testing and learning. Push back on anyone who's trying to be overly myopic about this. Understand the clients' needs and their existing test frameworks, and come up with a test plan together.

The meeting concluded with James making a detailed compilation of the methodology available to the group.

Basic Training. Basic Training was Ad Operations' week-long immersion program, which the unit ran in addition to CLICK's more general training for new employees. It was created and delivered by Nadia, an early member of the unit who proactively rose to become Ad Operations' lead expert on all things related to members' ongoing training.

Basic Training blended knowledge sharing and identity construction. During sessions, Nadia emphasized that the unit was far from a traditional Ad Operations group both in terms of 'who we are' and 'what we do'. She traced the history of the unit from its origins as a team dedicated exclusively to ad trafficking to its current incarnation: a client-facing source of new ad products, new business processes, and new tools. After the unit proactively changed its name to Media Solutions in year 5, Nadia also explained the rationale for the rebranding. In tandem, she described the unit's identity in terms of problem solving rather than simple ad execution. According to Isaac, Basic Training was about saying to new recruits: *"Here is our identity, here is our culture, here is the way that* ***we****, Media Solutions, think … defining ourselves like that, taking pride in that, and also empowering each individual person to solve problems in ways that they came up with on their own."* (his emphasis)

Nadia situated the unit within CLICK using a wider perspective than the organization's formal structure would suggest. According to Robert, instead of stressing the unit's formal ties with Sales, Nadia portrayed the unit as part of "*a larger ecosystem*" and for which "*cross-group collaboration was the primary thing*." Nadia herself noted that, during the first hour of Basic Training, she would lay out the structure of the organization by drawing circles on the board and positioning the unit at the center. She explained she did so because "*we truly belong there. We*

really do connect and interface with so many teams." She then articulated all the internal and external agents with which the unit interacted, explaining the nature of those relationships and the resulting inputs and outputs.

Nadia also devoted considerable time to sharing knowledge with new recruits on the numerous ad products CLICK offered and on the tools and systems with which the group worked. As she did so, she noted all the products and tools members had helped build. Joel, one of the unit's newest members, said that while Basic Training could only provide an overview of these tools, it gave newcomers "*just enough of a taste of everything we do*" in order to "*give somewhat of an educated response*" to any enquiries they may receive from clients during their first few weeks, as well as orient members as to where to go to find more thorough answers. At the same time, by providing a comprehensive overview of the unit's activities and aims, Basic Training prompted newcomers to "*find a niche*," as members put it, to begin contributing to the unit's collective job crafting efforts.

Intranet wikis. Wikis were created by Ad Operations experts to assist fellow members of the unit on specific topics. They acted as live repositories of very detailed knowledge that all members of the unit could update with either questions or answers. August referred to the wiki as "*a great way to learn*". He noted:

> You would go and post a question or searched the wiki and chances are someone had encountered the same question or posted something similar that could point you in the right direction.

Martin, for example, created a wiki dedicated to gathering knowledge on how to perform queries to produce custom reports. Because CLICK's database infrastructure was complex, producing a custom report involved writing original code to yield the required information. The organization's standard reporting tool did not accommodate these types of requests, so they had

to be performed manually. Martin was among the first Ad Operations members to get involved in custom reporting and was, consequently, considered one of the resident experts by his peers. The wiki he created served as a tool to synthesize the unit's knowledge on this issue. He said:

> Maybe last spring, April or May, I created this wiki called 'Query Support'. The idea was, I was getting hit up at all hours, day and night, by people asking for help with writing queries … So I created this wiki where people could ask me … It was a great thing. The wiki was being used all the time and it is still an extraordinarily active wiki.

While online wikis served mostly as means of knowledge sharing, they were also symbolic of the unit's envisioned identity as problem solvers. Ad Operations members were proud of the quality of the discussions contained in their wikis and believed they reflected how far the unit had come in collectively crafting the job. For example, Martin associated the quality of the questions he received through the Query Support wiki from his Ad Operations peers with identity attributes such as intellectual curiosity and motivation to explore, which he saw as representative of his unit. He then contrasted these questions with requests he received from account managers when they needed to produce custom reports. He saw the relatively lower quality of these requests as evidence of a different kind of disposition. He observed:

> [Ad Operations members] were asking really good questions about how to structure their queries … It was like, 'Hey, I tried to do this query, it's not working. Can you help me figure out why this isn't working?' 'Yes, we can do that' … [In turn, with account managers] it's like, 'Hey, I need a query to do this. Does anybody have this?' But it's asked in such a way that they expect—they clearly don't understand … how data works at CLICK, they don't really care to understand that in order to get this done.

This section described group proactive behavior in collective job crafting in terms of the dynamics it entails (sharing knowledge and building the group's identity) and the contexts in

which these dynamics took place. Next, we turn to examining group adaptive behavior in similar terms.

Group Adaptive Behavior

Group adaptive behavior in collective job crafting entails two kinds of externally-facing group dynamics: *wielding influence* and *establishing a positive external image* for the unit. These dynamics conveyed the space the unit aimed to occupy in the organization's internal social environment and its external ecosystem (as opposed to the position it occupied given its formal mandate) and the way in which the unit wished to be perceived by others (as opposed to the image other groups had formed given Ad Operations' formal mandate suggested).

While individual Ad Operations members displayed adaptive behavior within their client accounts and projects, and thereby did their part in changing other individuals' perceptions about the unit in those specific contexts, at the collective level these dynamics were usually in the hands of the unit's managers and members who had risen to become informal leaders in one or more of the unit's areas of specialization. These managers and members formed an informal web of complementarities: together, they were well-versed on all the projects that were going on at Ad Operations and used their relationships across the organization to keep the unit connected to key managers and members of other units. They especially cultivated relationships in units whose support and collaboration were critical to Ad Operations' collective job crafting activities. These individuals saw themselves (and were perceived by the rest of the group) as informal representatives of the unit who acted on its behalf. They gathered feedback from all members on specific topics, synthesized it, defined the unit's official position on these topics and brought it to the appropriate parties across the organization. At the same time, they were positioned as

informal ‘points of entry’ to Ad Operations, so that other units could channel information and requests into the group. In this sense, these individuals processed and synthesized external information so it could be quickly disseminated among Ad Operations members.

By acting in a complementary fashion, these individuals sought to influence other units into changing their behavior or reconfiguring their priorities. They did so, for example, by directing these units’ attention to problems they were ignoring or warning them of potentially negative consequences of certain actions. The more recognition for their advice they gained, the more other units came to rely on Ad Operations as a trusted advisor. In parallel, these individuals sought to install a new public narrative for the unit—one that would progressively lead other units to view Ad Operations in terms of its own envisioned mandate and identity rather than its formally-appointed ones. These dynamics took place in meetings, email exchanges, and informal conversations between these individuals and high-ranking members of other units, and in all-hands sessions they occasionally scheduled between the entire Ad Operations unit and leaders of other units. Table 4.3 synthesizes key aspects of group adaptive behavior in collective job crafting dynamics.

Table 4.3. Practices and Contexts in Group Adaptive Behavior

	Meetings, Emails, Conversations	All-hands Sessions
Wielding influence	***Ad Operations leaders:*** Offering feedback other unit leaders considered valuable Providing guidance by leveraging knowledge obtained through synthesizing members' group-oriented individual job crafting Inducing leaders of other units to devote resources to Ad Operations' collective job crafting activities	***All Ad Operations members:*** Offering feedback other unit leaders considered valuable Providing guidance by leveraging knowledge obtained through members' group-oriented individual job crafting Inducing other unit leaders to wield their influence across CLICK on behalf of Ad Operations
Communicating a collectively crafted group identity	***Ad Operations leaders:*** Displaying behaviors consistent with the unit's collectively crafted identity Inducing leaders of other units to change their perception of Ad Operations	***All Ad Operations members:*** Displaying behaviors consistent with the unit's collectively crafted identity Asking leaders of other units to explain their perception of Ad Operations

Meetings, **emails, and informal conversations**. Meetings, email exchanges, and informal conversations with key members in other units happened frequently. Ad Operations managers and informal leaders used these occasions to influence other units' priorities, nudging them to include Ad Operations' input into their decision-making processes and their workflows. In parallel, these conversations enabled them to provide other units' decision-makers with a different narrative about Ad Operations—one that may lead them and their teams to see Ad Operations as a "*source of truth*" on critical issues, as Duncan put it, rather than as a group of ad traffickers.

Meetings, emails, and informal conversations proved effective as devices to adapt the perceptions of Engineering leaders. Relationships between Ad Operations and Engineering were

built informally over time through repeated mutual exposure. For example, members like Isaac who were product experts interacted with leaders of the Product Management team to help them assess whether a new ad product would prove attractive to clients and to influence the changes they made to already existing ad products. Many of these ties were established in the early days of Ad Operations. The unit sat right next to product engineers at CLICK's headquarters and members of both units chatted frequently. Isaac stated that the two units "*were so tight knit at the time [that] we started a process of co-collaboration for which way and which direction we should take with these products*". Over time, dialogue between the two units was channeled between Ad Operations product experts, product managers, and their direct reports. Product managers came to rely heavily on Ad Operations for product design and testing, to the extent that, according to Jeremy, Ad Operations "*became almost part of the product development cycle*". This made sense because, according to Isaac, Product Management rarely interacted with clients. Isaac explained:

> We talk really regularly with the Product folks. They occasionally talk to the client—only when they need to—but really we are the ones taking this direct feedback to them saying, 'Hey, this is what we need to do'. Because any time they want to launch something, they need to get the specifics and the details out. They need to vet it and see if this is actually going to sell on the market … We are the team that has all the expertise there, so they come to us and we work closely together.

In parallel, these Ad Operations members channeled client feedback on existing products back to product managers in order to influence how products were maintained and updated. This started out as a haphazard process but, given the quality of the feedback Ad Operations provided, the unit's product experts eventually earned the right to sit in on high-level Product Management meetings. This was an important milestone in terms of exercising influence, because no other unit had received the same privilege. As such, these Ad Operations representatives exercised judgment in terms of what product changes to request. Isaac noted:

> They have a weekly product launch meeting among themselves, and we are—as far as I know—the only non-Product Management team that sits in on those meetings … We only want to do this when we have a [critical] need, but we will interject and be like, 'Hey, this is something that we need rapidly on the market. Can you get this on the roadmap?'

Exercising influence through meetings and email exchanges could sometimes be a painstaking process which required, in Isaac's view, "*whispering into the Product people's ears*" on a regular basis to devote resources to Ad Operations' proposals. He further remarked:

> It doesn't always materialize immediately. A lot of this stuff [requires] constantly talking to them for 6 months, putting together revenue forecasts [like] 'If we get this built, this is the impact on the market, here is how it will be received and this is why we need it'. Nigel and I and the managers [i.e., other Ad Operations product experts] will essentially pull that together and we will send that to the Product guys and push them and push them to do it.

The development of direct response ad products narrated previously is a case in point. While Ad Operations led much of the original programming for direct response ad products, the permutations on these ads that were required to optimize a campaign had to be built manually. Isaac remarked that this set-up imposed "*a hugely manual process on our end*" and was "*obviously not a scalable solution*". Automating this function, however, required introducing alterations to CLICK's platform. According to Isaac, Ad Operations' leaders were able to "*push*" Engineering to make the necessary changes to the platform so a scalable solution could be built, to set clear standards of use for clients, and to define privacy standards for the data before the product's widespread launch.

Finally, Isaac noted that exercising influence through meetings and email exchanges enabled Ad Operations to nudge other units into devoting permanent resources to issues Ad Operations had raised. In the case of direct response, for example, Ad Operations leaders were eventually able to get Garth, a top executive in Product Management and Soren, the head of Measurement, to hire staff to exclusively focus on direct response ads. Having dedicated

resources to run Ad Operations initiatives provided the unit with an additional source of potential influence. Isaac explained:

> They didn't have a product manager to support [direct response]. Nobody wanted to take it on. Nigel kept being vocal about it, [asking] 'Are we going to hire somebody for this?' So we have this new guy who is just new this week and who I already talked to. [I said], 'Here are essentially the problems on the market. This is what we've already been working on.' So if you get to those people early, we already have our roadmap of what they need to work on, and we just guide them, which is awesome.

Meetings, emails, and informal conversations proved less effective as devices to adapt the perceptions of Sales leaders. Unlike Engineering, which came to know and interact with Ad Operations on an informal basis, Sales was bound to the unit through formal ties. The implicit hierarchy that informally subordinated Ad Operations members to sellers and account managers in client account teams was also salient at the leadership level, where Ad Operations was granted less of a voice than other units to influence CLICK's Sales-related goals and practices. Consequently, Ad Operations experienced difficulties in inducing these leaders' to alter their perceptions of the unit's work and identity. On the contrary, Sales leaders would attempt to influence Ad Operations into conforming to the tenets set by their unit.

For example, knowing that Ad Operations devoted part of its time to informally collaborating with engineers on projects, Sales leaders often pressured Nigel to move his unit away from engineering work and to reinforce the importance of sales work. Nigel noted:

> That is something that … I hear all the time from Sales: 'Ad Operations focuses too much on projects. They are always doing projects. They need to put the customer first and just focus on the customer and the business.' They are literally like broken records about that and they don't understand that by doing these projects, that is exactly what we are focused on.

As result, Ad Operations sometimes sought roundabout ways of influencing Sales, for example by adapting Engineering leaders' views and, later on, relying on them to pass on the

message to Sales. Certain initiatives spearheaded by Ad Operations were presented to Sales as stemming from Engineering in order to foster their acceptance. Isaac noted:

> The fact that Sales saw these initiatives coming from Product and Engineering—if it had come from us, they wouldn't necessarily have seen it in the same light, there would have been more push back but insomuch as we were able to collaborate and push these ideas on Product and Engineering, it certainly was a vehicle, it was a means by which we could get more stuff done than we would otherwise have been able to do.

All-hands sessions. Occasionally, Ad Operations managers were able to get some of their high-level contacts in other units to come talk to the entire Ad Operations team and exchange back-and-forth feedback in all-hands sessions. Managers acted as moderators. These sessions served to expose key decision makers in other units to the source of Ad Operations' insights, namely members themselves, who worked on the ground in client accounts and projects. All-hands sessions provided occasions for anyone in the unit to surface issues and propose solutions on behalf of the group, and thereby influence other units' priorities and work. At the same time, these sessions enabled the unit to establish a new public narrative for itself from the bottom up. Interacting with the entire Ad Operations unit at once sent a message to leaders of other units as to what the group could contribute and how it wanted to be perceived.

All-hands sessions with Engineering leaders tended to be effective in enabling Ad Operations to adapt their perceptions of the unit. For example, the following all-hands session between Garth (as specified earlier, a leader in Product Management) and the unit took place about three years after the launch of Selfie and shortly after the unit had been renamed Media Solutions. Garth surfaced his frustration about the number of requests he got from Sales leaders to update and modify ad products that ran on insertion orders. At the time, over 90% of CLICK's revenues ran through Selfie. Hence, Garth was reluctant to devote engineering resources to ad products that ran on insertion orders, responsible for less than 10% of revenues. While most

clients had already adopted Selfie, Garth noted that some of CLICK's largest advertisers hadn't yet made the transition. The following excerpt from that session illustrates how Media Solutions agreed with Garth on the importance of encouraging clients' Selfie adoption across the board, provided him with information on the root causes of the problem, and influenced his decision-making process on how to tackle this issue. Concretely, by the end of the all-hands session Media Solutions members had induced Garth to (1) use his own status in the organization to engage Sales leaders directly and (2) introduce specific changes to Selfie in order to make the system more attractive to sellers. In turn, we see Garth appeal to and rely on Media Solutions to continue driving Selfie adoption in client account teams while his team addressed the problem.

Situation: In an all-hands session, Garth complains to Media Solutions about the number of requests his unit was receiving regarding insertion order ad products. He explains that he has no incentive to allocate engineers' time to these products when Selfie ad products represent the majority of the company's revenues.

Garth: Can you guess what percentage [of our revenues] insertion order ad products are for this year? 7%, declining … How much are Sales teams selling insertion order products versus Selfie? … Are they spending 30% of their time?

Various: More! [Media Solutions members shout 60%, 70%, 80%].

Garth: That's crazy! That gives me serious frustration. I have to set up meetings with Francis [Top Sales executive] … and say, 'What the hell is going on?' … So tell us, how can we fix this?

Duncan: Come to the Sales Summit. That would go a long way.

…

Garth: Let's keep a joint goal of, by mid next year, to get rid of insertion orders. Let's see if we can get to zero insertion orders.

Everyone cheers.

Walt: Maybe that would be cool for the Sales Summit, if you could bring up that goal.

Later on, Media Solutions members provide Garth with their interpretation of why sellers and account managers showed resistance toward Selfie and held onto insertion orders. They propose a solution which Garth accepts.

Anna: Sales leadership is telling all the sellers 'You've got to sell more.' It's a big problem for Sales leadership not to understand why this [i.e., Selfie adoption] is important. And so we go and side with Product and our sellers get really nervous. [In my account team] this quarter, for the first time, they had 70% of their revenue from Selfie, before it was 50%-50%, and my seller and account manager were frightened about that.

Garth: Why? Why are they frightened?

…

Sam: A lot of it comes down to fear because they don't understand it. They have been selling insertion orders for 25 years. To go away from that control is a big fear. If there were people like you, like Francis, people higher up saying, 'This is the future, we need to get on board' [they would adopt it] …

Newton: There is comfort about the bookings [a functionality insertion orders provided to lock-in clients' advertising budgets ahead of time]. If you could replicate the bookings concept that they know—Once the client has signed so much in bookings then they feel comfortable. They feel like if they have booking on an insertion order a client is going to be less inclined to want to cancel or move money away … and that revenue is going to get recognized.

Garth: What is mindboggling to me is that this is not going to help them meet their quota in any way, shape or form … We can replicate the bookings but we need to get rid of the insertion order construct, and this is where you guys can help us.

Media Solutions also used this all-hands session with Garth to provide him with a narrative about the group that defied its traditional association with ad trafficking and fostered a more positive image about the unit. In the excerpt below, Nigel asks Garth tactfully how his unit perceives Media Solutions. Garth recognizes Media Solutions as a source of insight for his unit and makes the point that Media Solutions' feedback tends to be more impactful for his unit than the feedback they obtain from Sales.

Nigel: One thing that comes up a ton with the team is just our perception within the Product world … How are we perceived by your team, your product managers and engineers, in general?

Garth: I think you guys are perceived as leaders in thinking how large advertisers use our products … The knowledge that you guys have

> of our client needs and of our business is unparalleled … The scaled way of understanding our clients' needs through you guys is incredible. The Sales team I think is on a different level. They don't understand the nitty-gritty of things and what is going on. You have a much better view about what is going on and a much more honest and frank view of what is going on. This is what I appreciate.

Similarly, in an all-hands session with Brady, who held a prominent position in regards to ad products, the value of Media Solutions as a fair conduit of client feedback on ad products came up again. Media Solutions' positive image and influence were validated when Brady acknowledged that he trusted the unit's voice over Sales'. Brady noted that relying on Sales for product feedback was difficult, since every request seemed to be of the highest priority. During the session, he said: *"[For Sales leaders] the sky falls a lot ... We look at the stuff and we have to sort out when the world is really ending and when it is not*." In the face of so much "*noise*", he feared his team was getting "*desensitized about insight*" and not prioritizing or responding properly. He mentioned a case where his team initially disregarded feedback on an ad product's malfunctioning and only came to understand the importance of fixing it through Media Solutions' feedback. He said:

> We have some of our largest clients saying '[this] system is totally fucked. It's not reading the right numbers'. And we are like, '*No*, you are stupid', and we push back on our clients. It turns out [the feedback was correct]. And I am sure you guys have been sharing that feedback with us. *Whoever in this room was pushing that was right* … You guys put legitimacy to the noise ... When you back things up we feel confident that *that* is actually happening. (his emphasis)

While all-hands sessions with top managers such as Garth and Brady didn't happen very often, their impact was considerably high and went a long way to raise the unit's profile, both in terms of increasing its influence and of instilling a positive image. For example, after an all-hands session with Garth, which had been scheduled to last one hour and ended up lasting 90 minutes at Garth's insistence, Nigel wrote him to say thank you and to express how much his

team had appreciated the chance to speak with him directly. Garth not only responded in kind but also committed himself to supporting Media Solutions. He wrote:

> I think the world of them … They rock. I was really inspired by our session, and I now wear the Media Solutions jacket once a week to show a sense of camaraderie with the team. I feel their pain [about the transition from insertion orders to Selfie] and we will fix it.

Garth's and Brady's positive impressions of Media Solutions trickled down to their units and contributed to opening up further avenues for informal collaboration between Media Solutions members and engineers.

In contrast, Ad Operations rarely organized all-hands sessions with Sales leaders. Instead, the unit participated in all-hands sessions Sales leaders organized for client-facing units under their purview. The purpose of these sessions was to communicate CLICK's sales goals and priorities for each quarter. There were few opportunities to voice dissenting opinions in an attempt to change Sales leaders' views of Ad Operations. For example, during one of these sessions, Anthony, a Sales leader, presented a new initiative to sell packages of different ad products to clients. The target for these packages were clients who, in his words, "*needed predictability*" and were willing to "*buy in a guaranteed way*," i.e., to pay a premium to make sure their ads yielded a given number of impressions. Anthony did not present accurate information regarding the return on investment on these packages and, when questioned by Anna, deflected and reinforced the importance of meeting revenue targets for the quarter.

> *Setting: conference room during Sales-led meeting. In attendance are all sellers, account managers, and Ad Operations analysts.*
>
> Anthony: There is better ROI buying these packages through Selfie.
>
> Anna: Not for clients using Marketing Developers. This has been on many people's minds, because a lot of clients use Marketing Developers. We are adding a premium for the guaranteed

impressions and that is why there is better pricing with insertion orders.

Anthony: Be active with your agency and your client. These are very competitively-priced packages, so help us push Q2 revenue.

Situations like these created a shared sense across Ad Operations that Sales leaders were too attuned to their objectives to entertain a version of Ad Operations different from what they knew to be prevalent in the industry. Cameron noted that "*they are all about clients, they are all about the Sales role, and they are all about making their short term quota*" whereas Nigel said "*they just care about hitting their quota and keeping their customers happy and don't necessarily think two steps in front of that*."

Before we turn to the last section of this chapter, where we briefly analyze the unit's collective job crafting trajectory, it is necessary to devote some attention to the self-driven renaming of 'Ad Operations' as 'Media Solutions'. This name change is worth analyzing separately, because it constitutes a key instance in the unit's evolution in which group proactive and adaptive behaviors intertwined. To the unit, the new name had as much significance internally (as a representation of the unit's self-transformation through collective job crafting) as it did externally (as a representation of how the unit expected to be perceived by others). The process of renaming the unit—from the moment members perceived the need for a new name to the moment when they communicated it to the rest of the organization—required a mix of group proactive and adaptive behaviors unlike any other initiative during the course of the unit's evolution.

Group Proactive and Adaptive Behavior: Renaming the Unit

Almost since the unit's inception, Ad Operations members worked in a coordinated fashion to erase their unit's formal mandate and to enact a new, self-defined one. In doing so, they turned ad trafficking into a small portion of the unit's daily activities. The unit came to operate informally as an analytical and creative engine that sought, identified, and seized opportunities to improve the way advertisers planned, bought, ran, and measured advertising at CLICK. In hindsight, members estimated that the nature of their work had been collectively re-crafted every 18 months. Nigel explained the evolution in these terms:

> In the beginning there was this [ad] trafficking function. And this trafficking function is now a minimum amount of what people spend time doing … I wanted to erase the need to have a team [of ad traffickers], because I am convinced that my team is smart enough that once we erase this task that we are doing we will find an even more leveraged set of tasks that we can do, knock those out and make sure those things are just happening effectively, efficiently and technically in an automated fashion … and then figure out the next set of tasks, and *that is what we do*. We just consistently reinvent ourselves. (his emphasis)

Group proactive behavior. By year 5, the unit's work streams had grown more and more removed from its ad trafficking origins. The contrast between what the Ad Operations name suggested and what the unit actually did began to create limitations to its growth and inconsistencies in the perceptions of other units at CLICK and in the organization's environment. At that point, Nigel involved all members in the search for a new name. Sam explained:

> We all agreed that the Ad Operations term was limiting … The industry wide term [i.e., Ad Operations, suggests] people who are trafficking, very operational, not strategic at all, very back office. We had evolved the team multiple times over the years to basically take on more responsibility and to up our own game probably once a year, year and a half … [We thought], we will need to change the name to something that is actually more strategic.

The new name was meant to convey both the breadth of members' collective job crafting efforts thus far and the unit's future potential. At the same time, the new name was meant to

detach the unit from what other groups and agents considered a typical Ad Operations function. Many options were considered, until the unit settled on Ralph's suggestion: *Media Solutions*. At CLICK, 'media' encompassed the entire cycle of planning, buying, executing, and measuring campaigns on the platform, while the term 'solutions' pointed to the unit's envisioned identity as a group of problem solvers. Sam continued: "*We changed the name to Media Solutions because it was more representative of where we were and where we wanted to go.*" In choosing the new name, the unit purposefully avoided options that contained the words "advertising" and/or "operations," as the first restricted the unit's involvement with clients to the execution stage of the media cycle, while the second suggested a back-end, transaction-oriented function rather than a client-facing, strategic one. Remy noted that "*changing [the name] to Media Solutions was good because it doesn't have that stigma that an Ad Operations position … had*."

Group adaptive behavior. Once the unit settled on a new name, Nigel and his boss Dylan, who ran Ad Operations at the global level, moved to validate the name change with Sales leadership. The process of adapting Sales leaders' expectations to accept the new name took several months. There were about eight executives whose buy-in Ad Operations considered important. Nigel and Dylan approached these individuals and engaged in direct communication to explain the reasons why changing the unit's name was necessary. They explained, for example, that new clients were skeptical when asked to rely on Ad Operations for advice and insight because they were used to associating Ad Operations strictly with ad trafficking. In an email to an executive, Nigel wrote:

> Ad Operations in the industry is a back-office position focused on trafficking and troubleshooting ad creative … Clients are often confused as to why our team is client-facing and service focused, and are in some cases initially resistant to our guidance.

Nigel also reported similar mistrust when clients were asked to rely on Ad Operations for training. In the same email, he stated:

> Rebranding will help immensely when it comes to client training. Ad Operations owned the media portion of [clients' training on Tool X], for example. However, it was confusing to clients as to why an Ad Operations team was leading this.

While Media Solutions was an idiosyncratic name in the industry and clients would have to be educated as to its meaning, the unit's expectation was that clients would respond positively. In this regard, Nigel affirmed that "*re-branding clarifies this [i.e., our responsibilities] and gives our team immediate credibility*," and Dylan asserted that "*The Media Solutions name will fit well as the team takes on additional responsibilities and becomes more engrained in our clients' media buying experience*".

Nigel and Dylan also explained that the unit was having trouble with recruiting, as most candidates who applied were seeking to transition from Ad Operations units in other media companies. Ad Operations at CLICK, on the other hand, sought candidates with strong analytical and communications skills, who often came from backgrounds other than media. Nigel wrote:

> The first thing that I tell new candidates in recruiting conversations is 'this is not an Ad Operations role.' This is a conversation that would be nice to avoid. Further, we do not actively recruit individuals with traditional Ad Operations backgrounds. The name Ad Operations unnecessarily constrains our candidate pool and makes it harder for our recruiters to source. Re-branding as Media Solutions would lead to an influx of proactive applicants, more effective interview discussions, and a better talent pool overall.

