

Contents

Purpose	2
What's unique about working from home due to Coronavirus?	2
Establishing working from home protocols	2
Virtual meetings	3
What's acceptable when working from home?	4
Tips for working from home.....	4
Working from home and dependent children	5
A note on feedback in the virtual environment.....	7
Mental health and wellbeing considerations.....	8
Inclusion and creating a virtual community.....	8
Fact sheet: Formulate smart objectives that effectively spur people into action	10
Acacia Connection fact sheet: Mindfulness.....	11
Acacia Connection fact sheet: Work/life balance	14
Fact sheet: Cope with stressful situations more effectively	18
Fact sheet: Trust to be trusted.....	19
Acacia Connection fact sheet: Coping with change	20
Acacia Connection fact sheet: Self care	22
Fact sheet: Cultivate social networks	28

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide guidance to Seymour Whyte's employees on working from home arrangements being implemented because of Coronavirus. The intent of this guide is to minimise overall business disruption and provide consistency in our approach to implementing productive and transparent working from home arrangements.

What's unique about working from home due to Coronavirus?

- Being encouraged or directed to work from home en masse, during a global pandemic, following an already stressful bushfire season is not a normal situation for any business or individual. It is vital that Seymour Whyte focus on both productivity and the welfare of our people during this time – for the benefit of everyone over the longer term.
- Not only are you working from home, but others in your household may be as well and if you have children, they could be home from school too. As social distancing and self-isolation updates from the government continue to evolve, we all need to work together to find a balance between maintaining productivity and working out what our home lives look like. This may mean reducing or changing your working hours.
- There is an element of uncertainty surrounding the total impact of Coronavirus and we may become more anxious about this over time. We've only got to look at the mass panic buying tendencies to see just how powerful fear can be. At Seymour Whyte, know that your Manager is making every effort to communicate transparently, empathetically and regularly to avoid a similar mindset invading our operations.
- For the benefit of everyone – Seymour Whyte must remain productive. It's reasonable that you may be worried about a lot right now, so a dip in productivity could be expected. Help to mitigate loss of productivity by maintaining, as far as reasonably practicable, your usual routine and usual total working hours. The work you are doing from home should be equally as valuable as the work you would be doing in the workplace.
- Thinking about the impact of Coronavirus, you are encouraged to consider what deliverables are achievable at this time. Ask yourself, are my current performance objectives and goals still appropriate given the current climate? Am I clear on my priorities and my Manager's expectations? Ensure you speak to your Manager to address these and any concerns promptly – don't let issues fester in the new, largely-virtual environment. Ensure your performance objectives are in Page Up and approved by your Manager.
- Given that these working from home arrangements are being implemented en masse and very quickly, it's possible that you may feel uncomfortable changing your normal work and home environments or using new technologies. Use the resources in this guide to assist in coping with these changes.
- We could be in this for a while. All reports from the government are that self-isolation measures are not a quick-fix to our pandemic crisis. Establishing transparent working from home protocols will help to build trust within your team and promote productivity. Let's start as we mean to go on.

Establishing working from home protocols

Get the administration done now.

- All Seymour Whyte employees working from home should have a completed and approved Performance and Development Plan including Performance Objectives prior to commencing their work from home arrangement.
- Complete the following forms to facilitate the working from home process:

- SWC-HRP-160.20 Work from Home Checklist – Mandatory
 - SWC-HRP-160.30 Work from Home Guide (COVID-19) – Mandatory if there are dependent children in the household during the working from home arrangement
 - SWC-HRP-150.10 Leave Application – If relevant
- Get clear on how your Manager will be assessing your performance while you're working from home. Revisit Performance Objectives and weekly, monthly, quarterly objectives or responsibilities to determine how performance will be measured in the virtual environment. When will each objective/ responsibility need to be discussed – daily/ weekly/ individual/ team check-ins? How will completion of tasks be communicated? How will coaching and development take place in the virtual environment?
 - Once you have confirmed your working from home arrangements, consider documenting a calendar to share with your Manager and/or team to show where and when you will be available. With the view to maintaining routine and normality, try and keep your working from home hours aligned to usual workplace working hours wherever possible. Ensure you update your Manager as your working from home situation evolves.
 - Discuss and diarise (your Manager will likely have multiple), regular, intentional check-in meetings to be conducted preferably over video conference. The intent of these check-ins is to ensure health, wellbeing and connectedness as a priority as well as being productivity related. These check-ins may need to be daily or every other day for the duration of the working from home arrangement.
 - Accept all the new virtual meeting requests coming your way! Test your technology and ensure you understand what each meeting is about – one-on-one check-in, regular weekly team meeting, new team project meetings, social catch up, etc. By getting ready now you can help to minimise unproductive time in meetings.
 - In the early days, it's better to be overly connected, to over-communicate, to check-in a little too much, rather than under-cook communication while establishing working from home protocols. If you're unsure, need clarity, something changes, or you need support in any form, get in touch with your Manager immediately.

The following appendix is attached which you may find useful:

- ✓ Fact sheet: Formulate smart objectives that effectively spur people into action

Virtual meetings

With social distancing and remote working, phone and video calls and meetings will be the new norm. It's easy to take for granted the visual cues of the workplace until you are not physically present. The little smiles and nods we give and receive not only make us feel more connected, they contain valuable information. Keep the below in mind as virtual meetings take place:

- Can you hear/see me? Do a video test before going live. As soon as possible, make sure the system works and get in touch with IT Service Desk to trouble-shoot any issues.
- What's in the background? Piles of dirty laundry or the TV/ radio broadcast in the background easily become distractions for others on the call, impacting on productivity. Consider what's in frame or earshot to maximise productive time during meetings.
- Who's at home? Whether in the workplace or at home, you may find yourself having to share your work space with others. Advise others in the vicinity/ household regarding upcoming video/ conference calls to avoid interruptions and distractions.
- Am I on video? Don't assume that a teleconference will remain as such and be prepared for video calls to come through at any time. Everyone is being encouraged to use video as the preferred communication medium so jokes aside, make sure you're wearing something

appropriate for video meetings, including more business-like attire if the meeting is important.

- Who's on the line? It's likely that some of your team members may need to be on a teleconference during video meetings, for whatever circumstance. It can be hard to know when to interject or assert a position when you can't see the rest of the team and it can be easy to forget to involve people who can't be seen.

What's acceptable when working from home?

Generally, anything that would normally be acceptable or not acceptable at your usual place of work applies when you are working from home.

Acceptable	Not Acceptable
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Briefly running errands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being unproductive
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Taking regular "brain breaks"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Harassment and bullying
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Negotiating flexibility with your manager	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discrimination
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dressing appropriately for the environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual harassment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scheduling a few social virtual activities with your colleagues to promote connectedness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caring for dependent children (under 12yrs)
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Failure to comply with Company Policies and Procedures
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not working your agreed working hours

Tips for working from home

- Where are you working? Completing the SWC-HRP-160.20 Working From Home Checklist will help you set up a suitable workspace at home. Consider the lighting, ergonomics, access to power and the internet and remember that you may be working in this environment for a prolonged period. Where you determine the environment or arrangement is not suitable (for example, slow internet) you should consider another arrangement (such as returning to the office to work).
- Who are you sharing your working from home environment with? If other members of your household are also working from home, how will you ensure you're not in each other's way? Can you make video and phone calls without interrupting/being interrupted? If your household has one home-office, do you rotate access to it? Remember that until further direction from the government, it's ok if you need to undertake (maybe some of) your work at your usual Seymour Whyte place of work.
- Maintain a similar routine to your pre-working from home routine. Continue to get up, eat breakfast, get dressed and start work as though you still needed to commute to your usual place of work. Normally we have a commute to or from work to prepare or decompress from the day, so consider implementing a new ritual during this time instead.
- Work in "sprints" – if you're used to doing an eight-hour (plus) day, don't assume that you need to be sitting at your home workspace for prolonged periods of time. Our brains work in sprints of about 60 to 90 minutes. Develop a new rhythm where you set yourself a task or goal to achieve in a 60 to 90-minute timeframe, shut down all distractions, and reward yourself upon completion.
- One risk of working from home is the blurring of the work/life balance. Often this isn't so much at the beginning or end a day, but at lunchtime. Remember to take lunch and other breaks throughout the day.

- Switch off at the end of the day in the same manner that you would when you leave your usual place of work. Just because all your hardware is available at home now, that doesn't mean you need to be checking emails late at night.

The following appendices are attached which you may find useful:

- ✓ Acacia Connection fact sheet: Mindfulness
- ✓ Acacia Connection fact sheet: Work/life balance

Working from home and dependent children

Once in a blue moon, a public transport strike may have meant that you and the members of your household had to collectively work from home, but as businesses, schools and childcare centres all move towards online platforms because of Coronavirus, a new world of working from home arrives – at least for now. There are some key considerations when it comes to maintaining productivity while sharing your new work space, particularly with your child/ren.

