

THE ISSUE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND EFFICIENCY IN THE CONCEPT OF TOP MANAGER LIFESTYLE

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Abstract

The article focuses on the top manager lifestyle. The author describes a structure of time allocation by a top manager to individual activities in both professional area and non-work activities in the context of responsibility towards himself/herself, his/her family and the company in which he/she functions. Simultaneously, it describes the mutual interaction between efficiency and managerial lifestyle models. The research has been carried out by means of questioning using a questionnaire prepared by the author for this occasion which included closed and semi-closed questions, by means of document analysis method, i.e. the technique of assignment content analysis under the Personal Effectiveness and Managerial Task module (MBA Senior Executive Programme) and by means of questioning using a semi-standardized interview. The exploration technique mentioned as the last one was selected to provide for more detailed information concerning the issue researched. The author has come to a conclusion that the time spent in the working environment is identical for both sexes. The male/female managers differ with regard to the time structure and allocation to individual activities in the area outside the working environment, in particular in children and household care. Female managers spend more time on these categories at the expense of recreational activities, self-education and individual studies. Male managers have a greater part of the time pie dedicated to sporting activities, study and self-education and participation in public affairs. Top managers have high competencies which come with obligations and responsibility for an effective decision-making process, measures and efficient provision of processes related to the set objectives which are in keeping with the company strategy. This responsibility is carried out under the following relationship structure: manager – company, manager – family and manager – him/her self.

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The ability to coordinate private and working life has a positive impact not only on the psychological and physical sides of the individual in question but also has a significant influence on the efficiency of his/her managerial decisions and productivity of his/her performance at work.

Key Words

Lifestyle, Professional Area, Non-Work Activities, Personal Responsibility, Work Efficiency

Introduction

Lifestyle

Lifestyle is an aggregate category which characterizes the life of a person as a whole and in terms of mutual interrelatedness of individual components. Simultaneously it depicts a character of life in terms of its content and structure. Lifestyle may be looked at from several aspects by monitoring its content (i.e. activities carried out by people, making use of individual types of means or time structure) or by monitoring the facts which shape it (i.e. means serving to meet objectives, their determination and assessment of their level).

Certain communities form their lifestyle on the basis of individual and group behaviour models. It is a social process in which all individuals participate.

From the standpoint of social activities of humans, the lifestyle can be understood as a kind of synthesis of two basic areas - the professional area and non-work activities (the latter includes a subcategory concerning leisure time) (Nový and Surynek 2006)

Professional area

Professional area is one of the most significant structural parts of lifestyle, it is closely related to it and it represents a key issue for most top managers. Work includes social, psychological, cultural and other functions (Yost 2004). From the point of view of an individual, the trend of the current social/economic development is marked by gradual rapprochement of the professional and non-professional world while the prior absorbs the latter (Nový and Surynek 2006). In the professional area, lifestyle is determined by the level of education achieved,

kind of an employment and status in the company and social hierarchy.

The status at work and type of an employment are closely related to one's career. The following types may be distinguished: the *bureaucratic career*, i.e. anticipated movements towards an employment with a higher social status as part of a single profession or an organization; the *professional career*, i.e. personal growth on the basis of competencies acquired which come with more demanding tasks) and the *entrepreneurial career* which concerns building and development of one's own company and creating valuable outputs (Arnold et al 2007). Generally, the term "successful career" is widely spread. However, how can success be measured and do all individual see it the same way? The most marked criterion may be the status achieved in a particular company hierarchy and simultaneously the level of remuneration. These indicators serve as good driving force in the traditional concept of bureaucratic career but are not as prominent in the other two career types. Earnings and promotion are often stated as the objectives of career success. Attitudes and feelings of a particular individual could be, on the other hand, considered the subject. For these reasons, other criteria for successful career evaluation are available. These are criteria in terms of satisfaction with one's career progress, remuneration or personal influence and balance between the professional area and non-work activities, i.e. also the family life.

Recently, there has been a great interest in the last career success criterion in the list, the work-life balance. The relationship between family life and career must be looked at in the context of global viewpoints which are: job market functioning and state measures and simultaneously subjective components: individual ideas, values and need and distribution of responsibilities and roles within a family (Hajná 2006).

