WORK-LIFE WELLNESS STUDY

BETTER WORK STARTS WITH A MORE SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACE

New research from the KC Chamber and UMKC shows how workplace culture and supervisors can improve employee well-being, satisfaction, and retention.

Work affects family and personal life at more than twice the rate family affects work, giving employers a real opportunity to reduce conflict and make work a source of confidence, fulfillment, and support beyond the workplace..

42%	5x	5x	41%
report work-to-family conflict	odds of high stress with high work-to-family conflict	odds of high job satisfaction with work-to-family enrichment	lower odds of wanting to leave when work enriches family life

HOW WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE CONNECT

- **When work affects life at home:** Job demands, long hours or workplace stress make it harder to meet personal, family or caregiving responsibilities.
- **When personal responsibilities affect work:** Caregiving, illness, emergencies or other personal demands make it harder to focus or perform at work.
- **When work strengthens personal life:** Work can build confidence, fulfillment, skills and resources that strengthen life outside the workplace.
- **When personal life strengthens work:** Experiences and responsibilities outside work can improve focus, empathy and effectiveness on the job.

WHY IT MATTERS TO EMPLOYERS

When work enriches employees' lives, everyone benefits. Those experiencing high work-to-family enrichment had **5 times the odds of high job satisfaction** and **41% lower odds of wanting to leave their organization**. The research highlights employees' competing responsibilities. In the previous six months, 26% had taken time off for mental health reasons. More than half had caregiving responsibilities, with 72% of caregivers taking time off to meet those needs. These findings offer employers opportunities to strengthen employee well-being, performance, satisfaction and retention.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

- **Reducing conflict supports well-being.** Less conflict between work and personal life is connected to lower stress, fewer mental-health-related absences and greater job satisfaction.
- **Enrichment creates value.** When work provides energy, skills and a sense of accomplishment, employees report stronger well-being, greater job satisfaction and a greater desire to remain with their organizations.
- **Workplace culture is a powerful tool.** In workplaces where employees felt expected to place work ahead of personal responsibilities, 53% reported work-to-family conflict, compared to 29% in workplaces with more supportive expectations.
- **Supervisors make a measurable difference.** Supervisors make a measurable difference. Strong support from supervisors was associated with a 20-point reduction in work-to-family conflict—from 55% to 35%.
- **Mid-sized employers have an important opportunity.** Organizations with 100–499 employees report the highest conflict rates, highlighting the value of strengthening policies and support systems as they grow.

FIVE WAYS EMPLOYERS CAN ACT

1. Train supervisors to recognize work-life strain and respond with empathy, consistency and practical solutions.

2. Examine workplace norms for unspoken expectations that commitment requires sacrificing personal or caregiving responsibilities.

3. Build flexibility with clarity so employees understand available options and managers apply them fairly.

4. Make support visible through policies, benefits, regular communication and leaders who model healthy boundaries.

5. Listen and measure using employee feedback, absence patterns, satisfaction and retention to identify where change is needed most.

THE OPPORTUNITY: Employers cannot control every pressure employees face, but they can shape the workplace. Supportive cultures, equipped supervisors and a focus on work-life wellness can help employees succeed at work and at home—strengthening well-being, performance, satisfaction and retention.

ABOUT THE STUDY: The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce partnered with researchers at UMKC's Henry W. Bloch School of Management to study work-life dynamics among Kansas City-area workers. Because participants self-selected, findings should be interpreted as insights from the study sample rather than as representative estimates of the entire regional workforce.

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