Additionally, Nigel and Dylan explained that having a new name would facilitate the unit's interactions with other units at CLICK, particularly on the Engineering side, and foster role clarity. While individuals who frequently interacted with Ad Operations members were cognizant of the unit's knowledge and capabilities beyond ad trafficking and knew which

members to reach out to for specific advice, others with less exposure to Ad Operations still held traditional beliefs about the unit. Nigel noted:

> Partner groups [i.e., internal units at CLICK] are often confused as to whom to reach out to for media-related client-facing needs. We consistently need to reiterate with [these] groups that Ad Operations is responsible for all creative, execution, and ongoing media support because the name confuses people based on its industry connotation. It would be great to clarify things by re-branding our team based on our core responsibilities, i.e. [providing] media solutions.

Lastly, Nigel and Dylan explained that changing the unit's name would boost team morale, as it would provide recognition for the value members' collective job crafting efforts had added to the organization over the years. Nigel wrote:

> Considering all the changes we've made to the role … as well as the changes that are still to come, rebranding the team would help to cement this evolution as something that *the team themselves* accomplished through their hard work and effort … In the end, the name itself, Media Solutions, is something the team earned through all of their hard work, and essentially by pushing the boundaries and striving to operate in this capacity. (his emphasis)

Most Sales executives approved of the new name. Nigel reported that those he had spoken with were "*surprisingly in favor*," "*really bullish*," and "*really supportive*" of renaming the unit. However, some executives had reservations. For example, one Sales leader was reportedly uncomfortable with the term 'media' while another objected to the term 'solutions,' as it would "*confuse the market*". He suggested, instead, opting for 'services' or maintaining the already existing 'operations'. To his point, Dylan replied:

> I think that puts the team into a "back office" role with the operations naming. Given [that] the team … demonstrated their ability to drive incremental revenue, more involvement with creative strategies and media planning, we are trying to move away from those stereotypes.

Group proactive behavior. Nigel and Dylan spent months meeting with Sales leaders about the new name, but there was never any consensus as to the most favorable time to announce it to the rest of CLICK. While Dylan proposed moving with caution, Nigel and his

direct reports were anxious to move ahead even in the absence of total approval from Sales. Nigel believed that the new name would bring organizational acknowledgement of Ad Operations' crafted space within CLICK and that this would help the unit obtain jurisdiction over it down the line. Frustrated by the politics surrounding the name change, Nigel decided to proceed before complete approval from Sales had been granted. He explained the decision to move ahead in these terms:

> Sam [by then Nigel's second-in-command] and I eventually got fed up with the back and forth on Media Solutions. The change was taking months and it would have died if we hadn't just made the call. Dylan was concerned about doing things tactfully, and making sure there was buy-in from Sales leaders, which in my mind was a "nice to have" but not absolutely necessary.

In the same vein, Sam stated:

> The upper level Sales managers at the time … were mostly on board ... but there were maybe two people that were holding out and were like, 'Well, [you] should be Ad Operations'. Those people didn't know what we did, really ... They didn't fully understand the impact we were having. I guess we could have done more to get them to understand that but … every time we tried they had us in a box. We were like, 'Let's just do our own thing'.

The unit chose a particularly high-profile event to announce its new name: that year's Sales Summit. The summit gathered all Sales-oriented functions worldwide for two days at CLICK headquarters and consisted of a series of lectures, Q&A sessions, and networking events with the organization's top managers and renowned people in the industry. Nigel and Sam considered the summit as a sort of private deadline and "*decided that we'd just launch at the summit if for some reason things had not been sorted out yet*." The announcement was made by having the entire unit attend the summit wearing jackets branded 'Media Solutions'. Sam stated:

> Every year for the Sales Summit we would do branding for the team. We would buy hoodies or t-shirts and we would get team pictures with everybody on the stage … So basically it was time to order those and … we [asked ourselves], 'Do we do Ad Operations or Media Solutions?' And then Nigel was like, 'Let's do Media Solutions'.

Cameron designed a Media Solutions logo and Lynn, a member of the unit who worked at headquarters, collected information on everyone's sizes and ordered the jackets. According to Sam, they informed Dylan "*and some other people*" that they would be introducing the new name "*the day before the summit*". This bold move made a mostly positive impact and garnered immediate support from some key executives. Nigel explained:

> I gave jackets to the Sales leaders and arranged for us to take pictures with [top executives]. [The company COO] even wore her jacket on stage during her keynote, which was great PR for the squad. A ton of people ended up asking for jackets after the event. The rebrand was pretty much official at that.

Members of the unit were thrilled that the new name had finally been made official. Jillian, for example, said:

> I don't think that we are or have ever been a true Ad Operations team ... We have great managers who have basically carved the path for us to be where we are today. I feel like a long time ago they had a vision of what this team would do and it was going to be *more* than Ad Operations—*always*. I loved when they renamed the team to Media Solutions because I don't think that we were people behind a computer setting up ads. We were doing a lot more than that. (her emphasis)

Media Solutions' boldness in announcing the new name, however, did not sit well with everyone. Sam admitted that Nigel "*got a slap on the wrist*" for moving ahead without full support. The unit's proactivity in changing its name had jurisdictional consequences down the line, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

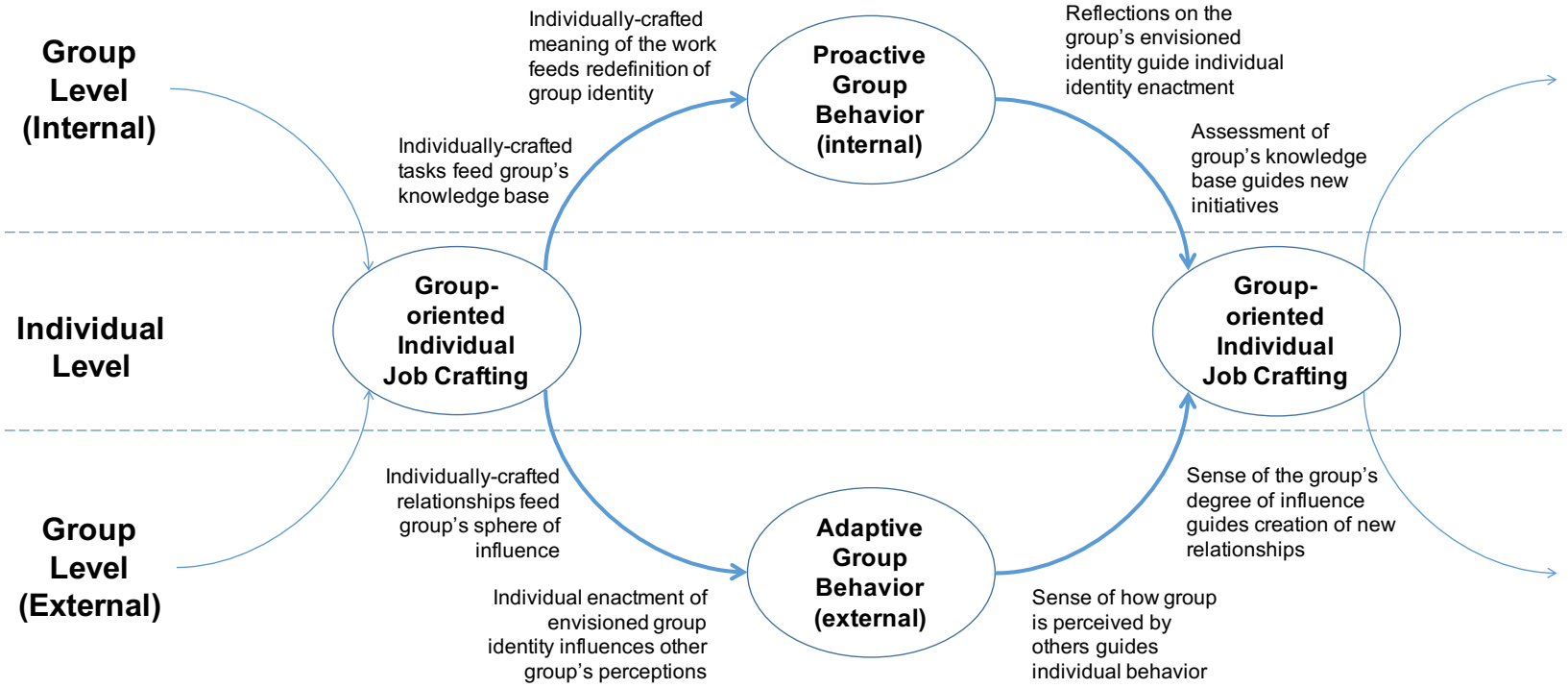
Thus far, we have covered the three main components of the process of collective job crafting: group-oriented individual job crafting (containing individual proactive and adaptive behaviors), group proactive behavior, and group adaptive behavior. We also analyzed the unit's renaming through both group proactive and adaptive behaviors. We now turn to the final section, where we analyze one key aspect of the unit's collective job crafting trajectory: the interplay

between the group and the individual member over time, as co-creators of one another's identity and work. Other aspects of the unit's collective job crafting trajectory—specifically, the interplay between human agency (the capacity of the unit to self-determine) and evolutionary forces that either facilitated or constrained its collective job crafting endeavors (such as the evolution of the industry and the rising complexity of CLICK's structure) will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Carving a Collective Job Crafting Trajectory

Collective job crafting enables a group to carve a unique trajectory for itself—one that differs from the trajectory the group would have followed had it strictly enacted its formal mandate over the same period of time. A fundamental driver of this trajectory is the interplay over time between the group and its individual members. The group relies on members' ingenuity in identifying and capturing job crafting opportunities to transform its work and identity, while members enrich their personal job experience and sense of identity through mechanisms that enable them to learn and connect to the group. Figure 4.9 illustrates the recursive nature of collective job crafting when viewed over time, through the lens of the group's trajectory. This section focuses on the lived experience of individual members as they contributed to building Media Solutions' collective job crafting trajectory.

Figure 4.9: Carving a Collective Job Crafting Trajectory



The experience of collective job crafting over time may be described as a series of balancing acts between interests that reside at the individual level and at the group level. Concretely, individual group members must balance the interplay between developing deep expertise in a given area on behalf of the group while acquiring general knowledge on other areas of expertise from the group; their own personal motivations, interests, and needs at work with the group's goals; and the construction of their own work identity and that of the group. On these three dimensions—knowledge, motivations, identity—*the individual job crafter and the group co-create one another over time*. In the same way that the unit traverses a collective job crafting trajectory, each member carves a path as a group-oriented individual job crafter. Her personal trajectory evidences the choices she has made over time to alter the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of her work in order to contribute to the unit's evolution. Nigel summarized this process of co-creation in an email he sent to the group. He remarked:

> I'm so proud to be a part of a team where literally everyone takes responsibility for contributing to the group as a whole … I believe firmly that we all work so hard and remain so dedicated to our team … because we have each internalized the responsibility that we have to one another. What makes us unique is that we realize not just that we are in this together, but also that we understand that we will only succeed if we continue to push ourselves to grow and maximize our potential as individuals. We are together responsible for taking our team and our company to new heights and we are each uniquely accountable for doing what we have to do to make that happen.

However, the same balancing acts that help propel the co-evolution of a unit's trajectory and those of individual members may cause these trajectories to fall out of sync—especially in cases where the demands of the collectively crafted job exceed the individual's capacity to execute it satisfactorily.

Balancing Specialized Knowledge Generation and General Knowledge Acquisition

In collective job crafting, group members develop specialized knowledge that is of value both to them and to the group. At the same time, they learn from other group members who generate and share knowledge in the particular areas where they have chosen to develop expertise. Each member becomes, in effect, an expert in his chosen area and a generalist in everyone else's area. By balancing the duality of being experts and generalists simultaneously, members co-construct the groups' knowledge base and their own respective knowledge bases. At Ad Operations, each member generated specialized knowledge in an area (product development, tool creation, or process design) while committing, for the sake of the unit, to be well-rounded in the other two. Isaac explained:

> We tried to create a team of people who understood end-to-end how to solve these [i.e., media] problems … The core role was very advertiser focused. But there was always the expectation that … we also needed to understand the fundamentals, the back-end of how our systems worked, and … when the more in-depth problems arose … we had people who specialized in each of those things … We didn't expect everyone on the team to be an expert in everything, we did expect them to specialize [but] … we expected everyone to be well-rounded and well-versed in most things end-to-end when it came to media.

As a result, members developed a keen sense of interdependence in the development of their respective knowledge basis and that of the unit. James explained:

> I get to work with really smart people, people that are significantly smarter than me. That's where the learning happens. Particularly in our team I am surrounded by people who are extremely intelligent, motivated, and have a varied background. In my daily interactions with the team I get to absorb all these different perspectives and get to apply them to my daily work streams, which is really helpful … I am learning as I go and I am growing from there and taking those experiences and building upon them.

Since the essence of the unit's collectively crafted job was a moving target, Ad Operations members relied on one another to cover momentary knowledge gaps. In addition to learning from their peers in formally established settings such as weekly meetings and intranet

wikis, members also learned from one another informally. Each member's situated expertise constituted a readily-available resource for the rest of the unit. Jacob stated:

> There are certain individuals who own projects related to product launches, related to policy, related to our financial system. And they obviously have the expertise in those areas. If I run into a situation with one of my accounts, where I have a tricky financial change order revision on a contract and I am not sure if this is the right way to do it … I will go to that resource, that individual on my team and kind of bounce that idea off with them. Like, 'This is what I am thinking, if I get these approvals in place, do you think that our internal auditing will approve this revision to the contract?'

Jacob further noted that the availability of an expert on the unit did not exclude everyone else from the obligation to acquire general knowledge in that area. He noted that the unit could only work efficiently when everyone committed to being well-versed on every topic and resorting to experts only in one-of-a-kind situations that truly required an expert opinion. Therefore, when issues came up that exceeded a member's knowledge, that member would first try to solve the issue by himself, for example by going to the wiki. If the answer couldn't be found, he would then resort to the expert. Jacob explained:

> You don't want to be such a drag that you are being inefficient for your teammates, that all you are doing is leveraging other people and not looking for yourself. It's like teaching yourself how to fish. The way I would say it is, if I cannot find it in 5 to 10 min, I will just go ask them because it will save me time and it will save them time. And as long as I know, I am able to share that information with another teammate as well.

Hence, balancing the duality of being both an expert and a generalist involved acknowledging one's own contributions, responsibilities, and rewards in the co-creation of one's own knowledge base and that of the group. Yet, despite these resources, as the unit's collective job crafting activities multiplied and the number and complexity of the contributions each member made grew over time, the need to balance specialized knowledge generation and general

knowledge acquisition proved overwhelming for some. These members experienced feelings of anxiety and a sense that they were letting down the unit. Linda explained:

> Our manager would be giving a presentation, sometimes it would be a manager and sometimes it would be another expert on the team—people who we saw as experts in a certain area. And they would be hammering on in the presentation 'This is what we do, this is what Media Solutions does, we are experts in this' and at the time I remember thinking, 'Oh my God, I don't know anything about this' … Next week, different topic. 'This is something we need to be experts on, this is what Media Solutions does, this is what we do, here is how I did it with my client account' … It just felt overwhelming.

Balancing Personal and Group Motivations

In collective job crafting, unit members are primarily motivated by the possibility of benefitting the group. However, the preeminence of group-level motivations in guiding members' behavior does not necessarily negate individual sources of motivation. At Ad Operations, members sought to harmonize group and individual motivations and goals. Each member defined her job in a way that was meaningful to her and to the unit, and subsequently sought, identified, and seized job crafting opportunities that could generate both personal and group value. She understood her individual job crafting initiatives as a personal contribution to achieving the group's goals. Motivational alignment, then, enabled the co-creation of the job crafter's work and the crafted domain of the unit. Jeremy explained this symbiotic relationship between the individual member and the unit in these terms:

> There was never a shortage of people saying, 'yeah, I want to kick ass here, I want to learn [this], I want to help put [that] together, make this process awesome'. You just saw people firing on all cylinders … And to me it was like, 'ok, let's … pick that stuff up because that makes our team more essential and it makes it that much more of an integral part [of the organization].'

However, in some cases, prioritizing the group's goals caused individuals to momentarily leave some personal goals unfulfilled. This was a rather frequent occurrence at Ad Operations,

where members operated according to what Ralph labeled a "*self-sacrificial, team-before-self*" mentality. For example, on occasion, members found themselves overwhelmed by their workload and were unable to sustain healthy levels of work/life balance. The breadth of their collectively crafted job meant that members sometimes worked around the clock day and night, weekdays and weekends. Ralph noted:

> Having all these multiple points of contact, touch points, and relationships to manage can be exhausting and burn out can be a problem. If you have a day where every single partner, every relationship that you manage, they all have urgent matters at hand … you really do need to prioritize. That can be very stressful.

Anna mentioned that, at times, balancing client account work and side projects took a toll on her well-being:

> I actually had a great experience where I worked on the launch of [an ad product] but it was awful from an hours-in-the-day perspective. I was completely under water, I was neglecting my book of business, I felt like I was failing at both things, I was at the office like 12 hours a day. That wasn't sustainable, but that was the reality of the role.

This rhythm of work caused members to endure strain in their personal relations outside of work. Benjamin recalled the long hours he worked programming ads while simultaneously trying to get his third-party revenue recognition project off the ground. He reported that his partner would repeatedly ask, "*Why are you at work so much?*" and, thinking of his unfinished work, he would respond "*It needs to get done, it needs to get done*."

Ad Operations members noted that peers often sought to alleviate one another's workload when those extreme situations arose. Nigel, in particular, set the tone by being the first to arrive in the morning and the last to leave at night, and by regularly dropping in during the weekends to provide support to those who came into the office. Jacob explained that members' high level of

empathy for one another led them to relegate their own personal needs in favor of helping their peers. He stated:

> When I know that a teammate is struggling, I will go over to their desk and demand work from them. 'Give me some work so you don't have to be here until 6 o'clock or until 9 o'clock. If you are the last one here in the office regularly we need to figure out what is going on here, not because you are being inefficient but probably because you have way too much on your plate. Let me help you out'. I have seen that not just in myself but in other teammates and that is what makes us successful.

Hence, coordination and mutual help among members contributed to partly restoring the balance between group and individual goals when excessive workload caused members to feel overwhelmed.

Balancing the Construction of Individual Work Identity and Group Identity

In collective job crafting, the individual simultaneously constructs a new work identity for herself and contributes to the construction of the group's identity. The opportunities the group member pursues are identity-defining both at the individual and the group levels. In this way, when she enacts her own crafted identity at work she also embodies the attributes contained in the group's crafted identity. The sense of identification that the individual feels toward the group is built *in practice* through the particular ways in which she chooses to participate in collective job crafting.

When collective job crafting happens consistently over time, the co-creation of the individual's work identity and the group's identity happens in a relatively seamless fashion. As they engage in collective job crafting, individual members imprint the group's identity as much as they are imprinted by it. Ralph, for example, described his own experience as follows:

> What's my story? What's my narrative? … As the job changed, our title changed, our scope changed, *I* changed, I grew, I grew into it, I grew into aspects of it or it grew into *me*. I think for many individuals it does the same. *We grow with the*

> *team as the team grows*. And it's still changing so much that it's not like you are going to be stuck here and this is what you do … There is a lot that we could potentially cover. And that is something that we are still trying to identify. (his emphasis)

In this sense, members' process of identification with the group as they engaged in collective job crafting did not consist of the passive internalization of the group's identity attributes as an expression of self. Instead, identification was an active—rather, a *proactive*—endeavor whereby both the individual member's identity and the group's identity are recognized as being in constant flux, mutually shaping one another. To this point, Nigel wrote in an email to Media Solutions members:

> Our team has grown in size and scope since our origin as a back-office ad trafficking role. We've been successful thus far because members of the team have consistently identified opportunities to improve, streamline, or automate elements of the sales process, and then went far beyond their prescribed set of "responsibilities" to address them. As the team continues to grow, it is important to me that we keep that spirit at our core, … that we maintain a focus on the ongoing growth and development of every member of the team so that each of us can continue to step up and play an important role in writing the future of [CLICK] Media Solutions.

However, as the unit grew, a small number of members faced difficulties evolving 'their niche' in tandem with the evolution of the group and, as a result, their sense of work identity and the group's identity began to differ. For example, toward year 7 most members were comfortable manipulating data and bringing analytics into their client account teams. Jillian, who worked for a big client that was not data-savvy, fell behind on the acquisition of those skills. In turn, her lack of familiarity with data analysis tools kept her from educating her client and bringing her client account team up to speed. As a result, her role as Media Solutions analyst was less consultative in nature than that of most of her peers. Thinking through the meaning of this disparity, she said:

> People tend to rely on their strengths … what I make of the role is different from someone who is really data-focused. And I think that our role is definitely moving in that way, to be more data-focused, which I think is hard. It's great for the

> people who that's their strength, but also not so great for people who that's not your strength. I am not a data person … my background is not that. It never was. But as our mission is to provide consultative help to our clients through data, it's almost like we are being pushed to be as trained [in data tools] as some people are.

As Media Solutions neared the end of its 7-year existence, conversations on how to more effectively share knowledge, balance workloads and priorities, and create opportunities for all members to find richer ways to contribute to the unit's evolution were frequent. These issues remained unresolved as a reorganization eliminated the unit from CLICK's organizational chart and reassigned its members to a Sales-oriented function. Media Solutions' collective job crafting trajectory was permanently interrupted.

CHAPTER 5. FINDINGS

CLAIMING JURISDICTION OVER A COLLECTIVELY CRAFTED JOB

Ad Operations is evolving to encompass … media solutions from soup-to-nuts.
We manage all aspects of media from planning and media strategy …
through optimization, through final reporting.

(Document excerpt)

It's challenging, it's very challenging [to explain who we are and what we do].
It's not like an account manager, so a person that just exists.
This role doesn't really exist.

(Interview excerpt, manager)

Chapter 5 reports findings on the practices groups use to claim jurisdiction over a collectively crafted job. I identify three distinct practices that groups rely on over time to claim ownership over the tasks, relationships, and rewards that constitute their intended jurisdictional mandate: (1) leveraging technology, (2) leveraging the group's crafted position in the organizational landscape, and (3) leveraging the group's self-presentation. I also identify two kinds of jurisdictional claims: what I term 'local' claims, which target jurisdiction over specific crafted tasks and relationships in a given context and which are granted by context-specific audiences, and 'global' claims, which target jurisdiction over the entire breadth of the unit's collectively crafted job across multiple contexts and which require granting by multiple audiences. I employ a temporal lens to analyze the moments during a group's collective job crafting trajectory in which the group may resort to different combinations of jurisdiction-seeking practices to ground either local or global jurisdictional claims. To conclude, I analyze different factors and circumstances that prove conducive or detrimental to the group's efforts to obtain jurisdiction over its collectively crafted job and, thereby, to transform it into an

idiosyncratic occupation sanctioned by the organization. I discuss outcomes at organizational, group, and individual levels in the short and long terms.

I ground my analysis of jurisdictional claims on a longitudinal examination of Ad Operations' evolution into Media Solution through collective job crafting. As seen in Chapter 4, Ad Operations began collectively crafting its job practically since its inception. Over the seven years that followed its first foray into collective job crafting, the unit carved a dramatic collective job crafting trajectory. The unit progressively erased much of the manual work involved in ad trafficking and filled members' time with self-appointed responsibilities. In the end, the collectively crafted job resembled what (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991) characterized as a 'loose cannon'—a work role that contains but a few formal task elements and is almost wholly made up of emergent ones.

However, throughout that time, the unit's formal mandate changed little compared to its crafted one and so, consequently, did its jurisdiction[12]. As its trajectory progressed, the unit's collective job crafting initiatives were supported by some groups at CLICK, yet resisted to higher and higher degrees by others—in particular, by Sales, to which the unit ultimately reported. The unit made various attempts to claim jurisdiction over its collectively crafted tasks and relationships, as well as over the rewards it believed performing those tasks entailed. Changing its name from "Ad Operations" to "Media Solutions" was but one of the tactics the unit employed to support its jurisdictional claims. Initially, these claims were granted by Sales leaders and the unit's jurisdiction was updated to include new formally-owned tasks and relationships. However, as time passed and the unit's collective job crafting initiatives became

[12] As noted in Chapter 2, a mandate is a group's overall job or mission, which can be expressed in one or a few sentences. In contrast, a group's jurisdiction is the collection of tasks and relationships the group owns by virtue of its mandate. Then, while a mandate can be formal or informal (i.e., crafted), a jurisdiction is always formal. A group can perform tasks by virtue of its crafted mandate that it doesn't own, i.e., that lie outside of its jurisdiction.

more ambitious, most claims were denied or remained unanswered. The unit continued performing that work on an informal basis, sometimes away from the Sales' line of sight, until its dissolution. The present chapter builds theory by drawing from the circumstances, mechanisms, and outcomes surrounding the unit's successful and unsuccessful jurisdictional claims.

A Process Model of Jurisdictional Claims over a Collectively Crafted Job

Figure 5.1 shows a graphic representation of the process of claiming jurisdiction over a collectively crafted job, as induced from the data. Table 5.1 lists expected short-term outcomes of local and global jurisdictional claims at the individual, group, and organizational levels.

Figure 5.1. A Process Model of Jurisdictional Claims Over a Collectively Crafted Job

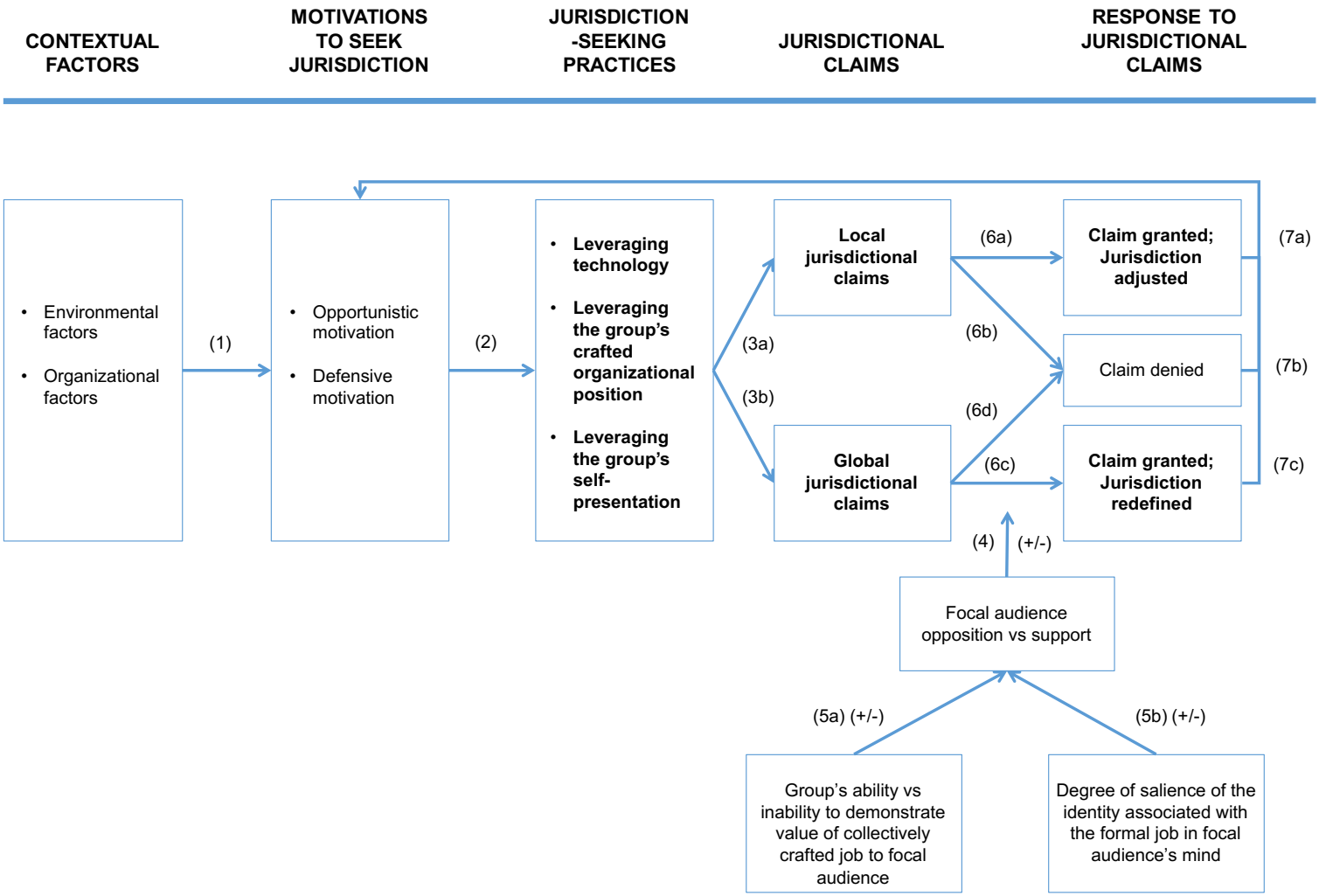


Table 5.1. Short-term Outcomes of Granted Jurisdictional Claims

Jurisdictional Claims	Individual Outcomes	Group Outcomes	Organizational Outcomes
Local *Jurisdictional claims over specific tasks and relationships crafted in a specific context and dependent on the approval of context-specific audiences*	Enriched job definition Increased group identification Increased job satisfaction; improved self-image Potentially increased material rewards associated with performance in enriched job	Jurisdiction adjusted to reflect small change in group tasks and relationships Formal authority over adjusted task domain; potentially increased influence over adjacent domains Recognition of proprietary knowledge associated with adjusted task domain Potentially increased material rewards, commensurate with adjusted jurisdiction	Potentially improved organizational performance Potential changes to organizational structure if adjusted jurisdiction creates new formal linkages or repositions the unit on the organizational chart.
Global *Jurisdictional claims that cover most or all tasks and relationships that compose a collectively crafted job and that hinge on the approval of various audiences across multiple contexts*	Job redefinition; recognition of group member as holder of an idiosyncratic occupation Occupational identification and increased group identification Increased job satisfaction; improved self-image Potentially increased material rewards associated with performance in redefined job	Jurisdiction redefined to reflect significant change in tasks and relationships; recognition of group's work as an idiosyncratic occupation Formal authority over occupational task domain; potentially increased influence over adjacent domains and increased opportunities to impact organizational strategy Recognition of proprietary knowledge associated with the idiosyncratic occupation Congruence between internally crafted occupational identity and external image Potentially increased material rewards, commensurate with redefined jurisdiction	Potentially improved organizational performance Redefined organizational structure

As illustrated in Figure 5.1, my findings show that groups seek jurisdiction over a collectively crafted job motivated by a variety of environmental factors (e.g., competitive pressure; ecosystem complexity) and organizational factors (e.g., ambiguity over task ownership; disputes over task ownership; cognitive dissonance about the group's mandate; threats to the collectively crafted job from organizational or structural change). These factors may lead to jurisdiction-seeking behavior when they make relying on adaptive behavior risky for the group, in terms of the continuity of its collective job crafting endeavors and—in extreme cases—its own survival (arrow 1). Based on the nature of the environmental and organizational factors the group faces, the motivation to make jurisdictional claims may be opportunistic (e.g., it may prove of mutual advantage for the group to take over another group's tasks) or defensive (e.g., the group may need to secure jurisdiction over a certain task in order to engage in further collective job crafting in a related area).