Do you have dependent children who usually attend school or child care?

If yes, then there are some key considerations when it comes to maintaining productivity while sharing your new workspace, particularly with your child/ren. You should discuss your ability to effectively work from home while your child/ren are not in some other form of care.

In most instances, it is not feasible to simultaneously be the primary carer (and home school carer) for children under the age of 12 years and work to your usual capacity during your standard working hours.

We suggest you complete the SWC-HRP-160.30 Working From Home Guide (COVID-19) to ensure sustainable workplace practices are in place. Remember, we want to start our working from home arrangements how we intend for them to continue.

What are my options for working if I need to also be primary carer?

Transparency is key when establishing effective working from home arrangements. Honest and frank discussions about your and your Manager's needs helps to promote trust in the virtual environment. Whatever the age of your child/ren, consider some of the below in mapping out the best solution for you, your team and Seymour Whyte:

- Can you share caring arrangements with another person, so you don't have to be primary carer during some, or all, of your usual working hours? Maybe your partner or another household member is available to assist. Talk to your Manager about what this might look like. For example, can your working hours be updated so you can continue your usual total working hours each week? Can you dedicate specific days to work (and get paid) and other days to care (accessing approved leave entitlements during these days)?
- Ensure you understand the priorities and commit to meeting agreed deadlines and work hours. When considering your short-term objectives (when it's less likely you'll be able to work outside your usual working hours to make up for any lost productivity in the short term) be disciplined in your delivery of agreed commitments. For example, is it feasible for you 'make up work time' in the evening or on weekends and what is the impact of this on your home environment? If it appears that you are unable to work your agreed hours, know that your situation will be reviewed.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate. Both with your Manager and with your team/stakeholders. For example, it might be reasonable to let your team know that they may hear your child/ren in the background of a conference call. However, if your child/ren start to

become a regular disruption to otherwise productive team meetings, know that your arrangements will be reviewed.

- Use provided home-school schedules and daily routines. RaisingChildren.net.au states that an organized and predictable environment helps children feel safe, secure and looked after. Routines also let children of all ages know what you expect of them, so they are better able to cooperate. Visit the RaisingChildren.net.au website to access a variety of tools that may assist as the Coronavirus situation evolves, including how to establish new family routines: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/coronavirus-covid-19-guide>.
- Schedule your work around when you're likely to be most productive. Try to make the most of shared caring/ nap/ screen/ home-school/ at-school time and if you need flexibility to change or reduce your usual working hours talk to your Manager immediately.
- If your children are old enough, talk to them to help them understand that you need to spend some time during the day "going to work" and that you look forward to spending time with them "before/after work" like usual. It may help to get your child/ren to make you a go/no-go sign for your home office, so they can easily identify your "at work" time.
- Seek extra support if you need it – it's ok to ask for help. Whether you would like help with a single deliverable, you'd like to find out more about additional flexibility or you're struggling with the impact of all the changes – communicate regularly with your Manager in the first instance.

What if I can't work (occasionally and/or regularly) due to needing to care for my child/ren due to Coronavirus?

The Fair Work Ombudsman's current advice is that employees who can't work because they need to care for a child whose school or childcare centre has closed will ordinarily need to use paid leave entitlements to be paid for their absence. There are several scenarios that may apply and you and your Manager are encouraged to consult with HR for clarification.

Paid carer's leave is available to full-time or part-time employees where the employee needs to look after a family member or a member of their household who requires care or support because of a personal illness or unexpected emergency affecting the member. Whether particular circumstances amount to an employee needing to provide care or support due to an unexpected emergency will depend on the particular facts. A school or childcare centre closing on short notice and for a short period due to concerns about Coronavirus (for example, because someone at the school has tested positive) is an unexpected emergency for this purpose.

Casual employees are entitled to 2 days of unpaid carer's leave per occasion. Full-time and part-time employees are also entitled to take 2 days of unpaid carer's leave per occasion if they have no paid sick or carer's leave left.

You must give your Manager reasonable evidence of the unexpected emergency.

Other arrangements that may be available include:

- working from home (if this is a practical option as per the above) or other flexible working arrangements;
- taking annual leave;
- taking any other leave (such as long service leave or any other leave available under an award, enterprise agreement or employment contract); or
- taking any other paid or unpaid leave by agreement between the employee and the employer.

Consider the following examples:

Example: Employee needs to care for an 18-month-old child during childcare centre closure

Alastor has just received an email from his daughter's childcare centre letting him know that the centre will be closed from tomorrow for 48 hours because a child at the centre has tested positive to coronavirus. Alastor immediately contacts his employer to let them know he'll need to stay at home during the closure to care for his daughter.

They discuss whether working from home is an option but decide that given Alastor needs to actively care for his daughter he is unable to work at his normal capacity.

Alastor's employer lets him know that he can take paid carer's leave because the closure of the childcare centre on short notice is an unexpected emergency. Alastor forwards the email from the child care centre to his employer as evidence.

Example: Employee needs to care for a child during school closure

Winona's children attend primary school. On Sunday she received an email from the school informing her that school holidays will be brought forward to Tuesday rather than starting holidays the Monday after. This means Winona needs to organise care for her children earlier than planned.

Usually, when Winona needs care for her children at short notice her parents help her out. However, given the Government's social distancing requirements, she's unable to ask her parents to look after her children as they are in their 70s.

Winona is currently working from home after her office closed down, but she lets her employer know she won't be able to work at all now while she cares for her children. They discuss her leave options. As this situation is an unexpected emergency, Winona goes on paid carer's leave until when the school holidays were expected to start. She already had annual leave booked to cover the school holidays.

Example: Schools remain open

Dan and Amy send their 3 children to a primary school that is remaining open. Dan and Amy decide to keep their children at home.

Dan and Amy both work full-time. Dan is a registered nurse and is not taking time off work. Amy works in the finance industry and contacts her employer to discuss her situation and leave options. Her employer advises her that because the school is still open and there is no enforceable government direction to keep children at home, this situation isn't an unexpected emergency. This means Amy isn't able to access paid carer's leave.

Amy and her employer agree that Amy can change her contact hours and still be available 20 hours per week. With the reduction in her available time, her deliverables are reviewed, and Amy reduces to 50% hours and pay. Amy and her employer agree that Amy will use her paid annual leave and then go on leave without pay.

A note on feedback in the virtual environment

Just like in the workplace, we all know that when it comes to giving feedback, email or messaging aren't the best way to communicate. Layer a sense of isolation and a genuinely stressful global pandemic on top of black and white text and we have a recipe for disaster. For instance, 'nice job' can seem cold and sarcastic even when it's meant genuinely. The lack of tone can mean people obsess over punctuation. 'Did they mean to not capitalise? Are they angry? Where are the emojis?'

Everyone is encouraged to communicate using video conferencing facilities as much as possible, or on the phone so you can at least communicate with tone and context. This is particularly important when giving feedback – and setting up this method of communication as the norm means that when you need to give people constructive feedback they know it's just part of the usual communication process.

Remember these tips about feedback in the virtual environment:

- Face to face is best.
- If your feedback requires you to put some content into an email:
 - Make the call first and send the email as you talk so you can go through it together.

- Consider writing the email, then reviewing it or re-writing it and imagine that you have the person in front of you as they receive the feedback.
 - Don't compromise the content by sugar-coating or watering it down but recognise where misunderstandings may arise and write the email with safety in mind.
- Ensure the interaction is two-way.
 - Remember: it takes five times as many positive interactions with someone for them to recognise positivity. Don't hold back on genuine praise, help eliminate any negative bias (perceived or genuine).

Mental health and wellbeing considerations

The mental health impacts associated with Coronavirus may be significant. Psychological distress is likely a prominent emotion in workplaces across the world, and it's not something most people are confident addressing. Seymour Whyte acknowledges that there won't just be general disruptions to the way our people work, there's market volatility, talk of recession and the impact of Coronavirus on the health of our community. We'll likely experience levels of psychological distress unseen in recent times. And many people don't feel comfortable disclosing their stress or mental health concerns to their Managers creating extra challenges for everyone. It is vitally important that you check-in regularly with your teammates to see how they are coping. The ELT will continue to provide regular updates to both Managers and our people more broadly.

All Seymour Whyte employees and their immediate family members still have access to our Employee Assistance Program: Acacia Connection.

