

Work LIFE Balance

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Abstract

The article discusses the significance of work-life balance of an employee and tries to provide some solutions to this contemporary globe crisis which demands for greater stability in the corporate world. It also reflects on the factors influencing work-life balance and on the solutions entailing wider scope for employers and employees to relate the same and attain optimum results and satisfaction in their lives. This could appropriately be understood as the harmony between office and personal life.

People are usually either at work or at home. Any individual usually spends a major part of the day's productive time at work and this is an important facet of his life. His productivity depends, not only on factors related to his work, but also on various other factors related to his personal life. Work-life balance entails attaining equilibrium between professional work and other activities, so that it reduces friction between official and domestic /personal life. Work-life balance enhances efficiency and thus, the productivity of an employee increases. It enhances satisfaction, in both the professional and personal lives.

With the advent of globalization, the demands of workplace are ever increasing and highly dynamic. Employees spend more time at the work place rather than at home. Although businesses are witnessing new height, the work-life balance of the employee is no longer in control. Growing number of suicides, divorces, disturbed families and relationships, outrage or conflicts in the organizations, etc. are the reflections of disturbed work-life balance of the employees. It is high time employers must draw out strategies or plan to cope with the

problem and help the employees to enjoy their work and live life to the fullest. This article discusses some aspects of balancing work and life.

Keywords: Work–life balance, attitude, performance, psychological factors, emotions management, quality of work, contentment.

1. Introduction

In this influx of globalization, organizations feel the heat in the form of competition to perform better or fulfil the promises made to the customers in time to survive the business. This heat to large extent percolates down to the employees, putting pressure on them to show at work places, leading to very high stressful situation. In this process lot of demands pile up from the personal side of the life which is equally important for the employees, which they cannot afford to ignore. Balancing professional and personal life, better productivity and harmonious life have become challenging.

Work life balance can be defined as the perfect integration between work and life both not interfering with each other.

2. The concept

The performance of any organization depends on its employees, which in turn depends on numerous other factors. They can be work related or family related or personal. How a person manages various aspects of his life helps in achieving balance at work and in private life. A major portion of an individual is spent at the work. Any problem either at work place or at personal life will definitely affect the balance and thus it is very much essential that both are maintained well.

3. Importance of Work life balance

Work is one dimension of life and should not distort our personal life. The vice-versa is also true as work is a means of livelihood. The concept is gaining prominence since it helps in maintaining balanced life at the work place as well as at home. Maintaining balance encourages optimum working hours that ultimately enhances overall efficiency. It is a common fact that increase in quantity tends to deteriorate quality. If the employee is not over loaded with work, he is motivated to shoulder responsibilities. He does not feel exhausted and is ready to perform every day. Work load does not kill his working spirit and he is eager to work. When someone works willingly, he attains satisfaction and a contented person is bound to succeed not only at work but also in life.

4. Factors influencing Work life balance

There can be many factors that affect the balance of work and life. The first such factor is the attitude of the employee. Attitude defines ones likes and dislikes. Attitude is the way of thinking or feeling about something. Balance is considerably affected by various psychological factors. How one reacts to a particular situations, handles that situation, how he manages work and peer pressure are some aspects of psychological behaviours. Emotions management also plays an important role in achieving and maintaining such balance. Another important factor is the environment in which the individual stays. The working environment should be comfortable or it can negatively affect efficiency. Similarly , the environment at home should be calm and congenial. The type of job can also influence balance. A job, which is monotonous and not challenging can make the worker lethargic. The job profile should match the employee's profile, in order to enhance his work efficiency and give him job satisfaction. Since balance is related to both personal and professional life, factors like, family background, financial and social status of the family, life stage of the employee, financial standing, family structure, daily routine, friends circle and social life would also affect his work life. An employee who is struggling financially or who has a large family to support or other family problems may spend more time in taking care of those issues. To focus on his work it is necessary that he is free from any domestic encumbrances. It is equally important to create a healthy working environment at the work place. The comfort and ease at the working place enhances the efficiency as well as the effectiveness of the performance.

