Introduction
Autonomy is generally viewed as a key element for business success, but what exactly does it mean to have autonomy at work? Does the same meaning apply to everyone?

Research Questions:
• How do salaried professionals construct the meaning of autonomy in their own jobs?
• How do salaried professionals feel about the amount of autonomy they have, and how that compares to the amount they feel they should have?

Methods
A mixed method approach consisting of semi-structured narrative interviews, supplemented by a literature review.

• Ten (10) salaried professionals participated in interviews
• All participants were self-described mid to senior level professionals
• Literature review focused on:
  • Autonomy correlation with workplace factors, such as job satisfaction, engagement, and performance
  • Autonomy perceptions stemming from individual/leader behavior

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Conclusions
Structure and limits resulting from role clarity increase employee perceptions of autonomy

A sense of meaning and purpose is integral to perceived autonomy

Participants only interpreted autonomy limits negatively when they felt an “undue burden” associated

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Results
Participants generally perceived autonomy as a sense of self-governance which is dependent upon role clarity and grounded by a sense of meaning and purpose.

PERCEIVED AUTONOMY FRAMEWORK:
How clear is my box?
How big is my box?

ROLE CLARITY

AUTONOMY LIMIT:
Unable to do
• Lacking resources
• Lacking information

SENSE OF MEANING & PURPOSE

AUTONOMY LIMIT:
Not Permitted to do
• Permission needed
• Approval needed

Questions?
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