



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:  
OUT AT THE OFFICE ?!**

BY  
PROF. DR. DOMINIC FROHN,  
FLORIAN MEINHOLD,  
CHRISTINA SCHMIDT

**WORK.  
TOGETHER.  
DIFFERENTLY.**

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## FOREWORD

### Dear readers,

More and more companies are committing to a respectful approach to their employees in order to foster a non-discriminatory and open work environment.

But what is really going on inside these companies? Do their corporate cultures actually provide a space for an open approach to one's own sexual identity and / or gender identity? This question is the focus of a new edition of the study "Out At The Office?!" by Prof. Dr. Dominic Frohn, Florian Meinhold and Christina Schmidt. This new edition marks the first time that the work situation of bisexual and trans\*-people employed in Germany has been examined to this level of detail.

This is also exactly where PROUT AT WORK comes in: ensuring equal opportunities for people regardless of their sexual identity, gender identity and gender expression in the workplace. Thus we have decided to help to publish this study so that as many companies as possible have access to the interesting results of the analysis, providing them with the information they need to improve their commitment to diversity.

Albert Kehrer  
PROUT AT WORK-FOUNDATION  
CEO



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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: OUT AT THE OFFICE ?!**

by  
Prof. Dr. Dominic Frohn,  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

The employment situation for LGBT\* people is still unsatisfactorily researched. There are only few qualitative studies and just a handful of quantitative studies to date that have focussed in particular on work-relevant topics. The new edition of the study “Out At The Office?!” by Prof. Dr. Dominic Frohn, Florian Meinhold and Christina Schmidt looks at the current work situation of LGBT\* people. It explores the significant changes that have occurred in the workplaces of lesbian and gay employees within the last ten years. Furthermore, the study has been expanded to include the perspective of bisexual and trans\* employees, who have so far received little attention in research.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

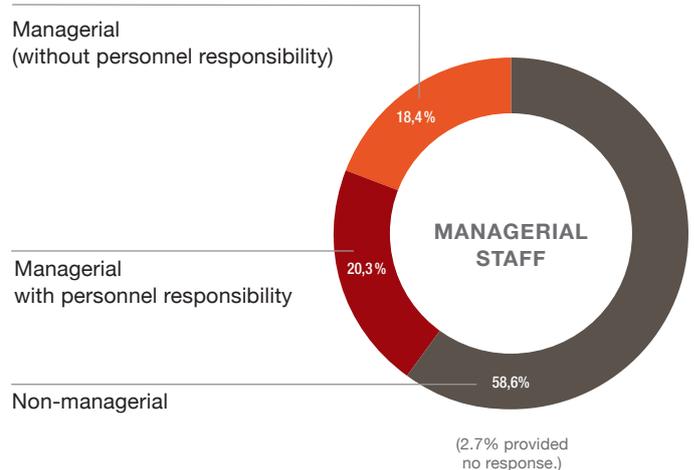
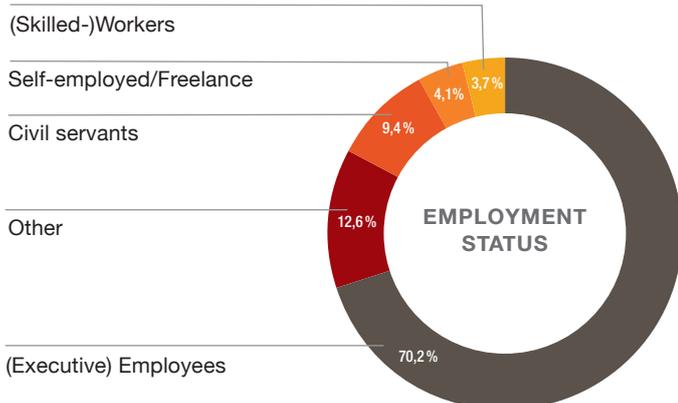
The collection of data took place from mid-February to early May 2017. During this period, LGBT\* workers took part in an online survey, providing information on their workplace situation and their sexual or gender identity.

2,884 LGBT\* people in Germany were included in the evaluation. This number consists of 2,385 lesbian and gay (LG), 209 bisexual (B) and 290 transgender (T\*) employees. The average age of respondents is around 38 years.

