Helping Young Professionals Find Work-Life Balance

You might already know the answer to the question, or you might be asking yourself why you should help employees in your company find work-life balance. Why should you as an employer worry about that and how is it going to benefit you if the employee is going to leave the next day? Well, the rationale starts exactly here on this issue. You wouldn’t want trained employees and talented employees to leave your organization, and one of the best retention strategies to ensure that is to create comfort zones and proper work-life balance for your employees.

Research has proved beyond reasonable doubt that higher salary is just one of the factors that motivate talented employees to leave, but a far more crucial reason is the lack of work-life balance felt or perceived by employees: Something, which is usually the result of poor management and the inability to put in the workplace, efficient work-stress coping strategies. Also, you would not want a talented employee to burnout instead of remaining highly productive. And the key to obtaining the highest productivity and retention of employees lies in creating coping strategies that help young professionals achieve work-life balance. So, to help an employee become highly productive and motivated, as also achieve work-life balance, we need to start from the opposite end and find out what causes an employee to lose motivation and experience job burnout. Taking care of those factors helps your company grow in productivity and retention, besides, of course, gaining a happy workplace.

According to Best, (2005), ‘job burnout should be considered the result of a dysfunctional relationship between the person and the work environment.’ Building on Best’s approach, Maslach and Jackson (1981) found that employee burnout has three major components:

1. Emotional exhaustion – feeling overextended and unable to cope;
2. De-personalization – gaining the tendency to treat human beings as things;
3. Reduced perception of personal accomplishment – feeling that one’s achievements are increasingly insufficient to meet benchmarks.

Loss of work-life balance, inexorably leads employees to burnout or near-burnout states, thus reducing their energy levels and drastically constricting performance and productivity.

But is it all due to workplace factors? Aryee (1993) finds a role of the family in employee burnouts, and Maslach and Jackson (1985) clearly found that work-family conflict has direct repercussions on employee burnout. In fact, in 2003, Maslach urged researchers that the context of work and family in employee burnout needs to be taken into account rather than confining the focus only to immediate workplace factors. This is why an employer needs to “help” young professionals find “work-life” balance, because all factors that reduce employee productivity are not within control of the employer or the workplace, and helping young professionals with guidance is required so that they can manage things on their personal fronts.
By themselves, and without proper knowledge, employees cope with work-life conflicts in three major manners:

- Positive thinking – focusing on seeing things positively (sometimes builds a fool’s paradise)
- Direct action coping – focusing on tasks to the exclusion of all else (sometimes keeps piling up the stress)
- Avoidance coping – ignoring the situation and resigning to fate (No employer wants that to happen)

While the first two strategies can be strengthened by guidance, the last coping strategy is one that the employer should at all costs try to prevent the employee from adopting.

Mostly, once aware of the situation and the factors that are affecting them, employees are quick to pick up and put their schedules, time-management practices, and priorities properly in place, leading to greater productivity and employee satisfaction. This is extremely important for the employer as repeated research, Lingard and Francis (2006), has proved that ‘burnout is one of the most commonly investigated outcomes of work-life conflict.’