Toward a Model of Work Redesign for Better Work and Better Life

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Abstract

Flexible work accommodations provided by employers purport to help individuals struggling to manage work and family demands. The underlying model for change is accommodation—helping individuals accommodate their work demands with no changes in the structure of work or cultural expectations of ideal workers. The purpose of this article is to derive a Work Redesign Model and compare it with the Accommodation Model. This article centers around two change initiatives—Predictability, Teaming and Open Communication and Results Only Work Environment—that alter the structure and culture of work in ways that enable better work and better lives.

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The world of work is changing. It is becoming more virtual, more global, and more technologically advanced. Expectations of when and where work is done are also changing. Professional, managerial, and many technical employees are often expected to be connected anywhere, anytime.[1]

Changes in technology, globalization, and the ways that people work together have taken a toll on the American worker and the American workplace. Job stressors such as lack of control, work–life conflict, long work hours, and heavy workloads are correlated with self-reported physical symptoms including backache, headache, eye strain, sleep disturbance, dizziness, fatigue, appetite loss, and gastrointestinal problems (Nixon, Mazzola, Bauer, Krueger, & Spector, 2011). And, with more work hours, people are sleeping less (Barnes, Wagner, & Ghumman, 2012; Basner et al., 2007; Centers for Disease Control, 2009).

There are also significant costs for employees' family lives. Conflicts between work life and personal life are broadly, though unequally, felt (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004; Schieman, Milkie, & Glavin, 2009). Fifty-three percent of employed parents say that balancing work and family is somewhat or very difficult, while 31% of married, working adults without children under 18 report difficulties (Parker & Wang, 2013). Half of all employed fathers reported work–family challenges (Parker & Wang, 2013) and, for those in dual-earner couples, fathers were even more likely to report work–life conflict than mothers (Galinsky, Aumann, & Bond, 2011). The intensification of work is felt keenly by growing numbers of dual-earner couples, single parents, elder caregivers, and fathers who are involved in day-to-day caregiving.

Employers are affected too. Job stress, health, and childcare are leading causes of absenteeism, which have a tangible cost that is approximated at $500 to $2,000 per employee per year (Corporate Voices for Working Families, 2004). Moreover, sleep deprivation is a leading predictor of employee burnout and is costing American companies $63.2 billion dollars per year in lost productivity (Kessler et al., 2011). Employees—often those with more attractive skills—look elsewhere for jobs they hope will be less stressful and all consuming. Turnover is costly due to both direct costs and lower productivity of new workers and those who train them.

The dominant response by employers to work–family challenges is to try to help individuals accommodate the work demands—what we label the Accommodation Model. In the next section, we describe this model and discuss its limitations. Then, we explore two initiatives that have successfully created change in the structure and culture of organizations,

Predictability, Teaming and Open Communication (PTO) as it origi-
nated at the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and Results Only
Work Environment (ROWE) as it originated at Best Buy. Comparing
these two initiatives and juxtaposing them with the Accommodation
Model, we derive a Work Redesign Model. As we will show, the
Work Redesign Model frames work as the problem, legitimates the
dual goals of improving work and personal lives, and establishes a pro-
cess for collective critique and experimentation with new ways of
working.

The Accommodation Model

As the costs of the changing nature of work rise, so too does interest in
addressing these problems. The dominant employer response has been
to look for ways to help individuals better accommodate the mismatch
between work demands and family structures, by allowing flexible start-
ing/stopping times, telecommuting, and reduced work schedules (i.e.,
part-time positions in jobs that are normally staffed as full time; see
Correll, Kelly, O'Connor, & Williams, 2014; Matos & Galinsky,
2012). We call these flexible work accommodations (FWAs) because
they are usually negotiated individually by an employee and his/her
manager, rather than being uniformly or broadly implemented to
create change in how work is done and what is valued within an organ-
ization (Kelly & Kalev, 2006; Ryan & Kossek, 2008).

