



How to Maintain a Healthy Work-Life Balance

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In today's 24/7, always-connected world, many Los Angeles and Southern California business owners and executives feel the need to stay "plugged in" to their businesses all the time via their smartphones, laptops, tablets and other digital devices. But there are both pros and cons to this kind of non-stop connectivity.

On the plus side, owners and executives can access information and make business decisions from anywhere, and at any time, without regard to their physical location or whether the office is "open" or not. This often enables owners and executives to work more productively, as well as take advantage of opportunities they might otherwise have missed.

However, there may be a cost to these benefits in the form of an out-of-whack work-life balance. Unfortunately, 24/7 accessibility to their jobs and companies via digital devices has made it difficult for many owners and executives to draw the line between work and the rest of their lives, including their families. As a result, many are dealing with burnout in their jobs and problems at home with their families. In addition, they find that they are not as creative or efficient in their jobs because they never have the opportunity to unplug and get away for awhile.

A Delicate Balancing Act

Finding the proper work-life balance in the digital age may be one of the greatest challenges faced by Americans in the 21st century. This includes individuals on every step of the corporate ladder — from entry-level employees all the way up to the C-suite.

Many of these people think that if they don't stay plugged into their jobs and businesses 24/7, they are going to fall behind and be passed by other employees and business owners who are "more committed" than they are or "work harder" than they do. So they are constantly checking their emails and returning phone calls — in the evenings, on weekends and even on vacation.

But many don't realize that there may be serious consequences to this kind of attitude and subsequent failure to maintain a healthy work-life balance, including:

- **Health issues** — Many studies have shown a strong link between working too much and too often and a wide range of health issues, including high blood pressure, hypertension, stroke, anxiety and depression.
- **Family problems** — Most employees and business owners who cannot disconnect from their jobs and businesses inevitably end up dealing with problems at home. Most often, their spouses and children resent the fact that the quality time they should be spending together as a family is being spent by the employee or owner glued to a laptop, tablet or smartphone.
- **Less productivity and creativity at work** — This is a less-obvious consequence, but an important one all the same. Most people need some time away from work in order to be at their most productive and creative in their jobs. When people never unplug from their jobs, they don't give their minds an opportunity

to refresh and reboot. The result is often stale thinking and a failure to conduct long-term strategic planning — an especially serious consequence for business owners and executives.

Establishing Firm Work Boundaries

The most important key to maintaining a healthy work-life balance and avoiding these potential consequences is simple: Establish firm boundaries between your work life and the rest of your life. While this is fairly simple, it's not necessarily easy. Here are three practical suggestions to help you find and maintain this balance.

1. Establish work-free times and zones in your home. For example, you could decide that you won't access a digital device in your home between 6 and 9 p.m., or anywhere outside of a designated work area (like a home office). This way, your family will know that they have your full devotion and attention when you're home during these times away from this area.

2. Take a *real* vacation. This might be the hardest step for many people, for whom the idea of completely unplugging from their job or business for more than a day or two is borderline terrifying. But it's essential in order to give both your body and your mind a chance to truly rest and recharge, and then come back to your job or business with a fresh perspective and renewed energy. It doesn't have to be a full week-long vacation, either — even a long weekend away without any access to your email or phone can do wonders for a refresh and recharge.

3. Become a better delegator. The real problem for many people, especially some business owners and executives, is their inability to delegate tasks to others. When they feel that they have to do everything themselves, this makes it virtually impossible to unplug and relax. If it's hard for you to delegate, make it a priority to work on improving this skill, which could put you well on your way to improving your work-life balance.

Concluding Thoughts

In today's 24/7, always-connected world, many business owners and executives feel the need to stay "plugged in" to their businesses all the time via their smartphones, laptops and tablets. However, there may be costs to this kind of non-stop connectivity, including job burnout, health issues and problems at home with the family. This makes it critical to strive for a healthy work-life balance by establishing firm boundaries between work life and the rest of your life. Establishing work-free times and zones in your home, taking a real vacation and becoming a better delegator are three things you can do to accomplish this.

About CFO Edge

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