Senior-level executives place highest value on flexible work schedules as they adjust to the 24/7 work week.
2014 BlueSteps Work-Life Balance Report

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Executive Summary

Senior-level executives place highest value on flexible work schedules as they adjust to the 24/7 work week

The 2014 BlueSteps Work-Life Balance survey was conducted in April 2014 to July 2014 and received 571 responses from senior-level executives across the world. The purpose of this survey was to gauge the attitudes and thoughts among global executives regarding the quality of their professional and personal lives, and how that quality may or may not have changed in meeting the challenges of working in 2014 thus far.

The survey results discovered that while modern senior-level executives are working more hours and in more locations now than in the past, over half (52%) are satisfied or very satisfied with their work-life balance. Global executives work an average of 58.5 hours per week, with 39% working over 60 hours per week. In comparison, four years ago, 55% of senior-level executives did not believe their current work-life balance was satisfactory.

Globalization and technology’s impact on the work environment have forced executives to find a way to integrate their work and personal responsibilities, which brought about the trend of work-life integration over the last decade. In order to achieve a beneficial work-life balance through work-life integration, executives are placing the highest value on flexible work schedules and telecommuting as the most valuable non-financial employer benefits. The majority (81%) of executives consider work-life balance when deciding on whether or not to accept a new position.

Peter Felix, AESC & BlueSteps President, commented: “The results of our most recent work-life balance study are encouraging. Senior executives are clearly working out how to balance the extreme demands that globalization and 24/7 accessibility can make upon them. Technology, while creating this accessibility, has also provided a form of liberation from the traditional work place environments and the constraints on personal freedom that they can create. With generational changes, corporations are also learning that they must make adjustments to the demands that they place on their senior executives and other members of staff. The financial services world is currently publicly making such adjustments to the working lives of their interns and young recruits. Working smarter rather than harder makes real sense in the hugely different world of management that we all experience today.”
Work-Life Balance and Executive Career Transition

52% of executives are satisfied or very satisfied with their work-life balance and an overwhelming majority of executives consider work-life balance to be a critical factor in their decision to accept a new position. So much so, that almost one-third would refuse a promotion or new job offer if it could negatively affect their work-life balance.

Describe how you feel about the overall ratio between your work life and personal life.

Would you refuse a promotion or a new job offer if it negatively affected your preferred work-life balance ratio?

- Yes: 31%
- No: 20%
- Maybe: 49%

Do you consider your work-life balance to be critical in your decision to accept a new position?

- Yes: 81%
- No: 19%
Work-Life Balance and Executive Compensation

How do you rate your work-life ratio against your potential earnings?

- More important, 28%
- Equally important, 57%
- Less important, 15%

Executives work an average of 58.5 hours/week.

Would you consider working fewer hours if this meant a proportionate decrease in your earnings?

- Yes 37%
- No 63%

The average executive works 58.5 hours per week, while 39% work over 60 hours per week (including travel for work, out of office work and work via a mobile device). Most executives place a balanced view on their work-life ratio and potential earnings, yet to some (37%), work-life balance is so important that they would consider accepting a paycut to be able to work fewer hours.
Most Valuable Employer Benefits

Flexible work schedule

Telecommuting

Maternity/paternity leave

Comp time

Fitness program

*Respondents were asked to rate a list of benefit options as “Highly Valuable,” “Somewhat Valuable,” and “Not Valuable.”

Why do you believe you are able to maintain a satisfying work-life balance?

“I put as much thought and effort into my personal time as my work. I do not check email 24/7, nor do I expect any of my direct reports to work on their personal time. I focus on working smarter, not harder and longer.”

“We have to accept that the balance is actually a pendulum that swings constantly. We occasionally have to compromise work or family in order to address matters, knowing that the pendulum will swing back.”
Work-Life Balance Becomes Work-Life Integration

Has a modern lifestyle, defined by globalization and technology affected your leisure/personal time?

Executives have experienced a decrease in the amount of leisure and personal time, mainly due to an increase in globalization and mobile technology, which requires many of them to be available outside of their normal working hours. The majority of executives are so connected, they even make themselves accessible during vacation. 97% are either always available and can be contacted at any time during vacation or are sometimes available and can be contacted at specific times during vacation.

Executives are now working during vacation and believe they have less personal time than they did pre-globalization and before mobile devices, yet the majority are satisfied with their work-life balance, now often accepted as work-life integration.
571 Executives from around the world participated in the study.

About Our Respondents

- Americas: 52%
- EMEA: 33%
- APAC: 15%
- Manufacturing/Industrial: 26%
- Technology/Telecoms: 15%
- Professional Services: 14%
- Financial Services: 9%
- Healthcare/Life Sciences: 9%
- Energy/Natural Resources: 7%
- Media/Entertainment: 5%
- Not for Profit/Public: 3%
- Hospitality/Tourism: 2%
- Insurance: 1%
About BlueSteps

BlueSteps is an online career management service for global senior executives. As an exclusive service of the Association of Executive Search Consultants (AESC), BlueSteps enables senior executives to make their career profile accessible to over 8,000 retained executive search professionals in more than 75 countries who are members of the AESC, and use the database as an additional resource in their candidate and source identification process. BlueSteps members can stay informed of executive job market trends and news and use a variety of tools and resources to facilitate the successful management of their executive career path.

About The Association of Executive Search Consultants

The Association of Executive Search Consultants (AESC) is the worldwide professional association for the retained executive search sector. The AESC promotes the highest professional standards in retained executive search consulting, broadens public understanding of the executive search process, and serves as an advocate for the interests of its member firms. For more information, or to download the AESC Code of Ethics and Professional Practice Guidelines, please visit www.aesc.org.

About Executive Search Connect

The AESC also offers www.ExecutiveSearchConnect.com, a service for the HR community offering sector information and tools to assist with senior executive recruiting, including access to the AESC membership directory.

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