

COPENHAGEN BALANCE

How Danish Work Design Creates Productivity and Life Quality



COPENHAGEN
BALANCE



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COPENHAGEN BALANCE

The future can be found in Denmark. In this report we show how some of the most successful companies in Denmark developed their business through an innovative, results-oriented focus on balancing employees' work and private lives.

Denmark has a unique position in the world when it comes to balancing work and private life.

- Denmark has one of the highest participation rates for women in the workforce. (75% of women are in the workforce).
- Among all EU countries, Danish employees have the highest degree of influence over their work. (85% of employees indicate that they have an influence on their work situation).
- Danish employees have some of the world's most flexible work conditions. (43% of employees can regulate their work hours to meet their private needs).
- Danish employees have some of the best maternity/paternity leaves in the world (combined one year leave per child).

The Danish model is known as 'flexicurity'. In this model, it is easy for organizations to hire and lay off employees, while government subsidies assure a safety net if people cannot find jobs. Denmark is also known for a variety of public initiatives that make it easier to have children. For example, the state subsidizes parental leave for a year after childbirth. After the leave, parents can go back to work, while the children are cared for in subsidized nurseries and preschools. 92% of Danish children in the age group 3-5 years are in preschool. Thus, having a family can be combined with holding down a job.

Balanced companies are successful

The ability to offer a balanced work-private life gives a competitive edge in an era when more than 80% of a company's valuation is created through knowledge, ideas, and innovation. Through this approach, organizations and their employees together reach impressive business related objectives.

The companies presented in the following cases have all been successful at integrating the concept of a balanced work-private life in their culture, and furthermore have achieved increased bottom line results and growth. Many of the companies have topped the national and European lists from the Great Place to Work Institute.

AbbVie is one example, in which employee satisfaction with work-life balance increased from 39% to 95%. At the same time, recruiting costs were reduced by 50%, and the number of unsolicited job applications increased by 300%. Revenue per employee increased by 50%. At both Nordea Life & Pensions and ATP, the initiatives have reduced sick leave by 20%. At Novozymes, 77% of the employees find that they have a good balance between work and private life, and 82% report they have the freedom and flexibility to do their jobs in ways they find to be the most efficient.

Although the companies have different parameters and different key indicators measuring their business development, all have been successful with their balance initiatives.

About the Authors

Copenhagen Balance is founded by Camilla Kring, Vivi Bach Pedersen and Anders Raastrup Kristensen. They have all completed PhD's on subjects related to balance between work and private life as seen from a cultural and organizational management perspective. They have worked with implementing balance projects in organizations, both within and outside of Denmark.

The founders have different backgrounds for this work. Camilla Kring holds a MSc in Engineering in technical physics and management, and a PhD in work-life balance. Since 2002 Camilla has designed new ways of organizing and managing knowledge work, with a focus on uniting flexibility, life quality and productivity. This has included the design and implementation of the work culture concept Life Navigation, which has helped to achieve significant results in both bottom line and corporate culture transformation. Her work includes several outstanding multi-national case successes and top national business awards going to the client companies (See case about AbbVie). Camilla is author of several books about Life Navigation and she has developed a Life Navigation app for iPhone®. Camilla is the founder and the chairperson of The B-Society, an association with members in 50 countries. Learn more at www.b-society.org.

Vivi Bach Pedersen holds a MSc in Psychology and a PhD in Work-Life Balance. Vivi advocates for individuals, organizations, and families to move beyond the many quick fixes and buzz words and face reality: Balance requires consistent and hard work, and we need continuously to define our personal autonomy and well-being in life. The crux of the matter is to learn from our everyday 'balance battles' and move towards increased productivity, satisfaction, and motivation. Vivi is an experienced organizational psychologist who has worked intensively with several public and private organizations, primarily as an executive coach, supervisor and process facilitator. She has published several articles, and gives talks about the challenging act of navigating in flexible organizations, and in life in general.

Anders Raastrup Kristensen is MSc in Business Administration and Philosophy and PhD in work-life balance from Copenhagen Business School, Denmark. Since 2004 he has worked extensively with several large international companies regarding projects on work-life balance and management. Anders believes that we need to learn to think differently to be able to act in new and better ways in the contemporary work-life. He has written books on work-life balance and leadership and self-leadership.

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Introduction

In this report we discuss how six leading Danish companies innovate with work-life balance as an integrated part of their strategy. We provide you with a variety of concrete ideas and inspiration that work with Balance. These case examples demonstrate unique versions of the concept, and show how to implement such initiatives in order to simultaneously improve employee well-being and productivity. The report describes not only the current and new innovative best practices in the field, but also points to the new directions in which work-life balance is most likely to progress.

Balance is about Business

All the companies described in this report have worked with balance between work and private life for many years. In this process they have left the traditional understanding of Balance behind. This was an understanding built on the sharp dichotomy of the industrial era, during which work and private life were seen as conflicting entities in two distinct spheres that were to be balanced as if on a scale. The new understanding of Balance is outlined below:

Traditional understanding of Balance

Balance is well-being



Balance is about working less



Balance is about entitlements



Balance is something the individual has to deal with



New understanding of Balance

Balance is part of business

Balance is about delivering the right results

Balance is reached through mutual agreements

Balance is a collective responsibility

Balance is part of business

Traditionally work-life balance initiatives focused on increasing employee well-being, working from the theory that happy employees produce better results. Organizations would organize work so it was easier to prioritize family obligations. In many cases balance projects still focus solely on the well-being aspects and the projects are anchored in the HR-departments.

Today, more and more companies recognize that top management has to be involved actively, as these initiatives require a long-term perspective and tenacity. In these organizations Balance has become an integrated part of how they understand their business, and its implementation is recognized as a strong transformative influence upon organizational culture. In Falck, Nordea Life & Pensions, and ATP, the core mission is providing care. Management understands that their relationships with the employees serve as a model for how the employees in turn interact with the customers.

In all six companies, the attitude towards work-life balance has become a central parameter in attracting and retaining the best talent, and for deriving optimal benefit from their knowledge and competencies. It is also a common trait that the companies have been working with balance for many years – integrating their understanding of the concept into most processes in the organization.

Balance is about delivering the right results

The traditional perception of Balance centered on

the idea that working less meant simply that there would be a better chance of achieving Balance. The options offered to the employees thus centered around working part time, flexible work hours, and options for taking a paid or unpaid leave of absence. While both work hours and work location are still a part of the discussion of options to achieve Balance, our cases present a newer notion, namely that these options will be set in proportion to the results they deliver. There is an increased focus on Management By Objectives, where monthly discussions between employee and supervisor assure improved prioritization of assignments, as well as closer alignment of resources and goals. The companies understand that involvement in goal setting is a precursor for employee engagement and acceptance of personal work objectives. The system helps insure that the employees understand which tasks bring most benefit to the organization, and thus how best to focus their energies to bring about the most efficient contributions.

The system supports both employee well-being and company results, and the processes and support structures allow the employees to maneuver within this framework, thus benefitting both themselves and the company. In this way, the system works not only to optimize employee productivity or encourage employee engagement, but in documenting goals, results, competencies and ambitions, and combining this with ongoing dialogues between employee and supervisor, the process can assure that a demanding carrier, workplace well-being, and personal needs can be discussed and prioritized as well.

Balance is reached through mutual agreements

Where the relationship between the organization and the employee traditionally centered around employee entitlements, the new understanding of Balance deals to a much higher degree with the notion that each party has to make room for the interests of the other. Both are expected to give as well as get. While entitlements focused – and still focus – on general work conditions (e.g. union agreements or personnel policies), the concept of making room for each other's interests can relate just as much to the individual expectations held by the employee as to those important to the supervisor.

All the companies described in the following cases strive to make mutual expectations both transparent and documented. Part of this work already happens before the employee is hired, through various branding activities by which the organizations clarify the expectations and desires the companies have for future employees. The contract between employer and employee is negotiated as part of the hiring discussions, and is periodically renegotiated during goal and performance reviews. This clarifies the expectations of both company and employee. To allow for flexibility, the supervisor must negotiate for realistic and clear objectives. This further relieves the employee from having to guess management priorities and helps focus the effort on the activities with the greatest effect. As each employee has to be managed individually, this process places high demands on the supervisors.

Balance is an organizational initiative

Traditionally, Balance was first and foremost about giving the individual employee room to navigate based on his or her own wishes and needs. There was – and still is in many organizations – an understanding that Balance required that the employee knew the right time and place for some activities, and that the employee should understand how to deal with stress and personal challenges. Today, many organizations offer classes in stress management, mindfulness, and health related subjects. The classes empower the employee to address challenges and navigate life with more awareness. The companies still understand that the way to balance work and private life varies depending on individual circumstances – but also that the overall handling stressors and unbalance must be respected as a mutual interest. The collective focus is a product of a realization that all are working towards a common goal.

