

# MOVING AHEAD

## MANAGEMENT INSIGHTS FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS

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## In Pursuit of Work/Life Balance

By Mark Sincevich

Many people devote all of their energies to career advancement and wealth accumulation, then wake up one day to find that their lives are out of balance. I recently read about a former executive who admitted that he had been miserable throughout the last decade of his job. Then, in his mid-50's, he took early retirement and his life changed dramatically for the better. He put his considerable energies into volunteer work, first in Africa and then in Central America. The positive experiences and the friends he made were the most rewarding in his entire life.

Can we succeed in our careers and still live balanced lives? I believe we can, but we have to realize that balance is not a destination; it is an ongoing journey. You must devote time every day to each of the four basic aspects of life—physical, mental, social and spiritual—in addition to your career.

### Physical Well-being

The physical aspect includes both exercise and diet. One of my best friends runs a marathon every year, as crossing the finish line is one of the best feelings he's ever had in his life. He has to begin training in April for the October race. He uses the rigorous training regimen as a way to stay in shape. I think this is an excellent plan, since it involves a continual process that builds upon prior small successes.

However, despite his training, he would not be able to finish the race if he didn't pay attention to his diet. If we don't focus on the fuel that powers our body, we will eventually have health problems. For example, when I travel by air I always pre-order low-fat, low-cholesterol meals. In addition, I pay attention to how I feel after eating. I have noticed that some foods make me feel sluggish and I try to avoid these. I also bring my workout clothes along on every business or personal trip to stay in shape and to remain mentally sharp.

### Mental Well-being

The mental aspect involves education and self-improvement. Make optimal use of your time—always carry a book, magazine or your journal with you to make productive use of any down time while waiting in line or for appointments. Another way to build knowledge is through employee education benefits. Many companies pay for continuing education, yet most employees don't take advantage of this free benefit. Also consider joining or forming a "Master Mind Group"—a collection of people who meet on a regular basis to share ideas about how to improve their lives or their businesses. Be creative. My grandmother did crossword puzzles into her 80's, honing a sharp wit and intellect by keeping her mind active.

### Social Well-being

The social aspect of life includes both getting together with your family and friends on a regular basis and providing service to your community. Consider hosting a regular themed get-together. For example, my wife and I host an annual wine tasting. We choose a wine region of the world and set up 10-12 tasting stations around the house. It is a great way to reconnect with people whom we haven't seen in a while and to thank our friends for inviting us to their parties.

How do you give back to your community? There are infinite ways. A former neighbor has been a loyal Knights of Columbus volunteer for over 30 years. I regularly speak to groups or associations for free in the hopes of inspiring others. I am also a member of a non-profit organization that helps promote environmental responsibility. I especially like the bumper sticker "Think Globally, Act Locally." What would you like to do locally? Pick up the telephone and call to volunteer now. It could change your life.

### Spiritual Well-being

When I mention spirituality, what do you think of? If you are like a lot of people, you might think that spirituality is limited to religion. It may involve religion, but I feel that it has a lot more to do with getting in touch with yourself and following your own path. The spiritual area of life

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needs to be nurtured in order to achieve balance and find a deeper meaning in life.

When was the last time you took time out just for yourself—ignoring e-mails and cell phone calls? Write down your dreams and goals. Refine and focus on what is truly important to you. Consider keeping a journal—it will help you get in touch with yourself more fully.

Don't wait until you retire to start living a balanced life. If you begin slowly, incorporating the physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects into your life each day, you may find yourself in a situation where you don't want to retire. So don't wait. I challenge you to begin living your life more fully in balance right now!

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Mark Sincevich offers executive presentation training and speaking programs on creativity, balance, leadership and personal development. He is an active member of the National Speakers Association and an instructor at the Washington School of Photography. For more information, visit [www.staashpress.com](http://www.staashpress.com).

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