These motivations lead the group to employ three distinct jurisdiction-seeking practices to claim ownership over a collectively crafted job: *leveraging technology*; *leveraging the group's crafted organizational position*; and *leveraging the group's self-presentation* (arrow 2). Leveraging technology consists of grounding jurisdictional claims on tools, products, or processes the group has created or built on through collective job crafting; leveraging the group's crafted organization position consists of grounding jurisdictional claims on knowledge, skills, or capabilities derived from the organizational spaces the group has come to occupy informally through collective job crafting; and leveraging the group's self-presentation consists of grounding jurisdictional claims on attributes of the new identity the group has developed internally and communicated externally through collective job crafting.

I find that groups initially employ combinations of these practices to make *local jurisdictional claims*, which I define as claims over specific tasks and relationships crafted in a specific context and dependent on the approval of specific audiences (arrow 3a). The success of local jurisdictional claims is tied to the ability of the group to elicit the support—rather than the opposition—of key audiences (arrow 4). This support depends on the unit's capacity to unambiguously demonstrate the value the organization would derive from having the unit formally own those tasks and relationships in those specific contexts (arrow 5a) and on the degree to which the identity associated with the unit's formal job is salient in key audiences' minds (arrow 5b). Given the incremental nature of local jurisdictional claims, a group may choose to frame these claims as natural extensions to its original formal mandate, in order to minimize any potential organizational or occupational dissonance jurisdiction-granting audiences may experience.

When granted, local jurisdictional claims lead to incremental or small-scale changes to the group's jurisdiction. In other words, through local jurisdictional claims the group's formal mandate incorporates new responsibilities but remains centered on what has traditionally been its core (arrow 6a). The group receives formal authority on crafted tasks and relationships in that specific domain and may, therefore, be able to exercise more influence over adjacent domains than it did through adaptive behavior. In parallel, the group gains ownership over the knowledge, capabilities, and skills associated with performing the claimed tasks and over any material rewards the organization bestows on them. However small the jurisdictional adjustment, the group may find itself in a position to impact organizational performance to a higher degree than by simply relying on adaptive behavior.

From an organizational perspective, granted local jurisdictional claims may cause adjustments to the organization's formal structure. This may happen, for example, when the group's new jurisdiction creates linkages between units that were not formally recognized before, or when the group's new jurisdiction somehow repositions the group within the organizational chart. In turn, from the perspective of individual group members, granted local jurisdictional claims result in an enriched job definition and in potentially higher material rewards. Formal ownership of crafted tasks and relationships may also increase members' job satisfaction, enhance their self-image, and deepen their identification with the group.

In time, however, organizational and environmental circumstances may motivate a group to employ jurisdiction-seeking practices in order to make *global*, rather than local, *jurisdictional claims* (arrow 3b). I define global jurisdictional claims as claims that cover most or all tasks and relationships that compose a collectively crafted job and that hinge on the approval of multiple audiences across multiple organizational contexts. The success of global jurisdictional claims relies on the group's ability to elicit the support of all of these key audiences (arrow 4). In extreme cases, success depends on those audiences' willingness to recognize the collectively crafted job as an *idiosyncratic occupation*, i.e., as an occupation that is unique to the organization and likely does not exist in the same form anywhere else. The more the group is able to articulate the value the organization would derive from significantly redefining the group's formal mandate (arrow 5a) and the less salient the identity audiences associate with the unit's original job (arrow 5b), the higher the chances these audiences will agree that the unit's collectively crafted job deserves recognition as its own occupational category.

Unlike local jurisdictional claims, global jurisdictional claims tend to redefine rather than simply cause adjustments to the group's jurisdiction (arrow 6c). Given their radical rather than

incremental nature, these claims are necessarily framed as transformational. They may require audiences to overcome extreme levels of dissonance between what the group is formally expected to be and do organizationally and occupationally, and what the group claims its mandate and jurisdiction should be.

When granted, global jurisdictional claims help reposition the group within the organization in terms of the nature of its work and its condition as an idiosyncratic occupation. They give the group ownership over the knowledge, skills, and capabilities associated with that occupation, they contribute to generating congruence between the group's internally crafted identity and its external image, they broaden the organizational realms over which the group exercises authority and influence, and they provide increased opportunities for the group to impact organizational strategy and performance, which may result in higher rewards.

From the perspective of individual members, global jurisdictional claims that are granted by the organization result in the redefinition of the job and in membership in an idiosyncratic occupation they have contributed to crafting. This is expected to result in increased job satisfaction, an enhanced sense of self at work, deeper group and occupational identification, and higher material rewards.

I find two sets of circumstances under which groups choose to make global jurisdictional claims. First, groups may make global jurisdictional claims after making a string of local jurisdictional claims. When a group's mandate has been adjusted several times to include additional responsibilities, some audiences may begin to experience dissonance between what the group actually does and what its members' formal job and occupation originally suggested. This dissonance may be rooted in notions of what the group is expected to do vs. what the group effectively does (collectively crafted tasks that exceed the group's formal job and occupational

mandate), the knowledge and capabilities the group is expected to display vs. those it effectively displays (crafted knowledge and capabilities that exceed those associated with the formal job and occupation), and the degree of power and influence the group is expected to wield vs. actually wields (a sphere of influence commensurate with the collectively crafted job rather than the formal job and occupation. In these cases, the group may find it necessary to argue for the formalization of its entire collectively crafted job at once. A second set of circumstances that may lead groups to make global jurisdictional claims is the threat of a structural change that endangers the collectively crafted job. In those cases, the process of formalization of the crafted job that may have unfolded incrementally through local jurisdictional claims is accelerated. Through global jurisdictional claims, the group may be able to incorporate the formalization of its collectively crafted job into the structural change process and thereby safeguard the tasks and relationships it developed informally thus far.

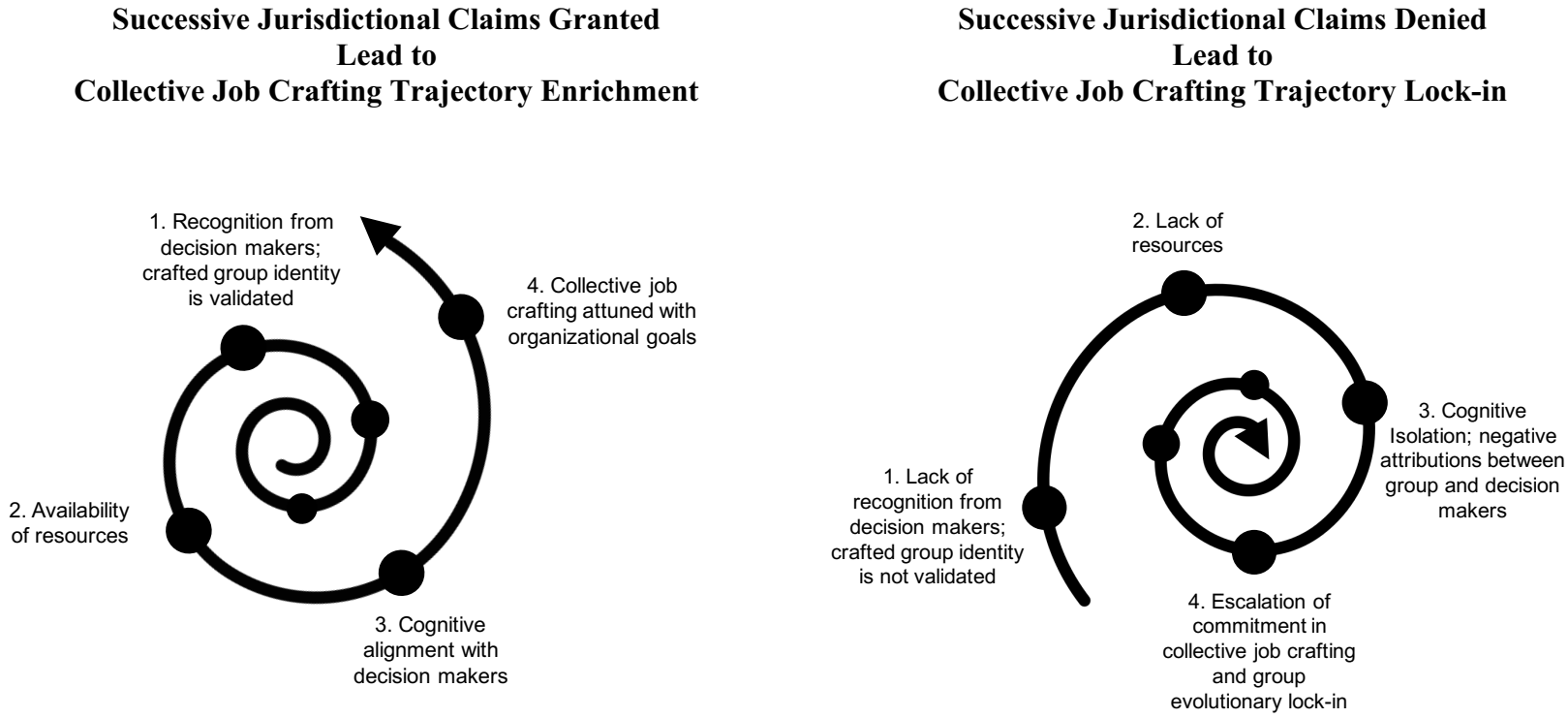
Both local and global jurisdictional claims may be denied when the group is unable to communicate the value of formalizing its collectively crafted job or to obtain the support of key audiences (arrows 6b and 6d).

Collective Job Crafting Trajectory and Jurisdictional Claims Over Time

Whether particular jurisdictional claims are granted or not, the process articulated above may prove recursive as long as the group continues to engage in collective job crafting and either organizational or environmental factors continue to fuel the group's motivation to renew its jurisdictional claims (arrows 7a, 7b, and 7c). However, over time, a group's collective job crafting trajectory may be significantly affected by the success or failure of its jurisdictional

claims. Figure 5.2 shows a graphic representation of cumulative outcomes when successive jurisdictional claims are granted and when they are denied.

Figure 5.2. Cumulative Outcomes of Granted and Denied Jurisdictional Claims



Icon credits: Joel McKinney from the Noun Project

My findings suggest that successively granted jurisdictional claims may give rise to a generative cycle where the group's collective job crafting trajectory is progressively enriched (first diagram). With each granted jurisdictional claim, the group's collective job crafting initiatives gain increased visibility across the organization. This visibility causes decision makers—and other groups across the organization—to recognize the group, to reward it, and to validate its evolving crafted identity. Recognition and identity validation, in turn, result in increased availability of resources to fund the group's collective job crafting endeavors. They also lead to cognitive alignment between group and organization, whereby the group understands the kinds of initiatives that are valued by the organization and favors them over initiatives that benefit the group—or others—but are misaligned with organizational goals. Over time, waves of collective job crafting activities, granted jurisdictional claims, recognition, identity validation, resource availability, and alignment between group and organization help the group carve a positive trajectory for itself. The group's mandate and jurisdiction grow progressively, each collective job crafting project acting as a conduit to others.

In contrast, when jurisdictional claims are successively denied over time, the group may find itself trapped in a negative cycle that leads to collective job crafting trajectory lock-in (second diagram). Denied jurisdictional claims translate into lack of recognition for the group's collective job crafting initiatives. Decision makers are reluctant to validate the group's crafted identity and continue to attach to it the identity associated with its original formal mandate. As a result, they make increasingly fewer resources available for the group to devote to collective job crafting: the group may receive few or no rewards for existing collective job crafting initiatives and may find itself struggling to fund new ones. The absence of recognition and resources may create cognitive misalignment between the group and decision makers—a situation in which the

group's collective job crafting initiatives, while perceived as valuable by the group, are viewed as detrimental to organizational goals. Lack of congruence between how the unit wishes to be seen and how it is effectively perceived, and between the level of support it believes it deserves and the level of support it is effectively afforded may give rise to mutual mistrust, misunderstanding, and negative attributions between the group and decision makers.

As commitment to its collective job crafting initiatives escalates, the group may be tempted to continue engaging in collective job crafting in a covert fashion, away from decision makers' line of sight. This covert job crafting behavior may win the group recognition from some actors across the organization, but widen the chasm between the group and key decision-making audiences. Ultimately, successive waves of collective job crafting initiatives, denied jurisdictional claims, lack of recognition and resources, and the zeal to sustain its crafted identity over an identity the group does not recognize as its own, may further lock the group into a downward-spiraling trajectory. The likelihood of having its jurisdictional claims granted diminishes progressively, and further attempts to engage in collective job crafting can eventually lead to negative consequences for the group.

Jurisdictional Claims at Ad Operations/Media Solutions

Media Solutions made both local and global jurisdictional claims over its 7-year lifespan. During this time, the unit experienced a succession of granted local jurisdictional claims followed by a succession of denied global jurisdictional claims. What started out as a generative job crafting process ultimately led the unit to a situation of evolutionary lock-in that derived in the unit's disappearance through a reorganization.

Table 5.2 summarizes the environmental and organizational factors, group motivations, kinds of practices, and outcomes involved in making these jurisdictional claims across three stages: years 1-3, when the unit's collective job crafting efforts thrived and were rewarded with granted local jurisdictional claims; years 3-5, when the unit's collective job crafting efforts blossomed even further, but local jurisdictional claims were not immediately granted; and years 5-7, when the unit's collective job crafting efforts reached their peak, but global jurisdictional claims either remained unanswered or were denied. The unit's coordinated collective job crafting efforts and jurisdictional claims over this 7-year period evidence its zeal to informally construct and formally validate a set of tasks, relationships, and identity attributes that would have amounted to an idiosyncratic occupation within CLICK.

Table 5.2: Local and Global Jurisdictional Claims at Ad Operations/Media Solutions

	Local Jurisdictional Claims at Ad Operations (Years 1-3)	Local Jurisdictional Claims at Ad Operations (Years 3-5)	Global Jurisdictional Claims at Media Solutions (Years 5-7)
Environmental Factors	Industry in expansion; low competitive pressure Ambiguity about the nature of the business; low pressure to obtain revenues Simple ecosystem of external partners	Industry approaching consolidation; moderate competitive pressure Business model under construction; moderate pressure to obtain revenues Growing ecosystem of external partners	Industry in consolidation; high competitive pressure Business model set; high pressure to obtain revenues Complex ecosystem of external partners
Organizational Factors	Loose structure; few layers; a few specialized functions coexist with many structural voids Numerous opportunities to claim jurisdiction over crafted tasks with no clear owner or through hiving-off	Growing structure and formalization; some layers; some specialized functions begin fill structural voids Numerous opportunities to claim jurisdiction over crafted tasks with no clear owner; fewer chances to gain tasks through hiving-off	Dense structure; numerous layers; mushrooming specialized functions fill pre-existing voids Overlapping domains among units lead to overlapping jurisdictional claims; fewer opportunities to take on unclaimed tasks or receive tasks through hiving-off
Degree of Organizational Inertia	Minimum; routines and cognitive frames underlying the organization's strategy in flux	Moderate; routines and cognitive frames underlying the organization's strategy flexible for Ad Operations and Engineering, less flexible for Sales	Maximum; routines and cognitive frames underlying the organization's strategy flexible for Ad Operations and Engineering, inflexible for Sales

Table 5.2: Local and Global Jurisdictional Claims at Ad Operations/Media Solutions (Continued)

	Local Jurisdictional Claims at Ad Operations (Years 1-3)	Local Jurisdictional Claims at Ad Operations (Years 3-5)	Global Jurisdictional Claims at Media Solutions (Years 5-7)
Motivation to Make Jurisdictional Claims	***Opportunistic*** Claims take advantage of other groups' ambivalence toward certain tasks/relationships Claims tend to signal "who we are not" Claims follow the group's determination to move away from its formal mandate	***Opportunistic*** Claims take advantage of other groups' ambivalence toward certain tasks/relationships Claims signal "who we are not" and "who we aim to become" Claims follow the group's determination to move away from its formal mandate and formulate a crafted mandate	***Defensive*** Claims address (1) high levels of dissonance and stakeholder alienation and later (2) reorganization threat Claims tend to signal "who we aim to become" Claims seek to formalize the group's crafted mandate
Jurisdiction-seeking Practices	Leveraging technology Leveraging the group's crafted organizational position	Leveraging technology Leveraging the group's crafted organizational position	Leveraging the group's self-presentation Leveraging technology Leveraging the group's crafted organizational position
Unit ability to exercise power and influence based on collectively crafted job	Low across the board	Medium vis-à-vis Engineering; lower vis-à-vis Sales	Substantial vis-à-vis Engineering; lower vis-à-vis Sales
Degree of post-claim Conflict	Low to Medium; cognitive alignment with decision makers	Medium; growing cognitive distance with decision makers	Medium to High; antagonism vis-à-vis decision makers

Table 5.2: Local and Global Jurisdictional Claims at Ad Operations/Media Solutions (Continued)

	Local Jurisdictional Claims at Ad Operations (Years 1-3)	Local Jurisdictional Claims at Ad Operations (Years 3-5)	Global Jurisdictional Claims at Media Solutions (Years 5-7)
Resources available for further collective job crafting	Abundant	Moderate	Scarce
Degree of visibility into collective job crafting initiatives	High across the board	High for Engineering; moderate for Sales	High for Engineering; lower for Sales
Outcomes	Jurisdictional claims mostly granted, but no additional compensation	Jurisdictional claims granted, but not immediately, and no additional compensation	Jurisdictional claims mostly unanswered or denied, but compensation adjusted to match previous claims

Years 1-3: Ad Operations Thrives on Local Jurisdictional Claims

During the first three years of the unit's existence, Ad Operations relied mostly on local jurisdictional claims to formalize selected tasks and relationships of its collectively crafted job. This period in the history of the unit coincided with CLICK's early development as an advertising platform. The social media industry was expanding quickly. Competitive pressure, while present, was not overwhelming, and CLICK enjoyed many advantages as one of the main players in the sector. However, the organization's business model—and its overall value as an advertising medium—were still up in the air. Critical aspects about the nature of the business still needed to be elucidated.

In this context, Ad Operations made opportunistically-motivated local jurisdictional claims. At the time, the unit wanted to break free from ad trafficking (its formal mandate) and had launched collective job crafting initiatives in a variety of directions. However, the unit hadn't yet synthesized those initiatives into a new (i.e., crafted) mandate for itself. The jurisdictional claims Ad Operations made during this period responded to opportunities that presented themselves to formally own tasks the unit had proactively undertaken and tasks other units were willing to hive-off. In order to make local jurisdictional claims over these tasks, Ad Operations relied primarily on two jurisdiction-seeking practices: leveraging technology and leveraging its crafted structural position as an internal bridge between Sales and other internal units at CLICK. Ad Operations placed less emphasis on leveraging the group's self-presentation during this stage, and continued managing its identity and image informally through adaptive behavior, as described in Chapter 4. Table 5.3.a summarizes the unit's collective job crafting efforts and jurisdictional claims during years 1-3, distinguishing between formal and informal tasks and relationships at the beginning and end of the period.

Table 5.3.a: Ad Operations' Collectively Crafted Job and Jurisdictional Claims, Years 1-3

Ad Operations Jurisdiction at inception		
Formal Org. Position	**Formal Tasks**	**Formal Relationships**
Internal unit Head of Ad Operations reports to Head of Sales	• Ad trafficking	**Sales** Sales team Account Management

Collective Job Crafting Efforts Years 1-3		
Crafted Org. Position	**Crafted Tasks**	**Crafted Relationships**
Internal bridge between Sales and other internal units	• Interacting with clients and ad agencies as required for ad trafficking • Advising clients on new ad products • Advising clients on changes to existing ad products • Managing new ad product tests	**Sales and External Agents** Sales team Account Management Clients Ad Agencies
	• Creating and managing a new ad publishing tool • Keeping abreast of new ad products • Keeping abreast of changes to existing ad products • Measuring ad campaign performance	**Engineering** Ad Engineering Product Management
	• Creating revenue recognition tool • Managing revenue recognition monthly • Designing revenue assurance process	**Finance** Revenue Recognition Revenue Assurance

Table 5.3.a: Ad Operations' Collectively Crafted Job and Jurisdictional Claims, Years 1-3 (Continued)

Selected Jurisdictional Claims Years 1-3		
Type of Claim	**Jurisdiction-seeking Practice**	**Result**
Local To gain jurisdiction over relationship between Sales and Engineering regarding new and changing ad products and product testing	Leveraging the unit's crafted organizational position	**Granted by Sales** **Granted by Engineering** Creation of the 'Product Champion' role
Local To gain jurisdiction over monthly revenue recognition tasks on the Sales side	Leveraging technology	**Granted by Sales** **Granted by Revenue Recognition** Responsibility for monthly revenue recognition transferred from Sales to Ad Operations

Ad Operations Jurisdiction Year 3		
Formal Org. Position	**Formal Tasks**	**Formal Relationships**
Client-facing unit Head of Ad Operations reports to Head of Sales	• Ad trafficking • Advising client account teams on new and changing ad products • Managing new ad product tests via 'Product Champions'	**Sales** Sales team Account Management Clients Ad Agencies
	• Keeping abreast of new ad products • Keeping abreast of changing ad products	**Engineering** Ad Engineering Product Management
	• Managing revenue recognition monthly • Managing revenue assurance	**Finance** Revenue recognition Revenue assurance

Leveraging an internal bridging position for local jurisdictional claims. As discussed previously, the Ad Operations unit operated formally under the purview of Sales. It was a

completely internal group whose members were meant to communicate exclusively with sellers and account managers. Through collective job crafting, however, Ad Operations came to occupy distinct informal positions in CLICK's organizational configuration over time. These positions enabled the group to claim jurisdiction over tasks other units hived-off as well as to capture and own tasks and relationships thus far unclaimed by other units in the organization.

In years 1-3, Ad Operations engaged in collective job crafting by capturing opportunities to work and build ties with internal functions at CLICK, particularly those on the Engineering side. Given is pre-existing formal ties to Sales, the Ad Operations unit positioned itself as an informal bridge between Sales and Engineering. This organizational position was strategic, because Sales and Engineering at CLICK had a rather antagonistic relationship. Both camps had the same goal: to scale the business rapidly to take advantage of favorable market conditions. However, mutual mistrust led to poor communication and to different visions about how the scaling process should occur. Jeremy explained:

> On one end of the spectrum you had this tribe of engineers who talked in ones and zeroes—nerd speak. And on the other end you had Sales guys [for whom] everything is like this colorful painting [*laughs*]. You put those guys in a room and it just didn't work. It's German and Japanese. It's just not going to happen.

Ad Operations leveraged its bridging position by "*learning to speak both languages*," in Jeremy's words. Jacob said:

> As immensely valuable as [Engineering teams] are, their products don't necessarily translate into sales … and with salespeople, a lot of times they don't understand what they are selling. So we sit in the middle and it is a very delicate middle … At the end of the day, sellers will always want more from Engineering and Product. [Sellers say:] 'This doesn't work because of XYZ' and Product always pushes back saying 'Well this doesn't work for our users because of XYZ', and we … interpret for both of them. We are the translators.

For example, CLICK initially established no formal liaison between Sales and Engineering when it came to developing and testing upcoming ad products. Ad Operations

members believed that such a function was needed to "*ease the pain of introducing and testing new products*," as expressed by Anna. Motivated by opportunity, Ad Operations made a local jurisdictional claim to act as the intermediating unit. Sales leadership granted these claims and, as a result, several Ad Operations members assumed additional formal responsibilities as 'Product Champions' on behalf of the unit. This was a non-hierarchical leadership position that implied no change in compensation, but allowed those members who stepped up to it to develop new skills and gain increased levels of exposure with engineers. While not directly involved in product development, product champions met regularly with engineers and generated expertise in the ad products they were developing. At the same time, they kept tabs on all the client account teams that were willing to serve as testing grounds for upcoming products. They then articulated the dialogue between engineers and client account teams as those products were being tested. Lastly, they disseminated knowledge about upcoming ad products throughout Ad Operations, so the rest of the unit could share that information within their respective client account teams. Anna, who was the formally appointed champion for what eventually became one of CLICK's most relevant ad products, explained:

> We basically became the point people for everyone when there was a new test product … our role was communicating [to client account teams] all the necessary requirements to participate in the test, communicating all the caveats for what information the advertisers would be able and would not be able to get from the test, managing advertisers' expectations, because things would change or be delayed, and also the actual execution of the [test] ads, which is easier said than done at times, and sometimes requires a lot of feedback.

Additionally, product champions were responsible for keeping the rest of Ad Operations informed about updates engineers were introducing to ad products that had already been launched. Anna remarked that every Monday night product champions would receive "*the Bible*" from Engineering: an extensive report that explained every update engineers planned to perform

that week. Product champions were in charge of understanding how those changes impacted clients' advertising strategies on CLICK, relaying that information to the rest of the unit, and providing support on the ground to client account teams. At the same time, they synthesized clients' feedback so that engineers could get a sense of clients' reactions to products across the board. Ad Operations' jurisdictional claims that derived in the creation of the add-on role of product champion eventually contributed to cementing the unit's image as a group of product experts.

