

# The Evolution of the Work-Life Field

Prof. Brad Harrington  
Boston College Center for Work & Family  
Carroll School of Management  
AWLP 2007 Conference  
Phoenix, Arizona

# CWF Mission

The Center for Work & Family is committed to enhancing the success of organizations and the quality of life of today's workforce by providing leadership for the integration of work and life, an essential for individual, organizational and community success.

**Key differentiator:**  
**Bridging the worlds of  
research and practice.**



# Objectives of the Evolution Study

- Understand how workforce strategies evolved in large companies in response to need for work and family integration over the past 15 years
- Examine the current trends that will impact work-life practices
- Identify the key focus areas / skills needed by work-life practitioners in the future



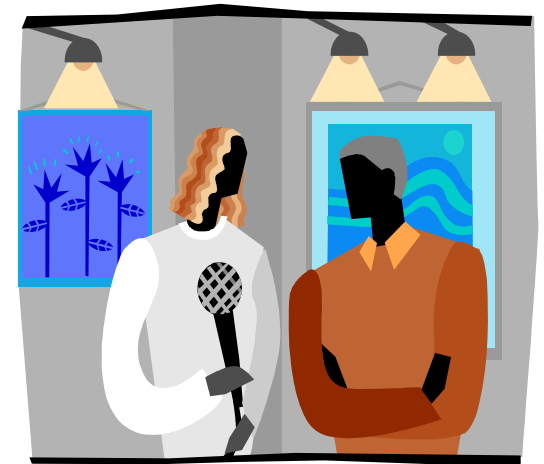
# Methodology and Sources

- *Review of journal articles and books on the field and its history*
- *Discussions with thought leaders including:*
  - *Practitioners*
  - *Researchers*
  - *Founders of the field*
- *Existing interviews from other studies (Ellen G – Legacy Awards)*
- *Future Search Conference*
- *Survey practitioners and experts on key themes*



# Interviewees included (for example) ...

- Anne Andreosatos, Proctor & Gamble
- Prof. Lotte Bailyn, MIT
- Kathleen Christianson, Sloan Foundation
- Prof. Bob Drago, Penn State
- Carol Evans, Working Mother
- Ellen Galinsky, FWI
- Stacey Gibson, Bristol-Myers, Squibb
- Maria Ferris, IBM
- Ralph Larsen, formerly of J & J
- Prof. Shelley MacDermid, Purdue
- Rhona Rapoport, Researcher
- Faith Wohl, DuPont (retired)



“My marching orders for the field would be to get out of the box that we’re in. Look at the world as it is today, but, more importantly, as it’s going to be in five years, or ten years, or more ...I think the Work/Life field needs to do that on a much larger scale than it has so far. Because if we don’t understand the context and the change that’s happening in that context, we’ll be asleep at the switch. And wouldn’t it be tragic if we in the Work Life field missed the changes that [may be] coming?”

Faith Wohl

# Future Search Conference

- Held July 18-19, 2006 at Boston College
- Brought together
  - Practitioners
  - Academics
  - Not-for-profit leaders
- 2 days in conversation, exploration, no presentations
- **Goal: Discuss key trends and begin developing a vision for future of workforce management**



# Future Search Conference Attendees

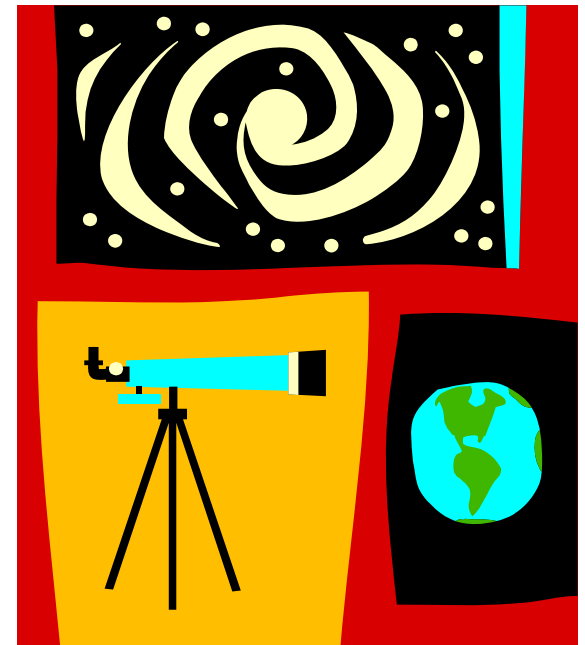
- Lotte Bailyn, MIT
- Donna Klein, Corporate Voices
- Peggy Henderson-Divers, IBM
- Candi Lange, Eli Lilly
- Jessica DeGroot, Third Path Inst.
- Kathy Kacher, Career-Life Alliance
- Bill Albright, MITRE
- Kathy Lynch, CoWA
- Ann Andreosatos, P & G
- Lois Backon, FWI
- Jackie James, CWF
- Judi Casey, Sloan Network
- Joyce Fletcher, Simmons
- Kathie Lingle, AWLP
- John Hamilton, Philips
- Andi Moselle, AstraZeneca
- Kay Campbell, GSK
- Karen Shine, Digitas
- Mindy Fried, Researcher
- Prof. Sandy Burud, Claremont
- Peter Linkow, WFD
- Erin Sullivan, Fidelity
- Laura den Dulk, Researcher
- Brad Harrington, BC

# Future Search Takeaways & next steps

- W-L field is in progress, still clearly has future
- Many of the people at Future Search have the ability to help influence changes in the field
- A multi-pronged approach is needed
- We need to engage other functions in this endeavor and work through the HR silos
- CWF can play a critical role in catalyzing the future: Write-up results and share widely
- Develop a clear action plan with owners who will move the actions forward - Sustain the momentum!

# Important Present and Future Trends

- Globalization
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Changing Demographics
- Importance of Diversity
- Increasing Healthcare Costs
- Changing Gender Roles
- Culture of Overwork
- Growing Inequality / Insecurity
- Pervasive technology - we can't get away from



