



Why work-life balance is dead

with Tracy Brower, Ph.D., M.M., MCR

Learn how Limeade and Dr. Tracy Brower view work-life integration – with advice, examples and insight for HR leaders.

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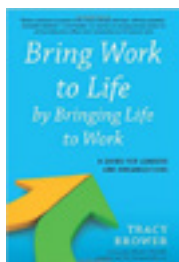
About Dr. Tracy Brower

We partnered with Tracy Brower, Ph.D., M.M. MCR, to launch a discussion on the future of work-life integration using her book “Bring Work to Life by Bringing Life to Work” as a guide. Tracy focuses on the sociology of work – how humans affect their work-life and how it affects them back.

Tracy is the Global Vice President of Workplace Vitality at Mars Drinks. Before that, she served as the Director of Human Dynamics + Work for Herman Miller. She’s had the opportunity to engage with a wide range of organizations, including many of the Fortune 500.

Tracy’s work has been featured in StoryCorps, Center for Creative Leadership, Globe and Mail, The Wall Street Journal, Fortune.com, Forbes.com and more.

She lives in Holland, Michigan, with her husband and two children.



This e-book is based on, and includes quotes from, with permission, *Bring Work to Life by Bringing Life to Work: A Guide for Leaders and Organizations* by Tracy Brower (Bibliomotion, 2014)

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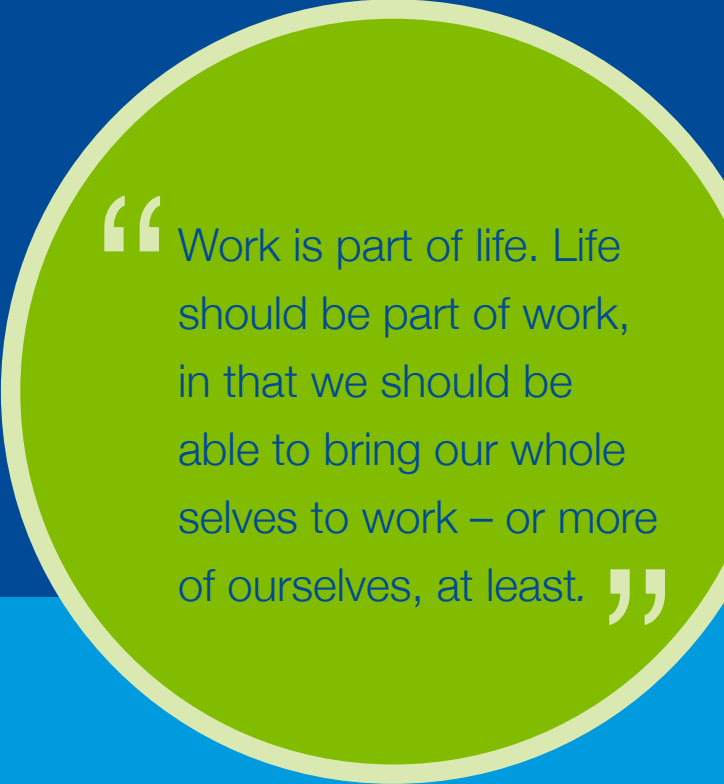
What is work-life integration?

We're not talking about work-life balance – we're talking integration. Tracy says balance implies a zero-sum game (suggesting we can't have it all), but integration means coordinating, blending and bringing elements of work and life into a unified whole. **We can have it all.**

It's all about mindset. If we believe we have to make trade-offs, we take different steps at work and in life. But if our perspective changes to having it all, we're able to bring work and life more closely together. Employees will come to work ready to take on more knowing they'll be able to make their doctor appointment, get a run in AND finish their projects.

The result? A more engaged, healthier and happier workforce.

Employees must integrate – not balance – all the demands they face with work and life.



“ Work is part of life. Life should be part of work, in that we should be able to bring our whole selves to work – or more of ourselves, at least. ”

What are work-life supports?

Tracy believes work-life supports are one of the first steps in creating integration. They are the formal benefits, policies and practices that help employees navigate the demands of work and life. If you want your employees to feel valued, then look at your available work-life supports. Here are some ideas to start:

- ✓ **Amenities**
- ✓ **Care-related solutions**
- ✓ **Hours of work**
- ✓ **Insurance/benefits**
- ✓ **Job management**
- ✓ **Physical work environment**
- ✓ **Technology**
- ✓ **Types of leaves (i.e., medical, sabbatical)**
- ✓ **Wellness and mental health**
- ✓ **Work location**

The goal is to create a sense of fulfillment, so get creative!
Let's take a peek at a few examples...



Work-life supports spotlight

Job management:

Organizations can help align employees' work with their passions by asking where they want to be and what skills they want to develop. Employees who see their long-term future with a company can better integrate work and life. Make sure your employees set clear developmental goals with their leaders to highlight which areas they want to learn and how they want to grow.

Flexibility:

Allowing employees to work flexible hours costs your company nothing – and there's demand for it. Seventy-four percent of employees want flexible work hours, but only 46% get it. And those who do are 18% more engaged.* At Limeade, our marketing department works from home every Thursday. One of our recruiting coordinators attends a workout class midday and makes up the time at night. Employees who need to be on site can shift their schedule to come into work one hour earlier or leave one hour later.