The professional area is closely tied to the issue of workaholism which stands for a psychological disease manifested by excessive working, pathological manifestation of one's will to manage everything on his/her own (Furnham 2005). In the Czech Republic this diagnosis does not officially exist, however, experts recognize it and consider it to be a serious issue of working hours (Pauknerová 2006) This strong obsession by work is related to the personality type. However, not every individual is capable to keep on working in this fashion without endangering his/her psychological and physical health (Fassel 2000). His/her working results do not necessarily have to correspond to the work effort.

Non-work activities

Definition of non-work activities is in the framework of the current economic development rather difficult. This is in particular given by the fact that a number of traditional ways of working which require strict separation of working time from non-work activities loses its efficiency and is being substituted by ways in which this separation is almost non-existent. Simultaneously, the possibilities to make use of free time have been modified as a result of economic growth and the activities which individual people choose are often closely tied to the performance of work-related activities. Area of non-work activities is characterised by activities which an individual carries out outside his/her working hours: *activities connected with his/her employment* (transportation to work, preparations for work), providing for *physiological needs* (sleep, food, body care, relaxation), providing for *functioning of household* (shopping and meal preparation, cleaning, cloths washing), *family life* (education of children, contacts between individual family members), focused on *recreation, entertainment or culture* (walks, meeting friends, performances), *study and self-*

education (e.g. MBA, MSc studies), *active physical development and sport* (running, fitness, golf or tennis) and participation in *public affairs* (charity, membership in political parties, representation in employer association).

Leisure time

Leisure time is a subcategory of non-work activities. It is that portion of time devoted to non-work activities which remains after subtracting the time of work the individual is paid for and activities connected to its performance and after subtracting the time connected with reproduction of human beings as a species, i.e. after satisfying the physiological needs of oneself and one's family. The leisure time category is often one of the indicators of a developed society, keeping in mind that managerial work places an individual before the task of organizing his/her social life (Nový and Surynek 2006).

Material and Methods

To obtain the background material necessary for purposes of this research, the method of questioning was selected using a questionnaire which included closed and semi-closed questions. The questionnaire contained an introduction, justification for the research and identifiers for the respondents (age, sex). The main section contained thematic blocks consisting of the following: "Work Area", which delved into not only time devoted to work but also a second significant indicator in the form of education level attained. At the same time, the extent of risk for dependence on work was assessed, along with the use of support resources. In another section, "Non-work Activities", the amount of time for individual activities in particular areas was mapped out, e.g., family life, study and self-education, sporting activities, etc. The return rate for the questionnaire, which stood at 68%,

was increased by a so-called “follow-up” 14 days after sending the questionnaires. This addressed respondents who had not yet returned the questionnaire.

The “Successful Career” area was researched using the 100 assignments under the Personal Effectiveness and Managerial Task module by a document analysis method and a further technique, structured semi-standardized interview with 96 respondents, focused on the same areas as those contained in the questionnaire, this time with the goal of getting deeper insight into the issues.

The exploration technique mentioned as the last one was selected to provide for more detailed information concerning the issue researched. Collection of empirical data, continuous analyses and subsequent evaluation of information was carried out from June 2008 to February 2009.

The research group included 225 individuals who work as top managers in the Czech Republic and who were selected on the basis of quota - age (30-50), working at a top managerial position (min. 3 years) from the base file containing students, graduates and contact information provided by a private university. The research group included 28% men and 7% women aged 30-40; 51% men and 14% women aged 41-50.

The objective of the paper is to describe the time structure and content of both work activities and non-work activities of top management (such as time devoted to family life and child care, study and self-education, sport and recreational activities of participation in public affairs). In a more general context, the objective is to find out about manager lifestyle in the framework of the efficiency of work outputs and the responsibility towards oneself, one’s family and company in which he/she works at a managerial position.

Results

Time devoted to professional area

In the professional area, there are two key indicators for mapping the top management lifestyle. The first one is the extent of time spent work.

