

# Workers more satisfied, productive with flexible hours

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Employers can expect higher worker satisfaction and production if the company offers flexible hours that allow employees to handle crises and short-term family commitments, a new University of Michigan study indicates.

When the demands of personal and family life come up against rigid company policies, [workers](#) often feel compelled to maneuver around these formal rules.

Lawrence Root, a professor at the School of Social Work, and the Alford Young, Jr. chair of the Department of Sociology in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, examined how Midwest factory workers created opportunities for short-term flexibility at their jobs.

The workers were able to cope with their family situations, such as dealing with child care or attending their child's sporting event, when they had sympathetic supervisors and supportive co-workers, the research showed.

Root and Young said the lack of formal flexibility can lead to informal ways of coping with work-family conflicts, which can often cause problems for workers and their employers.

A cooperative supervisor usually means less disruption for workers, as well as increased worker satisfaction and production.

In some cases, supportive co-workers were important to informal arrangements, where they covered for an employee who needed to leave briefly. This type of absence has less management control and greater potential for workplace disruption, Young said.

"A supportive work environment is critical for promoting loyalty and a willingness to go beyond the workplace requirements," the researchers said.

The findings appear in the November issue of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and [Social Science](#)*.

Provided by University of Michigan

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