



WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE BALANCE

Everyone is busy these days and often you may be required to put in longer hours at work than normal. Once now and again may be acceptable, but if this continues indefinitely, it could upset the balance between your work and personal life.

There are also more choices of where to work, for example, many organisations are offering telecommuting or working from home for part of the employee's normal hours.

Although this sounds a good idea, before taking this up as a viable option, you should consider the impact it will have on your family and your lifestyle.

Yes, it may be convenient to work from home, but what about friends and family dropping in because you are now more accessible. Make sure you tell them when they can visit and that you would prefer them to telephone first just in case you're working on a project you cannot leave.

The number of people in your household may determine if you need to consider a separate telephone line for business, plus your own computer and a dedicated place to work so you will not be interrupted.

If you have school children you will need to educate them regarding your working times and when they can and can't visit your workspace.

Keep the same sort of hours as you would if you were working in the office because one of the negatives is that it is easy to continue "just for a bit longer" to finish off a job.

But work life balance doesn't just affect those people who work from a home based office, which is a fairly recent phenomenon.

The following has been taken from Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia:

"The expression "work-life balance" was first used in the late 1970s to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life. (New Ways to Work and the Working Mother's Association in the United Kingdom.) In the United States, this phrase was first used in 1986. As the separation between work and home life has diminished, this concept has become more relevant than ever before."

Some or all of the following cost-effective ideas could assist with work-life balance in your workplace. Adapted from the Australian Government's website www.australia.gov.au

1. Schedule meetings within normal working hours
2. Ensure staff take their annual leave in the year it is due
3. Negotiate flexible start and finish times
4. Allow staff to have a say when rosters are being arranged
5. Introduce make-up time so staff can make-up hours if they need to attend an appointment
6. Allow staff to use sick leave entitlements to care for family members
7. Broaden the definition of 'family' (to include more distant relatives) for the purposes of bereavement leave
8. Provide information on local contacts to help staff find child care, school holiday care and elder/respite care
9. Provide an emergency phone for employees to contact family members (e.g. an older child sick at home)
10. Allow staff to take annual leave in single days
11. Allow staff to use work mobile phones for emergency family reasons
12. Discourage weekend work and staying back late in the office except in exceptional circumstances
13. Introduce a 'keep in touch' plan for staff on maternity leave
14. Hold a family picnic day
15. Allow leave without pay for cultural purposes
16. Extend social events such as happy hours to families and partners
17. Consider the needs of partners and families in any relocations
18. Introduce a workplace policy for employees who are breastfeeding
19. Include a summary of your company's work and family policy in a letter of offer to new employees
20. Put work and family issues on the agenda to discuss at the next round of negotiations for your workplace agreement.

About the Author:

Barb has been a successful business writer/editor/communicator since 1989. She writes in plain language and believes material for print and the web should be clear, concise and user-friendly. Please visit her website at www.barbclews.com to find out more.