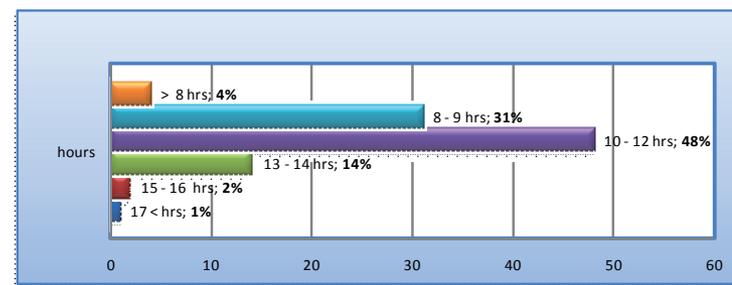


Fig. 1 The extent of time spent daily in the professional area (in %)

48% of top managers state ten to twelve hours spent on work-related activities. To this amount of time (10-12 hours) the time spent at home, however used for activities connected to work must also be added to. Simultaneously, it must be kept in mind that if, in the context of this paper, we talk about working time, it does not mean the “classical” working time model, i.e. performance of work from Monday to Friday, but the time devoted to weekend work must be considered as well. This period of time should, from the standpoint of psycho-genetics, be used for relaxation, strengthening and development of interpersonal relationships within the family, one’s surrounding and friends. Due to the excessive time demands for managerial activities (47% of respondents report working also at the weekends) the said interpersonal ties are being neglected together with time spend with family members, friends and oneself.

31% of respondents indicated they worked between eight and nine hours when asked about the “standard” workday. Thirteen to fourteen hours was indicated by 14% of respondents. Extreme values of between fifteen and seventeen hours daily were reported by 3% of top managers polled.

	Men	Women
Secondary school education	5	6
University education - Bachelors Degree	16 (79 Bc., 21 BA (Hons))	16 (67 Bc, 33 BA (Hons))
University – Master’s degree	67 (35 Mgr.,51 Ing., 14 MSc)	62 (26 Mgr.,61 Ing., 13 MSc)
Post gradual education	12	15

Table 1: Education completed (in %)

The second significant indicator in the professional area is the level of education completed. At the managerial position, most persons have completed a master’s degree of university education and 44% were awarded in particular the title Ing. Attaining the Mgr. title is represented by the difference of 18%. The ration between male managers and female managers in terms of attainment a certain university degree is almost identical.

The level of dependency on work (53 points)	12
Light form (54 – 63 points)	26
Moderate form (64 – 84 points)	15
Severe form (85 and more points)	5

Table 2: Workaholism test evaluation (in %)

Table 2 lists the results of the test concerning the risk of dependency on work which was written by Prof. B.E. Robinson from the University of North Carolina (Nešpor 1999). Based upon the sum of points obtained as part of 25 questions, it is possible to categorize dependency on work. On the basis of results of the said test, a high percentage share of work-dependent managers is obvious, namely in 58% of cases. This is an alarming fact since workaholism has a negative influence not only on the health of the particular individuals but also impacts, in a destructive way, the psychological side of people as well as their private lives.

Alcohol	8
Coffee	94
Energy drinks	31
Food supplements	19
Marihuana	9
Cocaine	1

Table 3: Making use of supporting substances (in %)

A serious problem of using alcohol as a supporting substance for stress release, for relaxation and stimulation is mentioned in 8% of respondents. Other supporting substances which are frequently used include in particular coffee 94%, (i.e. 212 respondents) - (84% from them [i.e. 178 persons] up to 5 cups a day, 15% from them [i.e. 32 persons] up to 10 cups a day, 1% from them [i.e. 2 persons] more than 10 cups a day), energy drinks – Redbull, Semtex, etc. 31% respondents (i.e. 70 persons) - (57% from them [i.e. 40 persons] stated consumption

1-2 a week, 17% from them [i.e. 12 persons] 3-4 a week, 11 % from them [i.e. 8 persons] 5-6 a week, 15% from them [i.e. 10 persons] 7 and more energy drinks a week). In the research group selected (225 respondents) 9% stated that they have experience with marihuana and 1% with cocaine. In spite of the fact that questionnaire research was anonymous, it can be assumed that the low percentage of experiences with cocaine has a low prediction value since it is a very sensitive issue. Other substances stimulating brain activity and higher work productivity include food supplements, in particular lecithin, guarana, ginko biloba (used by 19 % of respondents).

