



Work-life balancing act

By Jeff “Chief” Urbaniak
COLUMNIST

DEAR CHIEF: I’m a mid-level manager at a large telecommunications company and I’m struggling with how I should approach my boss with company-level suggestions concerning better support for employees’ work-life situations. I’m losing good workers every month because we don’t have amenities to assist them with balancing their work lives and personal/family commitments. Corporate leaders say they care about our families but I don’t see anything being done about it. What are some good ways a company can help employees achieve work-life balance and how should I present my suggestions?

FRUSTRATED MIDDLE MAN



DEAR FRUSTRATED MIDDLE MAN: Work-life balance is very important and you must address it with your supervisory chain. Use the mode of communication expected for suggestions and ideas at your company. Whether it is going directly to your boss, another organizational leader, or dropping comments off in a suggestion box or anonymous email system, get your concerns and suggestions to someone with influence soon.

Companies and organizations that truly care about and want to keep the workforce they have will typically provide a work-life program to help their

employees achieve a healthy work-life balance. Great leaders know when they take care of their people, their people, in turn, will take of the organization and its cause.

Most people will achieve a healthy work-life balance when they are given some flexibility and options in their work and personal lives. Here are some ideas and suggestions you can present to your chain of command for funding consideration and implementation:

1) Flexible work hours. This can accommodate many people for many reasons. It can help parents get their children to or from school in a timely manner or dual working couples to work opposite shifts so they don’t have to pay for childcare services they can’t afford, among other things.

2) Telecommuting. Whether every day or selected days, it’s great knowing you can avoid congested traffic, save money on gas, and having other personal conveniences.

3) Paid leave time. Employees sometimes need last-minute options to get a day or two off without putting a dent in their paycheck, especially during times of a family crisis or emergency, or maybe a special occasion.

4) On-site childcare services. This can be quite convenient and affordable for parents if properly invested in by the company. Some companies, like Cisco Systems, can accommodate up to as many as 420 children each day and have adjusted

rates for lower-income employees.

5) On-site fitness centers. These centers, especially when accompanied with fitness classes, are convenient, fun, and a great stress reliever.

Other options that can make life easier for employees include job sharing, summer day camps for children, elder-care referral services, dry cleaning pick-up and delivery, on-site car maintenance, an on-site medical clinic, job search assistance for employees’ spouses and partners, and free income tax and legal information advisory services.

These suggestions are not all inclusive--the sky is the limit when it comes to creativity and ideas for work-life programs. Some companies have gone as far as offering gift shopping services for employees. Imagine that! How cool would it be to have someone else do your Christmas and birthday shopping for you while you’re at work?

By implementing these or other creative and effective work-life programs, your company will attract and retain the most capable and motivated employees--and you’ll have fewer people walking out the door!



For an opportunity to have your question, issue or concern addressed in the Dear Chief column, go to www.DearChiefAdvice.com and submit your comments or email them to Jeff@DearChiefAdvice.com.