

# Work life balance critical analysis

[Business](#), [Accounting](#)



Key words and expressions Assessment center: It is an organism in charge of the evaluation by assessment. They use various methods, resources and tools based on work simulations such as case studies, role play, personality tests, interview, etc.

It is a process used for the selection of individuals for a job. Human capital: A set of knowledge, talents, experiences, qualifications which allows an individual to perform labor in order to produce economic value. Payroll: A list of employees receiving wages or salaries, with the amounts due to each. Conflict management: The practice of identifying and dealing with conflicts in a rational and balanced way. This involves effective communication, problem solving abilities and good negotiation skills in order to restore the focus to the company's goals.

Conflict management is one of competences of human resources management. Transfer A transfer is a relocation of an employee on the same scale in a different department or job site or to a related classification within the same salary range. Organization chart Visual representation like a diagram representing the management structure of a company, showing the authority and responsibilities of each department and the relationships between the departments.

## **Promotion**

A promotion involves a change from current job to another one; it involves more responsibilities and higher status at organization level. Usually, a promotion means a pay rise or benefits. It allows boosting the morale and rewarding committed employees.

## **Demotion**

Demotion is the opposite of promotion. It's when an employee is shifted to a lower job status, responsibilities, salary and grade. Most of the time, it happens when an employee encounters difficulties in meeting job requirements and standards.

## **Working conditions**

Working conditions refers to the working environment and all existing circumstances in relation with labor in the workplace, including amenities, physical aspects, stress and noise level, job hours, safety or danger degree and legal rights. Downsizing A reduction of the size or the number of employees of an organization in order to improve profitability or to reduce costs. The reduction of the size of a business may be part of a rationalization process or corporate restructuring with the closure of departments or functions after a period of unsatisfactory results or as consequences of strategic review.

## **Team building**

A short definition of team building may sound like that: a series of objectives and activities, which a group respectively a team has to accomplish in a period of time, in an unfamiliar and new environment, most usually in natural location, and ignoring the professional hierarchy and having as objective to relax, inter and intrapersonal knowledge of all persons involved, and last but not least to raise awareness about the importance and role of each in solving the issues.

## **Collective agreement**

Agreement concluded between the employer on one hand and employees represented by unions or any other form in accordance with the law on the other hand, through which are defined clauses concerning work conditions, salaries as well rights and duties which derives from employment relationships. Flextime Flexitime is a system that allows employees to vary the time that they start or finish work, provided that an agreed total number of hours are spent at work. Training Training is the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies as a result of the teaching of vocational or practical skills and knowledge that elate to specific useful competencies. Training has specific goals of improving one's capability, capacity, and performance. It forms the core of apprenticeships and provides the backbone of content at institutes of technology(also known as technical colleges or polytechnics). In addition to the basic training required for a trade, occupation or profession, observers of the labor-market recognize as of 2008 the need to continue training beyond initial qualifications: to maintain, upgrade and update skills throughout working life.

People within many professions and occupations may refer to this sort of training as professional development. Employee Satisfaction Employee satisfaction is the terminology used to describe whether employees are happy and contented and fulfilling their desires and needs at work. Employee satisfaction is often measured by anonymous surveys administered periodically that gauge employee satisfaction in areas such as management and teamwork. Compensatory rest It is granted to employees for the worked

extra hours and it takes the form of days off; its purpose is to adjust the worked hours to the legal working hours ceiling.

Eg: in Horeca the weekly worked hours are 40 instead of 38. Absenteeism The habitual non-presence of an employee at his or her job. Possible causes of absenteeism include job dissatisfaction, ongoing personal issues and chronic medical problems. Regardless of cause, a worker with a pattern of being absent may put his reputation and his employed status at risk. However, some forms of absence from work are legally protected and cannot be grounds for termination. Assisted employment Any employment in a company where at least 50% of employees are handicapped persons unable to work on the regular labor market.

## **Teleworking**

Teleworking allows employees work at home or at a local telework center one or more days per week using communication tools, such as such as phone, fax, modem, Internet teleconferencing, e-mail or IM, to perform work duties from a remote location. Work placement agency Companies which attempt to match the employment needs of an employer with a worker having the required skill set and interests. Some agencies are privately owned while others are sponsored by government. Case study: Work-life balance at ALD Automotive & Hotel Amigo Introduction

Human resources is the division of a company that is focused on activities related to employees management. Their activities include recruiting, orientation and training of current employees. Human resources have to deal with many aspects such as fringe benefits and work-life balance. Work-life

balance is a concept which means a daily effort to split employee's time and energy between personal life (family, friends, self-care and other personal activities) and work. The expression of " Work-life balance" was used for the first time in United Kingdom in the 70's.

