

White Paper

# Work-Life-Balance



Results of a survey conducted in December 2014 and January 2015

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## 1. Abstract

The survey “Work-Life-Balance“ by software producer InLoox shows:

- **Those who do not work for a supervisor – i.e. supervisors themselves or those who are self-employed – are more satisfied with their work situation.**
- **Supervisors are more content with themselves than employees are.**
- **The perceived appreciation of a person’s work is a key factor for their perceived stress levels.**

In summary, the survey results conclude that stress in everyday work life does not come from being permanently available and having to deal with a high workload, but results from human or social factors of collaboration. Researchers could not find a significant correlation between the number of projects an employee is working on at any given time and their perceived stress levels. The number of e-mails that employees have to write and respond to on a daily basis also does not correlate or reveal an association with a person’s susceptibility to stress. Additionally, the survey was not able to determine gender-specific differences in the perception of stress.

## 2. Method

InLoox conducted the online survey, “Stress, Burnout, Work-Life-Balance,” from November 14, 2014 until January 4, 2015. The 218 participants of this non-representative survey were recruited via the InLoox newsletter, direct mailings to customers and prospective customers of InLoox, via social media channels and on the company’s website.

## 3. Initial situation

The topics of burnout, coping with stress, and work-life-balance can often be seen manifested in a variety of stories in mainstream media as well as being referenced on social media, affecting countless people. In the project management business in particular, these topics play an important role. InLoox aimed to find risk factors and crucial parameters when it comes to establishing a sensible balance between a fulfilled work life and relaxed personal time.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Demographics

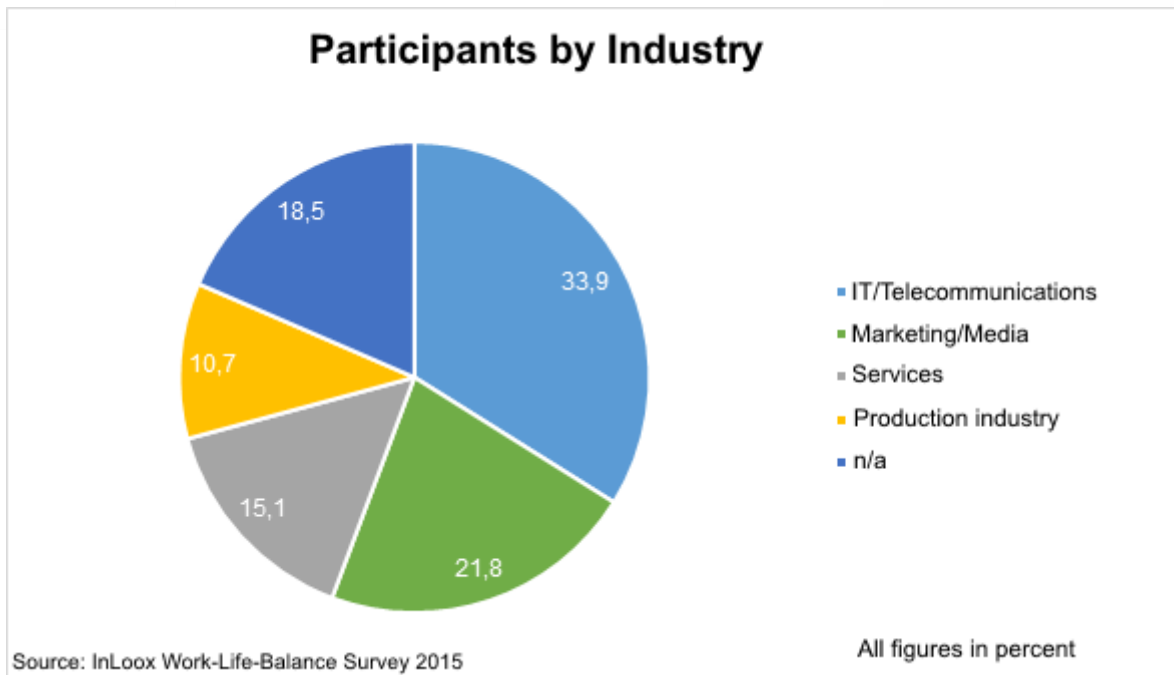
33.9% of the participants work in the IT/telecommunications industry, 21.8% in the field of marketing and media, 15.1% in the service sector and 10.7% in the production industry. 4.6% of the respondents are non-working persons.