Leveraging technology for local jurisdictional claims. At this early stage, Ad Operations leveraged technology in different ways to make local jurisdictional claims over collectively crafted tasks and relationships. First, it created technology that induced other groups to hive-off what they considered routine duties onto the unit. A case in point resulted from Ad Operations' first foray into collective job crafting: improving the process of revenue recognition at CLICK. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the Sales and Account Management units performed revenue recognition manually on a monthly basis. It was a painstaking process, according to Jeremy, because "*for like 3 days people were pretty stressed ... like, 'Why didn't this run?' 'Did we sign the insertion order?' It literally shut business down. People didn't get back to clients.*" When Jeremy took the time to create CLICK's first automated revenue recognition tool to help speed up the process, Sales and Account Management leaders could have taken the tool and entrusted their subordinates to use it. Sellers and account managers would have been able to recognize revenue more efficiently, but the task would have still remained under their jurisdiction. Jeremy, in turn, would have gained the satisfaction of having increased organizational performance, but Ad Operations' jurisdiction would have remained unaltered.

Jeremy himself acknowledged the opportunistic way in which Ad Operations claimed jurisdiction over those tasks. He noted that taking over revenue recognition "*was an 11th hour decision, where I was like, we will **do** this … because I just felt like the team was the most confident team*" (his emphasis). Ad Operations relied on the fact that, in the eyes of Sales and Account Management leaders, the existence of a tool created by another unit set their subordinates free to do what they valued most: stay in touch with clients. When Sales hived-off responsibility for the revenue recognition process to Ad Operations, the unit's jurisdiction was expanded beyond ad trafficking, until then its only task. August became the formally-appointed point person for revenue recognition within Ad Operations and began to officially manage the relationship between the unit and the Revenue Recognition team. Support from Barry, the Head of Revenue Recognition, aided the transference of these responsibilities. As reported by Jeremy, Barry preferred maintaining ties (and sharing an occupational boundary) with Ad Operations rather than interact directly with Sales. In Jeremy's words, by the time responsibility for revenue recognition became part of Ad Operations' jurisdiction, Barry "*was foaming at the mouth and he wanted the team to grow because we were his B.F.F. [i.e., Best Friends Forever]*."

An enriched job crafting trajectory through successively granted local jurisdictional claims. Between years 1-3, the unit experienced a string of granted local jurisdictional claims. As seen above, in some instances, these claims referred to crafted tasks and relationships the unit had taken over because they had no clear owner. In other instances, these claims had to do with crafted tasks and relationships other units explicitly or implicitly hived-off to the unit. Ralph noted that the Sales leaders to whom Ad Operations reported had been inclined to grant the unit's local jurisdictional claims early in the unit's evolution because the crafted tasks and relationships

under discussion directly and immediately benefitted Sales and yielded easily quantifiable results. As stated in Chapter 4, for example, when Ad Operations solved the issues that prevented CLICK from fully capturing revenue from ads published by third parties, the organization recouped up to 80 cents on the dollar for every ad of this kind it published. Similarly, when Ad Operations members performed complex queries and analyses and made proposals to optimize their clients' ad campaigns, the increased efficiency and incremental revenue derived from those campaigns could be precisely measured. Remembering his rapport with the Sales executive to whom he reported in the early days, Jeremy noted that the unit was able to measure its performance in general and the results of its collective job crafting activities in particular using clear metrics. He explained:

> [Through our collective job crafting initiatives,] our goal was to always handle twice as much revenue the next quarter per person. It was a metric, because we needed a metric. [My boss was] this crazy ex Marine guy. When he asked me for metrics, I *gave* him metrics. (his emphasis)

At the same time, most of these crafted tasks and relationships could be easily connected with ad trafficking. While Ad Operations at CLICK had more responsibilities than Ad Operations at other organizations, the distance between these two roles was not excessive. As a result, the unit's early collective job crafting activities and local jurisdictional claims caused members of the Sales team to experience little dissonance. This led to increased resource availability for Ad Operations. The unit successfully argued for and received the resources it needed to accommodate its growing workload. For example, when Ad Operations became client facing, the unit gained jurisdiction over a series of tasks hived-off by Account Management. While excited about expanding the boundaries of the job, Jeremy worried that Ad Operations would not have enough resources to perform its newly defined job satisfactorily. The Account

Management team transferred some of its most experienced members to Ad Operations to help the unit cope with its workload. Jeremy stated:

> I found some emails that I saved about me freaking about … how many heads we would need or how much work was moving [over to Ad Operations], but I think at the end of the day, when the dust settled, we took a couple of folks, like [AM1] or [AM2] coming over, so we had some of the experience coming in.

Ad Operations was cognitively aligned with decision makers in Sales and the generalized perception was that the unit's collective job crafting efforts were in accordance both with the Sales organizations' goals and those of CLICK at large.

Years 3-5: Ad Operations at Risk of Lock-in through Local Jurisdictional Claims

Years 3-5 constituted a transformational period for CLICK. The social media industry continued to expand, but competitive pressure grew. The industry's consolidation was looming in the horizon. In an attempt to scale its operations quickly and cement its success as a leading social media platform ahead of the industry's maturity stage, CLICK's Engineering team set the basis for a new business model. The unit launched Selfie, a system which—as described in Chapter 4—enabled clients to program ads themselves onto the CLICK platform. The actual programming was performed by marketing developers and coordinated by clients' media agencies. Selfie ads were bought through an auction system and were, therefore, more cost-effective than ads bought through insertion orders and programmed manually by Ad Operations.

As noted earlier, Ad Operations welcomed the introduction of Selfie, because shifting the responsibility for ad trafficking to external parties gave unit members free time to pursue what they considered more value-adding and fulfilling work. In other words, the introduction of Selfie helped Ad Operations consolidate its bi-directional collective job crafting methodology. The unit sought to simultaneously erase its formal mandate (i.e., to automate or transfer responsibility for

ad trafficking to third parties) and to enact a new, self-defined one (i.e., to generate incremental revenue through data analysis and partner management). The consolidation of this methodology marked the beginning of a highly generative period for Ad Operations, and collective job crafting initiatives began blossoming in multiple directions.

During this period, Ad Operations continued to rely on local jurisdictional claims in its quest to obtain ownership of selected tasks and relationships in its collectively crafted job. Yet, despite the unit's efforts, its local jurisdictional claims were not always well-received. Some claims had to be reiterated a number of times before they were granted. Other claims were granted by some audiences but remained unanswered by others. As a result, Ad Operations;

jurisdiction

As in years 1-3, Ad Operations' jurisdictional claims were motivated by opportunity. In order to support its claims, the unit continued to rely on the jurisdiction-seeking practices it had used in the past: leveraging its crafted organizational position and leveraging technology. The unit still managed its identity and image informally through adaptive behavior, and therefore placed less emphasis on the practice of leveraging the group's self-presentation. Table 5.3.b presents the unit's collective job crafting efforts and jurisdictional claims during years 3-5, as well as the unit's jurisdiction at the end of year 5. Please revert to Table 5.3.a for details on the unit's jurisdiction in year 3.

Table 5.3.b: Ad Operations' Collectively Crafted Job and Jurisdictional Claims, Years 3-5

Collective Job Crafting Efforts Years 3-5		
Crafted Org. Position	**Crafted Tasks**	**Crafted Relationships**
Internal/External bridge between Sales, Clients, Ad Agencies, Marketing Developers, and internal units	• Educating clients and ad agencies on Selfie as an alternative to insertion orders • Monitoring the progress of Selfie ad campaigns; coordinating with ad agencies and marketing developers • Providing Selfie support to Marketing developers • Designing Marketing Developer processes and standards • Educating clients and ad agencies on 'Direct Response' ad products • Educating clients and ad agencies on 'Assembled Targets' • Media reporting; generating standard and custom reports • Optimizing ad campaigns, running tests and gathering feedback on campaign performance	**Sales and External Agents** Sales team Account Management Clients Ad Agencies Marketing Developers
	• Developing and managing 'Direct Response' ad products • Developing and managing the 'Target Assembler' • Developing and managing Dashboards for ad campaign monitoring and data visualization • Developing reporting tools for standard ad campaign reporting • Drawing queries to produce custom reports • Collecting, synthesizing, and relaying feedback on new and existing ad products to engineers	**Engineering** Ad Engineering Product Management Measurement

Table 5.3.b: Ad Operations' Collectively Crafted Job and Jurisdictional Claims, Years 3-5 (Continued)

Selected Jurisdictional Claims Years 3-5		
Type of Claim	**Jurisdiction-seeking Practice**	**Result**
Local To gain jurisdiction over Selfie support	Leveraging the unit's crafted organizational position	**Granted by Sales with delay**
Local To gain jurisdiction over management of direct response ad products	Leveraging technology	**Granted by Engineering** **Partially granted by Sales**
Local To gain jurisdiction over reporting—standard and custom—in client account teams	Leveraging technology	**Granted by Engineering** **Unanswered by Sales**

Ad Operations Jurisdiction Year 5		
Formal Org. Position	**Formal Tasks**	**Formal Relationships**
Client-facing unit Head of Ad Operations reports to Head of Sales	• Ad trafficking • Advising client account teams on new and changing ad products • Managing new ad product tests via 'Product Champions' • Providing Selfie support to Marketing Developers • Executing direct response ad campaigns	**Sales** Sales team Account Management Clients Ad Agencies Marketing Developers
	• Keeping abreast of new ad products • Keeping abreast of changing ad products	**Engineering** Ad Engineering Product Management
	• Managing revenue recognition monthly • Managing revenue assurance	**Finance** Revenue recognition Revenue assurance

Leveraging an external/internal bridging position for local jurisdictional claims. By year 3, Ad Operations had advocated to become a client-facing function. This enabled the unit to occupy an informal organizational position that connected both Sales and external agents such as clients, media agencies, and marketing developers with CLICK's Engineering-oriented internal functions. James characterized the organizational position the unit had crafted for itself in these terms:

> We are the closest to how our ad products work, how the advertisers react to them, feel about them, whether it solves their business objectives and so on and so forth. We have that nuanced knowledge from the client because we work with the client on a daily basis, but also at the same time we are working with the product teams who are two steps removed from that, so we are this bridge between multiple teams and we get to touch a lot of the different aspects of the business.

Through this crafted external/internal bridging position, Ad Operations gathered, synthesized, and channeled information back and forth between all of these agents. At the same time, this position provided input for Ad Operations' own initiatives, some of which added efficiency to CLICK's advertising infrastructure while others generated incremental revenue.

Selfie support for clients, agencies, and marketing developers provides a case in point. As explained in Chapter 4, Selfie support was a task Sales refused to perform. Sales considered that clients should only receive support from CLICK for ads purchased through insertion orders, which were programmed in-house. In Sales leaders' minds, CLICK had no need to provide support for ads that were programmed externally. Sam explained:

> Sales was fundamentally opposed to it, and they would have done everything they could to stop it because it made them uncomfortable and because of their own personal incentives which did not necessarily align.

In contrast, Ad Operations identified Selfie support as a need from being on the ground with clients and from analyzing Selfie usage data. The unit considered that providing support would be necessary as a conduit to avoid client frustration and attrition. Sam explained:

> [We believed] advertisers don't see "this is CLICK, this is not CLICK", to them it's all CLICK and if they are not finding success here in the Selfie piece they are going to stop spending on insertion orders.

While providing Selfie support informally, Ad Operations began making local jurisdictional claims in an effort to, first, have Sales leaders recognize Selfie support as a worthy task and second, to acknowledge it as a task that should fit within Ad Operations' jurisdictional boundaries. The unit leveraged its internal/external bridging position to make these claims. On the one hand, Ad Operations had established close relationships with marketing developers, who were in charge of programming ads onto Selfie on behalf of clients, and proactively designed processes to guide their relationship with CLICK. Ad Operations argued that these close ties would make providing day-to-day support to their activities on Selfie a straightforward matter. On the other hand, Ad Operations had been working to establish close relationships with ad agencies and proactively approached them to educate them on Selfie as a cost-effective alternative to insertion orders. The unit argued that its ties to both ad agencies and marketing developers put it in an ideal position to help them navigate issues as Selfie ad campaigns were designed and executed.

These local jurisdictional claims were initially ignored by Sales leaders. The decision to offer Selfie support despite Sales' negative assessment of the system fractured the symbiotic relationship Ad Operations and Sales had established in the past, and evidenced that the units had opposing views on the future of CLICK's advertising infrastructure. Sales only recognized Selfie support as a necessary task and granted Ad Operations jurisdiction over it in year 5, when Selfie overtook insertion orders as clients' preferred buying method for ads. Sam credited Ad Operations for clients' continued engagement with CLICK through Selfie until that point. Thinking retrospectively, he stated in year 7: "*Ultimately Sales came around and now it's {i.e.,*

Selfie is] 90% of our revenue. Had we gone with what their plan was, who knows what spend would be at now … Would the shift from insertion orders to Selfie have happened anyways? Yes. Would advertisers have been successful? Probably mixed."

Leveraging technology for local jurisdictional claims. During years 3-5, Ad Operations leveraged technology in different ways to gain local jurisdiction over crafted tasks and relationships. One way in which this jurisdiction-seeking practice was enacted consisted of creating tools and systems to capture tasks so far unclaimed by other units. The creation of Direct Response ad products discussed in Chapter 4 is a case in point. As mentioned earlier, before Ad Operations' idea to test direct response advertising at CLICK, the organization defined itself exclusively as a platform for display advertising. Direct response advertising was the specialty of one of its largest competitors. Hence, back then direct response "*was almost a forbidden term around the company*" and was therefore "*intentionally left out of our entire narrative,*" according to Isaac. The motivation to both experiment with direct response ads and claim the related set of tasks, as acknowledged by Isaac and Nigel, was opportunistic. The organization's disregard for this kind of ad products provided an avenue for Ad Operations to work on them and subsequently claim ownership over their development.

It was Nigel, in collaboration with a few early members of the unit, who proactively wrote most of the code to test the first direct response ad campaign. While Engineering provided resources to introduce the necessary modifications to CLICK's platform, the bulk of media-related work for the test was performed informally by Ad Operations.

As direct response advertising caught on among CLICK's clients, Ad Operations made jurisdictional claims to own the development and management of direct response ad products.

These claims were granted by Engineering leaders such as Garth, who supervised product managers for every other ad product offered by the organization. Because Ad Operations had initially developed the idea and successfully tested it, Garth respected Ad Operations' ownership of direct response and recognized the unit's expertise in the matter over that of his own team. For example, in an all-hands session between Garth and Ad Operations members, the topic of direct response ad products came up and Nigel interjected to point out to Garth that direct response was an initiative spearheaded by his unit. Garth not only validated the claim but also encouraged the unit to be more forthcoming in driving the widespread adoption of direct response ad products.

> Nigel: Most of the direct response solutions that get scaled across the company are actually created by our team.
>
> Garth: I know! [*Everyone laughs*]. You guys are the leading experts and you should be evangelizing the rest of the company and getting all the clients to use it.

While Engineering leaders granted Ad Operations' local jurisdictional claims over direct response, these claims were not fully supported by Sales leaders. While they valued the additional revenue these ad products generated for CLICK, they saw no reason why Ad Operations should devote time to developing and managing direct response offerings. Sales leaders expected Ad Operations to be able to execute ad campaigns that involved a direct response component and granted the unit jurisdiction over that aspect of the initiative, but remained silent on validating Ad Operations' ownership of the solution itself. As a result, Ad Operations continued developing and managing direct response ad products informally.

The practice of leveraging technology was also used to make jurisdictional claims over tasks other units could hive-off to Ad Operations. The task of reporting ad campaign results is a case in point. Media reporting was originally a task performed by Account Management, but Ad Operations' ability to create reporting tools derived, first, in the unit's informally performing that

task in many client account teams and, later, making jurisdictional claims over it. An internal document stated that the unit "*designed and developed [a] scaled reporting system for premium [ad] units*". While these reports were based on Excel macros, "*they were extremely visually appealing and highly scalable. These led directly to online reports*," which the unit "*also drove*". Later, once Selfie was launched, Ad Operations "*scoped and co-led the development of Selfie reporting for premium ad units … This external-facing report was [a] less visually-appealing replica of standardized reporting.*" However, it "*enabled tremendous scale and convenience on the customer side*." A similar situation ensued with custom reports, which Account Management was unable to produce. Given the complex design of CLICK's databases, account managers required Engineering's assistance every time a client requested such a report. Ad Operations members like Martin proactively trained themselves in SQL, a programming language that enabled users to connect disparate databases and make queries that yielded custom reports. He explained:

> Anytime we go to a big executive meeting or conference they [Sales leaders] are talking about how clients want more data, they want more insights ... People just think it's hitting buttons or something but we have the most complicated database distribution in the world. The basic stuff is hard and when you start … doing these custom database queries and pulls and stuff, that's where it gets really complicated and that is where Sales doesn't have support … We [informally] took ownership of that naturally and got people into it.

The unit leveraged the development of these skills and tools to induce Sales leaders to transfer responsibility for media reporting from Account Management to Ad Operations within client account teams. In parallel, the unit also leveraged their technological acumen to convince Engineering leaders that running queries for custom reporting was a task better suited to Ad Operations than to their team. Engineering leaders granted Ad Operations' jurisdictional claims, because enabling Ad Operations to produce custom reports freed up engineers' time to perform

tasks they valued more. However, Sales leaders left these jurisdictional claims unanswered. By year 5, media reporting became a task performed by either the account manager or the Ad Operations specialist in most client accounts, depending on who had the availability or skills to produce the reports when they were due to the client. While formally under the purview of Account Management, the task informally sat at the boundary between both jobs and contributed to generating lack of role clarity between the two functions.

Risk of evolutionary lock-in after successive hard-to-win local jurisdictional claims. With the introduction of Selfie, Ad Operations' collective job crafting activities multiplied. In accordance with the unit's crafted mandate of 'generating incremental revenue,' most of these initiatives were designed to have revenue impact and thereby benefit CLICK's performance. Since CLICK's business had become more complex, however, these initiatives tended to be difficult to put together. Consequently, their revenue impact could only materialize in the mid to long term. As noted in Chapter 4, Nigel began receiving complaints from Sales leaders, who were frustrated with Ad Operations' devoting time to activities that did not directly serve their quarterly goals. Ad Operations, in turn, began engaging in collective job crafting 'under-the-radar,' as noted by several members of the unit. Unless a test was being carried out at a given client account or something was being launched, most of the unit's initiatives remained invisible to Sales leaders and account team members. The unit made jurisdictional claims to incorporate a small number of these collectively crafted tasks into its formal mandate. As a result, Sales leaders saw only those tasks and relationships that had been formally sanctioned for Ad Operations or were currently being claimed. Without having a full view of the unit's

contributions to CLICK, Sales leaders tended to bestow less recognition on Ad Operations specialists than they did on sellers and account managers.

Sales' lack of recognition for Ad Operations was evident in different ways. First, Ad Operations was rarely acknowledged at Sales meetings when celebrating the closing of lucrative deals with clients, despite the unit's contributions to the process. Benjamin said:

> I would go into Sales meetings and the seller was getting all the 'oh, congratulations, you did such a good job putting this together'. And our entire team was just forgotten about.

Second, because much of Ad Operations' crafted work remained invisible to Sales leaders, the unit became chronically understaffed. Sales leaders allocated headcount to the units under their purview according to the amount and complexity of the work they performed. Ad Operations' headcount responded to the demands of its formal job, rather than its collectively crafted job. Negotiating headcount became a difficult process. Elizabeth explained:

> Every time we asked for headcount, Sales leadership asked, 'what do you need all those heads for? You don't need all those heads for ad trafficking. Ad trafficking is a simple task.' And we would be frustrated.

Lastly, despite their units' contributions to CLICK through collective job crafting, Ad Operations specialists' salaries were fixed, whereas sellers' and account managers' compensation varied according to the degree to which they met or exceeded their quarterly sales quotas. Ad Operations members noted that their salaries represented a fraction of what sellers and account managers received, whereas their workload tended to be larger. Jacob noted:

> At the end of the day, and I say this completely candidly, it's a pretty thankless role … Based on our compensation structure, or based on the work that we are required to do, we wear more hats than anyone else on the Sales organization and we get the least amount of recognition.

In the same vein, Benjamin said:

> They [i.e., sellers and account managers] would go out to the bar but we would be there hours on end and they would get all the credit, you know? It kind of sucked.

This lack of recognition in terms of praise, resources, and compensation generated two widespread reactions among Ad Operations members, both of which created cognitive distance between the unit and Sales. First, the unit adopted an 'us-versus-them' mentality vis-à-vis Sales. According to Anna, Ad Operations members saw their unit as "*the underdog*" in its relationship with Sales. "*[It's] almost like you have a chip on your shoulder, like you have something to prove*," said Jacob. This derived in frequent talk against sellers and account managers. The general perception was that the former did not have deep enough understanding of what they were selling and the latter failed to "*pull their weight*" in client account teams, as one member put it. To this point, Benjamin said: "*The sellers and account managers, they are good at talking, they might be better at selling, but we are the ones who get it done*." This 'us-versus-them' mentality led to Sales being considered a 'dirty' word at Ad Operations. James noted:

> We have had not-that-great salespeople and not-that-great account managers, and that is why Sales is, like, a dirty word. Especially Account Management. But Account Management is not a bad role, in the sense that [our competitors'] account managers are really good. And I think at the very least on our team, and I think also on the Engineering teams, it's the same [assessment:] that Sales and Account Management are just not that great or have weak links, and so it's a dirty word.

This mentality also derived in behavior that sought to position Ad Operations as "*not Sales*" in the eyes of Engineering teams.

At the same time, there was a sense that Sales leaders still viewed Ad Operations as a traditional Ad Operations team and did not understand the extent of the unit's contributions to CLICK's ad sales process. This perceived lack of understanding created frustration among Ad Operations members and, as a result, the unit adopted a 'let's-just-do-our-own-thing' stance. Sam explained:

> They didn't fully understand the impact we were having … I guess we could have done more to get them to understand that, but I think the reason we didn't do much in that direction is that every time we tried they had us in a box … 'Oh, you are operational, you don't understand the business, we are salespeople, we get it.' … We were like, 'Let's just do our own thing'.

This mentality further induced the unit to engage in collective job crafting away from Sales leaders' line of sight. Ad Operations members made sure their work in their client accounts was done before devoting time to their collectively crafted activities. In contrast, Ad Operations' collectively crafted job tended to be visible to and supported by Engineering leaders and their teams. Sam noted: "*All the Engineering people know what we are doing. The people we thought were important knew what we were doing.*"

The 'us-versus-them' and 'let's-just-do-our-own-thing' mentalities that were cemented during this period led to further cognitive and behavioral differences between Ad Operations and Sales. Whereas sellers and account managers appeared to be focused on obtaining recognition and pay-for-performance rewards, Ad Operations members thought of themselves as humble and detached from extrinsic sources of motivation. Jacob said:

> Humility is a huge part [of the job] … If you are the type of person that gets motivated because you are recognized, motivated because you're doing something to get that carrot, you probably won't do well in this role, because it becomes unfulfilling. Whereas if you know what the big picture is and you know where you fit in that big picture, and you want to continue to drive the vision of the company forward, this is the perfect team for you to be on. If you don't mind putting your head down and coming to work every day, and putting in work and knowing that it will result in something good, regardless of whether there is an email sent out to the whole company saying 'This is what he did,' [this is the job for you].

Years 5-7: Ad Operations/Media Solutions Locked-in through Global Jurisdictional Claims

During the last years of Ad Operations' existence, CLICK progressively entered a phase of strong market competition. A number of new social media platforms with attractive

functionalities entered the industry and competed for users' attention. Adoption rates for CLICK's platform were still on the rise worldwide, but had begun a slow decline in key markets.

In response to these environmental challenges, CLICK's top managers moved to establish a more specialized organizational structure. New units were created to take over specific functions once informally crafted by Ad Operations. For example, a Product Marketing unit was set up to manage the release of new ad products, taking over the functions that had once been the purview of Ad Operations' product champions; a Marketing Developer Team was formed to screen, train, and evaluate new marketing developers and to create stronger links to those through which CLICK derived the most revenues, taking over some of the process design Ad Operations had produced to manage the organization's relationships with marketing developers; and a Data Management Team was set up to perform complex data mining and analysis, standing at odds with Ad Operations' crafted work in target assembly.

In parallel to these environmental and organizational developments, Ad Operations was coming into its own as a unit that had grown well beyond its formal mandate. The unit continued working according to the informal mandate it had set for itself in the previous stage. Its ties to other functions and to external agents grew and the number of collectively crafted tasks and relationships multiplied. However, the multi-dimensional nature of the unit's informal activities and its successive local jurisdictional claims were creating considerable amounts of dissonance in the eyes of relevant audiences like clients, potential recruits, internal units, and other agents in CLICK's environment.

In this scenario, Nigel believed it was imperative to have the organization and external agents view Ad Operations' collectively crafted job as a unique set of tasks and responsibilities worthy of legitimacy and recognition—what I call an *idiosyncratic occupation.* He also believed

the unit should structure itself in a way that conveyed the breadth of this occupation's jurisdiction.

To this end, the unit began making global jurisdictional claims. In contrast with the local jurisdictional claims the unit made in the past, these claims were motivated by the need to act defensively rather than opportunistically. Through these claims, the unit pursued the dual objective of creating role clarity vis-à-vis other units and securing its collectively crafted domain. According to the unit's leaders, this would foster congruence between the unit's mandate, image, and work in the eyes of those it interacted with and improve the unit's internal efficiency. In making global jurisdictional claims, Ad Operations relied primarily on the practices of leveraging the group's self-presentation and leveraging its crafted structural position, while placing less emphasis on leveraging technology. Table 5.3.c presents the unit's collective job crafting efforts and jurisdictional claims during years 5-7, as well as the unit's jurisdiction at the end of year 7. Please revert to Table 5.3.b for details on the unit's jurisdiction in year 5.

Table 5.3.c: Ad Operations/Media Solutions' Collectively Crafted Job and Jurisdictional Claims, Years 5-7

Collective Job Crafting Efforts Years 5-7		
Crafted Org. Position	**Crafted Tasks**	**Crafted Relationships**
Multi-dimensional bridge between Sales, Clients, Ad Agencies, Marketing Developers, and multiple internal units	• Educating clients and ad agencies on Selfie as an alternative to insertion orders • Monitoring the progress of Selfie ad campaigns; coordinating with ad agencies and marketing developers • Designing Marketing Developer processes and standards (potentially contested by CLICK Marketing Developer team) • Educating clients and ad agencies on 'Direct Response' ad products • Educating clients and ad agencies on 'Assembled Targets' • Media planning • Media reporting; generating standard and custom reports (unclear ownership Ad Operations/Account Management) • Optimizing ad campaigns, running tests and gathering feedback on campaign performance	**Sales and External Agents** Sales team Account Management Clients Ad Agencies Marketing Developers CLICK Marketing Developer team CLICK Ad Agency team

Table 5.3.c: Ad Operations/Media Solutions' Collectively Crafted Job and Jurisdictional Claims, Years 5-7 (Continued)

Collective Job Crafting Efforts Years 5-7 (Cont.)		
Crafted Org. Position	**Crafted Tasks**	**Crafted Relationships**
Multi-dimensional bridge between Sales, Clients, Ad Agencies, Marketing Developers, and multiple internal units	• Developing and managing 'Direct Response' ad products • Developing and managing the 'Target Assembler' • Developing and managing Dashboards for ad campaign monitoring and data visualization • Managing reporting tools for standard ad campaign reporting • Drawing queries to produce custom reports • Collecting, synthesizing, and relaying feedback on new and existing ad products to engineers (potentially contested by Product Marketing)	**Engineering** Ad Engineering Product Management Product Marketing Measurement Data Management

Selected Jurisdictional Claims Years 5-7		
Type of Claim	**Jurisdiction-seeking Practices**	**Result**
Global To gain jurisdiction over Ad Operations' entire collectively crafted job Prompted by lack of role clarity between Ad Operations and other units	Leveraging the unit's self-presentation: unit name changed to Media Solutions Leveraging the unit's crafted organizational position	**Granted by Engineering** **Unanswered by Sales**
Global To gain jurisdiction over Ad Operations' entire collectively crafted job Prompted by rumored reorganization and envisioned loss of the collectively crafted job	Leveraging the unit's self-presentation Leveraging the unit's crafted organizational position Leveraging technology	**Granted by Engineering** **Denied by Sales**

Table 5.3.c: Ad Operations/Media Solutions' Collectively Crafted Job and Jurisdictional Claims, Years 5-7 (Continued)

Media Solutions Jurisdiction Year 7
Media Solutions' jurisdiction in Year 7 was the same as Ad Operations' Jurisdiction in Year 5. Media Solutions was eliminated through reorganization at the end of Year 7. Client-facing tasks were assigned to a new function, Client Sales Solutions. Management of new and changing ad products, and product testing were assigned exclusively to Product Marketing. Management of custom clusters was assigned exclusively to Data Management. Direct response ad products had no clear owner. Production of custom reports remained with former Media Solutions members who

Leveraging the unit's self-presentation for global jurisdictional claims. Ad Operations used self-presentation tactics to claim global jurisdiction over its collectively crafted job by autonomously changing its name and by promoting the new name in association with its envisioned jurisdiction.

