Brief Summary of the Flexible Work & Well-Being Study

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Preliminaries

- Supported by the National Institutes of Health (National Institute for Child Health & Human Development, Office of Behavioral & Social Science Research)
- Additional support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
- Thanks to Best Buy employees and management
- [www.flexiblework.umn.edu](http://www.flexiblework.umn.edu) or [flexwork@umn.edu](mailto:flexwork@umn.edu)
- See also [workfamilyhealthnetwork.org](http://workfamilyhealthnetwork.org)
Flexible Work Arrangements

- **Flexibility for whom?**
  - Employer-driven vs. Employee-driven

- **Often administered in ways that don’t increase employees’ control**
  - Available as “accommodation” or to a favored few
  - Hard to predict who will “get” them, why, how long
  - Assume “trade-offs” or career penalties so don’t request or pursue
Control over When & Where You Work

- “Work-time control” as key to real benefits to employees
  - Work-life conflicts or facilitation
  - Health & well-being
- **Workplace Changes ➔ Control ➔ Work-Family Conflict**
- Based in occupational health literature, social psychology, and sociology of work studies
A “Natural Experiment” at Best Buy

- Fortune 500 Retail Company, HQ initiative
- **ROWE**: Results Only Work Environment
  - Developed by Cali Ressler and Jody Thompson (now Culture Rx)
  - Rolling out slowly → Pre & Post Data
  - Late adopting departments as comparison group
  - ROWE synergy with our claims: Give employees’ more control over when, where, and how they work. This will benefit employees and the organization.
ROWE’s Distinctiveness

- Explicitly focused on **work-time control**
- Includes critical analysis of current culture
- Implemented through **team sessions** → new norms and expectations (rather than “accommodations” framework for some individuals)
- Highly **participatory sessions**, then experimentation period

- Likely other strategies that would increase employee control over when & where they work…
Web Survey Design (N=659 employees)

ROWE Group

Leadership Decision -1 0 ROWE Training +6 +7 mo.

Wave 1 Opens Wave 1 Closes

Comparison Group

Traditional Work Environment

Wave 2 Opens Wave 2 Closes
Does ROWE Increase Control over When & Where They Work?

- ROWE increases **perceived control** over when & where they work
  - Significant, moderate effects, even after adjusting for previous level of control and many other work factors
- ROWE increases **working at home / off site**
  - Significant and strong effects, even after adjusting for previous patterns and many other work factors
  - Over 9 times more likely to work off site at all
  - About 7 times more likely to work off site 1+ full day
Does ROWE Affect Work-Family Interface?

- Yes.
- Reduces work-family conflict and negative work-family spillover
- Improves time adequacy and sense of fit between schedule and personal life
- All findings true for women, men, parents, non-parents
- ROWE ➔ perceived control over when and where they work ➔ work-family conflict (etc.)
More ROWE employees have a decrease in negative work-to-home spillover** and work-home conflict***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% with LESS negative work spillover</th>
<th>% with LESS work-family conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.3%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Summary of Significant Differences

- Control over When I Work
- Control over Where I Work
- Variability in hours each week
- Variability in schedule
- **Work at home**
- **Commute time**
- Negative work spillover
- Negative work-family conflict
- Work schedule fit
- Time adequacy

- Energy
- Sleep quality
- Less like to come to work when sick
- Less likely to skip going to doctor when needed
- Frequent exercise
- Sleeping more than 7 hours
- Interruptions at work
- Unnecessary work
- Turnover intentions
- Turnover
- Job satisfaction
- Organizational commitment
- Family Supportive Culture
- Job security
Some things don’t change, however.

- Positive and negative home-to-work spillover
- Family-to-work conflict
- Income adequacy
- Family engagement
- Family involvement
- Family relationship quality
- Satisfaction with division of housework
- Number of dinners with children
- Time spent caring for children
- Time spent on volunteer work
- Sense of Personal Mastery
- Overall assessment of health
- Well-Being scale
- Count of physical symptoms
- Psychosocial job demands scale
- Job control scale (decision authority, skill discretion)
- Have time to reflect and process work
- Individual job performance
- Assessment of team’s performance
- Job involvement scale
- Satisfaction with coworkers
- Satisfaction with manager
- Work engagement scale
- Psychological distress
- Emotional exhaustion
The Work, Family & Health Network has partnered with Culture Rx, a long-term care facility and another Fortune 500, white-collar organization.

- Build on ROWE and other workplace initiatives
- Emphasizes employee control over the time and timing of work again
- Randomized field experiment
- 18 month follow-up
- Improve health and family measures
For More Information

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- [workfamilyhealthnetwork.org](http://workfamilyhealthnetwork.org)

- Thank you!