Corner Office

Reports on how mobile executives lose money, the problems of working parents, executive telephone etiquette, and employee assistance programs.

Mommy Dourest

Working mothers are more likely to suffer from depression attributed to job-family conflicts than any other group of employees. However, recent findings show that fully one-third of *both* male and female parents are anxious *all or most of the time* about their children while they're at work.

Based on a survey of 709 employees working in management, clerical, and blue-collar capacities within a Boston-based corporation, Diane S. Burden, Ph.D., and Bradley Googins, Ph.D., of Boston University's School of Social Work determined that working parents worry most about:

☐ the safety of latch-key children,
☐ being able to stay home with a sick child,
☐ making themselves available to attend their children's school events,
☐ accompanying children to health care appointments, and
☐ transporting children to and from child-care organizations.

Approximately half of the respondents (50.3 percent) reported that they were members of dual-earner families; 14.9 percent were married males whose wives were full-time homemakers; 10.5 percent were single parents; and the remainder were single nonparents.

Fully 49 percent of all female employees, particularly parents, stated that they took full responsibility for home-related chores; only 4 percent of married male parents did so. Indeed, married fathers reported that their wives spent four times as many hours engaged in home chores and child care as they did, regardless of whether their wives were employed full-time. And employees who are parents, both male and female, logged 15 to 20 more hours per week on combined work and family responsibilities than did those employees who are not parents. What's more, only 8.5 percent of the parents reported that they engaged outside help to lighten the load.

GENE GRIEF

Most of the parents indicated that they must make special arrangements to care for sick children, and that the onus usually falls upon mothers: Female employees are six times more likely to have to stay home with a sick child (57.1 percent) than are male employees (9.4 percent).

Finally, although 86 percent of the respondents rated their performance on the job as good or unusually good, fewer (62 percent) described their performance within the family unit in equally glowing terms.

For more information on the study, "Balancing Job and Homelife," contact Bradley Googins, Ph.D., Boston University, School of Social Work, 264 Bay State Rd., Boston, MA 02215 (617-353-3811).■

From Hire to Eternity

The ambitious executive who changes jobs three times within a 40-year career span may lose more than $100,000 in defined benefit pension payments when he or she retires at age 65, based on findings by Professor Dennis E. Logue of Dartmouth College's Amos Tuck School.

Logue's study, published by the National Center for Policy Analysis, shows that not only does the job hopper lose all or part of his payments if he accepts another position before he is fully vested in a defined benefit plan—but, since defined benefit payments are contingent upon what an employee earns toward the end of his tenure with a company, even if he is fully vested, the employee loses a substantial amount of money if he leaves an organization at the beginning or middle of his career.

For example, the typical formula by which defined benefits are calculated is 1.5 percent times the number of years of employment multiplied by the individual's average salary for his final three years with the company. Thus, if an executive stays with the same job for 40 years, he will receive 60 percent (1.5 percent times 40) of his average salary at ages 62, 63, and 64. But if he takes only one other job, leaving his first

Job Status	Present Value of Pension Benefits at Retirement Age
No job change	$206,000
One job change after 20 years	$118,000
Three job changes (one every 10 years)	$ 82,000

Assumed mortality: Pension Benefit Guarantee Corp. healthy male
Other assumptions:
Final salary: $50,000
Discount rate: 9% per year
Retirement age: 65 years
Career span: 40 years
Salary growth: 10% per year
Benefit formula: .015 × number of years of employment × average salary of final three years
Vesting: Fully vested in all plans

Source: Adapted by Peat Marwick from a chart that appeared in "Pension Plans at Risk," October 1985, National Center for Policy Analysis.

employer after 20 years, then he will receive a pension from his second employer equal to 30 percent (1.5 percent times 20) of his salary at ages 62, 63, and 64, and another pension from his first employer equal to 30 percent (1.5 percent times 20) of his presumably lower salary at ages 42, 43, and 44. Each time he moves, he freezes a part of the pension benefits at a level commensurate with his current salary rather than his salary prior to retirement.

For the upwardly mobile executive, this may be a crucial concern, which should be addressed during contract negotiations with prospective employers. On the other hand, CEOs may appreciate defined-benefit plans, says Logue, for the very reason that mobile executives dislike them: These plans encourage job stability.