Employees often fear their careers will suffer if they work in a non-
standard way (Wharton, Chivers, & Blair-Loy, 2008). This fear is war-
ranted; workers who engage in flexible work practices or take leaves
have slower wage growth (Coltrane, Miller, DeHaan, & Stewart, 2013;
Glass, 2004), earn fewer promotions and have lower performance
reviews (Judiesch & Lyness, 1999), and are perceived as less motivated
and dedicated (Rogier & Padgett, 2004) than workers who work full
time, on-site, without interruption. Career penalties are greater when
managers believe workers are seeking flexibility to address their per-
sonal needs, rather than clients' needs (Leslie, Manchester, Park, &
Mehng, 2012). Those working flexibly are also socially stigmatized
— viewed as unworthy and often unmanly—in informal evaluations
by coworkers, managers, and others (Williams, Blair-Loy, & Berdahl,
2013).

Ironically, even those employees who win access to flexibility and are
willing to risk slowing their careers may not find the relief for which they
had hoped. Permeability across time and space makes it difficult to

unplug from work, particularly for those in jobs where devotion to work is both expected and experienced as intrinsically rewarding (Blair-Loy, 2003, 2009; Perlow, 2012; Schieman & Glavin, 2008). Grateful employees who have been granted flexibility also report feeling they should offer extra effort to their employer in return (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010).

In light of this reality, scholars have called for changes not only in policies but also in the structure of work and organizational cultures to make the workplace more accepting of new ways of working (Batt & Valcour, 2003; Kossek, Lewis, & Hammer, 2010; Lewis, 1997; Mennino, Rubin, & Brayfield, 2005). In the next section, we describe two initiatives that have successfully begun to make such changes.

Two Cases of Work Redesign for Better Work and Better Life

PTO at BCG

PTO began in 2004 as a research project conducted by Leslie Perlow (2012). After conducting ethnographic observations of how consulting teams in the Boston office of BCG performed their work, Perlow proposed an experiment to the organization (as described in depth in Perlow, 2012).[2] Perlow sought to understand whether it was possible to simultaneously improve the work process and consultants' lives. Having identified the lack of schedule predictability as a common problem for BCG consultants of all levels, genders, and marital status, she asked one team to experiment with a collective goal of taking a predictable day off each week and having a weekly pulse check to discuss the team's progress and how they were feeling about their work and lives. After getting positive results on her initial predictable time off (PTO) experiment,[3] Perlow conducted three related experiments with BCG teams. Each experiment altered slightly the collective goal, with the fourth experiment using a collective goal of one predictable night off each week. The results were so compelling, in terms of both work and work–life benefits (Perlow, 2012), that BCG's Boston Office Leadership decided to continue to experiment with PTO on additional teams. Within 4 years, over 2,000 teams in 66 BCG offices in 35 countries were involved in these experiments. During this period, Perlow stayed involved first as a consultant helping guide the expansion, but then she moved back to a strictly research role. Today, implementing PTO has

become a major company-wide initiative, featured prominently at BCG's annual World Wide Partner meetings.

To be a PTO team, a team has to establish a collective goal of personal interest (usually a predictable night off each week) and engage in a weekly pulse check (usually tacking on 30 min to the weekly case team meeting). The process begins with a kickoff meeting to discuss, sometimes moderate, and most importantly make the collective goal feel owned by the team. As part of the kickoff meeting, the team also engages in a pulse check, whose purpose is to build trust and plant the seeds for openness about both work and personal issues.

The PTO experiment unfolds with teams striving to achieve their collective goal and holding weekly team meetings to reflect on their progress and response to the change process. These meetings are presented as mandatory because PTO requires broad participation to achieve the collective goal. In these meetings, the team reviews whether each person has been able to achieve his/her part of the collective goal, how the team worked together to make each person's night off possible, and what might be done differently to meet the goal if it was not achieved for everyone that week. These conversations routinely move from the specific goal of a predictable night off to broader conversations of what work was expected (by the client, by the team leader, or by the members themselves), whether each task or piece of work was needed, and how communication and coordination could be improved to get the work done more easily and with less stress. Team members also reflect on their emotional reaction to both the change process and the work in progress. As team members build trust and a sense of connection, they increasingly share what is going on in their personal lives and how the team might help better support their needs.

PTO is promoted as an initiative to improve work and life and is not connected to Human Resources (HR) or People Management at BCG. Rather, it is the responsibility of the firm's partners, who are responsible for delivering BCG's core business, client service.