Many roads can lead to Balance

In spite of the commonalities in understanding of the Balance concept, each case shows a creative and different take on how to implement balance in the work place.

Life Navigation in AbbVie

In AbbVie, Balance is known as Life Navigation. Balance is the ability to navigate in the flexible full life. All employees are educated Life Navigators and contribute by creating a flexible culture with acceptance of different families, different work schedules, and different biological rhythms. AbbVie no longer subscribes to the idea that work happens at the office from 9 to 5. The employees can – facilitated by their negotiated business objectives – work when and where they choose. Focus is on the results, not on the hours clocked at the primary office location. In 2007 AbbVie set a long term goal to become the Best Place to Work in Denmark. They met this goal in 2011. Read more on page 12.

Life Balance in ATP

ATP has defined Balance as Life Balance. Work is a part of life. As they say at ATP, "It is no big deal to create a balanced company, but to create an ambitious company with balanced employees is an art-form." The recipe for combining ambitious goals with life balance requires leadership that communicates clearly, is present, and does not rely on the use of cookie cutter methods when handling people – different people have different needs. Balance is about 'give and take', and it is of equal importance that employees contribute to the common goals while management remains very flexible to meet the employees' needs. ATP was named Best Place to Work in Denmark in 2009 and 2010, and received recognition as second best in all of Europe in 2010. Read more on page 16.

Mutual Balance at Falck

At Falck, Balance is based on the notion that caring for the employees is a precursor for their ability to care for the customers. As first responders, many of Falck's employees are exposed daily to psychologically stressing events. Hence, Falck's leadership is aware that their employees need more than ordinary care. They try to prevent situations of personal crisis, for example, through their mandatory debriefing program. Part of Balance is the way work is inte-

grated in the lives of the employees. Realizing that imbalances will arise as a matter of course in their line of business, Falck sees their Balance initiatives as a necessary foundation for their success. Read more about Falck on page 20.

Healthy Living at Nordea Life & Pensions

The understanding of Balance at Nordea Life & Pensions is based on Healthy Living. There has to be energy for living the kind of life one desires, professionally and privately. The goal is to have healthy employees whose passionate fire for their work does not lead to suffering from burn out. The company extends an invitation to its employees for participation in Healthy Living initiatives – but it is only an invitation. The employees have to invest time and money in order to participate fully. The philosophy is that healthy business starts with an organization in which the employees can thrive. More satisfied employees will be more productive and they will help increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. In 2008 Nordea Life & Pensions set a long term goal to become the Best Place to Work in their business sector, and they met this goal in 2011. Read more on page 24 about Nordea Life & Pensions.

Balanced Business at Novozymes

At Novozymes, Balance is about creating room for one another. The organization has to be spacious enough to contain different types of employees with different needs, and the employees have to make room for the organizational goals. The company is willing to be very flexible when employees need to fit work in among their various priorities in life, but the employees show the loyalty of those in it for the long haul – so they are flexible too. At Novozymes, Balance also is about having the courage to ask difficult questions, to challenge oneself and each other concerning expectations, and thus create a group of highly skilled individualists who nevertheless can pull as a team. Novozymes was named Best Place to Work in Denmark in 2004 and 2005. Read more about Novozymes on page 28.

Financial Balance at Nykredit

At Nykredit, the foundation of Balance is the mission of financial sustainability, which assures that employees can grow to their full potential both professionally and personally. Openness to new ideas and creativity is central to Nykredit's understanding of Balance. Calling themselves "an attractive and

challenging place to work", they appeal to applicants who want to be part of moving the company forward. Clear objectives and differentiated rewards require a courageous and present management style. Read more about Nykredit on page 32.

Recommendations

What teachings can other companies take from these cases? We have focused on three areas:

1. Make sure that top management owns the vision. Working with Balance is a long-term effort. Each manager must be a role model, visible within the organization. Top management must communicate clearly in words and deeds how they integrate Balance into their work, so that employees may dare to be honest about how it works for them. It doesn't mean that everybody has to work the same way, but that there is room and trust for experimentation. Priorities are based on various functional necessities, so keep discussing what you do and how you tweak the system to make it work. Repetition and perseverance are key factors for success.
2. How you implement work-life balance needs to take into account the particularities of your business. Start by looking at and evaluating existing processes, systems, and tools. Then set up an ambitious goal, and get started.
3. Understand your organization's culture. Most organizations are somewhat flexible in their structure, but less so in their culture. To cultivate flexibility in a culture requires a long-term effort, as there may be many obstacles to implementing flexibility. Understand what supports employees in taking advantage of the options given – and just as much what factors inhibit and restrict cultural innovation, and may stop them from working 'differently'. Are there unspoken rules or expectations communicated through informal channels? Employees will not feel fully free if the limitations still exist in their mind or in their colleagues' behavior towards them. So creating a Culture of Balance takes a lot of time and effort - but once it takes hold, the effect is substantial.

Thank You

We would like to thank the people and organizations that have contributed to this report:

From AbbVie Denmark, CEO Christina Dyreborg and HR Manager Marianne Gylling Pedersen. From ATP, COO Lilian Mogensen, and VP Pernille Sefort. From Falck, EVP Anders D. Larsen and VP HR & Organization Thomas Kirk Vilsboell. From Nordea Life & Pensions, CEO Steen Michael Erichsen and VP People and Communication Trine Thorn. From Novozymes, Director People and Organization, Europe Jesper Johansen. From Nykredit, Group Managing Director Bente Overgaard and Director Employer Branding Pernille Hermansen.

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LIFE NAVIGATION

AbbVie (until January 1, 2013 a part of Abbott) is a biopharmaceutical company with approximately 23,000 employees, of which 80 work in Denmark. AbbVie Denmark is the story of a company that moves to a new location, and changes not only its physical surroundings, but also its way of doing business and its way of thinking. AbbVie sets the employees free from the 'nine-to-five' attitude by educating all their employees in how to navigate life. To AbbVie Denmark, Balance is about setting oneself and one's colleagues free; taking responsibility for the organizational community, and cultivating a flexible culture in which all participants share understanding and care. In 2007 AbbVie set up the long-term goal of becoming the Best Place to Work in Denmark. They reached that goal in 2011.

A mission

Moving offices can provide a convenient excuse for putting new goals on the agenda. To AbbVie, it was clear that they wanted to be the Best Place to Work in Denmark. The necessity of putting Balance on the agenda became obvious after the first time the company participated in the "Great Places to Work" survey in 2006. Marianne Gylling Pedersen, HR Manager, describes the results: "The survey showed that only 39% of the employees found that the company encouraged a good balance between work and private life." The management realized that something had to change.

Liane, a project assistant, tells about when she first started in the company: "Back then (when the company was at the old office location) I thought that I might not want to continue working here. It was

obvious that there was a poor climate among the employees." Whenever an employee chose to leave early or come in late, he or she would be greeted with sarcastic comments, such as, "Did you enjoy your half day off?" or, "Have you – again – been working from home?" Furthermore, the employees felt that they couldn't be productive at the office because they were often disturbed.

When the company was about to move location in December 2006, the management group decided to set aside a whole day of workshops, among them a workshop on Life Navigation. Life Navigation is a concept addressing work culture, developed by Camilla Kring, PhD. The concept focuses on balance between work and private life, and the employees were all very interested in this workshop. Based on the clear and engaged feedback from the workshop, the company founded a project group that would investigate how the principles from the Life Navigation workshop could be implemented in the organization. In the spring of 2007 a group of employees and supervisors were trained in the Life Navigation principles. After very positive reviews of this pilot program, the former CEO Laurent van Lerberghe decided to expand the project to the whole organization, and by the end of 2007 all 110 employees had been trained as Life Navigators. This was the beginning of a dramatic change in the organizational culture.

The Life Navigation Concept

The Life Navigation Concept punctures the idea that work is something that only can take place at the office during regular business hours. The employees are set free from their own and colleagues confining expectations, and are given the opportunity to design their own schedule and work location.

The concepts taught in the Life Navigation classes empower the individual to become 'super-navigators' by focusing on four roles: 'The Time Keeper' who becomes aware of time and planning, 'The Pilot' who sets out the individual goals, 'The Conductor' who decides and sets the rhythm, and 'The Space Creator' who chooses the optimal surroundings. The classes take place over five weeks, three hours per week, in small groups of up to 15 employees maximum.

All the classes were conducted by Camilla Kring, assuring consistency and transparency throughout the organization. AbbVie continues to put Life Navigation on the agenda. "We continue to communicate that we want all employees to have balance between their work and private lives," says HR Manager Marianne Gylling Pedersen. "That is why we want to educate everyone to pay attention to which factors influence this balance. All employees at AbbVie have to decide what is really important in their lives. How do I get better at planning or at staying focused? Which goals do I want for my professional life, as well as for my private life?" she continues.

