

6.8 Work-Life Balance

Work/life balance, in its broadest sense, is defined as a satisfactory level of involvement or 'fit' between the multiple roles in a person's life. Although definitions and explanations vary, work/life balance is generally associated with equilibrium, or maintaining an overall sense of harmony in life. The study of work/life balance involves the examination of people's ability to manage simultaneously the multi-faceted demands of life. Although work/life balance has traditionally been assumed to involve the devotion of equal amounts of time to paid work and non-work roles, more recently the concept has been recognised as more complex and has been developed to incorporate additional components. A recent study explored and measured three aspects of work/life balance:

- Time balance, which concerns the amount of time given to work and non-work roles.
- Involvement balance, meaning the level of psychological involvement in, or commitment to, work and non-work roles.
- Satisfaction balance, or the level of satisfaction with work and non-work roles.

Work-Life balance may "fit" within a few locations in a business/organization eg Human Resources, Occupational Health & Safety, Corporate Social Responsibility or Diversity. Another strategic consideration is what term to use: Employee Well-Being, Work-Life Balance, Life Family Balance are all possibilities. Basically it is the creation of a harmonic balance between the responsibilities of work and home life.

Work Life Balance initiatives can assist employers and employees to be productive and healthy in their work and community lives. They give employees greater flexibility in how they work and offer employers the competitive business edge in attracting and retaining employees.

The range of Work Life Balance initiatives available can be grouped into 4 main areas:

- leave provisions (such as parental and family leave);
- flexible hours provisions (including job sharing, flexible start and finish times);
- supportive structures and programs (such as child care provision or assistance); and
- social policy initiatives.

In today's labour market, flexible work arrangements are needed by all workers at different times in their lives to allow for: young people to study and work; parents to have time with children; everyone to maintain their health and be active in the community and for the older worker approaching retirement to have the opportunity to stay in the workforce on reduced hours.

The following links will assist you further understand this concept:

www.worklifebalance.com.au
www.workplace.gov.au
www.mccrindle.com.au
<http://yourlifeworks.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=305488>

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