

Designing Work for Life:

A Strategy for Recruiting and Retaining the Best



Sandra C. Kolb and Naomi Johnson

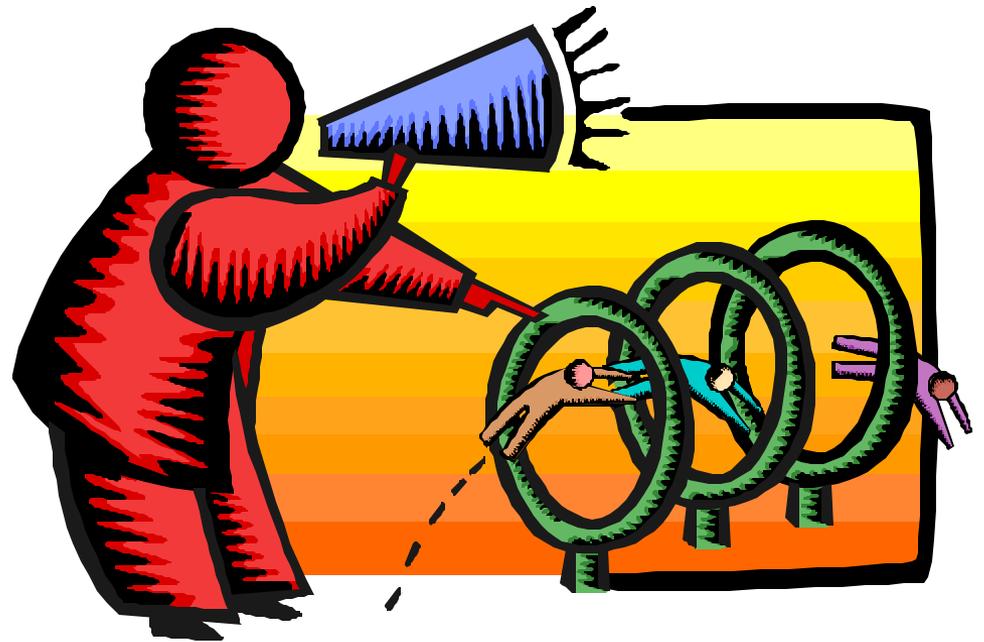
Office of Human Resources

Office of the Assistant Secretary for
Administration and Management

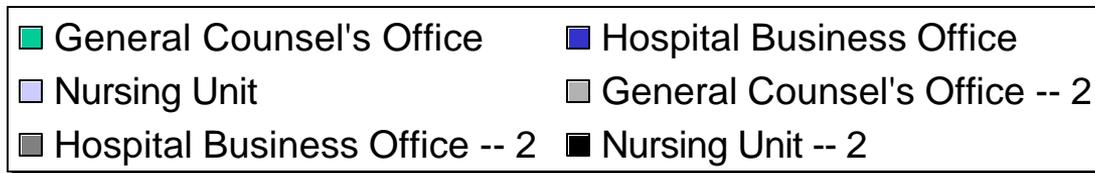
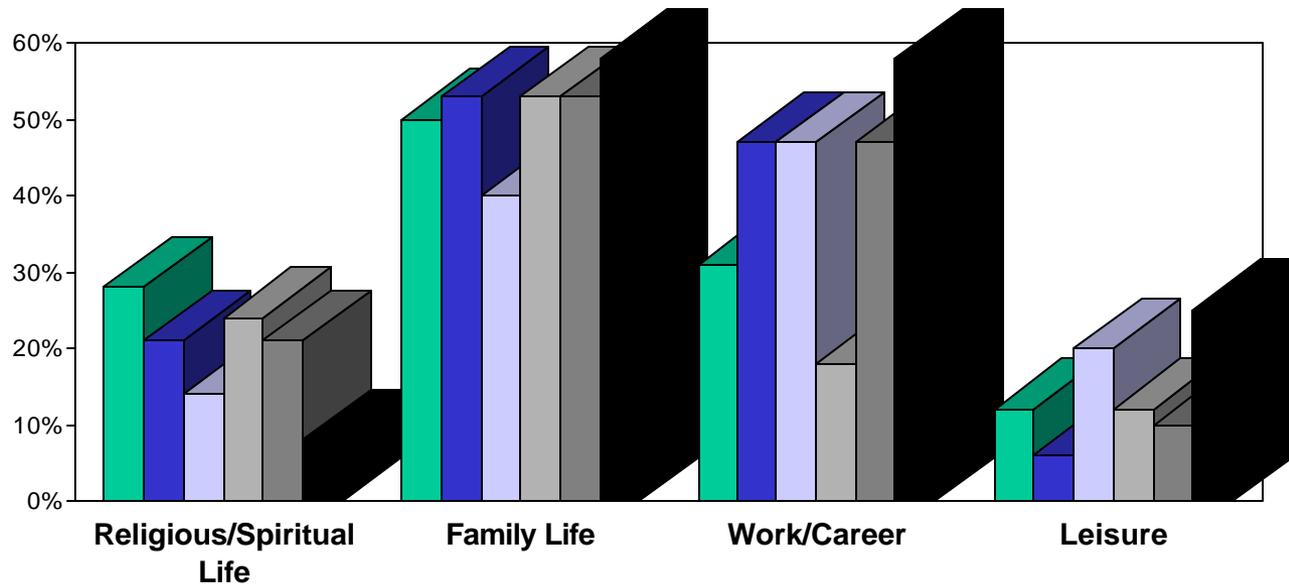
Family-Friendly Work Practices: The Challenges

