

## “Importance of Work-Life Balance”

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### **Abstract**

Balancing work and personal life is becoming a big issue for both workers and companies. This paper explains what Work-Life Balance (WLB) means and why it matters today. It also talks about what causes poor balance between work and life, what happens because of it, and gives ideas on how to fix and manage this problem.

**Key Words:** *Work-Life Balance, Personal Life, Workers, Companies, Fix.*

### **I. Understanding Work-Life Balance**

The phrase “WORK-LIFE BALANCE (WLB)” was first used in 1986, but people had been talking about it long before. In fact, work-life ideas were seen as early as the 1930s. Companies started making policies to help workers do their jobs well while also having time for personal or family matters. These days, most families have both parents working and for longer hours. A good balance means people do well both at work and at home without major problems. When work and personal life demands don't fit, it causes stress and imbalance. Today's workers care more about WLB than older generations did. Yet, it is still hard to reach this balance. Studies show that many new workers have to work very long hours, which hurts their personal time. This makes it hard to have a good balance between work and home life.

### **II. What Work-Life Balance Actually Mean?**

We all have a work life and a home life, but often forget how to keep them separate. To move up in a company, employees may have to work longer hours and deal with tough problems. Some days at work are fun, while others are stressful. Many people struggle to manage all the demands of work and home without letting stress from work affect their personal life. Studies show that workers who feel they don't have enough personal time feel tired and less focused at work. When work stress carries over into personal life, it can cause burnout, hurt relationships, reduce joy, and raise stress. Work-life balance means building a healthy, supportive workplace so employees can handle both job and personal duties. This helps improve loyalty and productivity. Many studies on WLB show it's a common problem. A Canadian study by Lowe (2005) found that 1 in 4 workers face serious work-family issues. If role overload is added, nearly 60% face this conflict. Still, some people manage to do well in their careers and enjoy personal life.

### **III. Defining Work-Life Balance in Simple Terms**

Experts say there is no single definition of work-life balance, and some don't even like using the term. But most agree it means being happy with both your work and personal life—even if you work long hours. First, let's look at what work-life balance is not:

1. It does not mean splitting your time equally. Trying to give the same number of hours to work and personal life usually doesn't work and isn't realistic. Life is more flexible than that.
2. Your best balance will change over time. What works for you today may not work tomorrow. It's different if you're single, married, have kids, start a new job, or are near retirement.
3. There is no perfect balance for everyone. Everyone's life and needs are different.

Work-life balance means how you divide your time between work, family, and things you enjoy. Getting the right balance can be hard. Success comes from knowing how you want to use your time and changing plans as your needs change. Even small changes can help. A messy schedule and stress at home can cause depression, poor work, family problems, and burnout. WLB is about keeping work from taking over your ability to enjoy life outside the job.

#### **IV. Work-Life Balance for Men and Women**

In the past 20 years, big changes have happened at work and at home. More women now work and earn better than before. At the same time, men have started doing more at home, and both men and women spend more time with their kids. But even with men helping more at home, it's still hard to balance job and family life. A study by the Families and Work Institute found that 3 out of 5 men feel stressed about work and family balance—25% more than in the late 1970s. For women, stress levels stayed around 45%. Most work policies still expect men to earn money and women to care for the family. But if companies want the best workers—both men and women—they need to help them succeed at both work and home. Saying work-life balance is only a women's issue is wrong and unfair. Another study called "The New Male Mystique" found that men now face more work-family conflict than women. The study said men now feel the same pressure women once did—to do everything. That's why WLB is a big issue for both men and women in today's busy world.

#### **V. Why Work-Life Balance Matters**

Technology has made life better in many ways. People now live longer and healthier lives thanks to new

inventions. Students can find lots of information for studies, and a mother can see and talk to her daughter even if she lives far away. These changes in how we get information, talk to others, and do tasks have brought more flexibility to jobs. But they've also made it harder to keep work and family time separate. It's important to draw a clear line between work and personal life.

People who are always working feel tired and burned out. If they don't take time to rest, their job performance drops. That's why managers should encourage workers to take breaks instead of working long hours. Having time for hobbies helps people do better at work and at home. After work hours, they should avoid answering work calls or using laptops. Finding balance is hard, as people will always demand your time. It's okay to say no to extra work unless it's truly needed.

Without balance, people miss out on enjoying the life they've worked hard to build. They can become sick or stressed, which may lead to health issues like heart disease, drinking problems, and diabetes.

#### **VI. How Poor Balance Affects Our Lives?**

Working long hours and dealing with stressful jobs makes it hard for employees to balance work and family. These problems are also linked to health risks like more smoking, drinking, weight gain, and depression. Work-life conflict affects both the body and mind. A 2007 study by Duxbury and Higgins found that women are more likely than men to feel overwhelmed and tired from caregiving duties. This is because women spend more time on things like childcare and housework, and often get less support from their partners. Even though women report more conflict, the number of men feeling this is growing too.

Work-life conflict also affects home life. The same study found that 1 in 4 Canadians say work gets in the way of home duties. Younger workers face long hours, always being online, and pressure from global work demands. Older workers are also working longer and want flexible jobs that fit their lives. One study of doctors found that having control over their schedules made a big difference in how balanced they felt. Other important factors include weekly hours worked, number of kids at home, hours on call, age, gender, and income—all of which impact work-life balance.

