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Downsizing? Time to increase high commitment work practices

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A new study by SFU Business professors reveals that high commitment work practices -- such as formal training programs, employee suggestion programs, flexible job design, and self-directed work groups -- need to be increased during downsizing in order to maintain productivity gains.

SFU Business professors Chris Zatzick and Rick Iverson recently studied 3,669 Canadian workplaces and discovered that downsizing flatlines any competitive advantages gained from existing high commitment work practices. Only those organizations that actually increased these practices during downsizing experienced any productivity gains.

The duo's study won the Best Convention Paper award in the Human Resources Division at the 64th annual meeting of the Academy of Management in August.