At AbbVie the employees have various props to assist them in the process. Marianne Gylling Pedersen explains that the little stuffed toy-frog is used as a signal to others, saying symbolically, "I need some peace and quiet now, to concentrate on some assignments."

Set People Free

A pivot point that keeps showing up when describing Life Navigation is the feeling of becoming more empowered to make decisions about one's life. "I felt that I was set free and could make decisions about my own time. The freedom was fantastic! I got a totally different level of energy in doing my job. The flexibility yields multiple benefits; when you get something, you are also more inclined to

give something back. The process gave me an inner tranquility. I learned that I am most productive in the morning, so now I concentrate my efforts there," explains Liane.

Life Navigation invites the employees to self-reflection. This requires both courage and patience, as Life Navigation is a continuous learning process. Communication assistant Danek describes it this way: "In the beginning I thought Life Navigation was really hard. To take the offered freedom to say 'I am leaving now'. To declare that my priority is to organize my job differently and not necessarily be at the office 'from nine to five'. To say that for whatever reasons I have to leave now, but I can work longer tomorrow. To trust myself and my colleagues that my way of organizing my work is accepted."

Everybody in the management group understood that they had to work as role models. It took a while to get everybody signed up, but there was continuous management focus on the process, and the Life Navigation project group facilitated and assisted in departments where the employees were skeptical. Liane describes the effect of changed behavior among the supervisors: "You could see and feel the changes after Life Navigation was implemented. It made a really big impression on me to see my supervisor accept the concepts to such a degree. He was very observant and kept asking 'What have you done this week? Have you been navigating?' He almost ran a log on his group."

At AbbVie they have left behind the traditional idea that a balanced work life is about working '9 to 5' and taking the rest of the day off. "Balance is about the mission and goals of the organization, and the wish from every individual to contribute towards these goals while we assure that the whole person is engaged," emphasizes CEO Christina Dyreborg. AbbVie has succeeded at setting up a flexible framework and a basic understanding that Balance is not about the hours spent at the desk, but about the results.

Flexibility Is Based on Trust and Common Goals

When asked what is special about the AbbVie DNA, Marianne Gylling Pedersen shows no sign of doubt, saying, “I have never experienced a company where flexibility has been taken to these levels.” Flexibility has become a part of AbbVie’s culture because they feel it is necessary to enable the delivery of quality work, while also living a complete life. “Flexibility is based on trust. We believe that everybody does his best to achieve good results and be successful. To succeed at your work you have to be assured that things also work at home. Giving the employees time to energize themselves also makes them more productive at work,” says Marianne Gylling Pedersen. AbbVie’s fundamental attitude is clearly stated: How much time you spend at the office is not as important as the results you produce. The company has worked – and is still working – at promoting this attitude, as it is a fundamentally different way to work.

“It has been a journey from the very beginning. The journey is about daring to do things differently. Very often we are stopped by our own limitations and abilities to think differently; or by how we believe acting differently will be accepted by colleagues and management. Once the employees move beyond their own mental hurdles, they begin navigating and living a full life,” Christina Dyreborg explains. “To me, balance is not primarily about working less, but about working the right way.”

Life Navigation has become part of the foundation in AbbVie’s culture, around which the organization conducts its business.

Both Christina Dyreborg and Marianne Gylling Pedersen wish to make it very clear that promoting Balance has not reduced the focus on performance. On the contrary, it is the business goals that set the course for how the employees navigate, as they evaluate how their actions contribute to the company’s objectives. Christina Dyreborg explains, “We all agree on the direction of the company, as strategic goals are broken into objectives for each team and for each individual. That way the work becomes more meaningful for each employee, as he or she understands how the individual contributions tie into

the greater perspective. To understand one’s work from the greater perspective engages the employee. It is more fulfilling.”

AbbVie has succeeded at turning a traditional work culture upside down, and in rebuilding both the physical and the mental environment into a balanced culture supporting the business. “It has been really special that everybody has contributed to redefine our culture. We strengthen and refine the culture every day, and everybody wants to contribute,” says Christina Dyreborg.

The Life Navigation concept has been implemented in AbbVie Denmark, AbbVie Norway, AbbVie Netherlands and AbbVie Ireland, with great results.

Success Factors for Creating Balance

The story about AbbVie identifies several factors that have contributed to a successful outcome:

- *Mandatory participation in Life Navigation by all*
All employees, from CEO to the bottom of the organization, participated in the same classes. That was a clear signal that management meant this seriously.
- *It is your responsibility*
AbbVie has made it very clear that they provide the framework, but the employees have to do the Navigation within these frames. Life Navigation only works if the employee contributes. Life Navigation is a long-term commitment that requires self-discipline and involvement.
- *Management must be role models*
The management group participated actively with implementation of the Life Navigation process; not only as employees for their own part, but also driving the process in their departments of the organization. AbbVie understood the power of modeling, particularly in the beginning of the process, and required supervisors to show a good example.

- *The Project group follows up and keeps developing Balance in the organization*

AbbVie has formed a Great Place to Work group lead by Marianne Gylling Pedersen. Since 2006 the group has analyzed the Great Place to Work reports, conducted further analyses to understand what has been achieved during the past year, and selected which areas need to be in focus in the coming period. Combined with listening to the informal talk, they continuously try to understand what issues are discussed among the employees.

Four Hard Questions for Management

Do you have advice for other companies who wish to work on Balance?

The most important factor for achieving good balance is mutual trust. As an organization, we have to communicate clearly about what we feel it takes to have good balance. At the same time it is necessary that everybody agree about what Balance is, and how we will provide it – otherwise we will get nowhere. We have to listen to each other, set up clear goals, and outline our expectations.

What is your next project?

Our next focus is the 'Results Trap' that easily can show up in an ambitious and results-oriented culture. The 'Results Trap' addresses the difficult balancing act between engagement and abuse. We want to avoid that our employees – by wanting to do their best and achieve all their goals – find themselves in a negative spiral. This requires constant leadership and prioritizing.

What have been some of your outstanding successes?

We have been good at running the process, and careful to give the employees time to adjust to this way of working. We are learning while doing.

From which mistakes have you learned the most?

We realized that for new employees it can be quite daunting to adjust to the culture as we are way ahead when it comes to Life Navigation. To us, this is already a way of life, but management and colleagues must be aware that new employees have to go through a transformation process. This takes time, and during that process the employee needs support from colleagues and supervisor.

LIFE BALANCE

ATP is a Pension Fund with approximately 2,000 employees. Its 'products' are state-mandated benefits for retirement, death, employer insolvency, maternity leave, educational leave, or accidental disability. Life Balance is a central part of ATP's business strategy – including balance for body, brain, and heart. In ATP's Academy, employees can find classes offering exercise for the body, building competences for the brain, and stimulating the heart through pride of being a member of the ATP family. The work is meaningful, and the organization repeatedly delivers results beating the market benchmarks, while at the same time succeeding at being the Best Place to Work in Denmark and the second Best Place to Work in all of Europe in 2010.

We Shouldn't Work 24/7

In 2004, when the idea of Balance first came into focus at ATP, they talked about balance between work and family lives. Gradually, it became obvious that this mainly concentrated on family, not so much on working conditions. Hence, they developed the concept of Life Balance. "The idea behind Life Balance is that work is a part of life. Life is the general frame that has to contain both me at my work and me at home," says Pernille Sefort, VP for Human Development at ATP. Balance must be individual, as it concerns the way of life the individual employee attempts to live.

Life Balance is not about working all the time. Lilian Mogensen, Chief Officer for HR and Customer Relations, puts it like this: "Working 24/7 is an easy concept. But to us, work doesn't require that you are 'on' constantly and we don't reward that type of behavior." Pernille Sefort elaborates on this, adding,

"Life Balance is about clear boundaries. We know that we shouldn't be working around the clock. I read an interview with Connie Hedegaard (EU Commissioner for Climate Action) where she spoke about the oases that make us more efficient. The oases are a very strong image. Balance includes taking a cup of coffee in the sofa, or going jogging during business hours in the forest right here next to our offices. But Balance also requires a deeper understanding. It must take into account what the individual feels is appropriate behavior. Is it really OK to sit in the sofa reading a book during business hours?"

Balance Makes Business Sense

In 1998 ATP centered on these values as foundation for their business: trustworthy, competitive, innovative, and a Great Place to Work. Pernille Sefort explains, "We have the mantra that each employee shall have the feeling that he or she has a voice and is being understood. There has to be a balance between the assignments and the competences the employee possesses." To assure that expectations are continuously aligned, the supervisor and the employee have monthly 'pit-stop' meetings where all aspects of assignments, methods, and competences are discussed, as are elements from the private sphere. "Leadership is a function of recognition, engagement, and trust between employee and manager," says Pernille Sefort.

