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A Practical Guide to

Conducting a Work/Life

Workplace Assessment



The Developmental Stages of Work/Life

Purpose

Use this activity to:

- Clarify the overall stage of your company's work/life plan
- Consider how this developmental stage might affect planning, implementation and evaluation.

Participants

This activity may be completed by a work/life manager or by members of a work/life committee.

Steps

1. Use the following chart to list the challenges currently confronting your organization. You may find that most of the challenges are clustered in a particular stage. However, it is possible that your organization is facing challenges associated with more than one developmental stage.

Key Work/Life Challenges

		Stage 4: Maximizing Linkages and Integration	•
	Stage 3: Examining Workplace Culture		•
Stage 2: Establishing Policies, Programs, and Practices			• •
Stage 1: Understanding the Issues			• •

2. Select the three most pressing challenges listed above and record how they might affect the development, implementation and evaluation of your work/life plan.

	Challenge	Impact on Development?	Impact on Implementation?	Impact on Evaluation?
1				
2				
3				





The Stakeholder "Solar System"

Purpose

Use this activity to:

- Identify stakeholder groups
- Gather information about stakeholders' perceptions and priorities
- Develop action steps to strengthen relationships with stakeholder groups.

Participants

This exercise has been developed for a small group of people involved in work/life planning (e.g., a planning committee or task force). In the absence of an existing work/life group, engage one or two people to help you work on this activity.

Steps

1. On a large sheet of paper, draw five concentric circles which will be called, "The Work/Life Stakeholder Orbits." Put the words "work/life policies, programs and practices" in the center circle.

The Work/Life Stakeholder Orbits



Pass out ten pieces of "post-it" note paper to each member of the planning group.

Identify the first "stakeholder orbit" as **corporate decision makers**. Ask each group member to write on a "post-it" the title of one top management position that is a stakeholder in (although not necessarily a supporter of) work/life issues. Post these on the first orbit.

Continue with the identification of groups/ individuals to fill the next four orbits:

- company departments or functions (e.g., compensations & benefits or community relations)
- employee groups and their families
- business customers
- investors or stockholders

Add other stakeholder orbits, such as "external groups," as appropriate.

As a group, review the stakeholders identified on the orbits. Which stakeholders were identified more than once? Were any important stakeholders not identified?

The Stakeholder "Solar System"

2. Ask the group to identify one or two individuals who are members of each stakeholder group and who could represent the group's perspective. For example, the director of community relations could be considered a representative of that department. Add the names of the individuals to the orbits.

Ask each person to select one or two individuals designated on the stakeholder orbits and conduct interviews with them.

Develop a list of interview questions. For example:

- In your opinion, what are the most important work/life issues facing employees at our company?
- How do these work/life issues affect how we do our business? Our company image? The extent to which we meet our business objectives?
- What are the problems associated with responding to these work/life issues? With not responding to these work/life issues?
- What recommendations do you have for addressing our company's priority work/life issues?
- How could work/life policies and programs benefit your group (your department, your set of responsibilities, etc.)?

Have the committee members present summaries of their interviews at a committee meeting. As a group, discuss:

- What we have learned about the perspectives of different stakeholder groups?
- What do they think about work/life issues?
- What do they think about our company's response to work/life issues?
- What are the implications for our planning efforts?
- 3. Prioritize the stakeholder groups on your stakeholder orbit. Select the top three (or more) groups as key stakeholders.
 - Assess the extent to which each key stakeholder is supportive of your company's work/life initiatives.
 - Develop strategies to strengthen relationships with selected stakeholders.
 - If you are working with an on-going work/life group, periodically ask committee members to assess their relationships with the stakeholders.

The Wheel of Organizational Change

Purpose

Use this activity to:

- Identify organizational changes
- Determine how these changes might affect your work/life policies, programs and practices
- Determine how work/life policies, programs and practices might affect the changes.

Participants

This exercise can be completed by a work/life manager or a person with planning responsibilities. Alternatively, members of a work/life committee could complete the worksheet and then meet to discuss the implications of past or anticipated structural changes.

Steps

Use the following pie chart for this exercise.



- Put a √ next to those changes that have occurred during the past 5 years but not during the past 12 months.
 Put a * next to those changes that have happened during the past 12 months.
- 2 Review the list.
 - Would you characterize the past five years as a time of great change in your organizational structure? Moderate change? Little or no change?
 - Consider each of the changes. How were they communicated? What might be the implications of these changes for work/life planning? Implications for the implementation of work/life policies, programs, and practices? Implications for evaluation?
 - Which changes are seen as opportunities for your work/life plan? Which are seen as challenges?
 - Is there any way to leverage the changes to enhance your company's work/life programs? Is there any way to mitigate negative changes?