42.3% of the participants are employees or workers, 22.1% are entrepreneurs or company owners, 21.1% are executives and 9.6% are self-employed persons without employees.

The majority of the respondents are within the age bracket of 31-60 years old and equally distributed to the respective decades. 57.7% of the participants have children.

90.0% of the participants have a college degree.

Men have a stronger representation in the survey sample, reporting 62% men and 37% women. A small percentage of the participants did not provide any information on their gender.



## 4.2 Differences between Supervisors and Non-Supervisors

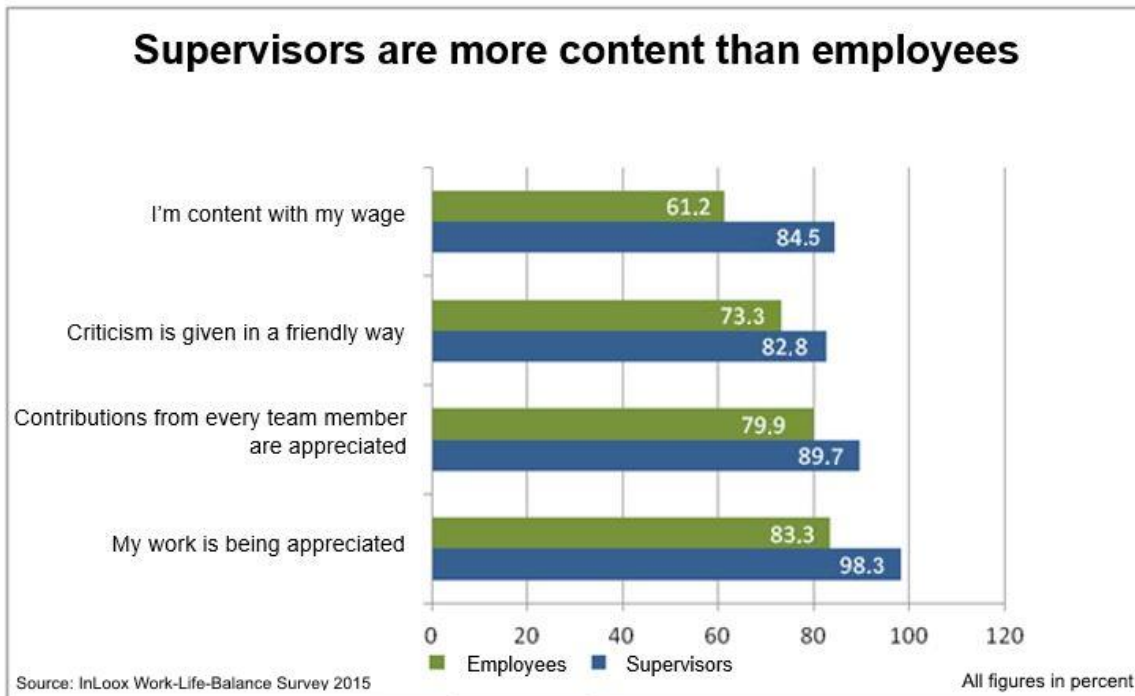
Results indicated significant differences between those participants who

- do not have a boss (hereafter referred to as “supervisors”) and those
- who do have a boss (referred to as “employees”).

In general, those persons who do not work with a supervisor are more content with their situation at work and indicated that they felt less stressed.