Nowadays, with the globalization, companies have begun to realize how important work-life balance is linked to the productivity and creativity of their employees. Furthermore, with the economic crisis and the recession, many employees have to work more, faster and with fewer resources. It tends to be more stressful to be successful than ever before. Usually, employees are expected to be exemplary parents and to have a fulfilled personal life in which they raise perfect children, enjoy their hobbies, volunteer in the community and take care of their bodies, spirits and minds.

Have a balance is a wonderful goal but it is not so easy! The root of work-life balance issues may come from the organizational norms and ideologies. For example, long hours and complete devotion to the profession can be difficult and can cause different problems such as stress, pressure, loss of motivation, loss of judgment until burn-out. However, over the years, these problems can become a major concern to both employers and employees. For instance, stress can cause physiological and psychological problems and can lead people to consume alcohol and smoke.

Therefore, with the effort to retain employees, it is increasingly important for organizations to recognize this balance. Employers have taken proactive measures in providing programs and initiatives in order to help their employees to cope with work-life balance. It is a challenge for companies to assist employees to experience work-life balance by offering such

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opportunities as flexible work schedules or sponsored family events and activities. However, with the technological progress, it is easier for employees to keep contact with work.

Employees can accomplish their tasks through computers, Smartphone, emails which enable them to succeed at work beyond the physical boundaries of their office. According to a research by Keneza Research Institute in 2007, employees who were more positive toward their organization's efforts to support work-life balance indicated a much lower intention to leave the organization, greater pride in their organization, a willingness to recommend it as a place to work and higher overall job satisfaction.

The goal of this research work consists in analyzing two companies (ALD Automotive and Hotel Ami-go) on work-life balance topic under different aspects. First of all, we will tackle the different problems that these companies have experienced for the last past years and the impact on employees life quality as well on their work productivity. Secondly, we will describe the activities and main work characteristics that the firms have taken into account. Thirdly, we will analyze the actual results of these implemented policies and finally, we will draw our general conclusions.

Wellbeing at work's pillars and actual situation

HR department's responsibility, in close cooperation with senior management, is to help teams and team leaders and to develop the capability and commitment in order to drive work-life balance proactively rather than simply respond to individual circumstances. Well-being at work depends on various approaches: Flexibility & communication ALD

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Automotive case ALD Automotive organizes a satisfaction surveys every 2nd year to set up measures in order to improve work-life balance. For the last years, the employees complained about of lack of flexibility, communication and homogeneity of work.

To fix up this problem, since December 2011, ALD Automotive established four values in which each individual can identify as belonging to the same unit.

The values are P. I. T. S. :

- Prefers to the passion of own job, passion drives ALD to surpass ourselves continuously.
- I for Innovation i. e. try to be successful most of the time, try to increase products/services quality level.
- T for Team spirit is their strength: they are open to different opinions. It is important to learn from own colleagues.

As a group, they draw their strengths from the huge variety of talents and cultures that characterises their organisation across the world.

This diversity helps them to act as a group and to move into a higher gear.

- S for service and customer focus; is the main goal of ALD Automotive. Their aim is to fulfil the expectations of those who put their trust in them with professionalism at all times. Whether they have met them in person or not, adopting a proactive attitude and constantly considering problems is and will always remain the very essence of their mission. Employees take particular care of customers in order to make the job easier and more



agreeable for everyone and every day. According to the employees, the schedules were like frozen.

Indeed, there were fixed schedules and for those who live outside Brussels in particular in the Dutch speaking area the situation was critical in the morning because of the heavy traffic. It caused an enormous stress and sometimes the bad jokes of certain colleagues were difficult to bear and people felt frustrated. An alternative was found in order to to increase employee satisfaction and also widen their recruitment target. Due to the geographical situation of the company, ALD automotive had difficulties recruiting native Dutch speaking staff.

To solve this problem, the employees have the possibility today to begin and to end as they wish within a time slot. This allows certain flexibility, especially since ALD automotive started working on a reliable system. Indeed, no clocking in and out is present. The aim of the company is that the employees can evolve in a relaxing atmosphere. Moreover, the management advocates the use of the familiar form between colleagues and people in charge and it meant to have certain proximity between the various members of the company.

In order to answer the lack of flexibility, the human resources manager decided to establish the " Open door policy " . This communication policy consists to leave the office door of the supervisor " open" in order to encourage openness and transparency with the employees. This kind of communication allows people to promote a good collaboration environment with high performance level and mutual respect. This is related to the

concept of work-life balance. Another point on which the employees would like to be worked out is a better transparency of salaries.

