

Study: Mentally reattaching to work important for leader success

August 31 2021, by Cristina Rojas



Reattachment to work is a beneficial practice for managers. Credit: Sora Shimazaki/Pexels

Getting into the right mindset for work can set the tone for the rest of your day—and it's an especially beneficial practice for managers, a new Portland State University study found.

Mentally reconnecting to work—thinking about what you want to

accomplish that day, what's on your day's agenda or what situations you might encounter before you even open your work email—better prepares an employee to be engaged throughout the workday. The study found that on the days that [leaders](#) and managers were better able to reattach to work in the morning, they experienced higher positive moods and work focus and that in turn allowed them to be more successful throughout the day.

Reattachment to work can occur while still at home (thinking about the upcoming day during breakfast), during the commute (anticipating events at work that day) or when arriving at work (mentally running through the day's to-do list after parking). For those working from home, the time saved by not commuting can be used to sit down in front of the computer and mentally get into a work mindset before opening your email or logging into a Zoom meeting.

Charlotte Fritz, the study's lead author and an associate professor of industrial-organizational psychology at PSU, previously found that employees who mentally reconnect to work in the morning are more engaged at work, but she says that this study's focus on leaders is important as they are also responsible for the work and engagement of their employees.

This study found that by successfully reattaching to work at the start of their day, managers were better able to accomplish their own work tasks, felt more energetic throughout the workday and engaged in more transformational leadership behaviors.

"These leader behaviors are crucial for a variety of employee outcomes," Fritz said. "Providing a vision, being inspirational and motivating for employees, listening carefully and supporting [employee](#) needs and providing them with opportunities for growth."

More than 400 leaders filled out daily surveys throughout the workweek and Fritz said their levels of vitality, goal accomplishment and positive leadership fluctuated based on how they mentally reconnected with work in the morning.

"On days when leaders do this, they're going to do better at work," Fritz said.

The study was published in the *Journal of Vocational Behavior*.

More information: Charlotte Fritz et al, Reattachment to work in the morning and day-level leader outcomes, *Journal of Vocational Behavior* (2021). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jvb.2021.103617](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2021.103617)

Provided by Portland State University

Citation: Study: Mentally reattaching to work important for leader success (2021, August 31) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-08-mentally-reattaching-important-leader-success.html>

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