

Improving work-life balance

Advice about work-life balance is often directed at the individual employee. But what about the employer — what role do they play in promoting work-life balance for their employees?

The employer's role in work-life balance

We have developed a helpful list of ideas for promoting work-life balance at an organization level. The list has been divided into six broad categories — annual leave, time management, flexibility, upskilling, health and wellness, and work environment. Consider sharing this list with managers, HR staff and leadership at your organization to encourage awareness at every level of your organization.



Annual leave

Giving employees time off allows them to rest and recharge. Generous leave offerings can also help your organization attract and retain employees. Here are some ideas to consider:

Offer competitive leave compared to other organizations in your market and/or industry (you can use [Leave Programs](#) to benchmark your leave offering).

Consider adding new types of leave for employees to enhance their sense of work-life balance, for example, personal days or mental health days.

Encourage employees at all levels to use their leave and ensure the message comes from senior leadership.

Lead by example — employees at all levels should take annual leave.



Time management

When employees feel overwhelmed at work it can lead to burnout and an overall sense of poor work-life balance. Furthermore, employees with heavy workloads may be working during hours that should be designated for personal time, which negatively impacts work-life balance. Helping employees with time management can address some of these issues. Here are some ideas to consider:

Offer training on time management to ensure employees are making the most of their working hours.

Review the employee's workload with them on a regular basis and help them prioritize the most important tasks or help them find support to get their work completed.

Avoid glorifying overworking/weekend working and actively encourage employees to log off when their scheduled work hours are over.

Encourage employees to set away messages or out of office messages outside of their established working hours.

Help employees delegate work when appropriate.

Facilitate open dialogue for employees that want to raise issues with workload/working too many hours each week.



Flexibility

When unexpected personal circumstances arise, it's convenient to have flexibility at work. Employees that have flexibility may feel that they have more autonomy over their schedule and the ability to schedule work and personal commitments in the way that works best for them. Here are some ideas to consider:

Consider offering a flexible working schedule or consider a four-day work week.

Offer remote working or hybrid working options, if appropriate for the employee's role.

Offer ad hoc flexible arrangements for appointments or other personal commitments.



Upskilling

Employees may feel more engaged at work when learning something new or developing a new skill. Offering upskilling opportunities also shows that the organization cares about the employee's development. Here are some ideas to consider:

Provide educational opportunities for employees at all levels in all roles.

Set up a mentorship program based on skills so employees can help each other learn new skills.

Offer opportunities for employees to attend workshops, conferences or seminars (in - person or virtually).

Offer opportunities for employees to upskill in nonwork-related skills, like a new language or an art class they can access outside of work.

Partner with an online learning platform to gain access for employees and allow them to select their own learning opportunities.

Ask employees about skills they want to foster and try to facilitate opportunities for them to upskill.



Health and wellness

A healthier employee is a happier employee. Supporting physical and mental health for employees is essential in promoting work-life balance. Here are some ideas to consider:

Offer subsidized or fully covered gym memberships, or talk to health insurance providers about programs they may have available.

Provide healthy snacks for on-site employees.

Start a mental health awareness program.

Partner with a meditation or stress management app to get licenses for employees to use.

Encourage breaks during the day for exercise, relaxation or eating lunch away from the employee's desk.

Start a "time to stand" campaign encouraging employees to stand up from their desks at least once each hour.

Disseminate helpful health-related information like healthy recipes or exercises that can be done at an office chair.

Gather feedback from a diverse group of employees on additional health and wellness offerings that would be of interest to them.



Work environment

Whether your workforce is working in person, remotely or in a hybrid setting there are changes you can make to the work environment to enhance the employee's work-life balance. Here are some ideas to consider:

In-office recommendations:

Start a committee to organize social activities during lunch or after work.

Plan a volunteer day.

Organize a space for relaxation.

Purchase plants, art or other decorations that add to the office aesthetic without being distracting.

Create spaces for collaboration and spaces for individual "heads down" work.

Consider starting a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) committee to help build a culture of acceptance and inclusion for all employees.

Remote recommendations:

Subsidize ergonomic equipment for employees to use in their home offices.

Plan remote team building exercises.

Encourage employees to be on camera during video meetings to share a "face to face" experience.

Take steps to build remote company culture.

Consider starting a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) committee to help build a culture of acceptance and inclusion for all employees.

Source:

The Economic Times — How organizations can help employees maintain work-life balance

Sage — 12 ways to support a better work-life balance for your employees

Criteria For Success — 12 examples of work-life balance initiatives

BuiltIn — 20 ways to promote work-life balance at your company

Time Doctor — 10 ways to foster better employee work-life balance



Conclusion

The pandemic caused people to think differently about their priorities and the balance, or lack thereof, between their personal and professional lives. Research confirms that employees are craving a more balanced future where they have time and energy for work and for personal activities. Helping employees achieve a sense of work-life balance can energize the workforce so that they can work better for the organization. Consider implementing the suggestions on this list and then ask employees whether these new measures are having the desired effect on work-life balance.

Need more information? The Leave Programs report can help! Use it to review market practices and statutory requirements for paid and unpaid time off across a selection of core leave programs.

[Learn More](#)