

Despite Recent Recession, New Research Finds Financial & Job Insecurities Not the Biggest Obstacles to Work Life Flexibility

TIME & WORKLOAD ARE THE PROBLEM IN 4TH EDITION OF WORK+LIFE FIT REALITY CHECK; SURVEY SHOWS NOTABLE SHIFTS IN WORK LIFE FLEXIBILITY CONCERNS, SATISFACTION AND USE OVER FIVE YEAR PERIOD

June 9, 2011 – Just as employees have gotten comfortable with the idea of work life flexibility, worrying less about the impact it has on their paychecks or careers, new research shows increased workloads or no time are now the biggest obstacles. The finding is from the 2011 Work+Life Fit™ Reality Check, a telephone survey of a national probability sample of 637 full-time employed adults, sponsored by Work+Life Fit, Inc. and conducted by Opinion Research Corporation March 3 – 7, 2011.

The current Work+Life Fit Reality Check, first conducted in 2006, has a margin of error of +/- 4 percent and also found:

- During the recession, about nine out of ten respondents said that their use of work life flexibility either increased (11%) or stayed the same (76%).
- While in the recovery, nine out of ten felt their level of use of work life flexibility would increase (10%) or stay the same (82%).
- Compared to this time last year, more than eight out of ten report they have the same (66%) or an increased amount (17%) of work life flexibility.
- Without work life flexibility, 66% believe the business suffers with employee health, morale and productivity as the most affected areas.
- Looking for a new job is the plan for more than one-third (35%); 33% of those cite a more flexible schedule and 25% the ability to telework as a reason. (Job search questions sponsored by Careerowners.com.)

“Whatever flexibility there was before the downturn survived, indicating it is here to stay in good times and bad. Work life flexibility withstood its toughest test and continues to grow,” said Cali Williams Yost, CEO, Work+Life Fit, Inc. “But - just when employees start to worry less about using flexibility - now they think they’re too busy to do so. Clearly, both organizations and employees struggle with how to make flexibility work as a meaningful and deliberate part of the way we manage our business, work and lives.”

Yost will discuss the findings at a free webinar Tuesday, June 14 at 1 p.m. EST. Register at <http://bit.ly/myQLyR>

Obstacles Evolve and Put Organizations at Risk

Fewer respondents report obstacles to using or improving their work life flexibility, 61% in 2011 compared to 76% in 2006. The most cited (29%) obstacle in 2011 was “increased workload or no time for flexibility.” But, despite going through one of the worst economic recessions ever, financial and perception worries have progressively become less problematic.

- You might make less money: 21% in 2011 versus 45% in 2006
- You might lose your job: 16% in 2011 versus 28% in 2006

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- Others will think you don't work hard: 11% in 2011 versus 39% in 2006
- You worry that your boss would say "no": 13% in 2011 versus 32% in 2006

"These findings are proof that the workplace has become more comfortable with flexibility. The challenge is to continue to address roadblocks that often unnecessarily hinder how we optimize and benefit from flexibility personally and organizationally," Yost said. "Flexibility should be used to manage increased workflows and dwindling resources, not be avoided because of them."

Otherwise, 66% of those surveyed indicated the possible risks that result from a lack of work life flexibility.

- Health is affected—you're stressed or lack time for exercise: 48%
- Morale is affected—you don't feel good about working at your company or organization: 41%
- Productivity is affected—you can't get your work done as fast as you like: 36%
- Focus and attention, or engagement, is affected—you can't concentrate the way you would like to on your work: 34%
- Loyalty is affected—you're not as committed to your employer and/or boss: 34%
- Creativity is affected—you have a harder time problem solving or coming up with new ideas: 31%

"Organizations and employees must move forward together taking a hard look at what, how, when and where work is best performed; how technology can support - not overwhelm - that work; and why they should champion flexibility as an operational and financial tool. The time has passed for seeing flexibility simply as a perk offered at certain ideal times," Yost explained.

For additional findings from the 2011 Work+Life Fit™ Reality Check, please visit <http://bit.ly/wlfitlongreport>

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For more than 15 years, Work+Life Fit, Inc. and CEO, Cali Williams Yost, have helped Fortune 1000 leaders strategically rethink inflexible ways of working for sustainable profit, growth and employee work+life fit. Yost is the author of the critically-acclaimed, Work+Life: Finding the Fit That's Right for You (Riverhead, 2004) and is an expert blogger for Fast Company.

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