

Beyond switching-off the lights: A conceptual model for explaining employees' green extra-role behaviors in companies

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In research as in managerial practice, green initiatives in organizations are mostly conceived of as environmental management systems or top-down managerial approaches. Recent research however shows that grassroots pro-environmental initiatives of employees provide a great potential for environmental change in organizations. Especially extra-role behaviors or green initiatives of employees that go clearly beyond routine behavior like switching off lights during a lunch break offer great chances for greening companies.

Companies should therefore make more use of the private environmental interests of their employees and their knowledge about renewable energy technologies. Several studies so far have proven that green behavior can spill between domains, so we assume that private green behaviors of employees can also spill over to the respective workplace. Showing a strong green identity while trying to be consistent over several behavioral domains employees might be willing and keen on bringing in green ideas into their workplace. Employees can thereby also combine their green identity and green living in their workplace in developing own green business models and acting as green intrapreneurs in the company.

Based on these assumptions and drawing on insights from the organizational citizenship and intrapreneurship literature this paper provides a model to explain green extra-role initiatives of employees towards greening the company. In this model, identity plays a key role in the explanation of extra-role behaviors of employees. Several studies have shown that self-identity can be considered a solid factor for the explanation of behavioral intentions.

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