Life Balance is a central part of our business strategy says Lilian Mogensen. "You can always create a business where the employees have to constantly focus on the business goals. The art is in having ambitious goals, while at the same time balancing all life aspects. We strive to produce optimal results for our customers, while our families can count on our undivided

attention at the same time. I may go to the office on a Sunday evening, but I do it willingly. We have built up a system of mutual trust.”

Something for Something

There is a simple basic principle behind the way that ATP works with Balance. Lillian Mogensen explains, “Our philosophy is based on a simple principle: ‘something for something’. Terms of trade must be reasonable and clear enough to support full integration of our commitments. Let’s look at the possibilities rather than the limitations. Therefore, we look at individual options, which also means that we do not treat all people alike.” Employees must give something if they are to receive benefits from the opportunities available to them at ATP. “We strive to provide such a ‘HR supermarket’ while we are setting ambitious goals,” Lillian continues. To this end, ATP offers an array of benefits, which include flexible hours, the opportunity to participate in part-time courses at the ATP academy, takeaway food from the cafeteria, hairdresser, exercise and sports, staff clubs, a library, dry cleaning services, and the opportunity to take children and grandchildren to work during school holidays.

Flexible Work

While ATP offers employees many opportunities to create Balance, these offers are only one part of the equation for the Balance of Life. To fulfil the rest of the equation, it is necessary to motivate employees and managers to create and implement new concepts and ideas about the culture of work at ATP. One of the managers, Jesper, says, “The flexibility enhances my ability to perform. It creates a space in which I can function in ways that will meet the various demands in my life. As long as management knows that I am the person who can be relied upon to open the office, I feel that it’s okay. My boss let me know that I should not work more than 37 hours. Just knowing that there is a focus on this topic, relieves the pressure, which is a great help.” What matters is not only that flexibility exists, but that management has a clear view of how employees use this flexibility. Anne, who is an employee, adds, “For me, Balance means having the

space to fulfil the necessary demands of work, yet leaves room for work that I find interesting. At the same time, I also would like to have the freedom and flexibility to be 100% present in the family. I may drive into work on a Sunday night, but I do it for pleasure. There is a mutual trust.”

Jesper and Anne talk about how to administer the freedom offered by the ability to work from home. Some employees fall into super-performance expectations, working all the time. Others become a bit hedonistic and spoiled. Jesper’s view is, “It is OK if the employee goes jogging during business hours, if he delivers this hour at some other time; but it is not OK to go for a jog if he has promised me a delivery two days ago.” Anne says that if she has a deadline, she may work 60 hours per week. “If you are days past your deadline you are still allowed to leave early – but I don’t think that is a good attitude,” she says.

Paper Towel Notes

The employees don’t distinguish sharply between work hours and off hours. Anne comments, “If there are days where I am mentally just not there, I may go to the library to read a newspaper – or go home. Then I will work the rest of the day from home. Some times when I need quiet and to concentrate, I prefer to work from home.”

At ATP Balance is more about the results you produce than the exact time you clock in. Anne gives this example: “While cooking Sunday dinner I often get ideas that I may put down on a paper towel. On Monday morning I sit with all my towel-notes and try to get them organized into my spreadsheets. When working in the kitchen, I don’t think about work, but sometimes things click under the surface. I don’t see that as ‘work hours’ – I concentrate on ‘work outcomes’.” To the employees, Balance is mainly about structure, priorities, and taking care of oneself. They have to know themselves well enough to be able to say No. They have to prioritize even if it has consequences. Balance requires that a project may be postponed - along with the promotion that would have followed.

Openness, Presence, and Decency

Management has to focus on the attitudes among employees and supervisors regarding how to work in order to be seen as a 'good' ATP employee. Flexibility and technology allows the employees to work wherever and whenever. That creates the risk, for example, that the employee feels required to answer emails from home during time off.

Therefore, one role is to communicate clearly that employees are allowed to be 'off line'. Jesper, who has management responsibilities, says, "Technology has opened this door that you have to guard. I know who in my group understands this responsibility." Jesper has to keep an eye out for which employees can administer this freedom, and who needs help with setting boundaries. Presence and decency are some of the tools managers at ATP have to use. Lillian Mogensen says, "We pay close attention when we recruit people into management positions. If you don't have solid basic values that include respect for the employees, you will not be taken into consideration. If you are too smart or take credit for other people's work, then you will not survive for long in this organization." Jesper adds: "You are welcome to produce all kinds of fantastic results, but it can't be at the expense of your colleagues. There is room for ambition, but not for stepping on other people."

Leadership is about building on the strengths of each employee, and the employees describe how they are encouraged towards assignments where they can excel. "My supervisor doesn't hesitate to let me know if my competences seem less aligned with my current assignments. Then he will help me move on to another job in the organization. That is a super chance. There has to be room for growth, and growing out of your current position is well accepted. The attitude is 'We need to put you to the best possible use, even if it is in a different job'," says Anne. This leadership style encourages the employees to share their long-term goals.

Success Factors for Creating Balance

ATP's work with Life Balance identifies several factors that have contributed to a successful outcome:

- *A long-term focus on Balance*
ATP has focused on Life Balance since 2004, and Life Balance is a central part of their business strategy. ATP combines Life Balance with ambitious goals.
- *Strong family culture*
ATP defines themselves as a family. The workplace should be a nice place to be, and the 'family' is united in prosperity and in adversity. 'The family' is a strong cultural symbol, and ATP gains strength by virtue of its goal to socialize employees, and especially leaders, into the family.
- *Clear leadership*
Management communicates clearly what is expected, and not expected, from the employees. Management spends time with their employees. The leaders have monthly pit stop conversations with their employees, where they talk about jobs, skills and life in general. The emphasis is on dialogue in everyday life. The employees must be seen, heard and understood, and these goals require time.
- *Clarity on the strategic objectives*
ATP works with performance management. There is a need to achieve clarity concerning individual employee's goals, so they know what to deliver, and can determine when these expectations have been met.

Four Hard Questions for Management

Do you have advice for other companies who wish to work on Balance?

Creating Balance takes time. It requires more than just setting up a fruit bowl. If you want to change a culture it takes a continuous and dedicated effort. Put Balance on the agenda, if it is not already there. Understand that your employees are your most valuable resource. But you have to mean it and live it every day.

What is your next project?

We don't have a new project. We will continue to work at making ATP a great place to work. We can see how the boundaries between work and private life continue to be permeated by technology through smart phones and laptop computers, and we have to discuss how this influences our lives. We must keep watch on the new generation entering the labor force. Having grown up constantly connected, they may be more vulnerable. As leaders and mentors, we have to give them ambitious goals while at the same time communicating when 'enough is enough'.

What have been some of your outstanding successes?

We have a good atmosphere where we dare to be open about our dreams and ambitions. This atmosphere is carrying Balance.

From which mistakes have you learned the most?

It has been a little surprising how important it is to constantly keep an eye out for what constitutes Balance for the individual at the present time. Creating Life Balance is not just a responsibility for the manager but for both parties. You have to observe if the employee becomes complacent, or stops analyzing his or her own thoughts around Balance. We have worked hard at communicating the individual aspect of Balance – one size really doesn't fit all.

Our business gives us a common assignment in a hectic workday, where the individual constantly has to renegotiate demands against resources. Both parties have to understand that flexibility is a two way street.

MUTUAL BALANCE

Falck is a global organization in disaster prevention, assistance, and rehabilitation. The company has around 28,000 employees. Every year the employees place a wreath on the grave of founder Sophus Falck, who was buried in Copenhagen in 1926. Even though a long time has passed, his spirit is still alive in the way that the company treats its employees. As an organization, Falck is willing to thoroughly support its employees, so that in return they can support the customers when difficult situations call for Falck's assistance. In this company Balance is an integrated element in how they do business.

The Complete Life

Many of Falck's employees are confronted daily with situations that can be psychologically challenging. As first responders, they are under hard pressure when responding to fires or traffic accidents. But everyone, from telephone operators who answer emergency calls, to ambulance drivers and their assistants, gets involved with many fate-changing events every day.

At Falck they are very attuned to the need for taking care of their employees. "We have to find solutions that work for the employees. They should enjoy their work. If they have problems we have to help them," says Anders D. Larsen, Executive VP for Europe and Asia.

Thus, Falck has a clear stand on Balance: "Balance is not in distinguishing between work and time off. Balance has to be realized by defining how work is part of one's life. We have to look at life as a complete entity - and work is a part of this," says Anders D. Larsen.

Thomas Kirk Vilsboell, Global VP of HR and Organizational Development adds, "At times we have been imbalanced as an organization. During these last years, we have acquired several new subsidiaries, and while Falck has been growing some of our employees have become imbalanced. But that is only for a while. We can't accept that we bring our employees into a state of constant imbalance - it makes neither organizational nor business sense."

