

autonomy

the quality or state of being self-governing

More and more, studies are showing that embracing autonomy in the workplace leads to positive effects on well-being and job satisfaction. Team autonomy also tends to decrease the levels of emotional exhaustion felt by individual team members. **But in order for autonomy to work its magic, teams need to work as a cohesive unit.** If everyone isn't on the same page about what to do with their independence, the group finds itself uncertain about how to move forward, which actually reduces productivity and effectiveness.

Methods for achieving autonomy fulfillment might include:

Emphasizing Interest In Your Tasks. We often demonstrate our most creative work when we can complete objectives in ways that are most interesting and meaningful to us. For example, if you have an interest in learning and development, immerse yourself in activities that provide the opportunity to educate your manager or coworkers in engaging ways. Although you may not be able to choose all your tasks, you can bring your interests into your assignments!

Talking To Your Manager & Asking For More Input. Before you do this, spend some time thinking about your current workload and where the challenges are. Then, set up a one-on-one with your manager and discuss the possibility of getting more of their input in your work. What are the specific changes you are seeking and why? Then, decide on a plan together. This boosts opportunity for more personal input and also demonstrates initiative and commitment to your work.

Taking Ownership Over Organizing Tasks. Although you might not be able to choose which tasks you're assigned, you likely have some control over your workflow and how you structure your time. Whatever flexibility you do have, it's worthwhile to take ownership of your responsibilities and structure them in the way that works best for you. For example, write down your daily or weekly plan and schedule so you can easily refer to it and update as needed. Additionally, as you work through your tasks, stay flexible in making changes to your approach as you see fit. And, set up a meeting with your manager for updates and feedback on your strategy for improvement.

Prove that you can be autonomous. If you meet your deadlines, roll with the punches, come up with your own ideas, offer solutions, work independently, and ask for help when needed, then you're demonstrating your preference for autonomy. If, on the other hand, you need to be reminded of deadlines and you need constant guidance, then you may be sending the message that you like, or require, extra management.

Be an information sponge. Kforce recommends listening, identifying knowledge gaps, and asking work-relevant questions. They recommend first exhausting self-directed research avenues to find answers before taking questions to managers.

Practice independent thinking. Lifhack recommends that anyone hoping to gain independence should practice independent thinking. Here's their definition of independent thinking:

"Thinking independently means exploring your choices, weighing the options for yourself, seeking opinions from others (for reference, not approval), and making the call for yourself. Perhaps it might end up being a wrong call, but that does not mean that you should stop and give your power back to others."

At work, this means distancing yourself from over-reliance on team support and validation and also getting used to owning your decisions. As a result, this also means letting go of the comfort and benefits of sharing responsibilities with others. This process can be daunting, but it will strengthen your independence and prove that you can be self-reliant.

Take time to reflect on how you might be able to create a greater sense of autonomy in your role at CGA by using these tips.



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