

UPDATE: AUTUMN 2004

Aspirating work-life balance organisations now have two 'best practice' benchmarks against which to measure their progress. The Work-Life Balance Standard has its roots in Dorset Tec's Family Friendly standard and was developed to support the government's Work-Life Balance Challenge Fund. And last year saw the launch of the IIP's Work-Life Balance module designed to complement other IIP activity.

While we believe the benchmarks are a wholly good thing, when we looked at them we saw pluses and minuses in both. So we've put together our own self-assessment checklist* and recently had the opportunity to share our thinking with two very different audiences.

At the beginning of September we ran an evening session for HR colleagues from the CIPD's Central London Branch. We were fortunate in having Rebecca Clake from Wimbledon join us as she's currently running a project to develop guidance on implementing flexible working. (See end column for more details.)

Essentially this was a practical session which allowed participants to identify gaps in their organisation's practices. It was no surprise to us that while most people felt they had a strategy and procedures in place, fewer claimed

to have a supportive culture and nobody had developed a process for evaluating whether all of this was successful or not!

At the end of September we ran a further workshop, this time for colleagues in the BPS Division of Occupational Psychology. This - more theoretical - session on how to create a work-life balance culture in organisations considered a number of models and cross-cultural definitions of work-life balance.

**While our checklist doesn't automatically lead to accreditation under either benchmark, it will help identify gaps in your work-life strategy. To obtain a free copy contact us via our website or email us at the address below.*

The Directors of HalsAllan are delighted to announce the launch of their new website, and invite you to visit:

www.Halsallan.co.uk

Our new website is now up and running; and - as exponents of the benefits of virtual and remote working - we're very excited at the prospect of being able to communicate with more people in cyberspace.

Through the website we plan to share good practice we've been

developing over the last five years as well as providing a link to our blog giving an insight into our day to day lives.

If you've not yet read our online diary, have a look at:

<http://halsallan.blogspot.com>

Practical guidance on flexible working from the CIPD

The CIPD has announced plans to develop practical advice on implementing flexible working.

A member survey is being conducted to understand:

- the challenges of effectively implementing flexible working and;
- the impact on the workplace and the way it operates .

As passionate supporters of flexible working, we're delighted the CIPD has taken this important step; and look forward to the practical guidance and web-based tool for managers (both planned for early 2005).

For more information about the project, contact Rebecca Clake, CIPD Adviser, Organisation and Resourcing: R.Clake@cipd.co.uk

‘Corridor coaching’ for work-life balance

In her new book ‘The Coach’s Coach’, Alyson Hardingham introduces the concept of corridor coaching - short opportunistic exchanges which can provide powerful opportunities for changing organisational culture.

In our experience this ‘bite size’ approach to coaching can be extremely effective on work-life balance matters. For most people, achieving balance is about making relatively minor adjustments; and a short exchange with a colleague or manager can provide insights into how these can be achieved.

Similarly for managers under time pressures a few minutes discussion – perhaps by the coffee machine – can be sufficient to identify new ways of addressing practical issues around flexible working. The payoff comes both in terms of resolving concerns in a timely manner, and in promoting a more open culture where work-life balance issues are discussed freely.

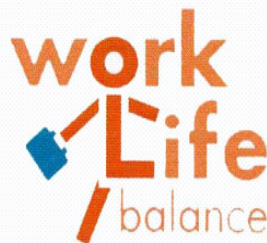
The Coach’s Coach (ISBN 1-84398-075-4) is available from CIPD Publishing

Work-life balance continues to be an issue for many sectors of the working population.

Over the summer the charity Common Purpose UK published the results of an online survey conducted among 1000 employees

between the ages of 25 and 35. Key findings included revelations that:

- A quarter life crisis is a reality for young people today, and is a time when they evaluate what they’re doing and what they want from life.
- The danger age when employers stand to lose their most talented employees is 30, when young people are most likely to feel disillusioned with their careers.



Developmental psychologists will recognised the ‘quarter life’ period around age 30 as Levinson’s ‘Age 30 Transition’ (originally identified by him in 1978). What’s different today is that younger workers are less likely to remain in unsatisfactory jobs as they work through the transition.

Consequently we’ve noticed a resurgence of interest in sabbatical policies as one attempt by leading edge organisations to resolve these issues.

(For the full report see: www.commonpurpose.org.uk)

Meanwhile, the Guardian’s ‘Society’ pages carried an article detailing the life of one of the UK’s two million male carers. Andrew Entwistle is 59 and has given up his job as a horticultural scientist to provide full-time care for his mother.

The article drew on research by the Cass Business School in London suggesting that by 2050 (under a ‘worst case’ scenario) the UK could face a potential shortfall of three million carers – requiring both men and women in work to step into the breach.

However, according to the EOC, male carers find it harder to obtain flexible working arrangements than their female counterparts. According to a spokesperson:

“Many employers see flexible working or family-friendly policies as something for women.”

(Read the full Guardian article – ‘Men about the house’, 6 Oct. - at: <http://society.guardian.co.uk>)

For more information about the Cass Business School report see: www.cass.city.ac.uk/arc/reports)

HalsAllan are running a half-day executive briefing on how to position work-life balance at the centre of the HR agenda. Briefings run in Covent Garden, Central London and more information can be found on our website:

www.halsallan.co.uk

This update has been brought to you by the directors of HalsAllan:

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