Gender-Responsive Family Policies
for the Private Sector in the Western Balkans and Moldova

The Family-Friendly Workplace Model

Expanding Choices through
Family-Friendly Policies

UNFPA

Contents

Step 4 Adjust   163

List of Tables

Introduction: What you need to know about the family-friendly workplace model

An initiative for inclusive and equal workplaces and societies

Globally, women take on a disproportionate amount of unpaid care work — over three hours more per day than men, on average, in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region.[1] This can have a significant effect on their careers, family and fertility decisions. The impact of who takes on the unpaid care work in households and families cannot be underestimated. It can create and has created significant barriers to women's active participation in the labour force: women in the region have significantly lower rates of labour force participation than men, and are more likely to work in part-time, flexible, low-paid and vulnerable jobs with few career advancement opportunities.

This has important consequences for household poverty rates, gender pay gaps and women's economic empowerment; in the long run, it also negatively affects older women's economic security. Addressing restrictive gender norms and roles and redistributing unpaid and paid care work more equally within families and societies will be crucial to achieving gender equality and advancing socioeconomic development in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The Expanding Choices initiative is helping expand choices for women: by working hand in hand with the private sector and governments, the project champions gender-responsive family policies at the national level and in the workplace to enable women both to achieve their career aspirations and to fulfil their fertility intentions. These policies can contribute to bringing more women into the

---

1. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Promundo, *Engaging men in unpaid care work: an advocacy brief for Eastern Europe and Central Asia* (Istanbul and Washington, DC, 2018).

labour market and public life, helping countries to tap into the talents and skills in their population more fully. They can help dismantle social norms around men's caregiving role, supporting men to take on a more equal share of the caregiving responsibilities. They contribute to removing key barriers that many people face in realizing their fertility and family intentions. And such policies can prepare societies for demographic changes. Positive linkages between gender-responsive family policies and children's development outcomes have also been well established, with improvements in health, education, psychosocial development and well-being for both individuals and their families.

Gender-responsive family policies help women and men balance work responsibilities with family, care and domestic obligations. These policies typically focus on time, finances and/or the services parents and caregivers need. They support the equal redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work without perpetuating harmful gender norms and roles, and contribute to sustainable growth and gender equality.

A note on families:

As highlighted in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, "[w]hile various forms of the family exist in different social, cultural, legal and political systems, the family is the basic unit of society and as such is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support".[2] Families are rarely homogeneous, and may take many shapes. Policies that aim to support families cannot employ a one-size-fits-all approach, and must recognize the constantly evolving nature of family formation and composition. It is important to move beyond notions of nuclear families consisting of two married, heterosexual parents, which does not reflect the reality of many families, and can instead serve to exclude those that need gender-responsive family policies the most (e.g. families headed by a single woman, intergenerational families with older members, etc.).

To promote gender-responsive family policies within companies, the Expanding Choices initiative developed the family-friendly workplace (FFW) model. The model, which includes strategies, activities and tools, supports companies in designing, implementing and monitoring gender-responsive family policies in the workplace. The model focuses on families, rather than solely on parents, as it recognizes that unpaid care work is not limited to childcare. The ability to balance paid work with unpaid care work and other life responsibilities is something all employees require.

---

2. UNFPA, *Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development – 20th Anniversary Edition* (New York, 2014), p. 39.

By using a broad definition of family to include all relationships that might add to workers' unpaid care work, the model encourages companies to not exclude employees from such initiatives based on parental or marital status, gender, seniority level or other characteristic. While a few of the activities that companies can pilot within this model focus on parents, specifically on parental leave, all other activities and policies can and should extend to all employees. For instance, childcare and domestic support could be offered to employees who care for children that are not their own, as is often the case in countries with high outmigration, where children are left with grandparents or other relatives while their parents work abroad. Companies are strongly encouraged to ensure that all activities meet the needs and reality of the unpaid care work borne by their employees, especially women.

Similarly, companies should ensure that their family-friendly workplace initiatives do not reinforce traditional gender norms, roles and stereotypes — for instance, by not including fathers in their parental leave programmes.

Benefits for the private sector

The FFW model offers private sector companies the knowledge, evidence and tools needed to create and implement long-term gender-responsive family policies and initiatives. All recommendations are based on global best practices and adapted to the local context. Through the Expanding Choices initiative, companies will gain a stronger understanding of the links between the FFW model, gender equality and business outcomes.

The FFW model is widely applicable in companies of all kinds and all sizes. Both small and large companies can implement initiatives and adapt them to their needs and resources. The main thing companies need to start becoming a family-friendly workplace is willingness and commitment on the part of senior management. One person can be responsible to start with, and the company does not need to invest a lot of resources or have a human resources department to become a family-friendly workplace.

The results will depend on the level of commitment from management and the degree to which FFW initiatives are in line with the company's overall strategy and goals. Some examples of the possible benefits and return on investment (ROI) for companies implementing the FFW model include the following:

- **Employer branding:** it will be easier to attract and retain employees.

- **Market value:** it is a competitive corporate branding advantage in the markets for both customers and business partners.

- **Public relations and communication:** it is a chance to highlight brand-strengthening values and internal role-model stories in all communications and marketing products.

- **Health and attendance:** it may decrease sick leave and absenteeism costs.

- **Greater gender equality:** it can add more gender balance in the workforce, including at senior management level, and create a more inclusive work environment and culture. Companies that are more gender-equal have been found to perform better in terms of productivity and innovation.

- **Engagement:** it leads to stronger motivation and greater loyalty among employees.

- **Productivity:** it increases innovation and efficiency among employees.

- **Competence and skill development:** it highlights how parenting and caregiving develops many transferable skills, like time and stress management, empathy and creativity.

A more detailed description of the potential returns on investment, as well as ways to measure these returns, is provided in the chapter Measuring returns on investment in family-friendly workplaces.

The FFW model enables companies to design and implement family-friendly workplace initiatives that are tailored to their needs, address the business challenges they face and support their priorities.
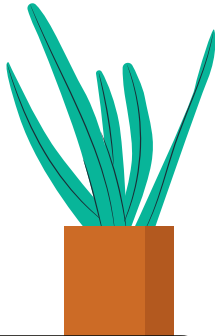
To accomplish these things, the model follows these five simple steps:

| Introduction | Companies have a strong understanding of the FFW concept and methodological approach and commit to piloting the model. |

| Step 1: Strategy | Companies determine their ambition and motivation for establishing a family-friendly workplace, based on an assessment of what the initiative would improve, financially and culturally. |

| Step 2: Plan | Companies establish a plan of action with timelines, responsibilities and resources needed to execute the strategy. |

| Step 3: Implement | Companies implement their chosen initiatives that benefit both themselves and their employees. |

| Step 4: Adjust | Companies continuously monitor and adjust their FFW strategy, plan and concrete actions to achieve long-term sustainable impact and integrate them within their policies. |

Introduction

Family-friendly workplace model: methodology

Ensuring a strong understanding of the FFW concept and approach

With a good understanding of the idea of a family-friendly workplace and its possible benefits, a company can establish a general purpose as well as motivation and a commitment to pursue efforts to build and support a family-friendly workplace. The key is to ensure management engagement by focusing on how the initiative and its potential financial and social return on investment can help the company implement its overall strategies and achieve its goals in the areas of human resources, social sustainability, inclusion, gender equality and employer branding (attraction, recruitment, retention). A company can be introduced to the idea of becoming a family-friendly workplace by sharing this document with a couple of interested managers with responsibility for the areas mentioned above and following up with an initial discussion about the company's main reasons for becoming a family-friendly workplace, using the ROI examples in this document. A deeper assessment of the challenges facing the company and its strategic reasons for becoming a family-friendly workplace will be carried out in the assessment part of step 1.

Expected output from the introduction:

The company has an understanding of the FFW idea and possible benefits, and has started a discussion about which business challenges to address by becoming a family-friendly workplace.

Step 1: FFW strategy

Determine the company's ambition and motivations for action

In this step companies will do the following:

- assess the degree to which they are already family-friendly and determine the level they wish to achieve

- identify the returns on investment they want from piloting the FFW model and which key performance indicators (KPIs) they need to measure these returns

- link the FFW initiative to their overall business goals

- identify managers to involve in the initiative, and ensure their engagement in the assessment and strategy development

- develop an FFW strategy that is tailored to their needs and ambitions

To describe its ambition, commitment and reason for implementing a family-friendly workplace, a company first needs to investigate what the initiative would improve, financially and culturally, and align this with its vision and priorities.

A SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the introduction of a family-friendly workplace can be undertaken, as can an assessment of the possible returns on investment, and discussions can be held with leaders and employees about attitudes and cultural shifts that could result from the initiatives. Examples of business cases for a family-friendly workplace from other companies and countries are provided as part of this step, to inspire and highlight possible positive outcomes (such as a stronger employer brand, higher employee retention rates, cost savings from reduced absenteeism and increased gender equality in the workplace). The company should also explore what might happen if it did not take action to implement FFW initiatives. Examples of the possible negative effects of not becoming a family-friendly workplace could be reduced work–life balance, higher turnover and absenteeism rates, lower employer attractiveness and loss of talent to competitors that have better FFW policies. Early management buy-in and input in this first step as well as identification of leader role models, who show how they manage to combine work with family, are key success factors in the FFW development process.

Expected output from step 1:

The company's FFW ambition statement and strategy

Supporting material:

○ Engaging managers and role models in family-friendly workplaces

○ Assessing your company's readiness

○ Measuring returns on investment in family-friendly workplaces

○ Developing your family-friendly workplace strategy

○ Understanding the business case for family-friendly workplaces

Step 2: FFW plan

Create a family-friendly workplace in line with company goals and local context

In this step companies will do the following:

- identify the approximate financial and staff resources available to implement FFW initiatives

- choose the initiatives and activities that can be implemented given the available resources and company ambition level, and plan the steps to ensure implementation

- ensure that all chosen activities are in line with the local possibilities and the legal system in the country

When a company's overall FFW strategy is determined, the next step is to identify the financial and staff resources available and, with this in mind, choose the activities to implement. In this step it is important to check the legal possibilities and limits in the country — for example, whether both men and women are entitled to paid maternity, paternity and/or parental leave. The model includes a number of tools and activities to help companies implement, evaluate and roll out family-friendly initiatives. These tools and activities were designed to be adaptable to local circumstances and to the context and size of the company, enabling managers to decide which initiatives to roll out and when to do so in order to meet the company's specific needs.

The proposed FFW activities and tools vary in complexity, investment and impact. The recommendation is to choose a mix that benefits both the company and its employees. Both company and individual perspectives must be considered for successful and sustainable FFW implementation, avoiding top-down initiatives that risk not getting engagement from managers and employees at all levels in the company.

The tools and activities suggested in the model focus on employer support connected with time and IT, financial help and attitudes and behaviours in the workplace. These tools and activities support management and decision-making and are divided into practical support and abstract support.

Practical support for working parents and caregivers covers the following:

○ routines (e.g. flexible and remote working arrangements, meetings scheduled only during core working hours, guidelines for engaging with employees before, during and after parental leave)

○ equipment (e.g. IT tools for remote work or flexible time management, etc.)

○ financial support (e.g. paid parental leave, domestic/household support, childcare support)

○ other support (e.g. internal coaching and support for working in a flexible, time-agile way)

Abstract support is a less tangible form of support provided to employees, especially by their managers and senior staff, and is based on positive and enabling attitudes, behaviours, role models and communication. This type of support can include the following:

○ managers leading by example by using family-friendly policies and benefits to normalize the uptake of these policies

○ trust and flexibility when implementing flexible or remote working arrangements

○ internal company programmes to keep employees engaged during parental leave

○ workplace family activities

○ a staff survey to assess the level of satisfaction with the initiatives and to gather input to better tailor them to employees' needs

An FFW plan describes what to do, who should do it and when it should be done within the three FFW areas (time and IT, financial help, and attitudes and behaviours). Decisions around the allocation of resources among the areas will be based on the level of ambition and investment that makes sense for the company, depending on its business situation.

Expected output from step 2:

A plan for resource requirements and actions to execute the FFW strategy

Supporting material:

○ Planning for your family-friendly workplace

Step 3: FFW implementation

Concretize, test and adapt policies and activities

In this step companies will do the following:

- test and adjust their chosen activities

- continuously gather feedback from employees and managers about the initiatives, their implementation and their impact

When the FFW strategy and the FFW plan have been established, based on the company's business goals and ambition, it is time to start implementing concrete initiatives within the company. More than one activity can be implemented, but the timing and sequence of these activities may differ and can be adapted along the way. Companies are advised to continuously share information about their FFW initiatives — both internally, with their employees and managers to ensure awareness and uptake of these initiatives, and externally, to improve their reputation and brand.

Expected output from step 3:

An understanding of how to implement one to three tools and activities in practice during a trial period, during which the tools and activities should be monitored, evaluated and adjusted to ensure alignment with the overall FFW strategy and plan

Supporting material:

- Sample initiative: flexible working policy

- Sample initiative: childcare and domestic support

- Sample initiative: parental leave routines

- Sample initiative: keeping employed parents engaged during and after leave

- Sample initiative: paid parental leave

- Communicating internally about your family-friendly workplace

- Communicating externally about your family-friendly workplace

Step 4: FFW monitoring and adjustments

Ensure long-term impact

In this step companies will do the following:

- continuously monitor, evaluate and adjust their strategy and initiatives
- integrate initiatives into their existing processes, policies and culture
- summarize their ambition, strategy and selected actions in an internal FFW policy

It is vital for companies to continuously monitor, evaluate and adjust their FFW strategy, plan and concrete actions to achieve long-term impact and integration into their existing processes, policies and culture. This will ensure that their family-friendly workplace matures in a sustainable way.

Expected output from step 4:

The company's ambition, strategy and selected tools and activities summarized in a company-wide FFW policy

Supporting material:

- Monitoring and adjusting your family-friendly workplace
- Developing a long-term family-friendly workplace policy

Step 1
Strategy

Understanding the business case for family-friendly workplaces

Introduction

To describe its family-friendly workplace (FFW) ambition and strategy, a company first needs to assess what would improve, financially and culturally, by piloting the FFW model and must align this with its vision and priorities. Improvements may be considered the return on investment (ROI) for supporting greater work–life balance and working parents. This chapter provides an overview of the type of ROI that companies can expect based on examples in various countries. It should be read in conjunction with the chapter Assessing your company's readiness and further elaborates on the proposed key performance indicators (KPIs).
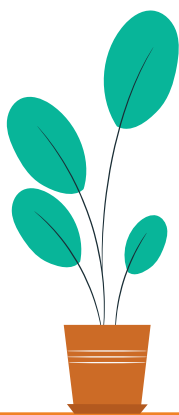
How to use this chapter

This chapter should be used for inspiration, ideas and guidance during assessments and for decisions about what KPIs are relevant for the company in continuously monitoring and assessing FFW initiatives, in both the short and long run. The chapter may be used as a complement to the KPI/ROI section in the chapter Assessing your company's readiness, as well as to provide input for the company's FFW strategy and for discussions with its human resources department and management about the business reasons for becoming a family-friendly workplace.

While this chapter provides examples of returns on investment and key performance indicators from FFW initiatives in other countries and companies, it is vital that the starting point for identifying a company's FFW ambition and strategy come from its own assessment of the business challenges and opportunities it wants to address.

It should be noted that even though there is a lack of definitive evidence of a financial ROI, given the fact that the concept is relatively new, examples from different countries suggest that there are still many ROI assumptions and possible wins for investing in creating a family-friendly workplace. Despite the scarcity of data, many companies still choose to invest in various FFW initiatives. Why? These companies assume that such investments will positively impact their business goals and strategy. By measuring and tracking specified KPIs related to their challenges or opportunities, these companies are able to see indications that there are benefits.

In addition, these companies have a fundamental belief that FFW investments are the right thing to do and are connected with company values. FFW investments are assessed from the perspective of what beliefs and values they want to be associated with and how they want to be perceived by employees — current, future and former — as well as customers, partners and investors. These companies conclude that they want to be recognized as inclusive organizations where employees can maintain a healthy balance between their work, personal life and family responsibilities.

Assumptions about the return on investment from FFW initiatives

Below are some examples of the most common strategic reasons to become a family-friendly workplace, based on family-friendly companies in different countries. The actual outcome of investing in becoming a family-friendly workplace depends on management's commitment and the extent to which the FFW strategy is connected with the company's main challenges, as well as the company's overall strategy and goals. The main reason to adopt an FFW approach is to offer a more inclusive company culture and attractive and sustainable work–life balance for all. This creates ROI areas such as the following:

- **Employer branding:** it will be easier to attract and retain employees.

