**Introduction**

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) is a multinational professional accounting firm offering a wide range of services including audit, consulting, and tax with 800 offices and 200 thousand employees worldwide. PwC’s Canadian operations has won awards for being a top-rated workplace in Canada, being included in the Indeed Top 25 2018 rankings and Randstad Top 20 2019 rankings.

PwC’s commitment to its clients are second to none, with an office in every major city of Canada serving some of the largest clients in the market. PwC achieves this through the strong dedication of its workforce, especially in its audit line of service where employees work tirelessly to meet deadlines imposed on their clients by regulators and banks. A side effect of the strong work ethic of PwC’s employees is the feeling of decreased work-life balance satisfaction, felt especially by new employees in their first three years of employment.

**Statement of Problem**

At PwC Canada, the pressure to meet deadlines is strong, especially within the audit teams. There is a general expectation that employees will make personal concessions to help the team meet its deadline. Regular and frequent concessions can lead to decreased satisfaction with work-life balance often manifesting in employee burn-out. Employee burn-out can be evident in many ways including decreased work performance, more frequent or longer abrupt time off, and even resignation.

This is an issue that former PwC Canada’s Chief People Officer has openly acknowledged in a CPA Canada publication, especially with junior staff. Balancing work with personal fulfillment is not an easy task, especially in a competitive and fast-moving industry like audit, but necessary as a good work-life balance means a healthy workforce driving the business.

**Proposed Solution**

A possible solution is to establish more opportunities for open communication with management, bringing awareness to employees of the options made available to them and overcoming the stigma of using those options. This change should be raised by the employees on an individual team basis to promote flexibility, rather than in a top-down instituted process which may enforce rigid weekly meetings. This is because in recent years, there have been more company driven initiatives that promote work-life balance including: flexible work arrangements, unprescribed sick leave, and increased accessibility to mental health resources. Clearly, the company is making efforts to improve work-life balance for its employees, so taking advantage of these initiatives to match employer and employee expectations through regular meetings tailored to each individual team would be a promising solution.

**Scope**

To assess the feasibility of improving work-life balance through regular communication with management, I plan to pursue the following leads targeted at the audit line of service:

1. What are aspects of work-life balance that most employees can agree upon?
2. What is a metric that can be used to measure work-life balance?
3. How aware are employees of company initiatives to improve work-life balance?
4. What stops an employee from using the options available to them to improve their work-life balance?
5. Would an employee’s work-life balance improve if those options are used? Or is it best to maintain the status quo?
6. Is it feasible for increased communication to improve work-life balance for employees? If so, would it be better implemented at the employee level or organizational level?

**Methods**

My proposed primary data sources will include surveys of current and ex-employees of PwC Canada, including those at the junior and senior level of staff in the audit line of service. These surveys will be used to address the leads in my scope.

I will also attempt to arrange for interviews with those at the management level to get a sense of how receptive management would be towards any recommendations or actions taken by staff.

**My Qualifications**

I am a Bachelor of Accounting graduate from the University of Alberta, and a former associate who has worked in PwC Canada’s audit line of service full-time for two years. I have worked with a number of different teams to complete tight deadlines and have personally experienced the life-style associated with demographic of this study.

**Intended Audience**

This formal report is intended for the current employees of PwC Canada in the audit line of service. The recommendations I will put forward are intended to be acted on at the employee level through communication with management, and by exercising the freedom each employee is already allowed.

**Conclusion**

Action needs to be taken by employees to address work-life balance, as even PwC Canada has recognized that more junior staff have taken time off because of anxiety and depression. By researching the lines of inquiry outlined in the scope, I will be able put forward actionable recommendations that improve work-life balance for the employees at PwC Canada.