

# An Alliance for Work-Life Progress Survey Brief



## State of the Work-Life Profession 2005

Survey of Alliance for Work-Life Progress (AWLP) Members  
April 2005

# About AWLP and AWLP Membership Surveys



*An Affiliate of WorldatWork®*

## About AWLP

Alliance for Work-Life Progress (AWLP) is a membership organization committed to the development and advancement of the field of work-life effectiveness.

Founded in 1996, AWLP addresses work-life issues through publications, forums and professional development strategies. AWLP strives both to improve the professionalism of those working in the work-life arena, and to influence better integration of work and family life. An affiliate organization of WorldatWork, AWLP is headquartered in Scottsdale, Ariz.



***The Professional Association for  
Compensation, Benefits and Total Rewards***

## About WorldatWork

WorldatWork is the world's leading not-for-profit professional association dedicated to knowledge leadership in compensation, benefits and total rewards. Founded in 1955, WorldatWork focuses on human resources disciplines associated with attracting, retaining and motivating employees. Besides serving as the membership association of the professions, the WorldatWork family

of organizations provides education, certification (Certified Compensation Professional — CCP®, Certified Benefits Professional®— CBP and Global Remuneration Professional — GRP®), publications, knowledge resources, surveys, conferences, research and networking. WorldatWork Society of Certified Professionals and Alliance for Work-Life Progress (AWLP) are part of the WorldatWork family.

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An AWLP Member Survey Brief – March 2005

## Introduction and Methodology

This report summarizes the results of a 2005 survey of Alliance for Work-Life Progress (AWLP) members and conference attendees. Because the survey was designed to examine the current state of the profession from the practitioner perspective, it intentionally screened out service providers, vendors and academics after a few initial questions. The results below represent the views and practices of current practitioners in the field.

In January, surveys were electronically sent to 549 AWLP members. In February, attendees of the AWLP Annual Conference & Exhibition were offered an additional opportunity to participate in the survey via hard copy. Through both of these channels, 191 non-duplicated completed surveys were received, a response rate representing 31 percent of the total AWLP membership<sup>1</sup>. A high response rate and a similar demographic profile between survey respondents and the general AWLP membership as a whole provides a high level of confidence regarding the validity of the data contained in this report.

## Key Findings

### ***Are the ranks of work-life practitioners dwindling, static or increasing?***

The number of work-life practitioners appears to be either static or increasing. Seventy-five percent of the survey's respondents continued past the initial screening question, meaning they are practicing in the work-life profession as either a full or part-time work-life practitioner, or an HR professional with some work-life effectiveness responsibilities (the remaining 25 percent in the survey serve the profession in another way).

When asked what has happened in the past year to the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees dedicated to work-life effectiveness programs in their organization, a combined 91 percent indicated that the number has either remained static (69 percent) or increased (22 percent). Only 9 percent said the number of work-life FTEs has decreased in their organization during the past year

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<sup>1</sup> Ten questionnaires were completed without any identifying information, and although these responses were included in the individual question data and analysis, they are not represented in the demographic information contained in this report.

***Who are the champions of work-life effectiveness programs today?***

According to respondents, top management (CEO or top HR professional) is leading the way today when it comes to championing work-life effectiveness programs. When asked who was the champion for work-life in their organization five years ago vs. today, the number of respondents who believe that employees were (and are) the primary champions for work-life, decreased substantially.

***Who has responsibility for work-life programs within organizations?***

Almost two-thirds of respondents indicated that a “work-life specialist” — not an HR or other generalist — is currently responsible for implementing work-life effectiveness programs within their organizations. In addition, the majority of those organizations had a work-life specialist role one year ago. About 30 percent have organizational work-life effectiveness under the responsibility of a generalist.

***What are the common areas of focus for work-life professionals?***

The time allocation by work-life related employees within organizations appears to be fairly well balanced among the seven categories presented in the AWLP model of organizational work-life effectiveness — which lends significant credence and validity to the model. The single largest amount of time spent by work-life professionals today is in the health and well-being category, followed by a cluster of three other categories: culture-change initiatives, workplace flexibility and caring for dependents. The final three categories of the AWLP model also created a cluster around the 10 percent range.

When presented with the same list of categories and asked about their organizational emphasis for 2005, respondents indicated that the workplace flexibility category would be a focus this year to attract, retain and motivate employees.