Phone: 1300 364 273

Live chat via: www.acaciaconnection.com

Text: 0401 33 77 11

Email: info@acaciaconnection.com

Skype: acacia.connection

Book an appointment online at: www.acaciaconnection.com

Check out the online resources available to Seymour Whyte employees at:
<http://www.eapcounselling.com.au/employees-login>

Username: SWC and Password: #!SWC2019!#

The following appendices are attached which you may find useful:

- ✓ Fact sheet: Cope with stressful situations more effectively
- ✓ Fact sheet: Trust to be trusted
- ✓ Acacia Connection fact sheet: Coping with change
- ✓ Acacia Connection fact sheet: Self care

Inclusion and creating a virtual community

As Australians are asked, or directed, to spend more time physically distancing or in self-isolation, it's important to foster connectedness through virtual communities. Social media is full of information about group video chats and messaging services allowing families and businesses to remain connected while in isolation. At Seymour Whyte, you may have access to FaceTime, Skype for Business, Zoom or other applications to visually connect you with your

Manager and team – make the most of this technology. Your Manager or team mates may also feel comfortable continuing, or commencing, a few social activities to promote connectedness during Coronavirus – maybe a regular team lunch or Friday afternoon get-together over video? It's important that we continue to enjoy socializing with our colleagues, just as you did before working from home.

The following appendices are attached which you may find useful:

- ✓ Fact sheet: Cultivate social networks



Formulate objectives that effectively spur people into action

The challenge

Managers know that objectives are necessary to guide their teams and stimulate them to action. However, formulating effective objectives is not as easy as it may seem at first glance. People are all too frequently discouraged by objectives they feel are unrealistic or often respond to their objectives in a way that is not in line with the manager's expectations. Moreover, poorly expressed objectives can produce conflict and resistance by leading to situations in which subordinates are convinced that they have done what was expected of them, only to find that the boss is disappointed with their performance!

Define "SMART" objectives

SMART is an acronym that will help you memorize the five key characteristics of an effective objective:

<p>S</p>	<p>Stretch An objective is all the more motivating when the subordinate feels satisfied and proud to attain it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose a challenge that requires a certain amount of effort. Explain to the subordinate what he or she will gain from achieving it. 	<p>Example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Now that you understand the technique, you can take charge of managing the project. This will prepare you for a managerial role."
<p>M</p>	<p>Measurable What defines success must be as clear as possible. In addition, measurable objectives enable to track progress and take corrective actions if needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If possible, define quantified indicators. When this is not possible, specify "deliverables". Establish the means to measure progress. 	<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Answer 95% of customer requests within 48 hours," if the system can track this information. "Develop a chart to track various ongoing projects, and update this chart weekly."
<p>A</p>	<p>Action-Oriented The subordinate must clearly understand what is expected of him or her in order to facilitate action as well as performance assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concretely describe expected initiatives, behaviors or results. Avoid vague and ambiguous terms. Also specify what is not expected. 	<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Answer calls before the 3rd ring" rather than "Improve phone call reception." "Reduce time to market for new products by five months" rather than "Accelerate innovation."
<p>R</p>	<p>Realistic An objective that seems unattainable can be demoralizing to a subordinate who feels that failure is the only possible outcome.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take account of available resources, the subordinate's skills and the context. Try to gain the adhesion of the subordinate. Define objectives that the subordinate truly has power to influence. 	<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Ensure that the IT system is operational 99% of the time" rather than 100%. "Increase sales to existing accounts by x%" rather than "Increase customer satisfaction" for salespeople who have no influence over product quality.
<p>T</p>	<p>Timely A deadline is very stimulating. Establishing a calendar also makes tracking progress easier.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set a deadline by which the objective must be attained. Define milestones and intermediary objectives if the deadline is far in the future. 	<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Cut the defect rate in half by the end of the year." "Develop specifications for March 30, a preliminary project by May 15 and a test version by June 1."

Mindfulness

It's a busy world. You fold the laundry while keeping one eye on the kids and another on the television. You plan your whole day while listening to the radio and commuting to work, you then

Mindfulness is not so much about doing as it is about being
Jon Kabat-Zinn

plan your weekend while you are at it. But in the rush to accomplish necessary tasks, you may find yourself losing your connection with the present moment, missing out on what you are doing and how you are feeling. Did you notice whether you felt

well rested this morning or that the jasmine is in flower when you left home in the morning?

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the practice of purposely focusing your attention on the present moment and accepting it without judgement.

Why should we practice mindfulness?

Increasing your capacity for mindfulness supports many attitudes that contribute to a satisfied life.

By focusing on the here and now, many people find that they are:

- Less likely to get caught up in worries about the future or regrets about the past,
- They are less preoccupied about success and self-esteem and
- Are better able to form deep connections with others.

Mindfulness is also positively correlated with benefits such as:

- Decreased stress
- Improvements in physical problems such as heart disease and blood pressure
- Improved sleep habits
- Alleviation of gastrointestinal problems



Developing and Practicing Mindfulness

<p>Mindfulness Techniques</p> <p>There is more than one way to practice mindfulness but the goal of any technique is to achieve a state of alert, focused relaxation by deliberately paying attention to thoughts and sensations without judgement. This allows the mind to refocus on the present moment. All mindfulness techniques are forms of meditation.</p>	
<p>Basic Mindfulness Meditation</p>	<p>Sit quietly and focus on your natural breathing or on a word or mantra that you repeat silently. Allow thoughts to come and go without judgement and return your focus on your breathing or mantra.</p>
<p>Body Sensations</p>	<p>Notice subtle body sensations such as an itch or tingling without judgement and let them pass. Notice each part of your body in succession from head to toe.</p>
<p>Sights and Sounds</p>	<p>Notice sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. Name them 'sight', 'sound' etc. without judgement and let them go.</p>
<p>Emotions</p>	<p>Allow emotions to be present without judging them. Practice a steady and relaxed naming of emotions: 'joy, anger, frustration' etc.</p>
<p>Urge Surfing</p>	<p>When you feel a craving or an urge (e.g. to eat excess food, use an addictive substance or practice an unwanted behaviour), acknowledge the urge and understand that it will pass. Notice how your body feels as the craving enters. Replace the wish for the craving to go away with the certain knowledge that it will subside.</p>



Meditation Exercise:

1. Sit on a straight-backed chair or cross-legged on the floor
2. Focus on an aspect of your breathing such as the sensations of air flowing into your nostrils and out of your mouth, or your belly rising and falling as you inhale and exhale.
3. Once you have narrowed your concentration in this way, begin to widen your focus. Become aware of sounds, sensations and ideas.
4. Embrace and consider each thought or sensation without judging it good or bad. If your mind starts to race, return your focus to your breathing. Then expand your awareness again.



**If you feel you need support, contact Acacia Connection
for assistance: 1300 364 273**



Work/Life Balance

In organizations and on the home front, the challenge of work/life balance is rising to the top of many employers' and employees' consciousness. Work/Life Balance: Challenges and Solutions

In a society filled with conflicting responsibilities and commitments, work/life balance has become a predominant issue in the workplace.

Defining Work/Life Balance

Work/Life Balance is defined as a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal.

Life is a balancing act, and it is safe to say that almost everyone is seeking work/life balance. But what exactly is work/life balance? Work/life balance fundamentally concerns establishing an effective balance between working commitments and personal commitments while finding a personal equilibrium between both of these key aspects of your life.

This is all very well in theory, but how often have you ever found yourself with a schedule like the one opposite. After the last 24 hectic hours, before you know it your alarm is going off and you have to start all over again. You have the work sorted, but where is the life or even the slightest hint of balance?

Personal Lives and Family Values to the Forefront

In recent years personal and family lives have become critical values that people are less willing to put on hold, put aside, or ignore, for the sake of work. Over time, the workforce has begun to change course from being willing to spend every hour working to learning to manage the complexities of modern living.

Consequently, people are looking for options that allow for both a personal and family life, and many seek ways to have it all.

A Pivotal Study

In their highly acclaimed book, *Work and Family-Allies or Enemies*, Friedman and Greenhaus (2000), two leaders in work/life balance, bring forth new evidence to help us understand choices we make as employers and individuals regarding work and family.

To handle work/life balance, Friedman and Greenhaus emphasize that working adults learn to build networks of support at home, at work, and in the community. Conflict between work and family has real consequences and significantly affects quality of family life and career attainment of both men and women.

The consequences for women may include serious constraints on career choices, limited opportunity for career advancement and success in their work role, and the need to choose between two apparent opposites-an active and satisfying career or marriage and children.

Many men have to trade off personal and career values while they search for ways to make dual-career families work, often requiring them to embrace family roles that are far different, and more egalitarian, than those they learned as children.



This research reveals a compensatory effect between two forms of psychological interference: work-to-family and family-to-work.

The impact of partner support is greater when business professionals feel their employers are unsupportive of their lives beyond work. Conversely, for employees with relatively unsupportive partners, the employer family-friendliness reduces role conflicts more than partners. Thus, one source of support compensates for the lack of the other.

Stress and the Consequences for Employer and Employee

We live in stressful times, and each of us deals with stress every day. In the past three years, an increasing number of employees surveyed indicate they are struggling with work/life balance.

Scientists agree that in moderate amounts stress can be benign, even beneficial, and most people are equipped to deal with it. However, increasing levels of stress can rapidly lead to low employee morale, poor productivity, and decreasing job satisfaction.

Work/life programs represent a largely untapped workplace solution that have the potential to significantly address stressful work environments.

Is Your Organization Culture-Ready for Work/Life Initiatives?

