



Achieving work life balance in a sector that never sleeps

This is part of a series of information sheets based on research funded by Wayfinder industry sponsors and FIAL in 2020.

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The supply chain never sleeps

At all hours of the day and night for 365 days in the year, shipments are moving, data is being produced and exchanged, and you can expect the unexpected in terms of external events that impact on operations. Mobile devices and instant communication also contribute to 'always on the job' expectations.

Achieving work life balance in a business that runs 24/7 for 365 days a year is operationally difficult, but not impossible – and it's increasingly important. Millennials and Gen Zers in particular, look for work life balance and greater flexibility in their working hours. They are almost twice as likely to have a partner working full time than baby boomers, and fathers are much more involved in parenting than previous generations.

It's not one size fits all – work life balance means different things to people at different life stages and with different personal circumstances and it also depends on the nature of the work.

Working from home can make a difference, especially for those with families – the quarantines and lockdowns imposed by the COVID pandemic pushed large numbers of people to work from home, accelerating a workplace experiment that pre-pandemic had struggled to take hold.

The benefits (and limitations) of remote work are now much clearer and many executives are now seeing the advantages of a hybrid model. For many (although not all) jobs – it's possible to work just as effectively from home as it is from the office at least for 2-3 days a week.



Making it work

A number of companies have initiatives in place to promote work-life balance.

Work life balance is part of the company's values – the supply chain and logistics sector is dynamic and fast paced, but to attract (and keep) top talent, successful companies make a healthy work life balance integral to their company culture

At least some of the shifts include family friendly options – times that take account of school or kinder pick-up times and managers understand employees may need to take time off for sports events or parent-teacher interviews.

They are transparent – up front with current and future employees about what to expect in terms of hours and what is (and what isn't) possible.

They offer 'offset' options –additional programs and benefits to offset long 'ugly' hours. Options can include allowances, additional leave and periods of remote work. Other options can include initiatives that promote positive wellness.

