


Do you live to work or work to live?

by  **Katka Benešová**,
Head of ACCA Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary

Think Ahead 

Work-life balance is an ever-present concern in our 'always-on' mobile and digital age. According various surveys, work-life balance is the second highest reason, behind boredom with a role, for someone leaving a job. This is why companies are increasingly turning to strategies such as flexible working schemes as a way to attract and retain talent.

This is particularly true for accountants. Companies are apparently struggling to find the right people, with the necessary skills and cultural fit. Remuneration for finance professionals continues to rise as companies seek to attract talent. Young and ambitious qualified and part-qualified ACCAs with a contemporary skillset, including technological and commercial awareness, are very desirable and should do well in the current climate.

What makes a happy employee?

But what makes someone a happy employee? Is it money alone, variety in the job, career progression or flexible working hours?

The answer is likely a combination of all of these, which is good news for finance professionals with more companies developing remuneration packages that not only attract through salary incentives, but with flexible working — part-time working from home, for example — promises of varied career progression and more focus on good work-life balance.

Yet amid all this, companies are striving for ever higher levels of productivity from their employees. Even with technological advances making processes more efficient, employees are expected to deliver more than ever, which presents a challenge to striking the right work-life balance.

How to achieve work life balance?

But getting a healthy work-life balance doesn't have to be

done in isolation — a problem shared, as they say, is a problem halved. If you're struggling to strike a good work-life balance, you need to address the issue with your superiors in a way that meets their needs and yours, says Lisa LaRue, a registered career coach at CareerWorx with over 18 years of experience helping people plan, manage and find happiness in their careers.

"Employers like to see results, so think about how you, along with the rest of your team, can deliver the desired results as time effectively as possible. There might be some streamlining needed in how things are done, freeing up valuable time across the team. It's worth bringing up work-life balance as an issue with your boss either during appraisal or as a team, during a team meeting for example. The wider the buy-in on an issue the more attention and action it will receive, hopefully leading to a successful outcome of improved work-life balance."

What if you're one of the ever-increasing number of ACCA-qualified professionals who are setting up their own businesses and becoming entrepreneurs? Being your own boss is very attractive, but it also means you're responsible for every aspect of your business and your life, including how you balance the two, which can be a lot more difficult without the structure of corporate life.

"It's important to know what a good work-life balance looks like for you," says Lisa. "For some, it will be working set hours each day and never on weekends.

For others, it might be working hard, long hours when the work is around with the ability to work flexibly at other times. Once you're clear on the work-life balance you want, you can choose ways of working that fit with that ideal."

Lastly, is work-life balance a different concept for men and women, young and old? "Work-life balance is important for all workers, men and women of all ages, regardless of their family situation or background," says Lisa. "Just because a staff member doesn't have children, doesn't mean they aren't at the same risk of stress or burn-out. Likewise, a young accountant can benefit from good work-life balance just as much as one approaching retirement. Good work-life balance has been proven to lead to happier, more productive workplaces and improved general wellbeing."



**BE GLOBALLY QUALIFIED
THIS IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY**

ACCA gives you every opportunity possible to succeed as an accountancy and finance professional. <http://bit.ly/YourOpportunitySK>

Think Ahead 