The department of human resources is leading talks this topic today. Indeed, it can be dangerous for a company to reveal the salaries of the various job positions because it can entertain bigger frustrations within the company. According to the results of satisfaction survey, concerning the lack of communication, the employees estimated that they were not sufficiently aware of this situation of ALD automotive. Indeed, due to the market evolution and the current economic conjuncture, the employees felt the need for additional information. Previously, the meetings were organized with members belonging to the same department.

Since November 2011, an individual meeting is organized once a year within automotive ALD' community in order to discuss the projects and the results between all concerned departments. This system thus makes it possible for the employees to have clear and complete information. This makes it possible for them to have a certain reflection on their own work as well to motivate the teams. However, for the absent people, the human resources department thinks to set up a communication system allowing the circulation of relevant information among all the company's members.

A reporting system to all the employees should be established for the end of this year. However, different companies from all over the world receive a newsletter each trimester. This one resumes the various worldwide projects in order to have knowledge of the overseas markets. In the frame of flexibility, ALD set up an interesting holiday policy. The contracts of the employees passed from 38h a week to 40h a week. In this way, the

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employees accumulate a day of additional vacation a month and can also make a request vacation further to their seniority and with regard to their position.

By taking into account the legal days off, they can cumulate until 50 days off a year in total. Case Hotel Amigo According to the HR manager: “ our hotel is a mix between familiar and English structure it means we have to respect the hierarchy but the managers can be approached in a familiar way”. The core values and keys words after which the company is guided are reminded on a regular basis. The motto of the establishment is “ the simple art of luxury” which means the best service in a familiar atmosphere.

For that they need all colleagues to be welcoming, team-players, to improve their performance and maintain their integrity. The communication channels between the personnel and the managing staff consists of, as in every company they dispose over telephone, email; it is advisable that any worker should contact his/her direct supervisor, department manager first of all. Concerning flex time the hotel did not implement this system as in hospitality it is not feasible; they need their people to be on time as agreed in their schedule.

When it comes about weekend work, there is no special agreement as in the hospitality sector, they mostly work on a variable schedule and it depends upon the occupancy rate, sick colleagues, etc. Often, except the office employees, executive staff as well their managers has to work outside 9 to 5 o clock so give the possibility to take the last common transport, either to sleep in the hotel or our guest house, and if living in Brussels or its peripheries to take a cab on company’s charge. The salary is in accordance

with the sector. However, it is negotiable for certain functions within the department budget limits.

Employees in general are rarely satisfied with their salaries and coming after a crisis period they have budget restrictions but they do respect the baremas imposed but the law; however they try to compensate with other incentives as lodging within the hotel's chain for a complimentary 25 euros a night. Once a year, the hotel organizes satisfaction surveys as well an individual evaluation with the direct manager; during half hour they discuss the strengths and weaknesses, evolution path as well improvement level. Info sessions in order to discuss the results of the company are organized every 3 months.

The GM gives a brief presentation over the results of the company within the chain or Belgian market, the departments with the biggest up sales, and positive notes to the other aspects; everybody's presence is necessary. ? Making work satisfying and fun Ald Automotive Case Within the framework of the work-life balance, Human resources organize teambuilding and offers incentives. Unlike teambuilding where these are organized according to the requests from managers, incentives as are organized once a year. Indeed, all the employees of ALD Automotive Belgium which counts approximately 230 employees are invited for a journey of a few days abroad.

The aim is that every employee meets new colleagues and favors the communication and develops the team spirit. Furthermore, during Saint Nicolas and during the Christmas party (annual staff day), chocolate "Neuhaus" is distributed to every employee. Other points were elaborated during this year in order to increase satisfaction and to work out at maximum on the <https://assignbuster.com/work-life-balance-critical-analysis/>

work-life balance. Since April 2012, the laundry service system was set up, so that people can benefit from their weekend without thinking too much of housework; the employees have the possibility to bring once a week their clothes for a democratic price.

Furthermore, for the fun spirit of the company a business card was given to them. This card enables them to obtain certain advantages in various shops. Moreover, the company offers possibility according to its position to obtain a company car at a lower category and thus to compensate the difference as a Flex Income Plan (F. I. P) These FIP intervene in the field as of family benefits, of the provision of a PC and/or bicycle, travels, sport and cultural activities. This encourages people to take moreover small cars and thus to give a sense of responsibility the employees on the environment.

Nowadays, we are evolving in a green mood and this kind of advantages makes it possible to have an impact on the future of our planet. Especially when certain employees complained about air quality because it is an old dated building from the years '50, no renewal of the air was done. The human resources management thus envisaged a new system of ventilation and the placement of transparent films on the windows in order to reduce heat during the hot summers. With that, one can add new parking spaces, a cooling of the offices on the level of paintings and furniture and also of the cafeteria.