## **Detailed Survey Results**

In early 2005, the AWLP administered a survey to its entire membership with the primary goal of examining the state of the work-life profession. A secondary goal of the survey was to test and validate the AWLP seven-category model of organizational work-life effectiveness. The AWLP model contains seven broad “buckets” or areas of potential organizational focus for employee work-life effectiveness programs. The seven categories are:

- Workplace flexibility
- Paid and unpaid time off
- Health and well-being
- Caring for dependents
- Financial support (e.g., adoption assistance, financial planning, etc.)
- Community involvement (e.g., volunteering, philanthropy, etc.)
- Culture-change initiatives (e.g., diversity/inclusion, work redesign, etc.)

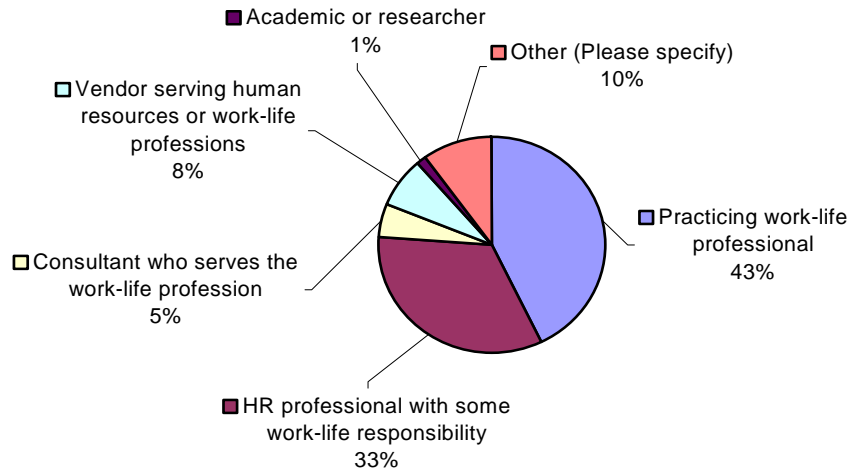
Although vendors, academics, service providers and consultants who serve the work-life profession are a critical component of the field, this survey was specifically designed for practitioners. An initial screening question on the survey allowed all respondents to self-identify their current status in the profession, such as “practicing work-life professional,” or “academic/researcher,” etc.

To ensure clarity of the results, those that did not indicate whether they were full or part-time work-life professionals were asked to skip to the end and submit because of the possibility that they could significantly skew the results of certain lines of inquiry. For example, on a question such as how time is allocated within an organization to certain work-life programs, a respondent from a work-life consulting firm might answer quite differently from a practitioner in a manufacturing company. The first survey question served to separate current practitioners from those who serve the field in other ways.

### **Respondents’ Status in the Work-Life Field**

More than three-quarters of the survey’s participants indicated they are either a currently practicing work-life professional or HR professional with at least some current work-life responsibility. About 14 percent identified themselves as consultants, vendors or academics serving the work-life field, and a small group of “other” respondents included a handful of non-HR directors, employee assistance program (EAP) managers, and a few people that described themselves as currently “in transition.”

**Figure 1. Which of the following best describes your current status in the work-life field? (n=159)**



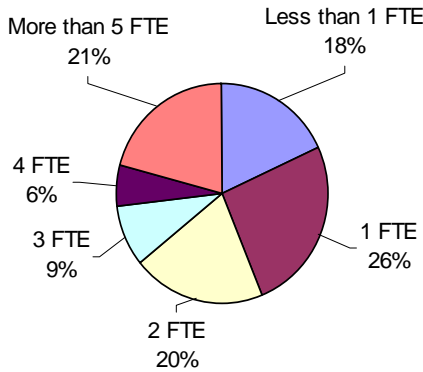
As noted above, following this first screening question, all respondents who indicated they were non-practitioners were asked to skip to the end for two opportunities to offer open-ended comments about the state of the profession. Those who indicated they were practitioners were asked to continue on through the rest of the survey.

### **Staffing: Current FTEs**

The survey's second question used the seven-category AWLP model of organizational work-life effectiveness to ask respondents how many FTE employees worked on these issues within their organization. Eighty-two percent of respondents reported that their organization has at least one FTE position dedicated to work-life effectiveness (as defined by the categories).

