

SELECTED REFERENCES

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SECTION

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WORK ADDICTION**

Adams, Jane Meredith. "The workaholic." *New England Business* (33 Union St., Boston, MA 02108), January 2, 1984. pp. 17-20, 79. \$4.00.

It is estimated that 5% of the adult population are workaholics who generally fall into two categories, those who use work to escape or avoid life and those who are addicted to the rewards that success brings them. Business perpetuates and reinforces this phenomenon in the form of bonuses and/or promotions. Most compulsive workers deny their affliction when confronted with it or are simply not cognizant of the problem. Psychologists believe that low self-esteem, depression, and underdeveloped personal skills are the underlying causes of workaholism. Work-addicted employees and managers are less successful than it appears. The presence of a workaholic in a group usually decreases productivity and demoralizes its non-workaholic members.

Cherrington, David J. "The workaholic and leisure." In *The work ethic: working values and values that work*. (pp. 253-276). New York, NY 10020. AMACOM (135 West 50th St.). 1980. 288 pp. o.p.

This chapter examines the proper balance between work and leisure, and what happens when work becomes so excessive that it renders a job meaningless and unsatisfactory. The author cites the characteristics differentiating a hard worker from a workaholic. His examination of instruments assessing workaholic tendencies reveals that workaholics do not know how to use leisure hours for enriching their lives. Research suggests that the way a person responds to work is largely determined by how work fits into the person's larger value system. Workaholics have a shallow meaning of work, because they work for the sake of working. Because they are apt to develop a variety of physical and psychological illnesses, workaholics require a gradual rehabilitation.

Kleiner, Brian H. and Greg Francis. "Understanding workaholism." *Business (Atlanta)*. (Georgia State University, College of Business Administration, Business Press, University Plaza, Atlanta, GA 30303-3093), January/March 1987. pp. 52-54. \$8.00.

This article provides background on workaholism and its destructive effects on the family. Although far more socially acceptable than alcohol and drug addiction, workaholism is just as debilitating. Contrary to popular expectation, workaholics rarely reach their potential or rise to the top, because

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they aren't interested in results. As a group, workaholics are satisfied with their lives and may not feel they are under stress. There is no definite link between the workaholic and poor health, but an unhappy workaholic may be a candidate for burnout and heart disease. However, whether or not the workaholic is happy, his family usually suffers. Over-commitment to work is cited by 90% of divorcing couples as a primary cause of their problems.

Korn, Errol R. and George J. Pratt. "Reaching for success in new ways." *Management World* (Administrative Management Society, 4622 Street Road, Trevese, PA 19047), September/October 1986. pp. 6-10. \$4.00.

High achievers are often confused with workaholics. Scientific studies show achievers to be healthy, happy and productive, while workaholics mistake long hours for quality of work at the expense of their health and personal lives. All the characteristics of the high level achiever can be learned. There are more than 30 basic optimal performance skills that enhance the characteristics of the high level achiever and decrease those of the stressed workaholic. Three of these (active relaxation, imagery and mental rehearsal) are superskills considered most effective and powerful.

Machlowitz, Marilyn. *Workaholics: living with them, working with them*. Reading, MA 01867. Addison-Wesley (1 Jacob Way). 1980. 189 pp. o.p.

This book is the product of a hundred interviews with, and responses to questionnaires by, individuals categorized by Machlowitz as workaholics. Although her sample consists mainly of white collar workers, she claims that the phenomenon exists in all occupations, classes, and genders. She distinguishes four types of workaholics and ascribes six characteristics shared by all respondents. After discussing how people become workaholics, she describes work-addicted persons and their interactions with other people at home, at work, and at play. The author concludes that workaholics are generally difficult to work and live with. The last two chapters suggest ways of coping and coexisting with workaholics in different environments, and methods workaholics may employ to help themselves lead more fulfilling and satisfying lives.

Martin, Paul. "Hooked on work: America's secret habit." *Science Digest* (Hearst Corporation, 224 West 57th St., New York, NY 10019), December 1976. pp. 72-77. o.p.

Behavioral scientists say that one major difference between work addicts and hard workers is that the former feel uneasy when they aren't working, while the latter do not. One danger sign is inventing work simply to keep busy. Heart attacks, ulcers, and hypertension are some of the side effects of work addiction. Workaholics can bring a balanced, rational approach to their lives, provided they recognize the existence of a problem and desire a change. Many experts agree that addicts benefit most from the support of other recovering syndrome sufferers. Family members can help by recognizing work addiction symptoms and suggesting ways to change behavior patterns. Regular vacations are devices that can break the chain of endless working. Hobbies and new interests are helpful provided they don't become new obsessions.