Indeed, the employees did not have a pleasant place for their lunchtime. Material of kitchen (micro-wave oven, dishes, etc) was added thus that fridges, water fountain and free coffee machine on each floor of the building. Hotel Amigo Case As they are always looking for improvement, they organize <https://assignbuster.com/work-life-balance-critical-analysis/>

different training programs as stress related, executive (kitchen, restaurant), language courses, for room maids how to tackle with back pains, fire and first aid course. As well they receive different incentives per hour/person from the state.

Either the personnel choose themselves their programs either are chosen by the department managers. In order to improve daily employee's activity and to make daily work satisfying and fun, the establishment, Amigo, organizes anniversaries (a small half hour party with drinks and cakes and a nice speech from the manager), Saint Nicholas party for the kids and in January a big staff party. Spouses are invited but no gifts are offered. Team buildings are organized once a year and only for the managers in different locations as Ardenne, France and consists of paintball, kayak etc.

The hotel does not organize any contest, but they do have a system through which it is voted the employee of the trimester; then the department manager will choose a person which will represent the hotel at the head office in London. The winner will get a trip to one hotel in the chain and a bonus of course. Nowadays, companies make their best to raise awareness and motivate their staff to be more ecological and to act accordingly. As most companies, the hotel intervenes in the expenses of public transport. However, the hotel places at the disposal of the HR's department company cars.

Those can only be used for the business appointment in order to avoid any way useless. Concerning the lunchtime, employees can eat for free different meals but no lunch vouchers are given anymore. Human resources think in order to ensure human being. For example, they give the opportunity for a <https://assignbuster.com/work-life-balance-critical-analysis/>

pregnant woman whose work is mainly physical for work rotation, eg a room maid can pass to the lingerie department so a much lighter work; if her health condition does not allow her to work, she can pass on medical leave provided the advice of a doctor. ? Parental leave Ald Automotive & Hotel Amigo Case

Concerning the parental leave no particular measures were set up in the last few years. ALD automotive and Hotel Amigo respect the legal delays and no childcare was envisaged. This type of request was not expressed by the staff. Overtime Ald Automotive Case The management does not encourage the employees to do overtime. Each task and work are given to be realized during practical deadlines. However, for exceptional events, the employees are rewarded in the form of gift voucher or are re-covered as days off. No supplementary payment is granted on top of the salary. Hotel Amigo Case

In the hospitality sector, law regulates every aspect in a very specific manner so as per the law, people can work maximum 40 hours a week with a one compensatory day a month and for the evening hours they receive an incentive. All the extra hours are made on request only and recovered with days off. ? Job sharing ALD Automotive Case The employees would like to have more flexibility at this level. The department of human resources is working out a system of telecommuting. This one should come out during the course of the year 2013. Hotel Amigo Case Job-sharing is not a common practice.

This is possible only for Sales Department. Homogeneity Ald Automotive case The department of human resources evolved much in the last few  
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years. Indeed, the members within this department passed from 1 to 4 people in the last 5 years. In 2007, ALD Automotive repurchased the company Renault BusinessFinance(RBF). Approximately 40 people migrated on the payroll of ALD Belgium. However, for those being under the wage conditions of RBF a lack of harmonization and frustration was very present within the spirit of work. Since 2010, automotive ALD modified the contracts and this allowed a certain homogeneity to the teams.

Moreover, the teams having become too numerous and carrying out too many various tasks, a reorganization by function was made by human resources. Today, it succeeded in raising the level of the teams and has to create experts in each department. ? Mobility Ald Automotive & Hotel Amigo Case For those interested to experience a new country's culture, there is a way to ask a transfer within the chain. For transfer, the anciently is not taken into account. The employee has to resign in Belgium and take up employment overseas. What you would have done, why and how

Regarding ALD Automotive, in our opinion, we think that the work of ALD showed expected results. The management of human resources was very effective. The fact of making satisfaction surveys every 2 years enables the company to realize the gaps within the company that is on the level of the work-life balance, of the training of the orientation of the employees. The advantage of ALD Belgium is that it does not depend entirely on their head office with regard to the strategic decisions. Indeed, according to the budgets allocated to each country, each company has the right as it should be to manage its staff while respecting the main idea.



