Abstract: Many work-tasks have a “correct” or “prescribed” method of completion, yet employees may be tempted to “cut corners” or “take short-cuts” to get work done more quickly and save time. However, cutting corners can result in accidents and injuries. Previous research has identified individual differences as predictors of engaging in unsafe behaviors on average, but even a very careful and conscientious person could be subject to a momentary lapse in caution. Thus, it is important to understand when and under which circumstances individuals are most likely to engage in unsafe corner-cutting behaviors. To this end, multiple studies are presented. In a field study using large national datasets it is demonstrated that time pressure interacts with workplace hazards to predict on-the-job injuries. Next, two laboratory studies are used to demonstrate how unsafe corner-cutting emerges dynamically within-persons over time. The results indicate that corner-cutting behavior is most likely to emerge when time is scarce, competing demands are present, perceived danger is low, and task-performance is seen as an obligation. I conclude with a discussion of implications of corner-cutting behaviors for safety, productivity, and motivational processes.

Presenter: James Beck is an assistant professor of industrial/organisational psychology at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada. He received his PhD in I/O psychology from the University of Minnesota in 2012. Dr Beck’s research primarily deals with motivational and self-regulatory processes. Specifically, Dr Beck is interested in factors that influence the way individuals allocate finite resources like time and effort among competing goals over time. Dr Beck’s work has appeared in numerous I/O psychology outlets, including Journal of Applied Psychology, Organisational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, and Leadership Quarterly. Additionally, Dr Beck currently serves on the editorial board of Organisational Behavior and Human Decision Processes.

Date: Friday 13 September 2013
Time: 12:00-1:00pm followed by Sandwich Reception
Venue: BUSN 142 Sir Rod Eddington Case Study Room
Registration: Sarah.Thoms@uwa.edu.au by 09/09/2013
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