

# Balance tops list of job desires

Life outside office beats money and job title, poll says

BY KATHERINE HARDING

Forget about throwing money and fancy job titles around to keep employees happy. Canadians want more responsibility, challenging work and a life outside the office, according to an Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail poll released today.

"People feel that they can't have work success without life success," said Linda Duxbury, a business professor at Carleton University in Ottawa and one of the country's leading researchers on work-life issues. "[Success] is much more intrinsic. People want their job to be interesting, they want to make a difference, they want to be consulted, they want to learn."

The Ipsos-Reid poll asked 1,000 Canadians to list their top indicator of personal career success from a list of eight options, including salary level and job title. Work-life balance was overwhelmingly the top selection at 30 per cent.

Job-challenge was the next closest choice at 14 per cent, followed by level of responsibility, 12 per cent, and advancement opportunities, 10 per cent. Salary level and loyalty of employees were each chosen by 9 per cent of respondents as the pinnacle of workplace success, while 2 per cent each cited vacation time and job title. The other 12 per cent either didn't have jobs or didn't know.

"The workplace is made up of a segmentation of people who clearly work for different reasons," explained John Wright, a senior vice-president for the polling firm.

See POLL on page C6

## The changing face of success

Ipsos-Reid asked 1,000 Canadians about what they want from their work lives.

Here's a breakdown of some of the responses to the question:

Which of the following would you choose as the top indicator of success in your own career?

	Gender		Region		Education			
	Male	Female	Rural	Urban	<HS	HS	Post Sec.	Univ.
Salary level (%)	10	8	11	9	11	9	9	8
Challenge of job (%)	14	13	9	15	11	10	14	17
Your title (%)	2	1	1	2	4	1	2	1
Your level of responsibility over your work (%)	14	11	14	12	9	11	12	15
Loyalty of your employees or those who report to you (%)	7	10	15	8	16	11	6	7
Opportunities to advance in company or industry (%)	12	8	9	10	9	11	10	8
Amount of vacation time (%)	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	1
<b>Work-life balance (%)</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>37</b>
Do not have a career/job (%)	6	12	13	9	23	13	6	2
Don't know/Refused (%)	3	3	1	4	5	3	2	3

SOURCE: IPSOS-REID

CARRIE COCKBURN/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

# What workers want

POLL from page C1

He added these results could be troubling for organizations that don't recognize this fundamental attitude change among workers.

He called the findings a "menu" for companies seeking guidance on employee retention in an era of looming labour shortages in almost every industry.

"Younger workers seem to have the upper hand," Mr. Wright added, "because they are able to come to the table and say: 'It's not just one thing I want, I want the following things. And if I don't get them from you, I will go somewhere else.'"

The concept of work-life balance was first identified in the 1980s as the workplace and labour market began to experience dramatic changes.

It's "about flexible schedules and all that kind of stuff," explains Graham Lowe, a work sociologist at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. "And it depends in part where people are at on their life course. ... That's a real distinction. For the twentysomethings who are single, work-life balance means something different than for thirtysomethings who have two kids, a mortgage and a working partner."

Experts have long warned that in an era of corporate downsizing, the growing tension between work and home has taken its toll, with research showing higher levels of stress among workers, more absences caused by work-life conflicts, as well as reduced productivity and lower morale.

Prof. Duxbury has studied the changing definition of workplace success and said that generally, women, younger workers and thirtysomethings "who aren't willing to play the game" are adopting this new norm.

She said most organizations "are having problems" accepting these new workplace norms of success. "Some think that if they just ignore it, it will go away, people will 'grow up.'"

Organizations have to start confronting this issue because they could lose talented workers to progressive organizations and stymie proper succession planning, Prof. Duxbury warned. "People have decided they don't want to become a manager because that fits the old definition of success, and why become a manager when it will make your life hell, you don't get any more credit for it and you have no balance?"

Ronald Burke, a professor of organizational behaviour at Schulich School of Business at York University, said that the concept of "work-life balance" is already being replaced by "work-life integration."

"It's not really about balance, because balance implies 50/50. And it is a different formula for most people. ... It means that work and life blend into each other in ways that fit for me and don't give me an inordinate amount of grief."

Prof. Burke said that while people may want balance, they do little to get it.

"Everybody says that they want to have balance, but not very many people do much about it. ... Many people might want to do this, but they don't feel secure enough to demand it." He added that balance is only truly achieved when companies and employees all work together on the issue.

The poll revealed that, depending on where you live, the concept of work-life balance is valued by some more than others.

In Quebec, 38 per cent of respondents said that it was a top indicator of career success; in

Saskatchewan and Manitoba, 33 per cent; Alberta, 32 per cent; British Columbia, 31 per cent; Ontario, 26 per cent; and Atlantic Canada, 22 per cent.

The poll also found:

- Respondents in Ontario and Alberta view money and benefits as more important than those in the rest of the country. Nationally, only 9 per cent of respondents said they were the top indicator of success, but in Ontario, 12 per cent said they were; in Alberta, 10 per cent.

- Work-life balance is primarily the height of success for people between the ages of 35 to 54, with 39 per cent of respondents from that age group citing it, compared with 31 per cent for 18- to 34-year-olds and 18 per cent for Canadians over the age of 55.

- The biggest divide between rural and urban Canadians was over the issue of loyalty of employees. Only 8 per cent of respondents in urban areas said it was the top mark of success, while 15 per cent of rural respondents rated it the highest.

- People who want to work to live, not live to work, are usually well paid and well educated. The poll found that 39 per cent of respondents who earned more than \$60,000 and 37 per cent of people who had a university education said work-life balance is the top indicator of career success. Not surprisingly, only 20 per cent of respondents who earned less than \$30,000 had the same view about work-life balance.

Ipsos-Reid conducted the research between April 22 and 24, and the survey is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,000 adult Canadians. Results of a poll this size are considered accurate to within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

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