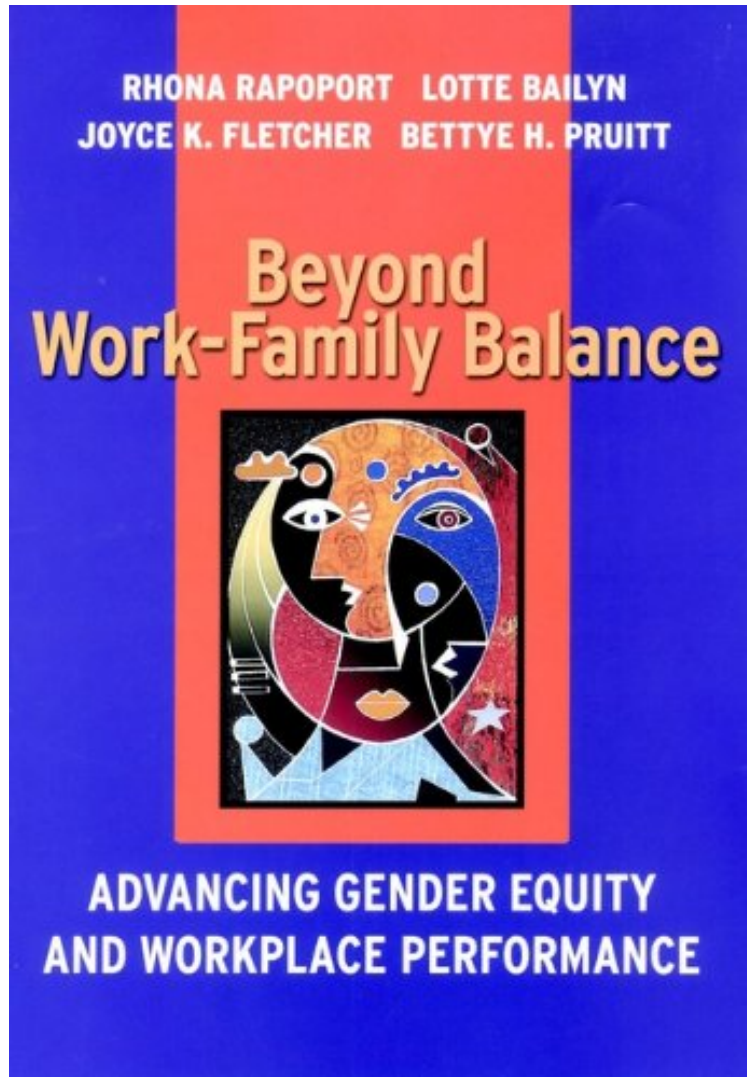


Beyond Work-Family Balance: Advancing Gender Equity and Workplace Performance

Rhona Rapoport, Lotte Bailyn, Joyce K. Fletcher, Bettye H. Pruitt
*ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF*



DOWNLOAD



+

READ ONLINE

#2466746 in eBooks 2008-03-11 2008-03-11 File Name: B000U5I5TI | File size: 42.Mb

Rhona Rapoport, Lotte Bailyn, Joyce K. Fletcher, Bettye H. Pruitt : Beyond Work-Family Balance: Advancing Gender Equity and Workplace Performance before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Beyond Work-Family Balance: Advancing Gender Equity and Workplace Performance:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. The business case
By Robert Drago
The long-awaited, "Beyond Work-Family Balance," is finally out! Many of us have been waiting for the better part of a decade for a full treatment of the work-life integration experiments at Xerox and elsewhere, and this is it! If you are looking for a book to get you charged up about the business case for work/life programs, go elsewhere. If you want the most honest, detailed account of attempts to make the business case successful in practice, this is the book for you. The basic argument starts with

integration: we cannot improve things unless and until we are willing to bring the public sphere of employment and the private sphere of home together, a process that can range from embarrassing to painful. The second ingredient is the dual agenda of improving business performance and gender equity. The tightrope involved in carrying this dual agenda into the workplace is what makes the book interesting, powerful, and realistic. The authors argue that an interactive research approach is required to make the dual agenda work, with the researchers listening and learning almost as much as the participants in the business world, a process that requires constant feedback, reflection, and communication. Indeed, an entire chapter is devoted to lessons for research teams wishing to pursue research while applying a dual agenda to themselves. Sometimes the dual agenda succeeds, and employees and managers learn how to improve the functioning of workplaces for all participants (yes, stockholders even benefit). But the fundamental honesty of the authors leaves us wondering: is it worth it? Fortunately, I think the answer is yes, but the authors leave us in no doubt as to the incredible amount of work required. The one question left hanging concerns unions, since the parallels between many labor-management cooperation initiatives and the integration approach are multiple (if not perfect), but unions are not mentioned. Well, that leaves something for the next book. Incredibly well-written, brutally honest, and extremely insightful! A must-read for academics and practitioners alike.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A groundbreaking book

