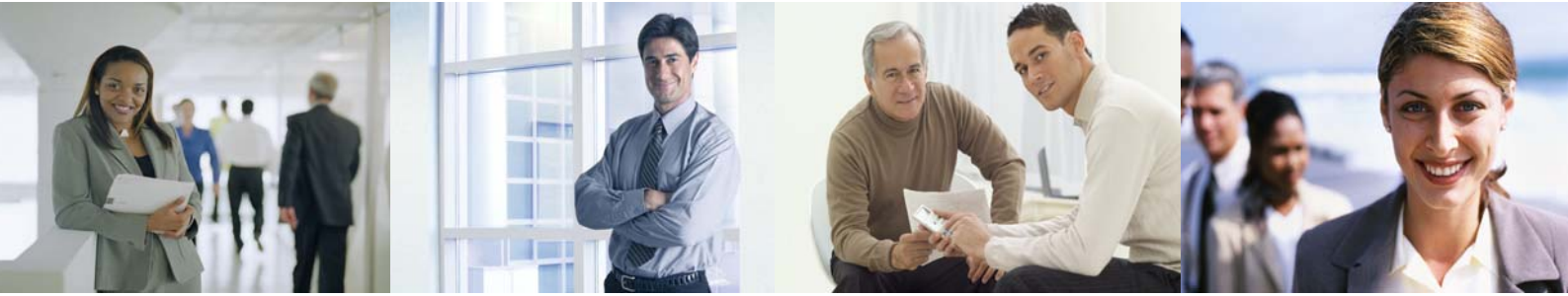


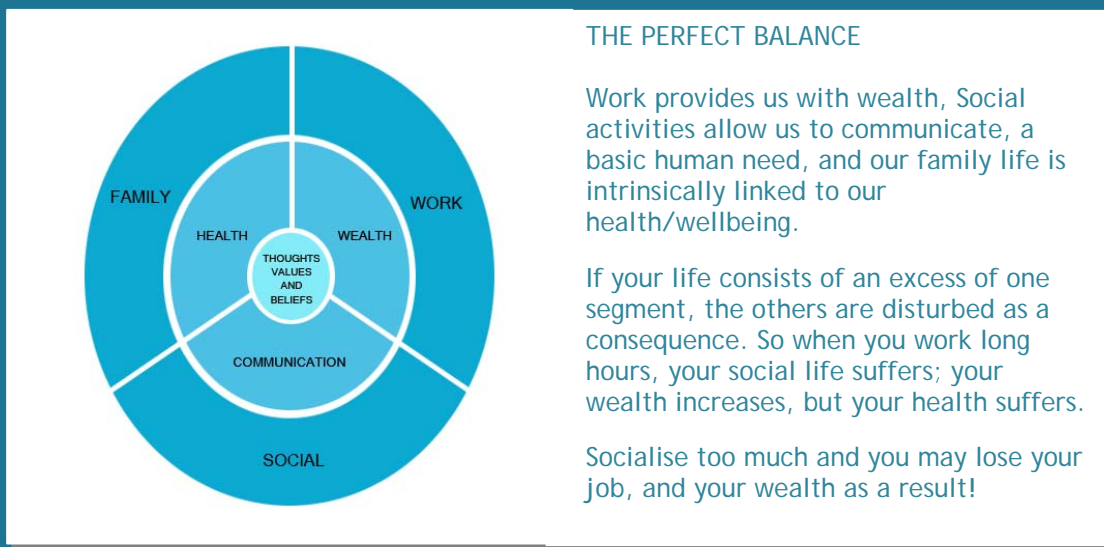
# Work Life Balance



## Do we work too hard in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

Look up the word “work” in a 19<sup>th</sup> century dictionary and you would find the definition “an activity for effect or outcome; often the one desired or expected”. Jump to the 21<sup>st</sup> century edition and it is somewhat different “Physical or mental effort or intense activity directed toward the production of something.”

Strange that we describe work today in terms of pure effort, and satisfaction doesn't seem to play a part in the meaning, yet in the days of the industrial revolution, with far worse working conditions, work was defined as a means to achieve ones desires. Do we still work now to achieve desires, or is it that with increased materialism, we must simply work harder, merely to achieve the status quo? Are the desires we now work towards material rather than emotional/mental, and therefore we find only the shallow satisfaction that acquiring material goods gives us?



A recent survey showed that 78% of employees in full time work want a better work/life balance. 9 out of ten respondents thought they would produce better work if there were a better balance, but over a third felt their career would suffer as a result. A recent study of 15 Blue Chip companies showed that 60% of prospective employees thought the most important factor when choosing a new job was how this would affect their personal life. So it looks like the worm is turning and the employee is beginning to put health and family first.

# Work Life Balance

## What can you do to improve your Work Life Balance?

First and foremost examine the amount of time you are working each week. Does it seem excessive? Do you enjoy what you do? If you are regularly working long hours then maybe your first step is to address this with your employer.

Here are some other simple ideas for improving the balance

### Social

- Learn a new skill by taking a class outside of work that forces you to leave at a set time
- Consider jobs that offer flexible working hours
- Set aside time each week to visit or ring family members
- Organise, or participate in, corporate quiz nights
- Get a group of friends and organise a once monthly catch up lunch
- Get away from the city on weekends if you can

### Health

- Go to the gym at lunch time
- Take your lunch to a park and have a picnic
- Organise, or participate in, corporate sports such as touchy footy
- When you are sick, don't struggle through, take the day off sick and get better
- Eat a healthy breakfast
- Go out for a short walk to get away from your desk

## What can Employers do to improve their Employees Work Life Balance?

Employers that incorporate the use of balance strategies into their corporate culture are those that will continue to attract the best candidates for their roles. These are some ideas:

### Social

- Team building activities
- Organise corporate games, corporate sports teams
- Social activities
- Family friendly policies
- Offer flexible working hours

### Health

- Employee health assessments
- Corporate massage
- In house gym and yoga classes
- A rest or 'play' room
- Fatigue Management
- Provide fruit for employees

Employers of choice recognise that a healthy workforce leads to less absenteeism, decreased staff turnover, and better performance. And a healthy employee equals a happy employee!