- Programs widespread, underutilized
- Policies and actions not in agreement
- Seen as accommodating personal needs
- Can cause resentment among co-workers
- Viewed as employee benefit, not business imperative

*Wanted: Employees
without a Life!*



Designing Work For Life Employee Questionnaire: *Central Focus at Beginning and End of Pilot Periods: A Comparison of Employees in Three Pilot Site Locations*



Importance of Time/Flexibility in Scheduling Work



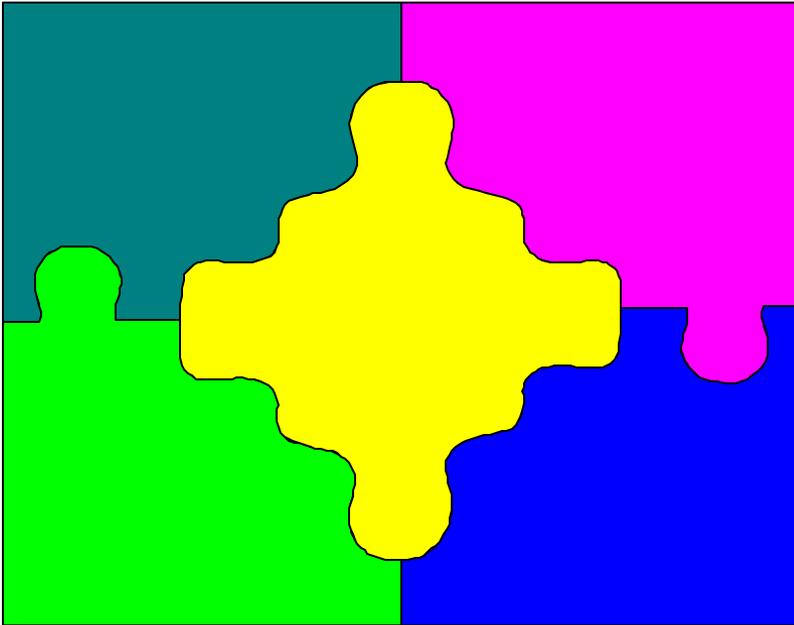
■ General Counsel's Office
■ Hospital Business Office
■ Nursing Unit

- In 2001, more employees rated having a job that allows for time to meet family or personal priorities as “very important” than having a job with a high salary.