By Suzan Lewis This is a book we have all been waiting for. After decades of reflection and debate about how best to develop innovative, high performance organisations, on the one hand, and how to enhance gender equity and work-personal life integration on the other hand, this book tells us that the two are not only compatible, but mutually dependent. Written in a non technical and thoroughly engaging style, the book argues that work practices and norms which are inequitable are also ineffective. The authors have the rare knack of presenting a deep and thoughtful analysis in such a clear way that their argument seems simple and obvious. The heart of the problem lies in the gendered assumptions that underpin many everyday working practices. The authors point out that assumptions based on traditional masculine values and life situations include the defining of commitment in terms of long working hours that preclude time for family or personal life, and the valuing of stereotypical male competencies, such as heroic action and firefighting, above interpersonal and other competencies regarded as more "feminine". Drawing on action research in a range of organisations they demonstrate how these assumptions and the practices that follow from them, undermine effective performance, but are so taken-for-granted that we rarely question them. What really distinguishes this book is that the authors go beyond identifying problems to provide a well tried method for bringing about meaningful change. It does not offer one size fits all solutions but does provide a process for reaching tailor made solutions. Their method of Collaborative Interactive Action Research (CIAR) includes examining working practice and the assumptions that sustain ineffective practices and gender inequity and then thinking collaboratively with work teams to come up with innovative solutions to what they call the "dual agenda". The case studies used throughout the book are based on experience in a wide range of organisations so that everybody should be able to identify with at least some of the situations described. This should leave limited room for the traditional cry of "it won't work here". For all those readers who are interested in organisational performance and change and in gender equity, whether or not they have already made the connections between the two, this book will make compulsive reading. Even the most cynical will find it difficult to totally disregard the central message that gender equity and effective performance go hand in hand.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Book! New Thinking!

By A Customer This book provides a powerful example that thinking out of the box can open up a new perspective on a conflict that had seemed to be unsolvable. And this book is an example that academic research can lead to applicable and practical results. The conflict between work life and family life is as old as the industrial age. We all know it and we all experience it in our daily life. The four authors, all of them experienced researchers, have for most of their lives tried to better understand this conflict and its underlying story. But with this book they went a step beyond traditional approaches. Based on case studies they unveil a number of assumptions on which this conflict is based. They challenge norms and traditional thinking. Career choices, life opportunities, values and reward structures are based on a specific western type of thinking that historically has been shaped by white, married, middle-class men. The result is a system that dominates most of our work-life and effects our private life, that of men and women. The authors question this system from two angles. First, they analyze the often painful struggle between having a life and a career, and how individuals are trying to balance the two. Second, they show that the widely believed assumption: "this system is bad for us but good for the organization" does not hold true. Organizations and work processes are often inefficient and the individual behavior that is based on these norms don't move the whole organization forward. This book does not make the mistake of ending up with an easy answer. The authors identify leverage points for significant change in organizations. The book has helped me to rethink basic assumptions about work and organizations in the industrialized world and to see new potential for change.

Everyone who struggles to meet the demands of work and personal-life responsibilities knows how tough it is to do so. This bold new book shows that it is the deeply engrained separation of work and personal life that has limited our ability to deal effectively with the conflict between them. Beyond Work-Family Balance demonstrates why the image of "balance" is outmoded and why a new approach -- work-personal life integration -- offers greater promise for

meaningful change. Providing many examples from action research projects in more than a dozen organizations of different kinds, the authors show how using their method of integrating rather than separating personal-life considerations from the workplace can achieve positive outcomes, not only for workers but also for the work. The method offers a way of looking deeply into the work culture to find inequitable and ineffective work practices that are so embedded and routine that no one thinks to question them -- they are just the way things get done. Once identified, these work practices can be changed to achieve what the authors call a Dual Agenda: a more equitable workplace where both men and women can achieve their full potential and a more effective workplace where the needs of the work, rather than gendered and outmoded assumptions, determine what gets done and how.