Renaming the unit. The rebranding of Ad Operations into Media Solutions was one of the main self-presentation tactics the unit used to claim jurisdiction over its collectively crafted job. Chapter 4 described the sources of dissonance that motivated the rebranding, the process of selection of the new name, and the way in which the unit chose to unveil its new name to the rest of the organization. As specified there, the rebranding was expected to convey the richness of the unit's collectively crafted job which, in turn, would facilitate the unit's recruitment process, its relationships with clients, agencies, and marketing developers, and its interactions with internal units at CLICK. Fundamentally, however, the unit intended the new name to aid in making jurisdictional claims over the entire media cycle, so that the job of Media Solutions Specialist could be cemented as an idiosyncratic occupation with end-to-end responsibility over CLICK advertising. In an email conversation with his direct reports, Nigel wrote:

> Closing the loop on the media management cycle is by far our team's most important goal as it sets both us and our company up for long-term success … We'll focus entirely on media solutions from soup to nuts: from media strategy and planning … to active execution, to creative consultation, to targeting development, to reporting and data mining solutions, to final reporting.

Once the new name had been selected, Nigel made global jurisdictional claims by reaching out to executives at his own hierarchical level in both U.S. Sales and Account Management. Because the rebranding would primarily affect sellers and account managers, Nigel saw the need to foster role clarity with these units before the announcement. He stated that "*everyone was hyper-sensitive about what Account Management would end up thinking about what the Media Solutions evolution would mean for their role*." Account managers had lost considerable ground in client account teams in the seven years that Media Solutions collectively crafted its job. Jurisdiction over simple tasks, like verifying an ad's creative before publication, had been hived-off by Account Management relatively early in the process. Other tasks, while not formalized into the unit's jurisdiction, were heavily contested. This was the case of media reporting, as described earlier, and media planning—the most strategic task in the media cycle. During this stage, a number of Media Solutions members took over media planning on an informal basis in their client accounts, others shared the responsibility for this task with the account manager, while yet others were in the process of adapting sellers' and account managers' perceptions to eventually take it over. Due to this progressive reduction in Account Management's media-related responsibilities, account managers had repositioned themselves in client account teams as 'junior sellers,' but the exact set of responsibilities associated with that understanding of their job was still up in the air.

In Nigel's conversations with U.S. Sales and Account Management leaders, they agreed that sellers would continue focusing on brand strategy and articulating dialogue with clients' C-

suite, account managers would focus on account strategy by owning high-level agency relationships, and Media Solutions would focus on everything else. Nigel followed up this general understanding with an email where he laid out the self-defined mandate his unit had been working under. For clarification, he then remarked:

> We'll continue to do everything we do today and in addition to that we will take on all media planning and all media reporting. We will be responsible for having media conversations directly with agency folks (i.e. those conversations will not be filtered through another person) around what units they should use, what posts, what content, when to heavy up or slow down, etc. Also, with this in mind in my opinion we don't need "media" account managers at all.

The U.S. Head of Account Management responded positively and proposed that everyone meet to plan how the transition in responsibilities should occur. More than the loss of jurisdiction over media-related tasks, she was concerned with her subordinates' lack of clarity in terms of what their job was evolving into. Her goal was to use these discussions to agree on a more strategic definition of the role account managers would play in client account teams.

In parallel, Nigel reached out to leaders in various Engineering groups to make global jurisdictional claims. In an email discussion with them, Nigel highlighted the importance of his unit's ownership of the entire media cycle—and media planning in particular—by sharing his vision for the future of online media:

> Media Planning will become something very different. Something much more metrics-driven and grounded in ongoing analysis and as opposed to coordination and operations … We saw things moving in this direction a few years ago, which is why I pivoted my team into Selfie management, killed "Ad Operations" in favor of "Media Solutions" and have tried to get us in a position to push this.

He envisioned Media Solutions' organizational model as the model that would govern relationships in the online media world in the future. Some of CLICK's key media agencies had already restructured themselves to fit their patterns of interaction with the organization to Media Solutions' model. Nigel appealed to Engineering leaders for support by subsequently adding:

> We deliberately created a new, robust ecosystem that we now need to manage, so our goal now should be to streamline that as much as possible, so that our teams can spend less time coordinating … and more time analyzing results. We have made a lot of key moves to set ourselves up to do this in a way that is not just limited to CLICK. We can focus on having an influence across the web … and across platforms.

Nigel reported that he and these executives had been "*in complete alignment*" for a while in terms of their vision for CLICK's future as an advertising platform. Their units routinely relied on Media Solutions for client insight and were supportive of both the unit's rebranding and its jurisdictional claims over the media cycle end-to-end.

Promoting the renamed unit. As detailed in Chapter 4, Ad Operations presented itself as Media Solutions to the organization during a high-profile Sales event. The unit had not yet been given the all-clear regarding its new name and jurisdiction, but Nigel and his direct reports felt it was time to rebrand anyways and went ahead with it. After the event, Nigel was ready to begin communicating Media Solutions' intended responsibilities to all the groups at CLICK with whom the unit interacted. However, Dylan, his boss and the Global Head of Media Solutions, was worried about Sales leaders' reactions after the conference. He instructed Nigel to tone down all executive-level communication on the unit's rebranding. As a result, there was no widespread announcement of Media Solutions' intended responsibilities. Nigel was frustrated. He stated:

> Following the Sales conference, Dylan was still really concerned about making too much noise about the re-brand … I'd hoped to go out to Account Management and Sales with proactive messaging that would provide clarity on everything and drive greater alignment … We'd done a *ton* of things: created products; driven product adoption in-market; re-trained the team, taken over and transformed Selfie, [which is] pretty much our entire business now; … etc. and I wanted to get that out there so that people would understand that we had rebranded for a reason. (his emphasis)

Dylan's instructions forced Nigel to opt for a 'bottom-up' approach to promoting the new identity of the unit. Nigel asked Media Solutions members to communicate the rationale behind renaming the unit to the sellers and account managers they worked with. To this end, he compiled a series of talking points for members to use in their day-to-day interactions. The goal was for all members to speak about the new name in similar terms and thus get the message across about the unit's intended jurisdiction. He also asked them to continue working to eventually take over all media-related responsibilities on their client accounts. Media Solutions specialists in progressive client accounts had already achieved or were close to achieving this milestone, but those in more hierarchical accounts still had a long way to go.

In parallel, Nigel set out to promote Media Solutions across the organization surreptitiously. He routinely reached out to U.S. leaders in both Sales and Engineering to continue pushing the unit's agenda. He noted he was forced to spend "*the next several months [after the rebranding] doing my best to get the message across behind-the-scenes, which to be honest was pretty draining*."

He also seized every opportunity available to him to make global jurisdictional claims to the upper echelons of the organization. For example, when he found out that PIXEL, one of CLICK's main competitors, had created its own Media Solutions unit, he wrote an email comparing both job descriptions and included his team, high level Sales executives, and the organization's COO among the recipients. He wrote:

> This was too good not to share. Looks like PIXEL Sales is trying to catch up to us for once … We've been stealing potential PIXEL candidates left and right as our role has continued to evolve. Congrats on all the progress you're making in moving the rest of the industry (as evidenced by the eerie similarity between the below two job postings). Let's continue to … create and re-create this role as we all charge ahead in this ambiguous and consistently-changing media landscape.

He closed the email by saying he was "*proud to be Media Solutions (CLICK Media Solutions, that is)*". In the postscript, he addressed high level Sales executives and the COO directly and thanked them for "*rocking the Media Solutions jackets at last year's Sales Summit*". Nigel also forwarded the email to Garth, whose support he valued as one of the most prominent Engineering executives. Garth responded in a validating tone, saying "*Wow. Huge.*"

Leveraging a multidimensional bridging position for global jurisdictional claims. By year 5, Media Solutions had crafted its collective job informally to cover a multitude of media-related tasks and relationships at CLICK and in the organization's environment. The unit was informally positioned as a multidimensional connector among many disparate actors which included sellers, account managers, clients, media agencies, marketing developers, product engineers, measurement experts, product marketers, data managers, and members of CLICK's Agency, Marketing Developer, and Revenue Recognition, and IT teams, among others. This crafted organizational position enabled Media Solutions to have an end-to-end view of CLICK's ad sales process. Nigel explained:

> Media Solutions is the glue that holds all the monetization stuff together. The team touches anyone who touches revenue or touches revenue-generating products … Literally, any team connected with CLICK making money, we are working with closely.

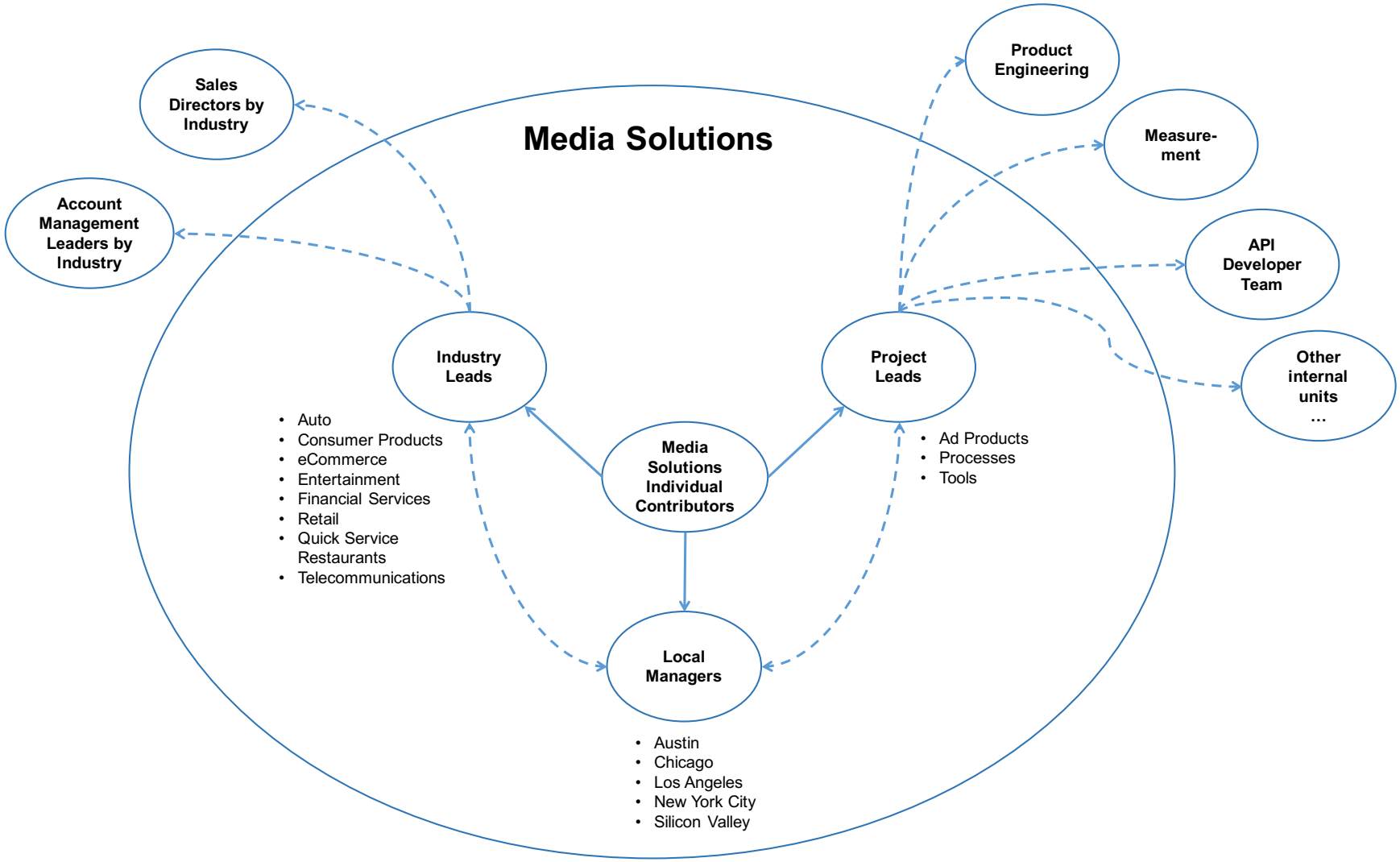
The group saw itself as the only entity at CLICK that had an integrative view of the monetization process and the only group able to act as a checks-and-balances mechanism for all the other functions involved. Ralph explained:

> We are the connective tissue … We are basically the consistent voice throughout the entire process in this organization … Because from start to finish you have Engineering who are building it, Product who is looking that it's done according to business objectives, Product Marketing, Sales, the client account teams… We connect what is on the ground in the business with what is being built on the

> back-end. But all along this process there is no single person that is following along this chain from start to finish. We are the only team that is [doing] that.

Given the rising complexity of the organization and the blurred boundaries between Media Solutions and several of the groups the unit interacted with, Nigel believed it was important for Media Solutions to engage with these audiences in formal rather than informal terms. To that end, he made global jurisdictional claims on the unit's collectively crafted job by formalizing the emergent 'web of complementarities' Media Solutions members had created to share knowledge internally and wield influence externally. In internal documents he shared with the unit, Nigel noted that formalizing its structure would enable Media Solutions to operate in a manner "*reflective of a jungle gym, interfacing at varying depths across multiple partner teams*," while at the same time enjoy "*additional alignment*" in its interactions with these units. The structure consisted of three complementary nodes: geography, industry vertical, and project area of specialization. Figure 5.3 shows a simplified representation.

Figure 5.3. Media Solutions' Formalized Structure to Support Global Jurisdictional Claims



Media Solutions members or individual contributors were located at the center of the structure. Each member's job as a Media Solutions Specialist had two formal components: industry-related work and project-related work. Industry-related work consisted, first and foremost, of managing the media cycle for a given client account team. In turn, project-related work consisted of working on value-adding initiatives to bring efficiency or incremental revenue to the organization. As noted in Chapter 4, these dimensions of the job had so far been carried out informally. Making them explicit served as a way to clarify performance expectations among members of the unit, to clarify who was working on which part of the collectively crafted job, and to communicate the breadth of the role—and claim its corresponding jurisdiction—to other units and to agents in CLICK's environment. Isaac remarked that this formal structure gave Media Solutions members a sense of owning these responsibilities "*officially*". He said:

> Essentially, we wanted to organize what people were already working on. I think by virtue of the fact that we established this structure and put it out there, [we] made people more cognizant of it and … they are constantly thinking about how can they achieve and effect results in all these different areas.

Each member was mentored by three kinds of leaders as he performed the job. First, all members serving clients in the same industry received support from a formally-appointed Industry Lead. Industry leads were experienced Media Solutions members who took on the added responsibility of heading the unit's efforts in a given industry. It was a non-hierarchical leadership position that implied no change in compensation, but allowed those members who stepped up to it to develop new skills and gain wider exposure to Sales leaders. There were eight industry leads dedicated to the following industries: auto, consumer products, ecommerce, entertainment, financial services, quick service restaurants, retail, and telecommunications. Through devices such as industry-specific meetings and online wikis, industry leads fostered the exchange of best practices among the Media Solutions members in their group. They were also

in charge of interfacing with key members of other units on industry-specific matters on behalf of Media Solutions. For example, industry leads coordinated with Sales leads in their industry to define a media strategy consistent with sales objectives. They also grew ties with internal units at CLICK to develop industry-specific solutions. For example, they coordinated with Measurement to identify, establish, and scale industry-specific measurement opportunities and they worked with Product Marketing to identify upcoming ad products clients in their industry could test.

Second, all Media Solutions members serving clients in a given industry relied on a formally-appointed Project Lead. These were experienced Media Solutions members who took on the added responsibility to coordinate the unit's efforts in a specific area of specialization. Like industry leads, project leads received no additional compensation for this role, but gained skills and wider exposure to Engineering leaders. There were three project leads: one dedicated to leading the development of new ad products, another to leading the development of tools, and another to leading the design of new processes. Project leads provided support to Media Solutions members as they worked on initiatives in these areas and fostered the exchange of best practices. They also facilitated members' access to experts in different internal units at CLICK such as Product Management, Measurement, and the Marketing Developer Team, to name a few.

Lastly, all Media Solutions members located in a given office were supported by a formally-appointed manager in that geography – a 'legacy' piece of the unit's previous formal structure. Unlike industry and project leads, local managers were the only leaders with hierarchical authority. They were in charge of acting as "*load balancers,*" in Nigel's words, for the members they supervised, making sure individuals were spending adequate amounts of time tending to their clients and their projects and prioritizing correctly. To this end, they coordinated with industry and project leads to make sure members in their respective groups were taking

advantage of the opportunities before them, yet not overextending themselves. They also advised members on career management, acting "*like a personal trainer to push you to be better*" and as "*a psychologist because they really know you and motivate you*". In that sense, according to Nigel, people managers served to "*hold the structure together*". At the same time, local managers supported Nigel to articulate Media Solutions' dialogue with first-line leaders of other units at CLICK.

The formal appointment of industry and project leads alongside local managers helped support Media Solutions' global jurisdictional claims in different ways. On the one hand, the structure asserted the unit's task domain across the entire spectrum of its collectively crafted job by formally appointing leaders in each major area of the job's domain. On the other, it asserted the unit's ownership of collectively crafted relationships by providing formal alignment and coordination mechanisms to both Sales and Engineering.

On the Sales side, the structure created a much-needed form of alignment that hadn't existed thus far. While Sales had traditionally been organized by industry, Media Solutions and Account Management had traditionally been organized by geography. In the early years, coordination among the three units had been simple despite this structural mismatch because of their relatively small size and co-location in a small number of offices. As a result, Jeremy and Nigel had been able to make local jurisdictional claims on behalf of their unit in a relatively straightforward manner. Now all units had grown considerably and the lack of structural alignment was becoming problematic.

In a push to extend its organizational model to more client-facing functions, Sales absorbed Account Management during year 5 and removed its geography-based management layer. Account managers now reported to Sales Directors in a given industry vertical. Fearing

that his unit might be absorbed next, Nigel deployed the new structure at Media Solutions in order to facilitate alignment with Sales while, at the same time, preserving the unit's independence and flexibility to continue engaging freely with Engineering. The presence of industry leads, then, created a direct bridge between Media Solutions and the heads of Sales in each industry vertical. The position was meant to assert Media Solutions' jurisdictional claims in the Sales sphere as the end-to-end owner of media-related activities for client account teams. In this regard, Isaac said:

> Now we have coordination across the U.S. in regards to the specific verticals and that is definitely a positive thing. We are closer to alignment with Sales. I think we are definitely more influential across the organization and also with our clients because the fact that we have [this structure].

On the Engineering side, in turn, the structure served to uphold Media Solutions' jurisdictional claims in the face of newly created functions that challenged the unit's collectively crafted job. The project leads appointed through Nigel's structure were, therefore, both in charge of coordinating Media Solutions members' efforts in the creation of ad products, processes, and tools, while securing the unit's position as a valid and necessary player in this shifting arena. Regarding this function, Nigel wrote in an email to the unit:

> The reason why we're aligning into project teams is to make it easier for more people to drive key priorities and take responsibility for the ongoing growth and development of the team … It will be up to the project leads to keep things coordinated; however, it will be up to the entire team to step up, identify, and lead important projects and project areas by setting aggressive goals and consistently ensuring delivery against key action items.

He later added:

> Project-level orientation … enables us to expand our skillsets, … interface with internal teams in real and meaningful ways, and above all make an impact on our team, our organization, and our company.

Leveraging the group's internal structure to manage inter-group boundaries.

Among the units with which Media Solutions needed to achieve role clarity were the Marketing Developer Team, the Agency Team, the Measurement Team, Product Marketing, and the Data Management Team. Isaac, who led the 'New Processes' node in Media Solutions' new structure, worked with a group of Media Solutions members to negotiate the unit's jurisdiction vis-à-vis these units. He noted:

> [We are trying] to establish … structure with some of these other groups that we need to be working with. We are trying to formalize everything from specific alignment mapping to shared goals to roles and responsibilities like progress tracking over time.

Media Solutions was able to establish clear boundaries with some of these units without much tension. A case in point was the Marketing Developer Team. The Marketing Developer Team had been created to select, vet, and train marketing developers before they began working with CLICK clients. At the same time, this team was meant to foster long-term relationships with large marketing developers who operated across industries and geographies. Media Solutions saw the Marketing Developer Team as a vehicle that could scale up the work the unit had been doing. The team relied heavily on Isaac's Handbook for its day-to-day operations and formed an Marketing Developer Council that included Isaac and a few other Media Solutions members. In turn, Media Solutions retained the tasks associated with managing CLICK's relationships with marketing developers in the context of client accounts. Nigel and Jimmy, the Marketing Developer Team leader, worked very much in sync and shared Engineering's conviction that Selfie should be the primary way for clients to advertise on CLICK. Since the Marketing Developer team rarely interfaced with clients, Media Solutions became "*our go-to guys*," according to Jimmy, and a trusted voice. "*We are counting on them to have all the information*

about a certain account and all the activity there," he added. About the symbiotic relationship between Media Solutions and the Marketing Developer Team, Isaac said:

> When it comes to vetting marketing developers, Media Solutions designed the process and then the Marketing Developer Team took over. We have great alignment with them. It's ok if Media Solutions no longer owns that piece. We don't have the bandwidth to do that, but we still have jurisdiction over relationships with marketing developers in the context of our accounts, and this is what we value.

In contrast, negotiating boundaries with the Product Marketing team proved trickier. The Product Marketing team was meant to take over the responsibilities Media Solutions' Product Champions had owned until then. They were charged with introducing new products to the Sales organization and retrieving feedback to pass along to engineers. While there were good intentions on both sides, Media Solutions leaders wondered why such a team was needed in the first place, when Product Champions had proven an effective and scaled mechanism to link clients with product developers. In turn, the Product Marketing team had been staffed with former salespeople who had never participated in the product development cycle. Furthermore, Product Marketing was not meant to interface with clients regularly, and Media Solutions leaders worried that, without the direct line that their unit provided to engineers, products would be created in a vacuum, detached from client's actual needs. In their minds, the Product Marketing team was adding a superfluous layer to CLICK's structure and bringing unnecessary complexity into an already complex process. Isaac explained:

> There have been multiple iterations of the current Product Marketing role proposed for the past four years and we were always adamantly against it because it seemed like adding another person unnecessarily. The reason was that Product Managers just didn't want to do some things and so they just added a head, which I think is a terrible reason to add someone.

What follows are highlights from the first meeting between members of the Media Solutions and Product Marketing units, which evidence Media Solutions analysts' skepticism

about the new unit and product marketers' hesitance to push too far while asserting their newly-created unit's domain. In the meeting, Media Solutions expresses appreciation for Product Marketing's close connection with Sales while asserting the value of its ties to Engineering. In turn, Product Marketing expresses appreciation for Media Solutions' work with ad products but stresses its priority to serve the Sales organization.

Setting: Large meeting room at one of CLICK's most important offices. Media Solutions members sit around the table or participate via teleconference. Two members of the Product Marketing team come in. They sit close to the screen. PM1 begins a long monologue.

PM1: You guys have been a great fix for the feedback we are getting from the Sales side. Thanks.

PM1 presents the Product Marketing team: 4 people, each one in charge of promoting specific products. She also lays some groundwork on how to structure the relationship between her unit and Media Solutions.

PM1: Sales is our #1 stakeholder. We are all former salespeople. As the Product Marketing team scales in the U.S., we would love to work with you guys. If there are any other conversations going on about products, we would love to hear about it.
…
Our main goal is to remove product barriers and increase product education. You've been doing a great job with that. Let us know how we can help. We want to scale product adoption and make CLICK easy to sell. We need real, honest feedback from you.
…
If there is a project you are passionate about, I'd be happy to divide and conquer … We don't want to take any of the fun off your plate. If there is anything not fun, we can help with that, so let us know.

PM1 suggests setting up a monthly meeting for both units. She then explains her team's current initiatives to simplify the way CLICK communicated its product offerings to clients. Media Solutions members interject by mentioning tools they had already built to this effect.

James: Newton and Martin have built dashboards that are pretty baller.

PM2: Dividing and conquering already!

Martin: I'll send it to you.

Ralph argues for Media Solutions to remain involved in product development, and for Product Marketing to amplify Media Solutions' voice vis-à-vis Sales leadership.

Ralph: Our team works closely with product managers and we need to be plugged in. Let's not create another layer and align forces. This is an opportunity for our team to scale some of our communication to Sales … You have that line to Sales too so let's reinforce the same message.

James: It makes sense for you to join our weekly meetings.

PM2: If you'll have us, yes!

PM1 then goes over the product simplification plan the Product Marketing team has designed. As she presents, Media Solutions members raise a number of concerns based on their experience with clients. After her presentation, PM1 voices some recommendations as to how Media Solutions members should communicate this simplification plan to clients.

PM1: How we talk about this is important. We want you guys to look at [our materials] before we go live. The PR of this is very important.

Victor: I have a client meeting tomorrow. Can I have a copy of your deck to show them?

PM1: No.

PM1 lays out the reasons why she cannot share the deck at this time.

Elizabeth: Do you want to create some [slides we can use]?

PM1: [*Ignores Elizabeth's request*] We look forward to working with you guys.

The meeting ends.

In addition to the difficulties Media Solutions faced finding common ground with Product Marketing, the unit's links to Engineering were further being curbed by new policies the Sales organization had implemented. Sales leadership defined that any product feedback was to be transmitted from Media Solutions members to sellers, who would then escalate it to Sales leaders. Sales leaders would then transmit the feedback to Product Marketing, and product

marketers would coordinate with engineers to introduce any necessary changes. Media Solutions members were frustrated with this arrangement, as they considered it inefficient. Those who defied it, however, risked alienating sellers. Media Solutions' position on the matter was that, in the absence of direct dialogue with engineers, the unit should have direct access to Product Marketing. They discussed this during an all-hands session with Brady, then the head of Product Marketing. The following excerpt provides one example of Media Solutions' frustration with the situation. We see Anna relating an incident where she got in trouble with Sales for directing product feedback directly to a product marketer. Brady makes a commitment to remedy it.

> *Situation: Large meeting room at CLICK HQ. All-hands session between Media Solutions and Brady. The entire Media Solutions unit is present. Brady came alone; no other members of his unit are there.*

Anna: We feel that we cannot go directly to your team to escalate … They told me I had to stick to policy and go through the appropriate channels. My client account and the salespeople got very worked up about it … They started to go through Sales leadership and then finally Sales went to [your team] … I think I would have managed that process better if I could talk to your people directly, … if I had felt empowered. It doesn't have to go through [Sales leader], you know, for it to actually be heard.