Before establishing work/life initiatives, it is important to know if the organization's culture is open and ready to support work/life programs.

One of the challenges of work/life initiatives-from both the employer and the employee viewpoint-is equitability, which has been cited as a major concern regarding work/life initiatives. When organizations are establishing work/life programs, it is important to consider the purpose of the programs and whom they serve. For example, do the work/life programs serve all employees or are they aimed toward employees who are parents or who are dealing with their elderly parents?

Another aspect of judging organizational readiness for work/life programs is the employees' view of perceived support of the organization.

Communication is Key

Communication about work/life programs is essential. Although an organization may offer a rich menu of work/life benefits, the desired effect-yielding positive business results-is unlikely to occur if employees do not know about the programs or understand them.

Human resource professionals should consider four critical questions:

1. Does the company culture truly support work/life benefits?
2. Does the management philosophy, starting with senior management, sincerely endorse work/life benefits?
3. Do managers and supervisors understand the impact work/life balance has on their workforce and
4. Are employees aware of and do they understand the company's work/life programs?

The following are suggestions to promote work/life programs:



- Review the human resources strategy to see if it supports the company's mission.
- Through questionnaires or focus groups, find out what employees feel about work/life balance.
- Align work/life initiatives with HR strategy (e.g., employer of choice).
- Create a work/life award program using noncash incentives aligned with business objectives.

Can Work/Life Initiatives be Measured?

Work/life initiatives create positive employer branding, promote being an employer of choice, foster organizational citizenship, and support diversity initiatives. Building a strategic business case for work/life initiatives requires hard data documenting positive results on the balance sheet.

The best place to start is to consider five key areas:

1. Employee time saved
2. Employee retention
3. Increased motivation and productivity;
4. Absenteeism; and
5. Decreased stress-related illnesses.

Work/Life Balance Trends

The challenge of work/life balance in our society is unlikely to disappear. Identified and discussed as follows are four work/life balance trends. Awareness of these trends will place the human resource professional in a position to better educate management and work closely with employees.

Employees are often preoccupied with work when not working, and when in the company of family and loved ones, experience an inability to be meaningfully engaged in non-work spheres. Modern work has become knowledge based, fluid, and intellectual; overworked people think about work all of the time. For many people, work has become cognitively intrusive."

To understand work/life balance, in simple terms, this means that work/life balance is not just about finding "physical time" to do all that needs to be done. Instead, and more importantly, it is about the "cognitive space" necessary to process, organize, and respond to the thinking demands of life within a complex society.

The cognitive intrusion of work results in:

- Lower job satisfaction
- Less happiness
- A greater incidence of work/life conflict and
- More frequent burnout.

Eldercare

One of the most significant trends in work/life balance is the increasing focus on eldercare. Researchers point out that work/life professionals anticipate eldercare will become a major issue in the coming years.



Many people caring for elders also have childcare responsibilities. These trends have led to the baby boomer generation being known as the "sandwich generation."

A growing number of companies offer work/life programs addressing eldercare. Eldercare programs include eldercare referral service, emergency eldercare, subsidy of eldercare cost, and paid eldercare.

Employee Assistance Programs can play an important role in an organization's eldercare program. Some of the lesser-known benefits of an EAP are referrals to community programs and contacts regarding eldercare issues.

Human resource professionals could significantly increase EAP usage by learning more about EAP eldercare support and communicating this to employees. Through these actions, HR professionals can emphasize the importance of EAPs to management and at the same time leverage EAP benefits to employees.

Total Life Planning

Total life planning is a new and innovative approach to work/life benefits and helps employees examine important aspects of their professional and personal lives and understand how they relate.

Their goal is "to encourage employees to look at their lives as a whole and assess relationships, emotional and physical well-being, careers, spirituality, and their personal financial situation. From these programs, employees can assess their available choices to improve balance in their lives and develop an individualized life plan ... the most successful programs set a goal-oriented environment with a meaningful and transformational component for each individual."

The concept of total life planning represents a paradigm shift in our society. One of the major benefits is renewed employee energy, enthusiasm for work, and increased productivity. Total life planning programs may be offered in conjunction with benefits such as health, life, and disability insurance, or on a stand-alone basis. However, not all organizations may wish to consider total life planning, as it brings topics into the workplace that have traditionally been considered private.

Conclusion

Work/life programs have the potential to significantly improve employee morale, reduce absenteeism, and retain organizational knowledge, particularly during difficult economic times. In today's global marketplace, as companies aim to reduce costs, it falls to the human resource professional to understand the critical issues of work/life balance and champion work/life programs.

Be it employees whose family members and/or friends are called to serve their country, single mothers who are trying to raise their children and make a living, Generation X and Y employees who value their personal time, couples struggling to manage dual-career marriages, or companies losing critical knowledge when employees leave for other opportunities, work/life programs offer a win-win situation for employers and employees.

If you feel you need support, contact Acacia Connection for assistance:
1300 364 273





Cope with **stressful situations** more effectively

The challenge

Stress is part of our day-to-day professional experience. Whether we're trying to finish a project on time or presenting the annual strategy to the executive committee, we naturally feel nervous. This pressure isn't a bad thing per se. It drives us to best mobilize all our capabilities. But it can also be accompanied by troublesome experiences, such as paralyzing thoughts, unpleasant physical reactions, etc. Fortunately, we can learn to limit their occurrence by developing a few simple reflexes.

Three reflexes to be more serene despite pressure

Everyone experiences stress differently. Understanding your own reactions will help you better manage the effects.

1 Identify your optimal stress level

The level of stress at which we perform the best varies appreciably from one person to the next. Some people need to feel a certain amount of pressure to be fully motivated and work to the best of their abilities. Others in the same circumstances, however, may have trouble concentrating and perform less well.

Ask yourself:

- In which circumstances are you most effective? E.g.: Do you prefer to wait for the day before a deadline to feel motivated and thus get things done? Or conversely, do you work better without time pressure? Do last-minute changes energize you or discourage you? What other factors play a role in the way you feel?

Organize yourself according to your optimal stress level:

- **Adapt your schedule.** E.g.: Organize work according to your resistance to last-minute stress.
- **Adjust the pressure you create for yourself.** E.g.: Manage the number of projects you undertake simultaneously; ask a peer to reassure you or, conversely, spur you on during important presentations, etc.
- **Know when to ask for help.** E.g.: Don't wait to be overloaded with stress before reorganizing your work or priorities.

2 Identify techniques to manage the physical repercussions of stress

Stress triggers physical reactions that vary widely from person to person, and can be very debilitating depending on the circumstances: tachycardia, altered pace of speech, trembling, sweating, "drawing a blank," aggressiveness, etc. If nothing is done to stem these reactions, the ensuing vicious circle makes the situation even more difficult.

Identify your spontaneous reactions in stressful situations:

- How do you show stress physically (trembling, sweating, talking faster, etc.)? Do you tend to become more irritable, agitated, etc., when under pressure? Which effects bother you the most?

Establish rituals to alleviate the effects of stress:

- **Identify techniques** that work for you. These techniques vary significantly depending on the individual, so don't hesitate to test several. E.g.: Deep breathing, muscular relaxation, stretching, taking a brisk five-minute walk before an important meeting, etc.
- **Be ready to activate these techniques as necessary.** E.g.: Don't hesitate to take a break during a difficult negotiation to go stretch or do some breathing exercises; have a bottle of water handy in case your mouth is dry, etc.

3 Work on the automatic thoughts that aggravate stress

Stress certainly has objective causes, but it is also highly correlated to our interpretation of a given situation. Thus, we often unwittingly have automatic thoughts such as: "He's criticizing me; he doesn't like me," or: "If this project fails, my career is ruined." Often erroneous, these automatic thoughts nevertheless help to increase our apprehension.

Become aware of these automatic judgments:

- What thoughts come to mind spontaneously? What frightens you—disappointing your entourage, making mistakes, etc.?

Put things into perspective:

- When you make an automatic judgment—such as "We'll never make it!"—, act as if you were hearing it for the first time from a third party. How objectively well-founded is this statement? Might it be an exaggeration? Are there any facts that contradict it? Aren't you unfairly generalizing or interpreting an objective observation about the situation as personal criticism?



Trust to be trusted

The stakes

Trust is a mutual feeling. The more someone trusts us, the more likely we are to trust them. Conversely, it is very difficult to trust someone who is wary of us. Imagine a colleague who asks you to confirm everything you say in writing, "just in case." Would you be inclined to trust that same person, when in turn you may have cause to rely on him? However, the propensity to trust is eminently variable from one person to the next. Personality, past experiences and personal issues play a big role. To inspire trust more easily, you are thus advised to develop your own ability to trust others.

Three personal factors conducive to trust

Three dimensions influence our propensity to trust others.



Coping with Change Fact Sheet

Change is something that we constantly live with everyday. Change involves endings, transitions and new beginnings

Be it in our personal lives, professional lives, things are constantly changing. Sometimes we adapt to change with no effort but sometimes, some changes are just seemingly impossible to get used to. Like it or not, changes happen everywhere frequently, particularly in modern workplaces.

