

Bulletin Board: Finding a work/life balance can be challenging

by Amy_Winter

Do you find it difficult to fit both your job and outside life obligations into the day? Learning to balance responsibilities in both worlds can make daily life less stressful. Bernadette Kenny, chief career officer of Adecco USA, a human resources solutions company, says productivity and technology add to the challenge of pursuing a reasonable work/life balance.

Although employers and employees seem to understand that stability leads to a healthier lifestyle and long-term working environment, it takes the cooperation of both the managers and employees to create an improved workplace.

"Employees need to truly stick to their life outside of work - family, the gym, friends or whatever it is you like to do, in addition to adding value and being productive at work," says Kenny. "Employers have a responsibility in creating a culture where workers can make choices about their career and work-life balance."

Employers can help workers by offering more flexibility with work schedules. Options may include telecommuting, job sharing and condensed schedules.

Kenny provides tips to assist workers in finding more flexibility:

- Respect and protect your private time. Consider private time as important as work meetings and family gatherings. Set aside time for yourself and stick to the plan.

- Leave your mobile devices behind. Technology can invade your personal life due to today's on-call atmosphere. Put your phone down when spending time with family and friends; center your energy on them.

- Take a health break. Spend time exercising and eating well to become healthier. Take a walk or eat a piece of fruit.

- Vacation on vacation. Avoid working while on a trip; rejuvenate and rest from the stress at work.

Check your priorities. Don't lose track of your top preferences even when your work schedule becomes busy.

Balance your top priorities for home, family, work and yourself.

A survey by Robert Half International, a staffing firm, also discovered that employees highly value flexible schedules.

The firm also gives some suggestions for moving toward a work/life balance:

- Slow down. Take pleasure in the activities and people around you, both in the office and at home.

- Simplify. Get rid of clutter on your desk; it will save you time from sorting through papers.

- Chart goals. Provide a list of daily tasks that need to be completed.

- Share responsibilities. Give roles to other employees instead of attempting to complete the projects on your own. It will reduce the workload and give co-workers a chance to develop more skills.

For more information, visit www.adecco.com and www.rhi.com.

MORE THAN COFFEE BREAKS

Workers have found new ways to take advantage of their daily coffee breaks. Forty-nine percent of employees take at least one break during the workday, according to an online survey by CareerBuilder.com that questioned 5,600 U.S. workers. And 32 percent of respondents said they take a coffee break at least twice a day.

These breaks aren't limited only to drinking coffee. CareerBuilder.com lists the oddest activities employees recalled doing during breaks:

- Completed a step aerobics workout.

- Kissed another co-worker.
- Participated in a burping contest.
- Ran in a race dressed in a wedding dress.
- Went outside to chase a weasel.
- Judged a "best legs" contest.

Fifteen percent of respondents admitted to searching for a new job during a break. Employees in the banking and finance industries were the most likely to job-search (29 percent), followed by health-care workers at 21 percent.

For more information, visit www.careerbuilder.com.

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