

How Was Your Day?

Capitalizing on Positive Work Events by Sharing them with Family

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Abstract

Increasing research attention has been paid to affective events at work. However, until very recently, research has failed to consider that employees' reactions to work events extend beyond the confines of the workplace and are often interpersonal in nature. In particular, research shows that sharing positive events increases positive affect and satisfaction levels above and beyond the experience of positive events.

This paper takes this discovery a step further, by applying this to the work-family interface research. The central purpose of this paper is to integrate existing theory on work-family integration and interpersonal capitalization on positive work events. Specifically, we examine the effects of sharing positive work events with one's spouse on employee positive affect and life satisfaction.

A field study was conducted in which 131 employees of a large Midwestern university provided accounts of their most important positive event during the prior week. Results indicated that having shared that event with one's spouse was positively associated with positive affect and life satisfaction after controlling for personality and event characteristics. These results were corroborated in a subsample of 99 employees whose spouses provided independent reports of whether the event was shared with them.

Overall, this paper shows that positive affect and life satisfaction increased not only by experiencing positive events, but also by the act of sharing these events with others. Hence, it hints at how people can be active in further improving these aspects of well-being, rather than simply experiencing many positive events. More importantly, this paper shows that such an interpersonal act of sharing is just as effective when conducted cross-domain – the act of sharing positive *work* events with *family* members increases *life* satisfaction and positive affect.