A somewhat surprising 21 percent indicated that their organization employs five or more FTEs dedicated to work-life. A closer look at these specific organizations indicates that they are predominantly large companies. Additionally, because "health and well-being" is specifically listed as a component of the AWLP work-life model, it is possible that some respondents counted their benefits staff that works on employee health care in this calculation.

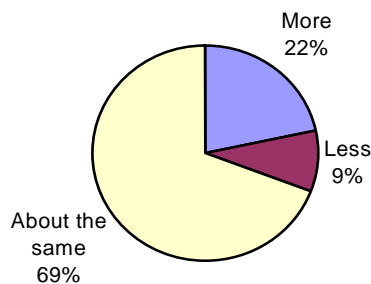
**Figure 2. Based on the amount of work performed in your organization within any or all of the seven categories of work-life effectiveness listed in the survey's introduction, how many FTE work-life professionals does your organization currently employ, including yourself? (n=130)**



**Staffing: Change in the Number of FTEs**

The presence of work-life professionals within organizations seems to be stable — and in more than a fifth of respondent organizations (22 percent), it is increasing. Fewer than seven out of ten organizations (69 percent) say their organization has about the same number of FTEs today on work-life as it did one year ago. Only 9 percent of respondents say that the number of full-time employees dedicated to work-life effectiveness has decreased during the past year.

**Figure 3. Does this number of FTE employees represent more, less or about the same number of FTEs that worked on work-life effectiveness in your organization one year ago? (n=130)**



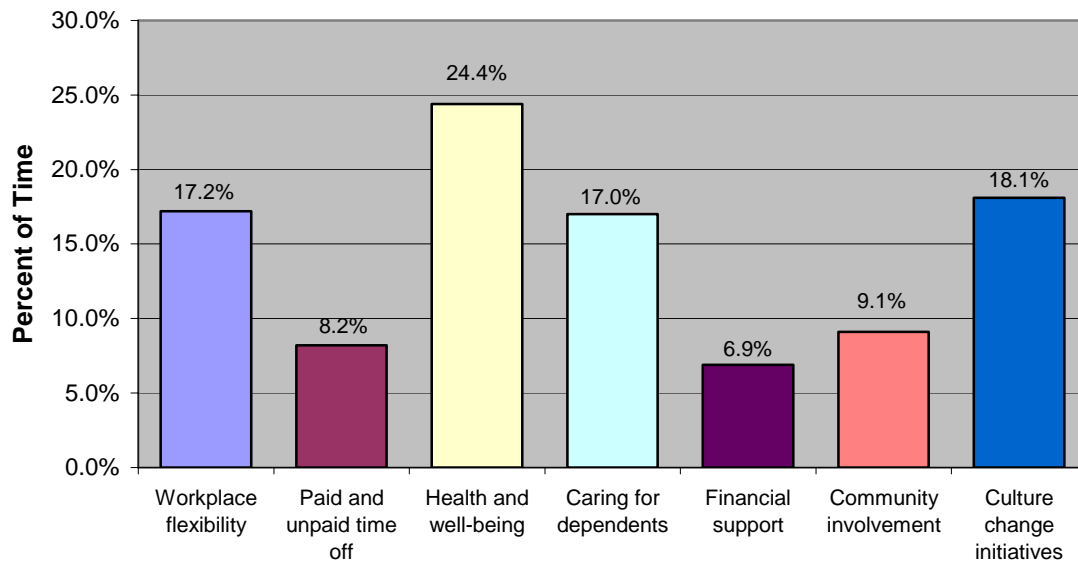
**Respondents' Own Time Allocation Across the Seven Work-Life Categories**

Figure 4 illustrates how respondents reported their personal time allocation on the job among the seven work-life effectiveness categories presented at the beginning of the

survey (whether the respondent indicated full-time or only part-time on work-life programs). In aggregate, the data in Figure 4 paints a picture of how the typical work-life professional today spends his or her time on the job, and the picture is rather balanced — in other words, it is not dominated by any single area of work-life effectiveness. The single largest allocation of time is 24 percent on health and well-being, meaning the average work-life professional spends about a quarter of his or her job on organizational health and well-being initiatives. This is perhaps not surprising, given the focus in recent years in virtually all organizations on containing health care costs.