# Weighting Priorities: The \$100 Test

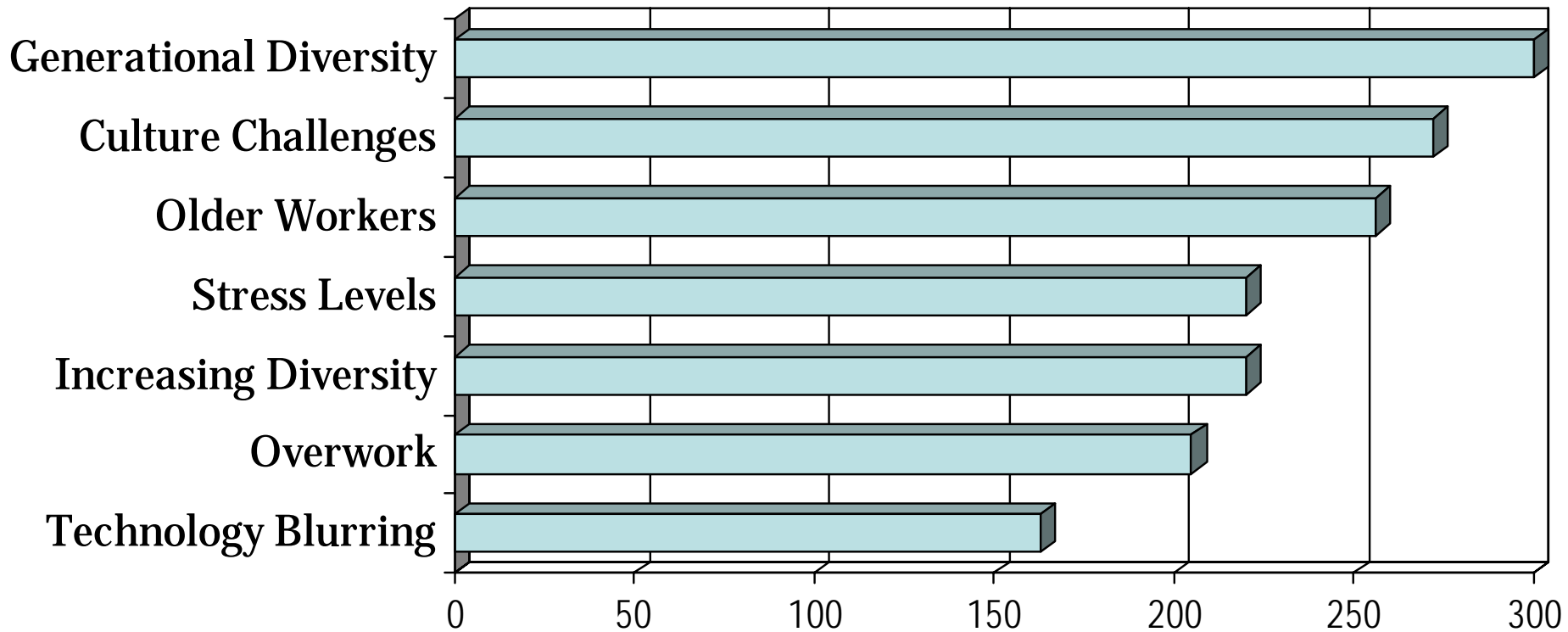
- You have \$100 dollars to invest in the issues
- Quick way to pinpoint areas of focus
- Can accomplish three things
  - Identifies priorities
  - Rank orders
  - Relative weightings
- Completed by BC Roundtable members, Future Search participants, leading academics



# Trends that will Impact Work-Life

1. Generational Diversity: 301
2. Challenge Across Cultures: 272
3. Older Workers: 256
4. Stress Levels: 220
5. Increasing diversity: 220
6. Overwork: 205
7. Technology Blurring W/F Division: 163
8. Health Care Costs Lead to Promoting Balance: 160
9. 24/7 Environment: 144
10. Working Virtually: 144
11. Longer Work Hours: 141
12. HC Costs Lead to Longer Career: 130
13. Talent Shortage: 124
14. EE's earn less to achieve balance: 115
15. Younger Workers: 107
16. Technology Changing Work's Nature: 96
17. Backlash to HealthCare Cost Increases: 94
18. Dual-centric: 92
19. China and India's Economies: 75
20. More Self-Directed Careers: 73
21. Impact on Instability: 72
22. Increasing Immigrant Workers: 55
23. Impact of Job Loss: 52
24. Co-Parenting Increase: 51
25. Women in Management: 50
26. Desire for Meaning in Work & Life: 49
27. Income Disparity: 48
28. Increasing Self-Reliance Benefits: 46
29. More idiosyncratic career changes: 45
30. Changing Employee/Employer Relationship: 45
31. Challenge of Large Organization: 38
32. Impact on Downsizing: 20
33. Increase in Low Income Workers: 5
34. Values Shift from communal to individual: 4

