

Supporting a Culture of Work-Life Balance

1st April 2020

You've built a team around you, but are you investing in their well-being?

Work-life balance is an important component of any organisation seeking to attract and retain its talent by creating a productive and positive work environment. Think of the time it takes to induct, train, and develop each member of your team. Then consider how the loss of your strongest staff members would affect your organisation. Creating an environment where people feel they are supported in creating boundaries and being able to switch off is invaluable to protect against burnout and keep the quality of your team's work high.

Here are some things to consider when it comes to promoting a healthy work-life balance at your organisation.

Communicate your expectations. Encourage employees to take their lunch breaks, and not eat at their desk. Make sure they know that they can take their holiday time guilt-free.

Listen to concerns and work with them to resolve issues that could be causing them to be overworked, such as unmanageable workloads and unrealistic deadlines.

Set an example. Your actions speak louder than your words. If you burn the midnight oil, you set an unhealthy expectation for those who report into you that they must also stay late. Get out of the office at a decent time and show your team that you value work-life balance in your own life too.

Be flexible. Do you have employees commuting long distances? Or some that care for an elderly parent, or small children, or both? Every employee lives a different life and you can help create work-life balance and accommodate these differences by talking to your human resources (HR) department about your company's policies around remote and flexible working. If your company allows it, you can arrange with a trusted team member for them to work remotely and negotiate start and finish times.

Value holidays. Holidays have the power to rejuvenate, providing rest and relaxation that can result in a more positive attitude and fresh perspective when employees return to work. Encourage workers to take holidays, and not just a long weekend. Cross-train your team members so that they can provide backup for each other for more than a day or two, then each person can enjoy more consecutive time off when they need or want it.

Press pause. Our minds aren't made to work under extended periods of concentration. Talk

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to your employees about taking a quick pause every 90 to 120 minutes to shift tasks, look away from their computer (if applicable), and shift their focus. They will return to their task with better concentration.

Foster fun. Encourage an atmosphere of enjoyment in your office by bringing fun into the workplace. Plan a team lunch or barbecue at work, move your team meeting outside or to the local cafe on a nice day, and celebrate individual and shared accomplishments together. Not only will you be promoting a more enjoyable work environment, you will be helping to build bonds between team members.

Remember, employees are not a commodity, they are a diverse group of people that require respect and some flexibility (when possible) to perform to their full potential. Work-life balance not only improves productivity, but also creativity, as your team is able to work with healthy and strong minds and bodies.