



Role of Work Life Balance in Globalised Era

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Abstract

Work–life balance is the balance between work and other life roles. It is the state of symmetry in which demands of personal life, professional life, and family life are equal. Work–life balance consists of, but it is not limited to, flexible work preparations that allow employees to carry out other life programs and practices. Life is a balancing act, and in Indian society, it is safe to say that almost everyone is seeking work/life balance. Work–life balance is a comprehensive concept including proper prioritizing between "work" (career and ambition) on the one hand and "life" (Health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development) on the other. Related, though broader, terms comprise "lifestyle balance" and "life balance". Work/life balance, in its broadest sense, is defined as a satisfactory level of participation or 'fit' between the multiple roles in a person's life. In the Globalised era the employee need to endeavor for the competition. In this era all must need to make themselves sufficient and tangible to maintain their work-life-family balanced. It is the need of hour be live and work happily. This paper envisages about the work life balance, globalization and suggests how to maintain this balance.

Keywords: Work-life balance, family values, globalization.

Introduction

The role of work has transformed throughout the world due to economic conditions and social demands. Originally, work was a matter of need and survival. Throughout the years, the role of "work" has evolved and the conformation of the workforce has changed. Today, work still is a necessity but it should be a source of personal gratification as well. One of the

vehicles to help provide attainment of personal and professional goals is work-life benefits and programs.

Implementation of these programs in India and other differs, due to fundamental beliefs about the goals of such programs. The work-life balance programs in existence as a result of a social responsibility to employees or to provide a competitive advantage to employers.

Numerous people think of work-life balance only in the framework of what the company does for the individual. However, work-life balance is a two prong approach. The other prong of work-life balance, which many persons overlook, relates to what individuals do for themselves.

The Work-life balance is meaningful achievement and enjoyment in everyday life. The primary way companies can help facilitate work-life balance for their employees is through work-life programs and training. Achievement and enjoyment at work is a critical part of anyone's work-life balance. Furthermore, achievement and enjoyment in the other three quadrants of one's life (e.g. family, friends and self) is critical as well.

Work Life Balance

Life is a balancing act, and in Indian society, it is safe to say that almost everyone is seeking work/life balance. But what exactly is work/life balance? We have all heard the term, and numerous of us complain that we don't have enough of it in our lives. Among men and women alike, the frustrating search for work/life balance is a recurrent topic of conversation, usually translated into not enough time and/or support to do, to handle, to manage ... our work commitments or personal responsibilities.

The meaning of work/life balance has dilettante characteristics. It means different things to different groups, and the meaning often depends on the context of the conversation and the speaker's viewpoint.

The following are working definitions of terms used concerning work/life balance; some definitions overlap and some are continuing to evolve.

- Work/family: a term more frequently recycled in the past than today. The current trend is to use titles that comprise the phrase work/life, giving a broader work/life connotation or labeling referring to specific areas of support (e.g., quality of life, flexible work options, life balance, etc.)
- Work/family conflict: the push & pull between work and family responsibilities.
- Work/life balance from the employee perspective: the dilemma of managing work obligations and personal/family responsibilities.

- Work/life balance from the employer viewpoint: the challenge of creating a supportive company philosophy where employees can focus on their jobs while at work.
- Family-friendly benefits: benefits that offer employees the latitude to address their personal and family obligations, while at the same time not compromising their work responsibilities.
- Work/life programs: programs (often financial or time-related) established by an employer that offer employees choices to address work and personal responsibilities.
- Work/life initiatives: policies and procedures established by an organization with the goal to permit employees to get their jobs done and at the same time provide flexibility to handle personal/family concerns.
- Work/family culture: the extent to which an organization's culture acknowledges and respects the family responsibilities and obligations of its employees and inspires management and employees to work together to meet their personal and work needs.

Globalization

Globalization refers to the increasing amalgamation of the world's economic order through reduction of such blockades to international trade as tariffs, export fees, and import quotas. The goal is to increase material wealth, goods, and services through an international division of labor by proficiencies catalyzed by international relations, specialization and competition. It describes the process by which regional economies, societies, and cultures have become integrated through communication, transportation, and trade. The term is most closely associated with the term economic globalization: the mixing of national economies into the international economy through trade, foreign direct investment, capital flows, migration, the spread of technology, and military presence. However, globalization is usually recognized as being driven by a combination of economic, sociocultural, technological, , political, and biological factors. The term can also refer to the international circulation of ideas, languages, or popular culture through acculturation. An aspect of the world which has gone through the procedure can be said to be globalized. Against this view, an alternative approach stresses how globalization has actually decreased inter-cultural contacts while increasing the option of international and intra-national conflict.

Personal Lives and Family Values

The work ethic remains complete, yet in recent years personal and family lives have become critical values that are less willing to put on hold, put aside, or ignore, for the sake of work. Over time, the Indian staff has begun to change course from being willing to spend every hour working to learning to manage the complexities of modern living. In addition, the influence of the terrorist activities has led many people to re-evaluate their lives and consider the meaning of work. Consequently, Indians are observing for options that allow for both a personal and family life, and many seek ways to have it all. As a result, the management philosophy that supposes employees to put work first, ahead of personal lives and family commitments, is becoming less accepted.