# Trends that will Impact Work-Life

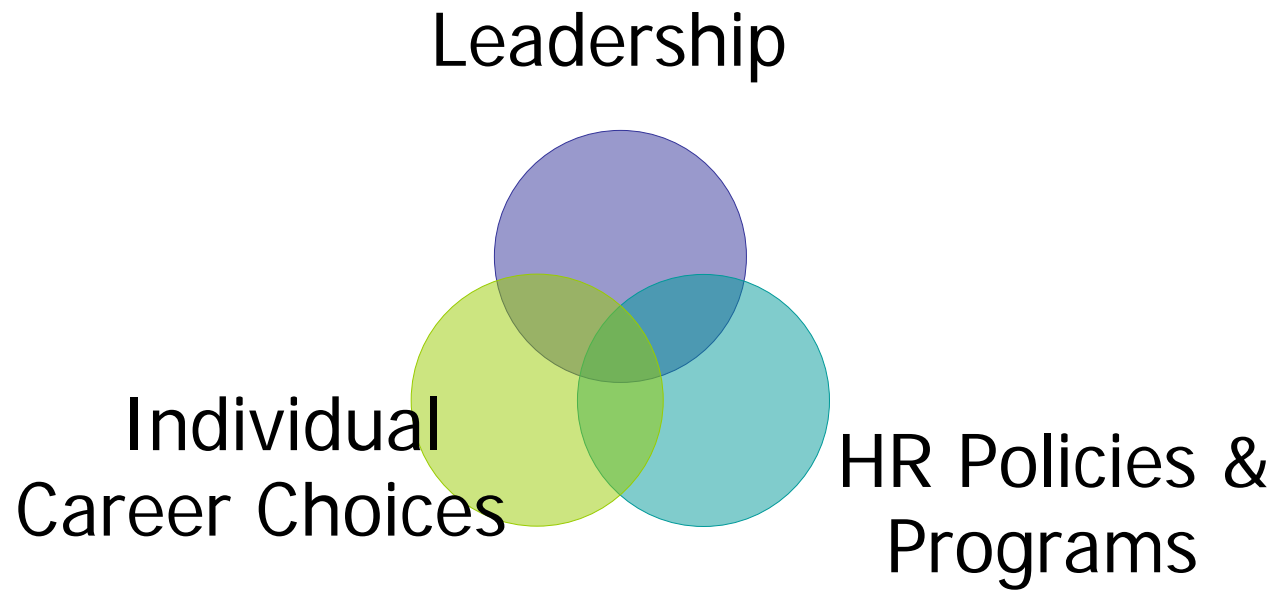


# Trends that will Impact Work-Life

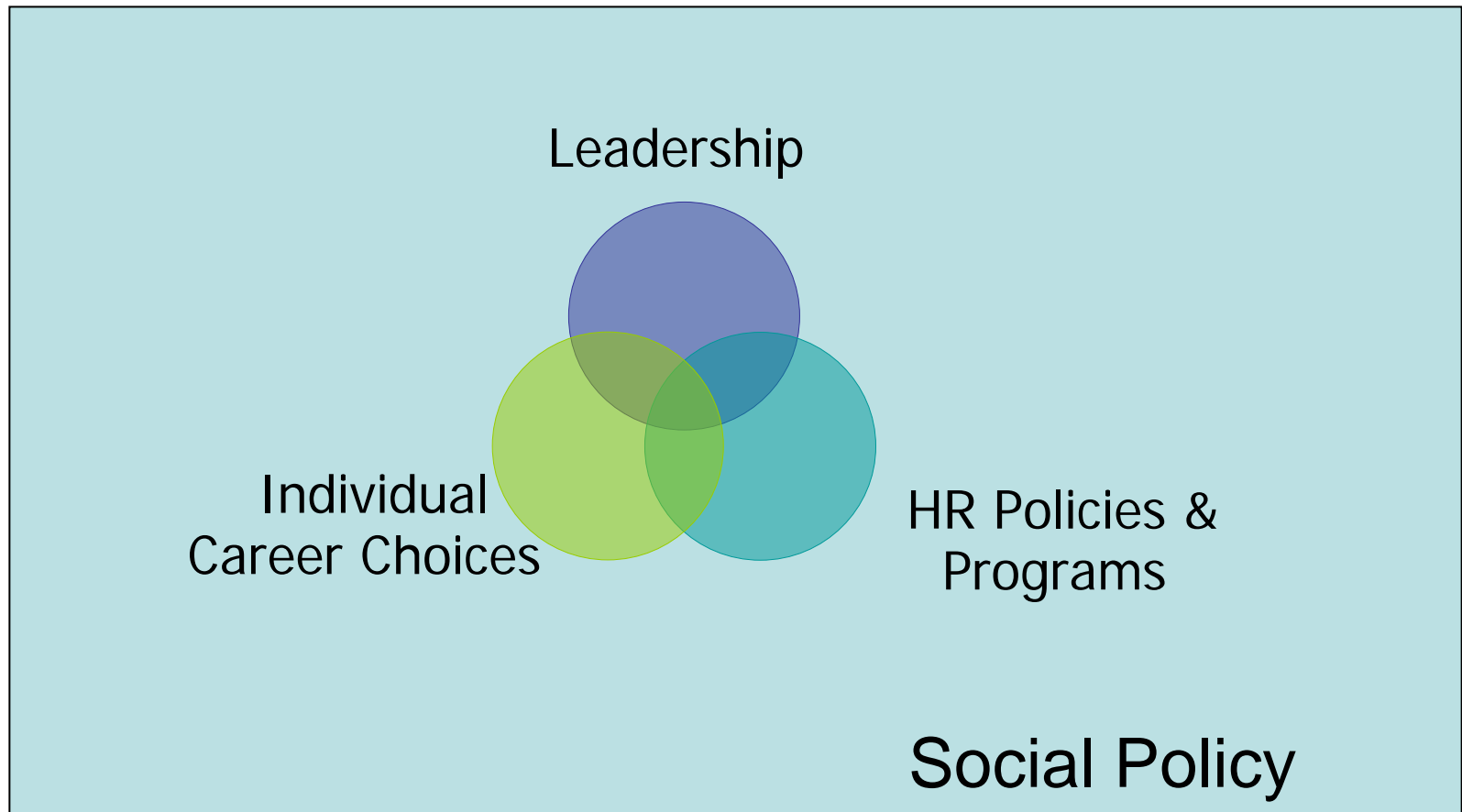
- Aging workforce and generational diversity
- Challenges of working in a more diverse workplace (e.g. Gender, race, ethnicity, religion)
- Increasing stress and overwork
- Globalization, working across cultures, 24x7
- Pervasive use of technology and working virtually
- Dramatic increase in health care costs