Through many years Falck has worked proactively to build a supportive working environment, exactly because the work itself can be so emotionally damaging. Being a first responder puts one at a 20 to 30 percent risk of developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), compared to a risk of only 3 percent in the general population. Falck knows that their employees will have more sick days, are more likely to retire early, and will have higher attrition rates - unless the company pays close attention to these factors. "Consequently, preventive care makes a lot of sense not only from the perspective of the individual employee, but also for our business results," says Thomas Kirk Vilsboell.

Balance Is Part of Doing Business

The very core of Falck's business is 'Dealing with anxiety'. "We know that we are in the business of helping people who suddenly are put into difficult situations. We take their worries upon us on their behalf. But consequently, our employees are always dealing with this anxiety," Anders D. Larsen explains. Thomas Kirk Vilsboell adds, "If we have to cultivate employees who can care for our customers,

we have to care for our employees first. This ‘genetic makeup’ for caring is found in our first responders, whether they are in Bogota or in Copenhagen. They are incredibly engaged in their work. Their experience is that they deal with people in difficult situations, and they receive immediate recognition by being able to help.” Chief psychologist Rikke Hoegsted explains that there is pride connected with working for Falck that goes beyond the company itself: “In Denmark you often see Falck responders around in the landscape, and it is obvious for each employee that he or she is part of a bigger cause. It is humbling that your work can have such great impact.”

The management group at Falck understands that caring goes both ways: “We have to function as a kind of ‘lightning rod’, making sure that these stressing situations don’t build up inside our employees. We can only do that by making sure they are well prepared – so they can handle the situations, and then do debriefing whenever they have been involved in traumatic events,” says Anders D. Larsen. Debriefing is thus a key element in working with Balance.

Debriefing

Falck has developed a set of debriefing procedures that help assure the emotional health of the employees. The system has several different elements. One is the support from other first responders, in which colleagues can debrief each other. They are trained through a theoretical education, as well as on-the-job training. Support from close colleagues is supplemented with assistance from specially qualified responders, who are called in when there have been particularly traumatic incidents. If the ‘colleague debriefer’ feels that the first responder needs extra help, then the company calls in assistance from professional psychologists. Other accommodations may include extra time off, or, in cases of PTSD, to rotate the first responder into other jobs within the company that are away from the front line.

Although there are many expenses involved with training first responders, including training in debriefing, Falck sees this as an investment. Anders D. Larsen explains, “Most of our expenses are employee related. It may take up to seven years to train a first responder. So we want them to stay with us

for a long time, and to make sure that they are not worn down by the extreme stress they are exposed to in their work. We have a competitive advantage because we do the right things. Thus, we don’t see education and debriefing as costs. Our systems strengthen our business.” Thomas Kirk Vilsboell continues, “Debriefing from colleagues works really well. You know your immediate peers, and there is a great sense of trust among the team members.” He adds, “Our focus on preventing attrition and sick days is part of our success. To us, Balance is a prerequisite for running a profitable organization.”

Bartering and Backup

There is more than debriefing systems assisting the responders in a crisis. The responders have a culture of companionship with everybody willing to reach out to a colleague. Flemming, who drives an ambulance, explains how Falck supports flexibility around the staffing. “The general attitude is that if the station is otherwise adequately staffed, we can normally take time off. We are free to switch schedules with other colleagues, and if you take over a watch you can get it credited later. We all try to ‘have a positive balance on the account’.”

Not only do the employees help each other with accommodating schedules, but they also come in earlier than their watch begins. This helps them become emotionally ready for their job, and also assures that an emergency at the end of a watch can be staffed with rested responders. It is easy to feel the team spirit that connects the responders. Flemming tells us: “The culture reminds me of my days serving in the army. We have the same social tone, we are a lot of guys, and we go through some very special experiences together.” Rikke Hoegsted continues, “You are part of a team, and when you are responding to an emergency you know exactly what is expected of you, while at the same time you know what everyone else is doing. The responders look out for one another. Many have their best friends among their colleagues. It really is like a family.” Thomas Kirk Vilsboell illustrates this with an example: “Our employees often show up on their days off. They may wash their car or get a cup of coffee. This work is more than just a job to our employees. They know that they work for a greater cause; it is a mission they can identify with.”

Leadership and the Unions

At Falck there is a tradition for working closely with the unions, because employees and the company see each other as equally important. Thomas Kirk Vilsboell explains, "If we are to succeed with our mission, employer and employee must work together to create the foundation that lets us be 'Dealing with anxiety'. There is great respect for the responders who carry this responsibility. They must have good working conditions, and I refer not only to the traditional elements such as pay and working hours. I refer to the care we need to provide so that they in turn can provide care for those we are here to serve. Caring is the essence of our business."

Hence, Thomas Kirk Vilsboell is not in doubt that Falck must be guided by values such as helpfulness and trustworthiness. "If we ran our business with more focus on a 'balances scorecard', time schedules, and surveillance cameras, our company would die. We have to build up the kind of trust where we are assured that our teams know what to do when they leave the station, and we no longer supervise them."

The balance between the interests of the employees and the company is fragile. Some employees feel that the balance has been disrupted. As Flemming says, "I can see how it is more difficult for employees who have worked here for 20 or 30 years, because it is a different company now. Many have been offered other jobs within the company." Many things can tip the balance, be it uniforms, equipment, vehicles, or schedules. At Falck, Balance is about having the big picture in mind, while paying attention to the details – every day, around the clock.

Success Factors for Creating Balance

Falck is the story about an organization that has made a successful business based on these factors:

- *Balance has to be an integrated part of the organizational DNA*
Falck's core mission is to provide care to people in dire straits. Falck has to provide care for their employees so they can connect authentically with people in crisis situations.
- *Working through crises requires pre-emptive action*
Falck understands that you can't just repair damaged employees; we have to look out for and engage responders who have been in physically or emotionally challenging situations, before they break down.
- *We are all in this together*
Falck shows great respect for the employees, understanding that there is no business without this respect. The employees need decent working conditions; not just concerning pay and hours, but also including trust, respect, and caring for each other.
- *Balance is fragile, keep nurturing it*
Because of the special type of work Falck does, employees can easily become destabilized. Hence, management knows that employees may not always work optimally, and that they must also prevent this from becoming a permanent situation. Events that have been physically or emotionally challenging require follow up through debriefing, for example.
- *Balance requires taking a long-term perspective*
Falck has been working actively with debriefing for over 20 years. They realize that it takes time to foster a culture of Balance.

Four Hard Questions for Management

Do you have advice for other companies who wish to work on Balance?

Don't turn this into a project or a 'management initiative'. You can't have 'Operation Balance', – it won't succeed. Then again, you can't just sit and wait for these things to happen all by themselves. Creating Balance takes time – a long time. It comes down to management paying attention to wherever imbalances show up. If you want to succeed, you have to be tenacious, and be on constant lookout for what creates imbalance, along with how to prevent this.

What is your next project?

We must spread Falck's DNA to our international subsidiaries. Our Danish customers have an exceptionally high level of trust in the organization, and we want to spread this to the rest of the world. We have a special status in Denmark. You can buy matchbox cars with our logo in toy stores. Our colleagues from abroad ask what we pay in product placement. They are speechless when we tell them that we don't do product placement. But the challenge is to understand that we can't just do things the same way abroad as we do them in Denmark. Here we use our historic connections, we contribute at ceremonies and parades to keep this story alive. We can't do that the same way internationally. We don't have the right answer yet, but we are working on that.

What have been some of your outstanding successes?

We have been very good at running this kind of operation. On the one hand we are an organization providing care; on the other hand we are a private company that has to make a profit for our shareholders. We continuously have to balance these two factors so that neither becomes dominant at the expense of the other. There has to be Balance in the organization all the way to the strategic level. We have to do our business through our set of values and through good leadership. We do look at objectives and a Balance scorecard for monitoring how we do, but we don't let that be the foundation for our organization.

From which mistakes have you learned the most?

We have learned that there has to be a 'buy-in' of the top management to the notion that our employees must be able to find balance in their work. In our everyday operations, local supervisors and colleagues support the individual employees at staying balanced. But top management must show continuous support of the local supervisors through the way they prioritize, assure adequate training, and deliver the tools necessary for maintaining this balance. We all have a common mission to fulfil with full workdays – where balance of resources and demands has to be renegotiated continuously. Flexibility has to be a two way street.

HEALTHY LIVING

Nordea Life & Pensions has approximately 500 employees. They have an attitude on the subject of healthy living, and management feels free to inspire the employees - even on matters related to their private spheres. Nordea Life & Pensions is action-oriented and dares to use methods a bit outside of the box to promote good health. One example was an occasion when the company bought 500 cans of mackerel, and placed one at each workstation. The message was that it shouldn't be that difficult to make fish part of the diet. In 2008 Nordea Life & Pensions set the goal to be the Best Place to Work within their industry, and in 2011 they reached this goal.

