



# Total Rewards STRATEGY

"If it's not practical, it doesn't get published."

*Total Rewards Strategy* is the monthly guide to what's working in strategic compensation and benefits. In every issue you'll find tried and tested ideas from 'best in class' companies ready to try out today.

To find more articles on HR and people management or to order your subscription, just visit <http://www.melcrum.com>



## ASK THE EXPERTS

# Communicating work-life initiatives



**My organization has recently developed a new work-life balance program. How can I most effectively communicate our work-life balance initiatives to employees?**



Barbara Holmes is managing director of **Managing Work | Life Balance** – a consultancy that provides Australian and Asia Pacific organizations with effective work/life strategies. She offers the following advice:

Some of the most common issues to be raised in work-life surveys are that staff don't know what options are available, or how to access them. Our experience would suggest that what is needed is an ongoing and multi-focused approach that will reach staff at all levels of the organization in a way that can be easily accessed and understood. A successful communication strategy should focus on the following:

### **#1. Get executive support.**

Buy-in and commitment to work-life strategies from senior managers and executives is vital. Encourage them to become role models for work-life balance. This sends a very powerful message to employees.

### **#2. Promote work-life strategies as a business issue.**

Make the link between work-life programs and the business strategy to attract and retain talent, encourage their use of discretionary effort and provide a high level of service to internal and external clients. Use internal data to support your case and promote the advantages at every opportunity.

### **#3. Draw on the existing management structure.**

The importance of face-to-face communication cannot be underestimated. Where there is a system of team briefings or meetings, encourage leaders to brief staff about work-life policies and programs on an ongoing basis. Work-life issues should be included in work or project planning sessions so that employees' needs, such as school holidays and childcare, can be dealt with cooperatively within the team.

### **#4. Use a variety of methods.**

Use as many forms of media as possible to spread your message – these can range from booklets, newsletters and posters to the intranet. It should also feature in induction and training packages. Not everyone will want to access work-life options immediately, but as requests arise people will need help and should know where to find information. Lastly, evaluate your communication strategies regularly and use the data to update your approach.

For more information see [www.worklifebalance.com.au](http://www.worklifebalance.com.au)