### 4.2.1 Perceived appreciation

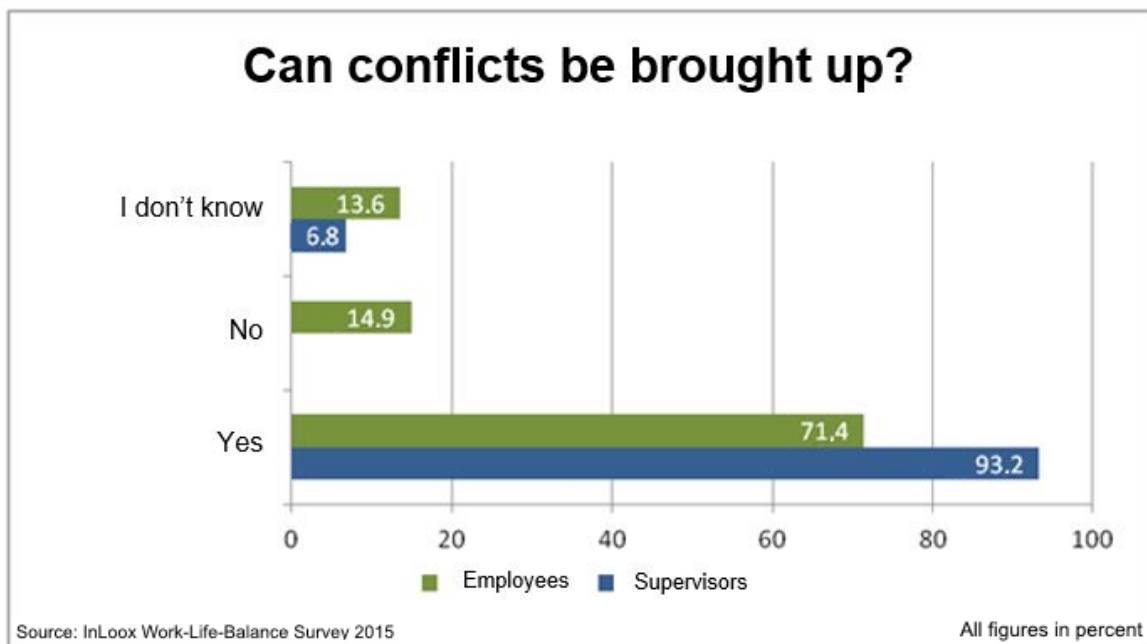
Supervisors feel more often appreciated than employees in their working environment and in terms of financial acknowledgement.



83.0% of supervisors stated that people at work are criticized in a respectful way, while only 73.0% of the employees feel the same. There is a similar difference when it comes to the question: Are contributions from all team members valued? Almost 90% of the supervisors think they are, while only 80.0% of the employees agree. There is a striking difference in terms of income: 84.5% of the supervisors are satisfied with their income, whereas only 61.2% of the employees are.

#### 4.2.2 Dealing with conflicts

There is also a striking difference when people assess how conflicts are dealt with within their companies: 93.2% of the supervisors stated that team members can address conflicts in the work environment and solve them, while only 71.4% of employees share this opinion.





### 4.2.3 Satisfaction with own job performance

The supervisors among the participants are more satisfied with their personal success than the responding employees are: 69.7% said that they have reached valuable professional goals, while only 44.8% of the employees say the same.

High expectations toward themselves are more common among employees (66%) than among the bosses (49.8%). When they judge their own job performance, employees are often unsatisfied: 45.5% stated that they felt more productive several years ago. Only 30.0% of the supervisors have this impression.



