

BT – Work-Life Balance drives Business Change

‘At BT,’ says Sir Christopher Bland, Chairman of BT Group, ‘we are attempting nothing less than the complete transformation of the way in which the company runs, the way we communicate, and the way we work together.’

In a digital networked economy, BT believes that it is anticipating change, reacting quickly and positively to it, and then providing products on demand in a real-time service environment that delivers true competitive advantage.

And an effective Work-Life Balance is at the heart of this – it is the enabler driving BT’s business change.

The balance has been achieved by introducing a wide variety of policies for more than 70,000 employees, including job sharing, full and occasional home working, local working, and flexitime. As well as enabling BT to meet its organisational model, this has delivered other benefits too, including a reduction in office accommodation costs of some £725 million per annum, home workers that are on average 20% more productive than office-based workers, improved morale and commitment, and a reduced carbon footprint.

‘Flexibility is a continuing evolution,’ says Caroline Waters, Director, People and Policy, BT Group. ‘It gives you the opportunity to adapt the way you are working to provide the most effective way of delivering products and services to your customers.’

Technology, of course, also plays an important part – it is the rollout of BT’s Broadband service and other innovative IT platforms that enables many organisations to use home, remote and flexible working like never before.

BT, a partner organisation of Work-Life Balance specialists Chwarae Teg, is an exemplar of implementing Work-Life Balance in the UK corporate world.

Summary

The WLB issue

The company's own realisation of flexible working – the BT Workstyle Project – incorporated the following key elements:

- Culture change
- Creation of a flexible estate
- Accommodation rationalisation
- A robust, scalable and flexible technology platform

The WLB Solution

- People-led and supported by the right technology platforms
- A suite of flexible working alternatives
- Clear policies and careful measurement
- Leadership from the top
- Cultural and behavioural change
- Development of the right equipment and workspaces for people's jobs
- Phased approach