

# Goodbye Work/Life Balance. Hello Work/Life Integration

Written by: Jason Orloske | September 21, 2017



Once upon a time, an employee used to leave work, come home from the office and unplug. There was this concept called “Work/Life Balance” that helped a person prioritize between their career and lifestyle areas.

Today, however, we live in a 24/7 business environment where we are always connected. Because of globalization, companies don’t stop at 5:00. They follow the sun with customers and co-workers in different time zones and continents. Because of this new reality, Work/Life Balance has made way for “Work/Life Integration” where professionals must blend what they do personally and professionally to make both work.

**Blurring the Boundaries between Family and Career using Technology.** Because of the 24/7 demands of the global market, companies are asking more of their employees to support it. Technology has enabled us to be connected to the office all the time. Work emails can be easily answered on a smartphone, meetings scheduled on a tablet, and a text

sent to a coworker from your watch. All these put the office right into our hands.

This has become very apparent to me in the last few years. When my children see me with my Bluetooth headphones on, they know it's a work call and are quieter than usual. They've learned I only put the headphones in when I'm on a work call so I can easily take notes. They've had that scene played out many times on nights, weekends, holidays and even vacations. I make these calls quick, but they usually are necessary as questions and issues arise.

**With Integration Comes Flexibility.** My family invested in a camping travel trailer two years ago. Most weekends in the summer, we hook it up to the truck and go to different campgrounds to have fun and make memories. Always being connected allows the flexibility to leave early, but still be available out of the office.

Another area of flexibility is remote working. Technologies, like high-speed internet, video conferencing, instant messaging and document sharing, have made it easy to work from home. Having been a remote employee for three years, I enjoyed the flexibility. However, since I was working with a global team, I had meetings at 3 AM with coworkers in London, 6 PM calls to Hawaii, and 10 PM video conferences to New Zealand. Personal events must be scheduled around these work commitments, but the flexibility allowed me to see my kids when they got home from school.

**There are Still Boundaries.** There still will need to be times when answering a phone call or responding to an email does not happen. These usually revolve around important personal appointments or family. I once had a manager try calling me three times during a child's school conference. When I did call her back, she was upset I didn't answer even though I told her earlier in the day I would be unavailable. Don't be afraid to set those boundaries when needed.

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## About the Author



### Jason Orloske

I am a seasoned project, program and portfolio manager with over 15 years' experience in the healthcare, retail, legal, and regulatory sectors. I believe that a successful project is more than just delivering on time, scope, budget and quality. It starts with a solid understanding of the requested project and ensuring it aligns with organizational goals and market needs. Through a governance process, I have worked with executive teams so only the right projects are approved, as well as agreement on priority. I have created a culture of success with project teams through well-defined processes, open communication with and among team members, and continual stakeholder engagement. I'm a clear communicator who can interact with executives and their teams about technology, business and financial topics.