	SURVEY 2007	SURVEY 2017
TARGET GROUP	Lesbian and gay workers (LG)	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans* workers (LGBT*)
SAMPLE	2.230 LS	2.884 LSBT*, of which 2.385 LS, 209 B und 290 T*
AVERAGE AGE	35 years	38 years
GENDER/GENDER IDENTITY	30.2% female 69.8% male	34.2 % (cis-)female, 55.7 % (cis-)male and 10.1 % trans*

It is striking that 80.1% respondents (i.e. more than three quarters), possess at least a technical college or general higher-education entrance qualification. Of these, 67.1% (i.e. more than two-thirds) have completed post-secondary education. Overall, 82.8% of lesbian, gay and bisexual respondents are fully employed, compared to only 65.9% of trans\* employees.

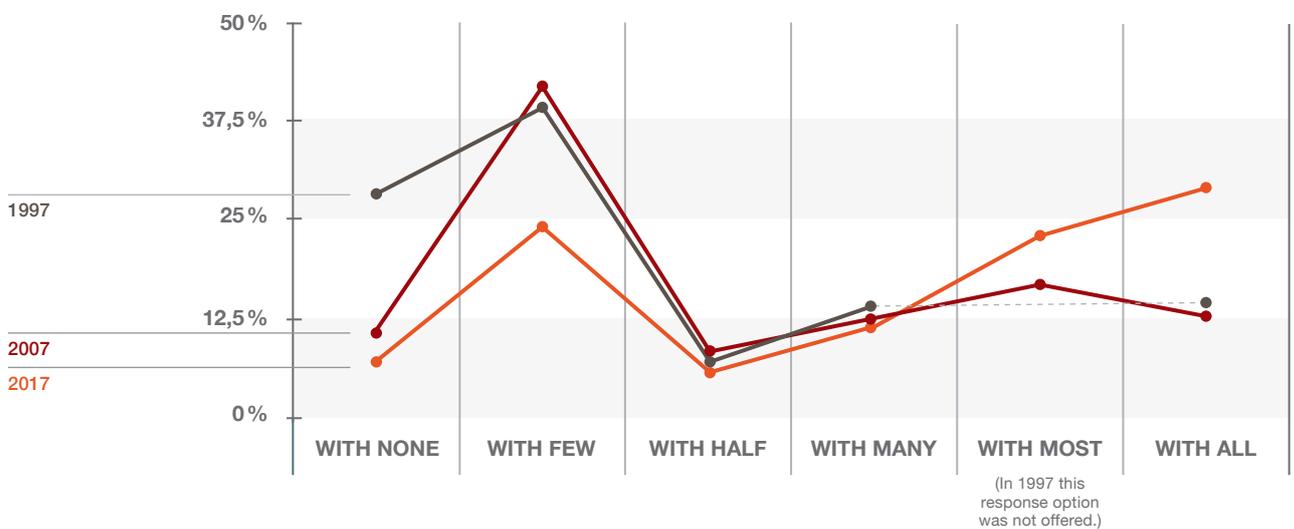
Trans\* people are thus more often in marginal, irregular or part-time employment or are currently not employed. A majority of LGBT\* interviewees (70.2%) report themselves as being (managing) members of staff. 58.6% of all respondents report being non-executive, 18.4% as executive without personnel responsibility and 20.3% as executive with personnel responsibility.



