

Have you ever heard of Michael Moschen? Yeh, me neither. But if you look up his name on the Internet you'll find that he is one of the most famous jugglers in the world, which doesn't seem like a big deal until you attempt to meet the challenge of keeping five balls in the air at the same time.

A good juggler makes the task look effortless, whether it's three objects—or seven—they are manipulating. Moschen shares some of the secrets to juggling success: "The death knell in juggling is to watch any individual object. Our instinct is to look at each ball or task separately, because we want to have control—But if you're tied to each little specific, you'll lose sight of the big picture. Concentrate on seeing all the patterns. If you look at things in only one way, you'll be greatly restricted in how many objects you can juggle" (Muoio, A., 2007).

Individuals in the workforce are challenged much in the same way. Juggling life demands is a complicated process that requires a big picture mindset. Job assignments, attending children's activities, cleaning house, volunteering at church, mowing the yard, presenting to the executive board, grocery shopping, attending medical appointments, meeting month end report deadlines, picking up dry-cleaning, scheduling the family dog's grooming appointment—the list of demands is endless.

Economic uncertainty can complicate matters, disrupting the usual balance between work and home-life. When individuals fear the loss of job security, extra effort is often given (and expected) in order to maintain their current employment. Priorities often shift toward satisfying our boss's expectations over meeting our obligations as spouses, parents, children, committee chairpersons, sport sponsors, teen chauffeur etc.

Failure to create and maintain a healthy work-life balance is the number one contributor to an employee's decline in physical, psychological and social health. Individuals who spend too much time and energy focusing on one "ball" find themselves discouraged and frustrated by the inability to successfully juggle all of the pieces in their life. Depression and anxiety are often the consequence of employee's failing to prioritize both work and home.

Employers who are invested in maintaining a healthy staff can have considerable influence over an employee's health by not only supporting, but celebrating life outside of the work environment. Encouraging staff to prioritize family, hobbies and community involvement passes

a strong message to employees about the value of balance.

Supervisors can also show commitment to this balance by making performance expectations and production priorities clear to all employees. Encouraging staff to care for themselves by prohibiting or limiting overtime, implementing flexible schedules to allow for both personal and professional success and achievement, and rewarding staff for utilizing the supportive resources available to them (such as employee assistant programs, personal leave time, and employee benefits such as gym memberships) reinforce the employer's commitment to employee health. Such commitment contributes to fewer resignations, absences, negative attitudes, inner-office conflict, and poor-quality production.

The economic crisis will come to an end; supervisors must ask themselves—when all is said and done, what kind of employee do you want to remain? One that is resentful, tired, angry, discouraged and ready to escape the moment an opportunity arises? Or one that feels good about being part of a team, that feels valued for their contributions and are motivated to quality production, and who, overall, are devoted and committed to the organization?

All employee's benefit from learning to juggle; supervisors can play a critical role in their staff successfully acquiring this skill.

Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling five balls in the air. You name them—work, family, health, friends and spirit—and you're keeping all of these in the air. You will soon understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. But the other four balls—family, health, friends and spirit are made of glass. If you drop one of these, they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged, or even shattered. They will never be the same. You must understand that and strive for balance in your life. Brian Dyson, CEO of Coca Cola Enterprises from 1959-1994.