



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

News/Business/Finance/Lifestyle/Health Editors

### **Despite the Economic Downturn, Nearly One-Third of Hong Kong Employees Would Consider Leaving Their Current Job for Better Work-Life Balance, According to New Survey From Community Business**

**Hong Kong, 19 October 2009** – The latest survey by Community Business, a leading non profit organisation specialising in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Hong Kong, has shown that work-life balance still remains a priority for employees – despite the current economic climate. More than two-thirds (67.7%) of respondents specifically said they believe it is important for their employers to address work-life balance during the current economic climate. Whilst 30% of employees said they would consider leaving their current job for better work-life balance elsewhere. This latter finding is particularly striking amongst younger workers: nearly half (47.8%) among respondents age 29 or younger.

Commenting on the findings from the State of Work-life Balance in Hong Kong Survey 2009, Ms. Shaun Bernier, Managing Director at Community Business said, “The findings of our latest survey clearly demonstrate the business case for continued investment and focus on the work-life balance of employees. In the current economic climate all employers are under pressure to achieve more with less – and this can often take its toll on employees. But this survey tells us that work-life balance is still important to employees and if you don’t focus the wellbeing of your staff, they may well leave in search of better options elsewhere. These findings should serve as a wake-up call to employers who have yet to prioritise the work-life balance needs of their employees.”

The survey is the fourth study of its kind commissioned by Community Business and conducted by the Public Opinion Programme (POP), the University of Hong Kong. Random telephone interviews were conducted in July 2009 and 1,013 full time workers were successfully interviewed.

The survey is an initiative of the Community Business Leadership Team (CBLT), a group of business leaders whose aim is to raise awareness and promote CSR in Hong Kong. Mr. Jim Thompson, Chair of the CBLT and Chairman of Crown Worldwide Group remarked, “This research clearly indicates that poor work-life balance, with its negative impact on health and productivity poses a real threat to business. At a time when companies rely more than ever on a healthy, engaged and productive workforce, this has major ramifications for companies and the onus is on us as leaders in Hong Kong to take the wellbeing of our staff seriously.”

#### **Additional highlights of this year’s survey include:**

**Hong Kong employees continue to work long hours.** Results from the survey show that employees work an average of 48.4 hours per week. This is 21% more than the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) recommendation, which states workers should work no more that 40 hours a week with occasional paid overtime.

**Employees spend less than two hours per day on their personal life, consistent with findings from 2008 and 2007.** 70.6% of Hong Kong employees said they spend less than two hours per day on personal or private activities in 2009. 7.8% of employees spend no time on their personal life at all.



**Despite the current economic downturn, employees' expectations of work-life balance have not changed and are far from what they consider ideal.** The preferred work-life ratio of employees is 62:38 and has not changed since last year, reflecting that employees' expectations of their work-life balance has not been affected by the current economic climate. Employees reported that their actual work-life balance ratio is 83:17. According to Dr Robert Chung, Director of POP, "In the midst of the economic recession, these findings show that the work-life balance of Hong Kong's work force has remained relatively unchanged. Further, the significant gap that still exists between people's preferred work time of 62% and their actual work time of 83% indicates that there is ample room for improvement."

**Poor work-life balance continues to negatively impact productivity, family life and health** Over three quarters (76.1%) of employees say they encounter various problems as a result of poor work-life balance. Over half (53.4%) suffer from prolonged fatigue, sleepiness and extreme tiredness, while 40.8% of employees do not have any time for their partner and family and 31.0% suffer from insomnia and poor diet as a result of work pressures.

**Financial security has overtaken long working hours as the most difficult work-life challenge this year.** Employees say the greatest obstacle they face in achieving work-life balance is the need to ensure financial security (13.8%). This has overtaken long working hours (12.1%), which was the key obstacle in 2008. Increased workload due to company downsizing (11.5%) followed by leader's attitude (11.4%) rank as the third and fourth most difficult work-life balance challenges.

**Employers have made little progress in their efforts to promote work-life balance.** Employees give their employers a score of 4.7 out of 10 in 2009 for efforts and resources spent on promoting work-life balance. This is the same score as in 2006 and 2007.

**Employees identify a 5-day work week and more paid annual leave as the best ways to help them achieve a better work-life balance.** The largest group of employees (26.9%) believe that a 5-day work week would most help them achieve a better work-life balance, followed by more paid annual leave (18.8%). This is consistent with findings over the past three years. Flexible working time (10.8%) and the option to work from home sometimes (9.4%) surpass career breaks/unpaid leave (8.9%) to rank as the third and fourth most desirable work arrangements in 2009.

The survey is sponsored by Baker & McKenzie, Cisco, Coca-Cola, Crown Worldwide Group, KPMG, Microsoft Hong Kong Limited, MTR Corporation, The Prudential Assurance Company Limited, Standard Chartered Bank (Hong Kong) Limited, Thomson Reuters and Time Technology. For full survey findings, visit [www.communitybusiness.org](http://www.communitybusiness.org)

### **About Community Business**

Community Business is a unique membership based non-profit organisation whose mission is to lead, inspire and support businesses to improve their positive impact on people and communities. Community Business provides training, facilitation and advice to some of the world's leading companies in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its major areas of focus include: CSR strategy, corporate community investment, diversity and inclusion and work-life balance. Founded in 2003 and based in Hong Kong, Community Business currently works with a number of organisations, small, medium and large, committed to CSR. For more information, visit [www.communitybusiness.org](http://www.communitybusiness.org).

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