

Paper 24

Factors that Matters in Attaining Work Life Balance

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Abstract

Work-life balance is a concept including the proper prioritization between work and lifestyle and it describes the balance between an individual's work and personal life. It defines division of ones time and focus between work and lifestyle. Here Work defines a career and goal of an individual where as Lifestyle defines Health, Pleasure and Family life for him. Achieving work life balance has become a challenge in these days due too much competitions in the present market segment. Technology has made the things best as well as the worst in present working environment. Unless the employee and the employer both put their hand together, achieving work life balance is impossible. This paper discus the various aspects to be adopted from both sides in order to get this balance factor right at the middle.

Keywords: Lifestyle, Pleasure, Family Life, Technology.

Introduction

Employees want to balance work with the rest of the activities which they wish to pursue in life. Work balance is especially important to every employee who are used to cramming their days with diverse activities and hours of electronic communication. Employers are not responsible for providing work balance for their employees, but they can assist the employees to seek and maintain their own work balance. Optimistically, the decisions, policies, values, and expectations in employees workplace will support employees in achieving their work-life balance. In the best case scenario, the employers help managers to recruit and retain superior employees you seek. Here are few factors that helps you control that encourage or discourage employee work-life balance. **Offering a flexible work schedule**

A [flexible schedule](#) does not mean that employees can come and go at will, which is a possibility that concerns employers. A flexible schedule policy spells out what the employer means by [flexible hours](#). In many workplaces, flexible starting and ending times are easy to implement. More [sophisticated flexible schedules](#) such as a four-day work week or telecommuting require more planning, but flexible work schedules are a cornerstone for work balance [1].

One best case to illustrate this practice is a New York City on line publishing company that allows employees to telecommute two days a week. With employees living in Brooklyn, New Jersey, and all over the other boroughs, this company policy saves employees hundreds of hours of commuting time and expense. It also enables them to have additional time for all of life's needs. **Offer paid time off (PTO)**

In lieu of traditional paid sick leave, paid personal days, and paid vacation, A [paid time off \(PTO\)](#) approach treats employees like adults who are capable of making decisions about how, when, and why to use the paid time off supplied by the employer. In a PTO system, neither employers nor employees need to worry about accounting for how the time off was spent. This eliminates confusion and the need for additional policies such as defining what constitutes a [sick day](#).

Allow only limited carry over of paid time off (PTO)

Allow only limited carry over of paid time off (PTO) into another calendar year. If the goal of paid time off is to encourage employees to do just that – take time off - paying employees for the time is counter productive. Even if employees want to donate the value of their paid time off to a charity or a co worker who has used his or her time up for valid reasons, these actions do not encourage the work balance and rejuvenation employees need [2] **Managers and senior managers need to model the work balance**

Managers and senior managers need to model the work balance they'd like to encourage for their employees. When a manager uses PTO to take a vacation yet responds to email as if she is in the office, this sends a powerful message to employees about whether they need to do email while on vacation. The actions of senior leaders are heard and observed by employees. When a senior manager calls in for unimportant meetings while out-of-the-office, employees get the message. It affects their personal choices for work and life balance.

Honour the employee's PTO

With employees electronically connected to the workplace 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in the office or out, work and life balance is a challenge. Set up the expectation, in your workplace, that when an employee leaves for vacation, it is okay to send an email that says he is on vacation with limited access to email. Honour the employee's PTO by not contacting him unless it is truly an emergency

Allow employees to take unpaid leave

Allow employees to take unpaid leave as needed for life cycle needs. Employees have serious, life-changing events, emergency family needs, and desires to explore life and career opportunities. While the 12 weeks required by the [Family and Medical Leave Act](#) (FMLA) and employer leave policies that existed prior to FMLA, cover many events, they're not always sufficient. Some known employers to allow employees to take an unpaid [leave of absence](#) for activities and events such as:

- Premature birth of a baby who is hospitalized for an extended time period.
- Nursing a parent with a serious illness in another state.
- Settling a relative's estate in another state.
- Extending maternity leave for an additional 4-8 weeks.
- Exploring moving to a new location with a spouse.
- Attending grade school full time to complete classes that were only available during the day.
- Attending on line grade school in another state for the four required two-week on site sessions a year etc

Sponsor employee and family events

Sponsor employee and family events and activities monthly to encourage team building, friendships among employees, and inclusion of families in work events. At the same time, schedule some of the events for adults only. Provide babysitting at the event or elsewhere, if it will encourage employee attendance. Bowling, picnics, outdoor movie and bonfires, game centres, ice skating, sports events like a baseball or football game, a hay ride, and interaction with a company favourite charity's event are all appropriate for families.

Cross-over of life needs into the workplace and vice versa

Allow some cross-over of life needs into the workplace and vice versa like shopping online at a sale while at work is often mitigated by the employee responding to emails at 10 p.m. You don't want to encourage your employees to talk with their children while at work. But you need to recognize that for many, especially professional employees, the line between work time and life time is no longer distinct [3].