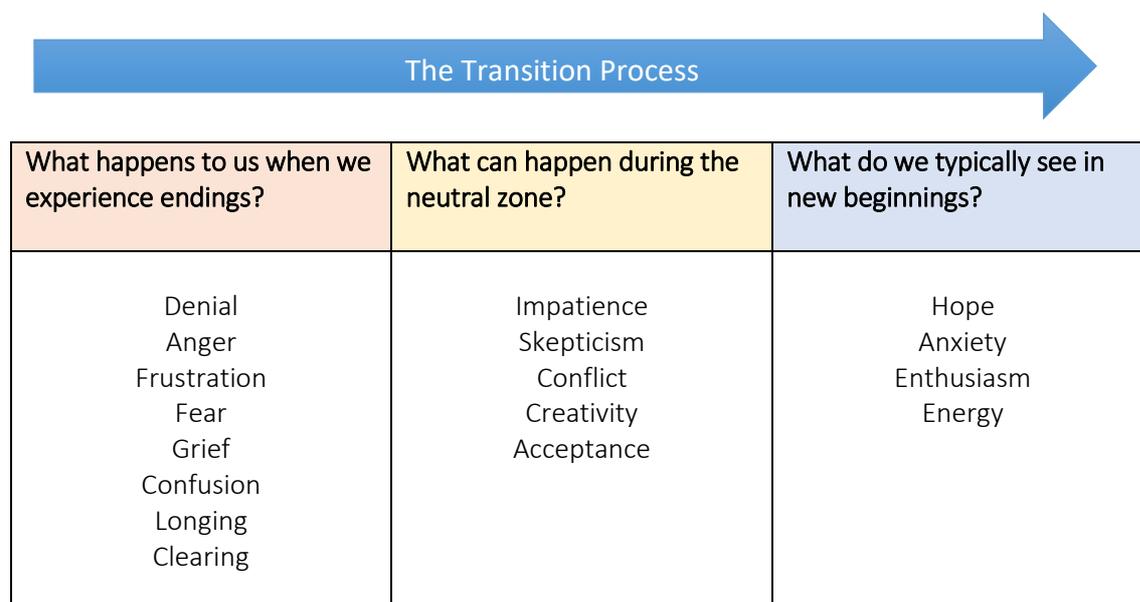
It is important that we understand how people respond to change generally and how can we work around it to make the change works for you.

Individuals have relatively predictable responses and concerns when facing change. Anticipation allows us to respond to concerns and manage negative impacts more effectively.

Experiencing change is very personal. There could be 10 people going through the same process and feel completely different about what's happening.

If we can anticipate & respond to concerns, we can manage negative impact more effectively

While people are different in exactly how they react to change, we can predict with some level of confidence that most people will have certain phases they will go through. Work by William Bridges sheds light on these phases as explained below:



Major workplace change that affects your job, your team or other elements of life can be challenging because you may think or feel that you will:

- Lose competence (e.g. while learning new skills)
- Not be as comfortable (e.g. in unfamiliar surroundings)
- Lose control (e.g. have little say in what is happening)
- Be less confident (may lose 'status' or recognition of your existing skills/ contribution)



A common reaction to these feelings includes:

- Over-generalising
- Taking things personally
- Pessimism
- Black & white thinking
- Imagining the worst

Change involves adjusting to many things at once like; new roles, teams, work space, location, systems and manager/s.

When a significant change happens what can you do that will best equip you to deal with the change?

As an employee, we usually accept the need for change but often have questions about the process. Individuals have relatively predictable concerns and questions when facing change.

Having said this, some people cope with change better than others. Research data and our personal experience shows that people who can withstand the stress of change utilise certain key skills. These are not personality traits but actual skills that employees can learn.

Stress-resistant workers tend to have higher levels of:

<p>Control</p> <p>They experience a sense of personal power and look for what they can control about their jobs.</p>	<p>Connection</p> <p>They value their friendships with people, feel respected, and have a common bond and purpose with the people around them.</p>
<p>Challenge</p> <p>They see change as an opportunity to learn new skills, not as something they must avoid and fear.</p>	<p>Commitment</p> <p>They are involved in their work and they create a sense of purpose and meaning in what they do.</p>

Employees commanding these skills are better able to reduce the negative effects of change on their work performance, personal functioning and health.

**If you feel you need more support coping with change, contact Acacia Connection for assistance:
1300 364 273**



What is Self-Care?

“Self-care” can be understood in many different ways. In its simplest form, the term refers to our ability as human beings to function effectively in the world while meeting the multiple challenges of daily life with a sense of energy, vitality, and confidence. Self-care is initiated and maintained by us as individuals, it requires our active engagement.

The term “self-care” spans a full range of issues:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Intellectual, and
- Spiritual.



Some conceptualise this construct by considering the dimensions of mind, body, and spirit, or in terms of thinking, feeling, and behaving.

It is referred to as “wellness”, a “healthy balance”, “resilience”, and simply, mental health. It is important to note, though, that no matter how one breaks down the dimensions of self-care, in the end, all of these different aspects are interconnected. Failure to take care of oneself in one realm can lead to consequences in another.

What isn’t Self Care?

To better understand what self-care is, here are three things it is not:

1. Self-care is not an “emergency response plan” to be activated when stress becomes overwhelming. Instead, healthy self-care is an intentional way of living by which our values, attitudes, and actions are integrated into our day-to-day routines. The need for “emergency care” should be an exception to usual practice.
2. Self-care is not about acting selfishly.

There is no magic formula for self-care. Each “self-care plan” will be unique and change over time. Ultimately, we must listen well to our own bodies, hearts, and minds, as well as to the voices and messages from trusted friends, as we seek resilience and renewal in our lives and work.



Instead, healthy self-care is about being a worthy steward of the self – body, mind, and spirit – with which we’ve been entrusted. It is foolhardy to think we can be providers of care to others without being the recipients of proper nurture and sustenance ourselves.

3. Self-care is not about doing more, or adding more tasks to an already overflowing “to do” list. Instead, healthy self-care is as much about “letting go” as it is about taking action. It has to do with taking time to be a human being as well as a human doing. It is about letting go of frenzied schedules, meaningless activities, unhealthy behaviours, and detrimental attitudes such as worry, guilt, and being judgemental.



Other Personal Self-Care Tips and Ideas

Physical	Emotional	Mental	Spiritual
Exercise: Walk, gym, cycle, swim etc.	Deep breath and positive thoughts	Say an affirmation	Connect with nature
Soak in a hot bath with candles and music	Share feelings about an experience with a friend or colleague	Read a book or magazine	Concentrate on the flame of a candle
Stretch and move to music	Listen to music you love, sing and make noise	Express your thoughts and feelings in a journal	Meditate/pray
Get a massage	Attend a counselling session(s)	Make a to do list and organise by urgency and importance	Study with a spiritual teacher



Take a course in Tai Chi, yoga or water aerobics	Hug someone, or ask for a hug	Write a poem or draw/paint a picture	Do something of service for someone else or your community
Sit in the sun for 15 minutes	Pet your dog or cat	Visit a museum or art gallery	Listen to a guided meditation track
Sit in a garden or a park or go for a bushwalk	Telephone a long distance friend	Undertake a hobby or study	Practice a daily quiet time routine
Watch birds or animals interact in nature	Reflection: Journaling, writing, poetry	List your traits, and your needs and wants	Visualise yourself in a peaceful place
Change one thing to improve your diet	Notice what you are feeling several times a day	Make a list of short term and long term SMART goals	Learn about a religion or belief system other than your own
Incorporate humour and laughter into something you are doing	Write a letter to someone who has hurt you (but do not send it)	Preview your day on awakening, review on returning	Study ancient esoteric wisdom teachings
Take a nap	Affirm yourself daily and acknowledge your accomplishments	Work on your family tree	Practice unconditional love and forgiveness with self and others

Self-Care Philosophies

Wellbeing is about feeling good and functioning well. Prioritising these key actions into everyday life and increasing time spent in these activities will help to enhance wellbeing.



Connect

Connect with the people around you, with family, friends, and neighbours; at home, school, or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

Be active

Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy, one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.



Take notice

Be curious. Notice the changing seasons. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Savour the moment, whether you're on a train, eating lunch or talking with friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

Keep learning

Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work or school. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do.



course.
Learn
you



Give

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you.

What Went Well Exercise

We can often think too much about what goes wrong and not enough about what goes right in our lives. Of course, sometimes it makes sense to analyse bad events so that we can learn from them and avoid them in the future. However, people tend to spend more time thinking about what is bad in life than is helpful. Worse, this focus on negative events sets us up for anxiety and depression. One way to keep this from happening is to get better at thinking about and savouring what went well.