The largest challenge of ALD was the problem of Renault Business Finance. That required in-depth work in order to reorganize the teams and to improve the work-life balance. In our judgment, we find that ALD puts very before the concept of the work-life balances and preach-es the wellbeing at work. It encourages each day to respect the values of the company and takes care of with dimensions social employees. Moreover, after having met certain employees, we were more convinced about the efforts carried out by the GRH in the last few years.

A real serene and confidence atmosphere emerges from ALD Automotive Belgium. Regarding Hotel Amigo after having observed the situation in this establishment, we believe that the human capital is an important component of the business. It is true that working in hospitality is not easy, especially at high standards, and it involves customer/management satisfaction on one side and personal/professional satisfaction on the side. It is as well about weekend work, late shifts and in most of the cases physical work as more than half are executive jobs.

At this point, the hotel offers the opportunity of lodging in the guest house, either in the hotel for those who cannot take the last common transport, but it does not regulate the weekend work, excepting those willing to work the weekends (as of personal reasons, better paid, combining with another job). We think that it is hard to find the perfect match with the family life. So, we should propose to make a survey among the staff to see who wants to work in the weekends, and how many weekends a month. In this way, except sick colleagues' case that needs to be replaced, everybody can fulfill their needs in an appropriate manner.

The company organizes satisfaction surveys, so people are encouraged to express themselves, but we think it better to take into consideration their voice when reasonable, like that they will see that their opinions really matters. The questionnaire may include as well the question: " From the last survey, have you noticed any change concerning your expressed wish? " In the content may rise the question of happiness with the salaries, as we can see only the baremas are respected, and even if the budget is tight, a small promotion has to always contain a salary raise.

We have remarked that the hotel wants to maintain and increase the skill of the personnel, so they want to invest in people by proposing a wide range of trainings, and stimulating via incentives as vouchers for 25 euros a night for a hotel in the chain or free meal. In fact, at the cafeteria in the only place where staff interacts, as no team buildings are made except at managing level. We know it is difficult to put all people together as the hotel cannot remain empty, but they can try by small groups within different departments to organize half day team buildings; when people know each other better, they trust each other more.

Also, a company is not the entire market so as well people can choose their employer and when most of the companies have private saving pension plans, enlarged medical cover and after investing so much in people is important to keep it along for the maximum time period; so we should propose to close up different insurances according to the importance of the person for the company. As the hotel is an equal employer for both sexes, and keeping in mind that a woman at work is a mother at home, they can

close up a partnership with a kindergarten mixed with an after-school class that can keep the kids until late hours.

The final effective results As analysed above, for Ald Automotive as well Hotel Amigo, satisfaction surveys are done that help people to express themselves and for the company to know where they still need to work out. Still in the first case, when they knew people are unhappy because of unflexible schedule, the situation has changed and more than that, they had the opportunity to recruit new staff (Dutch speakers). In the case of Amigo, this fact cannot be changed as is a constraint of the activity's nature.

Both companies offer different training programs but it is well needed a personal development through stress-relief, different creative workshops or why not corporate sport programs. That is why, in Ald Automotive, to increase the quality of time spent with the family, the company offers laundry for a democratic price, sport and travel facilities as well a shop reduction card. Regarding Hotel Amigo still needs to focus on employee's "out of work" life. As a general conclusion for both companies, they do have an effective HR department sustained by a good management, but as in every competitive business there is always place to improve.

Conclusion There are there aspects who characterize the balance between work and life: invested time in work and family life, emotional involvement in professional/family aspects and satisfaction level at work. We believe that it is important to manage the crises without falling back into old working routines. It should be much easier if there is a clearly defined process to deal with them. It is the Human resource department's responsibility to find the

solutions in order to balance personal life and work. Thanks to these solutions they could raise the productivity of the employees.

Indeed, it is a win-win decision, because the companies can benefit the productivity and motivation of the employees as far as the balancing between personal life and work is socially desirable. Even nowadays the work-life balance concept is more and more important; a lot of traditional companies perceive work and life as two distinct competitive fields. The managers with a contemporary view they have a partnership attitude between the employee and the manager with the scope of reaching the targets: professional and personal for both sides.

Those managers are guided through three major objectives:

1. A clear information to the employees regarding business priorities and employee's encouragement when is about personal priorities;
2. Recognition and support of the employees in and outside working environment
3. Permanent improvement of employee's performance combined with personal needs fulfillment.

In the actual economic system, where companies restrained their structures, a huge pressure is put on the left ones, work-life balance became for a lot of people destabilized.

We should be aware of the negativity of the work-life conflict in the family lives which is caused by lack of the balance between work and personal life. Creating and maintaining supportive and healthy work environments could reduce or prevent the work-life conflict. The equilibrium between personal

and professional life is defined as satisfaction, optimal functioning between work and job.

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