Brady: You guys can help us figure out how to aggregate [feedback] to one person ... I want to make sure that you guys feel empowered to fight for the right things, to take convictions and to chase those convictions and to push them with my team and to push them with me. If we lose that, if we start getting hierarchical, if we get to a spot where we can't push ourselves and we can't push me to be better, then we are not going to be a good company. We are not going to make great products.

Despite the auspicious results of this all-hands session, no agreement was reached among Sales, Product Marketing, and Media Solutions. Before the units could establish clear boundaries and coordination mechanisms, rumors of a reorganization that would radically alter the scope of the Media Solutions unit surfaced, and the unit's efforts turned to re-asserting its global jurisdictional claims in order to ensure its survival.

Media Solutions locked-in under unanswered global jurisdictional claims. The global jurisdictional claims Media Solutions made between year 5 and first hearing about a possible reorganization remained unanswered. Because of the 'us-versus-them' and 'let's-just-do-our-own-thing' mentalities Media Solutions had adopted in the past, many of the unit's crafted tasks and relationships had remained practically invisible to Sales leaders, while some of the crafted work that was visible to them created animosity between the units. At the time, the vast majority of CLICK's ads were being trafficked through Selfie and Media Solutions was close to succeeding in its quest to completely erase its formal job. However, the unit's ownership of Selfie support tasks meant that Sales leaders continued to associate the unit with execution work, rather than strategy work, across CLICK's media cycle. As a result, the identity as 'a group of ad traffickers' Sales leaders traditionally ascribed to the unit persisted. In Ralph's words, "*we were still being viewed as Ad Operations even though we had gained recognition from other [i.e., Engineering] teams*." He further explained:

> They don't really know what we do. There are still individuals within Sales that don't know what we do … They think of us as ad traffickers. That's one-of-the-things that we do but it's maybe 10 or 15% of what we do.

Media Solutions members complained that, whenever Sales reached out to the unit to solve problems, these appeared to be connected with operations gone wrong rather than challenging opportunities. According to Remy, Sales saw Media Solutions as "*the last stance*" in the media cycle "*before things go to hell.*" Similarly, Jacob noted that some members of the Sales organization tended to view the unit as "*the plumbers of the Sales team.*" He said: "*By the time you call the plumber, something has already gone down, but then they know what to do to fix it*."

In contrast, Media Solutions viewed itself as an increasingly strategic player in CLICK advertising: a unit that connected every other unit involved in the monetization process and could speak to every topic. Members referred to the unit as a team that operated with the flexibility of "*a utility player in baseball—the guy who can play all positions and wear all the hats*," the nimbleness of "*ballet dancers*," the practicality of a "*Swiss army knife*," and the attitude of "*army rangers, battling drills in a coordinated manner.*"

In parallel, Media Solutions continued to have difficulties communicating the value it was adding through its collectively crafted job. As the unit's collective job crafting efforts progressively eroded its responsibility for ad trafficking and gave rise to work in more nuanced areas of the business, finding metrics to explain the value of the unit's initiatives proved more difficult, because the unit's degree of involvement and contribution were harder to measure. This issue weighed heavily on Media Solutions leaders' minds. Ralph had been in charge of defining performance metrics for the unit at the time of the unit's rebranding, when the first global jurisdictional claims were made. As he ran through Media Solutions' different initiatives, he noted:

> Ok, [let's consider] Product. There is a major product change and now it's so much better. Even if we said it's X% better, there is Engineering that built it, the Product Manager, the Product Marketer, so it's not just us. We are one of many inputs. That is always the problem with how to demonstrate our value.

Ralph spoke in similar terms about initiatives Media Solutions owned end-to-end, such as the development of direct response ad products, whose impact should have been more straightforward to quantify and to communicate. Isaac found that the link between Media Solutions and direct response was unclear to some members of the Sales organization, especially those decision makers who had joined CLICK after Nigel and other early members lay the foundations of the direct response ad product suite. He was especially frustrated with those who

took direct response ads for granted, not realizing how groundbreaking the concept had been at the time of its inception and how difficult it had been for the unit to disprove the organization's negative opinion of this kind of ad products. Isaac noted:

> The fact that this strategy was being driven by Media Solutions, I think, is known among the salespeople that we worked with most at the time. But now Direct Response is such a buzzword and everyone wants to jump on the bandwagon. People have forgotten essentially how it got started and essentially how we [went against] the message that the Marketing department was putting out.

Similarly, a document produced by the unit read:

> The team … is 100% responsible for making Direct Response something that is relevant on the CLICK platform … Without Media Solutions we would not yet know that Direct Response advertising works well on our platform, we would not be generating the hundreds of millions of Direct Response dollars, and we would not have built many of the robust client relationships … that we have today.

In turn, Ralph noted that even those who duly credited Media Solutions with the introduction of Direct Response at CLICK did not value these ad products as much as they did Display Advertising. Even though Direct Response contributed about a quarter of CLICK's revenues by Year 7, that metric did not seem impactful enough:

> Direct Response is a major part of what we can do, but even that Direct Response story is being diluted. [Sales leaders are] saying, 'hey, Direct Response is really important and Media Solutions owns it. Direct Response is really important, but the big dollars are in brand [i.e., display advertising]. That is our main objective, what we need to tackle.'

After mentioning similar situations in other components of the unit's collectively crafted job, Ralph conceded:

> What I am trying to do is come up with some KPIs or *something* that measures what our team does and that everyone agrees on that we can measure against… How do you talk about that [i.e., our contribution]? What is that? What does it look like? Great service, maybe? Flawless execution, maybe? … There is nothing to celebrate … Scaling, efficiency, that is good but … not as exciting … You are going to celebrate a major upsell. You are not going to celebrate 'oh, so and so reduced costs by X% or improved engagement rates by X%' … Our value proposition is really hard to communicate right now. (his emphasis)

Media Solutions' difficulty in finding adequate metrics to communicate the value it was adding through collective job crafting translated into further difficulties to obtain resources to support its ever-evolving collectively crafted job. In members' minds, the unit's headcount never seemed to match the requirements of the work. James linked Media Solutions' need for headcount with the unit's inability to obtain support for the formal structure Nigel had put in place from key people in the Sales organization. He explained:

> That three-pronged approach could work if you had a lot of people and everyone is working together, but the challenge is, we were always under-resourced. And we were under-resourced because honestly we were working closely with the salespeople [but] we weren't kind of part of their organization. They weren't fighting for [us] … On a given vertical they might fight for more headcount with us, like for example [this vertical] will say, 'we need more Media Solutions.' But for the most part it is on us to try and fight for our headcount. That was always an uphill battle because the rest of the [Sales] organization didn't know what we did. They didn't understand the value. They were like, 'Why are you doing so much?'

Media Solutions' persistent lack of resources led to further negative attributions about Sales, which reinforced the unit's 'us-versus-them' and 'let's-just-do-our-own-thing' mentalities and further induced the unit to engage in collective job crafting in an 'under-the-radar' fashion. Sam noted:

> We did what we thought was right for the business but we didn't make a big deal of it. They [i.e., Sales leaders] didn't know that we did that. It just happened and [in their eyes] our Sales team did it, but no, we carried that along and we made it to the point where it actually was successful.

The single jurisdictional win Media Solutions obtained during this period had to do with the unit's compensation. Given members' contributions to generating incremental revenue in client account teams, the unit's compensation went from being fixed to including a variable component associated with each client account team's revenue quota. The tasks connected with these contributions, such as performing complex data analysis for client account teams, were

recognized as part of the unit's formal job and deemed worthy of remuneration. The variable incentive Media Solutions specialists received represented a smaller percentage of their salary than it did for sellers or account managers, but it was a testament to the fact that, in the contexts where the value of their crafted work could be seen and measured, Sales leaders were willing to grant the unit's jurisdictional claims and its corresponding rewards. When the unit received news their compensation scheme would be changed, Nigel wrote an email to its members highlighting the connection between the unit's collective job crafting initiatives over time and the increased level of recognition the unit received in this particular instance. He noted:

> I can't stress how pleased I am to be rolling this out across our team … I'd just like to thank every one of you for all your hard work in driving revenue for our company. At the end of the day it was really your dedication and focus that made all of this possible.

He then said:

> Over the past few years each of you devoted countless hours to fundamentally reinventing the expectations of the CLICK Ad Operations function as a group that is responsible for best-in-class client service and revenue-generating media solutions. You spent your time identifying and automating manual processes so that you could consistently focus on more leveraged activities, which is what our company is all about. You earned this, so be proud.

By mid-year 7, however, the vast majority of the unit's collectively crafted work remained unrecognized, both in terms of acknowledgement as a necessary part of the formal job and in terms of rewards. Media Solutions members continued to have difficulties showcasing the value of their collectively crafted job to decision makers in the Sales organization, and the cognitive distance between both units continued to stretch. This situation began to generate fatigue and frustration among Media Solutions members. Ralph explained:

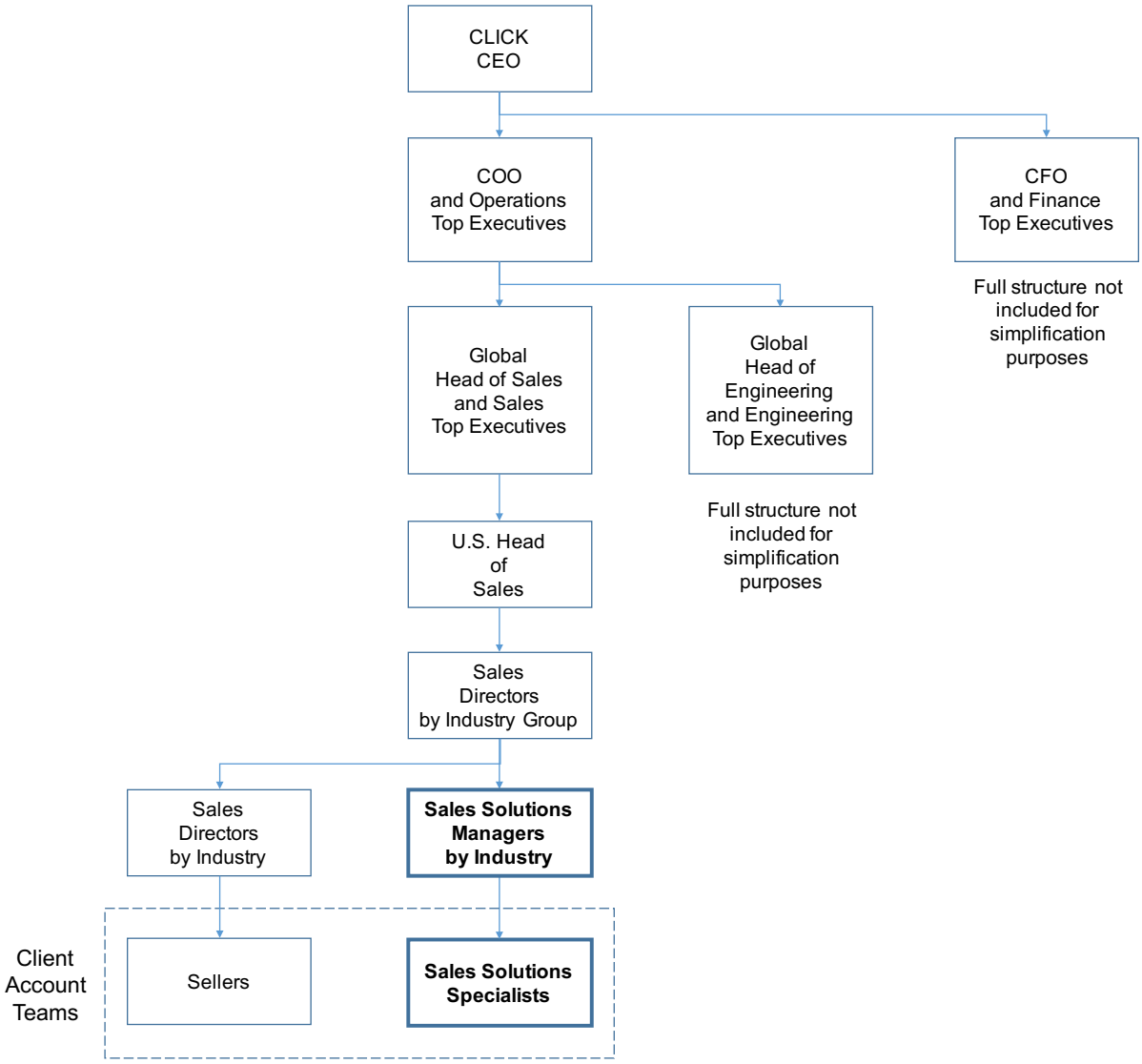
> There is this feeling that we have to constantly over-communicate what we do to justify ourselves and constantly *remind* people of what we do … There are so many parties involved, you have to be very, very clear about what your impact is, otherwise you are just spinning in your wheel and it's not as clear and impact

> cannot be boiled down to 'this is why they did this' … It is a challenge, to constantly have to justify ourselves.

Year 7: A Planned Reorganization as a Catalyst for Global Jurisdictional Claims

In response to the environmental challenges CLICK was facing (an industry progressively populated by small yet savvy competitors whose platforms offered functionalities CLICK did not support and CLICK's nearly-saturated user base in key markets), Charlotte, a top Sales executive, sent a proposal to Francis, an Operations executive working directly under CLICK's COO, advocating for a large-scale reorganization to improve alignment among the organization's client-facing functions. She proposed that members of Account Management, Media Solutions and other units that provided support to medium- and small-sized clients be brought together and assigned to a function called Sales Solutions. Sales Solutions specialists would then join sellers in 2-person client account teams specialized in a given industry vertical. Sales Solutions specialists would report to a Sales Solutions Head for each vertical, but there would be no overarching Sales Solutions Head: leaders in each vertical would report to the Sales Director for that vertical. All Sales Directors would then report to Charlotte. With this new structure, Charlotte expected to bring rationalization, specialization, efficiency, and an improved ability for the company to penetrate the market. Figure 5.4. provides a simplified representation of the proposed structure.

Figure 5.4: Post-reorganization Structure Proposed by Sales



Charlotte's proposed reorganization represented both a challenge and an opportunity for Media Solutions. If the reorganization came to pass as Charlotte envisioned, Media Solutions' collective job crafting trajectory would effectively come to an end. Because Sales Solutions would officially be a Sales-oriented function, Media Solutions members who transitioned into in that role would have no chance to sustain the Engineering-oriented mindset that had fed much of the unit's collectively crafted job and identity. Sales Solutions would resemble the current

Account Management unit. However, if Media Solutions could induce Francis to model Sales Solutions after itself, the unit would come out of the reorganizing process a stronger group: its intended jurisdiction would be cemented, its status as the holder of an idiosyncratic occupation within CLICK would finally be sanctioned, and its size would multiply through the incorporation of headcount from Account Management and other groups. Sales Solutions would be synonymous with Media Solutions. Nigel noted:

> What Charlotte is pushing to do is to pull Media Solutions into Sales, and what she doesn't understand is that completely kills everything. It kills the identity, it kills the management structure, it kills everything that has driven us to be where we are now, and also impedes us from doing everything that we wanted to do moving forward. You end up with just a shitty Account Management team, similar to what you have elsewhere in the industry. That is what she has put on the table ... You would completely lose Media Solutions.

On the other hand, he conceded:

> This process may give us the visibility we need [to gain jurisdiction over our collectively crafted job]. Things will change for Media Solutions one way or the other.

Immediately after he heard of Charlotte's plan, Nigel saw the need to reassert Media Solutions' global jurisdictional claims as a defensive move against the reorganization. Still frustrated with the back-and-forth process the unit had gone through when it first attempted to gain ownership over the entire set of tasks and relationships that made up its collectively crafted job, Nigel intended to present these new jurisdictional claims to Francis in a more straightforward and systematic way. To this end, he mobilized all Media Solutions managers across the U.S. to gather data to substantiate the claims.

Nigel believed that Francis would only grant Media Solutions' global jurisdictional claims if the unit was able to demonstrate the value it was adding in its current form. Because much of Media Solutions' collectively crafted role still needed to be formalized, however, Nigel

feared that Francis was lacking critical information on how CLICK's media-related processes actually ran, and would therefore be deciding on the reorganization based on incomplete knowledge.

Nigel and other Media Solutions managers produced an extensive document detailing Media Solutions' position on the reorganization and reasserting the unit's global jurisdictional claims. The unit made use of all three kinds of jurisdiction-seeking practices at this juncture. One section of the document leveraged the unit's self-presentation by bringing to light information on who Media Solutions had become until then and envisioned to become in the future; another section leveraged technology by detailing the ad products, processes, and tools the unit had built over the years; while the remaining sections leveraged the unit's crafted organizational position by presenting support for Media Solutions from other units across CLICK and an assessment of the potential structural gaps that might arise should Charlotte's organizational model be implemented.

Leveraging the unit's self-presentation for global jurisdictional claims. Media Solutions' document articulated a series of conditions that had facilitated the unit's collective job crafting initiatives in the past and had, therefore, contributed to shaping the unit's evolving identity. First, the document spoke of Media Solutions' strong sense of identity as 'a group of problem solvers'—a crafted identity that had driven the progressive expansion of its crafted mandate. The document emphasized the role of Media Solutions' identity as that which brought unit members together both cognitively and behaviorally, and drove them to collectively craft the job beyond its formally-set boundaries. The document also stated the unit's rejection of the

identity many key actors in the Sales organization still held—that of Media Solutions as 'a group of ad traffickers'. The document read:

> Identity and purpose drive a team. A team must always know that they are building towards something large and important and they must share collectively in the experiences that move them there. It is this combination of vision and shared experience that establishes confidence in both who they are as a collective unit and their ability to accomplish the goals set before them.

Later in the document, the unit stated:

> Media Solutions was never a team of traffickers, even when Trafficking was 100% of the role. Instead, Media Solutions has always been a team of problem-solvers, and has always been and will always be in a state of 'becoming,' because it is that ambiguous state that is necessary for success in today's uncertain, ever-changing environment.

Second, Media Solutions' document emphasized how its leaders had supported unit members in fulfilling the group's crafted identity. It particularly highlighted the fact that Media Solutions leaders were not mere supervisors (as would be the case, in the unit's opinion, for Sales Solutions Heads in each vertical), but embodied the unit's identity themselves. The document stated:

> Imparting and sustaining a strong sense of identity and purpose requires a strong leadership team. These leaders must be doers; they must understand the role at the deepest possible level … It is imperative that they be seen by the team as "one of them." They must lead by example, always maintaining the ability to perform the core duties of their subordinates, while at the same time setting an increasingly high bar for their own performance. External leadership, disconnected management, and interference are the best ways to stifle a strong sense of camaraderie and dismantle a high-performing team.

Third, the document spoke of the importance of autonomy to Media Solutions' collective job crafting endeavors. It stressed the fact that autonomy led to feelings of self-determination for the group, and that choosing its own identity attributes enabled the group to spot opportunities to innovate. The document contrasted this with Charlotte's proposal to have Sales Solutions be a function subordinate to Sales Directors. It stated:

> A proper degree of autonomy is necessary for a sense of ownership. If an individual (or a team overall) is not provided the proper degree of autonomy, they will not innovate because they will not feel as though they are agents of their own destiny. A team's ability to self-select and shape its own purpose is as important to its success as is the team's purpose itself. Motivated teams with the freedom to solve problems, innovate, and plot their own course will do so (and grow), while teams lacking the ability to steer their own ship will stagnate.

Lastly, the document portrayed Media Solutions' evolutionary path and the construction of its crafted identity as an expression of CLICK's culture. It thus sought to connect the group's collective job crafting efforts to larger organizational values. The document read:

> CLICK is a company driven by disruptive innovation … The company's greatest drivers of growth have come from small projects that addressed problems or opportunities that were not widely recognized or understood. Once these problems or opportunities were identified, preliminarily addressed (and thereby validated), the company as a whole would move resources behind them. This is crucial in any truly lean organization and something that CLICK has coined as [core to] its … culture.

Leveraging technology for global jurisdictional claims. Media Solutions managers devoted a sizable part of the document to showcasing the array of processes, tools, and ad products the unit created over its 7-year evolution. The document mentioned the circumstances that gave rise to these endeavors, the tasks and relationships the unit crafted, and the results it obtained. Projects were listed chronologically in order to highlight the rising complexity of Media Solutions' collectively crafted job as well as the unit's growing problem solving capacity over time.

Whenever possible, Media Solutions managers included metrics to quantify the impact of the unit's initiatives, whether in terms of efficiency savings or incremental revenue to CLICK. However, most milestones on the list presented a qualitative assessment of their importance to

the organization; in many cases, a quantitative impact measure would have been difficult or impractical to calculate.

Leveraging a multidimensional bridging position for global jurisdictional claims. Media Solutions leveraged the array of informal relationships it held across CLICK in two ways in order to support its global jurisdictional claims: (1) the unit showed evidence of support from other units at CLICK for Media Solutions' proposed organizational model, signaling that other groups shared its preference for a post-reorganization structure that maintained and formalized the existing web of relationships; and (2) the unit included an assessment of the structural gaps it believed would arise between Sales and Engineering should the organizational model proposed by Sales be implemented.

Presenting evidence of support from Engineering units. Media Solutions' document presented evidence of support from other units at CLICK, particularly those on the Engineering side, for the unit's position to remain intact after the reorganization. The intent was to get a groups on the one realm at CLICK that was large and influential enough to counterbalance the Sales organization to stand up for Media Solutions and offer evidence that the reorganization should take the unit's jurisdictional claims into account. Nigel explained:

> I am getting together all of Francis' direct reports. I have had conversations with a handful of them already to basically have them become advocates for our team, have them let him know how this would completely dismantle the Media Solutions team. The team would disappear and you would have another entity who wouldn't be able to service things the way that we need to service them. So I am rallying support from all those people.

These executives included, among others, the Head of Measurement, whose very small team was complemented by Media Solutions whenever client account teams required campaign performance measurement expertise. Several Media Solutions members, such as Martin,

collaborated closely with Measurement specialists and had been involved in developing tools together. Nigel expressed that the Head of Measurement and his direct reports "*understand this [i.e., the reorganization proposed by Sales] would be a disaster*". Nigel also engaged several leaders who managed some of CLICK's major ad product categories. He noted that "*they have already given me really good [support]*". Lastly, Nigel won support from Brady, the Head of Product Marketing. This was, like Measurement, a small team that hadn't yet gained scale and, despite some tension, relied heavily on Media Solutions' product expertise. Nigel said: "*I spoke with [Brady]. He said he would do whatever we needed him to do. He obviously understands the implications there as well*". In an email he directed to Francis and later forwarded to Nigel, Brady wrote: "*Media Solutions is the most effective, cohesive team in our business. They exude teamwork and collaboration.*" He went on to list the ways in which he saw Media Solutions add value to CLICK, including keeping tabs on new product releases and educating sellers, synthesizing Direct Response best practices, and beta-testing new ad products. He added:

> Sellers generally don't understand the full value that Media Solutions adds … Offices have a huge gap among sellers and Media Solutions members regarding the understanding of products and client needs … Sellers need to be balanced by a strong, unified team like Media Solutions. [In its absence,] I worry about the seller overrule and resulting misuse of products to fulfill other incentives.

In closing, Brady warned Francis that organizing the Sales Solutions function according to Charlotte's guidelines would induce strong Media Solutions talent to leave the role post-reorganization. He noted: "*A Media Solutions diaspora would not only disintegrate their ability to impact. Many strong Media Solutions folk would leave the company—that's not good for anyone*."

Highlighting potential structural gaps. Media Solutions expected the reorganization to create structural gaps that would cause critical processes in CLICK's operations to break down. Nigel noted:

> Francis is not clear on the gaps … The only argument that actually works on Charlotte's side is to get more alignment within the client teams. That is not actually an issue, because … the review cycle right now is showing that there is no lack of alignment. Maybe we would make tiny, tiny gains in terms of alignment, but the trade-off is actually massive. If you weigh that against everything that would fall apart, there isn't any argument there.

The document foreshadowed two kinds of structural gaps. First, structural gaps would emerge from key tasks performed by Media Solutions suddenly having no clear owner. Members of the Sales and Engineering units requiring information or advice on these matters would have no one to resort to. Among these tasks were management of beta testing for new ad products, management of Direct Response ad products, management of the Target Assembler, and the generation of custom reports.

Second, structural gaps would arise from the interruption of the information flow between Sales and Engineering that Media Solutions had provided since early in the unit's collective job crafting process. With Media Solutions gone, there would be no intermediary unit with a broad enough view of the media cycle to act as the "*connective tissue*," as Ralph put it, between these two organizational realms. Media Solutions managers reasoned that it would be difficult for other units to quickly jump in to perform this role. As discussed earlier, newly-created units such as Product Marketing had not yet scaled sufficiently to act as an effective substitute. In turn, Sales functions, including Sales Solutions, would be unable to do so due to lack of credibility with Engineering. For example, Media Solutions had systematically gathered feedback on each ad product from all client accounts, synthesized it, and shared it with Product Management. Media Solutions theorized that engineers were receptive to this feedback because,

unlike other client-facing units, Media Solutions presented itself as "not Sales" and was therefore seen as impartial. Isaac noted that "*not coming across as salespeople gives us a special kind of credibility with them [i.e., engineers]. They know we are not coming in with an agenda*." He explained:

> One of the reasons they [i.e., engineers] respected our opinion was because of the fact that while we were obviously advocating for clients' interests in the broad sense—there was a sense of neutrality. It was like "Hey, we actually understand the process and the tools, and we understand the way that you would scale this or go about improving something that is going to be good for the vast majority of the clients" because of the structure we had in place.

He then continued:

> We had specific points of contact driving specific initiatives. Those people's job was to interact with all the Media Solutions people to collect that feedback and go and present that unbiased or more neutral case view on how you [i.e., engineers] should scale this, instead of saying "my specific client, this is exactly how you should do it".

In the absence of Media Solutions, he expected each client account team to argue for the product functionalities that would most benefit their sales potential. Isaac noted:

> They [i.e., client account teams] are going to argue what is best for their own specific client because that is the way that they are incentivized … [But] they [i.e., engineers] are taking everything they say with a grain of salt because it's like, 'Hey, I get that this is good for your client, but what does that mean for the rest of the ecosystem?'

As a consequence, Jacob noted that structural gaps would cause CLICK to begin launching or modifying ad products "*using fewer signals from the market*"—a situation he qualified as potentially "*frustrating*."

Given these renewed global jurisdictional claims, it appeared that Media Solutions had a lot to be hopeful for. The rumor mill indicated that Media Solutions would likely be maintained as an autonomous unit with intact leadership from Nigel downward. However, shortly thereafter

Francis announced that the reorganization would proceed as proposed by Charlotte. On January 1st, Year 8, Media Solutions was merged with Account Management and other Sales-oriented units to form Sales Solutions and the unit's collective job crafting trajectory was permanently interrupted. Dominic, an early member who moved to another function a few years before Media Solutions' dissolution, examined Media Solutions' evolution against those of CLICK and the social media industry. He argued that, while CLICK and the industry had evolved—the former gaining in size and complexity and the latter moving from emergence to development to the early stages of maturity—Media Solutions had maintained the same mentality and modus operandi. In his mind, the qualities that once fueled a generative collective job crafting trajectory contributed to locking the unit into a self-sealing process that resulted in the most negative of outcomes. He noted:

> Ad Operations was born out of the same kind of mentality as a start-up. It was taking what needed to be done and taking care of it, and not dealing with politics, not looking at the larger organization, just sifting through the bullshit and making it happen. And it worked really well for a really long time … We had that mentality the whole time and, looking back on it, it was one of the downfalls. The same things that made Media Solutions or Ad Operations successful are the same things that make it not possible to carry over when the company progresses to a certain level.