For sound evolutionary reasons, most of us are not nearly as good at dwelling on good events as we are at analysing bad events. Those of our ancestors who spent a lot of time basking in the sunshine of good events, when they should have been preparing for disaster, did not survive the Ice Age. So to overcome our brains' natural catastrophic bent, we need to work on and practice this skill of thinking about what went well.

Steps to Follow:

1. Every night for the next week, set aside ten minutes before you go to sleep.
2. Write down three things that went well today and why they went well. You may use a journal or your computer to write about the events, but it is important that you have a physical record of what you wrote. The three things need not be earthshaking in importance ("My husband picked up my favourite ice cream for dessert on the way home from work today"), but they can be important ("My sister just gave birth to a healthy baby boy").
3. Next to each positive event, answer the question "Why did this happen?" For example, if you wrote that your husband picked up ice cream, write "because my husband is really thoughtful sometimes" or "because I remembered to call him from work and remind him to stop by the grocery store." Or if you wrote, "My sister just gave birth to a healthy baby boy," you might pick as the cause ... "She did everything right during her pregnancy."

Writing about why the positive events in your life happened may seem awkward at first, but please stick with it for one week. It will get easier.

For those of us able to quiet our inner culturally-conditioned cynic who judges and dismisses such practices, Martin Seligman promises that we'll be "less depressed, happier, and addicted to this exercise six months from now."

The 4Rs Model of Reflective Thinking



Level	Stage	Questions to get you started
1	Reporting and Responding	Report what happened or what the issue or incident involved. Why is it relevant? Respond to the incident or issue by making observations, expressing your opinion, or asking questions.
2	Relating	Relate or make a connection between the incident or issue and your own skills, professional experience, or discipline knowledge. Have I seen this before? Were the conditions the same or different? Do I have the skills and knowledge to deal with this? Explain.
3	Reasoning	Highlight in detail significant factors underlying the incident or issue. Explain and show why they are important to an understanding of the incident or issue. Refer to relevant theory and literature to support your reasoning. Consider different perspectives. How would a knowledgeable person perceive/handle this? What are the ethics involved?
4	Reconstructing	Reframe or reconstruct future practice or professional understanding. How would I deal with this next time? What might work and why? Are there different options? What might happen if...? Are my ideas supported by theory? Can I make changes to benefit others?





Cultivate social networks

Use networking to break down organizational silos



Didier Avril, série Storytelling

Our sources

This synopsis is based on the publications presented below and on the back page.

The Hidden Power of Social Networks

Rob Cross, Andrew Parker, Harvard Business School Press, 2004.

Never Eat Alone

Keith Ferrazzi, Currency Doubleday, 2005.

Social networks have not always had a good reputation. Although they are sometimes recognized as necessary for success, they are often associated with unscrupulous social climbers willing to do anything to get ahead, or with people who want to influence things behind the scenes for dubious motives.

This image does have some truth to it. However, it would be a pity to stop there without acknowledging the truly positive side of networks. For organizations, active social networks can be a valuable way to combat organizational silos and thus accelerate the flow of information, facilitate effective decision-making, and encourage people to take initiative.

Managers would therefore benefit from getting involved in the development of such networks, both for themselves and for the members of their teams. To achieve this goal, the publications we have selected provide several tips, of which several stand out in particular:

- **Think of building your network not simply as a way to advance your own interests, but rather as a part of your social life that enables people to help and support one another more effectively.**
- **Analyze the networks of your subordinates and work with them to resolve any deficiencies.**
- **Encourage your subordinates to develop personal links with one another and to expand their networks to other parts of the company.**

In this synopsis...

- 1 The value of social networks
- 2 Develop your network
- 3 Support networks

1 The value of social networks

Social networks don't have a particularly flattering image. They are certainly seen to be critical to success in some arenas, particularly those involving sales and business development. However, social networks are often associated with more or less underhanded means by which individuals advance their selfish interests to the detriment of the common good. The typical "networker" has the image of someone who

Although social networks are often viewed with suspicion, they can be very useful to companies.

is quick to distribute business cards, is not particularly honest, and is willing to stoop to hypocrisy in order to fill his or her address book with good contacts.

This stereotype does have some truth to it. Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to assume that anyone who makes an effort to develop and maintain a network of contacts must have reproachable motives. The publications that we have selected show that the clichés surrounding networking (Figure A) are often unfounded. In particular:

Effective networks cannot be maintained without sincere caring

The unpleasant attitudes often associated with the image of networking turn out to be ultimately counterproductive. Indeed, two things are needed to network effectively:

- **People must truly get along.** Networking efforts are often thought to be driven by immediate personal interest. It is consequently often assumed that a good networker must be hypocritical toward people he or she doesn't like if some benefit can be derived from the relationship. This conception is false. Indeed, this sort of attitude generates merely utilitarian relationships which are often limited to exchanging favors from time to time or to sharing scant information. To the contrary, mutual esteem fosters more enriching relationships and is ultimately more beneficial for everyone concerned.
- **Networks must be based on authentic generosity.** "Jaded networkers" generally try to use their contacts to serve their own selfish interests. However, this behavior rarely pays in the long term – who wants to help a blatant social climber? Those who manage to build the most complete – and ultimately the most effective – networks

do just the opposite. That is, they try to do nice things for people they know without expecting anything in return. In this way, they generate real feelings of gratitude and respect, and can thus build lasting relationships founded on mutual trust and sincerity.

Effective personal networks therefore rarely emerge from purely utilitarian relationships. In addition to giving people the pleasure of relating to others, interpersonal relationships generally facilitate the achievement of personal objectives: they facilitate access to the right information and to the right people at the right time, they ensure that one gets the support he or she needs, etc. However, people who have built a solid capital of trust over time find it easier to reap these benefits than those who attempt to exploit a list of superficial contacts opportunistically.

Social networks are as useful to the organization as to individuals

Networks are an essential part of organizational life, without which companies would find it difficult to function properly. Networks are often wrongly seen as exclusively promoting the selfish interests of isolated individuals. Yet, a network also benefits the circles in which a given individual moves:

FIGURE A Some unfounded clichés...

Networking, an activity that consists in actively building and maintaining a network of contacts, is subject to a number of unflattering stereotypes that do not always correspond to reality.

It is often thought that...

Yet, it is often true that...

Networking consists in developing contacts with a definite goal in mind.	Networks are most effective when the underlying relationships are based on a longstanding bond of trust, rather than on superficial contacts developed exclusively for opportunistic reasons.
Networks work primarily based on mutual favors ("I did you a favor, now you owe me one").	The quality of human contact is fundamental when developing relationships. Keeping strict accounts of services rendered makes relationships purely utilitarian and dooms them to dwindle away.
Good networkers are very social people with a gift for that sort of thing.	Networkers have a wide range of personalities. In any case, fast talk and a big ego are not much help in building solid relationships.
Networking necessarily requires people to compromise themselves and be hypocritical.	Being yourself is the golden rule for building healthy relationships and real trust with other people.
The success of networking depends on the number of relationships you establish with "influential people."	Parameters like the level of trust, the different kinds of people you know or the ability to mobilize the members of your network are just as important as the number of contacts in your address book.

- **Information circulates better.** Information generally circulates better through social networks than through official channels, because it reaches those concerned very rapidly and is often transmitted through dialogue that is richer than a simple official announcement. The internal networks maintained by the members of an organization thus play an important role in ensuring the efficient flow of information and are a good complement to official communication channels.
- **Silos are broken down.** The ability to mobilize the knowhow of individuals and get the members of the organization to collaborate actively is recognized to be critical. The personal network of contacts of each member of the organization can contribute to this goal. Such networks help people find out what is happening in other parts of the company and take account of the issues of other departments. Moreover, they are instrumental in creating a feeling of belonging to a community that cuts across geographical, functional and hierarchical boundaries.
- **Decision making is more consensual.** Networks are effective in helping to forge a collective mindset, gather opinions and test reactions. In this regard, they are an effective tool for engaging a large number of people in the decisionmaking process and ensuring that decisions are accepted by the largest possible number. So, it is important not only to have your own good network, but also to encourage others to develop one of their own. We shall see that this involves doing two things simultaneously:
 - Optimize the time devoted to developing your network;
 - Establish an environment that is conducive to network-building by the other members of the organization.

2 Develop your network

Many people would like to spend more time developing their networks, but find it difficult to fit this objective into their schedules. There are two ways to overcome this challenge:

- Target your efforts;
- Optimize the work required to maintain your contacts.