It's All About People

Steen Michael Erichsen was made CEO of Nordea Life and Pensions in 2008. Together with Trine Thorn, VP People and Communication, he soon set up the goal to become the Best Place to Work within the pensions industry. They used a two-pronged strategy: a project on health, and another one on culture. All work related to these two projects stems from the basic value that recognizes 'it's all about people'. "It is all a chain effect," says Trine Thorn. "If we make this a better place to work for our employees, they will become more productive, create more business, give better advice to our customers, provide better service, all of which combines to give the customers a totally different experience, so they in turn become more loyal, more happy, and more likely to continue to do business with us." The responsibility for the projects rests with Trine Thorn, VP People and Communication.

We Learn While We Trade

Through 2008, the People and Communication department was brewing. Corporate Health manager Nina Frimodt-Moeller describes it this way, "The sky is the limit when we brain storm." These sessions were a source for new ideas about creating the best place to work. They realized that they would have to base their work on the DNA already in the organization. Based on a number of interviews with employees, they decided to turn the organization into a 'Nordic Village', identified by values such as room for differences, informality in interactions, and a strong will to collaborate. The idea of the village has been brought into the physical world as well - the meeting facilities are now known as The Library, The Post Office, or City Hall. Some rooms make you feel right at home, as if you had stayed in your own living room. There are paintings on the walls - some are even painted by the CEO - and a photo of the employees carrying a big 'X', symbolizing the 'X-factor', or the secret sauce that it takes for the company to succeed.

"We are very good at putting ideas into action in Nordea Life & Pensions. We don't have to ask too much. We just do it. It gives us some of these good stories to share. I think such stories are central. They bring courage to try to do new and different things - a courage often lacking in other organizations. And it makes us want to create something new while we are working," says Trine Thorn.

Healthy Living requires courage supported by a culture where it is accepted that mistakes may be made. "We believe strongly in trial and error," says Trine Thorn. The Healthy Life project includes surprises to shake the employees out of their old habits

and disrupt expectations. One morning the employees woke up to a big, green chia-arrow pointing to the cafeteria where they all had their blood pressure taken. Now they use less salt and more chia in their food; all sharing a common silly story that prompted them to think more about healthy cooking. Such happenings are part of the communication at Nordea Life & Pensions. Painted on the wall in People & Communication is the mantra: "What is not communicated doesn't exist."

Your Choice

Healthy living is about energy. Nina Frimodt-Moeller talks about it this way, "To us balance is all about energy, and I feel that way about it, too; that I have energy to work towards my business goals, and energy for living the life I wish to live, both professionally and personally. There is a lot of talk about how we must bridge the gap between work and private life – as if those two concepts existed in separate worlds. I see those worlds as being closely connected. When I am shopping and waiting in line for checkout, I have no problem answering my work email. In return I feel it is totally legitimate that I call my dentist while at work." Balance centers around health, and about having the energy for the other things in life the employee also wants to achieve. In Nordea Life & Pensions they talk about being engaged in their work in a balanced way, more than dividing life into a work life and a private life. Steen Michael Erichsen says, "There are still today places where work hours are defined strictly. But we are not one of those places. Being engaged takes place 24/7. When I think about work, I think about being engaged. That is a rather intangible concept, making it really difficult to define what work actually is."

The project about Healthy Living was launched on January 1st, 2009, as a happening, naturally. An actor was hired to play the stereotypical health guru, Mr. Nielsen. "Although Mr. Nielsen sees himself as being very health-conscientious, he smokes, and taking the bike to work means having it in the trunk. He is really silly, and in that way he shakes up peoples' expectations. Whenever the employees see Mr. Nielsen, they know that we have something going on with the health project," Nina Frimodt-Moeller explains.

Nordea Life & Pensions creates a framework that makes it possible for the employees to live a Healthy Life. The Health project includes not only physical activities such as jogging, dance, and workouts, but also training in mindfulness and meditation. The activities have to be easily accessible, and meet the needs and wishes of Nordea Life & Pensions' employees.

However, the responsibility for partaking in the activities rests with the employee. Steen Michael Erichsen expresses it this way: "I can't force anybody to change their habits. But I can make demands of those who want to change. This is an invitation to change, but it must be understood that it is only an invitation." The health project is an investment for both company and employee: "The employee pays for using the offered activities. Taking a class does not count as work time, even though it may be conveniently placed during the normal business hours," Nina Frimodt-Moeller says. The employees also have to invest in their health.

The level of engagement needed to get Healthy Living to work seems to be there. Trine Thorn tells us that already one third of the employees make use of the offered activities. That is much more than was expected. Many join because the program offers more than just physical and mental exercise. "Healthy Living also fills a social need. We have experiences from the project in common. Suddenly we have new things to talk about over lunch," adds Claus, one of the pension consultants.

Healthy Business

Healthy Living started as an internal health project, but it turned out that it made a lot of sense also outside the ranks of Nordea Life & Pensions' employees. The customers – companies – heard about it, and started to ask for more information. People & Communication turned the strategy into a magazine describing the thoughts, methods, and effects of putting health on the organizational agenda. The magazine Healthy Business became a great success, and not only was it sent out to customers and business partners, but it also turned into a series of seminars on how to conduct business along these lines. Now the customers also share their stories about how they have improved health, and Nordea Life & Pensions has set up a web portal where interested parties can download material on how to implement Healthy Living.

Success Factors for Creating Balance

Nordea Life & Pensions' work and results, with the concepts of 'Healthy Living' and 'Nordic Village', point out a number of influential factors:

- *Long term strategic focus*
Management is clear about what they wish to achieve by becoming a Great Place to Work. They are out in front with ideas they believe in; being convincing, persistent, and consistent in their assertions.
- *Out of the box*
'Odd happenings' can efficiently engage the employees, and may be instrumental in opening up their willingness to change.
- *Physical surroundings*
The physical surroundings have to support the message. The 'Nordic Village' idea turns the attention to the impact that physical features can have on our physical and emotional well-being.
- *Individual 'buy-in' is necessary for success*
Balance is not a free-for-all. It includes making demands that the employee find inner motivation and engagement so they can help themselves and the organization. Hence, the employees put in time and money when they take part in the activities offered through the Healthy Living program.
- *We must act in order to learn*
Nordea Life & Pensions has stepped into the unknown with the Healthy Living project, and the process has been one of learning while doing. The project management did not consult the employees in program development, run a pilot project, or gather metrics or opinions – they just did it.

Four Hard Questions for Management

Do you have advice for other companies who wish to work on Balance?

This is a long-term project. You have to realize that small projects result in very little movement, and you have to work with these concepts for a long time before the organization starts moving. Figure out what works for you and then keep at it. With a long-term focus, you can better measure the incremental improvements.

What is your next project?

We are starting a better dialogue to prevent stress. We have learned that many people have a hard time setting boundaries. Even if colleagues sense that something is not quite right, they may not say or do anything, being uncertain about what may be the right thing to do. Supervisors may feel the same way, since the expression of stress is a common cultural taboo. Nobody knows how to deal with it. We want to create a dialogue that enables a discussion of how we are all responsible, as stress is not just a problem for the individual. Stress may develop in the intersection between colleagues, as well as between management and the employees, so all parties share in the responsibility.

What have been some of your outstanding successes?

We did what we said we would do. We have been authentic. You make a program and you have to really believe in it. You have to be one with the program. So get started! Have the guts to jump into the process. Give it all you have – and if it doesn't work, kill it.

From which mistakes have you learned the most?

We arranged a day in 2012 where we wanted to give the families of our employees a taste of what we offer. But we had to cancel the event as not enough people signed up. Another mistake was a dedicated weight loss initiative that had a huge signup, but was only a success for the people who wanted to lose 5 to 10 pounds. The employees who needed the program the most, those that would benefit from shedding 50 pounds, didn't stay with the program. We learned that it was a totally different challenge for this group. So we tried later with another program directed more towards employees with a body mass index (BMI) over 30.

BALANCED BUSINESS

Novozymes is a biotech company that originated in 2000 as a spinoff from the medical group Novo Nordisk. Today Novozymes has around 5,800 employees, with some in Denmark, but the majority abroad. The history of Novozymes is about the development of a culture in which the individualist can cooperate within a strong collective. There are the relatively objective skills such as structure, objectives, problem solving, and data analysis, combined with the subjective skills of artistic vision and collaboration. Employees are recruited from among results-oriented candidates who are also aware that results are reached collectively, and from managers who have the guts to ask questions, despite the risk that they may not get an answer for many years. Novozymes was awarded Best Place to Work in Denmark in 2004 and 2005.