- **Market value:** it is a competitive corporate branding advantage in the markets for both customers and business partners.

- **Public relations and communications:** it is a chance to highlight brand-strengthening values and stories about internal role models in all communications and marketing products.

- **Health and attendance:** it may decrease the costs of sick leave and absenteeism.

- **Greater gender equality:** it can improve the gender balance in the workforce, including at the senior management level, and create a more inclusive work environment and culture. Companies that are more gender-equal have been found to perform better in terms of productivity and innovation.

- **Engagement:** it leads to stronger motivation and more loyalty among employees.

- **Productivity:** it increases innovation and efficiency among employees.

- **Competence and skill development:** it highlights how parenting and caregiving develop many transferable skills, such as time and stress management, empathy and creativity.

To connect the wins above with actual financial benefits, there are concrete indications of cost savings in terms of attracting and retaining employees. These amount to the equivalent of one year's salary if one were to count the costs for recruitment, onboarding, replacement and productivity losses when an employee leaves the company.

> "The opportunity cost [of employee turnover] is one annual salary for an employee. It's a lot of money."

– Claes Peyron, Managing Director of Universum Global, an employer branding agency tracking future talent priorities and helping employers to attract employees

Employer branding

Investing in FFW initiatives and activities may strengthen a company's brand and attractiveness as an employer with a positive effect on attracting and retaining employees, not only parents but the whole workforce. FFW initiatives can also portray a company as socially responsible, offering a sustainable workplace supporting employees' right to live a whole life, with both work and a family/private life. Such traits may also prove attractive for customers and investors. FFW initiatives could be an advantage in the race for future talent for whom work–life balance, career advancement and personal development are highly important. Millennials (born between 1980 and 1994) and Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2015) in general support companies that align with their values; many say they will not hesitate to end a professional relationship if they disagree with a company's business practices and values.

The 2019 Deloitte Global Millennial Survey[3] (approximately 13,000 millennials in 42 countries and 3,000 members of Generation Z in 10 countries were surveyed) reveals the following:

- Nineteen per cent of Generation Z and 22 per cent of millennials plan to leave their current organization/employer in the coming years due to poor work–life balance (flexibility).

- Twenty-seven per cent of Generation Z and 28 per cent of millennials plan to leave their current organization/employer in the coming years due to a lack of learning and development opportunities.

- Thirty-three per cent of Generation Z and 35 per cent of millennials plan to leave their current organization/employer due to a lack of opportunities for advancement.

---

3 Michele Parmelee, "A generation disrupted: highlights from the 2019 Deloitte Global Millennial Survey", *Deloitte.Insights*, 17 May 2019.

Here is what some other studies suggest:

- Seventy-seven per cent of workers say that paid family leave could impact their choice of employer.[4]

- Women with paid parental leave are 93 per cent more likely to be working one year after having a baby than those who cannot take paid leave.[5]

- When Google increased its paid maternity leave programme from 12 to 18 weeks, the rate of female turnover after maternity leave dropped by 50 per cent.[6]

- Patagonia experiences 25 per cent lower turnover among employees who put their kids in the company childcare programme.[7]

- Sixty-seven per cent of UK parents of children under 5 have considered leaving their jobs because of the pressure to juggle childcare.[8]

Across jobs, the cost of replacing an employee is between 15 per cent and 30 per cent of the employee's annual salary, according to a study by the Center for American Progress.[9] Turnover seems to vary by wage and role. Other studies found that the average costs to replace an employee include the following:

- 16 per cent of the annual salary for high-turnover, low-paying jobs (earning under US$30,000 a year)[10]

- 20 per cent of the annual salary for mid-range positions (earning $30,000 to $50,000 a year)[11]

- up to 213 per cent of the annual salary for highly educated executives (e.g. the cost to replace a CEO earning $100,000 is $213,000)[12]

---

4   Deloitte, "Parental leave survey". Available at https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/about-deloitte/us-about-deloitte-paternal-leave-survey.pdf (accessed on 18 July 2023).

5   Linda Houser and Thomas Vartanian, "Pay matters: the positive economic impacts of paid family leave for families, businesses and the public", Rutgers Center for Women and Work, January 2012, cited in Trish Stroman and others, "Why paid family leave is good business", Boston Consulting Group, 7 February 2017.

6   Susan Wojcicki, "Closing the tech industry gender gap", HuffPost Contributor, 27 January 2016.

7   Rose Marcario, "Patagonia's CEO explains how to make on-site child care pay for itself", Fast Company, 15 August 2016.

8   Yoana Cholteeva, "Two thirds of parents would take a pay cut to be able to work more flexibly", *People Management*, 18 January 2023.

9   Heather Boushey and Sarah Jane Glynn, "There are significant business costs to replacing employees", Center for American Progress, 16 November 2012.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

Productivity and market value

According to companies, the benefits of investments in FFW initiatives include increased innovation and a competitive advantage in the customer and partner markets.

Here are some examples:

- KPMG found that its clients earned a return on investment of 125 per cent, measuring only the tangible benefits of providing on-site childcare.[13]

- JPMorgan Chase Bank has estimated returns of 115 per cent for its childcare programme.[14]

- Eighty per cent of 1,500 companies surveyed reported increased morale among employees following FFW initiatives.[15]

- Seventy per cent of 1,500 companies surveyed reported increased employee productivity following FFW initiatives.[16]

- Eighty-seven per cent of employees say childcare makes them more productive.[17]

Women who take maternity leave work 15–20 per cent more hours than women who do not take maternity leave.[18]

---

13 Marcario, "Patagonia's CEO explains how to make on-site child care pay for itself".
14 Rose Marcario, "Rose Marcario: our company policies for families", Patagonia.
15 Ernst and Young, "Viewpoints on paid family and medical leave", March 2017.
16 Ibid.
17 Bright Horizons Family Solutions, "The lasting impact of employer-sponsored child care centers". Available at https://www.brighthorizons.com/~/media/baaef6571dc04ae4802d735ec39b6745.pdf (accessed on 18 July 2023).
18 Claire Cain Miller, "The economic benefits of paid parental leave", *The New York Times*, 30 January 2015.

Health

For FFW initiatives that address and affect sick leave and short-term absences, the return on investment is seen in reduced direct costs from the loss of productivity and in potentially improved employee well-being, leading to a higher level of engagement, motivation and productivity. A study by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development suggests that

37 per cent of non-manual workers in the private sector cite home or family responsibilities as a major cause of short-term absences.[19]

Gender equality

Employers that invest in FFW initiatives affect their gender balance while expanding choices for women to fulfil their career, family and fertility aspirations. Women often face a critical decision, choosing between having a career or having a family. Due to factors such as limited parental leave, a lack of flexible working conditions, inaccessible childcare and biases in favour of men in human resources practices within companies, many women are unable both to realize their career aspirations and to have the number of children they want. This is further compounded by discriminatory gender norms that place the burden of unpaid care work on women, further limiting their employment opportunities and desires.

---

19 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and Simplyhealth, *Annual Survey Report 2010* (London, 2010). Available at https://dvikan.no/ntnu-studentserver/reports/Stress%20-%20%20Absence-Management-survey-report-2010.pdf (accessed on 24 July 2023).

Balanced gender demographics in a company have a positive impact on the following:

- Profitability: according to a study by the Catalyst and McKinsey, there is a strong correlation between gender diversity and productivity, net value added, net profitability and return on investment.[20]

- Employee engagement and turnover: 2003 research by Gallup found that inclusive organizations (where inclusivity covered gender and racial diversity) produced better business results — including 39 per cent higher customer satisfaction, 22 per cent greater productivity and 27 per cent higher profitability — than organizations that were not inclusive. The Gallup study also indicated that inclusive organizations have 22 per cent lower turnover rates.[21]

- Sound decision-making: research by the Kellogg School of Management demonstrated that heterogeneous groups (i.e. those with diversity, including gender diversity) get better results than homogeneous groups (i.e. those without diversity) because diversity creates a tension or discomfort that results in information being processed more thoroughly and more carefully, leading to wiser decisions.[22]

- Investment in FFW initiatives has also been seen to "potentially attract more female talent"[23] (Deloitte) and added to the goal of 50 per cent women in leadership positions.[24]

---

20 Vivian Hunt and others, "Delivering through diversity", McKinsey & Company, 18 January 2018.

21 Marcus Robinson, Charles Pfeffer and Joan Buccigross, "Business case for diversity with inclusion", Workforce Diversity Network, cited in Deloitte, "Inclusive mobility: how mobilizing a diverse workforce can drive business performance".