BCG partners must volunteer their teams to participate in PTO, and they must agree to work closely with facilitators throughout the process. Perlow (2012) and her research team initially served as facilitators but later the role was staffed by high-performing BCG consultants who rotated out of client-facing work for several months to do this work. Facilitators meet with team leaders before the PTO kickoff. They facilitate the kickoff and follow-up weekly with each team member and team leader to encourage reflection and openness. Moreover, facilitators lead the weekly pulse checks. Even the most supportive managers sometimes

need to be reminded of the implications of their actions. Facilitators played this role, keeping well-intentioned leaders on track as they faced tight deadlines and client pressures. Support from managers turned out to be a necessary—although not sufficient—condition for a PTO team to succeed (Perlow, 2012). Teams also needed to adhere to the collective goal and structured dialog.

The benefits reaped by a PTO team do not occur overnight but rather grow substantially with the team's engagement in the process. Gradually, teams build trust and transparency, and become increasingly willing to raise issues about their work and personal lives. At the same time, through attempting to achieve the collective goal, teams gain confidence in their abilities to create change. This confidence enables team members to challenge ingrained assumptions about how their work has to be done and propose different approaches.

Successful PTO teams establish new ways of prioritizing work, eliminating less important or unnecessary work and communicating more effectively. Individuals in PTO teams that embraced the change—by pursuing a collective goal and consistently engaging in dialog about how to make that change happen—saw clear, beneficial results for their work and their lives.[4] PTO teams were significantly more likely than teams that did not embrace PTO to perceive that their team was doing everything it could to be efficient (75% vs. 42%), to be effective (80% vs. 51%), and to provide significant client value (98% vs. 84%; Perlow, 2012).

At the same time, those on teams that embraced PTO were more likely than other BCG employees to feel comfortable taking time off for personal life (59% vs. 27%), to feel satisfied with their work–life balance (62% vs. 38%), and to imagine themselves at BCG for the long term (69% vs. 40%; Perlow, 2012).

ROWE at Best Buy

ROWE began as an innovation developed and championed by insiders at Best Buy Co., Inc., around 2004. Ressler and Thompson (2008), both HR employees at Best Buy's corporate headquarters, created ROWE initially in response to a department's employee survey, which revealed that employees did not feel trusted. Within 5 years, ROWE had been implemented in the majority of departments in the Best Buy corporate headquarters and implemented in other firms as well (see gorowe.com). In 2005, sociologists Phyllis Moen and Erin Kelly established a research partnership with Best Buy at the invitation of Ressler, Thompson, and

senior HR executives. From 2006 to 2008, Moen, Kelly, and their colleagues observed ROWE sessions and conducted surveys of employees before and after they began ROWE, as well as surveying employees in departments that continued with traditional work practices.

ROWE is implemented through participatory sessions led by facilitators who are not part of the department or team. In the Best Buy implementation that the research team observed, the primary facilitators were Ressler and Thompson, who knew the organization well (Kelly, Ammons, Chermack, & Moen, 2010).[5]

ROWE is implemented at the department level so that teams reporting to the same director or vice president begin ROWE together. After the senior manager approves moving into ROWE, executives and managers attend a session so they can ask questions, voice concerns, and hear others' reactions (including reports from managers who have already been through ROWE).

All employees in a given department are then oriented to the overarching philosophy in a kickoff meeting. ROWE claims that current work practices are unproductive and outdated; the solution is for employees to be "free to do whatever they want, whenever they want, as long as the work gets done," which will help employees be more focused, productive, and efficient at work while meeting their personal goals and responsibilities (Ressler & Thompson, 2008; gorowe.com). Additional training sessions invite teams to critically reflect on the traditional model of work and identify effective new ways of working together. Group exercises and guided dialog reveal how traditional work expectations about where someone works and how much someone works are perpetuated by the informal and formal reward systems and by everyday interactions. For example, comments such as "Just getting in?" or "Haven't seen you in a while!" are critiqued as examples of interactions centered on time norms. Facilitators suggest responses (such as "Is there something you need?") that refocus interactions on results and working effectively together, rather than on time. Employees brainstorm about how they might change their work practices by working different hours, working some at home, cutting back on meetings, or sharing tasks or information differently among the team. The goal is to propose changes that help the team and individuals reach their objectives while also benefiting employees' personal lives.