Work/Life Discussion Groups

Purpose

Use this activity to:

- Consider the perspectives of different employee groups as part of the Workplace Assessment process
- Clarify linkages between employees' experiences, business priorities, and your work/life plan.

Participants

This exercise has been designed to involve different groups of employees in your work/life planning activities. Employees should be encouraged to participate in those meetings that are most relevant to their own situations.

Steps

- 1. Plan monthly work/life discussion meetings organized according to work/life interests common to certain groups. For example, employees in dual career families could be invited to one meeting, single parents to another, employees with disabled family members to another, and so on. Be sure to encourage employees to suggest possible interest groups they are likely to identify groupings that might not occur to you.
- Publicize the meeting aggressively. However, discussions about work/family issues tend to be most successful when the groups are limited to 15 people so you may want to consider sign-ups and increase the number of meeting as necessary.
- 3. Assure all employees that the discussions will be kept completely confidential.
- 4. Invite employees to talk about their experiences related to work/life balance.
 - What are your career objectives?
 - What are your objectives for personal pursuits?
 - What are your most important family/home responsibilities?
 - How do your different life objectives affect each other?
 - What could help you achieve a more satisfying sense of work/life balance?
- 5. Summarize the key points made in the different discussion groups in a quarterly report (or some other communications strategy) to share with the work/life stakeholder groups. Remember to frame the summaries in a way that respects the confidentiality of the participants.





Mapping Motivators and Barriers

Purpose

Use this activity to:

• Identify factors at the workplace that might affect (e.g., motivate or inhibit) the development of your work/life plan or the implementation of work/life policies, programs, or practices.

Participants

This activity may be completed either by one person or by a committee engaged in work/life planning.

Steps

1. Use the "Peaks and Valleys" diagram below.



- Identify factors that might support your objectives for work/life planning. List these factors in the "peaks" column.
- Identify factors that might act as barriers to your objectives for work/life planning. List these factors in the "valleys" column.
- 2. Consider the implications of your motivators and barriers.
 - Do there seem to be more motivating or more inhibiting factors?
 - Can some factors sometimes act as motivators and sometimes as barriers?
- 3. Use the following chart to specify strategies that can reinforce the motivating factors or can reduce the inhibiting factors. Some of the factors should be best left alone.

Strategy Chart

	Motivating Factors "Peaks"	Effect on Work/Life Objectives	Strategies to "Move the Mountains"
1.			
2.			
	Inhibiting Factors "Valleys"	Effect on Work/Life Objectives	Strategies to "Till the Soil"
1.			
2.			
3.			



Measuring the Success of Work/Life Policies, Programs and Practices

Purpose

Use this activity to:

- Clarify the goals and objectives your company's work/life policies, programs and practices
- Determine the extent to which specific policies, programs, and practices have added value to your company's work/life strategy.

Participants

• This activity may be completed by a work/life manager or by members of a work/life committee.

Steps

1. Use the following table to specify the "hoped for" outcomes of your company's work/life policies, programs and practices.

For each policy, program and practice, put a " $\sqrt{"}$ in those columns which are important indicators of success.

Indicators of success may include:

Policy/Program/Practico

- increased use of specific policy, program, or practice in comparison to the previous year
- decreased costs of program administration
- increased employee perceptions that work/life issues are priorities for the company
- increased customer awareness that the company has made a commitment to work/life issues
- decrease in "unwanted" situations (e.g., fewer lay-offs as a result of an increase in job sharing, etc.)

· ·····				
Indicators of Success	Comments			
Utilization Rate?		-		
User Satisfaction?				
Improvement in Work Outcomes? (specify which outcomes)				
Improvement in Personal or Family Well-Being? (specify which outcomes)				·
Other Indicators			-	
Policy/Program/Practice				
Indicators of Success	<u>Comments</u>			
Utilization Rate?				
User Satisfaction?				
Improvement in Work Outcomes? (specify which outcomes)				
Improvement in Personal or Family Well-Being? (specify which outcomes)				
Other Indicators				

(continued on back side)