22 Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, "Better decisions through diversity", *KelloggInsight*, 1 October 2010.

23 Bright Horizons Family Solutions, "The lasting impact of employer-sponsored child care centers".

24 Quartz, "This is what work-life balance looks like at a company with 100% retention of moms", 16 October 2016.

Employee engagement

FFW initiatives contribute to stronger motivation (higher productivity) and greater loyalty (increased retention) among employees, according to Bright Horizons.[25]

Competence and skill development

Not much research has been done on the skills developed from parenting and caregiving, but the 2011 study "Kids och Karriär", by Sveriges Ingenjörer, looks at how parents among 3,000 engineers (25–45 years old) perceived their competence development during parental leave. For 63 per cent of men and 83 per cent of women, the top five skills they felt they developed were efficiency, cooperation, conflict management, prioritization and empathy.[26] Föräldrasmart Sverige AB's e-mail survey of 100 managers with children (FamSmart at Work Initiative from Sweden), conducted in 2010, collected over 70 examples of family skills that are directly linked to leadership and other skills needed at work.[27]

No one has yet tried to measure or follow the competencies developed among employees with families. However, they could be monitored through self-assessment before and after parental leave — for example, through a 360-degree assessment using the opinions of managers, the employees themselves and their colleagues.

25 Bright Horizons Family Solutions, "The lasting impact of employer-sponsored child care centers".
26 Helene Sjöman, *Kids och karriär*, Sveriges Ingenjörer, 9 January 2011, p. 28.
27 Tiina Bruno, *Föräldrasmart : handbok för chefer och medarbetare* (Stockholm, Ekerlids Förlag, 2010).

Common initiatives taken in other family-friendly workplaces

Examples of the most common FFW initiatives carried out in private sector companies:

- Routines
  - flexible and remote working guidelines
  - meeting policy (during core hours; between school drop-off and pick-up hours)
  - guidelines before, during and after parental leave
- IT tools (for remote work, flexible time management, etc.)
- Manager and HR support (internal coaching and support to enable employees to work in a flexible, time-agile and sustainable way)
  - trust and flexibility when remote working arrangements are in place
  - a programme during parental leave
  - workplace family activities
  - a plan for manager and role-model commitment
  - staff surveys
- Financial support
  - paid parental leave
  - domestic/household support
  - childcare support

Family-friendly workplace examples from Eastern Europe and Central Asia

The Expanding Choices initiative in Eastern Europe and Central Asia has involved 19 private sector companies from Albania, the Republic of Moldova and Kosovo* in a project to expand choices for women in terms of career and family aspirations. Through the project, these companies have become role models in the region, showcasing why and how they have introduced family-friendly workplaces.

Below are quotes from three company managers describing their reasons for implementing FFW initiatives and the ROI they expect from them.

INCA Fish Albania

"There are many strategic reasons for us to become a family-friendly workplace. It is a way to focus on sustainability and contribute to society. We will have more motivated people, [thus] retaining employees. And when we offer a more interesting and good workplace, we [make] the company [more attractive] and make it easier to recruit."

– Alban Zusi, CEO and owner, INCA Fish Albania

---

* All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

Raiffeisen Bank Kosovo

"We want to develop a family-friendly workplace culture by promoting new ways of working, like a flexible hybrid model, and make sure that top-level managers use it themselves, acting as role models."

– *Arta Celina, Head of the People, Culture and Learning Department, Raiffeisen Bank Kosovo*

Panilino Moldova

"We have created a workplace culture within the company with well-defined family principles, a culture that respects work–life balance. Role-modelling is key, and by offering flexible work schedules and family-friendly policies, we are results-oriented and not time-oriented. In my daily work as a manager, I try to motivate others by understanding their personal working styles, goals and ambitions, and align these with business objectives and innovative thinking."

– *Sergiu Guzun, CEO and Co-founder, Panilino Moldova*

Family-friendly workplace examples from Sweden

Telge AB, a group of 11 companies with 800 employees in Sweden

Telge's mission is to provide the residents of Södertälje with good services and contribute to making the city and municipality attractive. Telge Group consists of 11 companies offering housing, construction, electricity, port, heating, water, employment and staffing services.

Strategic reasons for supporting work–life balance and working parents

Part of what motivated the company to implement FFW initiatives was the following ROI assumptions:

- It would be easier to attract and keep young talent.
- It would be easier to attract and keep women, including in senior positions.
- The initiatives would promote greater use of paternity leave.
- The initiatives would help the company replace retiring employees by encouraging young people to join the company or stay longer.
- The initiatives would promote careers across the company by encouraging staff to change business units instead of leaving the company.

Actions taken to support work–life balance and working parents

Below are some examples of initiatives taken by the company to support working parents and work–life balance for all. The employees at Telge are offered the following:

- **flexible working arrangements:** remote work when possible and time planning to fit employees' schedules
- **paid parental leave:** a salary top-up above the rate supported by the government
- **a one-year programme for employees on parental leave:** monthly competence meetings and gatherings for staff who are on parental leave to share their experience as well as coaching support to discuss the new skills they have acquired during parental leave and how to balance their new life as a working parent (Telge was one of the pioneers in Sweden piloting a programme for parents on leave in 2010)
- **"new-start lunches" for working parents:** monthly gatherings during employees' first six months after returning from parental leave, to share experiences and receive coaching support for their new life as a working parent
- **communication with managers about the ROI from parenthood for the company:** collecting and sharing quotes from the CEO and from role-model managers about their development in the programme during their parental leave

Reasons for success

The main factors behind the successful implementation of the FFW initiatives included the following:

- A connection with the company's vision, values, overall challenges and goals: Telge AB is a values-based organization with a strong culture and leadership expectations connected with company values.
- The group's CEO, Human Resources Director and key senior management emphasized the importance of becoming a family-friendly workplace and have acted as role models.

Impact of initiatives

Below are some examples of the impact of the initiatives gathered from interviews with employees and as perceived in appraisals and by the human resources department after the pilot initiatives.

Retention: it was perceived as easier to go back to work after parental leave. The employees and employer noticed that the initiatives improved employees' self-esteem, increased efficiency and raised awareness of new skills developed.

Stronger employer brand: employees felt a stronger commitment to and loyalty towards their employer. The initiatives made it easier and cheaper to recruit and retain employees.

Sustainability role model: the initiatives showed a concrete action for social sustainability, and the company was perceived as a more inclusive and gender-equal employer than others. This generated a lot of media interest in the initiatives taken (especially the meetings for employees during parental leave).

Quotes from staff members

"Becoming a parent is a natural part of life, as is being on parental leave. We have hired pregnant women on several occasions. When we recruit someone our main goal is to hire the one that will perform the best in the long run. Viewing children and pregnancies as something negative feels strange. Being a parent is positive and brings about personal growth. As a parent one develops several different skills that if used in the right way can improve the company's results and goal achievements."

– Stefan Hollmark, father of three, Telge CEO, 2011–2019

"The company initiatives made me feel strengthened in my decision to take parental leave, and I feel a strong [sense of] loyalty towards a company that not only accepts that but also is proactive in the matter. During my paternity leave I discovered a number of links between parenthood and leadership — things that I hadn't thought of. I will use the mindset in my leadership [going] forward, to motivate, keep and develop my employees, using all their [competencies]."

– Joakim Ströberg, father of three, took part in the parental leave programme when working as a marketing manager at Telge

Boliden, a global mining company with 4,800 employees in Sweden

Strategic reasons for supporting work–life balance and working parents

Part of what motivated the company to implement FFW initiatives was the following ROI assumptions:

- Long-term business survival: demographic projections made it necessary for the company to start using all local competencies.

- The company perceived a better and more innovative working environment with more female staff members.