Collective Individualists

Through many years, Novozymes has focused on the balance between work and family life. At Novozymes this entails mainly high flexibility with respect to how the employees want to divide their work hours throughout the year. "I have an employee who works 10 hours per day for one week, but only five hours per day the following week," Sune, a department leader, tells us. Another employee works from home in the morning, and shows up mid-morning to avoid the worst traffic gridlock. Another manager notes, "I have an employee on my team who, as part of his paternity leave, has gone to an exotic destination with his wife and two young daughters for four months." The individual employees are free to choose their work day so it ties into their specific needs for accommodating their families, their hobbies - and traffic conditions.

"There has to be room within the organization for our differences," says manager Zenia.

To make room for the employees requires more than just good perks, like one year paid maternity leave or flexible work hours. There also has to be a culture where using this flexibility is generally accepted. Ole Kirk, VP Research & Development, observes, "We don't have a culture of rights, but a culture of inclusion. We must be able to include all employees - with all their idiosyncrasies. In return, the employee also has to make room for the company. The flexibility cuts both ways, for the benefit of both employees and organization." The employees also feel a responsibility for making the flexibility functional. Sussi tells us, "If they make it possible for you to leave the office at 3 pm the whole week, you must in return show up on the weekend if there are deadlines to be met - or go online during the evening. Flexibility cuts both ways."

Novozymes emphasizes that the individual freedom offered cannot be at the expense of the collective well-being. If one employee's freedom becomes another's stressor, some coordination must take place. Team members are allowed to work some days from home, but team leaders will plan to assure that this doesn't disrupt the close collaboration among team members. A special name has been invented at Novozymes to describe the employees who work for the common goals. They are called 'zymers'. Zenia elaborates, saying, "A zymer doesn't just look out for his own interests, but will make adjustments to make room for the company's needs. A zymer will be so engaged with Novozymes that the company is never far from his thoughts." Good employees don't just look out for themselves - they prioritize the good of the whole organization.

Investing in People Pays Off

The employees at Novozymes are highly educated specialists who are difficult to replace. It is in the strategic interest of Novozymes to have a high retention rate, and consequently they use substantial resources to invest in the employees, and give them additional freedom. Ole Kirk gives an example, saying, "I hired a woman 10 years ago. We had a number of talks during the hiring process, and at the last talk she disclosed that she was pregnant. It was not a planned pregnancy, but she felt that it would be fair to disclose it, even if it meant that she wouldn't get the job. Personally, I wasn't in doubt that she would be the right person for the job, even if she had to go on maternity leave. Today she runs one of our main business lines, and she has never forgotten that we believed in her. She is highly motivated. This is just one example that the trust we place in our employees comes back manifoldly." There are many examples in the company that show how extending trust to employees can create very loyal and engaged employees.

These attitudes about employee relations will naturally cost money up front, but these initial costs are a good investment. Trust in employees has become a part of the culture that in return yields a wish to give back to the organization. But not all employees understand this equally, and some flexibility has to be earned. "We have had employees on sick leave for more than 120 days without feeling the need to part ways with them. But we have had others who, although absent for a much shorter time, have been placed onto our observation list," says Jesper Johansen, Director People and Organization, Europe.

Dare To Ask the Questions that Cannot Yet Be Answered

Novozymes had already given the employees ample freedom to arrange their work hours as they saw best fit, hence it was a shock to the company when several employees were assailed by symptoms of stress. Jesper Johansen relates the story, "We had given the employees flexibility and freedom. They had all options open, and still some had stress related problems." The company already had procedures and action plans in place for dealing with long-term absences, but it became clear that they had to do more to prevent stress from occurring in the first place.

Jesper Johansen recalls, "We had to ask ourselves the question, 'How do we help the employees avoid falling victim to the effects of stress?' – and we had no idea. We could see that the stress came from the conditions under which the employees worked, but they had all the possibilities in the world to influence these conditions themselves. We came to the conclusion that we had to know more about self-management. Among the expectations that people set for themselves, which ones tend to produce stress?"

One of the projects launched by People & Organization focused on the different sources of expectations – from self, coworkers, and supervisors. The project was called 'Enough, enough!' One way this message was communicated was through the use of posters that asked questions, for example, "Are you on your cell phone when you should be on vacation? If in doubt, talk to your boss." The idea of this campaign was to discuss and align the expectations held by both the employee and the manager around the work. Should it be necessary to be online when officially being offline? The idea was not to find a uniform answer, but to create more awareness, and to generate healthy debate about the dilemmas and paradoxes created by flexibility and technology.

Balance Is a Collective Endeavor

One of the most important realizations People & Organization have gleaned from this process is that Balance is a Collective Endeavor. This emerges from an understanding that the expectations come not only from the employee and the company, but may arise just as much from collegial behaviors. This means that the employee does not only set his or her expectations in alignment with company policies. A research project on self-management, productivity, and well-being inspired People & Organization to develop a process tool, whereby teams of employees were trained in workshops. The idea is to have the whole team process the collective expectations, some of which have not been openly discussed yet exert an influence on the collaboration. These group expectations define a framework within which the employees must operate. During these workshops, the employees discuss goals, competences needed, levels of engagement, and how to go about working together to achieve group objectives. Jesper Johansen talks about what they have learned from the workshops: "The employees experience a deeper understanding for how their work contributes to the whole. They have a better feeling for this dimension, and can navigate with more ease." To People & Organization, it has become even clearer that Balance is not about two separate parts of life. Instead, employees are coached to navigate within one life-sphere, and to become both happy and productive. This requires questioning their own expectations about the work, as well as the expectations coming from the company and from their colleagues.

The examples clearly show a picture of an organization that dares to address issues for which solutions are yet to be discovered. The underlying values and thought patterns have been captured in a painting by the Danish artist HuskMitNavn, located on the wall outside the CEO's office, in the form of a big colorful mural of a person thinking these words, "When I am off work I think about working; when I am at work I think about my free time; may I someday work during my free time." This person expresses the conundrum of a life where work, and time away from work, seem to blend together. The painting asks the audience a question that it doesn't

answer. Instead it challenges you to find your own answer, and to discuss with others how to create this balance. Novozymes sends a strong signal that they realize the dilemmas that fewer boundaries between the work-sphere and the private-sphere create, and invites you to discuss and think about this too.

Jesper Johansen says, "I think we have done the right thing when being open and tackling these challenges head on. We have done a lot of research. But we had to understand the problems better before we could come up with solutions. Perhaps that is part of our culture, being very facts-oriented? People around here have more faith in solutions that have been researched thoroughly. This takes time – and we have to give it that time."

Success Factors for Creating Balance

Novozymes is the story of an organization that has made a successful business based on these factors:

- *Focus on results, not time spent*
The company focuses on employee results, not on how much time they spend working. They have a high degree of freedom to arrange their work so it fits their life structures, but they have to work towards the goals we have set up together.
- *Mutual inclusion*
The company must have room for the whole individual, and the employee must have room for the company. We need to establish a mutual understanding about what constitutes good work habits.
- *Balance is felt by the individual, but must be handled collectively*
We can't leave it to each employee to create balance. Both management and the teams must help the individual define a framework within which that person can operate freely. Balance must be handled collectively.
- *Management must focus on Balance*
To create Balance between work and private spheres is fundamentally a management respon-

sibility. Employees have to manage themselves, and managers have to show leadership for people who know how to self-manage. Novozymes includes these challenges in their leadership development programs, and includes Balance issues when doing performance and objectives reviews.

- *Creating Balance takes time*

It is a long-term project to create a balanced organization. There are no short cuts. Rather, one has to work on building a culture with freedom for the individual and the management processes that support the employees to develop and find more Balance in their lives.

Four Hard Questions for Management

Do you have advice for other companies who wish to work on Balance?

You can't put the responsibility for this on the employee. Creating a Balance Culture is a mutual responsibility. Company and management have to play an active role helping the employees find Balance in their lives.

What is your next project?

We want to change Balance more toward Navigation. In the future we have to be better at setting goals, both as individuals and as an organization. The employees need better tools to help them navigate things like productivity and priority. And we must strengthen their abilities to self-manage and manage their teams.

What have been some of your outstanding successes?

We have been good at catching subtle movements in the organization and acting upon them. We have defined challenges, realizing we didn't know how to solve them. And we have built a company where the employees have a high level of engagement and faith in what we do.

From which mistakes have you learned the most?

We have spent time and resources at creating a toolbox for creating Balance on our intranet. But it never had the effect we were looking for, and it didn't become a natural resource for either employees or managers.

FINANCIAL BALANCE

Nykredit is one of Denmark's larger financial conglomerates, with banking and mortgage underwriting as the main pillars. Nykredit has around 4,000 employees, and this is the story of a company that has focused on well-being for years and years. Formerly Nykredit was seen mainly as a company with flexible work hours and good salaries. Since 2009, the organization began working to institute a culture more focused on performance – one in which exceptional results would be rewarded. Well-being continues to be a foundational element, but with a recognition that Balance deals just as much with giving as taking.

