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Why WorkLife? Challenges and Opportunities

Employees and employers are faced with multiple challenges in the work/life landscape.

These challenges include:

-) an aging workforce, diminishing labour pool and loss of knowledge,
-) employees managing multiple commitments and challenges such as personal and family health issues, retirement, and juggling child and eldercare responsibilities,
-) changing employee expectations of work due to reasons such as generational influence, and life stage,
-) corporate downsizing, mergers and labour shortages resulting in overwhelming workloads, stress and decreased employee loyalty,
-) rising organizational and health care costs due to work/life conflict, depression, absenteeism and stress,
-) technology contributing to 24/7 availability, workload and blurring of the lines between work and personal life,
-) becoming an employer of choice with the ability to attract, engage, manage and retain employees,
-) addressing global warming by reducing carbon emissions.

An overarching but parallel challenge is that of addressing global warming. At WorkLife we believe there is an intersection of the challenges currently facing people, productivity and the planet. **And we think big.** We view our organizational work as an opportunity to inspire positive change in the organization and beyond. In fact, that is the WorkLife Mission:

To promote worklife innovations that benefit people, productivity, and the planet.

In *Small is Beautiful*, published in 1973, the author E.F. Schumacher chastised us for not “studying the possibilities of alternative methods of production and patterns of living — so as to get off the collision course on which we are moving with ever-increasing speed”. Worklife encourages making changes in the way we work and live, especially when the traditional way no longer makes sense. WorkLife innovations range from simple inexpensive initiatives such as flexible work options like job-sharing, compressed work weeks, or work from home, to more complex expensive initiatives like on-site daycare. We encourage you to do whatever you can to support the worklife mission and experience the benefits first hand.

Benefits for people include:

-) the ability to more effectively manage day to day worklife challenges and reduce stress
-) improved health and wellness
-) the ability to maintain healthy relationships and social connections

Benefits to productivity and organizations:

-) ability to attract and retain employees
-) improved employee satisfaction/engagement
-) enhanced productivity and client service levels
-) decreased levels of absenteeism and presenteeism *showing up but not capable of fully carrying out job responsibilities* due to illness, stress, depression, and worklife conflict.



Benefits to the planet could result from the:

-) ability of people to slow down and think about making changes in the way they are living
-) ability of people to spend more time working on initiatives that promote sustainability
-) decrease in carbon emissions achieved through promoting telecommuting (work from home) and other flexible work options that change commuting patterns and also reduce power consumption during peak periods.

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