After three training sessions, teams are told to begin implementing ROWE principles and practices. Facilitators are not only available for consultation but they also encourage employees and managers to

discuss the changes in their own meetings and casual conversations. After about two months, employees and managers in the department that have just moved to ROWE are invited to an open forum to discuss the changes, share positive stories, and brainstorm on how challenges might be resolved. Facilitators lead this session but deliberately turn to peers to provide reassurance and ideas for those struggling with changes. In all sessions, participants are invited to discuss their emotional reactions to the change process, including sharing anxieties and excitement (Kelly et al., 2010).

ROWE, like PTO, is not presented as a work–life initiative or a gender equity initiative; rather, it is strategically framed as a smart business move. Facilitators deliberately emphasize the value for the organization of moving from a *face time* culture to a workplace that is focused on work outcomes and that encourages employees to think creatively and collectively about how best to achieve those results.

ROWE had positive effects on the organization and on employees' work, personal lives, and health. ROWE reduced turnover—with 6% of employees in ROWE leaving the organization within the study period as compared with 11% of employees in traditional departments—as well as employees' plans to leave in the future (Moen, Kelly, & Hill, 2011). Comparing the changes experienced by employees in ROWE departments and traditional departments, ROWE significantly increased schedule control and decreased work–family conflict (Hill, Tranby, Kelly, & Moen, 2013, Kelly, Moen, & Tranby, 2011), increased sleep, energy, and self-reported health (Moen, Kelly, Tranby, & Huang, 2011), had positive effects on smoking, drinking, and exercise frequency (Moen, Fan, & Kelly, 2013), and increased family meals (specifically among mothers who ate with their children less often at baseline; Hill et al., 2013).

These outcomes were well received by the company, and insiders also reported increased productivity with ROWE. The Best Buy CEO even wrote the foreword for a book promoting ROWE (Ressler & Thompson, 2008, pp. vii–viii, 153–154). However, in 2013, ROWE was discontinued at Best Buy headquarters after a new CEO took over with the charge of turning the struggling company around. A company spokesman explained: "it's 'all hands on deck' at Best Buy and that means having employees in the office as much as possible to collaborate and connect on ways to improve our business" (Lee, 2013). The new CEO asserted that ROWE did not match his vision of leadership (Joly, 2013). Since 2008, though, ROWE has been successfully implemented at over 30 other organizations (see gorowe.com).

Comparing the Accommodation Model and Work Redesign Model

Although PTO and ROWE differ in terms of some aspects of the change process, we find they fundamentally share a set of characteristics that differentiate them from the dominant Accommodation Model, which is best characterized by Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA). Table 1 provides a comparison of FWA, PTO, and ROWE. Based on the shared characteristics of PTO and ROWE, and their differences from FWA, we derive a Work Redesign Model.

Stated Rationale

The commonalities between PTO and ROWE (and the contrast with FWA) begin with their rationale for existing. The Accommodation Model has been developed in response to the needs of today's workers whose responsibilities at home make it difficult to meet the demands of both work and family lives. Changing demographics of the American workforce—especially mothers' labor force participation—are seen as the primary drivers of FWA, as evidenced by the demographic statistics included in so many articles on these arrangements.

In contrast, both PTO and ROWE are framed as efforts to improve work itself. The shared premise of PTO and ROWE is that work process can be made more efficient and effective and, in doing so, individuals' lives will also benefit. In other words, better work–life integration is just one of many benefits reaped by approaching work differently. PTO is premised on finding ways to mutually improve both work and life; ROWE foregrounds the benefits to business, while simultaneously stressing employees' freedom in ROWE.

Implementation

The implementation of PTO and ROWE also differs from standard FWA. The Accommodation Model rests on a set of HR policies or practices that allow select employees to work differently (with variable schedules, telecommuting, or part-time positions). In contrast, both ROWE and PTO are explicitly initiated and supported by the senior *line* managers involved in the work itself. Moreover, the participants in PTO and ROWE are the entire set of employees in the group or unit, whereas the common FWAs involve a particular employee requesting a new arrangement and making an isolated change. This distinction

Table 1. Comparison of Accommodation and Work Redesign Models.