Measuring the Success of Work/Life Policies, Programs and Practices

Policy/Program/Practice	
	Commonto .
Indicators of Success	<u>Comments</u>
Utilization Rate?	
User Satisfaction?	
Improvement in Work Outcomes? (specify which outcomes)	
Improvement in Personal or Family Well-Being? (specify which outcomes)	
Other Indicators	
Policy/Program/Practice	
Indicators of Success	Comments
Utilization Rate?	
User Satisfaction?	
Improvement in Work Outcomes? (specify which outcomes)	
Improvement in Personal or Family Well-Being? (specify which outcomes)	
Other Indicators	
Policy/Program/Practice	
Indicators of Success	Comments
Utilization Rate?	
User Satisfaction?	
Improvement in Work Outcomes? (specify which outcomes)	
Improvement in Personal or Family Well-Being? (specify which outcomes)	
Other Indicators	·

2. Develop strategies to get information that will help you determine whether your policies, programs, and practices have achieved important goals and objectives.



Discussion Groups About Work/Life Culture

Purpose

Use this activity to:

• Collect information about employees' perceptions of values that exist at the workplace.

Participants

The participants could be members of your work/life committee or task force, representatives of different departments, or employees who seem to have different types of work/life priorities.

Steps

- 1. Select employees to participate in focus groups. Focus groups tend to work well with 7 12 participants per group.
- 2. Explain to the prospective participants that the purpose of the focus group is to get a better idea of employees' perspectives about attitudes and expectations that exist at the workplace.
- 3. Use the following topic areas as general discussion points for the focus groups. You may want to ask the participants, "Do you agree that the following statement is an accurate characterization of our company? Of your division?"

Workplace Value Statement

HR Change	Our company is a human resource leader which adopts innovative HR programs and policies.
Company Involvement	Our company feels that it should work cooperatively with employees to address their personal priorities and family responsibilities
Work/Life Initiatives	Our company feels that work/life initiatives are essential and vital to advancing business strategies.
Equity	Our company believes that its policies and procedures should be flexible enough to respond to the circumstances of individual situations.
Change	Our company seeks out change to its human resource strategies on a pro-active basis.
Perspectives About Employees	Our company considers its employees to be its most important asset.
Work/Life Balance	Our company feels that employees should pursue personal as well as occupational interests.
Careers	Our company believes that employees who are dedicated to their careers are those who are willing to make personal sacrifices.
Face Time	Our company feels that employees who invest more time at work are the hardest workers.

- 4. Once the focus group(s) is completed, consider how the perceptions of your corporate culture might affect

 your Workplace Assessment
 - the selection of different options for workplace supports
 - challenges to the implementation of different components of your work/life programs
 - employee utilization of work/life programs.



The Case for Your Work/Life Plan



Purpose

Use this activity to:

- Prepare a description of the linkages between your companies' work/life policies, programs, and practices and business strategies
- Articulate how your company's work/life plan addresses the priority needs of employees and the priority needs of the company.

Participants

This exercise has been designed as a role play for a group such as members of a work/life advisory committee or task force.

"Attorney for the Defense"

Work/Life Manager

Steps

1. Assign the stakeholder roles to group members:

"The Jury"

- CEO
- CFO
- Division Manager
- Line Supervisor
- Shareholder
- Employee
- 2. Give 5 index cards to each member of "The Jury." Ask them to write one question on each card about either the company's work/life strategy or the value added by specific policies, programs, and practices. Collect the index cards and mix them up.

Have the "work/life manager" make a list of links between the company's work/life initiatives and business objectives.

3. Have the "Work/Life Manager" present the case for the company's work/life strategy.

Pick some of the questions on the index cards and ask the "Work/Life Manager" to respond to the questions. Focus the discussion on the strategic linkages between work/life initiatives and business priorities.



Assessment Recording Sheet # 1:

Work/Life Shareholder Groups



Shareholder Group	Sup		or Work		sues	Implication Work
		Minir	nal Ex	tensive		
Top Decision Makers	1	2	3	4	5	s
Middle Managers	1	2	3	4	5	
Supervisors	1	2	3	4	5	
Line Employees	1	2	3	4	5	
Employees Who Have Used Policies, Programs, Practices	1	2	3	4	5	
Employees Who Have Not Used Policies, Program, Practices	1	2	3	4	5	
Employees in Different Departments or Business Units	1	2	3	4	5	
Employees Holding Different Types of Positions (e.g., Sales, Production, Clerical, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	
Business Customers	1	2	3	4	5	·
Stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5	
Community Groups	1	2	3	4	5	
Work/Life Consultants and Provider Groups	1	2	3	4	5	
Other Stakeholder Groups	1	2	3	4	5	

for Developing .ife Plan	Implications for Implementing Work/Life Plan	Implications for Evaluating Work/Life Plan