Behind health and well-being were three categories that all came in roughly the same in terms of time spent, between 17 and 18 percent: culture change initiatives, workplace flexibility and caring for dependents. Finally, at the bottom end of the scale was another cluster of three categories, all hovering in the 7 percent to 9 percent range: community involvement, paid and unpaid time off, and financial support.

**Figure 4. Of the total amount of time you personally spend in your job on work-life initiatives, please indicate the approximate allocation of time dedicated to each of the following areas** (please enter a value of "0" if no time is spent in that area. The total should equal 100%).



### Respondent's Competency Self-Assessment Across the Seven Categories

While Figure 4 indicated that respondents spend the most time on health and well-being programs within the work-life function, this category is not where respondents feel most competent. On average, by a slight margin, respondents believe their competence level in workplace flexibility is the highest, followed closely by health and well-being, and caring for dependents. Consistent with the time allocation, financial support was rated as the category in which respondents felt least competent.

**Figure 5. Please assess your personal competency on each of the categories below (even if your organization does not offer any programs in that area) by ranking the categories from one to seven, with one being "most competent" and seven being "least competent":**

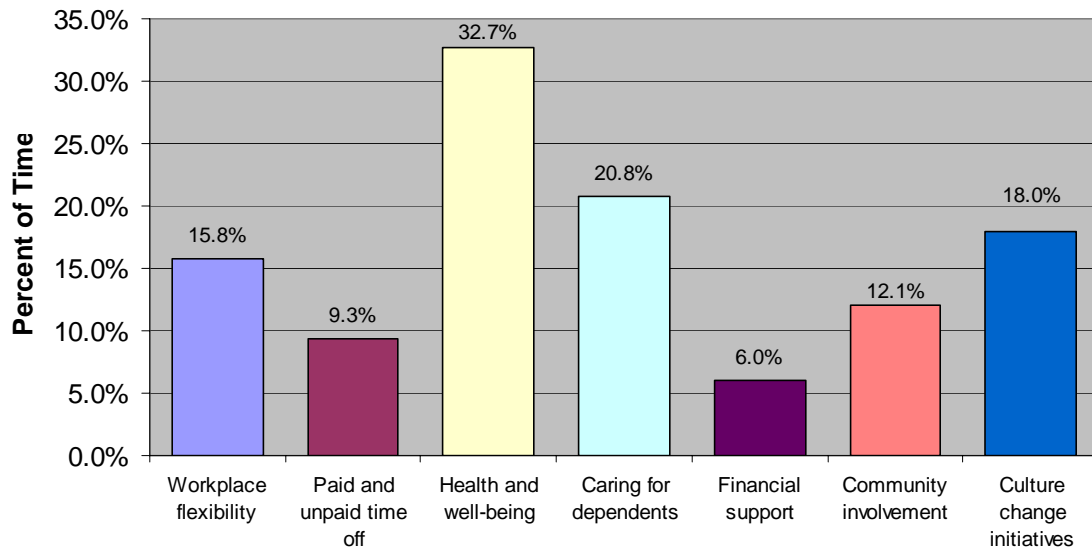
| <b>Rank</b> | <b>Work-Life Effectiveness Category</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>n</b> |
|-------------|---|-------------|----------|
| <b>1</b>    | <b>Workplace flexibility</b>            | 3.09        | 128      |
| <b>2</b>    | <b>Health and well-being</b>            | 3.15        | 126      |
| <b>3</b>    | <b>Paid and unpaid time off</b>         | 3.57        | 127      |
| <b>4</b>    | <b>Caring for dependents</b>            | 3.55        | 127      |
| <b>5</b>    | <b>Culture change initiatives</b>       | 3.80        | 127      |
| <b>6</b>    | <b>Community involvement</b>            | 4.19        | 126      |
| <b>7</b>    | <b>Financial support</b>                | 4.62        | 126      |

**Organizational Time Allocation Across the Seven Work-Life Categories (All FTEs)**

Figure 6 shifts the focus of a previous question regarding time allocation away from the individual answering the survey and asks about time allocation for the entire group of FTE employees working on work-life issues within the respondent’s organization.