Changing Role of Family

With the growing diversity of family constructions represented in the workforce in the new millennium, it is important that human resource professionals better understand the interface of work and family relationships and the resulting impact in the workplace. The parts of the workforce may be subject to unique work/family pressures, yet often have few sources of support. The under-representation of these groups of persons with potentially difficult types of work/family pressures represents a major gap in work/family research and employers' understanding of their needs. Typically, studies have focused on employed men and women who are wedded or living with a partner or those with children.

Omitted from research are single-earner mothers and fathers, single and childless employees with widespread responsibility for eldercare, blended families with children from both partners' prior marriages, families with shared custody of children, and grandparents raising their grandchildren.

- From both the employer and employee viewpoint, the changing nature of what constitutes family is one of the complications of today's society.
- As human resource professionals design policies and programs to address employee retention, job satisfaction, employee morale, and productivity, this research warrants serious consideration.

Stress and the Consequences for Employer and Employee

We live in stressful times, and each of us deals with stress every day. In the past three years, an cumulative number of employees surveyed indicate they are struggling with work/life balance.

- A work/life balance survey conducted states that 70% of more than 1,500 respondents said they don't have a healthy balance between their personal and work lives.
- "Holding a Job, Having a Life: Strategies for Change" study by the Work Institute of Indian points out that employee-driven solutions help reduce overtime, stress, and workloads, and increase flexibility and family and leisure time.

Scientists agree that in moderate amounts stress can be benign, even beneficial, and most people are prepared to deal with it. However, increasing levels of stress can rapidly lead to low employee morale, poor productivity, and decreasing job satisfaction. Some of the specific indications that relate directly to productivity in the work environment are abuse of sick time, cheating, chronic absenteeism, distrust, embezzlement, organizational disruption, tardiness, task avoidance, and violence in the workplace. Other serious consequences are depression, alcohol and drug abuse, marital and financial problems, compulsive eating disorders, and employee burnout. One of the neurologist has been learning stress for more than three decades. As he notes, "blaring car alarms, controlling bosses, two-career marriages, sixmile traffic jams, and rude salesclerks were simply not part of the plan."

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), offered by many employers, are an excellent resource for employees under stress. EAPs provide a countless of services, from drug and alcohol abuse counseling to addressing family and marriage problems, financial and legal difficulties, and stress-related problems. In addition, in line with the times and the cumulative stress levels in our society, a new profession has emerged: work/life professionals. The concept of work/life professionals originally developed as an extension of wellness programs and EAPs. The Alliance for Work/Life Progress, the national association for work/life professionals, leads and endorses work/life initiatives in business, academia, and the public sector to support a healthier work/life balance between work, personal, and family life. Work/life programs represent largely untapped workplace solutions that have the potential to significantly address stressful work environments.

Work Life Balance and Globalisation

HR leaders worldwide consider increasing globalization and regulation of labor and employment issues to be amongst the most important HR issues of the coming decade, according to a global survey by the International Bar Association's Global Employment Institute (GEI)

"While all aspects of our life are important, without a balance you become addicted and like all addictions you lose".

Working for a global company can create chaos on any attempt to balance work and family. Many executives think and talk a lot about the time we spend away from our families - both because we are flying around the world and because we work as long as it is office hours somewhere.

One of our senior executives in India recently told me he misses family time almost every evening because of long conference calls from the US. Another exec whose family is in the UK spends too much time flying back and forth between the US, UK and India; he's not doing justice to either job or family. So he's reluctantly decided to stay put in India for the next three weeks - away from family - to bring some order back to his life.

In the early days of world trade, goods would be produced in the local countries, at earthly hours, and would be transported by ship to faraway destinations. Globalization today is more taxing. Businesses are more complex. As the services component of global trade increases, so does the need for more communication and interaction.

Moreover, as sales, production and delivery become more team-based and knowledge-based, more people are needed to interact and play to the same sheet of music. The global businesses of today require more people interacting for more time across more countries.

We need to recalibrate our time and travel. Cost and ecological considerations are encouraging companies like ours to reduce travel and adopt video-conferencing instead. In addition, companies are recognizing they need to set boundaries around working hours, personal time and holidays.

We need to encourage corporate cultures that separate work and home, and hold family time sacrosanct. We also need to be "modularize" work so that local teams, working in close physical proximity, take on specific projects and tasks in "packages" that make geographic sense. Interface standards, across work packages, will minimize the need for extensive communication and interaction.

As a world, we are still learning how to deal with globalization at an individual and family level. We need to strike the right balance, in terms of distribution of work and output, between globalization and localization. Do share your own experiences and perspectives with regards to globalization and family life.

The New Constructs is an initiative to examine our beliefs and assumptions - about life and living - that we need to reinvent in order to create a more inclusive and sustainable world. It is an opportunity for each one of us to connect, collaborate and co-create the world that we will rebuild for posterity. Do post your own examples on the Wall.

Conclusion

Work/life programs have the potential to suggestively improve employee morale, reduce absenteeism, and retain organizational knowledge, particularly during difficult economic times. In today's global marketplace, as corporations aim to reduce costs, it falls to the human resource professional to understand the serious issues of work/life balance and champion work/life programs. Be it employees whose family members and/or friends are called to assist their country, single mothers who are trying to raise their children and make a living. In the Globalised era the employees value their personal time, couples struggling to manage dual-career marriages, or companies losing critical knowledge when employees leave for other opportunities, work/life programs offer a win-win situation for employers and employees.

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