	Accommodation	Work Redesign	
	FWVA	PTO	ROWE
Stated rationale	The new worker, with new demands at home, needs special accommodations to make work–life better	The nature of work is problematic. Change will benefit both work itself and work–life	The nature of work is problematic and the stated driver is fixing the work—making people more productive
Role of HR	Sets policy parameters; *may* guide employee or manager through decision	HR is not involved	HR supports but does not lead
Person who initiates process	Individual employee	Team leader, with senior leader approval	Senior leader—director or VP level
Who is involved in change	Individual employee and supervisor who approves or denies request	Team	Team or larger unit (department)
What changes are made	Policy opens up possibility that individual is allowed to deviate from the normal schedule or location in a particular way	Norms and expectations about how to work are challenged. Amplification process: starts with a particular collective goal then take on others	Norms and expectations about how to work are challenged. All changes are fair game from the start
Challenging assumptions	None	PTO is focused on getting people to realize they can challenge assumptions and change the way they work	ROWE is focused more explicitly on what counts as evidence of good work (visibility, availability, or the end results) and shifting from managerial control to employee control over time
Desired outcome	Help individual making request to change schedule or work	Improve work process through planning, prioritization,	Improve work process through planning, prioritization,

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

	Accommodation FWA	Work Redesign	
		PTO	ROWE
	location, with assumption that will address work–life concerns	elimination of low value work, efficiency, and effectiveness; Improve life—flexibility, predictability, and control	elimination of low value work, efficiency, and effectiveness; Improve life—flexibility, predictability, and control
Leadership support	Approval more likely to happen with supportive manager, higher status employee	Team leadership—value openness and risk taking among team members to raise issues and try new ways of working	Team leadership—value input of team members to develop new communication norms, ways of working
Facilitation	None	Facilitators conduct initial interviews, facilitate kickoff, and weekly meetings. Facilitators also conduct individual meetings weekly with each team member	Facilitators actively guide discussion in training. Teams asked to fold ROWE into team meetings (without facilitator)
Gender dynamics	Formally gender neutral; often pursued by mothers, in practice, and marginalization of users reinforces gender inequality	Formally gender neutral; full team pursues same change in work practices	Formally gender neutral. Risk that women or mothers will pursue more changes in work practices and be marginalized

Note. FWA = flexible work accommodation; PTO = Predictability, Teaming and Open Communication; ROWE = Results Only Work Environment.

121

between individual and collective change is the core factor differentiating the two models: Individuals are helped to accommodate the existing way of working versus groups of coworkers being empowered to work together to rethink how the work itself is done.

Both PTO and ROWE provide a rare opportunity for employees to think and talk critically about the way work is organized and carried out and what is expected and rewarded within a group. Changes in a given practice related to work time prompt related changes in interactions and new expectations of oneself, one's peers, and one's managers. As those new practices, interactions, and expectations are tried, discussed, and then implemented on a more routine basis, new norms emerge and reward systems shift. The changes unfold in a grounded way, uncovering unspoken expectations, identifying new practices to experiment with, and modeling new ways of interacting as a team.

Leadership Support and Facilitation

Leadership support is required in all these initiatives but the form it takes differs. With FWA, an individual manager approves or denies an individual employee's request, sometimes with guidance from a policy expressing top management's openness to flexibility and sometimes based solely on the manager's preferences. In both PTO and ROWE, leadership support signals to employees that those with official authority are open to the reflection process and trying new practices. PTO begins with one targeted change (e.g., one predictable night off per week for each team member) that is discussed and agreed upon by all team members, including the manager. ROWE begins with more changes discussed in training sessions and a call for a period of experimentation in which members of a team might try out several changes (e.g., more work from home, fewer status meetings).

In both PTO and ROWE, facilitators play a critical role by introducing the claim that work needs to change and raising questions, which insiders might not be willing to express. Their goal is to denaturalize the way things are done and legitimate the dual agenda of moving toward better work and better life. PTO facilitators conduct initial interviews to hone in on an appropriate collective goal, facilitate the kickoff meeting, and then lead weekly meetings to support the change process. ROWE facilitators lead training sessions and then withdraw so teams can experiment, before checking in on challenges and successes. Facilitators encourage managers and employees to incorporate

discussions of ROWE into regular staff meetings but do not participate in that process.

In contrast, the Accommodation Model unfolds within the usual subordinate–supervisor relationship in which managers control the way work is done. HR staff may or may not guide employees in crafting their requests or guide managers in evaluating them but managers' authority to decide whether a given "accommodation" is feasible is assumed (Kelly & Kalev, 2006).