Naughton, Thomas J. "A conceptual view of workaholism and implications for career counseling and research." *The Career Development Quarterly* (American Association for Counseling and Development, 5999 Stevenson Ave., Alexandria, VA 22304), March 1987. pp. 180-187. \$7.50

The existing literature on workaholism consists mainly of descriptive anecdotes of or by purported workaholics. Career counseling remains cursory due to both the vagueness of the concept and dearth of empirical studies. This article discusses different perspectives on workaholism, proposes a typology of the phenomenon, and assesses implications for counselors and researchers. Naughton posits that it is important to view the concept of workaholism as a matter of both degree and kind. This allows some individuals to be seen as highly committed to their jobs but not necessarily workaholics, because they are not compulsive about their preferences for allocation of time and energy. He also suggests that workaholism be recognized as representing either a stable characteristic of persons or a developmental phenomenon nurtured through occupational and work experience.

Oates, Wayne. *Confessions of a workaholic: the facts about work addiction*. New York, NY. The World Publishing Co. 1971. 112 p. o.p.

Oates, a former workaholic, coined the term workaholism. He believes that this malady, rooted in childhood influences, surfaces in adults who feel deprived of institutional approval and appreciation. As a socially approved syndrome, its disabling manifestations are sometimes difficult to detect at first. Oates describes the symptoms and patterns of behavior of a workaholic, identifies the developmental stages of the addiction from the early telltale signs to the final physical or emotional breakdown, probes the social factors that breed workaholism in American society, and proposes specific remedial strategies.

Robinson, Bryan E. *Work addiction: hidden legacies of adult children*. Deerfield Beach, FL 33442. Health Communications, Inc. (3201 S.W. 15th St.). 1989. 179 pp. \$8.95.

Between 40-50% of children of alcoholics become alcoholics themselves, while others become work addicts. This book explains how and why these children become compulsive workers. The author distinguishes between healthy work production and abusive work habits, and provides a test that measures a person's work compulsion. He includes a plan for personal recovery and suggests ways that corporations can help detect the syndrome and eradicate compulsive work patterns.

Schaeff, Anne Wilson and Diane Fassel. *The addictive organization*. New York, NY 10022. Harper and Row (10 East 53rd St.). 1988. 232 pp. \$16.95.

The authors suggest that current literature about organizations and corporate life fails to recognize that many organizations are both addictive and embedded in an addictive society. Furthermore, there is a lack of understanding of the role, power, and pervasiveness of the addictive process. This book explores the concept of the addictive organization: what it looks like; how to recognize it; how it functions; how it sets up processes and structures

which nurture the disease; and how it can begin the recovery process. Section I examines organizational theory, development, and transformation. Section II is devoted to a definition of terms like "co-dependence" and "adult children of alcoholics." Section III suggests four levels of addiction in organizations and their concomitant problems. Section IV deals with the recovery process, and the last section describes the characteristics of organizations moving out of the addictive system.

Schwartz, Howard S. "Job involvement as obsession-compulsion." *Academy of Management Review* (P.O. Box 39, Ada, OH 45810), July 1982. pp. 429-432. \$9.50.

Contrary to expectations, empirical evidence indicates no relation between job performance and job involvement. Job-involved persons appear to be less sensitive to situational characteristics than persons who are not job-involved. The author argues that when job involvement is viewed as an obsession-compulsion, it may help explain these findings. Schwartz notes the Freudian origins of this type of personality and the existentialist view of it which sees obsessives as avoiding the conscious recognition of one's finiteness and vulnerability by exerting control over oneself and his/her environment. One way of dealing with this anxiety is by immersing oneself in work. Because obsessives consider job involvement as an end in itself, they concentrate their energy on the techniques of avoiding anxiety, and not necessarily on the effective performance of work. This obsession also desensitizes the work addict to the characteristics of the job, in as much as any act can serve as a focus of absorption. The author questions the general assumption that job involvement is important in an organization.

Sprankle, Judith K. and Henry Ebel. *The workaholic syndrome*. New York, NY 10019. Walker & Co. (720 Fifth Ave.). 1987. 166 pp. \$16.95.

This volume traces the social movement and economic trends contributing to today's work-obsessed culture. It considers the ramifications of the new work ethic which include: disintegration of the family unit; reorganization of personal priorities; new pressure on family relationships; and other emotional and demographic repercussions. The authors' stated aim is to help people attain an emotional, intellectual, and psychological balance between work and personal life.

Spruell, Geraldine. "Work fever." *Training and Development Journal* (American Society for Training and Development, 1630 Duke St., Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313), January 1987. pp. 41-45. \$6.00.

The negative effects of workaholism on the entire organization include the erosion of team spirit, the breeding of resentment and antagonism among employees who aren't workaholics, and the creation of destructive competitiveness among coworkers. Suggestions for alleviating the problem include: placing a hardworking person at the top of the processing line for a smoother work flow; providing challenging and growing situations for productive non-stop workers; establishing an employee involvement program where a work unit assesses and solves issues that interfere with job performance; evaluating work behaviors; and holding "humor and health" workshops.