## RESULTS

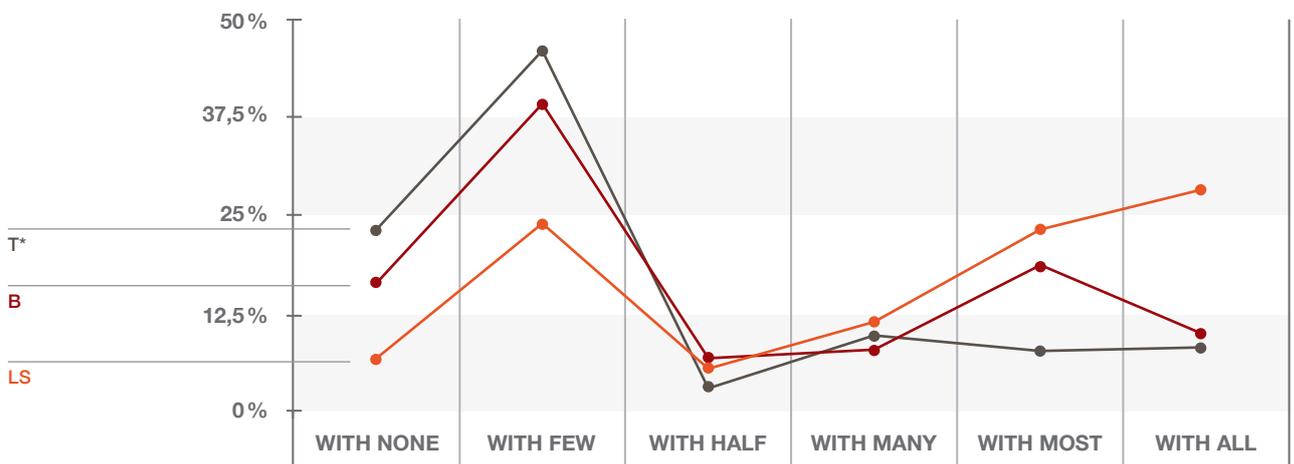
### DEALING WITH SEXUAL IDENTITY AND/OR GENDER IDENTITY.

In comparison to the surveys from 10 years ago (Frohn, 2007) and 20 years ago (Knoll, Edinger & Reisbeck, 1997), it appears that lesbian and gay respondents seem to be much more willing to open up about their sexual identity: the proportion of lesbian and gay respondents who said they were open about their sexual identity with no colleagues or only a few colleagues was 66.8% in 1997 and 51.9% in 2007, compared to 30.6% in 2017.



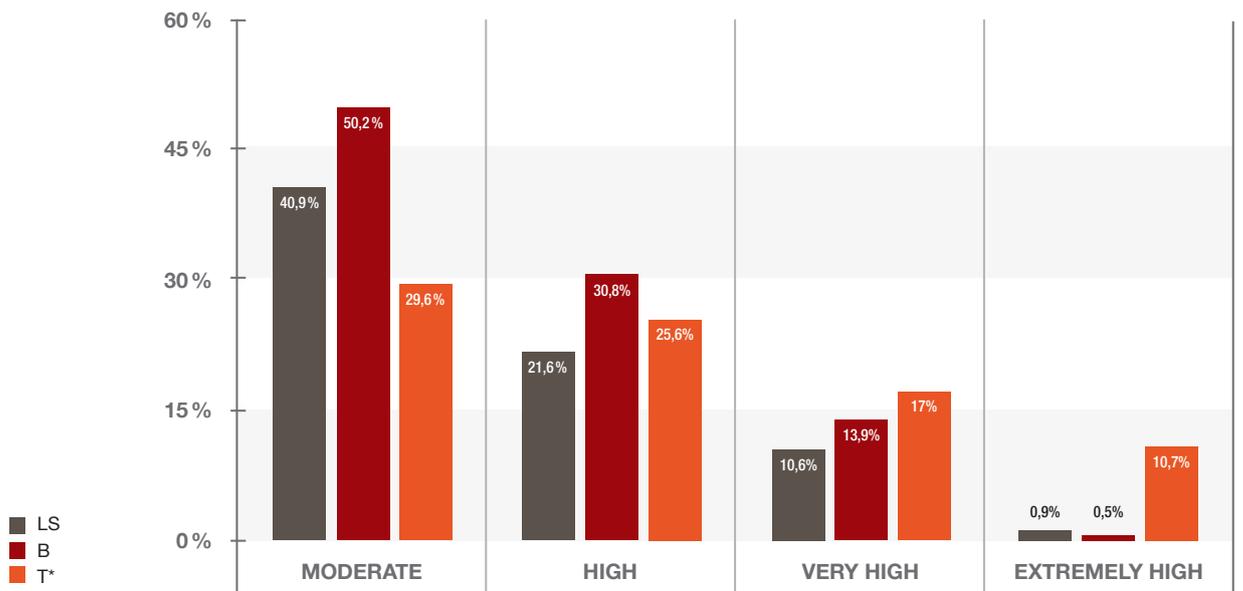
Bisexual people tend to be more closed at the workplace: 55.5% say that they talk about their sexual identity with no colleagues or only a few colleagues. Trans\* employees are more than twice as unlikely to be open compared to lesbian and gay people: about 70% of trans\* respondents say they

talk about their identity with no colleagues or only a few colleagues. In general, LGBT\* people are less open to managers than to colleagues. But those who are employed as managers or executives are more open about their sexual identity or gender identity than those who are non-managerial employees.



