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## Striking A Healthy Work-life Balance

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### Abstract:

*In the competitive marketplace of today, organizations need a highly motivated, productive and flexible workforce and work-life balance helps in achieving this. A major challenge of balancing the competing demands of work and family is not new. But the amount of research being conducted on the topic is an indication of its importance to both organizations and individuals today. Work-Life Balance in today's fast-paced world presents a major challenge to both employers and employees. Striking a healthy work-life balance is significant for both employer and employee which call for attention from both the sides.*

### KEYWORDS:

Flexible workforce, Work-life balance.

### INTRODUCTION

In the cut-throat competitive environment, organizations are facing increasing pressures that are in turn passed on to the employees creating certain problems both for the employees and the organization. In most of the organizations, people are talking about how hard it is to meet increasingly challenging work demands and at the same time take proper care of themselves and their families. Now it's no longer unusual for work to demand more time and attention from the employees far beyond the normal working hours. Fortunately or unfortunately, the benefits provided by technology also guarantee that work no longer ends when we walk out of the office. The outcome is a much greater intermingling of personal and work lives disturbing the work-life balance. Further with the increasing dual career families and nuclear families, work life balance issues have become more prominent drawing more attention.

### CONCEPT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE:

The concept of work-life balance has stemmed from the fact that an individual's work-life and personal life may put forth conflicting demands on one another and the demands from both the domains are equally important. "Work Life Balance is the principle that paid employment should be integrated with domestic life and community involvement in the interests of personal and social well-being" (Heery and Noon, 2008). According to Morgenstern (2008), "Work Life Balance is not about the amount of time one spends working versus not-working. It's more about how one spends time working and relaxing, recognizing that what a person does in one, fuels energy for the other."

### RELEVANCE OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE:

The issue of work-life balance has become the hot topic in the current day scenario. Sverko et al (2002) attribute the growing relevance of work-life balance in industrialized societies to changing

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technology, changing values and changing demographic trends. Other factors include increasing complexity of work and family roles and the expanded number of women entering the workforce. Work life balance refers to the divergence between the demands of work and the demands of personal life. When either side becomes unbalanced for extended periods of time, the effect is likely to be visible in unhealthy symptoms (fatigue, stress, depression, etc.) A lack of synchronization between domestic life and work life causes great personal and financial hardship, both to the individual and the company.

#### **WORK TO LIVE OR LIVE TO WORK:**

Work pressures, tight schedules, increased mobility and a host of other factors may all have a cumulative effect in making the lives of modern day professionals quite stressful. In the challenging environment, employees put in longer hours to achieve, and preferably exceed, expectations to protect their jobs. As a result of this, the boundaries between work and home tend to get blurred. It is easy for work to invade the personal life making both work-life and personal life go out of balance. Thus, finding Work-Life Balance in today's fast-paced world presents a major challenge to both employers and employees.

#### **STRONG CASE FOR WORK LIFE BALANCE:**

The commitment of employees can make the difference between those companies which are in a better position to compete in the market place when compared to others. The case for work-life balance tends to be made on two counts. First, that work-life balance improves individuals' health, wellbeing and job satisfaction. Second, that business can benefit from work-life balance because these policies enhance employees' commitment, productivity, and organizational citizenship behaviour, reduce absenteeism and increase retention rates for talented workers and reduce replacement costs.

With today's job market, companies are realizing that providing a supportive and family friendly work environment is no longer something that's "nice to do," but is absolutely necessary in order to attract and retain highly skilled employees. Job seekers are asking for more than a competitive pay package, and are looking for what makes an organization a "great place to work." In this context, many organizations are increasingly adopting work-life policies such as introducing greater work flexibility, providing child-care facilities and offering emotional support (Lapierre and Allen, 2006).

The benefits of work-life balance initiatives, for employers, are better talent attraction, enhanced productivity, better talent engagement, reduced work stress, reduced absenteeism, reduced costs, better motivation, employer branding, talent retention and efficient work practices (Byrne, 2005; Pocock, 2005; and McPherson, 2007). The home-base work was linked to higher levels of performance and lower absenteeism (Kopelman et al., 2006). Arthur (2003) reports a positive relationship between the announcement of organizational work-life benefits and shareholders returns. Claremann (2007) emphasizes that Work-life integration is an essential ingredient in sustainable business practice. Businesses that celebrate this reality are reaping the benefits in bottom-line performance and they create organizations that are satisfying communities in which to work.

Jyothi & Jyothi (2012) opine that human resources policies designed to help employees balance their work and family lives can also affect turnover, performance, absenteeism, organizational commitment and employee willingness to go the extra mile on behalf of their employers. They also highlighted that a good work-life balance enables the business to thrive and at the same time enables the employees to easily combine work with other aspirations and responsibilities.

Below are a few critical steps companies need to take when establishing a work-life balance for employees.

Creating a corporate culture that is supportive of employees.

Creating a vision of a positive work environment that leads directly to increased quality and productivity often through an increased motivation and dedication from employees.

Implementing the vision that can be the hardest part of the process, as it often involves changes in organizational norms and individual habits which may have been formed over a period of years.

The key to the success of any life work balance program is open relationship between supervisors and staff and team members.

Logically, "work-life balance" will remain a mere concept (useful for debates and workshops) unless there is a collective change in Corporate India. There has to be serious management buy-in and it has to be a wave that should ripple across all levels, and all domains.

Conclusion:

In this pressurized competitive environment, Human capital is considered to be one of the main sources of sustained competitive advantage for the organizations. Hence, organizations have to undertake certain initiatives to take care of their human capital. Work-life balance is as vital to the employer, as it is to the employee. Employers realize that stress is a drain on employee productivity and creativity. For an employer, a highly satisfied and hardly stressed employee is an invaluable asset and a vital source of productivity. For an employee work-life balance would mean stress-free, enjoyable private life. As striking a healthy work-life balance is important for both the employer and employee, both of them should work in this direction that can bring the best results for them.

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