5. Need for Work life balance

The outcomes of imperfect work-life balance faced in the day-to-day life are :

- **Stress:** employees must be ever performing and ever learning to adapt themselves to the dynamic market conditions. Adding to this is the constant pressure from the superiors to meet the targets. Thus, employees have no other choice but to sacrifice their personal space. The entire process is creating stress on the employees which are the root cause for many other problems.
- **Physical problem:** The numbers of employees suffering from physical ailments like hypertension, diabetes, heart attacks have grown considerably in the past. Women employees are the worst affected due to the long and stressful working hours and are facing severe gynaecological problems like cancer and abortions, etc.,
- **Relational problems:** since employees are spending more time at work rather than at home, spouses, parents, children are no longer given the time they deserve.
- **Hangover:** working for longer hours at the office, increases employee interaction. The employees tend to stay in their professional world (mentally) though they are at home. The effect of professional anger is carried to home.

- **Unethical practices:** to handle the stress, the employees tend to adopt Unethical practices like boozing, smoking, drugs, improper relation etc. Also there are chances that the employee may resort to unfair means to get their work done ultimately by hook or crook.
- **Disturbed families:** the worst hit is the family members of the employees. Fighting with the target achievement may sometimes result in neglecting the family. The number of broken family has gone up drastically.
- **Decreased performance:** employees in the organization are never at peace. When they are at work place issues at home are a concern and vice-versa. Unknowingly, the employees get into a frustration and cannot give their best to their profession.
- **Organization in jeopardy:** it all starts with stress and ultimately the employee ability and performance is at crossroads. The output to the situation may be that the organization may not achieve its goals or the employee is no longer satisfied with the organization. In either case, the entire organization is in jeopardy.

6. The role of HR in achieving Work-Life Balance:

The HR department should assist the employee to maintain a Work-Life Balance. The HR manager must carefully identify the issues and find a solution with the cooperation of the employer. Organizations must include providing Work-Life Balance as an HR policy. Some of the decisions which HR can help in are :

- Planning the work
- Providing a Flexi approach towards work
- Job analysis specifications/ descriptions
- Being empathetic towards the employees
- Providing space for the personal lives of the employees
- Family get-together's at the work place
- Conduct frequent training programs
- Effective communication system
- Organizational culture
- Worker's participation in management

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8. Steps to achieve Work-Life Balance

Two main issues in Work-Life Balance are Time and Stress. An individual who maintains time and stress perfectly will have a perfect Work-Life Balance. Time and stress are interrelated in a sense that one is the outcome of mismanagement of the other. If the activities of an employer are not planned properly, he runs out of time and pressure builds up leading to stress—the instrumental factor disturbing the balance between professional and personal life.

Time management + Stress management = Work-Life Balance

Tips for Time management:

- Proper planning
- Swot analysis
- Expert advice
- Reminders
- Motivators
- Self-motivation

Tips for Stress management:

- Take it easy
- Try to get solution instead of brooding over the problem
- Accept the fact and stop the blame game
- Boost yourself
- Enjoy your work

9. Conclusion

Work-life balance is an issue of great importance that has to be addressed by the organizations at the earliest. After all the employees are the greatest asset and the organization performance is affected by employee performance. The HR department of

the organization and the employees together must work out strategies to help attain Work-life balance which makes the organization the happiest place to work in. In spite of higher salaries and other monetary and non monetary benefits, a comfortable working environment, less work load and organizations taking care of employees, it is observed that sometimes employees fail to deliver expected sales. Though there can be numerous factors that affect the performance of an employee achieving balance in work and familial life is considered important in order to perform par excellence. Balance between professional and personal life improves performance at work and also helps in gaining job satisfaction. It gives a feeling of contentment and motivates the individual to shoulder responsibilities with greater accountability. It helps in creating a congenial environment at the work place and also strengthens family bonds of the employees.