Actions taken to support work–life balance and working parents

Below are some examples of company initiatives to support working parents:

- paid parental leave: a top-up above the rate supported by the government, with employees receiving an additional 10 per cent on top of their salary during 180 days of parental leave

- paid costs for medical needs and travel: to care for children up to 20 years old (taxed as salary)

- a laptop and mobile phone for remote work paid for during parental leave

- salary revision: normal salary increases even during parental leave

- invitations to all social meetings and events: also for employees on parental leave

- family days at local sites

- appraisals: also during parental leave if requested by the employee

- contact: continuous contact between managers and employees during parental leave if requested by the employee

Reasons for success

The main factors behind the successful implementation of the FFW initiatives included the following:

- **Working with role models:** one of the most senior male managers role-modelled the family-friendly workplace in the 1980s by taking paternity leave. Many male employees have followed his example.

- **Recruitment of pregnant women:** one pregnant woman nominated the company for a Golden Pacifier award in 2012 for being the most family-friendly company in Sweden. (Boliden won the award.)

"We see [the] recruitment of pregnant women as a long-term investment."

– Ann-Christin Thunehed, Boliden Group Human Resources Director in 2012, speaking at the award ceremony

Sweco, a global services company (consulting engineering, environmental technology and architecture) with around 6,000 employees in Sweden

Strategic reasons for supporting work–life balance and working parents

Part of what motivated the company to implement FFW initiatives was the following ROI assumptions:

- Employee retention and productivity would be improved by ensuring that employees are able to live a complete life.
- The company would become more competitive in the labour market.

Actions taken to support work–life balance and working parents

Below are some examples of company initiatives to support working parents:

- flexible working hours
- remote working arrangements
- flexible teams with shared processes
- paid parental leave: extra salary during parental leave (three months at 90 per cent salary)

Reasons for success

One of the main factors behind the successful implementation of the FFW initiatives was that the company trusted its employees.

"As a father of two and a regional manager, it's sometimes hard to keep everything running smoothly, but the freedom offered by Sweco makes it easier."

– Daan Cedergren, father of two children, Regional Manager

Ramboll, Danish engineering, design and consultancy company with around 2,000 employees in Sweden

Strategic reasons for supporting work–life balance and working parents

Part of what motivated the company to implement FFW initiatives was the following ROI assumptions:

○ The initiatives would be connected with the company's internal sustainability goals, especially for being an employer that offers equal development opportunities for everyone (internal goal of ensuring at least 35 per cent women by 2025).

○ The initiatives would improve health and decrease health-related costs.

○ The initiatives would ensure zero discrimination within the organization (as assessed by the annual employee survey).

Actions taken to support work–life balance and working parents

Below are some examples of company initiatives to support working parents:

- flexible working hours

- remote work

- time guidelines for meetings

- possibility of part-time work

- work–life balance

- recruitment of women, including the hiring of pregnant women

- personal development

- inclusion of employees in company events during parental leave

- annual salary review

- annual employee survey

- parental leave allowance

- beneficial prices for services to facilitate everyday life (offered to all employees)

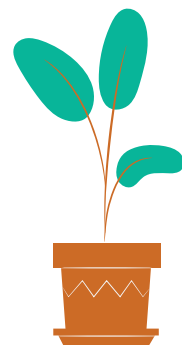## Reasons for success

The main factors behind the successful implementation of the FFW initiatives included the following:

- the promotion and engagement of manager role models

- strong and clear connections with the company's values and employer's promise to employees

"Ramboll has successfully worked on issues concerning work in both time and space in an industry that sets high standards on availability and responsiveness to ... clients' wishes and needs. Ramboll has also shown that competence development is an important success factor. This has been done mainly through ... training for managers about ... work for a parent-friendly working life."

– A member of the trade union when Ramboll won an award for being the most parent-friendly workplace in Sweden, 2014

"So proud of my awesome employer. Values are not just words but an investment in an important backbone — family and home."

– A Ramboll employee

Below are some more examples of initiatives by Swedish companies to ensure a family-friendly workplace (more details can be found on the websites of some of the companies)

SCA, a paper company with 4,000 employees in Sweden

- flexible working hours
- distance/remote working arrangements
- salary compensation during parental leave
- manager role models

"I have developed many skills as a parent [that are] valuable at work: prioritization, flexibility, efficiency."

– Nicolas Adlercreutz, Group CFO

Scania, a manufacturer of trucks and buses, 12,000 employees in Sweden

- salary compensation during parental leave
- promotions during pregnancies and parental leave

"I got the job eight-months pregnant with my first child!"

– Camilla Dewoon, product and marketing planning, two children

TeliaSonera, a telecom company with around 6,000 employees in Sweden

- flexibility and distance/remote working arrangements
- a laptop and mobile phone provided for use at home
- salary compensation during parental leave
- a parents network for exchanging ideas and experience regarding work–life balance
- focus on results, not hours

IKEA, a furniture company with 9,200 employees in Sweden

- flexible working hours
- many family activities
- possibility for employees to visit their workplace with their children while on parental leave in order to keep in touch with colleagues
- strong role models for work–life balance among managers

Engaging managers and role models in family-friendly workplaces

Introduction

This chapter provides suggestions and inspiration about how to engage managers and role models among senior staff in order to identify and develop internal ambassadors for family-friendly workplace (FFW) initiatives. It also provides recommendations on how to use FFW support and awareness-raising materials to increase and maintain the engagement of managers and employees in FFW initiatives.

Why engage managers and role models?

Holding dialogues with managers at an early stage in the FFW process is the key to success in changing a company's workplace culture and its processes and routines. Inviting managers to identify — and provide input concerning — the company's challenges and strategic reasons for becoming a family-friendly workplace will increase their commitment to developing and supporting family-friendly initiatives within the company. It will make it easier for leaders at all levels to prioritize initiatives and to get the mandate needed to implement new activities and workplace routines. Manager dialogues are also a way to identify and promote internal role models who can share honest and inspiring examples of how they combine their work with other aspects of their lives. These stories are useful during the FFW development process, for building trust and providing concrete examples for other employees to follow. Manager dialogues also provide an opportunity for the person doing the company assessment (see the chapter Assessing your company's readiness under step 1) to listen to and assess managers' attitudes and behaviours concerning family-friendly workplaces and what abstract support they provide to their employees.

How to engage managers and role models

The two main steps for success in engaging managers are the following:

1. early identification and engagement of role models and ambassadors among managers to champion the attitudes and behaviours needed for an effective family-friendly workplace

2. improvement of managers' understanding of the benefits, to the company and to employees, of successfully introducing a family-friendly workplace

Being a role-model manager at a family-friendly workplace means actively promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace and being a driving force that empowers the team and the rest of the company to reach their full potential. Role-model managers also champion family-friendly workplaces by creating an enabling environment that empowers employees to utilize FFW initiatives and policies (such as parental leave, flexible hours, etc.). When high-level managers use flexible working arrangements, paternity leave or other benefits, it sends a signal to employees and other managers that they too can avail of such policies without fear of judgment or retribution. So, continuously identifying, collating and sharing the stories of role-model managers is one of the strongest ways to get more managers to commit, thus becoming FFW role models themselves and inspiring the rest of the company.

What role-model managers have to say about their family-friendly workplace

"There are many strategic reasons for us to become a family-friendly workplace. It is a way to focus on sustainability and contribute to society. We will have more motivated people, [thus] retaining employees. And when we offer a more interesting and good workplace, we [make] the company [more attractive] and make it easier to recruit."

– Alban Zusi, CEO and owner, INCA Fish Albania

"We want to develop a family-friendly workplace culture by promoting new ways of working, like a flexible hybrid model, and make sure that top-level managers use it themselves, acting as role models."

– Arta Celina, Head of the People, Culture and Learning Department, Raiffeisen Bank Kosovo

"We have created a workplace culture within the company with well-defined family principles, a culture that respects work–life balance. Role-modelling is key, and by offering flexible work schedules and family-friendly policies, we are results-oriented and not time-oriented. In my daily work as a manager, I try to motivate others by understanding their personal working styles, goals and ambitions, and align these with business objectives and innovative thinking."

– Sergiu Guzun, CEO and Co-founder, Panilino Moldova

"We want to be an innovative company, and [we] know that diversity and a broad view [of] competencies stimulates innovation. It is important for us to attract future talent and develop and keep the employees we have.

From a profitability perspective, parents also develop lots of skills 'free of charge' for the company. When we help them combine work with family and see parenthood as an asset, we help employees develop and grow, their performance [improves], we get lower employee turnover and in the long run positive effects on our profitability."

