

The Need for Work-Life Balance

On 9/11 a shift occurred in our country's values placing emphasis on family and the need for Work-Life Balance. Recently, a Bar Association Task Force was nationally recognized for acknowledging and bringing to the forefront the sensitive issue of stress between career and personal life for legal professionals. Corporate America is indulging in Work-Life Balance Programs and the legal professional is also finding these same programs to be an excellent solution for managing work and home.

Indianapolis, IN (PRWEB) June 6, 2006 -- Every working person in Corporate America feels the need for work-life balance. The legal community is no different. The Boston Bar Association was recently commended for establishing a Task Force which addressed and brought to the forefront the sensitive issue of work-life balance. The findings not only highlight the complexity but the need to improve the quality of legal professionals' lives (<http://www.bostonbar.org/prs/fulfillment.htm>). Although the report focuses on stress of managing balance for lawyers, the problem extends to all professionals in the legal field and beyond. A new trend across the U.S. – errand and concierge services – enable professionals the ability to relieve stress and create balance between work and home. Errand and Concierge Services have been labeled “angels of time” and bring hope not only to the legal profession but to every working individual who needs an outlet to maintain a level of order in busy and sometimes chaotic lives.

No one likes to feel inadequate, out of control or irresponsible and the lack of time to accomplish tasks is a never ending battle both personally and professionally. Demands border on the verge of insanity and are a constant struggle. The best is taken from the best with the vicious cycle of stress manipulating guilt and guilt manipulating stress.

A legal career is not an easy job. Attorneys' work in excess of 45 hours per week because billable hour requirements measure performance. Judges' are overwhelmed compared to years past because of increased docket caseloads and the many factors of trials, hearings, motions and briefs. Legal staffs face increased stress because of workloads, productivity and their value being determined by commitment and performance.

As is now common in Corporate America, the practice of law is also focused on cost effective measures. Times have changed and “one-on-one” secretaries, assistants or paralegals no longer exist. Staff members are assigned 3, sometimes 4 people to work for. In the legal profession, attorneys work their cases and assist other attorneys at the same time. With so many roles to fulfill, maintaining a level of productivity while managing stress of work and home makes life very complicated.

The latest popular benefit for the legal community, Corporate America and hospitals is work-life balance programs. These programs are an excellent resource for recruitment, retention and morale boosters. The benefit is also proving to increase employee focus, reduce absenteeism, relieve stress and extend a level of order and management between career and home. Work-life balance programs communicate a company's concern for employee well-being and offer assistance for lifestyle management. In sum, the programs are a breath of fresh air and very affordable for the companies and employees.

The work-life program is typically set up as a membership based on number of employees with variables such as a tailored list of available services, the method of offering services to employees, and hours per month with a specific day of the week for the company and services completed during normal business hours (as long as permissible). Services may be offered at no cost or at a reduced cost to the employees depending on the

company's preference. “Outsourcing for balance is becoming more and more popular,” said Jackie Murphy, President and CEO of EK Errands Express in Indianapolis, IN. In the legal field for over 23 years, Jackie witnessed peers and clients struggle with accomplishing all that needed to be done. “On the work front there were projects, deadlines, meetings, and professional functions to attend. On the home front was grocery shopping, dinner, kids’ school functions and sporting events, volunteerism, the need to be home for repairmen, and the list went on and on.”

EK Errands Express was established based on recognition of the need for work-life balance and desire to make life simple. “It was important to not only give back to the legal community but assist others in the same situations,” said Murphy. “There were two ways of doing that - use the legal experience to offer dedicated business and legal services and offer personal solutions for home responsibilities that give back time for home, family and leisure.” Business Services and Legal Services include dedicated courier service, permit filing, business errands, filing court documents, service of process, virtual word processing and notary service to name a few. Personal services include waiting for repairs or deliveries, vacation house sitting, grocery shopping, dry cleaning pickup/delivery and so much more. EK Errands Express’ success is apparent by its popularity – more than 50 clients the first year in business. To date, 2006 is proving to be just as successful for Murphy.

What is recommended to look for when searching for an Errand and Concierge Service? “Make sure they carry proper liability and automobile insurance; are bonded (when necessary), and testimonials which speak of the service’s trust, reliability and dependability.” She also added that third party vendors are responsible for their own work and that most errand and concierge services offer a wealth of competent and reliable referrals to clients for services which they do not perform themselves.

Everyone needs more time. Work-life balance is an increasing need in today’s society. Errand & Concierge Services are a WIN-WIN solution – personally, professionally and for businesses.

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