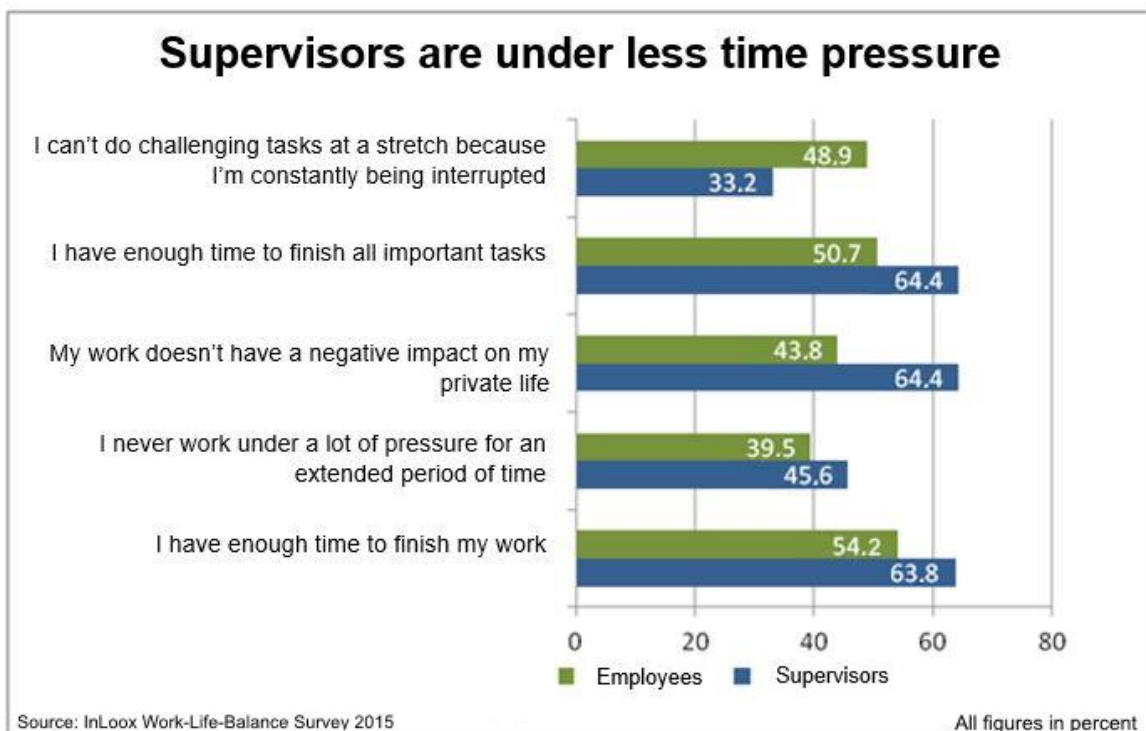
#### 4.2.4 Time constraints and stress

Supervisors feel less pressed for time than employees: 64% of the supervisors said that they have enough time to complete all of their important tasks, whereas only one out of two employees (50.7%) think they have enough time to accomplish all the important tasks.

Almost half of the employees in the sample (48.9%) stated that they were unable to finish challenging tasks at a stretch, because they are constantly interrupted. A significantly smaller proportion of the supervisors have the same problem (33.2%).

45.5% of the supervisors say that do not have to work under high pressure for longer periods, while only 39.4% of the employees agree. Consequently, 50.7% of the employees have to deal with high-pressure situations at work for longer periods.

The respondents are divided on the question whether their work has a negative impact on their private life: 33.9% of the supervisors agree, while even 54.8% of the employees think it does.



When taking a closer look into the working hours per week, the study found that supervisors work on an average 48.5 hours per week – five hours longer than the employees in the sample. At the same time, those bosses who say that their work does not have a negative impact on their private lives, “only” work 43.6 hours per week on average.