– Klas Forsström, CEO at Munters AB, quoted when he was global CEO at Sandvik Coromant

"Our company's initiatives make me feel strengthened in my decision to take parental leave, and I feel a strong [sense of] loyalty towards a company that not only accepts that but also is proactive in the matter. During my paternity leave, I discovered a number of links between parenthood and leadership — things that I hadn't thought of. I will use the mindset in my leadership going forward, to motivate, keep and develop my employees, using all their [competencies]."

– Joakim Ströberg, father of three, took part in the parental leave programme when working as a marketing manager at Telge

"Becoming a parent is a natural part of life, as is being on parental leave. We have hired pregnant women on several occasions. When we recruit someone, our main goal is to hire the one that will perform the best in the long run. Viewing children and pregnancies as something negative feels strange. Being a parent is positive and brings about personal growth. As a parent one develops several different skills that, if used in the right way, can improve the company's results and goal achievements."

– Stefan Hollmark, father of three, Telge Group CEO, 2011–2019

Suggested actions for engaging managers and identifying role models

The easiest and most efficient way to garner commitment, understanding and insights among managers and to identify potential role models is to invite a group to a workshop. The number of participants can range from a few managers to all the managers in the company; companies should choose the modality that suits them best. The key is to start involving the participants, posing questions and listening to their thoughts and ideas. The outcomes and benefits of organizing such workshops include the following:

○ managers' commitment to the FFW initiative at an early stage of the process

○ managers' understanding of how FFW initiatives can develop their own leadership skills — for instance, by becoming a more inclusive leader

○ an initial assessment and understanding of the company's FFW maturity status according to managers

○ input from managers about the current status and ideas on how to move forward (e.g. the status of existing routines and guidelines before, during and after parental leave; current attitudes towards and support for working parents inside and outside the office; potential areas for improvement)

○ internal buy-in about the importance of FFW initiatives for achieving the company's vision, values and goals

○ insights from discussions about how parenting and caregiving skills are useful at work and how to make use of all the competencies available, including the skills developed outside work

○ an understanding of how FFW initiatives can add value to the company's employer value proposition (EVP) and employer branding strategy (i.e. how becoming a family-friendly workplace could lead to greater talent attraction, development and retention)

Workshop for managers: value added and suggested format

Value added

One of the most effective ways to engage managers is through a workshop that combines information-sharing with an opportunity for all managers present to reflect, discuss and give feedback. It is often hard to let all participants share their thoughts and ideas at a seminar. Instead, a more interactive workshop with discussions in smaller groups gives everyone a chance to be heard. Participants often perceive such workshops as an eye-opener since they have an opportunity to reflect and create solutions together while feeling included, listened to and appreciated for their input. This makes it easier to get managers to commit, and it develops both their attitudes and their support for the FFW initiative. All groups can follow the same process in their discussions at the same time. An important added value of this method is that key conclusions and each individual's reasoning may be documented in the groups and can be worked on internally, using the suggestions and ideas that emerged during the discussions.

Format

If the company conducts in-person workshops, it can prepare large poster-size papers or flipcharts (A1–A3 size) to put on each table, with the questions to be discussed and space to write comments. It is also a good idea to have someone take notes at each table, but it is important that everyone be able to see the questions and notes on the table too. If the company conducts an online workshop, the questions can be displayed on-screen and notes taken in a shared document. The conversation is guided by a number of questions adapted to the workshop topic. For instance, for the topic of how to become a more family-friendly workplace, the questions should focus on the present (What do we currently offer?), the reasons (Why should we become a family-friendly workplace?) and the methods (What can we do to become a family-friendly workplace?). The time for each question should be short (3–5 minutes) to create quick and lively discussions.

The group dialogues can be conducted with four to six people per group and for an unlimited number of groups. Each group designates a moderator, a timekeeper, a note-taker and a rapporteur. Group discussions are followed by plenary sessions to consider the outcomes of the discussions. Depending on the chosen time for each question, as well as the number of contributors, the workshop can be scheduled to last from a few hours to a whole day.

Content

The discussion blocks can be introduced by short inspiration sessions to provide participants with inspiration and ideas for their discussions. These sessions can include reflections from the company's HR person or other managers and can be held in-plenary — for example, shorter interviews on stage with spontaneous reflections from the audience.

Suggestions of content and time requirements

Below are suggestions for the workshop's content, timing and flow; companies can and should adapt these to their context and needs. It is important that all the questions and timing be visible to all participants, ideally on each table.

1. Short introduction: what is a family-friendly workplace, and why are we doing this workshop? (10 minutes)

2. Group discussions about the present situation:
   - How family-friendly are we today, on a scale of 1 to 10? (2 minutes)
   - How family-friendly are the attitudes and behaviours in our company? (5 minutes)
   - Who (the individual or team) is responsible for different policies or initiatives that support a family-friendly workplace in our company? (2 minutes)

3. Plenary discussion: pick a few examples from different groups (the time will depend on the number of groups)

4. Inspirational discussion: what are some of the returns on investment from having a family-friendly workplace (either within the company or from other companies)? (10 minutes)

5. Group discussions about the reasons:

   ○ What can we expect from FFW initiatives? What is the best-case scenario in terms of the impact on our employees, managers and company? (5 minutes)

   ○ How are FFW initiatives connected with the company's vision, goals and values, and what challenges can they solve?(10 minutes)

   ○ What is the most important impact or return on investment? What is possible to measure and follow up over time? (5 minutes)

6. Plenary discussion: pick a few examples from different groups (the time will depend on the number of groups)

7. Inspirational discussion: examples of FFW initiatives undertaken by the company and/or other companies (10 minutes)

8. Group discussions about the methods:

   ○ What should we continue to do, stop doing and start doing to become a family-friendly workplace? (15 minutes)

   ○ How can we promote positive attitudes and share examples of role-model managers and employees, both internally and externally? (5 minutes)

   ○ How can we share experiences, best practices and lessons learned with each other? (5 minutes)

   ○ What are the immediate next steps to take as a company? What are the immediate next steps to take as a manager? (5 minutes)

Measuring returns on investment in family-friendly workplaces

Introduction

This chapter provides suggestions on possible key performance indicators (KPIs) that companies can select to measure their return on investment (ROI); it also describes how to carry out a cost–benefit analysis of a company's family-friendly workplace (FFW) strategy.

How to use this chapter

Companies should use this chapter for inspiration, ideas and guidance during their assessment to provide inputs for their FFW strategy and for discussions with their human resources department (or the unit responsible for staff management and workplace culture) and management about the reasons for becoming a family-friendly workplace. The chapter supports the selection of KPIs that can be used to continuously monitor FFW initiatives and measure their impact and returns on investment.

The chapter elaborates each KPI in terms of data required for qualitative monitoring and provides suggestions for possible cost–benefit analyses. It highlights the potential returns on investment that can be identified with each KPI. Carrying out these steps will clarify the benefits of each FFW initiative included in the FFW strategy and support management discussions and decision-making in steps 1 and 2.

This chapter is intended as guidance, and it provides an example of how to structure the inputs needed and the type of analysis that may be possible for each KPI. Each company can choose how to present the cost–benefit input, analysis and returns on investment to make them relevant and to align them with their own processes. Specifically, these elements should be adapted to each company's specific context, maturity level and national legal framework.

Step 1

Table 1. Key performance indicators

FFW key performance indicator (KPI)	Suggested data needed for KPI monitoring	Suggested cost–benefit analysis	What does this KPI measure?
1. Recruitment costs	Total cost of recruitment activities, for example: • time spent internally, by managers, human resources department, administration, etc. • cost of external support • advertising costs • efficiency losses before new employees are fully operating in new role **Formula**: total recruitment cost / number of recruitments = average cost per recruitment	• Compare changes in recruitment costs with relevant indicators for company productivity and/or efficiency, such as revenue or profit. Note: a decrease in recruitment costs may not be entirely attributable to the introduction of a family-friendly workplace; the proportion due to the implementation of a family-friendly workplace will need to be estimated.	• the potential reduction in recruitment costs due to the employer's attractiveness as a family-friendly workplace
2. Investment in parental leave per year	Total cost of, for example, financial contributions or subsidies before and during parental leave (for both mothers and fathers, depending on national financial support)	• Compare the investments in parental leave per year with relevant indicators for company productivity and/or efficiency, such as revenue or profit.	• The scope of investments in parental leave can be communicated to signal that the company is a family-friendly workplace. In role-model companies, this investment can be related to investments in management courses or developing employee competencies during parental leave.

