

EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE SERIES

WORK-FAMILY INFORMATION ON: OVERWORK

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WHY IS OVERWORK AN IMPORTANT WORKPLACE ISSUE?

"While we normally equate long hours at work with commitment, long hours are actually much more strongly correlated with increased risk for burnout - and burnout brings with it increased medical costs and lost productivity. Overwork may lead to short term business gains but often at huge costs both to the corporation and to the individual. Looking for ways to improve efficiency and effectiveness both at the company and the team level can help reduce overwork by streamlining and eliminating non-value added tasks." **Betty Purkey, Manager, Work/Life Strategies, Texas Instruments**



WHAT IS OVERWORK?

OVERWORK can be defined as negative outcomes that occur when individuals are required to work more hours than they want to work. Personal perceptions of workload are critical as individuals have diverse reactions to the number of hours worked depending on their needs, lifestyle, expectations and experiences. Individuals have a different tolerance for demands and stress. While many (professionals and dual earner couples) are working harder than ever, some workers (lower wage) can not find enough work to meet their needs.

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HOW DOES OVERWORK IMPACT YOUR EMPLOYEES AND YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Heavy workload and long hours are negatively affecting workers and their families, resulting in:

- Higher stress levels and burnout
- Increased health care costs
- Lower productivity
- Reduced aspirations
- Less time for friends and family
- Less emphasis on health/exercise
- Decline in volunteerism

% DID YOU KNOW?

- One in three American employees is chronically overworked (Galinsky et al., 2005).
- Stress-related illnesses cost American employers about \$300 billion per year (American Institute of Stress, 2005).
- "Twenty percent of employees reporting high overwork levels say they make a lot of mistakes at work versus none (0%) of those who experience low overwork levels" (Galinsky et al., 2005).
- Over the past 25 years, the combined weekly work hours of all couples has increased from 70 to 82 hours, while for dual earner couples with children under 18, hours have increased from 81 to 91 (Galinsky et al., 2005).

Want more STATISTICS or the full references for above statistics?

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WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO OVERWORK?

- Lack of control over workload or pace of work
- Global 24/7 economy
- Job insecurity
- Blurred boundaries between work and personal life
- Responsibility for two or three jobs
- Reduced administrative support
- Frequent interruptions and the need to multi-task



REPORTS WITH MORE INFORMATION

- DTI, TUC, & CBI. (2005). *Managing change: Practical ways to reduce long hours and reform working practices*. London: Department Trade Industry.
- Galinsky, E., Bond, J.T., Kim, S.S., Backon, L., Brownfield, E., & Sakai, K. (2005). *Overwork in America: When the way we work becomes too much*. New York: Families and Work Institute.
- Golden, L., & Wiens-Tuers, B. (2005, Fall). Mandatory overtime work, work-family conflict and unions. *Labor Family News*, 13(4).
- James, J., & Casey, J. (2005, Fall). *Business or busyness: Strategies for managing workload*. Executive Briefing Series. Boston, MA: Center for Work & Family.

Want more OVERVIEWS AND BRIEFS or the full references for the above reports?

http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=12&type=7



SUGGESTED READINGS

- deGraaf, J. (2003). *Take back your time: Fighting overwork and time poverty in America*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Friedman, S., & Lobel, S. (2003). The happy workaholic: A role model for employees. *Academy of Management Executive*, 17(3), 87-98.
- Golden, L., & Wiens-Tuers, B. (2005). Mandatory overtime work in the United States: Who, where, and what? *Labor Studies Journal*, 30(1), 1-26.
- Halpern, D., & Murphy, S. E. (2005). *From work-family balance to work-family interaction*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Jacobs, J., & Gerson, K. (2004). *The time divide: Work, family, and gender inequality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wharton, A. S., & Blair-Loy, M. (2006). Long work hours and family life: A cross-national study of employees' concerns. *Journal of Family Issues*, 27(3), 415-436.

Want more READINGS?

http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=12&type=2&linktype=suggested

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To visit the Overwork Topic Page, go to <http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic.php?id=12>