



# Achieving what you want

**What do you want to achieve in life? What are your aspirations? Whatever they are they will be unique to you – and people's aspirations change at different stages and ages, perhaps through the influence of a person or an ideal. The trick to achieving your ambitions is to balance two potentially conflicting aspects of all our lives – the social and economic.**

## **Balancing the economic and social aspects of your life**

While at school you may decide that your 'economic' aim is to earn enough to keep a roof over your head and to join in things which cost money. After school your economic goal may be independence gained by ensuring that your income is greater than your expenditure, that taxes are paid and, ideally, you have some savings to cushion against hardship if your income ever drops.

The 'social' dimension of life can be pleasant – or not. A single-minded focus on achieving an aspiration can in some cases be turned into bullying others or failure to appreciate other people's needs. By contrast, help which you provide at home, whether lending a hand with housework or looking after a family member, is 'social' (as are seeing friends, relaxing and taking exercise).

Sometimes the social aspect can have a positive economic impact, for example if you only earn pocket money in exchange for doing some housework. Are there any negative economic aspects to social life? What if you nag your family to stop buying things whose production caused environmental or social damage? This might make you feel good, but might it add to the family's cost of living? What is the balance?

## **Balancing aspects at work**

Just as you and your school friends may have very different aspirations, the same will be true at work; employers, business owners, board members and shareholders, as well as other colleagues will all have their own work-related and personal ambitions. It is a constant challenge to balance economic and social interests. There are legal constraints: for example an employer can't allow economic considerations to override social ones if that means not paying entitled wages or denying rest breaks and holidays. People's behaviour at work can be changed by the 'management information' which shows how the business is progressing; a group can find ways to develop a business while maintaining a safe environment in which to work.

For example there might be information about refunds given to customers for faulty goods or poor service. A firm can then decide how to identify and stem any weaknesses so that its reputation is protected. That makes life easier for all staff, especially those who have had to face irate customers and work with unhappy colleagues. By analysing sales trends a firm can find how to adjust a range of products or services to maintain profitability. The business can use management information to change direction and sustain its commercial need to employ local people. That means those people gain an income to support their own personal aspirations.

Balancing of social and economic aspirations can be difficult; there may be peer pressure to achieve a balance at somebody's expense. A shop assistant may be under pressure (from bonus targets or the firm's profit position) to persuade a customer to buy clothes that are really too expensive for them. The customer's family might think that a cheaper alternative would be sufficient if it meant more food on the table!

Life involves sorting your own balance, achieving what you want to do, but fairly with others and not just following the herd blindly.



**Another attractive balance is in taking of tradition, but with a contemporary twist**

Sporran Nation makes limited edition, bespoke and commissioned sporrans, bags and accessories.

Sporran Nation takes a Scottish tradition and gives it a contemporary twist, bringing it into the 21st century and giving you an alternative that's tailored to your own style and can be worn both casual or formal.

All pieces are designed and handmade in the Sporran Nation studio and workshop in the North of Scotland.

"Choosing to buy handmade in a disposable world makes a statement that quality, craftsmanship and supporting the local economy matter to you. Sporran Nation sporrans and bags are not mass produced or mass consumed, they have been made with time, care and attention by me, for you."

[sporran-nation.co.uk](http://sporran-nation.co.uk)

**Countries also have 'management information'**

Like businesses, countries have 'management information' but usually in the form of national indicators and national statistics. Countries are also constrained by regulations, for example European Union public procurement legislation.

When working in a business, you learn to identify where your job collects information for management purposes (although in too many firms it can be ignored, not considered or acted upon). It may not be easy to do, but a progressive business learns to use the information collected, to decide what information is really needed or that there is no economic benefit using staff time to produce the data.

Countries are slower than businesses to do this or to implement policies to balance the 'social' and the 'economic' for purposes of inclusion.

Progress in life means continually adapting traditional ways of doing things to take account of changed circumstances.

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