# Creating an effective work/life culture



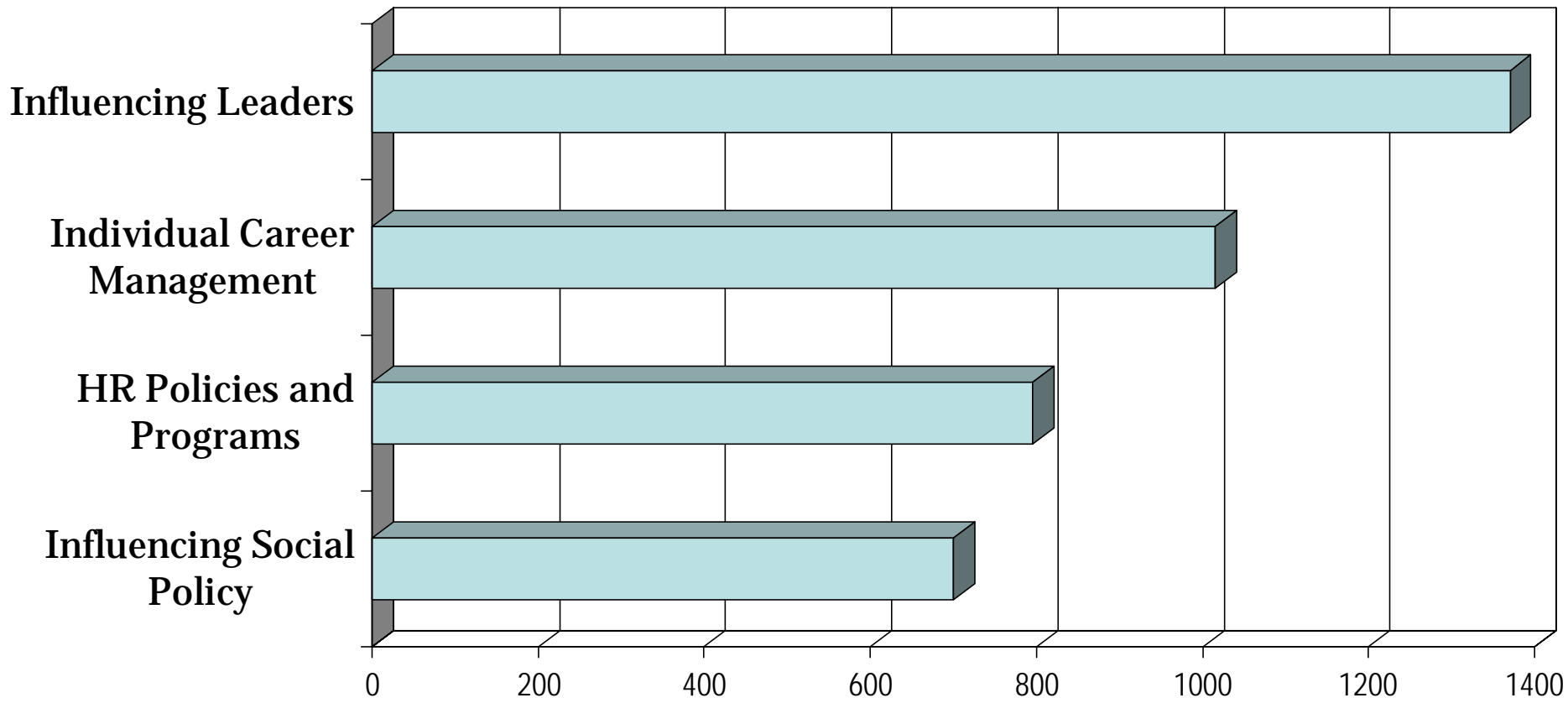
# Changing corporate culture



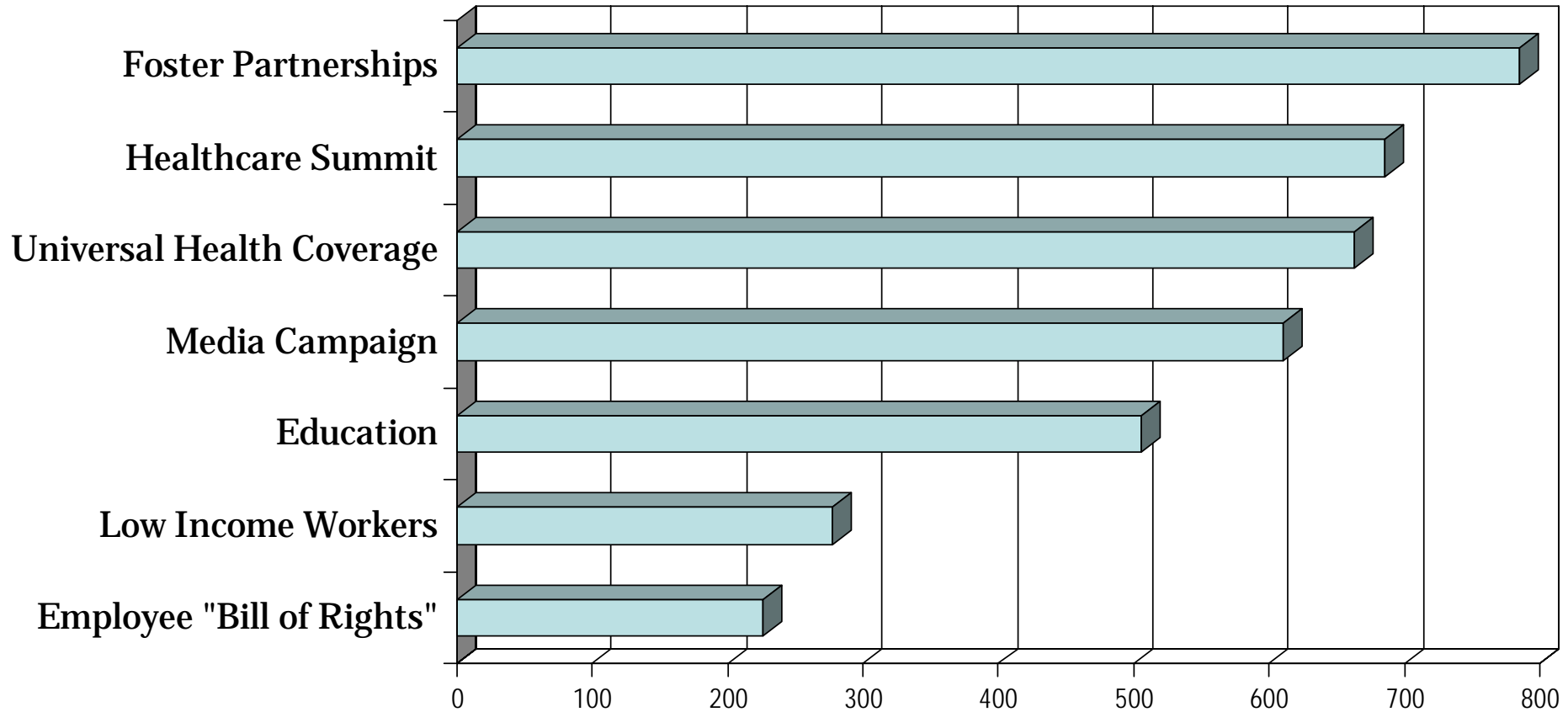
# Focus for Work-Life Practitioners

- **HR Policies and Programs:** Develop effective policies & programs that address the broad range of work-life issues
- **Influence Organizational Leaders:** Work in a consultative manner with leaders at all levels to ensure that effective work-life management practices are incorporated into the organization's values, culture, and management behaviors.
- **Help Individuals Make & Negotiate Career Choices:** Provide individual employees with training, consulting, & support to make good choices and pro-actively manage their career and work-life options
- **Influence Social Policy:** Work externally to ensure employees' needs supported through effective social policy