Background of Work Redesign Pilot Projects

- Based on Ford Foundation and other research in private sector -- part of HHS' Quality of Work Life Initiative
- Dual Objectives: Improve organizational productivity and employee's ability to integrate work and personal life
- Work Group Focus: Look at the whole, not just needs of individuals

Designing Work for Life: Three Pilot Projects



- Division in the Office of General Counsel
- Hospital Business Office
- Hospital Nursing Unit

Business Need

Division in Office of Recruitment and
the General Counsel retention

Hospital Business Recruitment and
Office retention

Nursing Unit Cyclical nature of work
Employee stress

The Process

- ④ *Appreciative Inquiry*
- ④ *Traditional data collection: questionnaires, work process analysis*
- ④ *Data feedback -- “all hands” retreat*
- ④ *Possibilities and design*
- ④ *Recommendations*
- ④ *Implementation and tracking*

Approved Experiments

- Division in General Counsel's Office
- Hospital Business Office
- Nursing Unit
- Flexi-place
- Simplified Time and Attendance Reporting
- Alternate Work Schedules
- Supplemental staffing
- Discharge education partnership with pharmacy

How We Evaluated

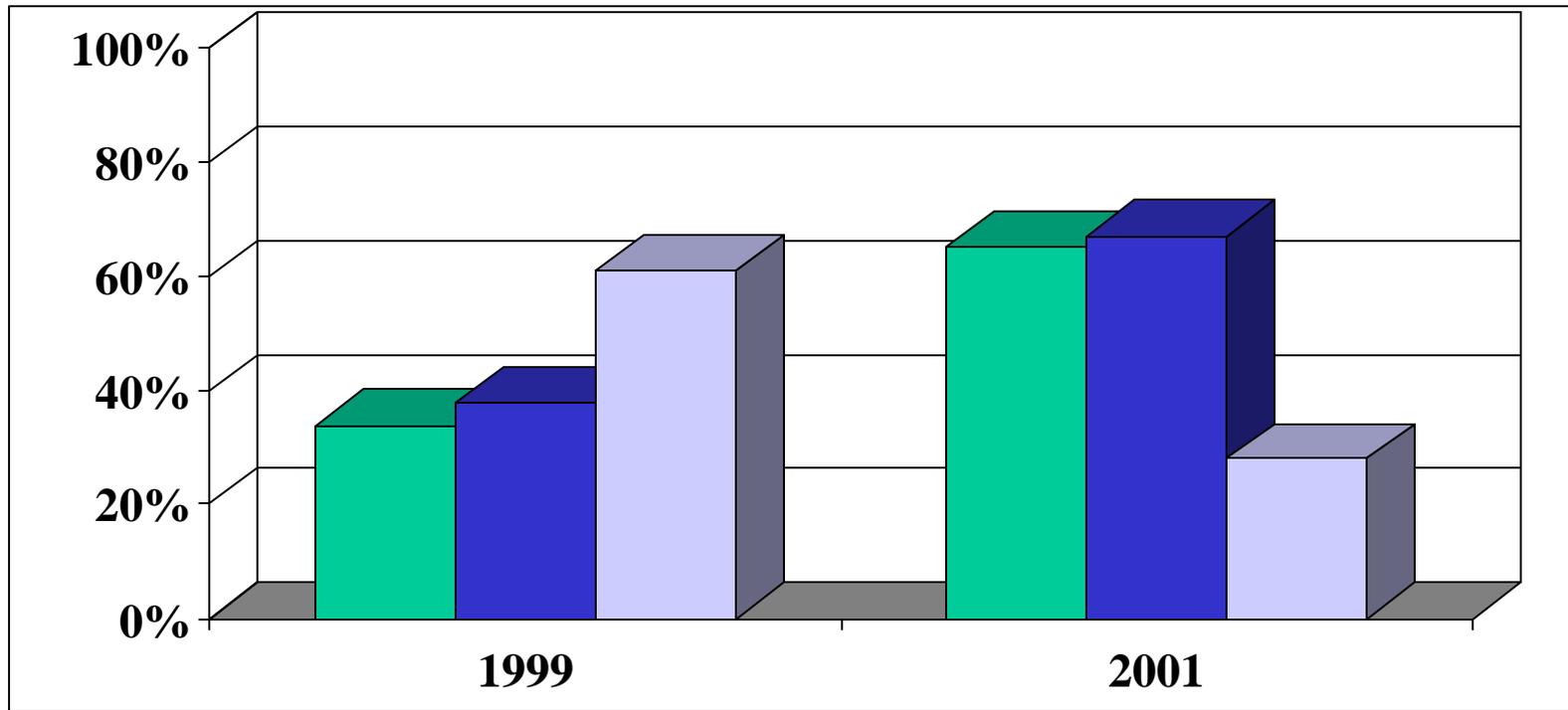
Measures

- Employee/coworker satisfaction
- Leave usage
- Overtime
- Workload timeliness
- Float hours (nurses)
- Discharges
- Turn-over (General Counsel's Office)

Method

- »»» Interviews
- »»» Pre- and post-surveys
- »»» Time sheets; logs
- »»» Time sheets
- »»» Worker logs
- »»» Nurse manager's logs
- »»» Agency Monthly Report
- »»» Personnel records

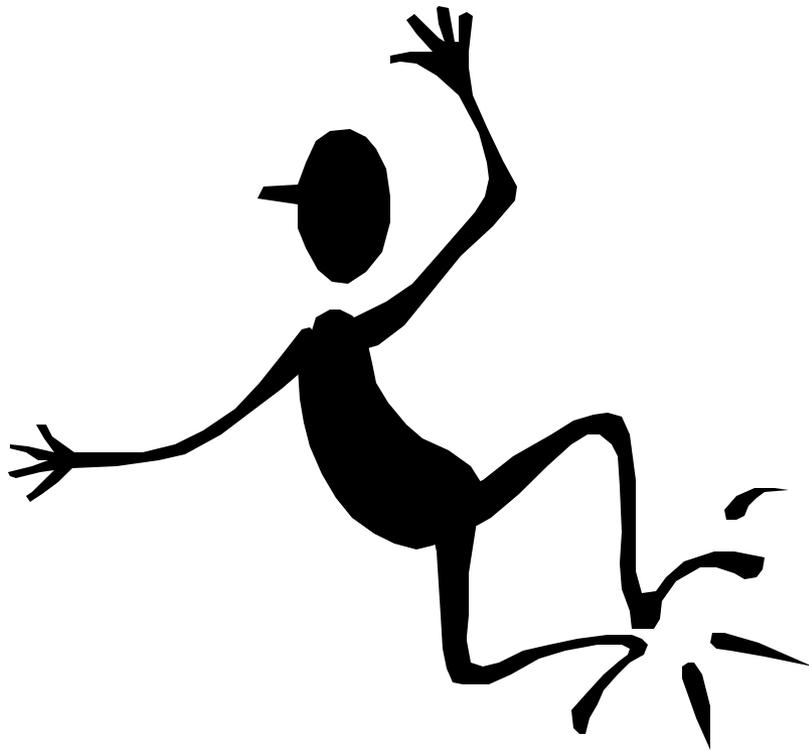
Employee Satisfaction with Work/Life Balance



■ Office of General Counsel ■ Hospital Business Office ■ Nursing Unit

% answering "agree" or "strongly agree"

Office of General Counsel Flexi-place



- Users, co-workers, supervisors all satisfied
- Majority felt it had positive impact on organization
- All recommended making permanent

