



# The Science of Work-Life-Flow

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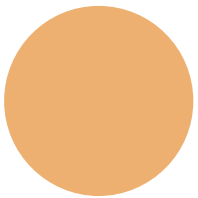


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# **Work-Life-Balance? Work-Life-Flow!**



# What is Work-Life-Flow?

- A new and wider concept idea of the traditional work-life balance:
- WLF integrates important aspects of today's world: diverse **roles** & blurred **boundaries, flow**
- A realistic, but positive enriching resource-based approach: includes incompatibility issues/demands and enriching resource-based processes (Positive Psychology)

# Basic principles of WLF



## Roles & boundaries are individual and situational:

- People occupy different **roles** (mother, sister, friend, supervisor, colleague, advisor, etc.).
- Each role requires effort
- **Blurred boundaries** between roles determine how different roles influence each other (positively and negatively)

# Basic principles of WLF

**WLF depends on individual contexts, situations, values and behaviors**

- *Example A:* A young 26-year old woman in the consultancy sector, focusing on career development
- *Example B:* A 45-year old husband and parent of three children, caring for his parents, working in the construction industry



# Basic principles of WLF

“Work-life balance sets the bar too low” – Adam Grant

## Flow

- Dynamic and fragile equilibrium that aims to find the optimal experience skills/challenge
- People are active agents of their experiences.
- Periods of flow require energy. Periods of energy-recovery need to follow.

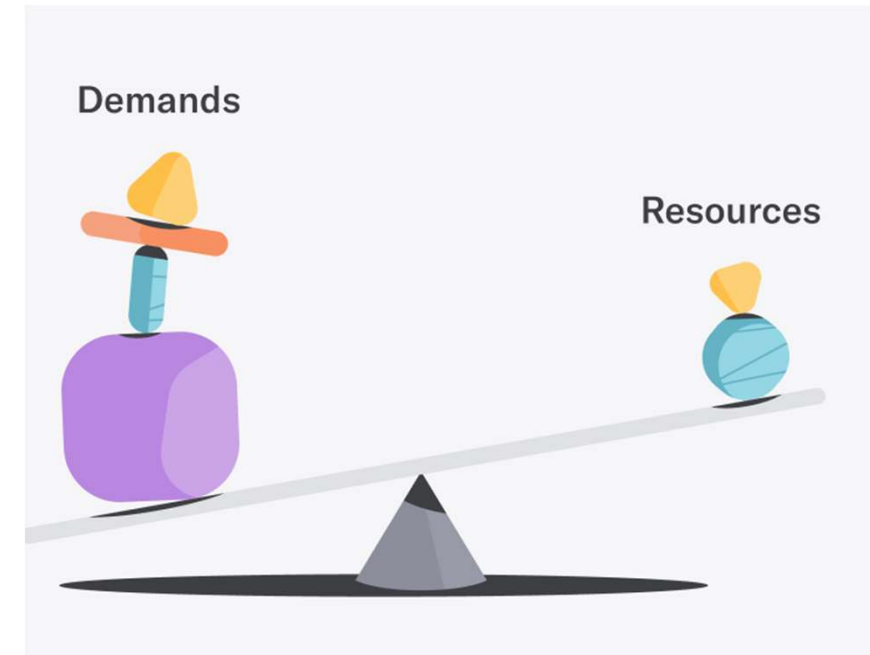
***WLF focuses on positive dynamics regarding quality of life as a whole instead of avoiding a bad work-life balance/conflict***



# Basic principles of WLF

## Resources and demands

- of a person, at work, at nonwork domain or in-between:
- Interplay between demands and resources determine employee wellbeing and stress over time
- Patterns emerge



***Think of WLF more holistically, considering factors at different levels, regarding the interaction of the individual within the environment.***

# Basic principles of WLF: Conclusions

Work and nonwork life should be in a healthy flow.

## ORGANIZATION

- Need to provide resource-rich environments that help individuals to achieve a healthy WLF.
- Need to optimize demands so that they have an optimal degree of challenge, ensuring sufficient recovery of depleted resources.