Desired Outcomes

Given the fundamentally different goals of individually negotiated FWA versus PTO and ROWE, it is hardly surprising that the desired outcomes differ. With the Accommodation Model, in the best-case scenario, the individual succeeds with implementing an alternative work arrangement. Unfortunately, most of the time, individuals find themselves penalized because they are attempting to do something different, and the formal and informal expectations have not adjusted to make such deviations from standard practice acceptable.

In contrast, with PTO and ROWE, the norms and expectations about how work is done are exactly what are being challenged. Individuals are encouraged to work differently, and their engagement in the change process is valued as a signal of openness to learning. Moreover, in the best cases, the process does not stop with challenging norms around work schedules but rather expands to challenging norms and expectations around who helps whom, who interacts with whom, and how they interact in the process of doing work itself. In the end, when they succeed, both PTO and ROWE eliminate less important or unnecessary work, improve the work process, and may fundamentally alter interaction patterns.

A final difference between the Accommodation Model and PTO and ROWE is related to the kinds of benefits organizations are attempting to achieve. In the Accommodation Model, there is an expectation that the organization will benefit because accommodated workers should have less work–family conflict or stress and, therefore, be more likely to join and stay with the organization. With PTO and ROWE, the benefits to the business go beyond recruitment and retention to improving the way work is done, day to day, task to task, and interaction to interaction.

It is important to note that the Work Redesign efforts we have explored through PTO and ROWE are meant to redesign the work of

the full-time workforce, not to facilitate shifts to part-time schedules. In contrast, a key flexible work arrangement that falls under the Accommodation Model is a reduced hours option. We posit that the Work Redesign Model will ultimately facilitate effective reduced hours positions, because it creates the cultural space in which deviations from traditional time norms can occur. Indeed, the key to making FWA work, as others have noted, is to change the underlying culture, which is the intention of the Work Redesign Model.

Under the Accommodation Model, part-time work is implemented in an unchanged culture. In contrast, when part-time work is implemented within or after a Work Redesign initiative, the reduced hour schedule is added to a culture of work that embraces different ways of working from the outset.

Indeed, in one case where a member of a PTO team tried to work part time, the employee succeeded in a way that she (or anyone else in her office) had never been able to before. Her PTO team also saw bigger benefits. This team was forced to challenge more assumptions about work, creating more changes in how they worked and raising more substantial personal issues. As a result, many team members, not just the part-time worker, were able to make significant changes in their schedule to better meet their personal needs.

Differences in These Work Redesign Initiatives

A Work Redesign Model has emerged inductively from our comparison of these two innovative cases and the Accommodation Model underlying standard FWA. However, there are important nuances that differentiate ROWE and PTO. These nuances provide evidence that there are different strategies for pursuing the essential elements of a Work Redesign Model. Generally, PTO is more context specific, with more explicit guidance for teams as they move through the initial process; while, ROWE is more open-ended with less structure placed around the initial changes.

Facilitators in PTO and ROWE interact somewhat differently with those involved in the change process. In early stages, PTO facilitators interview members of the team to discover the problems with work and with work time, specifically, and then propose a single collective goal. Early stages of ROWE involve more problem validation than problem discovery, with facilitators sharing their perspective on the problems with the current way of working and the ROWE philosophy for creating change.

Another difference is whether the change process unfolds within or between work teams. In the kickoff meeting, PTO engages a single team in coming to agreement on a single collective goal, while ROWE introduces a number of work groups (usually in one department or division) to the change process. Follow-up meetings in PTO involve a single team participating in a structured dialog, while ROWE sessions involve either a large team or a few teams. One benefit of working with multiple teams is that a more enthusiastic manager or team can help a skeptical one move forward, and seeing how other groups critique the work process can open up new possibilities for another team. A challenge is that many details specific to a given team need to be worked out in another setting, usually without the guidance of the facilitator.

The differences in process between PTO and ROWE mirror differences in the scope of the initial change pursued. PTO operates with a narrower originating focus, with the goal of developing capacity for the specific change the team has identified so they can work through additional changes themselves. PTO approaches the change as a collective decision and operates on (facilitated) consensus. In practice, PTO brings managers along carefully, having them weigh in on problem definition and on proposed changes; initially, employees also have less freedom to try things that would work for them individually. Employee engagement and input is essential but the process is fundamentally approached as a team change.

