

# Six proven ways employers can improve work/life balance

Modern life has evolved, either by choice or force, into the quest to cram as much into our days as possible. The lack of time, scheduling conflicts, and feeling overwhelmed or stressed are the main issues that affect our sense of work/life balance.

As an employer, you have an opportunity to help your staff bring their work and home lives into balance and create a positive environment that promotes mental health. Based on research done for Health Canada<sup>†</sup>, experts say there are six proven things employers can do to help.

## 1. Offer flexible work schedules.

Give your employees more control over their work hours and schedules, so they can change up their hours of work and find more time for personal commitments, take holidays, or get home in time for dinner. Make sure you and your employee agree on the terms of the arrangement and accountability from both sides. Also consider options like part-time work, job sharing and reduced work week arrangements with pro-rated benefits.

## 2. Support offsite learning opportunities.

Training sessions like courses and conferences give employees the opportunity to build confidence in their skills and in their own job security, which helps relieve stress. It also helps employers grow and retain talent.

## 3. Offer paid days off for caregiving emergencies.

Most employers offer vacation and sick days, but what if employees need to take care of sick children or elderly parents? Offer a set number of caregiver days per year; not only will the families benefit, but it also increases your employee engagement by showing your employees that you trust them, you're listening, and you empathize with the demands on their time outside of work.

## 4. Rethink how you measure employee performance.

If you have a performance review system, make sure it focusses on clear objectives and results rather than the number of hours or amount of work completed. Value quality over quantity.

## 5. Foster supportive managers.

Recruit and coach your management staff to be as supportive as possible. Help them build the skills and resources they need to effectively:

- > Set clear work expectations, plans and project schedules
- > Recognize employees when they do good work
- > Listen actively and make themselves available to answer employee questions
- > Ask for their employees' opinions before making decisions that affect them

Managers should also be clear that they don't expect employees to work the same number of hours as they do, and encourage employees to take the time off they need for personal or family issues without feeling guilty.

## 6. Ensure your benefits package meets your employees' diverse needs.

Look for a benefits plan that gives employees a choice of services to suit their personal situation. Consider offering:

- > Child care and elder care referral services
- > Relocation services
- > Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)
- > Short-term personal/family leave

## Ready to rebalance your workplace? Let's talk.

Help your employees find the right balance between work and home life. We can help with expert advice on enhancing wellness in workplace and making sure your employees have the support they need.

Call us today: 888-633-6349

<sup>†</sup>From: Health Canada, (2008), Reducing Work-Life Conflict: What Works? What Doesn't?

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