Assessment Recording Sheet # 2:

Communications Plan

C

Communications Issues	Target One	Target Two
	(Group or individual)	(Group or individual)
Types of information in which they will be interested		
Types of communication strategies that will work best		
Timing and frequency of communications		
Opportunities for follow-up and feedback		
Methods of assessing effectiveness		

Target Three	Target Four	Target Five
(Group or individual)	(Group or individual)	(Group or individual)
		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
	· ·]	
	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	

Assessment Recording Sheet # 3:

Organizational Structure

Structural Characteristics	Observations			Implications fo Work/Li		
Your Industry(ies)						
Workforce Size		employees				
Number of Work Sites		sites				
Types of Work Tasks	S	sites				
Linkages to Other Departments						· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Your Firm's Life Cycle Stage		? ing systems onalizing?	?			
Unionized Employees Other HR Systems and Practices Patterns of Communication & Coordination						
Assessments		Minimal		Extensive		
Layoffs?	1	2	3	4	5	
Changes in CEO?	1	2	3	4	5	
Changes in other company leaders?	1	2	3	4	5	
Hires?	1	2	3	4	5	
		Few		Many		
Changes in work sites?	1	2	3	4	5	
Changes in technology or work processes?	1	2	3	4	5	
Changes in basic strategies (e.g. TQM)?	1	2	3	4	5	
Extent of differences among sites?	1	Minimal 2	3	Extensive 4	5	
Where does Work/Life report in?	1	Lower 2	. Н З	igher Level 4	5	
Extent of centralization?	1	Minimal 2	3	Extensive 4	5	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Extent of resources for Work/Life?	1	Minimal 2	3	Extensive 4	5	

r Developing	Implications for Implementing	Implications for Evaluating
e Plan	Work/Life Plan	Work/Life Plan
		·
	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	

Assessment Recording Sheet # 4:

Workforce Demographics

Characteristics	Percent of Workforce (use estimates as needed)	Implications for Develop Work/Life Plan
Gender		
male		
female		
Age		
under 20 years		
21 - 30 years		
31 - 40 years		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
41 - 50 years		
51 - 60 years		
61 + years Family Profile		
single		
with dependent children		
without dependent children		
married		
with dependent children		
without dependent children		
spouse at home		
spouse employed part-time		
spouse employed full-time		
other family characteristics		
Dependent Care Responsibilities		
child care responsibilities		
elder care responsibilities		
family members with disabilities		
Ethnicity		
African-American		
American Indian Asian-American		
Euro-American	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
Hispanic		
other:		
Positions		
managers		
line supervisors		
professional/technical		
production		
service		
clerical		
other		
Income		
under \$25,000		
\$25,001 - \$45,000		
\$45,001 - \$65,000		
\$65,001 - \$85,000		
\$85,001 +		
Terms of Employment		
full-time, permanent		
part-time, permanent		
full-time, temporary part-time, temporary		
contractors		
shift workers (evenings, weekends)		
since workers (evenings, weekends)		

Implications for Implementing Work/Life Plan	Implications for Evaluating Work/Life Plan

Assessment Recording Sheet # 5:



Motivators	Imp	ortance	to Vou	r Com	nanv	Implications f
motivators	mp	ortance	10 104	r com	pany	Work/L
						Motivators Rel
		not at all	very	y much		
Reduce absenteeism	1	2	3	4	5	
Reduce tardiness	1	2	3	4	5	
Reduce early departures	1	2	3	4	5	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Reduce costs of benefits programs	1	2	3	4	5	
Reduce unwanted turnover	1	2	3	4	5	
Reduce costs of recruitment	_ 1	2	3	4	5	
Improve employee performance	1	2	3	4	5	
Address business problem						
(e.g., traveling conflicts, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	
Other profit-related motivators	1	2	3	4	5	
						Motivators Related to I
Attract most skilled employees	1	2	3	4	5	
Reduce employee stress	1	2	3	4	5	
Promote positive coworker relationships	1	2	3	4	5	
Provide supervisors with						
additional human resource tools	1	2	3	4	5	
Promote positive relationships						
between management and unions	1	2	3	4	5	
Other motivators associated with		2	2		-	
management strategies	1	2	3	4	5	
						Motivators Related t
Increase morale	1	2	3	4	5	
Promote employees' positive	1	2	3	4	5	
feelings about the company	1	2	3	4	5	
Enhance company image to the "outside world"	1	2	3	4	5	
Promote employee loyalty	1	2	3	4	5	
Promote employee commitment	1	2	3	4	5	
Demonstrate company's caring for employees	1	2	3	4	5	
Other motivators associated with						
corporate culture	1	2	3	4	5	
						:

or Developing	Implications for Implementing	Implications for Evaluating
fe Plan	Work/Life Plan	Work/Life Plan
ted to Profit		
lanagement Strategy		
5		
Corporate Culture		

