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Talking with employees returning from ill-related absenteeism: An effective strategy of workplace health promotion (?)

Talking with employees returning from ill-related absenteeism widely takes place in the practice of work health promotion. Its positive effect is often announced while the social mechanisms of its impact is still unknown. The article discusses implications of different practical variations and finally outlines the basic assumptions of the non repressive concept implemented by ‚Wirtschaftsbetriebe Oberhausen‘. This concept basically aims at inventing and stabilizing the healthful power of social supportive structures between employees and superiors. The article presents the main results of an evaluating study covering the implementation process: Such non repressive talks can help intensifying the relationship between employee and superior while their impact in work health promotion projects still have to be discussed.

key words: absenteeism, social support, work health promotion

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Role clarity amongst loan-employees

A comparison between loan - employees and regular staff of a company

The present article discusses reasons for the employment of contract-personnel as well as employment problems referring to an example stemming from the chemical industry. In the empirical part of the article the working situation of 48 loan-employees will be compared to the situation of 85 regular employees of the customer company. The results show that loan-employees are instructed, supplied with tools, and supported with performance feedback as well as regular employees. Role clarity of loan-employees compares to the role clarity of regular employees with up to twelve months of company experience. A joint analysis of both investigation groups shows that role clarity increases with increasing company experience. Further conditions of role clarity are the quality and quantity of information supply and performance feedback for the employees and their teams. Consequence of a significant role clarity is a strong self-efficacy of the employee.

key words: health, information transfer, role clarity, self-efficacy, work satisfaction

Sabine Pfeiffer

Teleservice in the machine tool industry

Paradoxes of innovation and negation of tacit knowledge

The focus of public discussions and scientific research projects on Teleservice are usually its technical, legal or economic aspects. The human factor and questions of work organization and qualification therefore play a subordinate role. One example is that the traditionally high value placed on experiential knowledge in the field of support and service in carrying out technical tasks is often neglected in the reorganization-process of Teleservice implementation. This article presents recent results of a study in the German machine tool industry, which identifies paradoxes of innovation and barriers for Teleservice implementation in production and maintenance, and on this background draws conclusions and shows perspectives for future research.

key words: paradoxes of innovation, tacit knowledge, teleservice, subjectifying work-related action

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Occupational paths and health-related status passages

Empirical results to determinants of limited work-time

Work activities which for health reasons can only be performed for a limited time lead for many persons engaged in such work-places to occupational status passages long before normal retirement age. Whether a person can participate in occupational life as 'relatively healthy' or is excluded due to being 'relatively ill' depends much more on the type of obtainable work-places than on his/her psycho-physical abilities. On the basis of two representative data sets, the article presents empirical identification strategies for socio-demographic, work-place and job-related determinants of limited work-time (German Socio-economic Panel, National and Regional Health Surveys of the German Cardiovascular Prevention Study). The effect of socioeconomic status was interrelated with certain working conditions at the last work place. The best way of coping with the problem that certain work activities can only be performed for a limited time and not until normal retirement age are changes within careers. However, changing the job because of health-related reasons often had unfavourable effects for the further occupational course and referred to down-spirals until the presumably final finishing of occupation. Instead of such an externalization of the problem of limited work-time the alternative strategies of employers should be strengthened.

key words: limited work-time, occupational paths, status passages