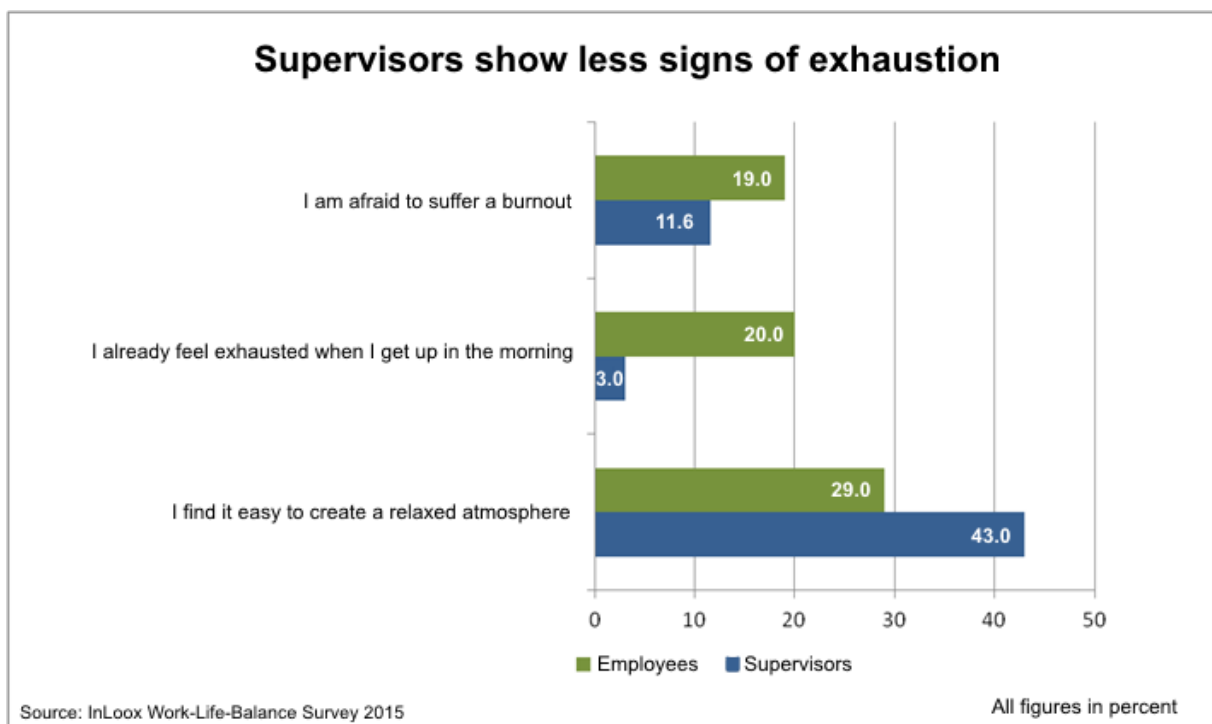
#### 4.2.5 Exhaustion and relaxation

The employees in the sample show more signs of exhaustion than the supervisors in the sample. There is a particularly obvious difference when it comes to the phenomenon of being already exhausted when the working day starts – a phenomenon which is a typical burnout symptom.

20.0% of the employees said they already feel exhausted before they even go to work. This number, which is already remarkably high by its own, stands out even more when one compares it with the result in the supervisor group. Only 3% of the supervisors say that they have this feeling in the mornings.

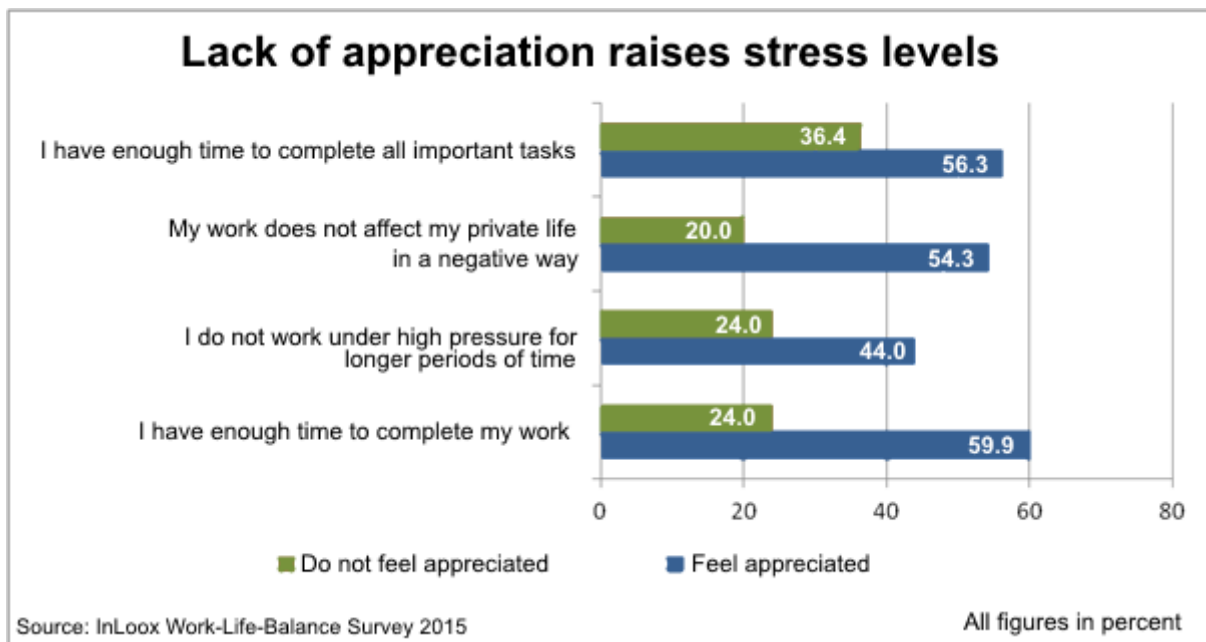
It is also easier for the supervisors to relax: 43.0% of the supervisors say that it is easy for them to create a relaxed atmosphere, while only 29.0% of the employees can say the same.