The graphic representation of Figure 6 is nearly a mirror image of Figure 4, with the most time being allocated to health and well-being programs within the organizational work-life framework – although this category increases from 24 percent to nearly 33 percent of all work-life FTE time allotted within organizations to health and well-being. There is also significant consistency between personal allocation of time and the allocation of time among all work-life FTEs on the second and third clusters of categories. The second cluster of workplace flexibility, caring for dependents and culture change initiatives all came in a range of about 15 percent to 20 percent each, similar to the results in Figure 4. The third cluster (community involvement, paid and unpaid time off and financial support) also remained fairly constant.

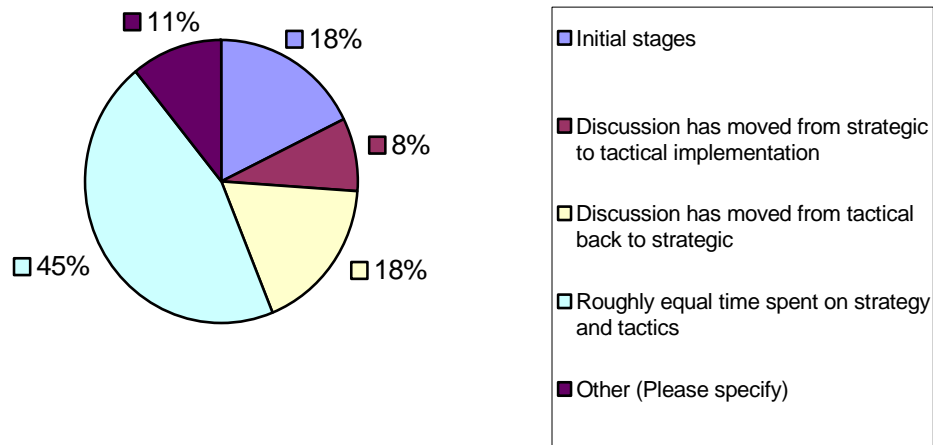
**Figure 6. If your organization has more than one FTE employee spending time on work-life initiatives (based on your answer in question 2), please indicate the approximate allocation of time that ALL WORK-LIFE RELATED FTEs combined dedicate to each of the following areas (please enter a value of "0" if no time is spent in that area. the total should equal 100 percent).**



### Strategic Vs. Tactical Nature of Work-Life

When asked about the strategic and/or tactical nature of the work-life function in their organization during the last year, the single largest block of respondents (roughly 45 percent) said that nearly equal amounts of time were spent on strategy and tactics. Eighteen percent of respondents indicated that discussions have moved from tactical back to strategic. Another 18 percent reported that they are still in the initial stages of development of their work-life function. The relatively small number of respondents within the “other” category talked about diminishing resources and budget cuts, the allocation of work-life initiatives among various departments, and how discussions are limited because the work-life programs are already quite mature.

**Figure 7. Which of the following best describes the status of the work-life function in your organization during the past year? (n=129)**

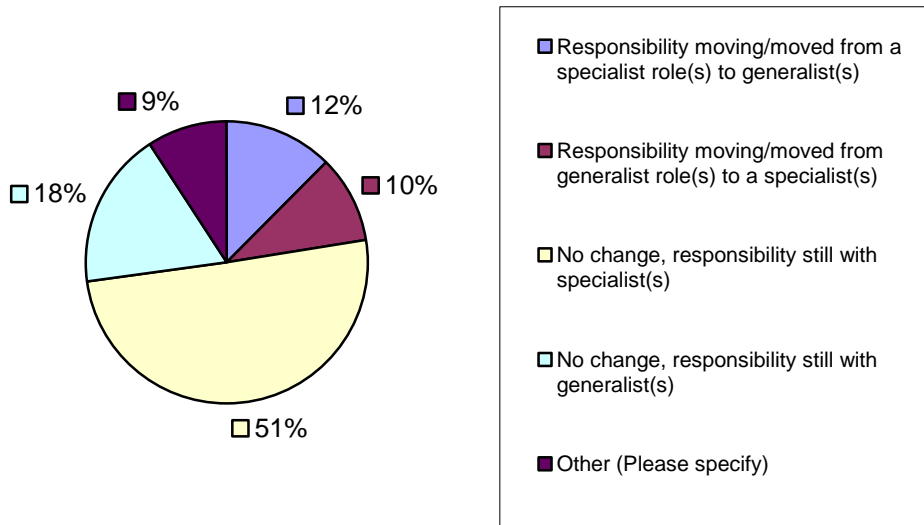


**Who Serves the Work-Life Function: Generalist or Specialist?**

When the survey turned to a question about whether the organizational work-life function was occupied by either a generalist or a specialist during the past year, roughly half of all respondents (51 percent) said that their organization had a work-life specialist in the role. In addition, about one in 10 (10 percent) indicated that the responsibility for implementing work-life effectiveness programs moved from a generalist to a specialist role within the past year. Thus, a combined six in 10 organizations in the survey reported they have a specialist, as opposed to a generalist, working on work-life issues.

