

It's all about balance

According to the Department of Labour, work-life balance refers to “effectively managing the juggling act between paid work and other activities that are important to us – including spending time with family, taking part in sport and recreation, volunteering or undertaking further study”.

■ BY ANGELIQUE JURD

However this is one case where quality wins out over quantity – if you try to schedule an equal number of hours for each of your activities you are going to find that nothing in life is very pleasurable or productive – life needs more flexibility than that.

According to Charlotte Perry, owner of Charlie's Angels, and lifestyle manager extraordinaire, the biggest mistake people make is trying to cram too much into a day.

“I'm not sure if it's financial or social pressure but there is a lot of pressure on improving lifestyle,” Charlotte told *Business to Business*.

“People are joining groups and gyms and spending so much time doing everything, they're missing out on down time.”

The result is a familiar refrain – one most of us have heard or even used ourselves – “I need a holiday”. According to Charlotte though, people don't need to be on a holiday.

“It should be achievable any time. The problem is people are valuing time less.”

It's all very well to know you need more balance between your work and personal life – but achieving it can be easier said than done, especially if you are a business owner

and the office goes everywhere with you. So Charlotte helped us come up with some tips to get you started:

VALUE YOUR TIME

The value you put on your time is often the key to finding that elusive balance. Valuing your time makes it easier to block time for chores or to delegate those chores. For some it is also easier to ignore their cell phone when they think of the time investment in monetary terms – so if they think their time is worth \$500 an hour, an hour spent at the school picnic is not an hour lost in work time but \$500 invested in their child. An hour at the gym becomes an investment in their health. However they measure that value, those people who place a higher value on their time tend to be less reticent about taking necessary steps to ensure they have balance.

START A TO DO LIST

It may sound simple, but a list takes the chaos out of the day and stops things becoming overwhelming. Keeping a to do list helps you capture all the things you need to achieve in a day. By keeping a To-Do List, you make sure that you capture all of the tasks you



■ Charlotte Perry, of lifestyle management company Charlie's Angels.

have to complete in one place. This is essential if you're not going to forget things. And by prioritising work, you plan the order in which you'll do things, so you can tell what needs your immediate attention, and what you can quietly forget about until much, much later. This is essential if you're going to beat work overload. Without To-Do Lists, you'll seem dizzy, unfocused and unreliable to the people around you. With To-Do Lists, you'll be much better organised, and life will be more balanced.

PRIORITISE

Most people are familiar with the A-B-C method – ‘A’ needing to happen today and ‘C’ can wait for another day. Charlotte suggests you look a bit deeper than that and prioritise according to not just urgency but importance – or vice versa. It may be important that you regularly collect your mail and read it – but can you delegate the job of collecting it? And is it vital you read all the mail every morning? Can it be done once a week? Prioritising will stop the merry go round of grabbing five minutes here and there to spend on jobs.

GET HELP

If you are swamped with work and everything else is going out the window – get help. Employ an assistant or call a lifestyle manager like Charlotte and her team. Don't wait until your children are grown or you have had a heart attack. Prevention is the key in work life balance.