# Critical Focus Areas



# Influence Social Policy

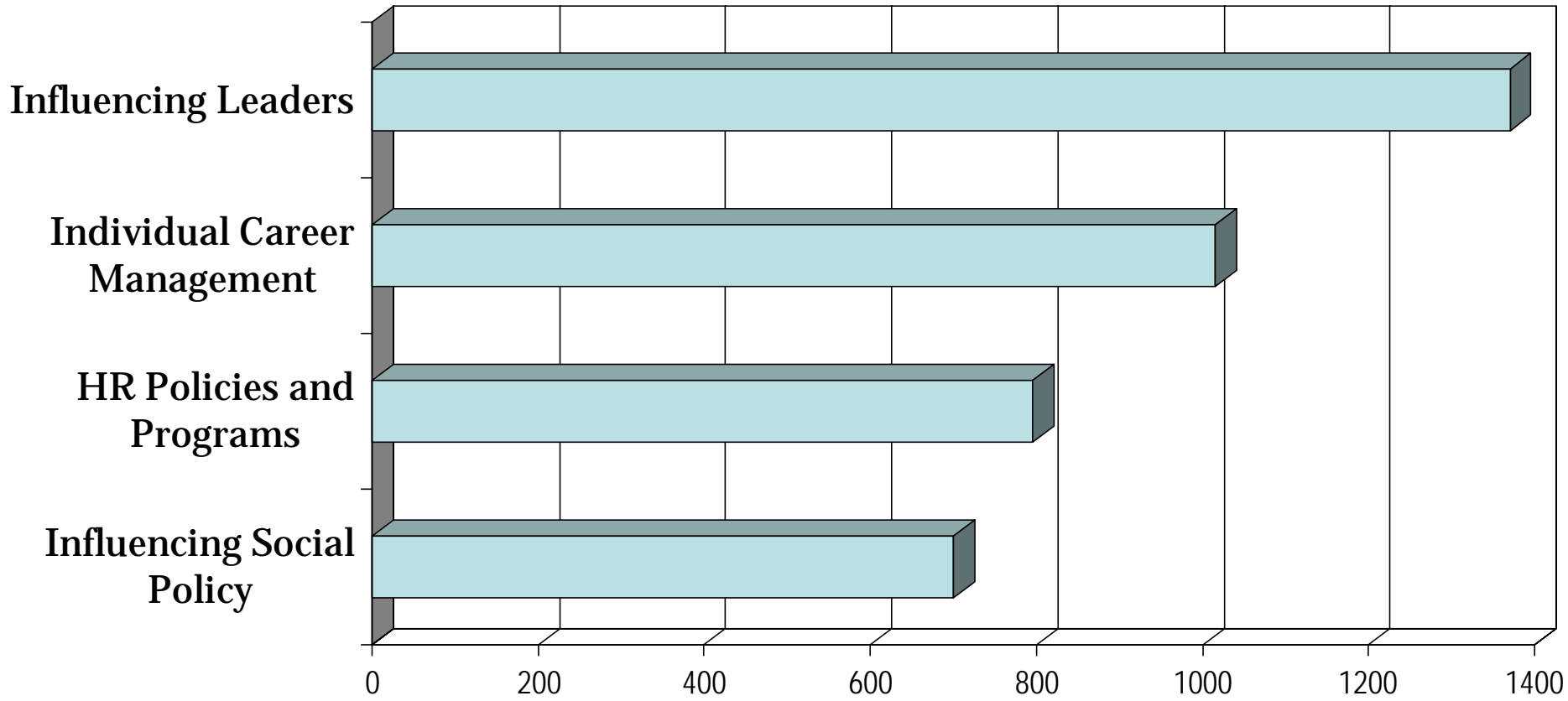


# Influence Social Policy

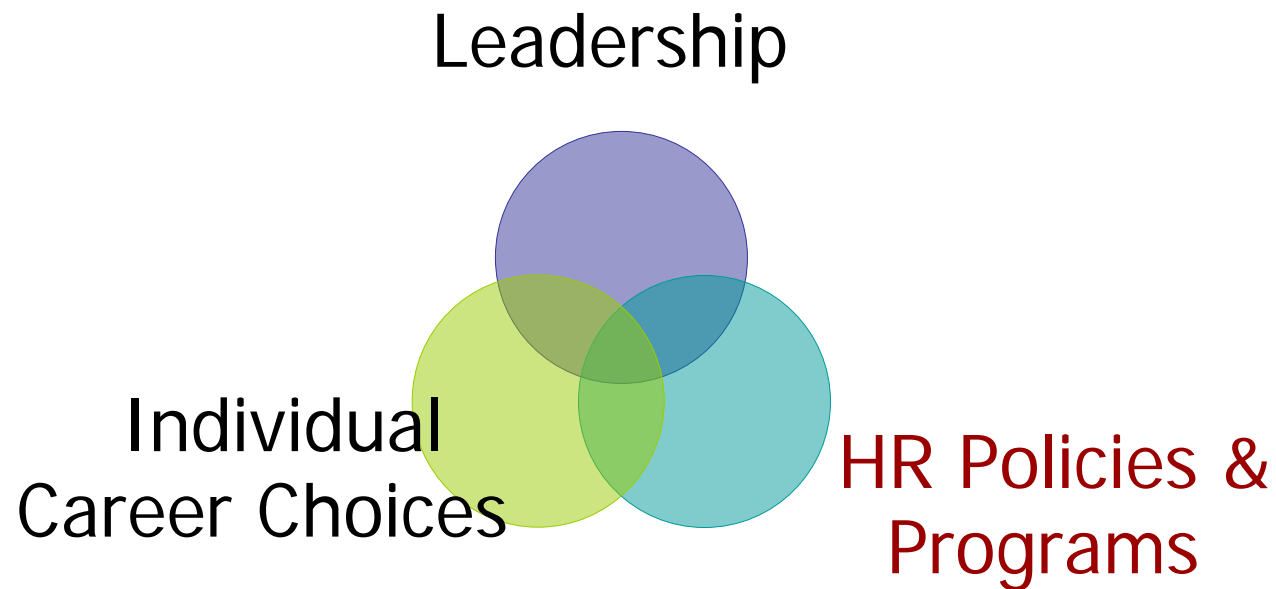
- Foster public-private partnerships to solve problems that transcend any one employer
- Convene summit on healthcare to study the relationship between work-life practices and positive health outcomes
- Develop solution to need for Universal Health Care
- Develop a media campaign on the importance of work-life
- Increase education for students on how to manage work/life issues



# Critical Focus Areas



# Changing corporate culture

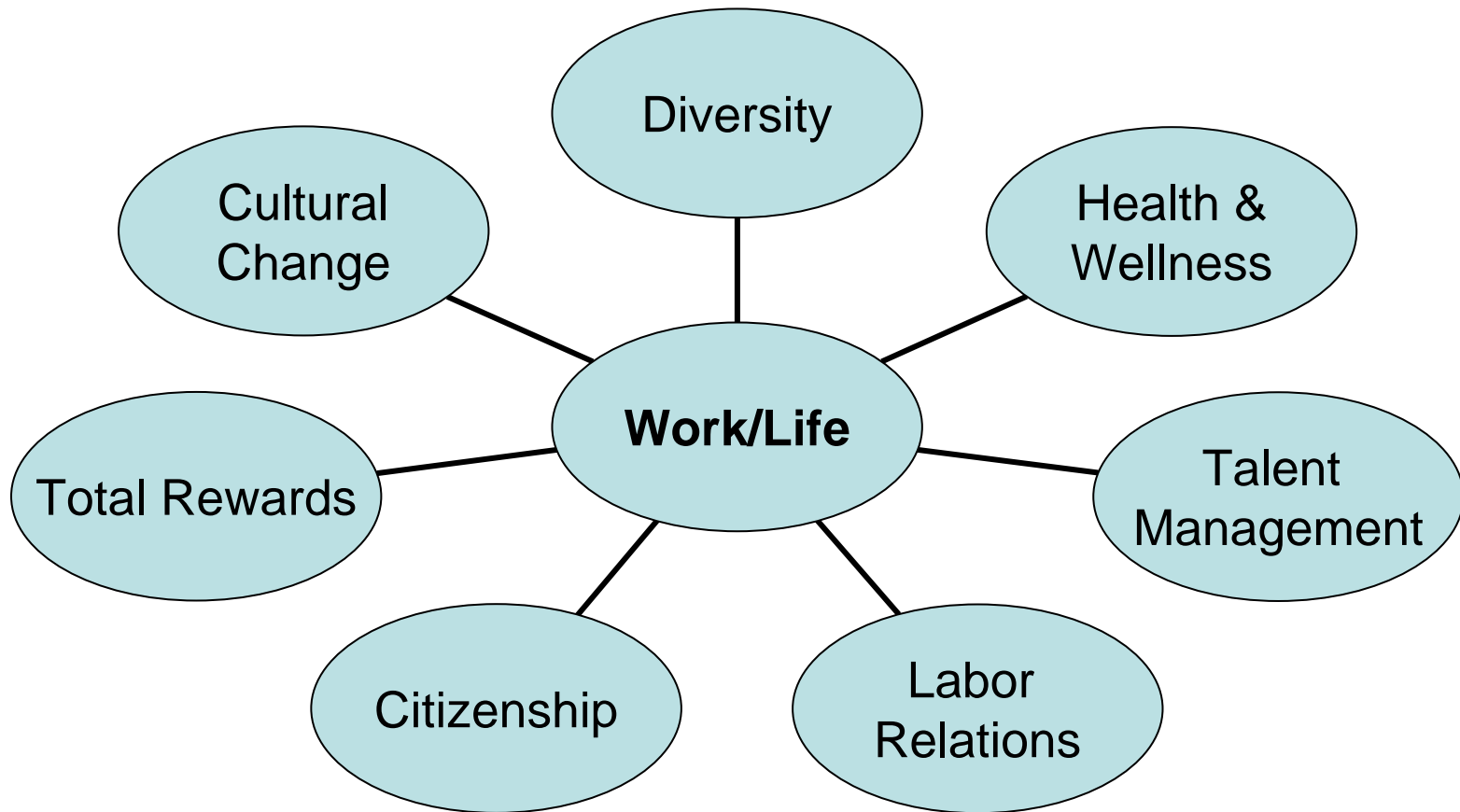


# HR Policies

- Help ensure consistency of implementation
- Help institutionalize the desired change
- Help ensure equity across levels
- Provide guidance for managers and employees
- Necessary but not sufficient
- Help people at the more vulnerable end of the scale



# Work/Life Perspectives



# HR Policies

Once we got to the notion of flexibility, a lot of things kind of fell into place in terms of HR policies. But you also need to change the organizational culture in order to make this stuff work. Big companies are really trying to do the right thing by having great policies in place that people aren't using even today.

