

## GOOD NEWS

### Work-life Balance Enhances Promotability



Traditional views about an exclusive focus on work and career as a fundamental requirement for career advancement may be changing. Recent research by Karen Lyness and Michael Judiesch found that perceptions of a manager's work-life balance were positively associated with perceptions of potential for career advancement. This represents a significant departure from the beliefs of the 1950's that advocated the centrality of work as a prerequisite for promotion to senior management and executive levels. Such traditional wisdom for ensuring promotability subordinated attention to family, friends and recreation in favor of devotion to work and career above all else.

The departure from this traditional view elevates the importance of balancing time and personal resources across all life dimensions. The result is a work-life or work-family balance more typical of a well-rounded individual. A potential contributor to the link between work-life balance and career advancement is the possibility that in order to achieve work-life balance, individuals must successfully navigate multiple roles. Proficiency in managing multiple roles is likely to foster greater flexibility, interpersonal tolerance and adaptability to change than might be required of individuals with a more singular focus. Indeed, some factors often associated with career derailment include challenges with interpersonal relationships, adapting to change and difficulty with building a team. Consequently, individuals who achieve an effective work-life balance may be more competent in addressing the challenges that accompany career progression.

The current research findings are even more compelling in that self-perceptions, as well as the perceptions of peers and superiors, all showed work-life balance as positively related to career advancement. In addition, work-life balance was viewed as augmenting the chances for career advancement for both men and women. These results signal a shift in the qualities that contribute to career advancement. The single focused, career driven mentality appears to have given way to a more well-rounded, multifaceted individual who successfully juggles multiple roles. Work-life balance has long been a centerpiece for the career and leadership coaching offered by the psychologists at Applied Assessments, Inc. Our recent engagements to assist companies with their senior management succession planning initiatives have also confirmed the desire for work-balance among the next generation of corporate leaders. Perhaps American business has recognized that family oriented, well-balanced individuals possess desirable attributes consistent with career and business success.

Lyness, K. S. & Jueiesch, M. K. (2008). Can a manager have a life and a career? International and multisource perspectives on work-life balance and career advancement potential. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76, 789-805.