Office of General Counsel Simplified T&A Reporting

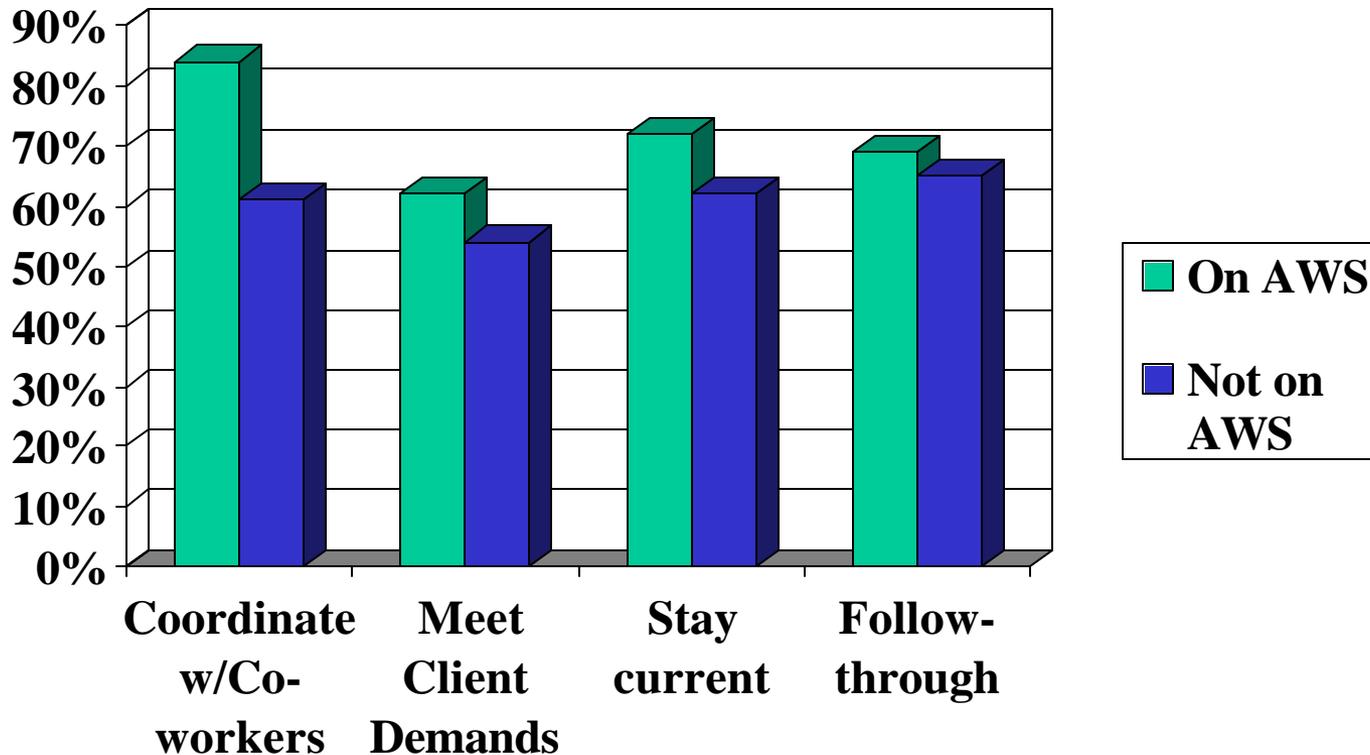
- Led to feeling of trust
- More use of credit hours (82% cf. 69%)
- Credit hours per person almost doubled



Hospital Business Office: Alternate and Staggered Work Schedules and Performance...