	Men		Women	
	Mon - Fri	Sat - Sun	Mon - Fri	Sat - Sun
Employment-related activities	27	13	24	10
Physiological needs	48	33	49	32
Providing for household functioning	3	4	6	13
Family life (partnership)	7	15	8	19
Child care	3	6	7	10
Recreational activities	2	7	1	4
Study and self-education	5	8	3	6
Active physical development and sport	4	10	2	4
Participation in public affairs	1	4	0	2

Table 4: The extent of time spent on non-work activities area per week (in %)

Employment-related activities

This non-work activity category concerns primarily transportation to the place of employment. Including the time spent travelling to business meeting is disputable. For the purposes of this paper, the time necessary for such work transportation will be considered to be work-related. Results in this category are almost identical (in the case of male managers 27% time (Mon – Fri), 13% time (Sat – Sun) and in the case of female managers 24% (Mon – Fri), 10% (Sat – Sun) of time necessary for preparations for work, transportation to work. In recent months, an increase in preferences for taking a train as opposed to driving one’s own car have been noted. An effort to maximally make use of time management and devote the time which was usually spent driving by working on a notebook, dealing with Outlook mail, preparation of projects, and notes for meetings etc. Before the economic recession settled in, a company driver for transportation of a top manager was not rare. The gloomy economic situation has, however, caused radical cost cuts in this area.

Physiological needs

The extent of time, i.e. 48% (Mon – Fri, 33% (Sat – Sun) in the case of male managers and 49% (Mon – Fri), 32% (Sat – Sun) in the case of female managers is devoted to this category of non-work activities weekly.

Providing for household functioning

This is primarily a women’s domain (female managers devote 6% (Mon – Fri), 13% (Sat – Sun) of time to this category as part of their non-work activities, while men reserve only 3% (Mon – Fri), 4% (Sat – Sun) of their time for the said activities). During a common working week these activities include basic household

cleaning and meal preparation. In the area of household chores the weekend activities also encompass shopping (interviews show preferences for a one-off shopping to provide for the whole week) and cloths washing.

Family life (partnership)

During a working week the top managers devote minimum amount of time to this category. Male managers “invest” 7% of time a working week in this category. Female managers spend slightly more time on family life during a working week than male managers - by 1%. At the weekend, the amount of time spent increases: to 8% for male managers and 11% for female managers. The insufficient amount of time spent with family is currently also greatly impacted by the economic crisis. There are much higher demands made on managers in terms of their performance, efficiency and output productivity, effectiveness of implemented anti-crisis measures within their company. The time spent at work radically displaces the time which could be devoted to family (partner).

Child care

In spite of the fact that female managers are fully occupied at their employment, the research shows a greater amount of time devoted to child care and activities connected with their education compared to the amount of time which male managers devote to their children, 7% (Mon – Fri) 10% (Sat – Sun) female managers, 3% (Mon – Fri), 6% (Sat – Sun) male managers). Child care includes not only providing the basic care but also helping them with their schoolwork, reading and talking, playtime and providing transport to their regular sporting activities, going to see presentations of their activities - school shows, children’s theatre and music performances.

Recreational activities

This type of activities takes a minimum share in the framework of the working week time structure for both the male and female managers. Male managers are more likely to take part in recreational activities than female managers, specifically 7% (as part of the non-work activities). Female managers only 4%. If women find time space for recreation, it is interconnected (the same way as sporting activities) with participation by all (or at least the majority) of family members.

Study and self-education

Study and self-education is interconnected with further follow-up studies (in particular university) increasing the credit of a particular manager and his/her competitive ability on the job market. Top managers usually devote their time to studies aiming at a prestigious MBA (Master of Business Administration) title, which is nowadays considered to be the standard for top manager qualification. Respondents in the research group stated male managers 5% of time (Mon – Fri), 8% (Sat – Sun) and female managers 3% (Mon – Fri), 6% (Sat – Sun) devoted to studies. Aside from the mentioned MBA studies, managers take part in seminars in the area of soft skills (e.g. crisis management and crises communication, managerial skills, leadership, process management, time management, stress management etc.) together with the type education which develops their professional expertise.

