

Why You Should Encourage Your Employees To Maintain A Work-Life Balance

Maintaining the perfect work-life balance has always been a struggle for employees and business owners alike. Schedules are busier than they've ever been before, which often causes either our work life or personal life to suffer. Many times it's both.

Maintaining an efficient work-life balance involves juggling your duties at work with the daily pressure of family, friends, and time for yourself. Employees today want more control over their lives and a bigger say in the structure of their jobs. While it may seem counterintuitive, giving them a greater say is usually mutually beneficial for the company and the employee. When an employee feels a greater sense of control and ownership over their own lives, they have better relationships at work and work harder while they're there.

Balanced employees are generally more motivated and less stressed out while they're at work. This increases company productivity and reduces conflicts between coworkers and management. Companies with a reputation for encouraging a healthy work-life balance are very attractive to workers and can attract a valuable pool of job candidates for their openings.

These companies also do a good job of retaining their employees, resulting in less turnover and time-consuming training, and more in-house expertise.

A positive work-life balance is beneficial for both the employee and the employer, so it's something that should be present in every business. Below is a list of things you can do to encourage a healthy work-life balance for your employees.

Ask Your Employees What They Need

The first step in fixing a problem is knowing it exists. It's becoming common knowledge that work-life balance is important, but that doesn't tell you how to give it to your employees. The best way to figure out what your employees need is to simply ask them.

An easy and efficient way of doing this is having them fill out a survey. Ask them about the factors that affect their work-life balance, such as hours worked, flexible scheduling, support for parents, etc.

This allows you to easily identify the areas where your company needs to improve and make changes that will actually benefit your employees.

Establish Clear Boundaries

Technology is great at helping your staff stay up to date on what's happening in your company no matter where they are. However, it also makes it even harder for them to leave the office. In our era of 24/7 always-on technology, it can become tempting for employees to constantly check in with what's going on at work.

A recent study done in Australia found that Australians donate \$110 billion to their employers every year. How exactly did they do that? Through unpaid overtime. You should do all you can to encourage your employees to leave their work at the office and not to worry about it until they get to work the next day. Setting guidelines about when emails can and cannot be sent is a good start.

Encourage Efficiency

Working long hours and being productive do not go hand in hand. In fact, people are likely to be less productive and put out less quality work with each additional hour they work. Long hours rarely equates to higher productivity.

As well as reducing employee performance, longer hours also damages employee morale. The Mental Health Foundation has reported that when working long hours, 27% of people report feeling depressed, 34% feel anxious, and 58% are irritable. So instead of encouraging longer hours which is bad all around, encourage efficiency.

Encourage them to make the most of their time at the office, and then leave when they're supposed to and forget about it while they're home. This will keep the quality of their work up without damaging employee morale.

Make Sure They Use Their Vacation Time

Believe it or not, some people go years on end without ever taking a vacation. It could be for a number of reasons, but they opt to work year round without any sort of break. You should encourage your staff to use their vacation days.

It will allow your employees to completely turn themselves off, de-stress, and come back to work rejuvenated. Employees are often more motivated and productive in the days following their vacations. They may also come back with fresh ideas and new perspectives on things that they wouldn't have gained without taking their vacation.

If they can't go on an all-out vacation, encourage a "staycation." Sometimes all people need is a little rest and relaxation at home.

Lead By Example

Telling employees to do something doesn't always get them to do it. You may tell them they need to leave at 5 pm, but 9 pm rolls around and they are still pounding away at the keyboard. You tell them to take their vacation, but they still have hundreds of hours of PTO sitting around gathering dust.

Like many things, creating balance is easier said than done. So you should lead by example. Don't just tell them it's important, show them it's important.

Make sure you're walking out of the door at 5. Don't respond to their emails after hours (unless it's an emergency). Take time off when you need it.

If your employees see you prioritizing your personal time, they won't feel as guilty when they start to prioritize theirs.

Start The Conversation

Your employees won't know it's okay to value their personal time unless you tell them it is. Send out that survey we talked about, and start implementing the changes as soon as possible. Leave for work on time. Take your lunch breaks. Show them that these things are okay.

And one of the absolute best thing you can do as their boss to show them that you care about their personal lives is to simply ask about them. Ask them how their kids, their spouse, their dog are. Ask them where they plan to take their vacation.

Showing a genuine interest goes a long way with people. Start getting that work-life balance where it needs to be as soon as you can. Your employees and your bottom line will thank you.