About 30 percent said that an HR generalist was either given responsibility for implementing work-life effectiveness programs in their organization during the last year or already had the responsibility. Some of those in the “other” category said that implementation is a joint effort between generalist and specialist roles. One respondent mentioned the formation within the past year of an employee-based, work-life “action team” to handle implementation of work-life effectiveness programs.

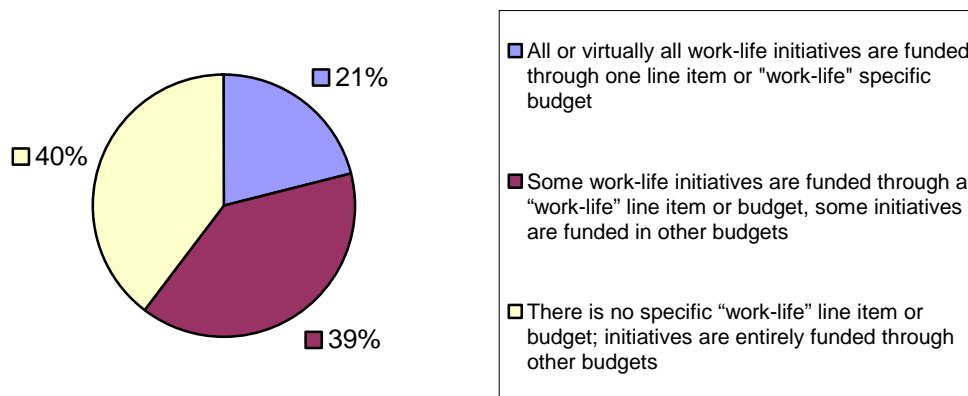
**Figure 8. Regarding the implementation of work-life effectiveness programs in your organization, which of the following best describes what has happened during the past year? (n=129)**



### Work-Life Budgets

Only one in five organizations (21 percent) have a specific, “work-life” budget or line item within their organizational budget, while the largest percentage of respondents reported that work-life initiatives are funded through various line-items and departments. Another 39 percent of respondents said their organization’s funding for work-life is a combination of specific work-life line items and parts of other budgets.

**Figure 9. Is “work-life” a specific line item in your organization's budget, or is it part of another budget (e.g., benefits, diversity)? (n=128)**

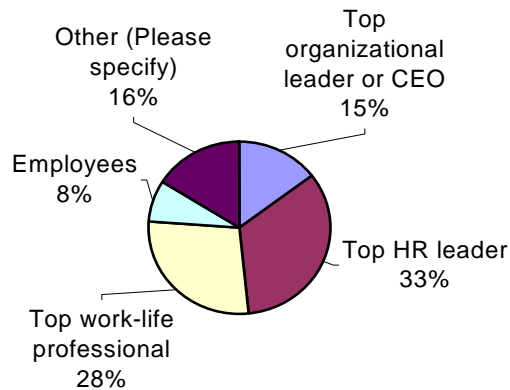


## Who Advocates for Work-Life Effectiveness?

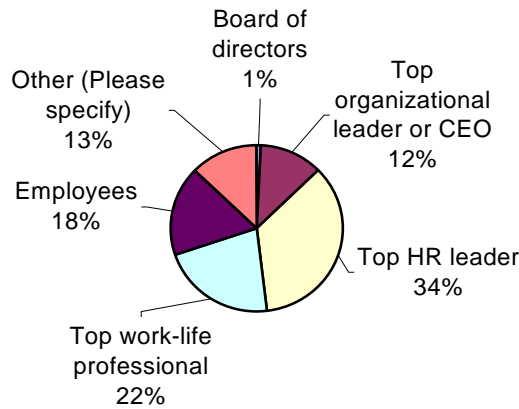
Figures 9 and 10 show a comparison of who the survey's respondents believe was the primary champion of work-life effectiveness five years ago, vs. today. The results show a slight shift toward more involvement from the top organizational leader or CEO, and movement away from employees as the primary champion. Today, a combined 48 percent of respondents say that the primary champion is either the top organizational leader/CEO (15 percent) or top HR leader (33 percent). While these figures are comparable to what respondents believed to be the situation five years ago, the shift away from employees as champions is a suggestion that work-life effectiveness programs are more valued today by organizational leadership.

