



that all you got?

It's an industrial revelation: Britain is the gulag of Europe where we work longer hours than any of our continental cousins and boast the second longest working hours in the developed world.

The most pervasive of Thatcher's legacies has bred a hardened work ethic where it's considered commendable to squeeze the workforce until it squeaks. Each appraisal, job advertisement and interview is thick with the innuendo that nothing less than your soul will suffice in the service of The Company. Executive burnout is no longer a tragedy which befalls the sensitive minority, but an indication that The Company has successfully released and consumed your total potential.

"Work is encroaching more and more into people's home lives which certainly isn't healthy for their relationships and, in fact, isn't good for business either," says the creator of IE's work-life balance quiz (overleaf), Professor Cary Cooper. "There has to be a balance which truly recognises that productivity does not increase exponentially with time spent at work."

In fact, the raft of evidence to support this statement - compared to an absolute absence of any to contradict it - should be all the proof industry needs to change. Professor Cooper's own research for his Quality of Life Working Survey of 5000 UK managers proved that even the workaholics themselves knew they were being less effective after the 50-hour week mark - so why do it?

The answer is inextricably woven into our economic model which is primed to promote and reward a continuing increase in wealth, but not in well-being. In other words, we envy those with a higher income much more keenly than we do people with more leisure, evidently the least-valued commodity.

And because our model doesn't acknowledge quality of life, often the only way to improve this aspect of our lives is to 'opt-out' or 'downsize' completely; something that achieves nothing, at first glance, for our economy.

Getting the balance right, according to Professor Cooper, is a simple case of technology and trust - utilise the technology to allow employees more flexible working patterns and trust them to achieve the objectives set for them.

"If you've got a CEO who's a workaholic, remember that if they want to kill themselves through work that's their choice, but it's not one they can impose on their staff. Recognising that employees have equally important wider social and community commitments is an important aspect of good management."

ONE HUNDRED PER CENT? IS THAT ALL YOU'VE GOT? IE TALKS TO PROFESSOR CARY COOPER ABOUT GETTING THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE RIGHT. OVERLEAF, PROFESSOR COOPER INTRODUCES IE READERS TO HIS VERY OWN WORK-LIFE BALANCE QUIZ.

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Find out whether you're life-balanced or leisure-challenged by taking the IE work-life balancing act quiz, and remember: honesty is the best policy! Circle the answer which best reflects the way you would behave in each of these situations.

Score 1, 2 or 3

Your chief executive approaches you at 4:30pm to do a last minute job that will require you to stay a further three hours at work on a night that your son/daughter is in a school play. Do you:

- 1 (stay at work and try to finish as soon as possible knowing you will miss part or all of the performance?
- 2 (try to determine how important it really is - if it is a high priority stay for a while and miss only part of the play?
- 3 (be accommodating by saying that you will do it early next morning but you planned this and you don't want to let your son/daughter down, and leave in plenty of time for the play?

You've planned to go out to dinner with close friends during the week, but your professional body has invited you at the last minute to attend a dinner where you will be introduced to a leading government Minister. Do you:

- 1 (say 'yes' - you don't want to miss the opportunity?
- 2 (say you would have liked to but you need more notice - perhaps the next time?
- 3 (say 'no' - you made other plans with close friends and don't want to let them down?

When you are on holiday with your family, you meet at the resort a very senior person in your field. Do you:

- 1 (try to spend as much time with him/her as you can because it might help your career?
- 2 (see him or her from time to time?
- 3 (exchange cards and pleasantries but stay with your family during the whole holiday?

When on a long distance train or long haul flight, you tend to:

- 1 (take your laptop and work whenever possible.
- 2 (do some work but also read a paper/book and talk to other travellers.
- 3 (tend to relax by reading, talking to others or listening to music.

At the weekend, you tend to:

- 1 (do a great deal of work or work-related activities (eg. business golf).
- 2 (do some work but also do activities with the family or friends.
- 3 (treat the weekend solely as private time for yourself and your family/friends.

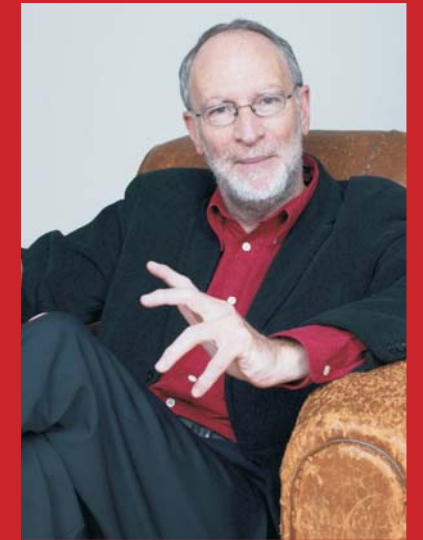
The kind of books you enjoy reading are:

- 1 (business books.
- 2 (a mixture of business and leisure reading.
- 3 (novels and other leisure reading material.

When going to a supermarket, you tend to:

- 1 (get very impatient when waiting in the checkout queue.
- 2 (get somewhat annoyed spending time shopping and waiting in checkout queues but can find some things to do.
- 3 (feel relaxed while shopping, tend to talk to neighbours and don't get uptight about the queues.

_____ Total



You scored: 7-11

If you were on your deathbed awaiting the arrival of the grim reaper, you'd probably use the time productively by checking your e-mails. Your partner has left you (that's why you've been finding it easy to get into the bathroom in the morning!) and your relationship with your kids has devolved to text messaging whilst you're having minor surgery. Yes, you are the impatient, workaholic type who doesn't take enough leisure time for yourself or your loved ones. Remember that occasion when your long-suffering partner stomped off because you made eight mobile calls during your anniversary dinner? We can now tell you they went to start an affair with someone from the 17-21 category.

You scored: 12-16

You tend to let work and your achievement drives spill over into your private life, but you do still spend some time with the relevant others in your life. If you have noticed friends concealing the odd yawn, it's because you're talking about work - again. Aim to bring only the minimum of work home with you. If you find this impossible, calculate how many hours you spend on company business (both in and out of the office) every month, and then divide your salary, after tax, by that number. This should give you an hourly salary rate equivalent to the kid who delivers your local free sheet. (Caution: This calculation has been known to drive some professionals to seek City & Guilds plumbing qualifications.)

You scored: 17-21

You have a very good work-life balance, ensuring that work does not dominate your personal and family life. You haven't turned your family and friends into career counsellors/whipping boys and you're probably quite well liked by subordinates. You make sure you focus on where you are at any given moment and that you work hard at making it a success, whether social or professional. Perhaps you used to be in the 7-11 category until you reassessed your priorities - or perhaps you're on your way there via the 12-16s? Either way, you'll probably never get a promotion with your attitude, but with the balance all in your own and your loved ones' favour, would you really sacrifice everything to get one?