

EVERYBODY WINS Families, Workplaces, Society, You

Whether you read the research, talk to our pioneering leaders, or listen to the growing dad community - everyone wins when flex becomes the new normal.

All year long we've been focusing on why flex across the life cycle is good for everyone.

Read the scientific proof ...

At the end of this update we've included information about a rigorous scientific study that proves how flex is good for us and good for business.

Join us next week when we talk to a number of progressive leaders ...

Kyra Cavanaugh - author of the wonderful book *Who Works Where and Who Cares* - will be joining our Thursdays with ThirdPath webinar along with two inspirational leaders who successfully manage flexible work teams. Read on for more details and an excerpt from Kyra's book.

Listen to an amazing group of dads share their flex stories ...

Want to be inspired by the dads who joined us for last month's webinar -- all who have found their own unique way of flexing work and family -- and all who are writing a new narrative on fatherhood. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Just like spring renews our energy - let these stories inspire you about why change is possible.

/Jessica and the ThirdPath team

Your Work Life Balance ***Should*** be Your Companies Problem

This is the title of an excellent HBR blog post Nanette Fonda wrote June 2014 - one that is so relevant it's worth repeating.

In it she references a study that unequivocally proves how system-wide flexibility can improve employees' lives without burdening those who work more conventionally. Here's what she wrote:

"Seven out of ten American workers struggle to achieve an acceptable balance between work and family life, reports a study published in American Sociological Review, funded by the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That number has been climbing over time, to a point where employees - especially parents - feel stressed, overwhelmed, and maxed out. In "Changing Work and Work-Family Conflict: Evidence from the Work, Family, and Health Network," the research team asked what can be changed in the workplace to address this growing health and productivity problem.

"They conducted a large-scale experiment in a Fortune 500 company and found that work-family conflicts don't need to be solely employees' individual, private troubles, but can be resolved systemically with a little management leadership.

"Nearly 700 employees from an information technology department participated in the experiment. These were highly skilled, middle-aged workers with professional and technical degrees. They worked long hours, with over 25 percent logging more than 50 hours per week. Some worked remotely but reported pressure to be visible at the office to demonstrate work and team commitment.

"The research team randomly assigned these employees to two groups. Those in the "treatment" group were then given greater control over when and where they worked, and more supervisor support for their family and personal lives. The control group's working conditions remained unchanged.

"Over a six-month period, the people in the treatment group experienced a significant reduction in work-family conflict - that chronic sense of being pulled in two different directions. Crucially, employees who were more likely to be vulnerable to work-family conflicts (parents and people with less supportive supervisors initially) benefitted most from the intervention. Parents reported working one hour less per week than non-parents, but others did not have to increase their workloads to accommodate parents.

"People in the treatment group also reported they felt they now had adequate time to spend with their families while managing their workloads."

[Click here to read more.](#)

Who Works Where and Who Cares?

That's the title of Kyra Cavanaugh's outstanding book where she provides how- to's for creating flexible work teams and flexible workplaces.

Who Works Where is a hands-on workbook that shows managers how to boost collaboration and performance even when their teams don't work together in the same time or space. The ideas that are presented can be applied equally to teams that are direct reports, whole departments, entire organizations, or project groups in a matrixed organization.

Designed for flexible, virtual, and dispersed work teams, *Who Works Where* helps managers increase their skills while also establishing effective team norms for this new age of work.

The book begins by reviewing a few general concepts. It then provides detailed discussion of six tools managers need to create highly successful flexible work teams. After introducing each tool, the author also provides detailed examples of how each one can be put into practice.

Tool #1 - Performance - Focus on results, not time at the office

Tool #2 - Capacity & Resiliency - Simultaneously focusing on flex and managing capacity, improves resiliency

Tool #3 - When & Where We Work - Find solutions that work for the individual, team and organization

Tool #4 - Work Process - Flex can create opportunities for process improvement

Tool #5 - Communication - Good communication is key to successful flex

Tool #6 - Team Building - Flexing (and non-flexing) employees benefit from team building

Join us next week on our Thursdays with ThirdPath webinar when **Chris Madoo from Marriott International** and **Jeremy Anderson from FlexJobs** provide inspirational examples for my discussion with Kyra Cavanaugh about how to put these tools into practice.

Want to learn more? Here's a [two-page summary](#) of Kyra's book.