For more details on the study, "Pension Plans at Risk," contact Becci Breining, National Center for Policy Analysis, 7701 N. Stemmons, Suite 717, Dallas, TX 75247 (214-951-0306).■

Keeping Your Own Counsel

Nearly half (47 percent) of 283 U.S. companies polled recently by the Administrative Management Society (AMS) indicated that they sponsor some type of formally defined employee assistance or counseling program(s).

Among those companies that offer employee assistance programs (EAPs), 82 percent make alcohol/drug abuse counseling available to personnel and 66 percent offer assistance to staff members suffering from stress or other emotional problems. Both types of therapy, which are perceived as personal and confidential, are usually handled by outside services—in which case, 39 percent of the surveyed companies reimburse employees for all expenses, 41 percent pay part of the expenses, and 5 percent pay nothing.

Also popular are preretirement counseling (available at 69 percent of the organizations that offer EAPs), termination or out-placement programs (52 percent), and career counseling (50 percent). These programs, which are perceived as job related, are most often administered within the company.

Marital, financial, and legal counseling are offered by one-quarter to one-half of those companies with EAPs. According to Jeff Long, director of communications for the AMS, "There's been a significant increase over the past five years in the number of companies that are offering these three specific nonwork-related programs." In addition, smoking and weight reduction programs are sponsored by 40 percent of the EAP respondents.

Does the availability of these benefits also benefit the employer in some manner? Reduced absenteeism has been reported by 32 percent of companies that offer EAPs, while 21 percent have experienced reduced turnover. However, nearly half (47 percent) noted that they have seen neither a reduction in absenteeism nor in employee turnover in connection with EAPs. Long comments, "Many organizations offer EAPs in an effort to boost employee satisfaction, but they make little effort to actually measure the results of these programs. That's especially true of small- and mid-sized companies that may not have the resources to study the results. Therefore, it is possible that these programs are much more successful in deterring absenteeism and turnover than our survey numbers would lead one to believe. What we can attest to is the fact that organizations that have begun offering these programs over the past four to five years seem to be pleased with them."

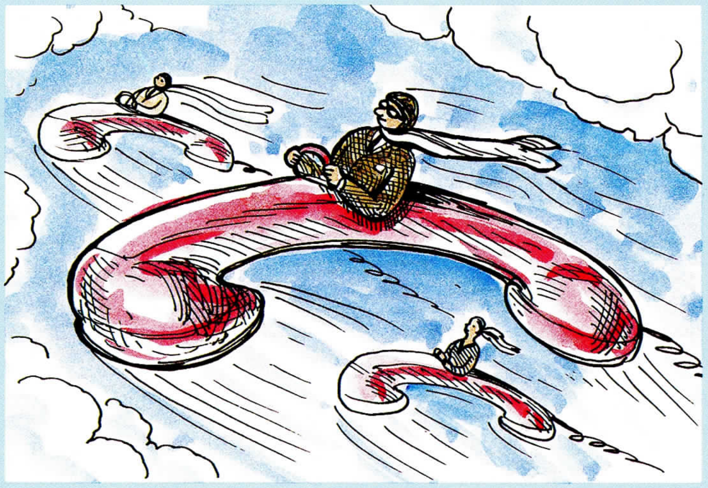
For more information on the report, entitled "AMS New Benefits Survey," contact the Administrative Management Society, 2360 Maryland Rd., Willow Grove, PA 19090 (215-659-4300).■

With This Ring

Most of the nation's executives answer their own telephones and dial their own business calls, according to a study conducted by Accountemps, a New York-based temporary personnel service.

A survey of vice presidents and personnel directors working within 100 of America's 1,000 largest companies revealed that 70 percent of the respondents place their own calls—and that only 20 percent have a secretary or assistant make contact first and then buzz them to pick up.

In fact, many of these executives believe that having an assistant phone ahead to make the initial contact is the height of telephone tactlessness. Over half (56 percent) of the respondents indicated that they are irritated when a secretary phones and then puts them on hold until the individual who wishes to speak to them is ready to get on the line. On the other hand, 40 percent of those surveyed stated that they were not disturbed by such behavior, and 4 percent of the respondents had no opinion.



ELLIOTT BANFIELD

Are most senior executives so tough to reach that it is necessary to have an assistant phone ahead? Not according to these survey results. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents reported that they do not have their incoming phone calls screened by a secretary or an assistant.

For more details, contact Marc Silbert, Vice President, Accountemps, 522 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10036.■
—Cheryl Waixel