Physical work environment:

Space tells a story about what the organization values and how it supports employees. Build places for people to meet, connect and collaborate (we have puzzle and Jenga stations at Limeade!). Account for varying personalities by providing space for focused work as well (such as phone booths or quiet rooms). Doing this will provide a fulfilling experience for all people.

Technology:

Technology allows for flexibility and new ways to communicate. Let employees choose the devices they use. Or reimburse them for using their own devices.

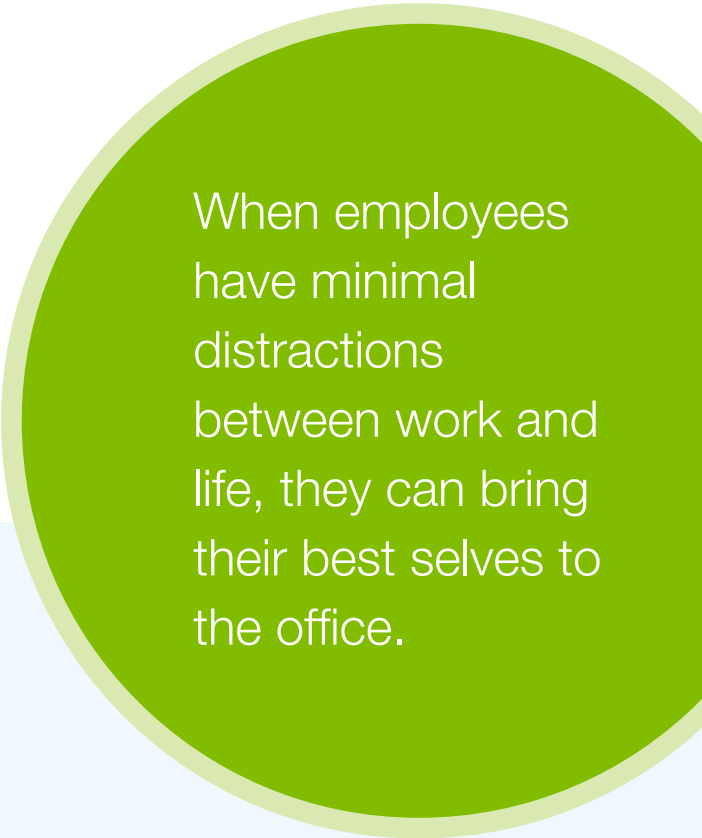
*Statistics based on "Workplace Well-Being," research from Quantum Workplace & Limeade, unless otherwise noted.

Why this matters

So is there an ROI on this?

Yes. When organizations provide work-life supports, they enhance employee engagement, satisfaction, retention and health – which yields better company results. And when employees believe their employer cares about their health and well-being, they are...

- ✓ **38% more engaged**
- ✓ **28% more likely to recommend their workplace**
- ✓ **10x less likely to be hostile**
- ✓ **17% more likely to be working there in one year**
- ✓ **18% more likely to go the extra mile for the organization**



When employees have minimal distractions between work and life, they can bring their best selves to the office.

Just think of the opportunity costs of overlooking work-life supports. You may save money today, but you'll lose in the future.

The bottom line? Work-life supports are good for your bottom line.

Alignment with culture

It all comes down to your culture. The work-life supports you select need to be exactly right for your culture. You need to integrate them into everything: your processes, your systems, and the actions, behaviors and beliefs of your leaders and employees.

- ✓ If you have a culture of health – supports could include an onsite clinic and fitness classes.
- ✓ If you have a culture of improvement – supports could include subsidized tuition for continuing education courses.
- ✓ If you have a culture of innovation – supports could include daily time for learning, thinking and creativity (separate from day-to-day job responsibilities).

“ Work-life supports tend to be a *product* of an organization’s overall culture. ”

“ Accomplishing integration of work and life isn’t a prescription with one right answer. Instead, there are multiple right answers. ”

“ The way that an organization provides work-life supports makes a powerful statement about what the organization values. ”

The greatest challenge with culture: leadership behavior

Tracy emphasizes leaders are pivotal to the success of work-life supports. If leaders don't live out and promote your organization's work-life supports, your employees sure won't.

Why? Because all the choices leaders make send cues to employees about what is – and isn't – acceptable. And these messages guide employee decisions. They notice if leaders collaborate, take vacations or work from home when their children are sick. So make sure your leaders demonstrate how important work-life integration is to them and your culture.

Limeade leadership spotlight:

- ✓ Director of Customer Marketing Shauna Cour sets her schedule so she can drop off and pick up her kids from school every day. She finishes her work from home after they go to bed.
- ✓ Chief Executive Officer Henry Albrecht sets the Limeade standard for walking meetings. And because of this, employees choose to hit the pavement instead of huddling in a conference room.

Both Shauna and Henry's choices send real messages to the people around them. If employees see leaders embracing work-life supports, they will too.



Tracy's formula for change

**Demand for work-life supports is here to stay.
And it's only going to grow.**

To meet this demand, HR leaders will need to create a business case with clear recommendations and rationale to get stakeholders on board.