► Target your efforts

Given the time required to build and maintain a network, relying purely upon chance meetings would be a mistake. To build a good professional network, a targeted strategy must be pursued with perseverance:

| Clarify your objectives

If you do not direct your efforts toward a clearly delineated goal, your network is likely to be inconsistent and inefficient. You must consequently define your networking strategy to meet specific needs. For example, depending on whether you want to build your career in a profession or in an industry, the kind of network to develop will not be the same. Moreover, you should identify departments

A certain level of discipline will help you fit network-building into your schedule.

in your company with which it would be helpful to cooperate smoothly, or with which you would like to develop a closer relationship. Your networking objectives may also concern your interests outside work. Do you want to play a role in your city, in politics or to serve a social or humanitarian cause? The point is not so much to have a single objective as a clear idea of the type of contacts you would ideally like to develop over time.

| Identify people you want to meet

Once you have clarified the arenas where you want to develop your network, such as the marketing department of your company, an industry or a professional circle, you should develop a list of the ideal contacts that you would like to make. For instance, this could be a specific expert, a given company, the head of a non-profit organization, etc.

| Implement a strategy to open doors

It is often difficult simply to go out and meet the people on your ideal contact list. However, analyzing this list will help you understand the types of contacts that would be likely to lead you to a given person one day or another, and imagine how to direct your efforts accordingly. Often, the best place to start is with the people you know, e.g. your friends, family, colleagues, school alumni, etc. You could start by simply asking them to whom they could introduce you. You can then capitalize on these new relationships to pursue your strategy (Figure B). Many other drivers are also available, of course, such as volunteering for a cross-functional project, working for a non-profit, joining a club, attending conferences to make contacts during breaks, etc. You can also try to make yourself more visible to make others want to meet you. This can be done in different ways, depending on the context. You could write a report, circulate a memo, publish an article, join the board of a non-profit, etc.

► Effectively maintain your network

Maintaining your network takes a lot of time once you acquire a large number of contacts. Yet, this task is essential and will determine your ability to call upon these contacts when the day comes. You must therefore use a methodical process and ensure that it fits as well as possible into your regular activities.

| Schedule periodic "booster shots"

Regular contact is essential to maintain relationships. Yet, don't hesitate to adjust the frequency of these contacts depending on the importance you accord to each relationship. For example, some networking experts recommend classifying your relationships into different types and deciding how frequently you should telephone or e-mail each type. You might decide, for instance, to make monthly calls to

most strategic contacts, quarterly calls to people with whom you would like to maintain an active relationship, and yearly calls when you simply don't want to lose sight of someone. Planning this schedule on a computer or an electronic agenda will keep you from falling behind and from letting your network deteriorate.

Offer added value to each contact

A simple e-mail "to say hi" has little chance of making an impression on the person who receives it. Yet, to maintain the relationship, each interaction must leave the other person with an impression that is as vibrant as possible. Think to include small details that will lend particular interest to a phone call or an e-mail, such as a photo of your last meeting with the person, a copy of an article, notes on something interesting you have read recently or the title of a good book. Such details may help or please the other person and also help him or her remember you. These are just several examples among possible inexpensive things you can do to make the contact stand out and keep it active.

Systematically organize group meetings

Whenever possible, don't hesitate to arrange a meeting with several people at the same time, for example, for a meal or a sports event. Face-to-face conversations are irreplaceable to maintain a relationship, but it is difficult to find the time to meet each contact individually. This problem can be solved by organizing meetings with several people at the same time. This arrangement also gives an opportunity for your contacts to meet one another, which will in turn help them develop their respective networks.

3 Support networks

Some contexts are more favorable than others to network building. Managers must therefore make sure that the environment in which their team operates is favorable to it. There are three main ways to do this:

- Analyze the networks in the organization;
- Ensure that team members know their colleagues and understand what they can contribute to one another;
- Encourage people from different departments to meet and collaborate.

► Analyze the networks in the organization

Analyzing the networks in a team or organization does not necessarily require the help of specialized experts. Ordinary managers can personally conduct such an analysis and derive relevant conclusions. This task is facilitated by breaking down the analysis process into three key steps:

Map the network

The point of this exercise is use interviews or surveys to evaluate the contacts that each employee maintains with the other members of the team. The precise type of questions posed will naturally depend on the context

There are a number of ways for managers to help their subordinates establish effective networks.

and targeted objectives. For example, focus could be placed on the quality of mutual support and cooperation, the speed of access to information, and the effective utilization of available expertise. Based on this analysis, a map of existing networks can be drawn

FIGURE B Transforming contacts into relationships

When you meet someone in a formal setting, you may have just a few moments to start a friendly relationship. The following recommendations can help you achieve this:

- **Prepare for meetings.**
When you attend a conference, a trade show or any other gathering, you should arrive knowing beforehand who you want to meet and how you intend to go about meeting them.
- **Find something in common with your contact targets.**
Research the people you want to meet, to find out whether you have something in common with their professional or academic background, geographical origins or hobbies, in order to create a bond from the very start.
- **Go beyond bland niceties.**
Asserting your personality and what makes you different generally makes a bigger impression on other people than merely sticking to social niceties.
- **Offer help.**
People are more interested in maintaining contact with someone who offers to help them and who clearly adds value.
- **Don't reveal everything about yourself immediately.**
Make people curious to know more about you and what you could bring them.
- **Rapidly make contact again.**
If possible, try to set up another meeting while your contacts still remember you clearly.

Based on *Never Eat Alone*, Keith Ferrazzi, Currency Doubleday.

and then employed to understand and improve the situation (Figure C).

Use the network maps to stimulate discussion

Although social networks are often vaguely understood to exist and to be critical, they generally remain invisible. Helping people visualize these networks is therefore very important. The authors of *The Hidden Power of Social Networks* assert that even simply showing department members the resulting map is enough to trigger good discussions on the configuration of the network, its deficiencies and the means to improve it. For example, as a result of these discussions, many people who speak very rarely to one another become aware of the benefit of getting together. Very often, the network is rapidly reconfigured as a result and becomes much more efficient.

Take corrective measures

Some deficiencies highlighted by the map do not always resolve themselves spontaneously. In such situations, managers must make the necessary decisions. Figure D presents several examples of frequent problems and the types of initiative that can be used to resolve them.

► Tell people about the expertise of other team members

Cooperative relationships are not established unless people see the benefit of talking and working with one another. Yet, people working in the same department are frequently unaware of exactly what their colleagues know. The authors of *The Hidden Power of Social Networks* state, for example,

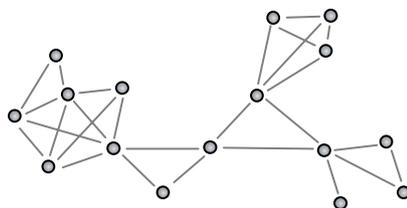
that they have often met people who work in the same office without understanding exactly what everyone else is doing! Managers who would like to encourage network-building must actively combat this phenomenon in the following ways:

Communicate regularly on the role and expertise of respective team members

Periodic updates must be provided on how the company operates, as well as the identity, function and skills of the people who work there. Likewise, explanations on individual roles and expertise should be given whenever the organization changes, or when people leave or arrive in a new position. Experience shows that without such reminders, people quickly forget what their colleagues do when they don't work with them on a daily basis or when their

FIGURE C Map the internal networks of the organization

Developing visual representations of the internal networks of a company can be very helpful in analyzing them. A network map should help visualize the existing interpersonal relationships within an organization. It looks something like the diagram below :



The points symbolize individuals. The lines symbolize interpersonal relationships, established based on the statements of organization members gathered from interviews or questionnaires.

It is possible to draw several maps of the same organization, depending on the angle from which the analysis is conducted. For example:

Angle of analysis

Possible questions

Angle of analysis	Possible questions
Regular professional contact	With whom do you work regularly in the course of your work? "With whom are you in contact most often?"
Accessibility	"Who can you contact rapidly when you need it?"
Knowledge of the expertise of other people	"With whose skills are you very familiar?"
Access to strategic information	"Who do you call to obtain information essential to the success of your assignments?"
Energy	"Who has the energy to motivate you?" "Who tends to bring you down?"
Type of shared knowledge	"Who do you ask to get new ideas?" "Who helps you when you want to improve processes or methods?" "Who do you ask to find out what is going on in the company?"
Personal dimension	"With whom do you have good rapport?" "Who could you imagine meeting outside work?"

Based on The *Hidden Power of Social Networks*, Rob Cross, Andrew Parker, Harvard Business School Press, and *Karen Stephenson's Quantum Theory of Trust*, Art Kleiner, Article published in *Strategy + Business*, issue 29.

domain of expertise is too remote from their own. For example, a consulting firm decided to establish a department in which half of the members were strategic consultants, and half were IT specialists. Several months later, despite a shared office layout, contact between these two groups was observed to be very limited. The company had been in such a rush to move ahead with the physical integration that it forgot to introduce people to one another, and they continued to function in separate silos.

Capitalize on people with the best “connections”

Understanding the role and expertise of the other people in the organization is certainly important. However, it is equally important to understand who these people know and how to benefit from their networks. By highlighting the role of these “links,” a company established in three continents made great strides in improving cross-border collaboration between units in Europe, the U.S. and Australia. It identified several people who had unofficial long-standing relationships with units on other continents and used these people

as official liaisons. All employees were asked to go through the identified liaisons to get to know their colleagues on the other side of the world who were working on subjects similar to their own. The involvement of these middlemen helped team members target the right contacts depending on their needs. Communication improved fantastically, thereby accelerating the development of global centers of expertise.