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Job crafting—the process of altering the sets of tasks, relationships, and meanings that make up the experience of work—is becoming an increasingly widespread practice in organizations (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2008; Roberts, Dutton, Spreitzer, Heaphy, & Quinn, 2005; Wrzesniewski, Berg, & Dutton, 2010). The still-incipient literature on this phenomenon has mostly focused on job crafters who operate at the individual (e.g., Berg et al., 2010b; Ghitulescu, 2007; Lyons, 2008) and interpersonal levels (e.g., Leana et al., 2009) in what has been termed 'individual' and 'collaborative' job crafting, respectively. In contrast, there has been a relative scarcity of studies focused on job crafters who act coordinately as a cohesive unit or group, despite repeated calls from leading researchers (Berg et al., 2010b; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). My dissertation responds to these calls by presenting an in-depth examination of *collective job crafting*, which I define as the concerted set of actions performed by the members of a group to jointly redefine the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of the group's mandate. Collective job crafting differs from individual and collaborative job crafting in important ways. Table 6.1 synthesizes the nature of collective job crafting in contrast to those of individual and collaborative job crafting.

Table 6.1: Individual, Collaborative, and Collective Job Crafting at a Glance

	INDIVIDUAL JOB CRAFTING	**COLLABORATIVE JOB CRAFTING**	**COLLECTIVE JOB CRAFTING**
Definition	*Occurs when an individual alters the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of her job*	*Occurs when two or more members of a group engage in joint decision making that causes changes to the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of their respective jobs*	*Occurs when most, if not all, members of a group alter the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of their own jobs, yet coordinate their efforts to jointly alter the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of the group's mandate. Coordination occurs through mechanisms that enable knowledge sharing, leveraging social ties on behalf of the group, and jointly redefining the significance of thew group's work.*
Nature	Individual	Interpersonal	Collective
Participants	Single individual	Two or more members of a group; does not require all members' involvement	Most, if not all, members of a group
Locus of Motivation	**Individual (primary)**, e.g.: To enhance the individual's experience of the job To gain a positive sense of self-identity **Group or organization (secondary)**, e.g.: To contribute to the unit's and/or the organization's goals To build a personal connection to the organization's mission	**Individual and group or organization (same level)**, e.g.: To enhance the participating individuals' experience of the job within the group To positively impact participating individuals' self-identity and image within the group To contribute to the unit's and/or the organization's goals To build a personal and interpersonal connection to the organization's mission	**Group (primary)**, e.g.: To help the group become a more impactful contributor to the organization's goals To improve the group's image **Individual and organizational (secondary)**, e.g.: To enhance group members' own experience of the job To gain a positive sense of self-identity and image within the group, across the organization, and its environment To contribute to the organization's goals

Table 6.1: Individual, Collaborative, and Collective Job Crafting at a Glance (Continued)

	INDIVIDUAL JOB CRAFTING	COLLABORATIVE JOB CRAFTING	COLLECTIVE JOB CRAFTING
Locus of Job Crafting	Immediate surroundings in which the individual's work takes place Individual may or may not need to negotiate the boundaries of the job with others	Immediate surroundings in which the group and/or its members work Members negotiate the boundaries of the job with colleagues and/or managers	Across the organization and beyond: members act on behalf of the group to negotiate its boundaries with agents within the organization and the environment
Effects on Task Boundaries of the Job	Individual may incorporate new tasks into the job, introduce changes to existing tasks, or eliminate tasks from the job	Participating individuals may incorporate new tasks into the job they have been assigned as part of the group, introduce changes to existing tasks, or eliminate tasks	Members may incorporate new tasks into their job, introduce changes to existing tasks, or eliminate tasks from the job Changes to task boundaries are performed on behalf of the group, with the goal of benefitting the group
Effects on Relational Boundaries of the Job	Individual may create new social ties associated with the job, introduce changes to existing ties, or discontinue ties	Participating individuals may create new social ties in connection with the job she has been entrusted in the group, introduce changes to existing ties, or discontinue ties	Members may establish new social ties, introduce changes to existing ties, or eliminate ties from the job Changes to relational boundaries are performed on behalf of the group, with the goal of benefitting the group

Table 6.1: Individual, Collaborative, and Collective Job Crafting at a Glance (Continued)

	INDIVIDUAL JOB CRAFTING	COLLABORATIVE JOB CRAFTING	COLLECTIVE JOB CRAFTING
Effects on Cognitive Boundaries of the Job	Individual finds greater meaning in the job	Participating individuals find greater meaning in their respective jobs	Group members jointly find greater meaning in the group's work (interpreted as the group's contribution to organizational performance) Individual group members find greater meaning in their own work (interpreted as their own contribution to fulfilling the group's goals)
Effects on Identity Construction	Individual finds a positive sense of self-identity	Participating individuals find a positive sense of self-identity	Group members jointly build a new group identity, seen as the expression of what the group can truly 'become' as a contributor to the organization Group members renew their own identity in line with the group's new identity Strong identification with the group; group/individual identity co-construction
Effects on Knowledge Base	Skills or assets developed through job crafting tend to remain at the individual level	Skills or assets developed through job crafting may either remain at the individual level or be shared among specific group members	Group members enhance the group's knowledge base by diffusing individually-developed skills or assets across the group, while simultaneously apprehending those developed and shared by the rest of the group

Table 6.1: Individual, Collaborative, and Collective Job Crafting at a Glance (Continued)

	INDIVIDUAL JOB CRAFTING	COLLABORATIVE JOB CRAFTING	COLLECTIVE JOB CRAFTING
Effects on Power and Capacity to Influence	Individual may gain power and influence vis-à-vis others she interacts with at work	Individual may gain power and influence within the group	Group may gain power and influence within and beyond the organization Group members may gain power and influence within the group and beyond; may assume informal leadership positions based on expertise gained through job crafting
Effects on Organizational Structure	Limited to the individual's job boundaries, often imperceptible to the rest of the organization	Limited to participating individuals' job boundaries, often visible to other group members but imperceptible to the rest of the organization Group boundaries do not change	Group generates variation in the organization's configuration by altering and negotiating the boundaries of its mandate
Effects on Organizational Performance	Often of low impact	Potential for substantial impact	Potential for large-scale impact, both financial and strategic

The insights I developed in these pages emerged from an inductive qualitative study of collective job crafting at Media Solutions, a unit at CLICK, a leading social media company. Through interviews, non-participant observation, and archival data, I traced the 7-year evolution of the unit, from its inception to its disappearance through reorganization. I divided my analysis of these data into two complementary studies. In Chapter 4, I explored how the process of collective job crafting at Media Solutions unfolded informally over time, both in terms of proactive and adaptive behavior. In Chapter 5, I examined specific instances along the unit's evolution when Media Solutions sought to obtain jurisdiction over collectively crafted tasks and relationships. I mapped the jurisdiction-seeking practices that the unit used in each instance and identified factors that contributed to having some of these jurisdictional claims granted while others were rejected.

In the coming sections, I articulate my core contribution to the incipient literature on job crafting. Then, I connect my findings with the literatures on emergent organizing, emergent strategy, occupations, and power in organizations. Lastly, I offer insights for groups engaged in collective job crafting and for the organizational leaders who manage them.

Contributions to the Job Crafting Literature

The Concept of Collective Job Crafting

My dissertation identifies and conceptualizes collective job crafting as a distinct form of job crafting situated at the group level that relies on the interplay between individual and group behavior and unfolds both within and beyond group boundaries.

Collective job crafting is motivated by group-level needs, and these needs may vary from group to group. In the case of Media Solutions, collective job crafting was prompted by the need

to perform meaningful and impactful work, the need to learn, and the need for a positive group identity. Ad trafficking, the work for which the unit was formally responsible at CLICK, was fully execution-focused, required little skill, and involved minimum interaction with the rest of the organization or the market. Across the industry, ad trafficking teams tended to work in the same way; they were usually devalued and the occupation was stigmatized. Through collective job crafting, the unit aimed to acquire new knowledge and skills, to increase its sphere of influence, and to redefine its identity. In doing so, the unit hoped to make higher-value-added contributions to CLICK.

Based on group needs and goals, most—if not all—members of the group engage in group-oriented individual job crafting. They identify opportunities to alter the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of their jobs as a way to make contributions to the group. New tasks undertaken at the individual level give rise to new individually-held knowledge; new relationships established at the individual level create occasions to exercise influence in the context of one's work and to transform others' expectations; and tangible contributions to the group create a strong sense of identification with the collective.

Through mechanisms that link individual members to the collective, the group leverages individually-crafted work and transforms it into group-level assets. At Media Solutions, individual knowledge shared and applied widely across the unit led to broadening the group's knowledge base (Sole & Edmondson, 2002); individually-held social ties activated to gain strategic information, communicate the unit's position on key matters, or provide input to other groups' decision-making processes led to enhancing the unit's sphere of influence (Hickson et al., 1971); and jointly reflecting on 'who we are' and 'who we want to become' helped redefine the unit's identity within the organization and beyond (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Hence,

collective job crafting does not consist of the simple aggregation of individual-level initiatives to the group level, but involves nuanced mechanisms that transform individually-produced contributions into group-level capabilities (Bandura, 2000).

An important matter to consider is whether collective job crafting can be expected to always produce outcomes associated with group-level knowledge, influence, and identity—as was the case with Media Solutions' collective job crafting process—or whether it's possible for a group to engage in collective job crafting without moving the needle in any of these dimensions of work. While I cannot generalize from my single case, I would expect some change (however minimal) to these three variables from most collective job crafting processes. The essence of collective job crafting revolves around altering the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of a group's mandate. It would be unlikely for a group to undertake new tasks or modify existing ones without expanding its knowledge set, or to create new ties and interdependencies without altering the distribution of power and influence within the organization. Even if the group's identity attributes remain the same, their definition—or the way they are understood by members of the group itself and the organization at large—may still change. Even in cases where collective job crafting is geared toward initiatives that have no bearing on the organization's revenue-generating workflow (e.g., organizing charitable events on behalf of the organization), knowledge, influence, and identity may still be impacted.

The relationship between the group and its individual members in collective job crafting is symbiotic. Through collective job crafting, members emerge as simultaneous crafters of the group's mandate and of their own specific jobs: each member transforms *who she is* and *what she does* in her work in ways that are complementary and useful toward changing *who the group is* and *what it does* (Ashforth, 2016; Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Through the contributions they

choose to make to the group, members renew their own sense of work identity (Ashforth, Rogers, & Corley, 2011) and strengthen their identification with the group (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994). Identification is built *in action* as crafted work progresses—it is not merely a cognitive construct. Members come to see themselves as co-creators of their group's evolution.

At the individual level, collective job crafting may generate both positive and negative outcomes. Positive outcomes may include finding meaning (Berg et al., 2013; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003), growing (Sonenshein, Dutton, Grant, Spreitzer, & Sutcliffe, 2013), and thriving at work (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003). Negative outcomes, on the other hand, may include burnout, a lack of balance between personal and professional life, and performance-related stress. The case of Media Solutions suggests that positive and negative outcomes at the individual level may temporarily coexist, and points to members' absorptive capacity (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990) as a possible limit to the extent to which a group may expand a collectively crafted job.

A Longitudinal View of Job Crafting

My dissertation offers what is, to my knowledge, the first truly longitudinal examination of job crafting at any level of analysis. So far, the overwhelming majority of studies have been cross-sectional or focused on short periods (usually months) in the working lives of job crafters. In contrast, my study of Media Solutions produced data that spans the entire 7-year lifetime of the unit, from its inception to its disappearance through a reorganization. I was able to analyze the co-evolution of the group, its members, and the organization over time and, therefore, to capture the full arc of the process of collective job crafting.

Previous studies have rightly stated that job crafting is not a one-time event but a process that unfolds over time (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). While there is an implicit

acknowledgement that the outcomes of job crafting at a moment in time feed its inputs for a new iteration of the process, how these iterations happen over time was unclear. My study demonstrates that *the nature of job crafting involves both path-dependence and path-creation* (Garud, Kumaraswamy, & Karnøe, 2010). The notion of path-dependence implies that decisions made by an actor (an individual, a group, an organization) at a certain point in time will affect the options open to the actor and the outcomes of decisions at a later point in time (Pierson, 2000; Sydow, Schreyögg, & Koch, 2009). In other words, decisions at a given moment in time are historically conditioned. There is an "imprinting effect" of past circumstances and actions over the present and future circumstances an actor will face, and over the actions the actor will be able to take (Sydow et al., 2009:689). This imprinting effect is dynamic. The causal forces that shape events and outcomes change over time rather than remain uniform; in turn, events and outcomes alter the balance of causal forces as time goes by (Sewell, 1996). Through path-dependent sequences of action, actors shape and reproduce valued organizational patterns over time (Mahoney, 2000). However, the conditioning forces of the past may progressively erode the degree of agency actors enjoy throughout the process, i.e., they may constrain the degree of freedom with which actors move in terms of the number and quality of the opportunities available to them over time. When immersed in a path-dependent process, then, actors may eventually find that the forces of the past prompt them to "go with a flow of events" that they "have little power to influence in real time" (Garud & Karnoe, 2001: 2).

In turn, the notion of path-creation implies that actors can find ways to enhance their agency as time goes by. While actors' freedom of choice is never unbounded, path-creation suggests that actors can "mindfully" mobilize resources "despite resistance and inertia" in order to "disembed" themselves from structures that arise over time as a consequence of their past

choices (Garud & Karnoe, 2001: 2). In other words, actors may not necessarily be at the mercy of causal forces, but may have the ability to reshape some of those forces as time goes by in order to alter the patterns they have reproduced thus far.

Path creation and path dependence at the group level. Collective job crafting is path-creating in the sense that the initiatives undertaken in the past may help prepare the terrain for future ones. For example, proactively taking over simple tasks may provide the basis for performing more complex tasks that build on them; proactively establishing relationships in a given context may help build relationships in adjacent contexts later on; and creating, manipulating, or leveraging simple technologies may help contribute more complex technological solutions to the organization in the future. The case of Media Solutions, in particular, shows how the group synergistically made use of knowledge, technology, organizational positions, and identity attributes crafted at a given moment in time to enhance its knowledge base, grow its sphere of influence, and enact a new identity over time. The group built on its past achievements to continue crafting its job as time went by. The group's actions were bound to past decisions as much as they unleashed opportunities for further, more generative action.

At the same time, collective job crafting is path-dependent in the sense that the job crafting initiatives undertaken by a group at a moment in time may quantitatively and qualitatively constrain the collective job crafting opportunities available to the group at a later time (Sewell, 1996). Moreover, collective job crafting may create unwanted capability-related or identity-related rigidities for the group as time goes by (Leonard-Barton, 1992; Tripsas & Gavetti, 2000). For example, close relationships crafted with certain actors may later provoke hard-to-overcome misalignment with others, while identity attributes crafted at one moment in

time may render the group unable to adopt others—and thereby adjust its self-presentation flexibly—at a future date.

The case of Media Solutions shows that, in extreme situations, the constraining path-dependent nature of collective job crafting may lead to situations where the group finds itself locked into a job crafting trajectory and committed to identity attributes the organization may not find worth retaining. This may lead to escalation of commitment to a hopeless course of action (Staw, 1981) and turn members of the group into 'optimistic martyrs' (Dosi & Lovallo, 1997) with an "illusion of control" over the fate of their collectively crafted job (Garud & Karnoe, 2001: 2). As seen in Chapter 5, the behavioral and organizational patterns Media Solutions set in motion through collective job crafting collided with those espoused by more powerful decision makers (Mahoney, 2000). Media Solutions' and Sales' views differed in terms of the organizational model, cognitive orientations, and time orientations they proposed. This misalignment between the units led, initially, to the accumulation of negative attributions about the group on the part of relevant audiences; later, to the introduction of structure- and process-related changes that hindered the group's collective job crafting efforts in certain areas; and, finally, to the deployment of drastic measures that permanently interrupted the group's collective job crafting trajectory.

Path creation and path dependence at the individual level. In parallel to its group-level effects, the path-dependent and path-creating nature of collective job crafting also produces individual-level effects. My study shows that *job crafters are keenly aware of time and temporality* (Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001) *as they collectively craft the job.* The case of Media Solutions demonstrates that job crafters are constantly engaged in 'temporal work' (Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013): both individually and as a group, job crafters reflect on the past, assess the

present, and imagine the future as they make sense of the opportunities for job crafting that lie before them and select which ones to tackle next. This awareness of time and the temporal work it fosters allow job crafters to mindfully build (Garud et al., 2010) a job crafting trajectory (Strauss, 1993) for their unit and for themselves.

As discussed in Chapter 4, these two trajectories co-evolve and are crisscrossed by both path-dependence and path-creation. From a path-creating perspective, a group member's job crafting initiatives rely on his own past job crafting efforts and on the unit's collective achievements through job crafting, which he can apprehend; in turn, the group's collective job crafting initiatives rely on the job crafting efforts made by its individual members and on the degree of complementarity these display. Time awareness and temporal work also speak to the co-evolution of members' work identities and the identity of the group. The case of Media Solutions shows that the harmonization of '*who I am*' and '*what I do*' at work with '*who we are*' and '*what we do*' happens over time in a mutually constitutive way, facilitated by previous individual and group choices. Members collectively build the group's identity through their own interdependent past and present choices. In turn, the identity the group has crafted in the past opens doors for individual members to shape their own work identities later on, as they decide how to contribute to the group.

In contrast, from a path-dependent perspective, the case of Media Solutions highlights the perils of individuals' over-identification with the group (Elsbach, 1999) and escalation of commitment to a course of action over which neither individuals nor the group have adequate control (Staw, 1981). As (Strauss, 1997: 42) notes, "to be involved in a course of action is to 'care,' to be concerned, to be identified with it." Therefore, when an individual "conceives of himself as an integral part of the group, he allies himself with progress toward its goals; its path

to some extent becomes his own path, its failures his own failures" (Strauss, 1997: 43). Media Solutions members became 'optimistic martyrs' (Dosi & Lovallo, 1997) as the group faced the possibility of a reorganization and subsequently engaged in its final negotiation to gain jurisdiction over its collectively crafted job. In the aftermath of the reorganization, the interruption of the group's collective job crafting trajectory and of each member's own crafted trajectory at work faced these individuals with the need to accept the loss of their unit, their collectively crafted job, and their collectively built identity, and reassess the notions of '*who I am*' and '*what I do*' in the organization moving forward.

Organizational inertia and collective job crafting over time. The notions of path dependence and path creation discussed above paint a picture of collective job crafting as a process largely driven by a group's collective agency—i.e., by its capacity to make choices and take action within a social structure and thereby to influence, control, or alter it (Bandura, 2000)—and where the challenges the group finds along the way are, to a great extent, of its own making. However, path creation and path dependence offer only a partial view of the forces that affect a group's ability to carve a collective job crafting trajectory over time. A group's collective agency is counterbalanced not only by the restrictions that past choices impose on the alternatives that stand available to the group today (Hernes & Weik, 2007; Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001), but also, quite fundamentally, by organizational and environmental factors that initially facilitate yet progressively restrict agency-driven action.

In its early days as Ad Operations, the unit's main challenge in exercising agency to engage in collective job crafting was its formal job description and the prevalence of ad trafficking as a widespread occupation within social media companies. Most organizations start out with ambiguous structures and fluid roles and build clearer and more complex configurations

over time (Baron, 1984). It is only when roles stabilize that they become resistant to change (Freidson, 1976). This was the case for Engineering-oriented functions at CLICK. The content and boundaries of these functions were fuzzy at first and were progressively refined as engineers built the platform and gained a better understanding of the nature of their job. However, Sales-oriented functions had well-demarcated playing grounds since they were first created: sellers were in charge of defining clients' overall advertising strategy on the platform; account managers devised the media plan; and ad traffickers programmed the ads. This division of labor mirrored the structure of Sales functions in organizations across the industry. There was very little ambiguity or fluidity to Ad Operations' formal mandate, and other groups' perceptions of the unit were heavily tainted by what they knew to be true about ad traffickers in the industry at large. These perceptions constituted the main source of inertia Ad Operations challenged as it began collectively crafting its job. In between Sales and Engineering, vast areas of the organization were virtual 'empty spaces' (Hatch, 1999). Most of Ad Operations' early collective job crafting initiatives constituted deliberate moves to capture those empty spaces.

As time went by, CLICK's structure gained clarity, specialized functions mushroomed, and empty spaces began to disappear. This created new sources of inertia and reinforced old ones. On the Sales side, organizational routines began to solidify (e.g., "we sell ads through insertion orders") (Gilbert, 2005), cognitive frames became rigid (e.g., "CLICK is a display advertising platform") (Kaplan & Henderson, 2005), and views about what Ad Operations (later, Media Solutions) should deliver became fixated on the unit's formal mandate rather than on the possibilities inherent to its collectively crafted job (e.g., "Media Solutions spends too much time on side projects, when it should focus on supporting Sales")—a form of identity-based control Fleming and Spicer (2014) termed 'subjectification.' As a result, CLICK's Sales organization

had “difficulty revisiting deeply held assumptions about the appropriate role of new technology, the structure of the market, and the usefulness of alternative business models” Kaplan and Henderson (2005:510).

These sources of inertia led Sales and Media Solutions to sustain different interpretations of what kinds of initiatives were considered valuable and worthy of rewards (Stark, 2011), what strategic direction the organization should follow (Benner & Tushman, 2003; Kaplan & Henderson, 2005), and who gets to capture opportunities that add value and further the organization’s strategic goals (Strauss, 1985). Facing increasing levels of inertia, the unit opted to engage in collective job crafting away from Sales leaders’ line of sight. Its collective job crafting efforts became what (Lyons, 2008) termed ‘shadow job re-design’. Media Solutions’ decision to elude inertia rather than confront it provided a buffer that temporarily protected the collectively crafted job, yet created an irredeemable situation when the unit fought—and lost—the battle for its survival.

A Bi-directional View of Job Crafting

My dissertation offers a rare glimpse into the activities of job crafters who seek to simultaneously erase features of their formal job and take over new, more engaging work. Most studies of job crafting focus on how the tasks, relationships, and meanings that compose the experience of a job are modified or enhanced. Studies of job crafters whose efforts lead to the elimination of components of the formal job, while acknowledged in theory (e.g., Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), have been far less commonly observed in practice. Studies that do examine job crafters who reduce or eliminate parts of their formal jobs often portray this behavior in a negative light as ‘avoidance crafting’ (Bruning & Campion, 2018)—job crafting performed in

order to better deal with the demands of the job or use resources more efficiently (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2013a). Avoidance crafting has been linked with negative emotions and behaviors such as boredom, work withdrawal, and neglect of responsibilities (Bruning & Campion, 2018).

In contrast, my examination of the process of collective job crafting at Media Solutions presents a generative view of job crafting initiatives that result in the elimination of features of the unit's formal mandate. In its quest to automate or outsource tasks associated with ad trafficking, Media Solutions designed new processes, created new tools, and leveraged technologies (such as Selfie) created by others; it expanded its knowledge base by developing capabilities only engineers possessed until then; established ties to engineers, clients, media agencies, marketing developers, and other actors; and, most fundamentally, freed up members' time to engage in work they found meaningful and impactful.

My analysis shows that both directions in collective job crafting can be complementary and may eventually lead the unit to fully replace its original formal mandate with a collectively crafted one. The more Media Solutions engaged in collective job crafting to erase features of its formal mandate, the more it distanced itself from the identity as 'a group of ad traffickers' other groups so tightly associated with it. As the formal job progressively disappeared, the unit filled the void with "more leveraged opportunities," as its leader put it, collectively crafting tasks and relationships that conveyed a broader and richer work domain and a prized identity as 'a group of problem solvers'. Erasing the formal job completely became a necessity for Ad Operations to transform itself into Media Solutions.

Additionally, my analysis of jurisdictional claims made by Media Solutions suggests that there may be a correlation between the timing of local and global jurisdictional claims and the progress a group makes in both erasing the formal job and collectively crafting a new domain.

During its years as Ad Operations, the unit made mostly local jurisdictional claims, aided by the practices of leveraging technology and leveraging an internal and external bridging position. The unit moved to making global jurisdictional claims once ad trafficking constituted a minimum amount of members' workload. Leveraging a multi-dimensional bridging position and single-handedly changing its name to Media Solutions served to support those claims and underpin the unit's quest to have the organization recognize its collectively-crafted job as an idiosyncratic occupation.

A Power-based View of Job Crafting

Power—understood here as "the capacity to determine outcomes within and for an organization" (Ranson, Hinings, & Greenwood, 1980:7)—has not been a central theme in the job crafting literature thus far. Yet power dynamics underlie the job crafting process, simply because power is inherent to individuals' jobs and units' mandates given their position on the organization's hierarchy (Krackhardt, 1990). The division of labor constitutes "the ultimate source of intraorganizational power" (Hickson et al., 1971:217), and power is explained by the kinds of tasks contained in units' mandates and individuals' job descriptions, their relative importance in the overall workflow of the organization, and the interdependencies they share (Pettigrew, 1973). Power may translate into the ability to set strategies and agendas, impose world views, control resources, and determine others' behavior (Fleming & Spicer, 2014).

A handful of studies have evidenced that power dynamics may play a role as a moderator of job crafting, particularly as a determinant of the extent to which individuals are able to identify and seize job crafting opportunities. Some studies have shown that higher-power individuals may be instrumental in facilitating lower-power individuals' reconfiguration of the

work they do and of the meaning they attach to it. For example, in their study of teachers and aides in kindergarten classrooms, Leana et al. (2009) observed that aides' ability to expand the task boundaries of their job depended on the extent to which teachers chose to enforce occupational boundaries and hierarchy. Teachers were formally responsible for creative and educational activities, while aides were in charge of children's cleanliness and safety. There was an 'implicit' hierarchy in the classroom, whereby teachers had some control over the activities of aides. Aides who worked with teachers following a hierarchical approach tended to perceive fewer opportunities to craft their jobs compared to aides paired with teachers who fomented a 'co-teaching' environment. In turn, Wrzesniewski et al. (2003) found that hospital cleaners' understanding of the meaning of their work was impacted by the quality of interactions they had with higher-power individuals. Cleaners attached positive meanings to their work, for example, when patients engaged them in conversation and signaled that they valued cleaners' work. Conversely, they construed their work as having little value when doctors and nurses purposefully left rooms in disarray.

Despite these insights, we are still a long way from understanding how power and job crafting intersect. In particular, the search for power as a motivation for job crafting and the achievement of power as its outcome have not yet been explored in practice, albeit suggested in theory (Lyons, 2008). Instead, the main focus has been on creating positive job meanings and identities (Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), on the one hand, and on controlling job resources and demands (Tims et al., 2013a; Tims et al., 2013b), on the other. The study I present in this dissertation is no exception: power was not a salient motivation in Media Solutions' collective job crafting efforts and, given the unit's lack of success in obtaining formal jurisdiction over most of its collectively crafted tasks and relationships, neither was it a

significant outcome. However, the unit did gain the ability to *influence* other units' decisions (Magee & Galinsky, 2008) by developing two subtle forms of power: power derived from having crafted unique knowledge and capabilities—what French and Raven (1959) termed 'expert' power—and power derived from gaining a more central position in CLICK's workflow and thereby controlling critical contingencies (Hickson et al., 1971).

The development of expert power can be observed over time by examining Media Solutions' collective job crafting trajectory: through initiatives that enabled the unit to familiarize itself with CLICK's technical infrastructure, on the one hand, and critical revenue assurance processes on the other, the unit moved onto initiatives that allowed it to gain market expertise. The combination of knowledge from both realms later yielded initiatives connected with revenue generation, such as the creation of direct response ad products and the target assembler tool. This knowledge rendered Media Solutions a credible source of market insight in engineers' eyes and a trustworthy source of analytical data for campaign optimization in the eyes of clients and media agencies.

