Making Work Work: Work Redesign at the Work-Life Frontier

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Abstract

Making Work Work looks closely at the experiences of professionals and managers who are increasingly overloaded, continually asked to do more with less, and battling exhaustion when they are supposed to be creating and innovating. While working parents and caregivers are especially hard hit, even employees with few responsibilities outside of work feel overwhelmed by the escalating expectations on the job and a growing sense of job insecurity in the wake of globalization and repeated downsizings. How can we both advance business goals and recognize employee needs for sustainable, healthy, and engaging work? This book tells the story behind one effort to address these concerns with a work redesign initiative that was evaluated with a randomized field experiment in the IT division of a Fortune 500 firm. Drawing on interviews, fieldwork over four years, and the field experiment data, Kelly and Moen describe an innovative work redesign approach to changing work practices and norms and document its benefits for employees, families, and the firm. Making Work Work also analyzes the revocation of the work redesign initiative in the wake of a merger, asking what that change suggests for managing new ways of working through major organizational change.