If anything, I think we're in an environment where it's almost harder to get people to use policies because of concerns about job security. And people worry, if I use this, am I going to lose my job?

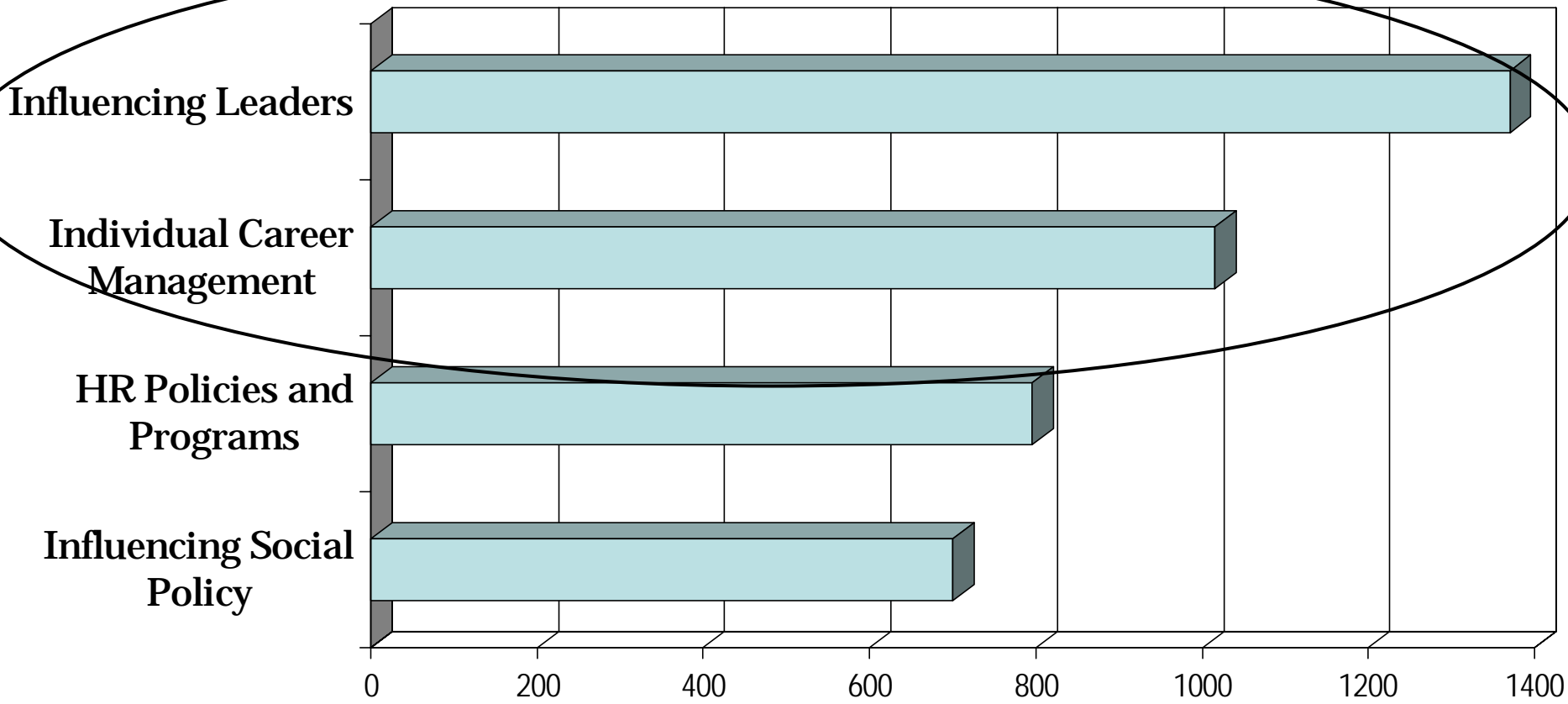
**Bob Drago**  
**Penn State University**

# Cultural Change

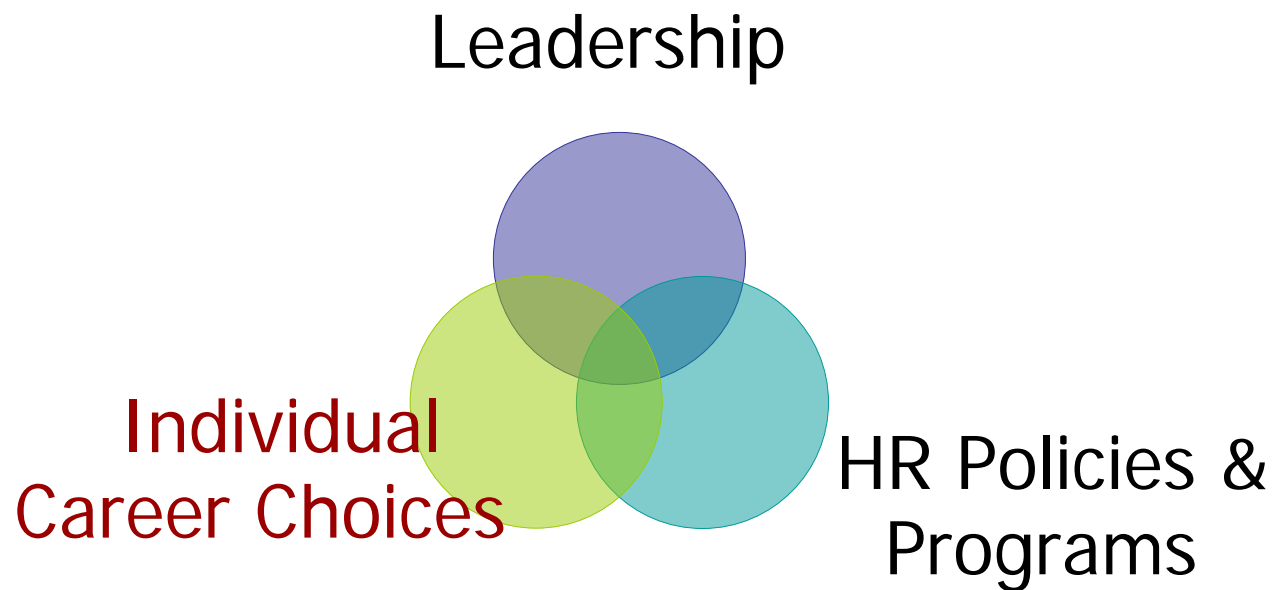
I learned how difficult it is to get organizations to change the way they work, even when they say they want to, and how much people are dependent on policies without understanding that the policies, while necessary (it's the same with legislation), they're totally insufficient because it's their implementation that makes the difference.

Rhona Rapoport

# Critical Focus Areas



# Changing corporate culture



# Work-Life and the individual

## The real owners ...

“Most bosses are willing to accommodate work-life challenges if you have earned it with performance. The key word is: if. Even the most accommodating bosses believe that work-life balance is your problem to solve.”