In turn, Media Solutions' trajectory evidences instances in which the unit came to attain a central position in CLICK's workflow and capture critical contingencies. By members' own admission, Media Solutions was the only unit at CLICK with end-to-end visibility of the media cycle and monetization process. At a special meeting the unit organized to devise a strategy for 'partner management,' members listed no fewer than 50 different actors within CLICK and in CLICK's environment with whom the unit regularly exchanged information or actively worked with. Hinings, Hickson, Pennings, and Schneck (1974) note that a unit can derive power from controlling two types of workflow contingencies: (1) absorbing uncertainty for other units and (2) managing interdependencies for other units, and both of these were present in Media

Solutions' case. For example, Media Solutions absorbed uncertainty for Product Engineering by aggregating feedback on ad products from all client accounts members served. They analyzed, weighed, and prioritized the feedback, and later made recommendations to engineers on how to improve existing products to benefit the widest possible array of clients. Engineers felt they could trust Media Solutions' feedback, as noted by Garth in Chapter 4 during a meeting, because they perceived their recommendations as 'unbiased' compared to recommendations they received from Sales, which tended to be motivated by what would benefit specific client accounts. After the reorganization, there was no group left at CLICK to manage this contingency, and product engineers were left at a loss in terms of which recommendations to attend to and which to ignore. Similarly, Media Solutions gained the ability to influence sellers, account managers, clients, and media agencies by managing critical interdependencies for them. For example, when Selfie began to gain traction, a wide array of marketing developers mushroomed in the market. Media Solutions engaged with them, vetted them, trained them to use the system, and designed processes to guide their interactions with CLICK. Media Solutions members were then able to make specific recommendations to clients as to which marketing developers to work with, depending on the types of ad products they favored for their campaigns. Even when CLICK created the Marketing Developer unit to manage the process of evaluating and training marketing developers, Media Solutions remained this unit's "first and most trusted partner," in the words of its manager. These findings resonate with (Krackhardt)'s (1990:343) assertion that "power accrues not only to those who occupy central network positions in organizations but also to those who have an accurate perception of the network in which they are embedded."

Lastly, the case of Media Solutions provides a glimpse into the role technology plays in shifting the allocation of power in organizations through collective job crafting. Studies have shown that high-power agents may determine which technologies get selected and implemented across the organization (Thomas, 1994). As (Cohen, 2013:435) notes, "technology is not exogenous, but rather it is the product of ongoing social choices starting with strategy formation, continuing on to the decision to adopt a new technology, and ending with implementation. Many parties participate across these stages, and through their participation, they exert and gain power." The introduction of new technologies leads to changes in power dynamics through changes in structure, roles, and the kinds of expertise the organization values (Barley, 1986, 1988). As Barley (1990:67) states, "subsequent to the introduction of a technology … groups will surely jockey for the right to define their roles to their own advantage."

However, what we see in Media Solutions' approach to collective job crafting is an active manipulation of technology to further the unit's self-appointed goals. The unit's manipulation of technology made it possible to simultaneously erase most features of its formal job and to replace it with collectively crafted ones. Members taught themselves to code so they could automate machine-like tasks associated with ad trafficking; they also leveraged technology created by others, such as Selfie, which further erased the need for manual ad trafficking to be performed at CLICK at all. Members also learned the complex structure of CLICK's databases in order to perform sophisticated analyses and custom reports, improve the organization's targeting capabilities, and create new ad products. Yet, despite this access to and active manipulation of technology, Media Solutions itself enjoyed little formal power and relied on other units it associated closely with, especially those on the Engineering side, to gain insight into where the organization was going from a technology perspective.

The pursuit of power itself was not among Media Solutions' main motivations to engage in collective job crafting, and influence, rather than power, became a salient theme as the unit's evolution unfolded. This study barely scratches the surface of the interrelations between power dynamics and job crafting, but suggests this as a research avenue rich in possibilities.

Beyond Job Crafting: Contributions to Other Literatures

In this section, I discuss the contributions that my theory of collective job crafting makes to the literatures of organizational design, organizational renewal, and occupations. Concretely, I suggest that collective job crafting may provide a useful lens to re-examine the bases of emergent organizing, emergent strategy, and the creation of new occupations. These constitute relevant processes that exceed the realm of formal and crafted work, yet are informed by work-related interactions among individuals and groups. I establish ties between collective job crafting and I illustrate these contributions with examples extracted from Media Solutions' collective job crafting trajectory.

Contributions to Organizational Design: Collective Job Crafting and Emergent Organizing

Collective job crafting may shed light on the microfoundations of organizing—a topic which the organizational design field is only now beginning to explore (e.g., Puranam, 2018). Recent research on emergent organizing has tended to focus on two main areas. First, studies have tried to ascertain the specific environmental conditions under which higher or lesser amounts of formal structure are conducive to superior organizational performance (e.g., Davis et al., 2009). Second, studies have tried to map how organizational features such as fluid job descriptions, multi-directional communication, distributed leadership, and participative decision

making function together to support organizational performance. These studies have introduced useful metaphors such as 'jazz' (Hatch, 1999) and 'tangled worlds' (Hernes, 2008), alerted us to the importance of processes like sensemaking (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005), and pointed to the power of tools like narratives (Czarniawska, 2014) that create order and clarity out of often ambiguous situations.

However, research on the microprocesses that underlie emergent organizing writ large is still in its infancy. How do emergent organizational features arise and why do they exhibit the characteristics that they do? For example, what does a 'fluid' role entail and how does the meaning of fluidity change over time? What are the sources of interdependence that connect groups—and the individuals within them—in an emergent fashion and, again, how do they evolve over time? The few extant studies we have in this regard portray the microfundations of organizing as driven by impersonal attributes of the work. For example, in their examination of how the division of labor emerges in groups, Raveendran, Puranam, and Warglien (2016) compare task salience and object salience as they observe members gain clarity of their respective roles. Similarly, in her study of job assembling Cohen (2013) observes individuals and their managers converge on ideas of what their job description should be, "facilitated by the onset of problems that allowed incumbents to work out solutions and thus revise their jobs" … However, she notes, "incumbents rarely actively created these opportunities" (Cohen, 2013:450). They were created for them before their behavior took place.

Job crafting in general and collective job crafting in particular may contribute an alternative viewpoint to analyze the microfoundations of organizing—one that sees organizing as arising not only from malleable features of the work per se but also from an evolving sense of individual and collective identity. The collective job crafting opportunities Media Solutions

identified and captured reflected the unit's need to both '*do more*' and '*become more*'. Identities shaped over time according to the designs of the individuals and groups that enact them may be seen as interwoven with emergent organizational features. Scholars advocating an interpretation of work situated practice have long advocated for the need to 'bring work back' into studies of organization (Barley & Kunda, 2001; Orr, 1996). Collective job crafting may provide occasions to bring *workers*—their personalities, their aspirations, their goals, their *selves*—in, and thereby give rise to theories of organizing rooted in what individuals and groups do to thrive in organizations.

One such theory is that of *positive organizing* (Fredrickson & Dutton, 2008). Positive organizing refers to "the generative dynamics in and of organizations that enable individuals, groups, and organizations as a whole to flourish" (Fredrickson & Dutton, 2008:1). Positive organizing involves cognitive, emotional, and relational mechanisms that allow individual and collective resources to emerge (Dutton & Glynn, 2008). Because of its effect on the group, its members, and the organization, collective job crafting may be seen as a form of positive organizing. Through collective job crafting, groups may enhance their knowledge base, grow their ability to exercise influence, and construct a new identity that conveys who the group strives to become within and beyond the organization. Through their contributions to the group's collective job crafting efforts, group members augment their creativity, knowledgeability, resourcefulness, and resilience (Sonenshein et al., 2013); they thrive at work by setting challenging and interesting work for themselves that fits their talents and interests (Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005); and they experience growth by redefining their own work identity in positive and meaningful ways (Berg et al., 2013). Lastly, by fostering positive organizing collective job crafting has the potential to open up unexplored avenues for

the organization: it may increase the organization's awareness of new opportunities, it may foster innovation as the organization moves to seize them, and it may give rise to more effective ways to relate and organize.

Contributions to Organizational Renewal: Collective Job Crafting and Emergent Strategy

My analysis of collective job crafting at Media Solutions may provide a novel glimpse into how and why emergent strategies arise and gain traction in organizations. Emergent strategies are patterns in a stream of decisions that are "realized despite, or in the absence of, top managers' intentions" (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985:257). They result from initiatives pioneered by members situated lower in the organizational hierarchy who seek to alter the way the organization creates and captures value (Burgelman, 1983). These initiatives may be understood as expressions of intra-organizational entrepreneurship (Ahuja & Morris Lampert, 2001; Stevenson & Jarillo, 2007) in the sense that those who undertake them pursue opportunities without regard to the resources they actually control and irrespective of organizational context (Brown, Davidsson, & Wiklund, 2001). They may also be seen as forms of exploration (Gupta, Smith, & Shalley, 2006; March, 1991) in the sense that those who pursue them seek to generate new knowledge and novel capabilities for the organization. However, by definition, these initiatives are often not sanctioned by the organization and come to life only through proactive resource allocation decisions units make to capture opportunities (Bower & Gilbert, 2005). They provide unexpected variation top management must eventually contend with, either by selecting and retaining them or by shutting them down. When validated, emergent strategies constitute useful mechanisms through which the organization renews itself and adapts to its environment

(Benner & Tushman, 2003; Burgelman, 1991); when shut down, they constitute examples of misdirected resource allocation from which the organization can learn (Sull, 2005).

The case of Media Solutions suggests that collective job crafting may be one mechanism through which emergent strategies arise. Collective job crafting proactively redirects the group's resources—particularly, its members' time, attention, and knowledge—toward initiatives that serve to alter the boundaries of the group's mandate. The case highlights what Kirzner (1973) termed 'alertness to opportunity' and (Kiesler & Sproull, 1982) referred to as 'problem sensing.' As a pre-requisite, collective job crafting requires groups to recognize opportunities amidst a stream of environmental and organizational trends in order to make impactful contributions to their organizations. At Media Solutions, some collective job crafting opportunities arose from identifying latent client needs (e.g., custom reports), gauging the bases and imitability of competitors' business models (e.g., direct response ad products), and anticipating demand for non-existent services (e.g., Selfie support). Others came from understanding the organization's goals and looking for non-prescribed ways to contribute to them (e.g., target assembler) or from establishing ways to make the organization more productive or efficient (e.g., revenue recognition tool).

In collective job crafting, the pursuit of opportunities entails both economic and social logics. On the one hand, collectively crafted initiatives seek to improve both the organization's and the group's performance; on the other, they reflect the motivations, interests, and needs of job crafters and their units—they are expressions of 'what they wish to do' and 'who they collectively aim to become.' Collectively crafted initiatives also reflect particular views that the group espouses about how the organization should do business, how it should interact with clients, what products it should offer, etc. For example, through its development of direct

response ad products, Media Solutions espoused a view of CLICK as a platform where brands and users could carry out transactions, in contrast to the prevailing view that CLICK was a platform designed to grow brand awareness. In turn, by fostering the adoption of Selfie rather than insertion orders within client account teams, Media Solutions challenged CLICK's prevailing monetization strategy.

My theory of collective job crafting may also offer insights into what makes certain emergent strategies more or less likely to gain traction and eventually get selected and retained. Classic theories of organizational renewal posit that once organizations create administrative systems that grant them efficiency and stability, variation-reducing mechanisms begin to creep in. Organizational routines ossify (Nelson & Winter, 1982), core competences become core rigidities (Leonard-Barton, 1992), the cognitive frames that underlie strategy definition become hard to contest (Kaplan, 2008), and incentives induce individuals and units to search locally rather than disruptively (Kaplan & Henderson, 2005). Before long, organizations find themselves favoring innovations that reinforce preexisting choices in products, markets, and technologies rather than propel them in new directions (Benner & Tushman, 2003). As resource allocation decisions follow an increasingly conservative approach (Christensen & Bower, 1996; Gilbert, 2005), the lack of exposure to divergent ideas renders organizations myopic to simple yet impactful forms of innovation (Henderson & Clark, 1990).

In contrast, the expectation is that organizations which are not yet burdened by the variation-reducing forces of administrative systems should provide fertile grounds for exploration and should be more receptive to retaining emergent strategies that pursue new markets, new products, and new technologies. CLICK appeared to be such one company—however, resistance to trajectory-breaking initiatives was still strong. The two initiatives

mentioned in the paragraphs above took years to gain traction, in no small measure thanks to incentive misalignment and irreconcilable views of the world between Media Solutions and Sales (Kaplan & Henderson, 2005). As the conversation between Garth, (Head of Product Management) and Media Solutions reported in Chapter 4 shows, sellers were reticent to promote Selfie among clients because this technology, unlike the traditional insertion orders, made revenue—the one metric Sales based its existence on—harder to predict and impossible to book in advance. Selfie was not selected by those with authority to do so, but de facto by an increasing number of clients who saw in the system a more cost-effective and more efficient way of advertising on the CLICK platform.

Contributions to the Literature on Occupations: Idiosyncratic Occupations

My theory of collective job crafting adds to the literature on occupations by conceptualizing 'idiosyncratic occupations' as organizationally-sanctioned occupations whose jurisdictions reflect the interests, capabilities, and preferences of the groups that enacts them. Idiosyncratic occupations result from collective job crafting performed by a group in a systematic manner over a period of time long enough to significantly distance the actual practice of work from the core of the group's formal mandate. A group comes to recognize its collectively crafted job as an idiosyncratic occupation when it faces increasing difficulties obtaining resources to continue engaging in collective job crafting. These difficulties are usually rooted in cognitive dissonance that resource owners experience when they interact with the group and contrast how they view it with how the group behaves. For example, in its days as 'Ad Operations,' Media Solutions had difficulties attracting candidates with the background and skills required to perform the multi-faceted work its collectively crafted job entailed. Candidates

with the right profile would not apply for an 'Ad Operations' job, and those who would lacked the cognitive orientations and skills required to perform well in the actual job. Similarly, clients questioned why they were required to interact with an ad trafficking unit at CLICK when similar units at every other social media company were fully internal.

The Media Solutions case also suggests that, when a group comes to interpret its collectively crafted job as an idiosyncratic occupation, it starts behaving as a budding *occupational community*, as described in Chapter 5 (Van Maanen & Barley, 1982). Occupational communities strive to exercise control over the parameters that define and govern an occupation. As a budding occupational community, a group engaged in collective job crafting seeks to justify the collectively crafted role as a body of work that is worthy of formalization and remuneration (Nelsen & Barley, 1997). It also seeks to establish an occupational mandate by defining for itself the tasks that should naturally fall into its jurisdiction; the knowledge, skills, and orientations necessary to perform and evaluate members' performance; the rewards that should accrue to members; and the identity it associates to the practice of the work (Barley & Tolbert, 1997).

Much like idiosyncratic jobs at the individual level, idiosyncratic occupations are negotiated through a process of 'social ecology' (Miner, 1991; Pugh, Hickson, Hinings, & Turner, 1968) whereby a group makes jurisdictional claims over a collectively crafted job by deploying three jurisdiction-seeking practices: (1) leveraging technology, (2) leveraging the group's crafted position in the organizational landscape, and (3) leveraging the group's self-presentation. These practices may be used strategically over time in order to, initially, induce the hiving-off of tasks from other groups to the focal group or to support the group's ownership of tasks that have no clear owner and, later, to claim full ownership over the tasks and relationships that compose a collectively crafted job. I also identify two factors that influence the group's

ability to elicit support from key audiences in its jurisdiction-seeking process: (1) the group's ability to demonstrate the value added by its collective job crafting efforts and (2) the degree of salience of the identity associated with the group's formal (rather than crafted) mandate.

Once an idiosyncratic occupation is formalized, the organization's structure is adapted to reflect its existence as the purview of the unit that created it. Groups that succeed in formalizing their collectively crafted job as an idiosyncratic occupation can expect to enjoy more stability and support than those who enact occupations that transcend organizational boundaries. Unit mandates and occupational mandates often respond to different logics and stand at odds with one another as individuals and groups perform their work (Anteby et al., 2016). However, since idiosyncratic occupations were created to fit particular organizational- and group-level goals as well as a crafted occupational mandate, the chances of such conflicts can be expected to diminish.

Practical Implications

The process of collective job crafting has important practical implications for groups, for their members, and for the managers who supervise them. Because collective job crafting impacts individual, group, and organizational performance, it is critical to reflect on how, when, and why groups choose to engage in collective job crafting, and on the dynamics this choice unleashes within and beyond group boundaries.

Job crafting is "neither inherently good nor bad" for organizations (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001:195). Its outcomes can be positive or negative, depending on whether crafted tasks and relationships contribute (or not) to simultaneously fulfilling organizational, group, and individual goals. Top managers have the challenge to encourage collective job crafting initiatives

that have positive effects while discouraging initiatives that may prove detrimental in any of these dimensions. Top managers are, in that sense, tasked with architecting an organizational context that will motivate groups to engage in collective job crafting in ways that are beneficial to the group, to its members, and to the organization (Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1994). This can be difficult to achieve, because what constitutes a 'positive' or 'negative' outcome in collective job crafting is not necessarily clear-cut.

The case of Media Solutions at CLICK, in particular, presents a situation in which a unit generated billions of dollars in incremental revenue for its organization through collective job crafting—an undeniably positive result—yet, by overstepping the boundaries of its formal job in directions that collided with leaders' strategic and organizational vision, found itself locked into an evolutionary trajectory leaders did not entirely value—an undeniably negative result. Most of the collectively crafted work the unit performed toward the end of its lifespan was intrinsically valuable to the organization, but it was work the organization did not expect or require that particular unit to perform. The case highlights the detrimental dynamics that may ensue when value-adding collective job crafting initiatives co-exist with faulty inter-group communication, negative attributions, and hard-to-permeate cognitive boundaries.

At the same time, the case of Media Solutions illustrates a situation in which members of a unit grow and thrive at work (Sonenshein et al., 2013) and find renewed meaning in their job (Berg et al., 2013) by finding opportunities to contribute to and benefit the collective. Media Solutions members experienced the job as a process of becoming one's 'best self' through the co-construction of something greater than themselves (Roberts et al., 2005). While the alignment of personal and group-level goals constituted, in itself, a positive outcome for Media Solutions and its members, there was often a cost to pay in terms of work-life balance because the unit was

constantly understaffed. This cost increased as the unit's collectively crafted job grew in multiple dimensions and work became more multifaceted and complex. Toward the end of the unit's lifespan, some members qualified the situation as unsustainable. Members themselves were able to partly mitigate these negative effects by helping one another carry the escalating workload. The prosocial attitudes and behaviors that first drew the unit to engage in collective job crafting served, albeit imperfectly, to sustain the practice of an increasingly arduous collectively crafted job (Grant & Berg, 2012; Grant & Berry, 2011). The case draws our attention toward the conflicting emotions group members may experience when they simultaneously derive inspiration, pride, and a positive sense of identity from their unit's collective job crafting endeavors, yet that same process causes them to feel overwhelmed.

Given these considerations, top managers must remain alert and devise mechanisms that foster generative dynamics in collective job crafting, so that organizational, group, and individual goals can be satisfied at the same time. First, they must actively mentor units and unit leaders by including them in strategic conversations and by making relevant information available to them, so that group leaders can gain clarity on organizational goals and guide their units' collectively crafted initiatives toward them. Second, they must monitor the evolution of interdependent units' collective job crafting trajectories and foster collaboration and dialogue, so that groups are able to effectively negotiate boundaries over time and avoid the animosity that may stem from encroaching on one another's jurisdictions. Third, they must lend their support to units whose collective job crafting initiatives they value and help them adapt other units' perceptions and views, so that they can evolve their identity and image in ways consistent with the work they actually perform. Finally, top managers must make the appropriate resources available to units actively engaged in positive collective job crafting. Resource availability

enables job crafters to adequately respond to the demands of the work and to sustain high levels of commitment and engagement.

Limitations

My analysis of the process of collective job crafting at Media Solutions relied on an in-depth inductive qualitative study at a single field site. As is often the case in this kind of research, reliance on a single field site raises questions about generalizability or transferability of the findings. Thorngate (1976) posited that studies cannot be simultaneously simple, accurate, and general. Single case studies, in particular, lacking the benefit of a replication logic in their design (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1984), tend to compensate their imperfect generalizability with their relative simplicity and deep level of accuracy. My dedicated focus on Media Solutions' collective job crafting activities at CLICK allowed me to remain close to the field throughout my study and to collect a vast amount of data (over 300 interviews; over 500 pages of high-quality archival data, and hundreds of pages of field notes covering 49 hours of non-participant observation) to substantiate my findings.

In some instances, such as this one, relying on a single case is not only appropriate in the spirit of Thorngate (1976)'s criteria, but practically inevitable, because comparative cases are not readily available to the researcher. Siggelkow (2007) remarks that single cases constitute a useful device when the phenomenon being observed likens a 'talking pig'—a very powerful example that stands on its uniqueness. Groups such as Media Solutions at CLICK (a unit that proactively crafted a collective job over a period of seven years, transforming itself from a group with a single task and a single reporting line, into an analytical and creative engine with one of the broadest sets of tasks and relationships in the organization) are indeed hard to find. The lack of

job crafting studies at the group level as well as the relative scarcity of studies that trace the process of job crafting over long periods of time, are a testament of how difficult it can be to find job crafters who act in a systematic and coordinate way to transform the space their unit occupies in the organization and their own work experience. In order to shed light on how the process of job crafting unfolds at the collective level, researchers have proposed resorting to "quasi-experimental research that uses an intervention in which employees are encouraged to craft their jobs as a group" (Berg et al., 2010b:180). The case of Media Solutions, then, is especially valuable because the process of collective job crafting unfolded for years in an unprompted way and led to a dramatic evolution in the nature of the unit's work, relationships, and identity.

Lastly, a common limitation longitudinal case studies face is the possibility of retrospective bias in interviews when the phenomenon under analysis is connected to events that happened before the researcher entered the field. In order to mitigate this problem, I gathered as much real-time data as possible from diverse sources. I interviewed and/or directly observed the vast majority of the individuals who, at one time or another, were members of the Media Solutions unit in order to gather multiple viewpoints on the experience of collective job crafting. I also had access to rich documents—including old presentations, email threads, and reports—that provided insights into the unit's past and helped me corroborate statements individuals made during interviews and instances of observation. These documents were helpful in triangulating my interview data and, thereby, in minimizing inaccuracies associated with retrospection.

Opportunities for Future Research

This dissertation provides an initial theoretical framework through which to understand how the process of collective job crafting unfolds. In the spirit of Glaser and Strauss (1967), my

intent in these pages has been to elaborate, rather than test, theory (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 2007) in order to shed light on an underexplored, yet potentially impactful, form of job crafting (Edmondson & McManus, 2007). More research is required to test the theory proposed here in order to more deeply understand the causes, patterns, and consequences of collective job crafting for individuals, groups, and organizations.

In particular, future research should examine how the process of collective job crafting unfolds under a different set of circumstances than those presented in this dissertation. For example, future research may look at the process across a variety of industries and ascertain how a groups' perceived opportunities to engage in collective job crafting and the industry life cycle interrelate. Collective job crafting at Media Solutions took place toward the end of the emergent stage of the social media industry and at the height of its development stage. What does collective job crafting entail and what results does it produce in nascent industries, particularly at organizations that haven't yet launched a product or defined a clear identity? Conversely, how does the process unfold in mature industries and what consequences does it bring, especially in organizations facing decline or the possibility of disruption? Studies may also examine groups that pursue different motivations to engage in collective job crafting than those presented here. Media Solutions strived for the ability to learn, the capacity to make an impact, and recognition beyond 'ad trafficking'. In particular, as earlier sections suggest, future studies may more closely examine the dynamics of collective job crafting when groups explicitly alter the boundaries of their mandate to gain power.

Future research may also analyze how intra-organizational conditions, such as the presence or absence of supportive supervision, the intensity and types of interdependence that binds a group to others in the organization, or the shape and degree of salience of the

organization's formal structure affect a group's ability to engage in collective job crafting and its chances of eventually gaining jurisdiction over collectively-crafted tasks and relationships. Most intra-organizational conditions were favorable to Media Solutions in the early years of the unit's collective job crafting efforts, but proved adverse toward the end. This curbed the unit's ability to elicit support from key audiences and ultimately harmed its chances to convert its collectively crafted job into an organizationally-sanctioned idiosyncratic occupation. Cases where groups do receive support to engage in collective job crafting on a systematic basis and successfully negotiate ownership of collectively-crafted components of the job may prove revelatory and help us more fully understand the relationship between adaptive and jurisdiction-seeking behavior in collective job crafting. Positive cases such as these may also contribute to our understanding of how traditional and idiosyncratic occupations relate to one another and coexist in organizations.

Future studies may also examine antecedents and outcomes of collective job crafting different from those evident at Media Solutions. For example, when it comes to power, this dissertation discussed the acquisition of 'expert' power through collective job crafting initiatives that yielded valuable knowledge and skills for the group, as well as of power derived from informally repositioning the group within the organization's social environment. However, the search for power itself was not a salient motivation for Media Solutions. Research could explore how the process of collective job crafting unfolds when driven by the quest to acquire power. In particular, collective job crafting efforts that seek forms of coercive power may lead the group to deploy different jurisdiction-seeking practices thank those identified here.

Given the multidimensional nature of collective job crafting, future research may also examine its mechanisms and effects at individual, group, and organizational level in more detail than I have in this study. There is much to explore in terms of how collective job crafting

impacts and draws from identity construction and transformation at all three levels of analysis, how it influences and is nourished by the ways in which knowledge is produced, stored, and shared across the organization, and how it relates to and relies on the ways in which groups and group members manage power, influence, and the ongoing evolution of intra- and inter-organizational task domains. A deeper examination of these processes would benefit from further attention to issues connected with path-dependence and path-creation, and with the carving of individual and collective job crafting trajectories highlighted throughout the dissertation.

Conclusion

As we move into a world in which proactive (Grant & Ashford, 2008) and prosocial (Grant & Berg, 2012) behaviors play an increasingly vital role in organizational life, it is an exciting time to revisit long-standing theories of work and organizational design. Job crafting in general, and collective job crafting in particular, are expressions of the generative forces that lead individuals and groups to reinvent the practice of work, construct identities, create structures, and generate value from the bottom-up. New pathways for growing and thriving at work are emerging—brought about by individual and collective ingenuity, vision, and conviction (Roberts et al., 2005; Sonenshein et al., 2013; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003). New ways of making sense of and finding meaning in 'who we are' and 'what we do' at work are being revealed (Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). And new ways of creating and sharing collective resources that benefit individuals, groups, and organizations are being conceived and disseminated (Fredrickson & Dutton, 2008).

In the midst of this transformation in the ways we work and relate, biographical processes (Gergen & Gergen, 1997; Kegan, 1982; Strauss, 1997)—the active construction of individual

and collective identities across self-driven trajectories, the weaving of narratives that synthesize and project the content of those identities across temporal boundaries, and the instances of identity claiming and granting that enable individuals and groups to communicate and establish themselves at work—are of paramount importance. Kogut and Zander (1996) posited that organizations (and the individuals and units within them) do three things: coordination, identity, and learning. These three undeniable drives have been present in organizations throughout time. In my view, coordination had the upper hand in the late 19th century and for much of the 20th century. Learning ruled toward the end of the last millennium and the beginning of this one. Now, identity—interpreted temporally as the notion of who we have been, who we are, and who we strive to become—is emerging as a critical driving force in organizational life for the 21st century. Media Solutions embodied this phenomenon through its quest for self-realization and self-actualization over seven years of collective job crafting. Toward the end, its leaders wrote:

> Media Solutions was never a team of traffickers, even when Trafficking was 100% of the role. Instead, Media Solutions has always been a team of problem solvers, and has always been and will always be in a state of "becoming," because it is that ambiguous state that is necessary for success in today's uncertain, ever-changing environment. Media Solutions' core role, in a nutshell, is the journey to erase the need for the role to exist vis-à-vis the current set of tasks for which it is responsible. The minute that journey ends is the minute the Media Solutions team will cease to exist, even if its name persists.

Media Solutions no longer exists, but there is a rising number of groups out there engaging in collective job crafting at this very moment. Their existence prompts us to continue exploring the complex nature of job crafting and reflecting on the generative relationship between identity and work.

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