## **VII. Creating a Work-Life Balance Strategy**

Before starting a work-life balance plan, it's important to first understand what the business truly needs. For example, a help desk may need staff during certain hours. It's a good idea to ask employees for their thoughts since those doing the work often have the best ideas for making things better. Next, current policies should be reviewed, and a new draft strategy for work-life balance should be created. This draft should be shared with employees for feedback, and a test run or pilot can be helpful. After one last review, the final plan can be shared with all staff. Don't forget to include a section for checking how well the plan works over time. This will help track how many people use it and how effective it is.

## **VIII. How Organization can Support Balance?**

1. Offer flexible work options to everyone. Share real-life success stories within the company to show these ideas work for all job levels.
2. Be open to changing high-level roles so they allow more flexibility in when and where work is done.
3. Focus on what gets done, not how many hours people spend in the office. Stop thinking that being present equals doing well.
4. Set up a clear process for requesting flexible work. Let HR or the Diversity Manager track it to make sure everyone is treated fairly.
5. During performance talks, ask: "How can I help you balance work and life? What's getting in the way?" Take real steps to help.
6. Help leaders review tasks and remove low-value work. This frees up time for more important jobs or tasks that others can do.
7. Include work-life balance questions in staff surveys. Act on what you learn.

To help with control issues, managers should be trained in handling performance and flexibility in their teams. Barbara Holmes from Managing Work-Life Balance International says managing flexible teams needs the same skills that make organizations strong. These include setting clear goals, supporting remote work, good communication, progress checks, and giving feedback often.

## **IX. Practical Steps for Employers**

1. Run training programs to help supervisors manage work-life and flexible work issues in their teams. These sessions should include:
  - The benefits of offering flexible work options.
  - How to manage the work and results of employees who work flexible hours. This includes dealing with poor performance directly, rather than blaming the flexible setup.
  - How to build trust between managers and staff.
  - Clear ways for managers, staff, and team members to stay in touch and avoid problems or misunderstandings. These sessions should include real examples and chances to practice skills.
2. Offer one-on-one help for managers when staff ask for flexible work. A senior manager or HR team member can guide them to:
  - Set clear work goals as part of the flexible arrangement.
  - Agree on work hours, days, and locations—especially when working from home.
  - Decide what success looks like and how it will be measured.
  - Plan how communication will work between the employee, manager, clients, and team members.
  - Set dates to meet and review how the flexible work is going.
3. Make clear policies for flexible work. These should explain what's available, who can use it, and how requests will be judged. This gives fairness and helps managers who may hesitate to allow flexibility.
4. Share success stories to show managers that flexibility can work and help the company.

## **X. What Employee Can Do For Better Balance?**

### **Useful Tips for Managing Work:**

- Start by clearly understanding what matters most in both your job and personal life. Plan your day with a reasonable time frame—normally, work should take around eight hours a day.
- Be well-organized. Complete your meetings, tasks, and assignments within working hours to avoid stress carrying into the next day.

- Approach your duties, follow-ups, and communication in a calm, respectful, and friendly way to improve teamwork and reduce conflict.
- Make a daily to-do list, ranked by importance. Remember to take short breaks to relax and reset your focus.
- Stay calm even during stressful times. A gentle and thoughtful attitude helps you handle challenges more effectively.
- Pay attention to your coworkers. Treat them kindly and professionally. A friendly attitude at work leads to better relationships.
- If you feel overloaded or unsure, step back for a moment. Taking a pause can prevent mistakes and help you manage future tasks better.

#### Helpful Tips for Managing Life:

- Spend time doing things you love to relieve stress and refresh your mind and body.
- Go for walks or play sports to stay active, especially if you sit at a desk all day.
- If your job involves being out and about, pick a quiet hobby like reading or indoor games to recharge.
- Always make time for your family—spouse, children, parents, and friends. Join a local group to stay socially connected.
- Plan fun home activities like birthdays, small gatherings, or family get-togethers. These events help strengthen social bonds.
- Get enough sleep based on your age and job. Sleep is essential for good work-life balance.
- Care for your inner self. Without spiritual time—whether it's prayer, meditation, or reflection—life can feel empty. These practices bring calm, boost health, and give purpose.
- All your work and life activities are supported by a higher power—whatever name you call it. Spend time each day in prayer or reflection to gain peace, clarity, and strength for life's challenges.

ways of managing people—like offering flexible hours and work locations and having supportive managers—can really help improve work-life balance. Programs for WLB help with hiring, keeping employees, commitment, job satisfaction, fewer absences, better work, and fewer workplace accidents. Companies that support WLB know that employee well-being affects their business success.

To make sure these programs work, companies need ways to check their impact. Six ways to measure this include: how much managers support the idea, how well the plan is shared with staff, the company's culture, how things are managed, HR rules, and how much choice employees have. Lastly, people also need to manage themselves. They must control their behavior and what they expect from WLB. We may not be as brave as Gandhi, but we should aim to live by our own values—not by what others expect from us.

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#### **XI. Final Thought on Work-Life Balance**

Love and work are key parts of being human, and both are needed for happiness. But handling both can be hard. By thinking differently, we might find better ways to balance work and home life. Studies show that better