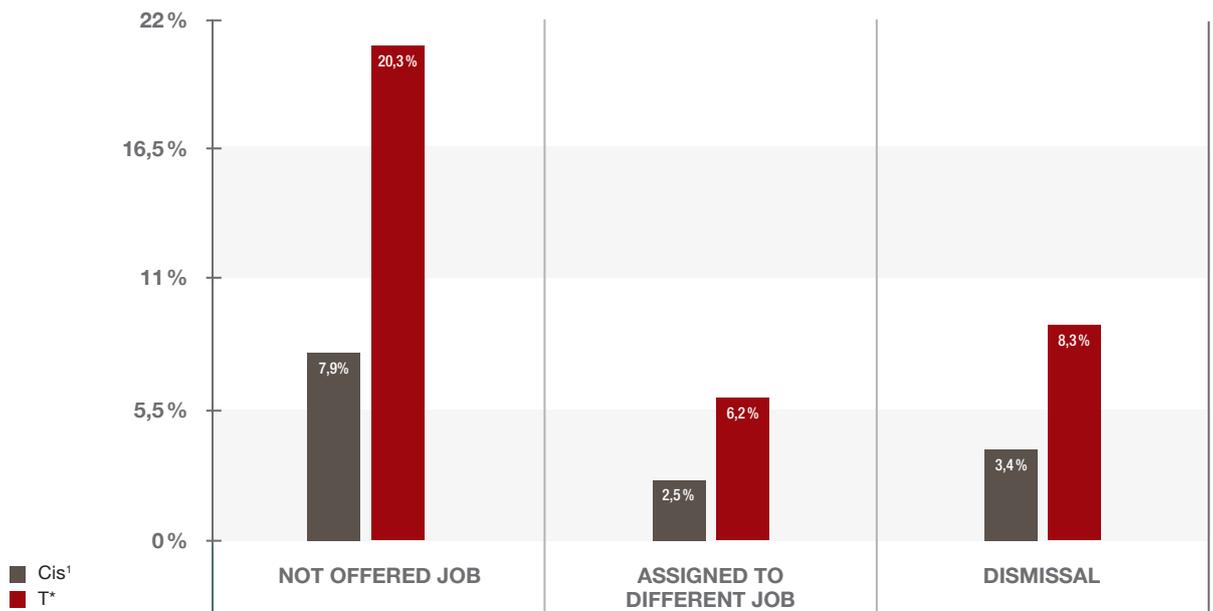
## EXPERIENCE OF DISCRIMINATION

The reported experience of discrimination has hardly changed since 2007. In 2017, about three-quarters (74%) of lesbian and gay employees experienced discrimination in at least one form. The percentage is 83% for trans\* people and 95.5% for bisexual respondents. Overall, the Discrimination Index shows that bisexual people particularly experience many more forms of discrimination compared to the other two groups, but that the proportion of trans\* workers who can be described as very highly or extremely highly discriminated against is strikingly large.



Looking at discrimination directly related to the workplace, around 8% of lesbian and gay respondents have reported the experience of not getting a job because of their sexual identity. About 3% experienced a job reassignment or a dismissal. By contrast, bisexual people report way less direct workplace-related discrimination: in comparison, only 4.8% of respondents reported not getting a job as a result of discrimination. The reported experience of trans\* employees shows that they

experience much more direct workplace-related discrimination: For example, more than 20% report not getting a job. And about 6% say they have been reassigned to a different job and 8% have been dismissed from their job. In total, 12.1% of lesbian and gay and 4.8% of bisexual respondents experienced discrimination in at least one of the three forms (in 2007: 11.6%). For trans\* people, it is one in four people (25.5%).



