

## **Work Design Applied to Workaholics [Television Series]**

Workaholics is a comedy TV series about three best friends (Adam, Blake and Anders) working as telemarketers. They share the same work spaces and live in the same house. They are always up to mischief in the office, usually playing pranks on their boss or colleagues. I will be applying work design theory to Season 1, episode 6, 'The Strike'.

This episode sees them wanting to celebrate their tradition, 'half Christmas'. They try to convince their boss Alice to give them two days off for their celebrations. Alice did not approve their request, reasoning that this is not an official holiday. Undeterred, they decided to celebrate 'half Christmas' anyway by decorating their cubicles with accessories from a local store. When Alice found out, she asked them to shut down their celebrations. Unhappy, Adam and Blake decided to go on strike. They felt that Alice's decision to not approve their days off to celebrate their tradition was not fair, but they conceded, choosing to celebrate this at work instead. It seemed to them that Alice was not accepting of their compromise, and this made them very unhappy.

This aligns with theory of hygiene factors from the motivational approach. Specifically, their organisation could have reconsidered the organisational policies to take into account multicultural employees, and to try to create a good work environment, so that employees will feel more satisfied and appreciated, which in turn leads to more productive work.

Following the strike, Adam and Blake were easily replaced by Alice. Anders chose to not take part in the strike, because he needed the job. However, Anders did not feel the same social connection with these new employees as he had with Adam and Blake. This can be linked to the sociotechnical systems approach, specifically: individual job and relationship with co-workers.

Because of the decline in quality of his social relationships at work, Anders was unhappy and ultimately decided to join the strike. This illustrates the theory that although people may work individually at their jobs, the social relationship between co-workers is very important for job satisfaction.

The episode ended with the organisation agreeing to discuss the requirements of the employees. The organisation's decision to negotiate resulted in the workers returning to work. This aligns with the technical and personal needs theories. Both parties benefitted from this negotiation - the organisation had efficient employees returning to work, while the employees were more satisfied with their working environments. According to various work design theories, this will lead to an increase in productivity and at the same time improve employees' social support at work.

## References

Cummings, T. G., & Worley, C. G. (2014). *Organization development and change* (10th ed.).

Boston, MA: Cengage learning.

Koch, C. (Director). (2011) The strike. [Television series episode] In B. Anderson (Creator) &

A. DeVine (Creator), *Workaholics*. New York City, NY: Comedy Central.