Create databases

In large organizations or companies scattered across a number of locations, databases can accelerate network building. Existing information on individual knowledge and expertise can effectively be consolidated in such databases and made available to everyone. This is why many organizations like British Telecom or the World Bank have developed information systems to make it easier for thousands of employees to contact one another. Although such systems are undeniably useful, they are rarely the whole answer. Their effectiveness depends on taking certain precautions, as **Figure E** explains in detail.

Foster the development of personal relationships

Even when people understand what their colleagues do, this is not always enough to get them to cooperate. They must have both a desire and a legitimate reason to contact someone when the need arises. Simply managing a company directory is not enough to create an effective network. Managers must also foster the development of an environment conducive to interpersonal collaboration. Several management practices can be very helpful in this regard:

Encourage autonomy

Many people tend to rely on the boss when they are confronted with a problem that goes beyond their scope of responsibility, or when they are looking for information. A better idea is to encourage people to hook up directly with those who can help them, and give them relevant contact information to do this, if necessary. This helps employees develop their own networks and get used to employing them.

FIGURE D Common network deficiencies

Problem	Possible Solutions
Bottlenecks A person occupies a position that is so central in the network that he or she cannot handle it all and paralyzes the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relieve the person in question of some responsibilities. Explain the problem to the other members of the network and ask them to try to contact one another directly more often.
Exclusion of an individual A person has very few contacts with the other members of the network and his or her skills are thus underutilized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the person's position in the organizational chart or geographically. Reallocate tasks to the person to facilitate his or her integration.
Closed circuits A team keeps to itself and becomes isolated from the rest of the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring new people into the team. Try to set up meetings and opportunities to collaborate with other departments. Periodically ask people from outside the team to participate in team efforts and meetings.
Geographical dispersion Geographical distance separates people and makes contact and collaboration difficult.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish technological solutions to facilitate contacts. Consider a geographical reorganization.
Excessive dependence on one person Information and contacts strategic to the organization are controlled exclusively by one person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that other team members also have access to these contacts and information. Develop a buddy system, where some tasks are allocated to two people simultaneously.

Based on *The Hidden Power of Social Networks*, Rob Cross, Andrew Parker, Harvard Business School Press.

Foster geographical proximity

The physical layout of the work environment has a considerable impact on interpersonal communication. This fact must be taken into account in order to facilitate contact between people who would benefit from meeting. Chrysler, for example, totally revised the office layout of its new vehicle design department in order to bring designers closer to R&D staff. The resulting contacts greatly improved the flow of the development process.

Don't hesitate to be directive if necessary

Introducing people from different backgrounds is not always enough to ensure the formation of durable relationships. If a manager feels that employees would truly benefit from working together, he or she should not hesitate to push things in the right direction. For example, the manager of an internal auditing department recently created at a bank had to do just that. His department included former consultants, bankers and IT experts. Each group was aware of the expertise of the others, but they were still not cooperating well together several months after the department was created. Seminars were subsequently organized to help people reflect on ways to combine their

know-how more effectively. This effort was demanding, but it enabled people to develop common work practices and get used to capitalizing more fully on the expertise of their colleagues.

Regularly use crossfunctional teams

It is important for people from different parts of the company to have frequent opportunities to meet and collaborate. Actively ensuring that project teams are composed of a diverse range of participants is an effective way to achieve this objective. For example, this approach is frequently used by many consulting firms, which have a strategic stake in sharing and building global knowledge and expertise. Some even include team members from offices in other countries, despite the cost that this adds to the project and despite the fact that local resources may have been available. They do this because they understand that this policy is extremely effective in simulating interoffice exchange and thus greatly enhances the overall performance of the organization.

Recognize the ability to play as a team

The evaluation system should encourage people not only to perform

individually, but also to contribute to collective success and to share their know-how with the other members of the organization. Some companies officially make this an official performance criterion, against which managers are asked to evaluate their subordinates regularly. Others prefer to reserve financial or honorific rewards for people who are seen as the best team players, rather than those who perform the best individually.



Although networking does not always have a particularly flattering image, it is an effective way to break down organizational silos, without necessarily involving the moral compromises with which it is often associated. Managers could therefore benefit from building their own networks, as well as from encouraging their subordinates to do likewise. When this happens, the entire organization wins, as people who feel closer to one another are able to share information more effectively and are more open to outside influences.

FIGURE E Use databases effectively

Many companies have developed databases to help their employees get to know what their colleagues do and where they are located. However, many also admit they are disappointed at how little these tools are used and how little impact they have on collaboration. There are three potential ways to improve this situation:

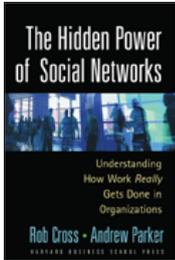
What to do	Why	Practical Tips
Consider databases as a tool that facilitates contact, but is not sufficient in itself	If people are not used to asking their colleagues for help in solving their problems, the best technological tool in the world will not suffice to change their behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start by working to change people's mindset and encourage collaboration.
Describe domains of expertise in a concrete manner	Many databases cite only the diplomas and general areas of expertise of employees. This information is not always helpful in finding someone who can help solve a specific problem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe expertise as precisely as possible. Make a concrete list of accomplishments, particularly the most recent, rather than university diplomas or old experiences.
Do not exaggerate expertise	Some databases give the impression that the company contains only high-level experts. This tendency to exaggerate is detrimental to the credibility of the system and dissuades potential users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask managers to validate the description proposed by each employee of his or her own expertise. Ask people to specify as well what they can't do, if there is a risk of confusion for users.

Our selection

To find the best ideas on this subject, we recommend the following publications:

The Hidden Power of Social Networks

Rob Cross, Andrew Parker, Harvard Business School Press, 2004.



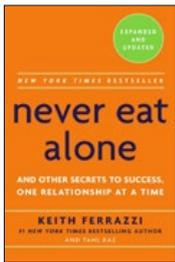
Devoted to the networks formed by employees in a company or department, this book attempts to understand how these networks function and how they could be improved to facilitate the effective flow of information. The analytical, disciplined, precise and straightforward manner in which the authors address the topic gets right to the heart of the issue with no superfluous meanderings.

In addition to offering high-quality thinking, this book can also serve alone as a how-to guide for managers who want to study the existing networks within an organization. Chapters 3 and 5 clearly explain how to do this, and are complemented by the very useful surveys and checklists in Appendix A.

We also recommend chapters 6 and 7, which contain many practical tips and illustrative examples on how to improve the way networks operate in an organization.

Never Eat Alone

Keith Ferrazzi, Currency-Doubleday, 2005.



Management literature is not always reputed to be particularly exciting, but this book is an exception. Admittedly, the topic is not in itself particularly original ("How to develop your networks?") and the advice that it proffers, although useful, is rarely revolutionary. However, the tone adopted by the author makes this book stand out. Obviously a highly gifted networker with a passion for human relations, he shares his daily experiences in a manner that adeptly convinces us that "we can do it too." The world he lives in and the social rules he follows are undeniably

US-centric. Yet, his enthusiasm and skill in establishing a sense of closeness with the reader makes it hard to remain indifferent.

Of the 32 short chapters in the book, chapters 1, 2, 6, 9, 15, 17 and 19 appear to be the most original, and should be consulted first for a quick read. In contrast, the last section (chapters 22 to 31), devoted to promoting a "personal brand," seems much more anecdotal.

Further readings

To explore this topic further:

- *Karen Stephenson's Quantum Theory of Trust*, Art Kleiner, *Strategy + Business*, Issue 29. (Article)
A detailed analysis of how networks function in organizations.
- *Use your influence effectively* (Manageris Synopsis 124a)
Develop your understanding of the mechanics of power and influence in the organization.
- *La logique de l'Informel* [The unofficial side of the organization], Gérard Pavy, Les Editions d'Organisation, 2002. (Book)
Develop your understanding of the unofficial side of organizations.
- *Leveraging Communities of Practice for Strategic Advantage*, Hubert Saint-Onge, Debra Wallace, Butterworth-Heinemann, 2003. (Book)
Organize networks to share ideas and generate knowledge in the organization.
- *Trust in the Balance*, Robert Bruce Shaw, Jossey-Bass, 1997. (Book)
The foundations of trust, a critical component in cooperative relationships.

MANAGERIS

28, rue des Petites Écuries

75010 Paris - FRANCE

Tel.: +33 (0)1 53 24 39 39

Fax: +33 (0)1 53 24 39 30

E-mail: info@manageris.com

www.manageris.com

One-year subscription to Manageris synopses

Web subscription (20 synopses)	850 € + V.A.T
Full archive subscription (over 400 synopses)	1850 € + V.A.T

One synopsis

Subscribers	35 € + V.A.T
Non subscribers	70 € + V.A.T

For copyright permissions and group rates, please contact us.