ROWE, in contrast, offers a vision of employee freedom to do what makes sense for each individual, "as long as the work gets done." One employee may want to work at home more regularly, and work to change how key information is conveyed and how certain meetings are handled to facilitate that; another employee may want to bound his or her work to avoid checking email every evening and weekend. The initial changes that people strive for are more customized in ROWE, though more successful teams repeatedly discuss what needs to happen to be sure "the work gets done" and how a given change should be coordinated with other work processes (Chermack, Kelly, Moen, & Ammons, 2012).

ROWE thus welcomes more rapid and varied individual changes than PTO encourages at the start. Employee empowerment is explicitly welcomed in ROWE. ROWE, as a result, may be experienced as challenging for managers who must adjust their understanding of their role from directing when, where, and how the work is done to supporting employees—who are now working in more varied ways—in reaching individual and team goals. PTO focuses on a shared collective goal as

the catalyst to help bring team members together, and unite them in the shared goal of rethinking work together; however, once the process unfolds, any change is open to further consideration within PTO as well. Individual issues are raised and the team members work together to solve these issues.

Discussion

Flexible work arrangements as currently conceptualized and implemented individualize the problem and frequently result in stigmatizing those who take advantage of the purported solution. Others have articulated a critique of standard approaches to flexibility (e.g., Correll et al., 2014; Kelly et al., 2010; Wharton et al., 2008) and called for changing the organizational culture to be more accepting of flexible work patterns (e.g., Kossek et al., 2010; Mennino et al., 2005). We extend that work in three ways.

First, we synthesize these concerns in our description of the Accommodation Model and use two innovative workplace initiatives to elaborate an alternative model. The Work Redesign Model focuses on the work itself, framing its agenda around the dual goals of improving work and personal lives. The process for change invites collective critique and experimentation with new ways of working. Work Redesign initiatives attempt to disrupt the interconnected web of everyday practices, interactions, assumptions, and expectations that usually function to keep the old order in place. This is evident in both PTO and ROWE in the deliberate effort to teach new interactions, so that old interaction patterns do not reactivate old practices and the expectations implicit in them (e.g., visible busyness is a good sign of productivity, work comes first so bringing up personal obligations signals a lack of commitment to the project).

In analytic terms, the Work Redesign Model provides a multi-pronged, coordinated challenge to disrupt the structure of work—that is to challenge the underlying cultural schema and the practices, interactions, and reward systems tied to that schema—rather than taking these ways of working as given, as in the Accommodation Model. Work redesign creates an opportunity for changing the structure of work because it prompts actors embedded in a given organizational system to critically interpret existing rules and resources and promotes alternatives to the established system (Schneiberg & Clemens, 2006; Sewell, 1992).

Second, scholars have advocated changing the culture and altering organizational systems to more fully implement flexible work policies and programs; here, we advocate a different approach. Kelly and Moen (2007) previously described what they believe to be best practices for more accessible, transparent, and equitable flexible work policies that are administered on an individual basis (in addition to describing ROWE as an alternative approach). Kossek et al. (2010) propose that work–life initiatives that are culturally supported and integrated into existing HR systems will eventually "mainstream" these concerns. Our Work Redesign Model begins with an integrated and collective reflection on everyday practices and interactions. Instead of trying to move toward more legitimated individual adjustments and more manager support for those accommodations, we argue here that pursuing coordinated, collective change in all aspects of the organizational system—cultural assumptions, interactions, work practices, and reward systems—is a more direct, and less stigmatized, path forward. Both PTO and ROWE aim to change the culture in ways that welcome individual variations in how work is done but the strategies for doing so differ.

Third, calls for culture change have been made for over a decade (e. g., Lewis, 1997; Mennino et al., 2005) but few have provided guidance on how to achieve cultural change. Our analysis of these two cases provides a more detailed description of such change efforts, showing *how* this happens rather than simply arguing that it needs to.

The Work Redesign Model grows from the pioneering work of Bailyn and colleagues on changing workplaces to advance a "dual agenda" (Bailyn, 2011; Rapoport, Bailyn, Fletcher, & Pruitt, 2002). Like the Work Redesign Model, these scholars argued for moving "beyond work–family balance" to involving employees and managers in identifying and implementing changes in specific work practices and processes (Bailyn, 2011; Rapoport et al., 2002). Unlike the initiatives described here, though, Bailyn and colleagues emphasize gender equity as the ultimate goal, along with work effectiveness of these change efforts (Bailyn, 2011; Rapoport et al., 2002). Consequently, they hone in on particular work practices that are experienced differently by women and men or that directly affect gender inequalities in the workplace.

