

The Usability of Work/Life Policies and Programs
Mini-Cases for Analysis and Discussion
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Usability Cases:

1. Dave is a 30 year old married man with 2 children ages 7 & 5. He is a highly motivated "career man". His career orientation can best be described as "getting ahead." He works for Solomon Corporation as a middle level executive. Solomon has been cited on numerous occasions for being one of the best company's to work for in regards to work/life balance, but their climate has lived up to the media hype in recent months. Dave's wife is having their third child in a few weeks and has asked Dave to take 2-3 weeks of his Family and Medical Leave Act time to help her with the kids. How "usable" are the company policies to Dave? What factors will impact Dave's decision rather to take leave time or not?
2. Donna is a 45 year old married women with two kids ages 12 & 16. Her husband works full-time as a high powered attorney in town. Donna has always given up career growth to help her family have a more balanced life and to be there for her kids. Donna works for Excel Incorporated as a sales representative. Excel is widely known for their long hours and unwillingness to work with employees on issues of work/life balance. Donna's daughter is going to undergo surgery on her knee and will need a few weeks of rehabilitation. Donna and her husband are debating who will take time off to be with their daughter. What factors will impact Donna's decision? How will she determine if the company policies that allow for flexible hours or part-time positions are "usable"?
3. Marcia is a single women who is 38 years old. She has worked hard for her career, but is moving into another state where she is seeking a slower pace in life. She works for Medtec as a biological researcher and is well known for her discoveries in the laboratory. Her findings have led to the development of many life saving drugs. Her company is neutral on work/life issues, neither friendly nor hostile. Her mother is suffering from cancer and needs some help with her medical issues. Her mother lives in the same city as Marcia. Donna can take time off under the Family and Medical Leave Act, ask for flexible hours for the next few months, go part-time or continue to work full time and just help her mother after work hours. What factors will impact Donna's decision? How will she determine if the policies available are "usable"?