Work-Life Balance: Getting away from it all

Australian Management Academy

In May 2008, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, approximately 25% of all managers and administrators declared they worked over 50 hours per week. It is now a standing joke how futurists in the 1970's predicted that technology would shrink the working week and we would all have more leisure time! Far from technology giving us more freedom, it appears that many of us are almost never NOT at work. Even as we arrive home from work, or on our days off, there is a temptation to answer work emails or phone messages. It's becoming increasingly difficult to separate business and home life, and you know that you are a basket case when the laptop is packed into the car as you head off on holiday.

So, increasingly, getting to grips with personal time management is an absolute necessity. When you start to get subtle hints from the spouse, children or friends, it's time for reflection on how your day goes.

Looking on the lighter side of working life and managing your time, perhaps there's a few things in the following list that apply to you.

- Your internal emails and memos are worthy of awards for excellence in presentation.
- You check emails 3-4 times an hour
- You are unorganised with paperwork on your desk and you have no system of electronic folders for storing work documents. They all just go someone and it takes you ages to find them.
- It's hard to open up Internet Explorer without reading the daily news or check the football league tables.
- While it takes 10 minutes for your slow computer to boot up completely you just sit back, relax and say "the computer is too damn slow".
- You like to get involved in conversations around the office
- You use MSN Messenger or Skype constantly to chat with family and friends.
- You like to check you Facebook page hourly
- You are a reliable attendee for meetings, sacrificing your own deadlines if necessary.
- You are the office footy tipping expert
- You are into the nice but expensive coffee that you can buy just down the road.

Well, if too many things in the above list apply to you, then perhaps you need a challenge, something to give you time to think, something to turn your life around. Here's a suggestion - walk the Kokoda Trail. Many famous Australians have done this in recent times including Kevin Rudd, Ron Barassi and Chris Handy.

Peter Stephenson of the Australian Management Academy walked the trail in 2008 and said that it was a "once in a lifetime personal development experience. It's guaranteed to sharpen the mind and let you know you are alive."

While you are on the trip you can prepare ready made answers to those really important questions (joke) such as "Where the hell have you been all week, you didn't answer my emails?" or "Who are you tipping this week-end"!