Active physical movement and sport

The most frequent stated sporting activities such as running, golf and tennis. However, it is complicated to determine a clear category to included sporting activities in which managers participate. At the first sight it could be considered to be a

part of the non-work activities, this, however, is not clear. Simultaneously, there exist an interconnection of both the professional world and non-work activities. Top managers often use a connection between sporting activities and business. Compared to male managers, the total amount of time invested in the physical development is significantly lower in case of female managers (- 8%). This is due to the fact that given the time exigencies of a particular profession, female managers give preference to childcare and household duties. The interviews carried out revealed that if female managers include sporting activities in their daily timetable it is usually connected with saturating needs in their roles of mothers or wives and they thus seek activities in which other family members may take part and thus relationship structures within a family unit are reinforced.

Participation in public affairs

Activities connected with participation in public affairs in particular activities in political parties and charity, are the domain of male managers. As part of the non-work activities account for 4% of time per weekend. Female managers devote only 2% of weekend time space.

Discussion

In their effort to achieve success and career growth most managers feel a strong need for self-realization which is often ranked at the top of the value system. The current period of economic recession places greater demands upon error-free and maximally efficient character of all activities connected with managerial work.

Let's focus on selected areas of professional and private lives in the context of top management lifestyle.

Work – life balance

Family or work? Work or family? How much time should be devoted to each of these areas? How often can we encounter this dilemma which top managers have to deal with. It is undoubtedly true that to achieve a psychological balance and feelings of well-being there must be an interconnection between maximum success and satisfaction in professional area and functional family and positive experiences in private life (Jones et al 2006).

The balance between private and professional life is therefore an important aspect in the lives of top managers (Hall 2006). If an individual carries out activities in his/her professional area which he/she regards as positive, this fact is reflected in his/her private life (Johnston and Smith 2001). This is also, of course, true vice versa. Managers also pay attention to the balance between the professional/private life so that they find corresponding amount of time to devote to themselves, their leisure activities and interests but simultaneously (and in particular) their loved ones. It is also very important to be able to rise above work-related problems and do not transfer them to one's environment in their private life. Top managers also state that a balance in the said two areas may be achieved if they manage to think about and experience other things than just their business and avoid seeing it all around themselves, in spite of the fact, that they enjoy it and it enables to saturate their self-realization needs. Responsible setting of priorities and to be able to, on a given scale, divide the time ratio for professional and career values and priorities in private life is a key element for the mutual balance is a responsible setting of priorities. The ability to balance private and professional life has a positive impact not only on psychological and physical areas of a particular

individual, but it also has a significant impact upon efficiency of his/her decisions and performance at work.

Aspect of responsibility in professional and private areas

Work brings benefits not only to a particular individual but also to economy of a given country. Top managers have high competencies which come with obligations and responsibility for an effective decision-making process, measures and efficient provision of processes related to the set objectives which are in keeping with the company strategy. This responsibility is carried out under the following relationship structure: manager – company, manager – him/her self. Each of them plays several roles in his/her lives and those that are connected with our professional area (manager, employee etc.) may be counter productive and destructive vis-à-vis roles in the private and family areas of life. Here, the individual in question has a further range of responsibilities, especially in the role of father to his children and partner. The extent to which concrete forms of responsibility are fulfilled depends particularly upon the value hierarchy possessed by every individual, upon the phase of life and the age of the individual. On the basis of knowledge from praxis (especially instruction in the MBA programme), a certain developmental curve may be sought in co-relatedness to the responsibilities and value preferences of the area in question. Managers up to about forty years of age tend to be focused on work, building their careers and attaining the greatest possible remuneration. The priorities at this point are usually career and finances. With managers over forty years of age, however, we may run into a substantial re-evaluation of what is important in life and awareness of the fact that money will buy almost anything -- but not health, love and the most beautiful years

in the role of father and partner. Many times, however, it's too late for a change in the ladder of priorities (in favour of family life) and relationship disharmony, as one of the chief reasons for divorce, does its damage. This shows up in the results of research interviews, which indicate that top managers record a high percentage of divorces (36% of all those polled, with 84% divorced once, 16% divorced twice or more).

