

WHEN **WORK** GETS IN THE WAY OF **WORK**



WORK

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Reclaiming organizational capacity

*How do I unlock worker capacity,
and how should it be used?*

There's little doubt that "busy" is an accurate description of what workers are currently feeling. New tools meant to increase productivity and efficiency often add new layers of complexity as well. As current efforts to rethink unnecessary or nonessential work appear to be falling flat, how can leaders and workers come together to reclaim organizational capacity for net new work, improved well-being, and improved responsiveness to market changes and challenges?

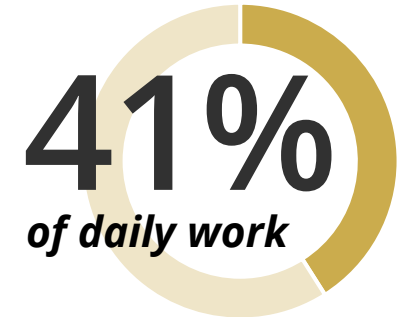


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WHAT THE DATA SHOWS



is spent on non-essential tasks



is extremely or very effective at
finding and implementing ways to
simplify work

HOW CAN WE GET UNSTUCK IN WAYS THAT DON'T BENEFIT THE WORKERS AND THE ORGANIZATION?

REWORKING WORK?

68%

of workers

say they don't have enough uninterrupted time to focus on important tasks during the workday

41%

of professionals' time

is spent on work that doesn't contribute to the value their organizations create

22%

of survey respondents

say their organization is highly effective at simplifying work

USING SLACK TO HEIGHTEN PERFORMANCE



In rock climbing, keeping **slack** in the rope that supports the climber is a critical practice that ensures safety, flexibility, and freedom. The same is true in the workplace: creating slack is about giving workers the space and freedom to manage their responsibilities in ways that work for them and the business.



Nearly 70% of workers say they lack uninterrupted time to focus, and 41% of daily tasks don't contribute real value. Around 22% of employees spend over 10 hours a week just trying to look productive rather than doing meaningful work. Creating slack—unscheduled time to focus and innovate can reverse these trends.

CLEANING UP

82%

of organizations

say freeing up capacity is very important or critically important

35%

of organizations

doing something

8%

of organizations

making great progress

LIVING THE TREND



Adopt a new mindset about the value of slack



Use AI and workforce data to identify essential tasks



Partner with workers to implement a continuous work reset process

To truly benefit from slack, organizations must clean up low-value work and rethink priorities. Currently, 82% of workers say unnecessary meetings reduce their productivity, 35% report frequent interruptions, and 8% of their time is lost to duplicative or redundant tasks. Removing these barriers, using AI to focus on high-impact work, and shifting focus from activity to outcomes helps create space for meaningful contributions, improving performance, well-being, and long-term growth.

Namibian Readiness Gap

According to the Namibian data from the Deloitte 2025 Global Human Capital Trends survey, 45.16% of surveyed participants believe it's critically important to increase worker capacity for deep thinking, imagination, and personal growth, while cutting back on bureaucratic, low-value tasks. However, this awareness hasn't yet translated into action. Only 27.91% are currently considering this shift, with little to no concrete effort made. Even more telling, 33.33% of respondents say they lack a proper understanding of the issue. This gap presents a clear opportunity for Namibia to build awareness, equip leaders with the tools to simplify work, and create intentional space for meaningful contribution.

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ACTIONS

Adopting a new mindset

- Reframe how you think about and value slack with a focus on business and human outcomes. “Slack” doesn’t equate to “slacker”.



medibank

Health insurer Medibank launched a 4-day workweek experiment in 2023 – workers received 100% of their pay for 80% of the hours but were expected to maintain 100% of their productivity. To do this, they focused on reducing low-value work to give the extra hours back to the workers.

Results to-date of the experiment are promising. Productivity and performance levels remained the same; worker turnover intention and absenteeism dropped; workers experienced a 9.6% reduction in job stress and a 13% improvement in overall health.

Finding the slack

- Adopt a vertical and horizontal framework for rethinking work
- Use workforce data to identify value-added and value-robbing activities at a task level
- Help workers identify and understand the value of their roles and where efficiencies can be gained with simple tools such as job canvases
- Make AI your ally in identifying and addressing inefficiencies



DEW2I

German energy company Dortmunder Energie- und Wasserversorgung GmbH wanted to improve their customer service function, they identified case processing as a task that consumed much of their worker capacity.

In response, the team developed AI collaborators to process hundreds of thousands of standard cases, freeing up their human workers to handle more complicated cases and customers

Keeping the slack

- Co-create new metrics with workers that focus on the outcomes defined in the work reset
- Make ‘work resets’ an ongoing process via workforce planning and ongoing performance management



Zappos

Online retailer Zappos set an outcome for superior customer service.

So rather than evaluating its call center agents on how quickly they resolve an issue, their metric is how satisfied the customer was with the interaction—regardless of how long it took.

IN PRACTICE

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