Helping in Organizations – A double-edged sword?

A/Prof Matthias Spitzmueller, Queen's School of Business, Ontario, Canada

Abstract: Research on helping suggests that it yields a myriad of positive outcomes, not only for the organization and work group, but also for subjective well-being of the helper. Helping others serves important psychological functions, it contributes to higher personal well-being, positive self-evaluation, physical and mental health, and personal development. Not surprisingly, research shows that employees are generally amenable to receiving help and typically reciprocate by providing future help to those who have helped them. More recent empirical evidence questions the notion that helping is always associated with positive consequences. This research shows that helping can contribute to work-family conflict, role overload, and even slower career progression and salary advancement. In this presentation, I will present a series of field and laboratory studies conducted in different cultural contexts to explain when helping is most likely to benefit the helper, investigating the role of the helper’s personality, the social context in which helping is performed, and the group composition. I will discuss practical implications of this research for the selection of employees and the design of work in organizations.

Presenter: Matthias Spitzmueller is an Assistant Professor of Organizational Behavior at Queen's School of Business. His research focuses on team leadership and on helping behaviors/cooperative work behaviors and has been published in journals such as the Academy of Management Journal, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Management, Journal of Organizational Behavior, and Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes.

Date: Friday 14 November 2014
Time: 12:00-1:00pm followed by Sandwich Reception
Venue: BUSN 142 Case Study Room
Registration: Siew.Wade@uwa.edu.au by 11/11/2014
For more information: Gillian.Yeo@uwa.edu.au on 6488 1875