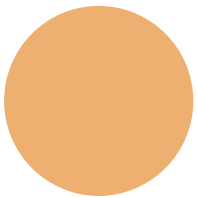
## INDIVIDUAL

- Individuals need to ensure they have enough resources to cope with their present and changing demands (knowledge, time, private support network, crafting competences...).
- Individuals need to build skills and competencies that can act as resources (training, webinars,...).





# Importance of a healthy WLF



# A healthy WLF is important

A healthy WLF benefits the individual, the organization (business interests), and the society as a whole.

INDIVIDUAL



ORGANIZATION



SOCIETY



# A healthy WLF is important

- **Work stress levels are on a record high:** Nearly half of Gen Zs (46%) and four in 10 millennials (39%) say they feel stressed or anxious at work all or most of the time (Deloitte, 2023; Gallup, 2023)
- Managers and supervisors are also exhausted (45%; Bruch, 2023)
- **Employees have more and more difficulties disconnecting from work** (work longer hours, check emails, etc.) (Adecco, 2022; Deloitte, 2023)
- Chief People Officer of Microsoft:  
**“We face a global Human Energy Crisis!”** (Hogan, 2023)



## Why Leaders Can't Ignore the Human Energy Crisis



Kathleen Hogan [in](#)  
Chief People Officer & EVP, Human Resources

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# A healthy WLF is important

- **45% of workers consider that their employer is NOT supporting their wellbeing enough, whereas 74% of employers consider it as highly important, especially to increase their workers' engagement (39%)**  
(Adecco, 2022)

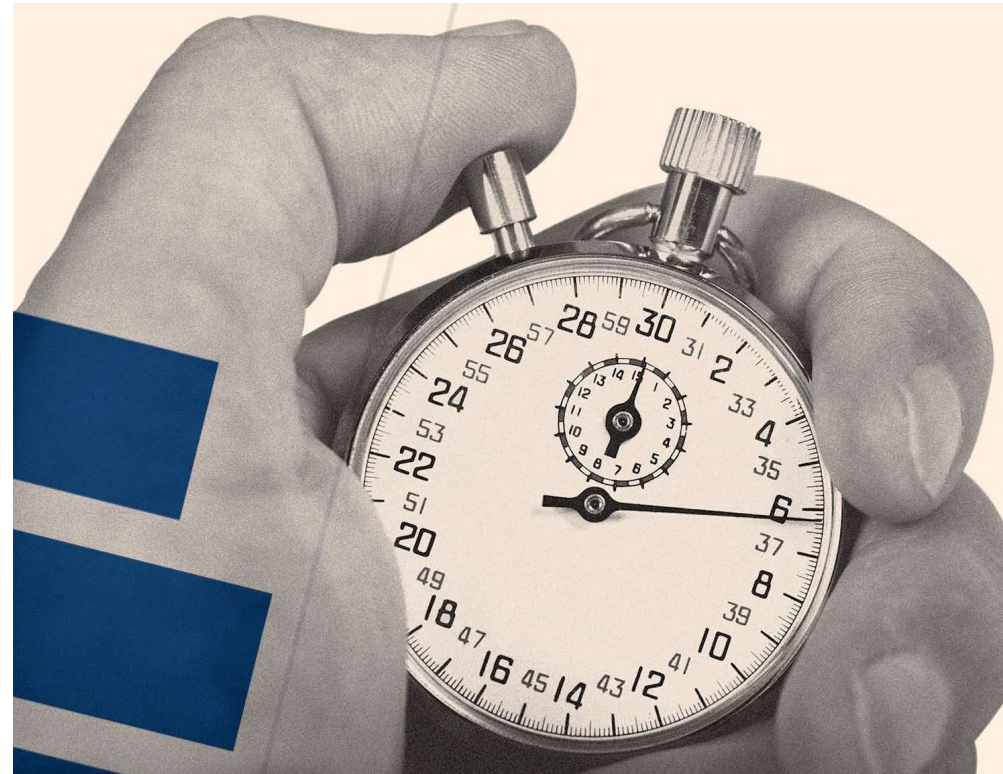
- **70% of employers estimate that the importance of mental health issues (depression, exhaustion, burnout) will increase in the next 3 years**  
(TK, 2023)



# A healthy WLF is important

Companies that try to achieve/maintain high performance with employees suffering mental health issues face significant disadvantages compared to high-performing & wellbeing-fostering companies:

- **18% lower productivity**
- **13% weaker company growth**
- **More than 12% decrease in employer attractiveness**  
(Top Job, 2023)



# A healthy WLF is important

## A healthy WLF is top priority for employees.

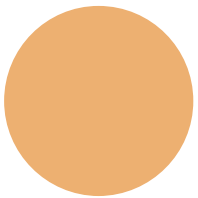
- Work is central to their identity, but a healthy WLF is what they are striving for.
- Having a good work/life balance is the **top trait they admire in their peers,**
- Having a good work/life balance is their **top consideration when choosing a new employer** (before learning and development opportunities and pay)

Gen Zs and millennials clearly value remote and hybrid work. 75% of respondents who are currently working in remote, or hybrid roles would **consider looking for a new job if their employer asked them to go on-site full-time**





# Current threats to a healthy WLF



# Pervasive Use of Technology

- Blurs the boundaries between work-nonwork
- Accelerates life and increases effort expenditure
- Risk of “Always on”-culture
- Insecurity of being up-to-date
- Potentially interrupts detachment and relaxation processes

**Despite its benefits for more flexible work arrangements (remote work, hybrid work)...**





# Changing Nature of Employment Arrangements

- Short-term, contract-based, gig-economy
- Unstable, unpredictable schedules
- Financial insecurity/Financial freedom

**Increasingly blurred boundaries between work and nonwork**



# Socio-cultural Change

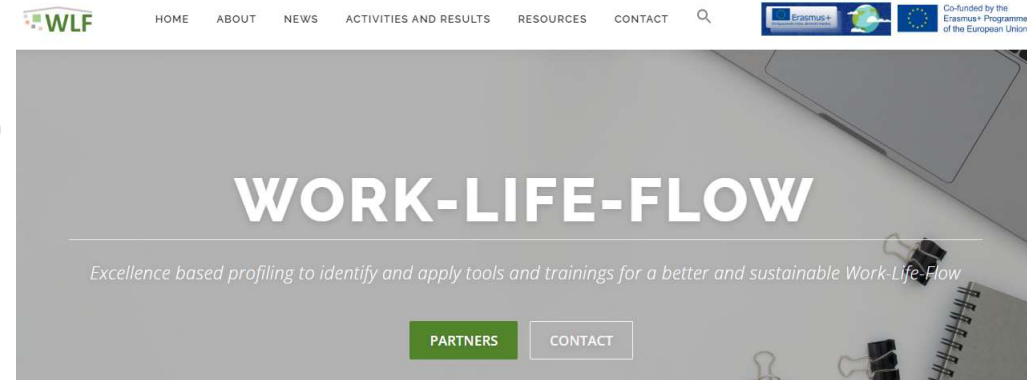
- More older people that need caring (33% of WLF-survey respondents have informal caring duties)
- Higher participation of women in the labor market
- Increased nonwork demands: **34-39% of respondents have daily or periodic caregiving responsibilities for both children and parents or older relatives** (Deloitte, 2023).



# WLF Survey and Conclusions

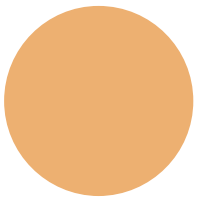
Online survey in Spain and Portugal on WLF Working conditions and health in 2022 (2000 Participants) – some results:

- Clear need to **establish healthy boundaries between work and nonwork** (preference for segmentation: 62-64%)
- Clear need to **reduce contextual demands** (overload, time pressure,....)
- Clear need to **increase contextual resources** (autonomy, social support, supportive culture, ....)
- Clear need to **increase personal resources** (emotion regulation, knowledge about WLF-related policies, etc.)





# Main Takeaways



# Main Takeaways

- Work-Life-Flow is more dynamic and overcomes the predominantly stress-oriented views on work-life balance
- Assessing influencing factors (resources and demands) that vary differently over time (stable vs. more dynamic) is useful
- A healthy WLF is important for individual wellbeing and the organization
- Providing a resource-rich environment for better WLF is an important competitive advantage for the organization
- Promoting systems that facilitate healthy WLFs contributes to sustainable development and SDG such as decent work and health



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# *Thank You*

*In case of questions or comments,  
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