Workaholism

Workaholism is a significant phenomenon among top managers, something which carries no small amount of risk (Johnson and Thorne 2000). Workaholism especially impacts that health status of individuals, primarily due to neglect of a healthy lifestyle, with heightened caffeine consumption impacting physical condition in the form of high blood pressure, cardiac ailments or food intake disorders, digestion, ulcer diseases of a stomach and duodenum but also overall weakness of the immunity system. At the same time, also psychological area is impacted manifesting in depression, sleep disorder, apathy or on the opposite anger outbursts. The issue of workaholism is also destructive in the private area, when permanent neglecting family members, partners and giving preference to clients and work issues is a frequent reason for relationship or marriage break-up. The disagreements due to excessive working, insufficient amount of time for a partner/family and subsequent overall relationship tension is mentioned as the reason for a divorce by 89 % of workaholics – managers.

Top managers who “fell for” workaholism should realise an important fact - that their good psychological and physical conditions is a prerequisite for their maximum performance at work. Only when being in the state of physical and psychological

well-being they are able to effectively and efficiently manage activities and time of themselves and their colleagues.

Successful career

Successful career, different concepts and understanding of “success” is a frequent topic for a discussion. What is a successful career, how can it be measured and when a particular individual can say he/she has reached it? On the basis of the interviews carried out a rather fitting description was arrived at using the following words and phrases (total enumeration or their combination):

Achieving one's goals, finances, satisfaction, recognition, prestige, felling of a job well done, pride.

Achieving one's personal goals – people who have an ambition and want to achieve something in life; they have clearly determined goals to achieve; personal and career goals are often closely interconnected. Desire to build one's own big business is frequently listed as a long-term objective as well as the wish to become a CEO of a prestigious company etc. Short-term objectives include, e.g., successful completion of MBA studies. To the feeling of achievement or experiencing a successful career requires meeting both types of objectives i.e. personal and professional.

Finances – to achieve the feeling of successful career a particular individual must receive corresponding remuneration and no financial deficit in terms of the level of lifestyle he/she desires is present.

Satisfaction – the particular manager must be concerned with the executed profession and be happy to do it. Then satisfaction is achieved and aside from the fact that the given profession

is his job, he/she is happy to do it and feels psychological satisfaction.

Recognition – an individual can consider him/herself to be successful if he achieves success in his/her field of expertise, his/her activities so that his/her environment appreciates him and was considered an expert.

Prestige – is understood in the context of carrying one's profession which is perceived and considered prestigious by the society.

The feeling of a job well done – doing maximum so that things are done the best way possible while making use of all knowledge and skills acquired in spite of the fact that the people in the manager's surrounding not always register or appreciate that.

Pride - he/she is proud of him/herself and desire that the loved ones are proud of him/her as well.

Conclusions

On the basis of result found during the research it can be stated that the amount of time devoted to the professional area is for both male and female managers identical. Male and female managers differ in the structure and time devoted to individual activities in the non-work activity area. These are, in particular, the following: female managers devote a greater amount of time to children and household than managers. A greater amount of time devoted to private life comes, in case of female manager, from time space designated to recreational activities, self-education and studies. Managers have a greater time space devoted to studies and self-education, sporting activities and participation in public affairs.

Time must be considered to be a limited resource. Time spent doing activities in the professional area decreases the time available for non-work activities. The lifestyle structure and

“time subsidies” for individual areas which is selected by a particular manager influences his/her psychological health, interpersonal relationship quality and overall life satisfaction.

A tendency may be noted with managers in particular, due to the limitations on their time imposed by their demanding profession, to spend the maximum amount of non-work time engaged in sporting and recreational activities with their families. It is entirely clear that a model of the top management lifestyle may be constructed which lays emphasis on the quality of time spent with the family and an attempt to get the most out of the minimal time options at hand.

The professional area and private life are the two interconnected containers which influence each other to a various degree. Unbalance and discrepancies between them impacts not only the professional life of a particular manager but is simultaneously reflected in the working atmosphere of the team and its overall performance.

The ability to recognize the level of urgency and importance of issues along with time management are important helpers in the effort to achieve the maximum possible working efficiency and arriving at a balance with the non-work activities. Setting values and matching them with priorities is among the key managerial abilities. It still holds true that top managers are capable of managing high values in their professional life but many times are not able to deal with priceless values in their private lives. The importance and capital contained in physical and spiritual health, quality of interpersonal relationships and their feedback into the professional area of a given individual must be recognized. Realization, respect and responsibility towards the given values is the key to performance in the professional area and satisfaction in human life.

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