Business or Busyness: Strategies for Managing Workload

This presentation is a companion to the Boston College Center for Work & Family Executive Briefing Series. It is designed to be customized by your organization. Please feel free to cut and paste these slides into your own format, and to use the questions provided as a guide to develop your own presentation. If you do not have a copy of the Briefing, please email: cwf@bc.edu.

How Big of a Problem is Overwork?

Work environment has changed in the last decade:

- Unstable workplace due to downsizing, mergers and acquisitions
- Pressure to work long hours
- Frequent interruptions and constant juggling
- Need to repeatedly demonstrate commitment
- Work extending to weekends and evenings
- Increase in dual earner couples and single parents

Families and Work Institute 2005 Report- Overwork in America

- 44% of US employees are overworked **often or very often in the last month** according to at least one of the definitions described below:

    - 26% of employees were overworked

    - 27% were overwhelmed by how much work they had to do

    - 29% didn't have time to step back and reflect on the work they were doing

- 36% do not plan to use their full vacations

- 43% return from vacations feeling overwhelmed

- 44% with work contact outside of normal work hours are highly overworked versus 26% who have little or no contact

How Big of a Problem is Overwork at your Organization?

✓ Discuss how overwork impacts your business

What is the Cost of Overwork?

- Increased healthcare costs
- Workplace stress
- Employee burnout
- Lower productivity
- Dissatisfaction with work
- Reduced aspirations and refusing promotions/advancement

Stress costs US employers about $300 billion per year in absenteeism, employee turnover, productivity and direct medical costs.

What Contributes to Overwork?

- Advances in technology
- Blurred boundaries between work and personal life
- Lack of control over workload or pace of work
- Poor fit between expectations at work and at home
- Global 24/7 economy
- Frequent interruptions, frantic pace, and the need to multi-task
- Job insecurity
- Responsibility for 2 or 3 jobs
- Lack of respect, trust and autonomy
- Evening and weekend work
- Sleep deprivation
- Staff reductions that result in no administrative support
- Ineffective use of email

Overwork at Your Organization

✓ Discuss what contributes to overwork at your organization

Low Value Work

What is it?

Work that does not add value or accomplish business goals

What causes it?

A culture of face time

Managers who are transaction focused

__Marriott International__ found that by streamlining low value work and focusing on results, managers reported less stress, greater work commitment and a more supportive work environment.

Low Value Work

How much is there?

20% of employee time is spent on low value work

29% of employees report that they do a lot of work that is not necessary

IBM's People Oriented Work Redesign Tool -- or "POWR" -- has enabled teams to pinpoint and resolve unnecessary, low value work at the department level and improve productivity among team members. The groups that have used POWR report increased clarity, teamwork and improved processes, which result in the reduction of time and effort spent on activities that do not provide creative and innovative client solutions.

Low Value Work at your Organization

✓ How much low value work is there in your organization?

✓ Discuss how low value work impacts your business

What Can Be Done to Reduce Overwork while Meeting Business Goals?

Individuals	**Managers**
Teams	**Organizations**

Individuals

- Regularly analyze your tasks and distinguish between the vital and the disposable
- Make adjustments that will ease work pressure without sacrifice of quality
- Take vacations; take sick time if needed
- Set firm boundaries between work and non-work time
- Take care of your health – exercise, eat healthy, sleep, relax
- Minimize interruptions and distractions

***AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals** Work Environment Flexibility and Effectiveness study found that employees who have the flexibility they need are more likely to "strongly agree" or "agree" on defined resilience indicators concerning managing pressure and pace. Also, they are more likely to agree that they have control over their work and have a manageable workload.*

Managers

- Rethink workflow and division of labor
- Consider cross-training and retraining opportunities
- Give employees some choice over their work and their schedule
- Assess the fit between job requirements and employee needs
- Ask employees for input about management decisions
- Support and encourage vacations
- Focus on performance outcomes, not face time
- Ask employees about their workload

At Alcan Inc., effective workload management, process improvement and culture change do not happen overnight, so senior executives are receiving executive coaching to improve their leadership skills while employees receive Resilience Coaching.

Teams

- Agree on expectations for how accessible team members need to be
- Reduce low value work
- Set realistic work plans
- Develop boundaries around interruptions
- Establish flexible ways to get work done with a focus on outcomes

***GlaxoSmithKline** believes that teams working together can best determine how to make work changes that are successful for both themselves and the business.*

Organizations

- Reward leaders that effectively manage human resources and their own time
- Disincent unproductive management behavior that encourages overwork
- Embrace a performance-based culture
- Create a culture of flexibility

*At **Best Buy's** corporate campus, their new Results-Oriented Work Environment lets employees adopt a fluid way of working, free from the focus on time. The unwritten rules are being rewritten so that judgment about anything but results is not tolerated. Employees at all levels are systematically challenging their own deeply held assumptions about how work works.*

What Can Be Done to Reduce Overwork at Your Organization?

✓ Discuss what can be done to reduce overwork at your organization for individuals, managers, teams and the organization

Action Steps

- What are the next steps for our organization?

- What needs to happen so we can move forward?

- Who is responsible for moving our organization towards our goals?