Neither FWA nor the Work Redesign initiatives described here explicitly target reducing gender inequality as a rationale. Yet, the structure of traditional jobs and careers disadvantages women, given gendered patterns of caregiving within families (Acker, 1990; Hochschild, 1997). Unfortunately, women's position within organizations may be further

disadvantaged by the Accommodation Model. Flexible work policies target those with extensive caregiving responsibilities, and women are more likely to pursue them, especially when they are already in lower status positions (Wharton et al., 2008). However, while less likely to use them, men who do use FWAs are judged harshly for violating gender norms as well as ideal worker norms (Rudman & Mescher, 2013; Vandello, Hettinger, Bosson, & Siddiqi, 2013). We contend that the Work Redesign Model is more likely to avoid these problems because the whole work group—not just mothers or others pursuing caregiving —makes changes.

While Work Redesign encourages deeper changes (in the way work is done and how it is valued) and broader changes (because teams, work groups, or whole organizations engage in this process) than FWA implemented under the Accommodation Model, it is unclear how far the Work Redesign model will spread for reasons we describe below.

Both ROWE and PTO were pioneered in large, white-collar professional organizations that claimed to be innovative but both have now moved into other workplaces. ROWE has been implemented in public sector organizations and among hourly workers (e.g., call centers). PTO's structured process may be appealing to organizations where tightly coordinated labor processes make it challenging to handle more varied changes. Still, organizations focused primarily on containing labor costs—particularly those who accept high turnover rates and have de-skilled jobs so that less experienced workers can get the basics done—are less likely to be interested in work redesign (or standard work–life policies; Osterman, 1995), even if it would benefit those organizations and their employees. PTO and ROWE presume that employees are dedicated, motivated, and capable of improving the way they work and that highly engaged employees contribute significantly to organizational performance.

An additional barrier to pursuing work redesign is the recognition that this type of change requires a substantial investment of time and energy. FWA policies often seem simpler and less challenging to implement, though we argue these policies have much less effect on workers' lives or on organizational performance. Work redesign initiatives also require top management support and senior leaders may not be interested in disrupting a structure and culture that they (and others in powerful positions) have mastered and from which they have benefited.

Even when such changes begin within an organization, employees and managers know that other organizations and individuals in their professional networks still assume that good employees demonstrate dedication to work through long hours, instant availability, and a willingness to organize their lives around work rather than vice versa. The old expectations, practices, and interactions remain salient and powerful, ready to reassert themselves unless the new vision is repeatedly promoted and protected. The challenges of sustaining these types of changes are real. As noted earlier, Best Buy pulled back ROWE under a new CEO, while PTO has survived and spread at BCG even after a change in leadership. Although work redesign for better work and better life requires substantial and ongoing efforts, it shows measurable and sustainable effect on both work effectiveness and employees' lives when such investment is made.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Perlow's original experiments has continued to grow and between 2009 and 2012 Perlow continued to study the expansion of these experiments, but solely as a researcher with no financial interest. The contents of this publication are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of these institutes and offices.

Notes

1. While technology and globalization are affecting all workers, our focus here is on professional, technical, and managerial workers in white-collar settings. These employees are facing intensification of work, while less privileged workers face increased insecurity and unstable work hours and wages (Kalleberg, 2010; Lambert, 2008).
2. Experiment here means trying out a new process of initiating changes within teams, with the goal of learning from that, rather than a research design with randomization of subjects.
3. PTO was chosen because it was the acronym for Predictable Time Off. However, with time as the experiments expanded, and the breadth of their effect came to be fully appreciated, PTO was kept but what it stood for was changed to Predictability, Teaming and Open Communication.
4. Teams that did not embrace PTO include both teams who were not exposed to PTO and those that signed up to do it but did not engage in either the collective goal or structured dialog.
5. As ROWE moved to other organizations, new options for customizing the roll-out were developed, including stand-alone keynote presentations and a train-the-trainer option (see gorowe.com). This section describes the implementation of ROWE at the Best Buy corporate headquarters, which is similar to the facilitated workshops now available to other organizations.

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