

One-Third of Working Mothers Are Dissatisfied With Their Work/Life Balance, Careerbuilder.Com Survey Finds

-- 53 Percent Missed a Significant Event in Their Child's Life Because of Work in the Last Year --

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Juggling personal and professional commitments continues to be a struggle for today's career moms. One third of working mothers surveyed by CareerBuilder.com report dissatisfaction with their work/life balance, with nearly one-in-five stating their employers are intolerant of working shorter days due to their children. CareerBuilder.com's "Working Mothers 2004" survey was conducted from April 6 to April 19, 2004 and included more than 235 employed full-time women with children under the age of 18 living at home.

Bringing the office home is a common occurrence amongst working mothers, which can cut into quality time with their children. Although the vast majority of working mothers say they spend three or more hours with their children after work, 49 percent admit they are preoccupied with work while at home. Thirty-three percent say they always or often work weekends.

Business demands have also resulted in working mothers having to miss significant events in their children's lives. One-in-two said they missed at least one important occasion in their child's life due to a work commitment in the last year, nearly one-in-four said they missed three or more events.

"Many women are taking on the dual role of breadwinner and mom, which can often pull you in ten different directions at once," said Mary Delaney, Chief Sales Officer for CareerBuilder.com and mother of three. "Thirty-four percent of working mothers say they feel the tug of war between personal and professional commitments and are looking for their employers to afford them more flexibility when it comes to family. The good news is more employers today have programs in place to better accommodate family needs."

Forty percent of working mothers say they spend less time with their children than their parents did with them and 38 percent said they would take a pay cut to be with their families more. To increase their face-to-face time with their families, working mothers say they have taken advantage of alternative work arrangements such as arriving and leaving work early, taking personal days and telecommuting. Seventy-four percent said these work style adjustments have not impacted their career progress.

Delaney offers the following tips to help working mothers gain a healthier work/life balance:

- Keep one calendar for business and family commitments. Schedule company meetings in the same place as baseball games to prevent overbooking yourself.
- Use vacation on occasion. Save your vacation days for major events such as graduations, school plays, soccer playoffs, etc. and make sure you are in the front row. There are some events you just never miss.
- Organize and compartmentalize. Set aside one night a week or a month to get organized at work. If you take work home with you, make sure your kids don't see it. Check emails after bedtime. When you're home, it's all about them.
- Make time. Designate one or more nights a week for a family activity that involves interaction instead of TV. Write a letter to each child so they know you're thinking about them.
- Give yourself a break. Treat yourself to some alone time with a good book or a long walk to relieve stress and refresh your spirit.

Survey Methodology

The CareerBuilder survey, "Working Mothers 2004," was conducted from April 6 to April 19, 2004 of more than 230 women who are employed full-time with children under the age of 18 living at home. To collect data for the survey, CareerBuilder commissioned SurveySite to use an e-mail methodology whereby individuals who are members of SurveySite Web Panel were randomly selected and approached by e-mail invitation to participate in the online survey. The results of this survey are accurate within +/- 6.4 percentage points (19 times out of 20).

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