



The Work/Life Balance

DATANET.CO.UK White Paper

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Having a positive work/life balance is a growing aim for a large number of people as they juggle families and social responsibilities with busy and rewarding careers.

Whether employees wish to spend more time with their children or devote time to further education or charity work, there is a growing trend to seek fulfilment outside of a career and good workers are increasingly looking for employers who can offer this flexibility.

One of the results of this trend is for employees to request flexible working hours and the ability to work from home. Technology has developed to easily provide this flexibility and freedom, but there is some reluctance from employers to allow employees this option.

A phrase to strike fear in the heart of employers?

Many employers baulk at the prospect of having staff work from home. How will they keep track of the work their staff do? Can they be trusted to actually do the work? Will the security of the office systems be compromised?

With expert assistance from your Internet provider, as well as proper internal management, it can actually prove beneficial to have staff work from home.

After all, it is better to have valued, trusted staff working from home than have them leave the company in search of a more positive experience.

Embracing the Work/ Life Balance

Several recent reports and surveys highlight how embracing flexible working for employees can be a positive thing not just for the individuals, but the company as a whole.

The Sunday Times regularly publishes their "100 Best Companies to Work for" lists* with the focus clearly on criteria such as wellbeing, personal development, family friendly policies and relationships with fellow employees.

A BT survey** also highlighted that 82% of the UK's small businesses who have broadband found that it helped them and their staff create a better work/life balance. 78% cited speed and flexibility as the reasons for adopting broadband.

What benefits can flexible working offer?

In addition to happier, more efficient staff, home working can have many advantages for the employee and the whole business. The employee will save time and money on travelling costs, as well as have less distractions than in the normal workplace. The business can now employ the best people for the job, regardless of location. It also allows for a broader reach as employees can be based closer to clients, which is especially advantageous for the sales force.

Taking the next step

Working closely with your ISP can help make the change to some of your employees working from home a very straightforward process. Technology allows VPNs to go beyond access to emails and include sharing applications, using VoIP and even video conferencing to make home workers every bit a part of the normal office environment.

* www.timesonline.co.uk/best100

** State of the Small Business Nation, published by BT Business, April 2007