Most of the respondents that chose "other" said that the work-life effectiveness champion within their organization today runs the gamut from various directors and managers to a combination of all levels. Those who answered "other" regarding the organizational champion five years ago commonly said that a work-life effectiveness champion did not exist five years ago.

**Figure 10. Who would you say is the primary champion of work-life effectiveness within your organization today? (n=130)**



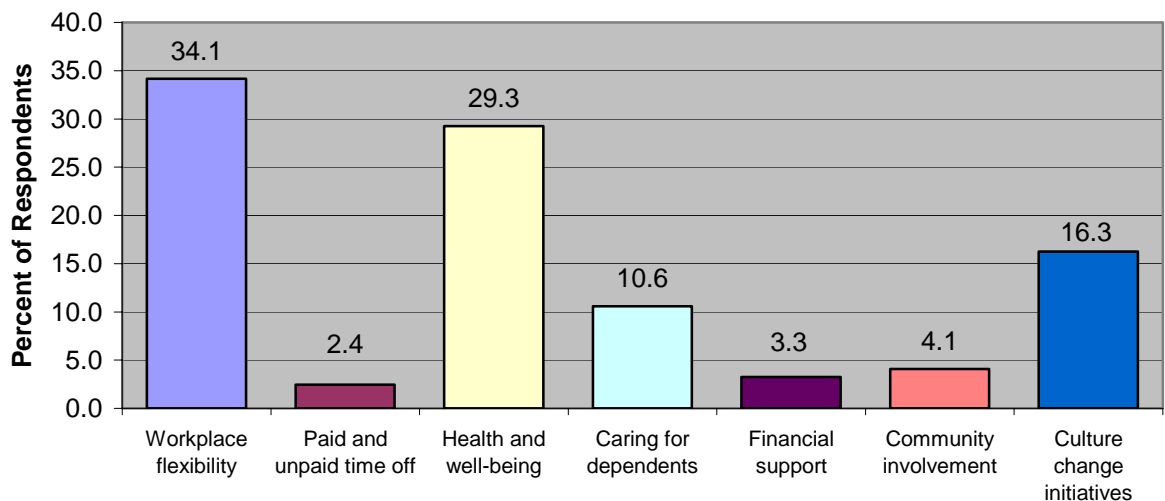
**Figure 11. Who would you say was the primary champion of work-life effectiveness within your organization five years ago? (n=125)**



**Primary Areas of Focus for 2005**

During 2005, respondents indicated that their organizations would be placing the greatest emphasis on the workplace flexibility facet of work-life effectiveness for employees (34 percent). Health and well-being finished second (29 percent) among the seven categories of work-life effectiveness, and culture change initiatives came in a distant third place at just over 16 percent.

**Figure 12. In 2005, which of the following facets of work-life effectiveness do you believe your organization will be placing the greatest emphasis on in order to attract, retain and motivate employees? (n=123)**



## Respondent Demographics

### *Number of Employees*

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Less than 100   | 12.1% |
| 100 - 499       | 3.4%  |
| 500 - 999       | 8.6%  |
| 1,000 - 2,499   | 8.6%  |
| 2,500 - 4,999   | 12.1% |
| 5,000 - 9,999   | 15.5% |
| 10,000 - 19,999 | 13.8% |
| 20,000 or more  | 25.9% |

### *Industry*

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Healthcare & Social Assistance                | 17.4% |
| Professional, Scientific & Technical Services | 15.7% |
| Finance & Insurance                           | 13.9% |
| Manufacturing                                 | 7.8%  |
| Educational Services                          | 6.1%  |
| Other Services (except Public Administration) | 6.1%  |
| Retail Trade                                  | 3.5%  |
| Utilities                                     | 2.6%  |
| Public Administration                         | 2.6%  |
| Transportation & Warehousing                  | 1.7%  |
| Information                                   | 1.7%  |
| Other   | 20.9% |