Opportunity for employees to job share or work part-time.

Employers tend to believe that every job is a full-time job, but not all jobs need a [full time employee](#). Consider the talent that would be available to your organization if you hired employees

for [part time](#) hours. With the appropriate two people, [job sharing](#) can also work effectively for employees who you want to retain while they start families or home school, for example. Creative employers and employees will think of more ways that employers can support employees in their quest for work-life balance. Start with these ten ideas to take a giant stride to support your employees in their efforts to fully participate in all aspects of work and life.

Allow Schedule Flexibility

Not every business is well-suited for a virtual workforce, so don't compromise the productivity of your company if you need your employees to arrive at work in-person. However, it is another thing entirely to give your employees the [option to work remotely](#) when they really need to because of an emergency that requires them to make up time later. For example, if your employee's child is sick, consider offering her the opportunity to work from home that day or come into the office over time weekend to make up for lost time. This way your employee doesn't have to worry about missing work and wages from taking the time off and your company's deadlines can still be met.

Benefits Employers Can Consider

Exercise Access

One of the most positive ways to reduce stress is exercise, and every able-bodied adult should be getting [at least 30 minutes](#) of it per day. Employees who eat healthy and exercise are less at risk of getting sick and missing days from work, which could ultimately detract from your company's productivity. Many office buildings have a gym facility on site, so encourage your employees to use it regularly if your building has this amenity. If not, consider offering your employees a membership discount at a local gym.

Childcare Services

As a parent, childcare duties don't always stop when you leave for work in the morning. A [family-friendly work environment](#) has proven to benefit both employers and employees in a variety of different industries. Employers can consider providing an [on site childcare facility](#) that employs a trusted staff and takes the guesswork and frustrations out of other babysitting and daycare services. If this is not possible, you may want to offer your employees a childcare service discount to alleviate the stresses of caring for children during the workday and reduce the amount of missed work. If neither one of these options is feasible for your business, try to allow your employees at least some flexibility to care for their children. This can include the ability to take time off to pick up a sick child from school, the ability to see a

child's school play at lunch time, or flexible start/end time for parents who drop off or pick up kids from school.

Create a Designated “Quiet Space”

Every employee has a bad day from time to time, so it's nice to have a space for employees to go to when they just need to step away for a moment. Create a designed [quiet space](#) in your office where employees can take a mental break when they need to. This space should be uncluttered and free of all company materials. Instead, fill it with luscious plants and flowers, comfortable seating, some light reading material, and perhaps some soft music. Establish a precedent that this space is not an employee lounge that welcomes chatter, laughter, venting, or meetings. This should be a calming space for silent reflection that respects solitude and peace.

Encourage Short Breaks Throughout the Day

On a smaller scale, it's important to workers' mental and physical health to take frequent breaks throughout the day. The human body was not designed to sit still and stare at a screen for eight hours, and doing so can lead to a wide variety of health issues. Taking breaks at work also makes employees [better at their jobs](#) because they are more focused, less burned out, and more productive in the long-term.

Provide good health coverage

Provide good health coverage for all employees, even for the part-time. Ask your employees what they would like to see improve about their health and life insurance coverage, and act on it. Take your employees' health and wellness seriously, and they will return the respect.

Ask Employees for Guidance

Who better to consult about what employees in your office truly need than the employees themselves. If you get a sense that your employees are struggling with work-life balance, ask them what changes around the workplace might help. You might be surprised what you hear and collaborate on some [mutually beneficial strategies](#) together as a result. To facilitate these discussions, which can often be difficult ones to bring up, consider having regularly scheduled meetings either as a group or as one-on-one discussions to talk about balance issues. These types of meetings can be held quarterly, semi-annually, or annually depending upon the size and individual needs of your workforce.

Be a Good Model for Balance

No one likes to take life advice from a hypocrite, so make sure that your words and actions are in line. If managers in your company are responding to emails while on vacation, it sends a message to employees that they are expected to do so as well. Be sure to respect the balance

and privacy of your employees and avoid contacting them after normal work hours unless it is an absolute emergency.

Conclusion

Work–life balance is a concept including the proper prioritization between work and lifestyle and it describes the balance between an individual's work and personal life. It defines division of one's time and focus between work and lifestyle. A mutual understanding between employer and employee is needed in attaining work life balance. Employer must understand the need of this for his employee and practice some exercise in order to provide work life balance among employee. Most of the front line multi national companies adapt methods like [paid time off](#), unpaid leave, sponsoring employee and family events, opportunity for employees to work part-time, schedule flexibility and found positive results in employees performance. Also employers can consider providing some additional facilities like having exercise access, childcare services, creating a designated quiet space and providing good health coverage etc that will lead employees to have better work life balance and improve their overall productivity.

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