Table 1. Key performance indicators

FFW key performance indicator (KPI)	Suggested data needed for KPI monitoring	Suggested cost–benefit analysis	What does this KPI measure?
3. Number of parental leave days taken by employees Could be further disaggregated by • gender • age • business area • managerial level • other	• number of parents among employees and managers • number of days absent due to parental leave	• Assess the change in the number of parental leave days taken by employees before and after the implementation of FFW initiatives. • Follow up on the change in the number of days of parental leave taken by managers before and after the implementation of FFW initiatives. • Compare the number of days of parental leave managers take with the number of days of parental leave employees take.	• whether FFW initiatives have an impact on the balance between parental leave taken by women and men, and whether there are differences between business areas, locations, etc. Note: this KPI can also be used to determine whether managers are acting as FFW role models by measuring the amount of parental leave taken by managers. Role models can have a positive impact on the implementation and utilization of FFW initiatives within the company as well as the company's attractiveness as an employer. Keep in mind, however, that managers are not necessarily role models just because they take parental leave.
4. Employee retention rate per year (retention = percentage of employees employed on 1 January who remain employed on 31 December of any given year) The retention rate could be further disaggregated by • gender • age • business area • parental status • other	• number of employees at the beginning of the year • number of employees who left during the year **Formula**: number of employees who stayed at the company for the entire period / number employees at the start of the period	• Assess the changes in retention among employees before and after the implementation of FFW initiatives.	• whether both women and men stay in the company, and whether there are differences between business areas, locations, etc. • everything from the level of workplace culture to concrete support for work–life balance

Step 1

Table 1. Key performance indicators

FFW key performance indicator (KPI)	Suggested data needed for KPI monitoring	Suggested cost–benefit analysis	What does this KPI measure?
5. Employee turnover rate per year (turnover = number of employees who left during the year) The employee turnover rate could be further disaggregated by • gender • age • business area • other	• number of employees at the beginning and end of the year • number of employees who left during the year **Formula**: number of employees leaving during the time period / average number of employees at the beginning and end of the time period	• Compare the employee turnover with relevant indicators for company productivity and/or efficiency, such as revenue or profit.	• everything from the level of workplace culture to concrete support for work–life balance • for example, whether there is a risk of higher turnover among employees of childbearing age
6. Employee turnover rate during parental leave The employee turnover rate during parental leave could be further divided by • gender • age • business area • other	• number of parents among employees • number of parents who terminated their employment • date of termination of employment • date of birth of employees' children	• Compare the turnover rate during parental leave among employees who are parents with the total employee turnover rate.	• how FFW initiatives support employees during parental leave Such initiatives may affect attraction and retention rates among employed parents on parental leave. Highlighting how FFW initiatives support employees during parental leave with a separate KPI puts the focus on parental leave as a critical period when many companies lose employees, and highlights the importance of ensuring strong engagement of parents during that period.
7. Employee turnover rate in the first two years after the birth of an employee's child This rate could be further disaggregated by • gender • age • business area • other	• number of parents among employees • number of parents who terminated their employment • date of termination of employment • date of birth of employees' children	• Compare the turnover rate among parents with the total employee turnover rate.	• how FFW initiatives support employees during their first years as a working parent Such initiatives may affect attraction and the retention rate among working parents with small children. Highlighting how FFW initiatives support employees during their first years as working parents with a separate KPI puts the focus on parental leave as a critical period when many companies lose employees, and highlights the importance of ensuring strong engagement of and support for parents during that period.

Table 1. Key performance indicators

FFW key performance indicator (KPI)	Suggested data needed for KPI monitoring	Suggested cost–benefit analysis	What does this KPI measure?
8. Promotions and recruitment Promotions and recruitment disaggregated by • gender • age • number of parents on parental leave • number of working parents • number of expecting parents • number of pregnant women • business area • other	• number of parents among employees • dates of parental leave • dates of promotions • number of expecting parents among employees and applicants* • number of promotions during pregnancy and parental leave • number of recruitments (internal and external) during pregnancy and parental leave * Please note that information about pregnancy needs to be provided by the applicants themselves. Asking about pregnancy is inappropriate and may be illegal in your country or territory.	• Monitor the change in promotions and recruitments before and after the implementation of FFW initiatives.	• how a family-friendly workplace values working parents and sees parenting and caregiving as an opportunity to develop useful skills for the company This KPI also indicates whether there is a risk of discrimination against employees of childbearing age. In addition, highlighting promotions and recruitment among parents before, during and after parental leave is an indicator of abstract norm changes.
9. Number of days employees are absent because their children are sick Disaggregated by • position • gender • other Could be further disaggregated by • age • business area • other	• number of parents among employees	• Compare absenteeism for parents with sick children before and after FFW initiatives. • Study the impact of absenteeism on relevant indicators for company productivity and/ or efficiency, such as revenue or profit.	• how FFW initiatives support employees during their first years as working parents, when they may need to stay home with sick children The company's performance in respect of this KPI may affect attraction and the retention rate among working parents with small children.

Table 1. Key performance indicators

FFW key performance indicator (KPI)	Suggested data needed for KPI monitoring	Suggested cost–benefit analysis	What does this KPI measure?
10. Costs of long-term sick leave among parents Could be disaggregated by • gender • age • business area • other	• number of parents among employees • total cost of sick leave within the company • all of the employer's additional costs for parents during leave (e.g. replacement workers)	• Monitor the change in long-term sick leave among employed parents if the company is becoming a family-friendly workplace. • Compare the cost of long-term sick leave among parents with the company's overall sick leave costs. • Study the impact of long-term sick leave on relevant indicators for company productivity and/or efficiency, such as revenue or profit (estimate of efficiency losses due to absences).	• whether parents get sick from challenges relating to balancing their work and family
11. Percentage of parents taking parental leave Disaggregated by • gender Could be further disaggregated by • age • business area • other	• number of parents among employees • gender of employees • number of days absent due to parental leave	• Assess the proportion of parents taking parental leave before and after the implementation of FFW initiatives.	• whether FFW initiatives affect the use of parental leave within the company
12. Gender balance within the total workforce Disaggregated by • top management • middle management • job categories	• gender of employees • number of employees (preferably true headcount, not full-time equivalents)	• Monitor changes in gender balance in, for example, management positions and different business units before and after the implementation of FFW initiatives. • Study the impact of gender balance on relevant indicators for company productivity and/or efficiency, such as revenue or profit.	• company savings/gains in relevant and appropriate metrics for company productivity and/or efficiency, such as revenue or profit, associated with changes in gender balance

Source: Compiled by the author.

Assessing your company's readiness

Assessing your company's readiness

What is this chapter for?

This chapter aims to guide the assessment of a company's current status as a family-friendly workplace (FFW) and its impact on the achievement of the company's business goals. It provides valuable input and guidance for developing and implementing an FFW ambition statement, strategy and actions that support the company's needs and goals.

How to use this chapter

The chapter consists of four assessment steps:

1. FFW assessment: overall status

Purpose

To quickly rate the current overall FFW maturity level as perceived by the company's human resources department (and, if needed, a selection of managers and employees), and to get an understanding of the level that the company aspires to reach.

The determination of the perceived maturity level (A, B or C) can be used to design a short FFW ambition statement.

Guidance

Adapt Table 2 by adding examples of what needs to be provided in terms of family policies in accordance with the applicable laws.

Based on the perceived maturity level, a more detailed assessment of the company can be done using Table 4.

2. Company challenges

Purpose

To identify which company challenges can and should be addressed with FFW initiatives in order to support the company's goals.

Before starting FFW initiatives, it is important to discuss and determine the company's main reasons for becoming a more family-friendly workplace. This will be mentioned in the FFW strategy and in both internal and external communication. It is also useful to help managers at all levels to understand and support the initiative.

More information about the reasons for becoming a family-friendly workplace can be found in the chapter Measuring returns on investment in family-friendly workplaces in step 1.

Guidance

Discuss with managers and the human resources department (or the staff responsible for personnel and the workplace culture in the company) the business challenges that could be addressed by FFW initiatives and the strategic reasons for becoming a family-friendly workplace. Rate the suggested strategic reasons from 1 to 10 based on the company's needs and challenges, and then pick the top three reasons for becoming a family-friendly workplace.