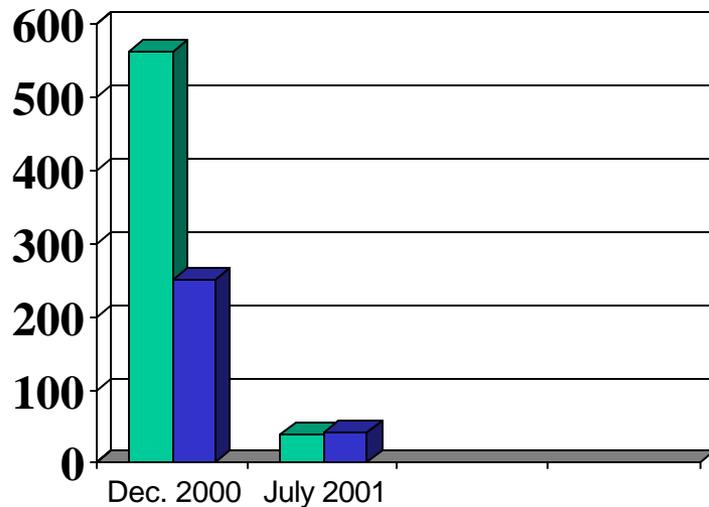
- Charts for scheduled appointments ready when clinics opened.
- Better patient service: front desk staff still in reception area when last patient leaves.
- More efficient use of office equipment.
- Improved ability to see tasks completed in one day.
- Ability to staff up during peak hours improved.

Hospital Business Office: Additional Impact of AWS on Performance



% answering "good or "very good"

Hospital Business Office: Alternate and Staggered Work Schedules and Productivity...



■ Outstanding Medicaid verifications
■ Outstanding patient updates

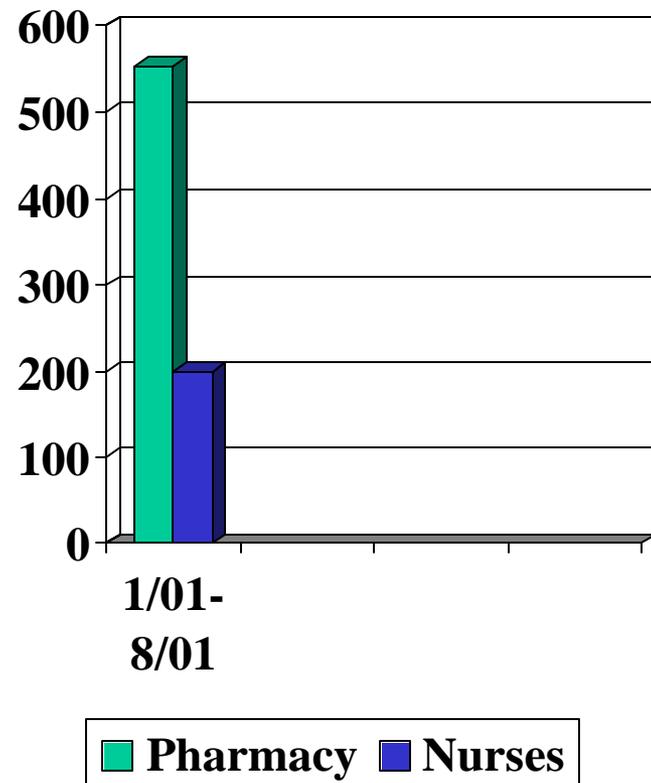
- More timely correction of errors
- Better understanding of process on part of providers
- Lower backlog and improved timeliness of updates

Nursing Unit: Impact of Supplemental Staffing

- Plan:
 - Staff for low season
 - Supplement RSV season with 3 contract nurses
 - Intent:
 - reduce stress, need for unscheduled leave and overtime during RSV
 - reduce need to float during summer
- Impact:
 - 1 Contract nurse hired for night shift for RSV season.
 - Difficult to evaluate
 - Mixed results
 - some reduced stress
 - did not relieve float situation
 - hired staff deemed unreliable

Nursing Unit: Impact of New Procedures with Pharmacy

- Pharmacy handling most discharge sessions
- Time saving for Peds
- Improved customer service
- Fewer interruptions for pharmacy



Impact on Recruitment and Retention



- Telework used as recruitment tool.
- New hires applied as soon as eligible.
- Employees stopped looking for other jobs or turned down offers.
- Employee returned to job when new employer did not offer flexible schedules.

Some Lessons Learned

- Retain the “dual objective” focus and define success.
- Solicit widespread employee involvement.
- Focus on work group level.
- Responding to employees engenders trust.
- Leave behind capacity to continually improve the work environment.