

Creating an Employee Supportive Workplace – Achieving Work-Life Quality and Balance

Work-Life quality and balance have become *the* most pressing issues experienced by workers today. This program is based upon the premise that we *cannot manage time* but we can manage our most important workplace activities, when they are clearly identified and prioritized.

Achieving work-life quality and balance requires the complementary efforts of:

- An Organizational Support System

and implementation of:

- Manager/Supervisor/Employee-Designed Work-Life Process

The Organizational Support System consists of:

- Program support
- Leadership support
- Cultural Transformation

The Manager/Supervisor/Employee Designed Work-Life Process consists of:

- Personal Work-Life Plan
- Implementation Process

An Organizational Support System

Program Support: This component involves the various unique programs offered by an organization to their employees. These programs include, but are not limited to:

1. Family-Friendly Initiatives
2. Child Care
3. Elder Care
4. Adoption
5. Family Leave
6. New Mothers
7. Family Education Expenses
8. Employee Assistance Programs
9. Personal Problems
10. Financial, Mental, Health, and Chemical Dependency
11. Work-friendly Programs
12. Flexibility in Work Hours
13. Telecommuting or working at home
14. Zero Tolerance Harassment (including race, color, sex, etc.)
15. Disability and Religious Accommodation
16. Anti-harassment Training, Prevention, and Procedures
17. Pay Equity Evaluations and Adjustments
18. Employee Satisfaction Survey
19. Disability Strategy
20. Retirement Planning Program

21. Reduced schedules
22. Family leave for childbirth or adoption
23. Job sharing
24. Leave for school/childcare functions
25. Childcare near or at worksite
26. On-site summer camp
27. Workshops or seminars for quality, balance, and work-life issues
28. Diversity training
29. Manager/supervisor work-life appraisals
30. Career counseling programs
31. Wellness programs for employees and their families
32. 401(k) or 403(b) individual retirement plan

Leadership Support: This component is a four-hour workshop for leadership personnel (support) to learn the mind-set and skills necessary to support the work-life quality and balance of employees. It also includes a segment for leadership to define for themselves those values/activities/practices that are of value for their own personal and professional well-being. The workshop is titled “**Creating an Employee Supportive Workplace Environment that Fosters Work-Life Quality and Balance.**”

The workshop begins with a review of the “**Sanity**” workshop that employees experience in order to acquaint support personnel with work-life plans and expectations of employees.

Learning Objectives

The objectives of this workshop are to learn:

1. The critical factors and guiding principles for creating an employee-supportive workplace environment.
2. The workplace expectations of employers and employees that create an employee-supportive workplace environment.
3. A new paradigm for compatibly integrating and performing work and personal life responsibilities.
4. How to facilitate the resolution of difficult work-life choices that employees experience.
5. The workplace values/activities/practices that are most important to those in leadership, management, or supporting roles.
6. Implementation strategies for creating an employee supportive workplace environment.

Cultural Transformation: This component of the Organizational Support System involves the design of a strategic plan to achieve a workplace culture where:

- People are our most important resource – attracting and retaining intellectual capital
- Performance is the measure of success
- Workplace values, such as teamwork, flexibility, support, and creativity and innovation are integrated with critical business decisions and functions
- Leadership, unambiguously, espouses and practices humanistic values — respect, equality, honesty, integrity, and wisdom — in managing and leading
- Personal/family responsibilities minimally impact workplace responsibilities and performance
- Creativity and innovation flourish
- Development, visible opportunities, and advancement are based upon potential and performance
- Work processes are flexibly designed and implemented
- Core values are a living, practiced reality

The design of the plan includes both tactical (how) and strategic (why) dimensions designed to attract, recruit, develop, and retain exceptional employees. In essence, to be an “employer of choice.” Such a plan is obviously an integral dimension of a diversity inclusive environment.

This plan is commonly based upon the results of a Work-Life Quality and Balance survey or other internal organizational means of addressing the most prominent issues that prevent an employee-supportive culture.

Manager/Supervisor/Employee-Designed Work-Life Process

An Employee-Designed Work-Life Process is the result of identifying our innermost values and then translating those values into a balance of activities in the areas of *self*, *family*, *work*, and *service*. Two basic premises of this work-life program are that we are individually responsible for creating quality and balance in our lives; and, these are most constructively accomplished with an employee-supportive workplace environment.

The work-life process is a result of an implementation plan designed during a day-long, highly interactive, hands-on workshop titled **Creating Sanity in the Midst of Chaos – Achieving Work-Life Quality and Balance**. This workshop is designed for managers, supervisors, and employees. Prior to the one-day workshop, each participant completes a confidential questionnaire on work-life balance to help them discover their present quality of life in preparation for the workshop activities.

The Workshop

The workshop activities include stimulating interactive dialogue, small group exercises, and various individual and paired sharing for in-depth self-discovery. A special feature involves the opportunity for feedback and coaching from other workshop participants based upon the mastery of “in-depth interactive dialogue.”

1) The first module begins with an in-depth personal assessment of “where you are” in your life with respect to *self*, *family*, *work*, and *service*. Based upon this assessment, you are provided an opportunity to evaluate the present state of your life and begin the process of determining the quality and balance you desire.

2) The second module focuses on personal responsibility, as a living concept, for achieving the quality and balance of life you desire. We learn what it really means to be responsible for our lives — past, present, and “probable future!” The basic premise of this module is:

*“You can only change your life in proportion
to what you claim responsibility for,
not for what you can control.”*

William A. Guillory, Ph.D.

This quote is brought to life with a simulation exercise that provides the opportunity for you to discover your most important values with respect to work and personal life.

3) The third module helps us to learn how to select and prioritize our most important workplace or life activities on a day-to-day basis—bringing sanity to our daily responsibilities. This module is one of the most important processes of the seminar in that it shows how to handle unexpected events as well as how to *prioritize, plan, execute, and focus* your most important day-to-day activities.

4) In the final module, we clearly define (or redefine) our innermost values—which are a permanent and unchanging part of who we are—and the corresponding activities that follow from them. Comparing the latter with our present living pattern creates the opportunity for not only reprioritizing, but also, redefining the quality of our lives for the immediate future.

Finally, we each examine, non-superficially, the consequences to us of rewriting the script of our lives where we take ownership of being writer, producer, director, and major actor. When faced with the consequences of such a dilemma, we each clearly understand what it means to “create our own reality.” The final exercise is writing a redesigned script of what we are committed to in aligning our innermost values with our life activities.

A basic premise of this workshop is that work and personal responsibilities are inseparable. Hence, the focus is a holistic approach to work-life quality and balance.

The workshop modules include:

- Assessing Your Life—Making a Personal Inventory
- Creating Sanity Begins with “Taking Responsibility for Your Life”
- Creating Sanity in the Midst of a Chaotic Day—Prioritizing and Managing Workplace Responsibilities
- Rewriting the Script of Your Life
- Appendix—Things I’ve Learned

Learning Experiences

Key objectives of the workshop include:

- how to achieve work-life quality and balance
- an assessment of your present work-life quality
- identification and resolution of barriers to work-life quality
- learning, experientially, how to take responsibility for your life
- learning how present work-life choices affect your long-term quality of life
- learning how to plan, prioritize, execute, and focus your daily activities
- learning your dominant workstyle orientation and its impact on others
- how-to's for organizing your work-life
- learning your innermost values
- designing a personal work-life plan