Navigating Work + Life
Boundary Management

IU Work + Life
Managing Boundaries in Personal and Professional Life

*Presented by Marielena R. Burt*
Factors Behind Boundary Disappearance

• Employees
  • Motivated by values, interests, and goals

• Technology
  • Creates availability anywhere/anytime
  • Progression in only a few years

• Employers
  • Competition
  • Time-saving

Value-based technology use

• *Value of* and *need for* having it faster simply because someone *can* send that email at 11:00 PM
• What precedence set if you respond without informing them?
• Often vs. Soon
• Speed of delivery vs. Speed of action

The 5 W’s

1. The ultimate multitasker
2. Creating and maintaining boundaries as a means of simplifying and ordering the environment
3. 24/7
4. Home, work, school, recreational clubs/hobbies, etc.
5. Taking care of you and getting the most out of both ‘worlds’
Boundary Management as the Employer

- Preserve the quality of work
- Snowball effect
  - Turnover
- Nonstop work is self-defeating
- Burn out
  - Short-term gain can create long-term pain

Personal Life

- Set a time limit on business communications at home
- Ask coworkers not to call you with business-related matters on your day off
- Leave thoughts about work at work
- Limit discussions of work matters at home and when speaking to friends

Personal Life

• Establish a rule to discuss work during office hours
• Explore and plan exciting events and activities with those important to you
• Include partner on meeting requests to inform if work will spillover into home

Professional Life

• Limit time checking personal email, text messages and home voicemail during work
• Limit the time you spend online related to personal matters
• Save private conversations with coworkers for lunchtime and other breaks if possible
• Limit your work schedule to meet obligations without cutting into hours necessary to relax and spend time with those important to you.
• Set a goal to leave at a specific time each day

Professional Life

• Designate a specific space and time of day for work if you need to work from home
  • Limit access of others if possible and reschedule domestic tasks
• Dress for work at home (avoid pajamas) if telecommuting is an option for you

Crossing Role Boundaries
Exit Strategies

• Establish a ritual/routine to prepare for entry and exit
  • Exit home: showering, dressing in work attire, read the news, listen to traffic reports
  • Exit work: plan next day agenda, turn equipment off, rinse coffee mugs
• Associate role with a specific time and setting

What are some of your rituals/routines?

“The cost of not commuting”

• Spared time
• Less stress
• Cost-saving

____________

• Buffer zone
  • Frame of mind
  • Decompress and disengage

The 3 Tips for Interruptions
1. If interrupting…

• Check first to see if they are tagged in Skype as ‘available’ if possible
• Ask if they have any available time for your agenda
  • If not suggest a time to chat
  • Send by email if possible
• Go in prepared - well designed agenda or question/concern

2. If being interrupted…

- Determine if appropriate time for interruption
- **Listen, Validate, and Redirect**
- Be resolute and direct
  - Example: if you would like to schedule a meeting/phone call another time to discuss this we can, but now I need to work on this….

3. Recognizing Cues

- Know what “cues” to recognize
- How to ask for alone time
- Interruptions are unavoidable
  - Some are necessary for business or personal reasons, others could probably be put off for a more convenient time
- Do not Disturb, on phone, at desk/available, or out of the office
Communication Strategies
Three Time Zones

• 100% on-duty
  • Where most work is done
  • Can be reached and relied on to get back in a short time

• 60% mid-duty
  • Neither fully on-duty or off-duty
  • You decide the degree of availability

• 40% off-duty
  • No work is being done

Getting Support

• Go in with a plan and not a demand
  • Maintaining positive relationships
• Focus on the results
  • It’s a process
• Consider the alternative
  • Taking the first step is key
• You’re not going alone

Who do you need to talk to?

• Contacted you more than once during times that you established as mid-duty or off-duty
• Repeatedly interfered with personal or free time
• Have their own work affected if they are not able to reach you during time off
• Share their concerns with their supervisor if not able to reach you during time off

The Six Steps for Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan—Don’t Improvise</th>
<th>Recommend—Don’t Beg</th>
<th>Propose—Don’t Impose</th>
<th>Find &amp; Fix Causes—Don’t Treat Symptoms</th>
<th>Reinforce—Don’t Ignore</th>
<th>Recap—Don’t Race Away</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Outline talking points</td>
<td>• Business solution to a business problem</td>
<td>• State view of problem and potential solution</td>
<td>• Need for information</td>
<td>• Summarize agreement</td>
<td>• Recognition when someone respects your boundaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sense of purpose</td>
<td>• Jointly develop a solution</td>
<td>• Underlying problem</td>
<td>• Determine action steps</td>
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Additional Tips

• Choose the time and place carefully
  • Avoid stressful periods
• Put yourself in their shoes
  • Consider how they will feel
• Sell the benefits and features
• Don’t ignore the possible problems
  • Suggest an alternative
• Be proactive
  • Inform others in advance

Managing interruptions

• A colleague approaches your office space frequently to chat about their weekend plans. You are currently working on a big project. You want to maintain a positive relationship with your colleague, yet you have a deadline to meet.

How do you respectfully manage this interruption?
Discussing Boundaries

• Your supervisor sends you an 11:00 pm late-night email regarding an office project. You are conflicted in responding in order to show your supervisor you are dedicated to the job, yet you wish to not work after business hours.

How would you approach the conversation of working after hours?
Setting Expectations

• You are a new employee at a business and you are trying to have the conversation with your supervisor about setting clear expectations. You wish to keep your work and personal life separate by not working from home or after business hours, yet you want your supervisor to see that you are dedicated to your work.

How would you start the conversation?
Getting Back in Control
Coping Strategies

• Clear communication regarding expectations
• Compensate for excessive spillover by taking extra time in another sphere
• Prioritizing - not everything has to happen today
• “80-20” activity

• If I could reduce the length of my typical workday by having more free time after normal working hours, I’d use that time to:

a. ___________________________________________________________________
b. ___________________________________________________________________
c. ___________________________________________________________________
d. ___________________________________________________________________
e. ___________________________________________________________________
• If I could reduce the amount of work I normally do on the weekend, I’d use that time to:

  a. __________________________________________________________
  b. __________________________________________________________
  c. __________________________________________________________
  d. __________________________________________________________
  e. __________________________________________________________

If I knew that I wouldn’t have to check my email and/or voice mail and/or respond to pages while on vacation or holiday, I’d change the way I use that time off by:

a. 

b. 

c. 

d. 

e. 

• If I could draw some boundaries around the times when I’m expected to be working or available to others – and still remain fully committed to my job – the likely effect this would have on my own attitude and outlook would be:

a. __________________________________________________________
b. __________________________________________________________
c. __________________________________________________________
d. __________________________________________________________
e. __________________________________________________________

• The books I’d like to read, hobbies I’d like to start or develop, places I’d like to visit, or experiences I’d like to have if I could free up some more time in evening and on the weekend are:

a. __________________________________________________________
b. __________________________________________________________
c. __________________________________________________________
d. __________________________________________________________
e. __________________________________________________________

• If I could draw some boundaries around the times when I’m expected to be working or available to others – and still remain fully committed to my job – the likely effect this would have on my relationship with my significant other(s) would be:

a. ______________________________________
b. ______________________________________
c. ______________________________________
d. ______________________________________
e. _______________________________________
What does balance mean to you?
Moving Forward

Examine

Create a plan

Decide if

Implement

Learning how *not* to work

• Schedule your relaxation time
  • Raises the importance
  • Fill free time with play

• Manage “Me” projects
  • Break down time-consuming hobbies into smaller blocks

• Use technology as play

What are the big rocks in your life?

Thank you!
References


