

Media Release



NOVOTEL SYDNEY MANLY PACIFIC

25-28 JUNE 2009

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Organisational psychology conference key media opportunities

Bullied bosses, unprofessional emails, staff motivation and flexible working hours - these are some of the research topics being explored at this week's Australian Psychological Society's (APS) 8th IOP Conference at the Novotel Sydney Manly Pacific (25 to 28 June). For more information please visit: www.iopconference.com.au

Psychologists are available for interview on the following topics. To arrange an interview, please contact: Elaine Grant on 0412 683 068 or Ellise McLoughlan on 0428 445 097

Active employees are more productive

Employees who are physically active outside of work time are more engaged, proactive and perform better in the workplace, a recent study has found.

Professor Sabine Sonnentag from the University of Konstanz, Germany will present her findings in her keynote address at this week's 8th IOP Conference in Sydney.

"Physical activity outside of work helps employees to mentally switch off and recover from job stress, which is highly important for staying in a good mood and for protecting one's well-being - particularly in the face of high work demands," said Professor Sonnentag.

"When under pressure or highly stressed, it can be harder to find the energy and motivation to exercise. Employees also tend to take work home or worry about their high workload for the next day."

Deviant behaviours in the workplace

Employees who damage property, steal, sabotage or misuse information for personal gain are more likely to be incivil or violent towards colleagues, as well as engage in other forms of deviance, according to an internationally recognised expert.

Professor Deniz Ones from the University of Minnesota will present her latest findings on understanding personality and the workplace in her keynote address at the Australian Psychological Society's (APS) 8th IOP Conference at the Novotel Sydney Manly Pacific from 25 to 28 June.

"This research tells us that where there is smoke there is fire. If an employee displays signs of one type of negative behaviour it is highly likely that they will also have the tendency of other deviant behaviours."

"I strongly urge employers to use standardised personality tests as part of the hiring process to identify potential trouble making employees."

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One in four Aussie bosses are bullied

Office gossip, withholding information, and intentionally missing deadlines are among tactics used to bully one in four Australian bosses, according to a new study.

The study into staff who target and harass their managers - a behaviour coined 'upwards bullying' - found other common bullying tactics included spreading workplace rumours, skipping meetings, and ignoring the views and opinions of managers.

"Upwards bullying, like other forms of workplace bullying, is often more subtle and less obvious to other staff," said Sara Branch, psychologist and study author from Griffith University.

"However, it can also include more aggressive behaviours such as yelling, verbal threats, and confrontational phone conversations."

Unprofessional emails causing workplace stress

Poor quality emails are causing almost as much stress in the workplace as the number received, a psychological study has revealed.

According to the study of 218 staff from the University of Queensland, respondents found interpreting ambiguous emails can be just as stressful as receiving large volumes of messages.

"Complex and emotionally-driven emails may complicate the message and allow room for misinterpretation," said study author and provisional psychologist, Rowena Brown.

"Our study found poorly crafted and complex emails can contribute to work-related stress such as feeling overloaded as well as impacting on job satisfaction and working relationships."

Flexible work hours key to staff happiness

Almost half of Aussie employees are unhappy with their working hours, according to a study of 3,324 workers that found staff want to work less hours for a greater work-life balance.

The study found those employees who worked 44.8 hours a week were less satisfied with their jobs than staff who worked 36-hours per week.

Study author, Rosie Bauld from Griffith University said employees want shorter working hours and more flexibility in their jobs.

"If staff feel their work is negatively impacting their personal life, they are more likely to have higher absenteeism rates or look for alternative employment.

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Staff want more than just a pay cheque

Employers should pay close attention to what's driving their staff, according to a recent study that found there are more important motivators for employees than financial rewards.

"Salary packages might engage an employee from the outset, but to sustain staff motivation organisations need to provide opportunities for personal and professional growth," said study author from Allworth Juniper Organisational Psychologists, Nick Stead.

The study of 1,881 applicants to management and professional positions across Australia revealed that several different sources of motivation were more important to employees than salary or financial incentives.

"In tough financial times, we know many organisations are looking for alternative ways to motivate their staff. To retain talent, employers need to invest time in working out what drives their staff."

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To coordinate an interview, please contact Elaine Grant on: 0412 683 068 or Ellise McLoughlan on 0428 445 097.

About the IOP Conference: The eighth biennial IOP Conference will explore contemporary issues in workplace psychology such as employee engagement, work/life balance and the impacts of new media. Keynote speakers include: *Professors Beryl Hesketh, Deniz Ones, Eduardo Salas, Sabine Sonnentag, Phillip Taylor and Robert Wood.*