.com Beyond Work-Family Balance, by academic researchers Rhona Rapoport, Lotte Bailyn, Joyce K. Fletcher, and Bettye H. Pruitt, grew out of a decade-long search for ways to restructure business life that would "enhance organizational effectiveness while making the workplace more equitable and improving the quality of working people's lives." While few would oppose such goals at face value, their full attainment has nonetheless remained elusive as business pressures increase and unrealistic gender assumptions--like institutional refusal to acknowledge the increasing emergence of women as primary breadwinners--remain entrenched in our corporate cultures, structures, and practices. This book advances a conceptual framework for appropriate organizational change that is tied directly to the dual agenda spelled out in the two-pronged premise of its subtitle: Advancing Gender Equity and Workplace Performance. With no one-size-fits-all solution possible for such complex issues, the authors draw on related studies in a dozen different workplace settings to instead present a starting point "so that organizations so inclined and the people in them can embark on a similar journey" of exploration and solution. The result will be of interest to anyone who agrees that such change is badly needed and long overdue. --Howard Rothman A welcome contribution to theory and practice, this volume describes a program developed by the authors (academics and professionals experienced in the work/family and organizational behavior fields) to create a more equitable and satisfying workplace. Their program is different in that it attempts to tie together two organizational goals usually tackled separately: improving the bottom line and improving employees' ability to manage their work and personal lives. The authors' underlying beliefs that work and family life should be integrated and that when it is, gender and diversity issues will be addressed and employees will be more effective contributors to their organizations. When it is not integrated, management often experiences costs without productivity gains, while employees often feel work/family initiatives have not been successful. The authors detail actions taken in several consulting assignments with various companies, sharing surveys and meeting agendas. They describe a process that includes many discussions, frequent feedback, and reevaluation. Problems and failures as well as successes are reported. Clients are assisted in understanding assumptions associated with work needs, personal requirements, communication methods, outcome measurements, and rewards. The ideas presented in this volume are provocative and the suggestions realistically appraised. Recommended for graduate, research, and professional collections. -- F. Reitman, Pace University "This book should be read by anyone who would like to (or needs to!) reflect on the universal work-life challenges, which are not exclusively women's but apply equally to men. Companies and other organizations wanting to succeed and survive both now and in the future will, without doubt, benefit from an increased awareness of these challenges and of the many myths which surround effectiveness and productivity in the workplace; myths which tend to persist in spite of the dramatic changes in both the workplace and the workforce." --Ragnhild Sohlberg, vice president, corporate staff, Norsk Hydro ASA, Oslo, Norway "Demonstrates convincingly that it is possible to have both gender equity and improved workplace performance; the 'Dual Agenda.' The authors' detailed description of their action research methodology and its impact on culture change in organizations breaks important new ground. This book will be of great interest to practicing managers, researchers, and consultants concerned with improving overall organizational effectiveness." --Edgar H. Schein, Sloan Fellows Professor of Management Emeritus, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management "If ever there was a book that goes beyond surface realities and uncovers assumptions about how jobs get done and what kind of performances are valued, this is it! Probes issues of organizational effectiveness, diversity, and work life with uncommon clarity and insight. What's more, it provides guidance on how to improve company performance as well as the lives of employees on and off the job." --Ellen Galinsky, president, Families and Work Institute and author of Ask the Children: The Breakthrough Study That Reveals How to Succeed at Work and Parenting "There has never been a greater need for organizational effectiveness or for productive and motivated people. This book goes to the heart of that issue, so critical as we seek a new model for doing business. Xerox is proud to have been on the ground floor of this seminal research." --Anne Mulcahy, CEO, Xerox Corporation "As a financial executive, husband, and father, I found Beyond Work-Family Balance to be very helpful in addressing key dilemmas that I face. Business leaders who are striving to increase shareholder value while maintaining employee satisfaction will find it a valuable addition to their tool kit. My experience is that work-personal life integration and gender equity can be attained in a manner that makes this a win-win for the employees and the company. It is time for the business community to embrace the messages and approaches in this book." --David E. Meador, Senior VP and Chief Financial Officer, DTE Energy "Beyond Work-Family Balance" demonstrates

convincingly that it is possible to have both gender equity and improved workplace performance—the "Dual Agenda." The authors' detailed description of their action research methodology and its impact on culture change in organizations breaks important new ground. This book will be of great interest to practicing managers, researchers and consultants concerned with improving overall organizational effectiveness. —Edgar H. Schein, Sloan Fellows Professor of Management Emeritus, MIT Sloan School of Management