Employees are
20%
more engaged when they
have the right amount of
mix between their work
and personal life.

Vision

Create a clear, compelling and (most important) shared vision of the future state. *"The future of our company will look like..."*

Dissatisfaction

Change happens when enough people are dissatisfied with the status quo. Articulate what isn't working today and identify the problem.

Knowledge

People need knowledge of how to close the gap between what they have and what they want. Communicate the steps necessary to move forward through the change and provide resources for help.

Perceived costs

These factors – vision, dissatisfaction and knowledge – must be greater than the perceived costs of the change. Time, money, people or political influence are a few potential concerns.

Tip from Tracy: If your organization is hesitant to jump on the work-life-supports bandwagon, consider a pilot. Start small and be specific – consider focusing on work hours or providing healthy snack options. Stakeholders will be more open to a trial run, knowing it isn't permanent. Plus, it'll kick off an internal discussion and build an army of supporters.



Top 5 difficult situations (and how to handle)

Navigating work and life isn't always easy. So we asked Tracy how to handle these five sticky situations.

Here's what she thinks you should do . . .

1 How can I implement work-life supports in my company despite our more rigid structure?

Think beyond flexible hours:

- ✓ Launch a special recognition program for high performers or a job-rotation option for employees to explore different departments and roles.
- ✓ Create a pool of volunteers who can be on call if an employee has a last-minute emergency.
- ✓ Assign people to fill in when employees are on vacation, so they don't have to put in extra work before they leave (this also is a great development experience for those who fill in).
- ✓ Establish a cross-training program for employees to train a coworker in their role.

2 How can I prove to my executive team this works?

Depending on your company, you may choose to measure using:

- ✓ Employee survey data (If you try a pilot version, survey the team before, during and after)
- ✓ Attendance records
- ✓ Customer satisfaction
- ✓ Turnover rates
- ✓ Exit interviews



3 What should I do if my leader doesn't accept work-life supports?

Consider the following options:

- ✓ Start small and make a specific request to your leader. Ask to leave early one day a week and come in earlier the following day.
- ✓ Sometimes, more traditional leaders change their minds when a high-performing employee finds a work-life support that works. Connect with someone in the office who's had success with the particular work-life support, so you'll have an example when you approach your leader.
- ✓ As individuals, we have some influence. But as teams, we have much more. Bring your team together to figure out different, creative ways of working. Ask the high performers to propose a pilot to your leader.
- ✓ Find other roles within your company.

4 What should I do if my new leader doesn't provide the same work-life supports as my previous one?

It's best to propose a trial run:

- ✓ Talk to your new leader right away: "I've been working from home every other Friday in my previous role, and it's been very effective for me. Could we try that in my new role for a month and see how it goes?"
- ✓ Establish a track record of high performance with your new leader and then pitch a pilot timeframe.
- ✓ Ask your previous leader to help influence your new one: "Could you help me advocate this model with my new leader?"
- ✓ Make it about the business and team – not you. Try the pilot as a team, then have a transparent conversation about what is and isn't working with your leader.
- ✓ Get your future work-life supports in writing, so the opportunities become something the company provides, not just a particular leader.



5 How do I know if I'm satisfied with my work-life integration?

There are a lot of questions you can ask yourself. Here are five to start:

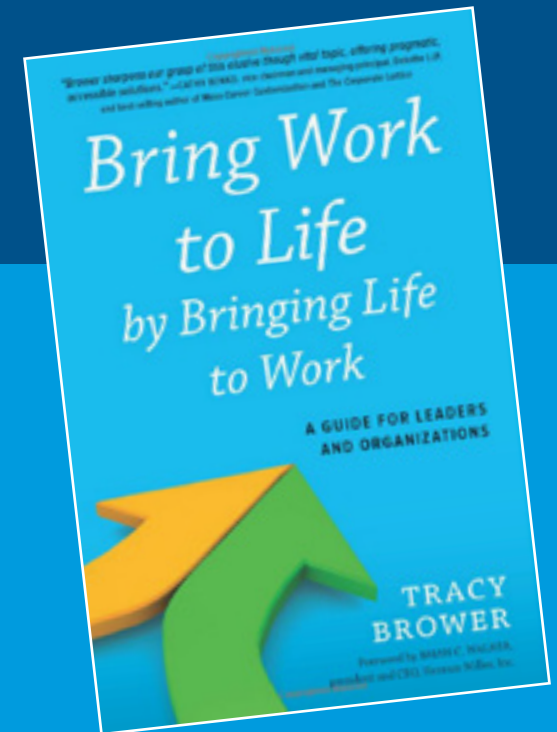
- ✓ Are you inspired by a **broader purpose** – something bigger than yourself that you feel connected to?
- ✓ Do you feel **challenged** and **stimulated**? Do you learn new things regularly?
- ✓ Do you feel **positively energized**?
- ✓ Do you feel you can **bring your whole self to work**? Can you be yourself, share about yourself and express yourself?

None of these are yes/no questions. Generally, your answers will fall on a continuum – and will likely shift over time.

Want to learn more?

Let's talk.

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