19.0% of the employees in the sample are afraid that they might suffer from a burnout one day, whereas only 11.6% of the supervisors think they are prone to a burnout.



### 4.3 Appreciation and stress levels

There is no difference between supervisors and employees: The perceived appreciation at work is a key factor for perceived work-related stress. Those who feel that their work is not valued feel more stress. A lack of appreciation at work has a particularly negative effect on the private life: The vast majority of those who have the impression that their work is not valued stated that their job has a negative impact on their private lives. Among those who feel appreciated, the numbers are significantly lower: only 50% of them see negative effects.



## 5. Interpretation of the results

The survey result stating that supervisors are happier with their work situation and that they feel less stress at work provokes different thoughts. How can these findings be interpreted? Assuming that supervisors have greater responsibilities than employees due to their roles that require making far-reaching decisions and requiring they be

available after office hours, this result might seem surprising.

Dr. Tatjana Reichhart, Senior Physician for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy at the Center for Disease Management (CFDM) at the Technical University of Munich, has been doing research for many years in the field of mental health at the workplace and explains the result of the InLoox survey based on her own scientific studies.

“The result that supervisors in general are happier with their work situation and that they feel less stress at work can be found in several other scientific studies. There are three explanations for that: On the one hand, supervisors have more freedom of action and they depend less on the appreciation from seniors. A lack of control and a lack of appreciation from supervisors is connected with an increased burnout risk and increased mental stress. Several scientific studies have demonstrated this effect, including our own burnout study with more than 1.000 project managers. The InLoox survey also gives clear evidence that appreciation is a key factor for personal stress levels.

On the other hand, supervisors tend to be older and have more professional expertise. These two characteristics are connected with a lower burnout risk. That is likely because with long years of professional experience, people gain more security when dealing with problems and they become aware of their own skills and have a higher ability to use them. It also becomes easier for them to prioritize tasks. Long years of professional and life experience seem to make people more confident and calm.

Another reason for the lower stress levels in supervisors is the fact that they already are supervisors. Employees are still on their way to an executive position and go beyond their limits to reach their next career step.

The results, however, do not mean that executives do not have a risk of a mental illness or of suffering a burnout. Especially managers in “sandwich positions” who feel high pressure.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> see Reichhart, Tatjana & Müller-Ettrich, Roswitha: Burnout-Gefährdung bei Projektmanagerinnen und Projektmanagern. 2014.GPM.; download at: [http://www.gpm-ipma.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Know-How/studien/141015\\_Burnout-Studie\\_Web\\_Final.pdf](http://www.gpm-ipma.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Know-How/studien/141015_Burnout-Studie_Web_Final.pdf) (downloaded on March 24, 2015)

## 6. About InLoox:

InLoox engineers project management software solutions optimizing business processes and increasing productivity. InLoox's Outlook-integrated and cloud-based project management solutions provide project managers and teams with a central workspace for collaboration on multiple projects. InLoox software is trusted by thousands of companies across all industries in the US, North America and all over the globe. Its features provide significant productivity gains to teams at global players like AVIS, US Airways, Verizon Wireless, HP, Hitachi, Novartis, Pentax, Siemens, and many more. InLoox, Inc. is privately held company founded in 2011 with headquarters in San Francisco. The responsible managing directors are the two founders, Dr. Tiziano Panico and Dr. Andreas Tremel.

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