

## ***BALANCING WORK AND PLAY***

Over the years there has been a continuing debate over the issue of rationalizing work schedules and balancing work life and family. Yet, over the last 50 years the number of hours that people work has gradually decreased, even a difference has emerged between countries. Koreans are among the hardest working people in the world, the Dutch are among those who devote the least amount of time to the company. In Spain the work day is a little higher than the European average but below that of Latin America. In Latin America the average is 1,952 hours per year, and in the United States is currently 1,819 hours per year. It is becoming more and more accepted in industrialized society that men should not only collaborate in family life, but that they should have the same rights as women in this regard. Therefore, we have now a situation where mothers have the right to a years leave when they give birth, and the fathers are being given the same option of taking six months leave. The basic thrust of this argument is that this will improve the stability of the family and of our overall society.

Representatives of various companies consider that flexibility of working hours, personalized attention, and telecommuting are some of the balancing methods that make workers feel better and, therefore, more productive. In fact, it seems that in today's world the adoption of measures which facilitate a balance between work and a personal life is a competitive advantage which distinguishes a company from others. In the future the directors consider this advantage will disappear as a coalition will be obligatory for all companies.

At the present time, the number one company that most people would wish to work for is Yahoo, an internet company based in Mountain View which provides their employees with a variety of flexible scheduling that meet their personal needs. It is important that companies and management understand the need for human fulfillment and achievement. That can only occur when an individual is in balance with their own personal needs.

It would seem that we as humans are much more adept to working and understanding the requirements of work than we are to understanding the needs of our relationships and our families. It would seem that most people today have significantly more problems in managing and comprehending their relationship and their families than they do their work. It would, therefore, seem that the majority of work is now involved in learning to play and to have fun, something which is natural to the human condition.

Somehow, it seems that we humans have gone to the other end of the pendulum to where we find it easier to work than we do to play. It is hoped that the pendulum then will continue to swing so that we will appreciate and make time for personal rejuvenation so that not only can we better participate in our personal life, but so that we can continue to be productive in our chosen profession.

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