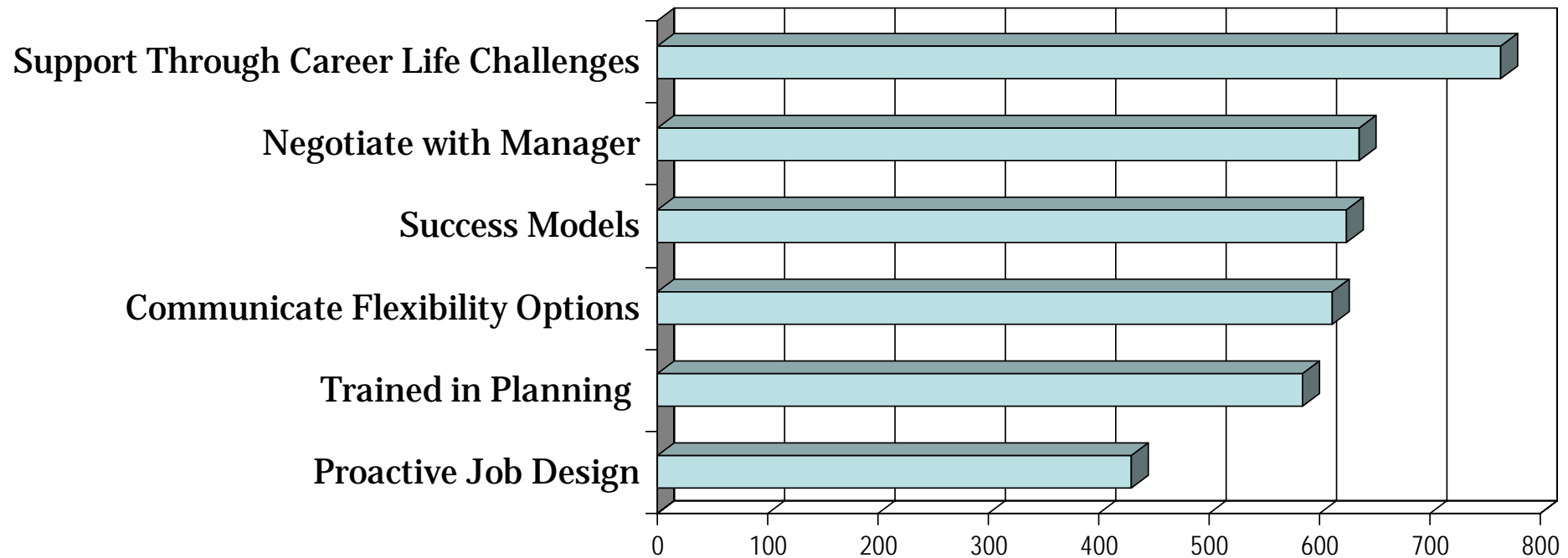
Jack Welch, Former CEO  
General Electric

# Work-Life and the individual

Individual career choice is a really important area that the work/life industry needs to focus on more. Helping people find the right solution. Helping people do what I call 'straight talk' with their manager. Helping the individual to represent themselves within the company. This is where I see the pain. Even in good companies, when I speak with individuals, there is a disconnect to their own life somehow.

Carol Evans, CEO  
Working Mother

# Help Individuals Make Career Choices



# Traditional vs. Protean Career

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Traditional Career</i>	<i>Protean Career</i>
<b>Who's in charge?</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Person</b>
<b>Core values</b>	<b>Advancement</b>	<b>Freedom, growth</b>
<b>Degree of mobility</b>	<b>Lower</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Key attitudes</b>	<b>Organizational commitment</b>	<b>Work satisfaction Professional commitment</b>
<b>Success criteria</b>	<b>Position level, salary</b>	<b>Psychological success Purposeful work</b>

# Help Individuals with Career Choices

- Provide individuals with support (coaching, R&R, EAP) through difficult career challenges
- Coach & encourage individuals to work with their managers to create optimal job structure and career path
- Communicate a wide array of success models
- Ensure individuals well versed in available Flexible Work Arrangements
- Train individuals in career management



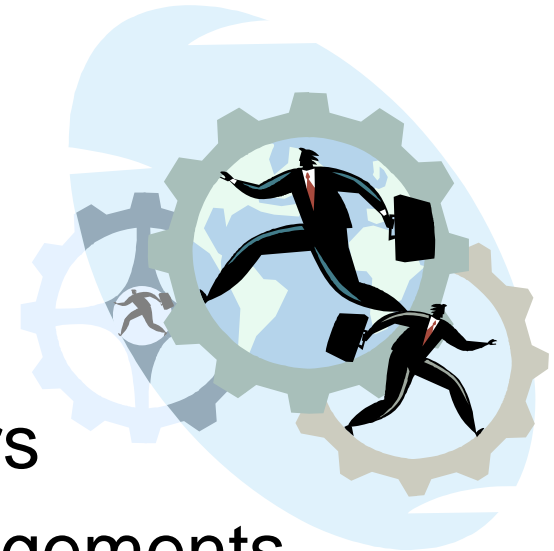
# Career training should include

## Clarifying Identity

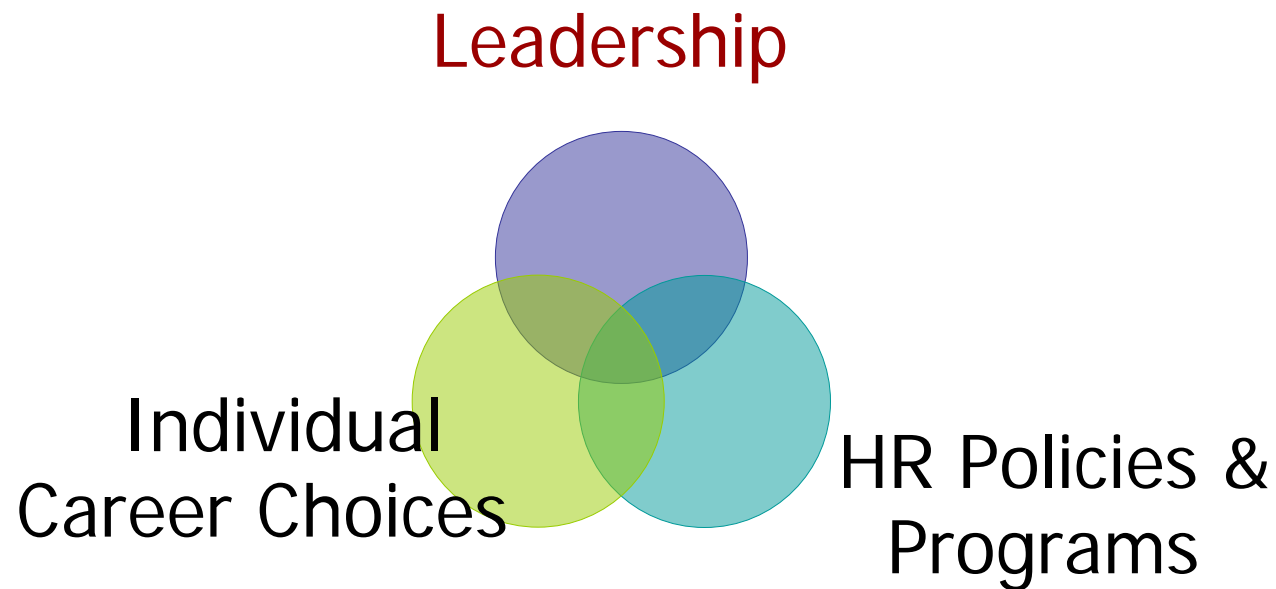
- Assessing skills, values, interests, aspirations,
- Establishing career-life priorities