Already shown to be statistically noteworthy in 2007, a connection between workplace discrimination and openness about sexual identity is supported by the new data. Where there are high levels of discrimination, the levels of openness for lesbian and gay employees are low. High levels of

openness in the workplace correspond to lower levels of workplace discrimination. For bisexual people there are similar but not statistically noteworthy correlations. For trans\* people, the correlation between discrimination and openness about gender identity is even more pronounced.

1\_ The term refers to people whose gender identity matches the gender assigned them at birth.

## **CORRELATIONS BETWEEN DEALING WITH SEXUAL IDENTITY AND/OR GENDER IDENTITY AND ...**

### **... PSYCHOSOMATIC COMPLAINTS**

Respondents who are more open about their sexual identity or gender identity have fewer psychosomatic complaints, while those who are less open about their sexual identity report more such complaints.

### **... RESOURCES**

It is clear that LGBT\* employees who are open or rather open about their sexual identity or gender identity, use fewer resources to control their behaviour, the content of their conversations, etc. People who are secretive about their sexual or gender identity in the workplace use up more energy and resources (and are thus less productive in the workplace).

### **... WORK SATISFACTION**

Employees who are open about their sexual or gender identity in the workplace are more positive about job satisfaction. The statistics demonstrate a positive connection between the open handling of sexual or gender identity and job satisfaction. The more open the respondents are (or can be), the higher their job satisfaction. For bisexual people, this correlation is not evident.

### **... COMMITMENT**

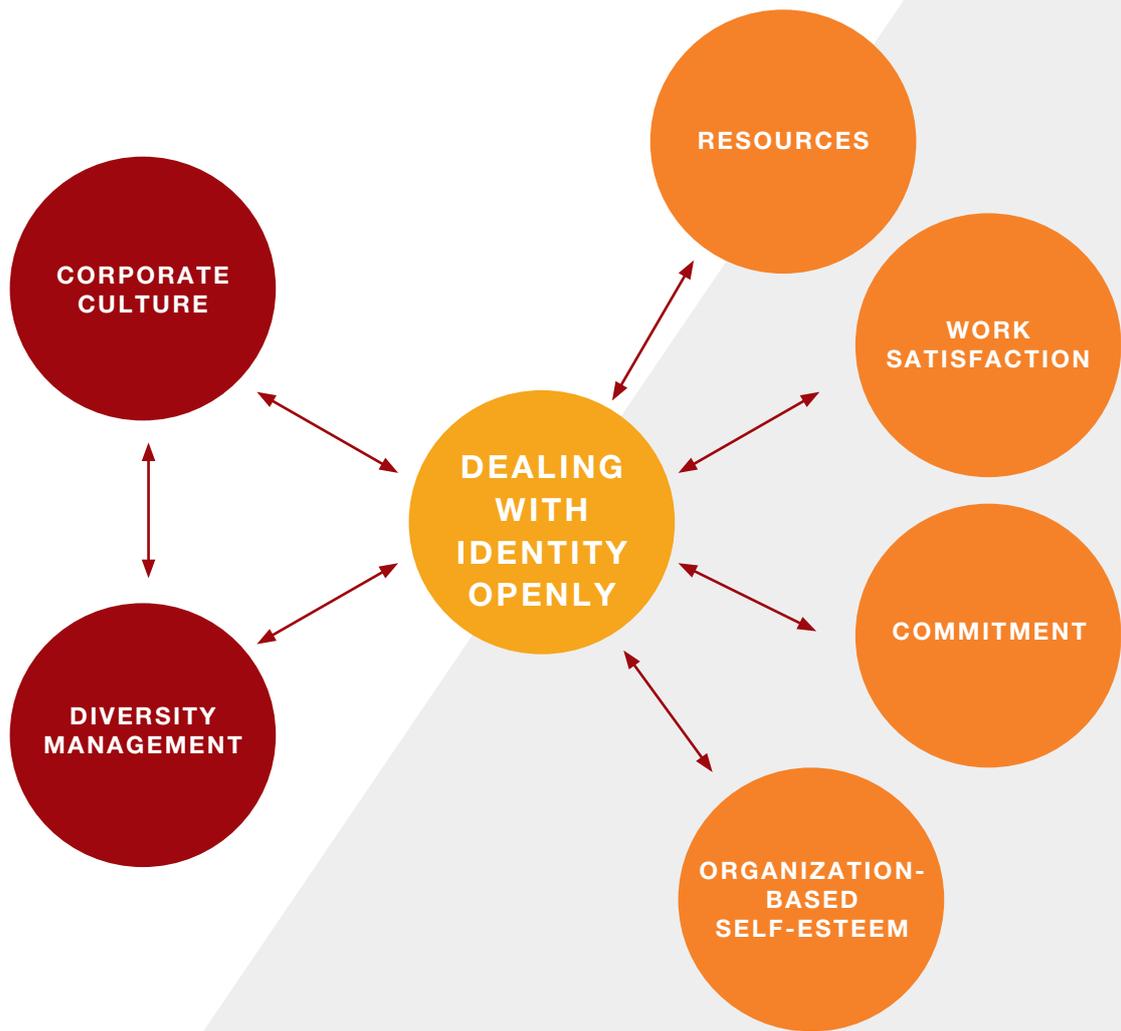
Employees who are open about their sexual identity or gender identity in the workplace are more positive about their organization or have a higher emotional commitment to their organization than those who are secretive. The more open the respondents are (or can be), the higher their attachment to the organization. For bisexual persons, this correlation is not evident.

