

STEP 1: GET MANAGEMENT SUPPORT AND THE RIGHT PEOPLE ON BOARD

The following example shows a staff communication sent by one company setting up a work-life balance project.

Work-Life Balance Project

Work-life balance is about people feeling satisfied with the way they divide their time and energy between paid work and all the other things they need and want to do.

Work-life balance is important for people of all ages and stages of life. It is important for individual employees who may have family responsibilities or are active in their communities, for those who are keen to study, to keep fit, to play sport and to enjoy life. It is also important for (name of company).

Because employees who are satisfied with their work-life balance are more likely to bring enthusiasm, energy and commitment to their work we are undertaking a work-life balance project.

The aim of the project is to identify and trial practical strategies that will help with work-life balance. (name of company) already does some things that help with work-life balance. But we also think we could do more. This project will help us identify what that might be. If you would like to know more about the project, please contact: (name and contact details).

Because this is an important issue, management, staff, and unions will be working together in partnership on this project. (name of company) will form a working group for the project, and this group will be meeting shortly to develop a plan and timetable for working together.

The first step of the project is a survey which will ask you about things such as:

- is work-life balance an issue for you?
- what do we currently do that makes work-life balance easier for you?
- what do we currently do that makes work-life balance harder for you?
- what else do you think we should do?

When we have a summary of the survey results it will not be possible for us to identify what any individual has said as all responses are confidential, and no identifying information will be included.

We won't be able to do everything, and we won't be able to do it all at once. But your answers in this survey will be the first step towards helping us find the practical things to be done next, to make this a place where you are more likely to be satisfied with your work-life balance.

The following example shows how one organisation defined the role of their working group.

The Role of the Working Group

Role

- to use company knowledge to examine available information on work-life balance in the company
- to decide what other information is needed and organise to get it
- to assess and prioritise work-life balance issues and solutions for the company
- to make recommendations to management on possible work-life balance initiatives.

The working group will include:

- staff representatives
- management
- union delegates or members selected by the union
- representatives from different parts of the company
- HR staff.

Some working group members may fulfil more than one of these roles.

What sort of people do we need?

We need people interested in work-life balance issues and are keen to help make a difference in this company! Members need to be prepared to work together, share ideas and undertake some work between meetings. While your particular perspective and knowledge will be valuable (management, warehouse, union etc), you are not expected to be an advocate for any particular issue or work area – we will all need to work on practical work-life balance strategies that are achievable within the project timeframe.

Project commitments

At this stage we anticipate that there will be 4–5 working group meetings, of possibly around 2–4 hours each. There will also be work to be completed between the meetings. We will decide 'who does what' at the meetings.