## Increasing Adaptability

- Finding right opportunities, making appropriate career decisions
- Advancement vs. alternative careers
- Utilizing & negotiating flexible arrangements
- **Developing a career plan**



# Changing corporate culture



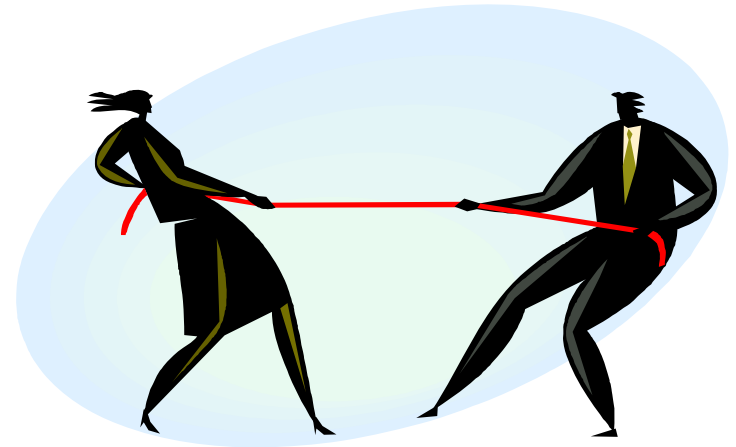
# Leadership Commitment

The role of the chief executive officer of any organization is to set the tone at the top. The role of the chief executive officer is to give permission for new thinking. But you can also convey that you have a high regard for, and respect for, the dignity and stability of the family, and you're open to new ideas—as to how we can develop policies and programs, and so forth, that facilitate that. So it's setting the tone, giving permission and encouragement, encouraging people to move in a positive way on this front.

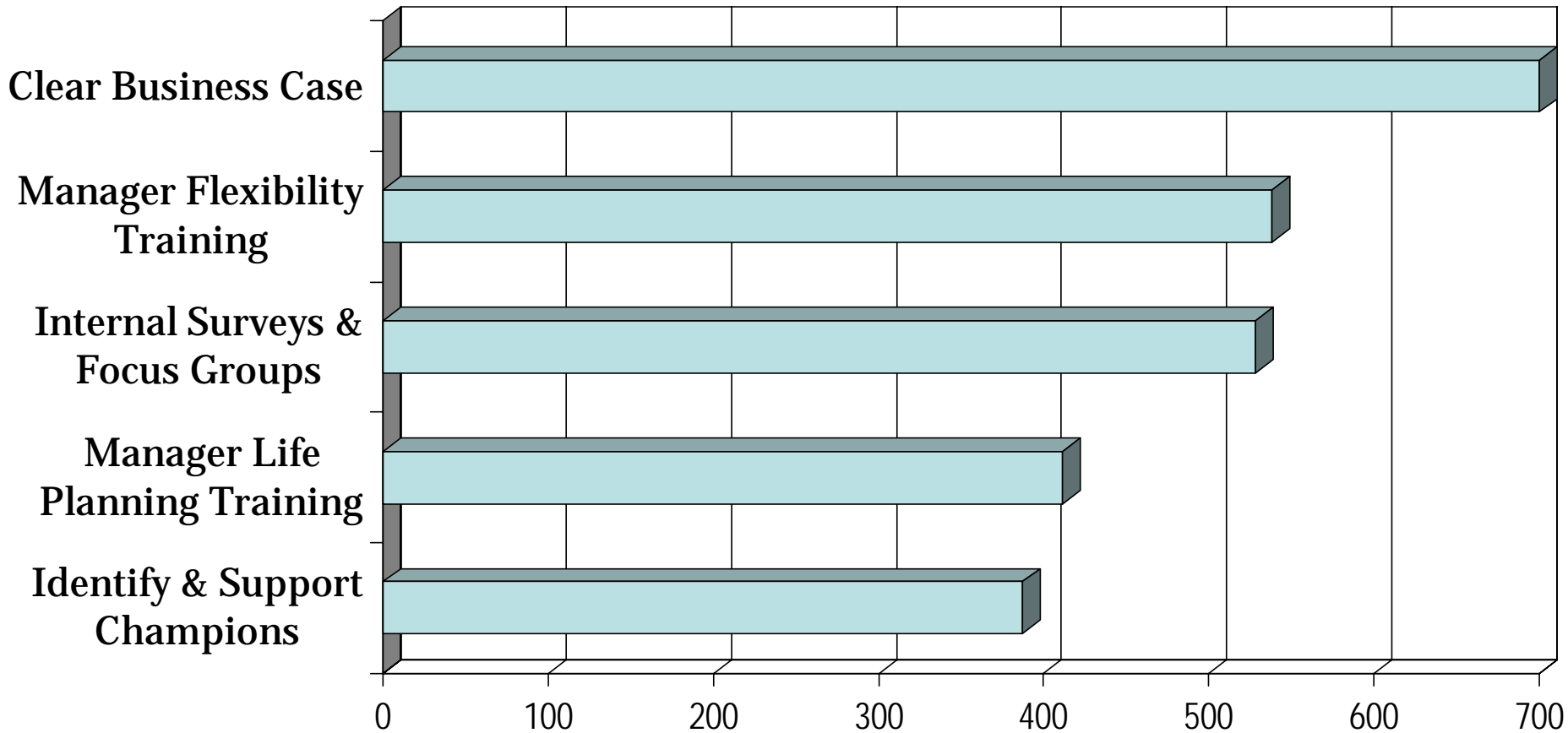
*Ralph Larsen, Former Chairman  
Johnson & Johnson*

# Why is Work-Life a struggle for leaders?

- Lacks “face validity”
- “Manage performance! Don’t take on personal problems”
- An employee-centric perk
- Two rules of change
  - Need top management commitment (maybe)
  - Top management needs to “walk the talk” (no)
- A huge issue personally, small organizationally

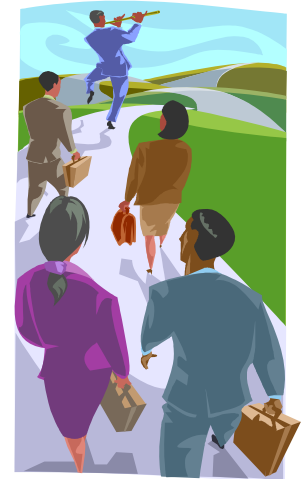


# Influence Organizational Leaders



# Influencing Leaders

- Make business case for work-life clear (through data, research, & anecdotal evidence)
- Train all managers on how to use flexible management approaches
- Use surveys, focus groups to demonstrate importance of work-life in retaining talent
- Train all managers in career-life planning (themselves & subordinates)
- Support pioneer leaders and enlist them in making the case for work-life



# Critical Skills for the Field

- Understanding how work/life perspective can be incorporated into broad range of workforce management practices
- Ability to demonstrate how innovative workforce practices lead to positive organizational outcomes
- Consulting with & educating managers on importance of and how to use flexible approaches
- Change management expertise
- Ensuring employees have the skills to make appropriate career choices



# Summary

- Work-life field is here to stay
- Taking center stage: aging, diversity, overwork, globalization, health & wellness, technology
- Practitioner role moving from implementing policies & programs to cultural change:
  - Influencing leaders
  - Helping employees craft career-life strategies
- Need to improve as change agents and HR integrators

