

Get Off the Work Treadmill

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Teresa Amabile, a professor at Harvard Business School, likens today's work environment to running on a treadmill. People race to keep up with meetings, emails, and deadlines, while making no real progress – especially on creative tasks.

Instead, it often would be better to do less, says Amabile, an APS Fellow. The single most important thing managers can do to enhance workplace creativity is “protecting at least 30 to 60 minutes each day for yourself and your people that's devoted to quiet reflection,” she tells the *Harvard Gazette*.

Amabile has spent the last 35 years researching life inside organizations and how it influences employees and their performance. Amabile says the ever-accelerating treadmill in the workplace lessens creativity.

“In the short term, people become less engaged in their work if their creativity isn't supported,” she says. “They will also be less productive because they often can't focus on their most important work. In the long term, companies may lose their most talented employees, as well as losing out because they won't have the innovative products, innovative services, and business models that they need to be competitive.”

“Managers and employees need to work together to constantly prioritize, to figure out what is truly important, what they can forget about, and what can they push to the back burner in order to reduce time pressure,” she adds.

Read more of her [Harvard Gazette](#) interview.