The Inclusive Workplace Can Both Give and Take

Nykredit allows for much 'space'. The employees have flexibility to take both paid and unpaid time off, flexible work hours, or reduced hours – whether as a new parent, to focus on elite sports, or gradually phase yourself out of work prior to retirement.

Although much of the work is sedentary, taking place at desks and work-stations, there has to be room for physical health as well. The cafeteria serves healthy meals, and at many locations the employees can bring home dinner prepared at the cafeteria. Some locations have fitness centers. Senior account manager Ulla tells us, "When I leave the office I need to turn into the role of mother and wife. Bringing dinner home from the cafeteria three days a week saves me from going shopping, and I can be more engaged in my children's activities. I really like working here – the culture is nice. I have good colleagues and the offer of healthy activities makes

it easier to live a healthy life. We have a fitness center in the basement at the office, and I often find myself there at 6am, spinning. The only thing I miss on those days is having breakfast with the kids." But Ulla emphasizes that there is a price, saying, "If you do a good job and are efficient, you are granted considerable flexibility, but you have to live up to reasonable demands."

Ulla's understanding of Balance is a direct reflection of Nykredit's vision of Financial Balance: that the employees can grow into their full potentials, both professionally and as whole people. The mission is to build a company where financial results can exist in alignment with developing human potential. To succeed, Nykredit has to attract top talent.

"Nykredit wants to be one of Denmark's most attractive and demanding companies. We want to recruit people who want to have a career, who can think new thoughts, and who want to collaborate at moving Nykredit in that direction," says Director Employer Branding Pernille Hermansen. Nykredit wants to appeal to people who are attracted by challenging objectives. "We want you to be motivated by the goals we set forth," she says.

This mutuality is at the core of how Nykredit sees Balance: you give and you get. "When discussing Balance, it is important to remember that Nykredit has a primary goal of producing good results. Otherwise we wouldn't be around. Balance is very individually defined, but at the center it is about two boxes: one with a variety of offers from us to you, and another with what you can and want to contribute to the organization. More rewards come to those who produce the greatest results," says Group Managing Director Bente Overgaard.

Focus needs to be on what creates results for the company, and to produce such results the employees have to thrive. "Our results orientation doesn't imply that we want to stress people out. We have to engage the whole person. The company has to be inclusive, and offer circumstances that make sense," emphasized Bente Overgaard. Nykredit still wants to be known for inclusiveness of employees from all stages in life.

Clear Objectives Give Satisfied Employees

At Nykredit, Balance is about doing the right things. Over the last several years, the company has worked with the organization to find ways of helping employees achieve optimal productivity in their assignments. "We have always had focus on employee well-being, but our yearly development discussions were not supported beyond what supervisor and employee could agree on. If the new supervisor then moved to another department, they would not have access to my development plan. We didn't have a clear picture at the organizational level of where to look for the people we should invest in," explains Pernille Hermansen.

Since 2011, all employees have been able to enter their goals into the HR-system, and now they can align the general goals for the organization with the goals of the individual employees. The connection is assured through breaking down the objectives at every level of the organization. Pernille Hermansen explains, "My boss has agreed with top management on the goals for her department, and based on her objectives I will form the objectives for my department. These objectives are the foundation for the discussions I then will have with my staff. Everybody is very active in formulating individual goals. The process begins with a meeting where the goals for the whole department are discussed. Working from this, the employee then returns to the next meeting with a draft for the individual objectives. Together we discuss these, reach an agreement, and enter the objectives in the system. This way the employees are taking responsibility for the development of their department." The employees have to influence their objectives, or these objectives are less likely to be seen as meaningful and personal.

Management by objectives makes new demands of the leaders. Bente Overgaard says, "It is important that we get better at communicating our expectations. The managers have to improve the way they communicate goals, demands, and expectations for the year discussed. Supervisors have to give clear feedback around how things are evolving. We have introduced performance management in order to develop not only the organization, but also the individual employees – not to 'abuse' people. If an employee can't meet the goals, the first thought is not that we should get rid of this employee, but how we together can change the processes so the employee can succeed."

Senior Project Leader Thomas tells us that he and many colleagues were somewhat skeptical when the performance measurement system was introduced, because the system seemed bureaucratic and cumbersome. His colleagues did, however, soon become more positive when they realized that the system was of direct help in the organization of their work, leading to clearly defined objectives. Through their talks with the supervisors, they understood how to meet the objectives, including how much time and resources they could expect to spend on a given issue. To coordinate all the unexpected interruptions that inevitably arise, expectations are regularly discussed with the supervisor. In many departments, one-to-one meetings are weekly events. Nykredit can see how clear objectives, along with regular and clear feedback from the supervisor, leads to higher employee motivation, satisfaction, and general happiness at work.

Think New

Nykredit wants to be an innovative company – one where action follows ideas. A central principle is: 'Think New'. Pernille Hermansen elaborates, "Working at Nykredit you can influence the whole company. Management is not far away." At the beginning of the financial crisis, CEO Peter Engberg invited all employees to send, directly to his Inbox, any ideas about how the company could save money. "He got over 200 responses from the employees. Peter invited our feedback, and then personally answered all the emails. This is a pretty flat organization," explains Thomas.

Short communication lines, respect shown to everyone, and a feeling of being heard, are mentioned again and again when employees describe the culture in Nykredit.

Productive Pluralities

Another route to innovation is heterogeneity. “We want to have an organization containing many different profiles. Variation will help us to think more varied thoughts, and also help us move the business forward,” says Pernille Hermansen. That is why Nykredit focuses on each talent. “All employees get a performance evaluation at the yearly discussion, where we also establish objectives for the year to come. The performance evaluations create transparency across the organization, so that it is no longer only the individual supervisors who know the particularly talented employees. Our internal recruiters now have access to that information as well, and we have been able to create a stronger culture of internal recruiting,” declares Pernille Hermansen.

For a number of years, Nykredit has focused successfully on placing women in management positions, and a few years ago they also placed sexual orientation on the agenda. This was done based on English research, which showed that homosexual employees were thriving better in companies where they dared to be open about their sexuality. “Naturally, to what degree a person wants to be open about their sexual orientation is the individual’s choice, but we want to signal that there is room for everybody, and that they are welcome to communicate openly,” explains Pernille Hermansen. Nykredit thus partners with Copenhagen Pride, and same sex partners have the same benefits as opposite sex partners. An example is that the same maternity leave is given to lesbian co-mothers as is given to fathers. The newest focus in the plurality-project is to improve integration of ‘flex-jobs’ (a system of partially state-funded jobs for people with disabilities) in Nykredit.

Success Factors for Creating Balance

A concentrate of Nykredit DNA points to these factors as having been significant for creating Financial Balance:

- *Business oriented HR*
At Nykredit they have closely connected employee well-being to the success of the business. With a background as VP for Nykredit’s business customers, Bente Overgaard brought a solid feeling for the core business into the role as head of HR, Education, Leadership, and Organizational Development.
- *Supporting IT systems*
Using ongoing employee satisfaction surveys it is easy to document how clearly stated objectives, and actionable feedback from ones supervisor leads to more satisfied employees – and happier customers. The organization has become more transparent, and IT systems provide data that relates cause and effect, including documentation that investing in well-being pays off.
- *Balance is both ‘give and take’*
Creating Balance is not just about giving the employees a number of entitlements. Rights are always combined with responsibilities; in this case, focus on which objectives rest on the employees’ responsibility. Trust and responsibility cuts both ways.
- *Differentiated management style*
It makes a difference for your business if you can manage people differently. At Nykredit ‘one size management’ doesn’t fit all; people are different. Some need close supervision; others need less. Naturally, this increases the complexity of the management job, where the supervisor must evaluate each employee’s needs within the context of good business sense.

Four Hard Questions for Management

Do you have advice for other companies who wish to work on Balance?

You have to believe in what you are doing, because changing an organization invariably will cause friction. With Performance Management, each employee suddenly has become more visible, as have his/her results. Locally, the supervisor has to consider employee development from a much broader, organization-wide perspective. Change takes tenacity and patience.

What is your next project?

We want to become even better at supporting the organization's selection of the best profiles for generating its overall efficiency. Knowing that satisfied employees deliver more, this in no way contradicts our focus on what makes people thrive.

What have been some of your outstanding successes?

We have been open and listening, and we have been tenacious. In this way, we have been able to make the adjustments called for in the feedback we received.

From which mistakes have you learned the most?

When we first launched the performance management system, we didn't use the same metrics for the evaluation of results and competences. That made the system confusing, and we changed it a.s.a.p. It is very important that support systems are simple and user-friendly.

