



Market Report

Executives Want To Get A Life

Up to 75 percent of Australia's executives say they would like to be able to trade some of their income for more time flexibility to improve their family and personal lives.

In the last 18 months executives at the top level have been under huge pressure and many have reached the point of burnout, which spells danger for companies looking to their top team to shift into another gear as the economy lifts.

Now could well be the time to take stock of the physical and emotional damage being caused as a result of career stress by looking past the bottom line performance at ways to improve your own quality of life and that of your leaders.

At Crown & Marks Executive Search, we are increasingly seeing tired and frustrated executives searching for a better way of working. Searching for a progressive corporate culture that allows an element of work/life balance.

The Executive Trap

We all know it and yet we seem hopelessly drawn to it. Career ambition drives us to work hard to enjoy the standard of living we expect and enjoy. In order to maintain and improve that standard of living, we continue to climb the corporate ladder to the top rung, a position that does not allow us the time to achieve our personal goals.

So how do you keep an eye on the prize of a top executive role and the other on your personal needs?

Achieve Work/Life Balance

Here are four basic strategies for executives under pressure:

1. **Watch the middle line.** Pay attention to your bodies – regular exercise (cardiovascular, strength training, and flexibility), nutrition and deep breathing. It's a business imperative to put the name of a good massage therapist and personal trainer right next to the financial advisors in the "essential numbers" section of your address book.
2. **Go home early.** Keep stock of your relationship balance sheet the same as you do your accounts at the office. Cutting-edge psychological research shows resilience in the top jobs comes mostly from having strong, supportive relationships outside of work.
3. **Go inside.** One astonishing recent medical finding is that time spent in "mindfulness" activities, like meditation or prayer, keeps people healthy, more alert, and better able to concentrate on work.

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4. **Laugh a little.** A career should sit in the middle of a life with room for playing, relaxing, creating and, of course, plenty of laughter. Most high-level career failures can be traced to the inability of harried leaders to see things in perspective and make informed judgments about what's really important. Burned-out execs haven't the emotional reserves or the clarity of thought to stay ahead of the challenges. Bad business decisions and bad personal decisions come from the same myopic place.
5. **Learn to say NO.** Saying no at times can be healthy. You are in charge of yourself. Don't give that away.

Remember the word stress comes from the French word estrece, meaning to constrict or narrow one's power. When you take the time to maintain this weekly program, you increase your power enough to keep up with the competition and to have real joy in your life. Why would anybody do it any other way?

All comments can be attributed to Stephen Lennard, Joint Managing Director and Principal of Crown & Marks Executive Search, one of Australia's leading senior Executive Search Consultants.

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