### **... ORGANIZATION-BASED SELF-ESTEEM**

LGBT\* employees who are open about their sexual or gender identity in the workplace report higher levels of organization-based self-esteem than those who are not open. LGBT\* people with greater organization-based self-esteem in turn place greater value on their contribution to their employer and see themselves as an important part of their organization.

### **... DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND CORPORATE CULTURE**

The (corporate) culture regarding LGBT\* people influences the openness of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans\* employees about their sexual or gender identity in the following way: The friendlier the corporate culture is for LGBT\* persons, the more respondents report being open about their sexual identity or their gender identity. In addition, a stable correlation between diversity management and corporate culture was confirmed: As was the case in the 2007 study, it has again been demonstrated that LGBT\* diversity management measures have a positive corporate culture outcome, e.g. LGBT\* employees networks, related to LGBT\* topics. Accordingly, such strategies are the primary tool for organizations.



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## CONCLUSION

- Overall, it is apparent that lesbian and gay workers have become increasingly open in regard to their sexual identities in the workplace over the past twenty years. However, compared to lesbian and gay respondents, bisexuals and transsexuals are much more reserved about their sexual or gender identity.
- Despite increased openness, lesbian and gay respondents report as much discrimination as they did ten years ago. Bisexual respondents report experiencing more discrimination than lesbian and gay employees, while trans\* people report two to three times as much discrimination experiences as lesbian and gay workers.
- In summary, it is clear that homo-, bi- and trans-negativity are still an ongoing issue in the workplace. This also explains the experiences identified in the study for LGBT\* employees (discrimination experiences, etc).
- In order to achieve both an improvement in the workplace experience for employees, plus a boost in the efficiency and profitability of the company, engaging in diversity within organizations is the primary tool.

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## DIE PROUT AT WORK-FOUNDATION

### THE FOUNDATION

The PROUT AT WORK Foundation is committed to a non-discriminatory and open work environment in which diversity is valued and promoted. Our commitment is to the mutual understanding and equal opportunities of people of all sexual identities, gender identities and all gender expressions in the workplace.

### PROMOTING DIVERSITY

Our work is the collaborative effort of people and businesses who are committed to a non-discriminatory work environment. In order to achieve its goals, the PROUT AT WORK Foundation depends on donations. Your contribution supports our work towards a discrimination-free workplace for people of every sexual orientation, gender identity and all forms of gender expression. We'd be delighted to talk with you about arranging an ongoing endowment or providing for a legacy to benefit our foundation in your will.

As a registered non-profit organization in Germany, we can provide you with an official receipt for your donation.

### Donate directly to our bank account.

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## WOULD YOU LIKE TO ORDER A FREE COPY OF THE UNABRIDGED VERSION OF THE “OUT AT THE OFFICE?!” STUDY?

Thanks to the generous support of the PROUT AT WORK-FOUNDATION, the complete study is available at no cost - also in printed form (in German only).

You can order a copy here:

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