Assessment Recording Sheet # 6:

Barriers

Barriers	Impo	ortance	to You	r Com	pany	Implications f Work/L
						Barriers Associated with
		not at al	I ver	y much		
Limited linkages to business operations	1	2	3	4	5	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Minimal need for work/life programs						
"expressed" by employees	1	2	3	4	5	
Other barriers associated with limited understanding	1	2	3	4	5	
						Barriers Associa
Cost benefits for company difficult to calculate	1	2	3	4	5	
Programs seem too expensive	1	2	3	4	5	
Other barriers associated with costs	1	2	3	4	5	
						Barriers Associated with
Implementation seems too complicated	1	2	3	4	5	
Implementation seems to conflict with existing policies and programs	1	2	3	4	5	
Too much work for supervisors	1	2	3	4	5	
Other motivators associated with management strategies	1	2	3	4	5	
						Barriers Associated wi
No credible champion	1	2	3	4	5	
Lack of support from the "top"	1	2	3	4	5	
Other barriers associated with limited leadership	1	2	3	4	5	
Company needs to address other						Barriers Associat
more important issues	1	2	3	4	5	
Company has recently had too much change	1	2	3	4	5	
Other barriers associated with timing	1	2	3	4	5	
* 1						Barriers Associated wi
Company believes employees should take care of their own work/life issues	1	2	3	4	5	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Company feels that a community group should address work/life and family issues	1	2	3	4	5	
Other barriers associated with corporate culture	1	2	3	4	5	

or Developing fe Plan	Implications for Implementing Work/Life Plan	Implications for Evaluating Work/Life Plan
Limited Understanding	-	
ed with Costs		
lanagement Strategies		
		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
h Limited Leadership		
ed with Timing		
h Corporate Culture		
	·	



Assessment Recording Sheet # 7:

Policies, Programs and Practices

Policy, Program or Practice	Percentage of the Workforce Who Can Use It	Number of People Who Have Used It		Satisf Am Us
				Inform
1			1	2
2	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		1	2
3		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	1	2
4			1	2
			! 	inancial
1			1	2 :
2	·		1	2
3			1	2
4			1	2
				Ser
1			1	2 :
2		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	1	2
3			1	2 :
4			1	2

continued on b



Assessment Recording Sheet # 7:

Policies, Programs and Practices

Policy, Program or Practice	Percentage of the Workforce Who Can Use It	Number of People Who Have Used It		Satisf Am Us
				Low
			Time	Manage
1			1	2 :
2			1	2 :
3			1	2 :
4			1	2 :
				Traiı
1			1	2
2			1	2
3			1	2
4			1	2

on ers . F	ligh	otions	Primary Benefits for the Company	Primary Benefits for the Employees
inc		1.1		
3	4	5		
3	4	5		
3	4	5		
~	4	5		
in	g			
20	4	5		
	4	5		
	4	5		
- 11 - 14 - 14	4	5		

Assessment Recording Sheet # 8: Corporate Culture Checklist

Does Your Company Value the Following?		C	ls It omp rior	any			it iced Top	Practiced by Managers/ Supervisors							
	No				Yes	N	No			Yes		No		Ye	
Human resources in general	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	
Open dialogue and communication	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	
Employee participation	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	
Diversity	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	

continued on l

•		Beh	lecto avio ploy	or a	of	
s	No	•		١	/es	Implications for Work/Life Strategy
5	1	2	3	4	5	
5	1	2	3	4	5	
5	1	2	3	4	5	
5	1	2	3	4	5	



Assessment Recording Sheet # 8:

Corporate Culture Checklist

Does Your Company Value the Following?		C		t a bany ity?				Practiced by Managers/ Supervisors?							
	No				Yes	Ne	0		١	/es	N	0		Y	e
Training and development for all employees	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	1
HR planning and change management	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	
Valuing employees as people	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	!
Work/Life balance	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	Ę

	Reflected in Behavior of Employees?		
5	No	Yes	Implications for Work/Life Strategy
5	12	3 4 5	
5	12	3 4 5	
	12	3 4 5	
t	12	3 4 5	