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# Achieving Work-Life Balance Through Integration

It is a challenge to get the four aspects of life fall perfectly in place, every single day, since priorities keep changing. That is the myth of work-life balance. Just like how priorities vary from person to person, so does the definition of work-life balance.

The world today is changing at a pace never seen before, and, has become more volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA). This creates a competitive and stressful environment for everyone - personally and professionally. In such circumstances, the question of how to succeed lingers in our minds. Most of us grew up with the belief that in order to taste success one must make huge sacrifices and remain focused on a single path, overlooking all else.

But is this necessary? Nowadays, people who are most successful and happy are those who bring together passion and power from various aspects of life - work, health, relationship, and society. When these integrate with each other, it is possible to achieve balance in life. Continuous juggling between these four aspects of life is not an easy task, and, there is no right or wrong way of doing it. I would rather say that it is an individual's choice. Each person has their own definition of work-life balance which results from how they decide to integrate their work with the other aspects of life. It depends on an individual's choice to create a life where values, actions, personal growth, and, social contribution exist in harmony.


In present times, it is a challenge to get the four aspects of life fall perfectly in place every single day, since priorities keep changing. That is the myth of work-life balance. Just like how priorities vary from

person to person, so does the definition of work-life balance. While some find balance by working nine hours a day, others might still achieve it by working 12 hours. For some, working 9 AM to 5 PM in the office could mean balance, and, for some working 9 AM to 10 PM from home could mean the same. Integration will help us take care of our personal lives within the work day and vice versa, without having to cut off one from the other. Adopting necessary skills such as flexibility, learning agility, adapting to new ideas quickly, etc., in both professional and personal life, will facilitate the integration better.

While individuals attempt integrating work and life, organisations can assist by looking at the employees' outcome instead of the hours spent in the office. It should start with the management leading by example, showing the importance of integrating work and life goals and motivating employees to take steps in that direction. Setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound (SMART) goals, tracking them through performance management systems and one-on-one meetings with managers will add to it. HR policies like work-from-home, flexi-work hours, maternity benefits, and, facilities such as day care, gym, and doctor-on-board can be introduced to support work life integration. Employees usually appreciate personalised policies and creating the work environment basis the

employee inputs will lead to better satisfaction and productivity.

When an employee finds his job challenging and empowering, with some autonomy to work at his pace, he will see the professional purpose and develop a passion for it. He may put in extended hours and yet feel satisfied with his work-life balance. If he is also provided with the opportunity to integrate the other aspects of his life along with work, his mind would be less cluttered, which would ultimately make him creative and innovative at work.

The maxim in recent times is 'Work is something we do and not something we go to'. Call it work-life balance or work-life integration, there is not much difference between the two. In fact, integration helps create the balance. Over a period, one generally masters the art and based on own preferences, starts prioritizing efficiently and achieves the "balance." My suggestion will be blending all the aspects and creating a better quality of life. 

## About the Author

**Devika Thorat** is the Talent Acquisition Specialist - India at IDEaS Revenue Solutions (a SAS Company). She is responsible for heading the Talent Acquisition for the company and also leads initiatives for college connect programmes and placements. She has previously worked in the TMI Network, CIGNA Healthcare, IKON Office Solutions and Unison Software Consultancy. Devika has a Bachelor's degree in Commerce and a Master's in Computer Management from Bharati Vidyapeeth.