3. FFW assessment: components

Purpose

To assess the degree to which the company is family-friendly, taking a detailed look at each potential FFW component. This detailed assessment would help facilitate the development of an FFW strategy by identifying what the company already does, what it wants to do and why it wants to do it.

Guidance

Go through each component with the company's human resources department and/or management to identify what the company does and what it offers employees today. Rate the extent to which the company provides the suggested FFW support components.

Discuss and rate what the company may want to offer in a couple of years, and to what extent it may want to offer these things.

Other options not mentioned below may be added, and this is encouraged to ensure that Table 4 is adapted to the company and the legislative and cultural context.

Rate how critical each component is to solving the company challenges identified in Table 3.

4. FFW assessment: staff survey

Purpose

To provide suggestions and ideas for questions to ask in staff surveys on the degree to which the company provides a family-friendly workplace. These suggestions and ideas can also be used for a general staff survey to monitor changes in staff's perception of the degree to which the company they work for provides a family-friendly workplace.

Guidance

Use an online survey tool or the company's own internal tool to survey staff about their perception of how family-friendly the company is. The questions proposed are indicative and can be rephrased as needed.

Be careful when posing background questions, as they may affect the anonymity of the respondents.

Table 5 may also be copied to a separate Excel document to use in annual follow-ups after the assessment.

Step 1

Table 2. FFW assessment: overall status

Purpose	To quickly rate the current overall FFW maturity level as perceived by the company's human resources department (and, if needed, a selection of managers and employees), and to get an understanding of the level that the company aspires to reach.
	The determination of the perceived maturity level (A, B or C) can be used to design a short FFW ambition statement.
Guidance	Adapt this table by adding examples of what needs to be provided in terms of family policies in accordance with the applicable laws.
	Based on the perceived maturity level, a more detailed assessment of the company can be carried out using Table 4.

Please rate your company's current overall FFW level.	Please rate your company's ambition in terms of its overall FFW level.
Level A: We offer what is required by law and regulations and do not discuss the issue internally, nor is it high on our agenda.	**Level A:** We want to offer what is required by law and regulations, and we do not want to discuss the issue internally or have it high on our agenda.
Level B: We ensure that a family-friendly workplace is on our agenda, and we give some support to employees (in the form of time and IT support, financial help, or supportive attitudes and behaviour).	**Level B:** We want a family-friendly workplace to be on our agenda and to give some support to employees (in the form of time and IT support, financial help, and supportive attitudes and behaviour).
Level C: We ensure that a family-friendly workplace is high on our agenda, that it gets focused attention and that we communicate about it externally. Employees receive targeted support (in the form of time, IT support, financial help, and supportive attitudes and behaviour).	**Level C:** We want to provide a family-friendly workplace by giving the issue attention and resources, communicating about it externally and providing targeted support to employees.

C?

B?

A?
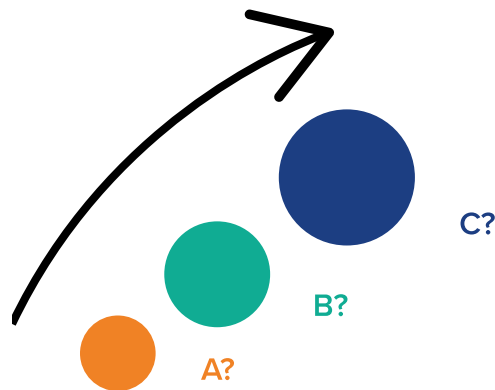
Source: Compiled by the author.

Table 3. Company challenges addressed

Purpose	To identify which company challenges can and should be addressed with FFW initiatives in order to support the company's goals.
	Before starting FFW initiatives, it is important to discuss and determine the company's main reasons for becoming a more family-friendly workplace. This will be mentioned in the FFW strategy and in both internal and external communication. It is also useful to help managers at all levels to understand and support the initiative.
	More information about the reasons for becoming a family-friendly workplace can be found in the chapter Measuring returns on investment in family-friendly workplaces in step 1.
Guidance	Discuss with managers and the human resources department (or the staff responsible for personnel and the workplace culture in the company) the challenges facing the company and its reasons for becoming a family-friendly workplace. Rate the suggested strategic reasons from 1 to 10 based on the company's needs and challenges, and then pick the top three reasons for becoming a family-friendly workplace.
Company challenges	Low attraction (difficult and costly to recruit employees)
	Low retention (difficult to keep employees)
	Low gender equality (in management positions and across the workforce)
	Low employee engagement
	Lack of sustainable work–life balance (high number of health- and absence-related issues)
	Low productivity (due to absence, low employee engagement or other reasons)
	Poor company brand (market position and competitiveness)
	None
	Other, please comment:

Source: Compiled by the author.

Table 4. FFW assessment: components

Purpose	If the company is determined to have a maturity level of B or C in the overall status assessment, then this table can be used to complete a more detailed assessment. The result of this assessment can be used to make an FFW plan.
Guidance	Go through each component with the company's human resources department and/or management staff to identify what the company does and what it offers employees today. Rate the extent to which the company provides the suggested FFW support components.
	Discuss and rate what the company may want to offer in a couple of years, and to what extent it may want to offer these things.
	It is possible to add other options not mentioned below, and doing so is encouraged to ensure that the tool is adapted to the company and the legislative and cultural context.
	Rate how critical each component is to solving the company challenges identified in Table 3.

No.	FFW support areas	FFW components	Is this in place in our company today?	Do we want this to be in place in our company in the future?	Importance for solving identified company challenges
Example	*Time and IT*	*We have guidelines for flexible and remote working arrangements (e.g. part-time work as required by law or a more extensive, staged return to work after leave, job sharing, working from home when one's child is sick).*	*Partially / to some extent*	*Yes*	*High*
1	**Time and IT**	We have guidelines and processes for flexible and remote working arrangements (e.g. part-time work as required by law or a more extensive, staged return to work after leave, job sharing, working from home when one's child is sick).	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High

Table 4. FFW assessment: components

No.	FFW support areas	FFW components	Is this in place in our company today?	Do we want this to be in place in our company in the future?	Importance for solving identified company challenges
2	Time and IT	We schedule work meetings during core office hours (e.g. between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.) so that employees can manage day-care drop-off/pick-up.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
3	Time and IT	We have guidelines, processes and routines for roles and responsibilities before parental leave (e.g. administration of leave, timing of leave, allocation of work responsibilities during leave, information for the team).	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
4	Time and IT	We have guidelines, processes and routines for roles and responsibilities during parental leave (e.g. how managers and employees will stay connected during leave, how company and team information is shared with employees on leave, which company activities/events employees on leave are invited to, etc.).	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High

Table 4. FFW assessment: components

No.	FFW support areas	FFW components	Is this in place in our company today?	Do we want this to be in place in our company in the future?	Importance for solving identified company challenges
5	Time and IT	We have guidelines, processes and routines for roles and responsibilities after parental leave (e.g. planning for a return to work, information for the team, performance and development discussion/appraisal upon return).	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
6	Time and IT	We offer flexible parental leave periods.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
7	Time and IT	Our workplace provides breastfeeding and pumping rooms.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High

Table 4. FFW assessment: components

No.	FFW support areas	FFW components	Is this in place in our company today?	Do we want this to be in place in our company in the future?	Importance for solving identified company challenges
8a	**Time and IT**	We have guidelines for how employees on (parental) leave are managed in their performance and development evaluation.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
8b	**Time and IT**	Other options identified in local companies	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
8c	**Time and IT**	Other options identified in local companies	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High

Table 4. FFW assessment: components

No.	FFW support areas	FFW components	Is this in place in our company today?	Do we want this to be in place in our company in the future?	Importance for solving identified company challenges
9	Financial help	We offer a financial contribution and/or parental leave subsidies to employees during parental leave.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
10	Financial help	We offer financial childcare support (e.g. for nursery fees, paid emergency care).	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
11	Financial help	We offer domestic/household support benefits (e.g. cleaning, housekeeping, grocery shopping).	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
12	Financial help	We offer study support for employees' children.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High

Table 4. FFW assessment: components

No.	FFW support areas	FFW components	Is this in place in our company today?	Do we want this to be in place in our company in the future?	Importance for solving identified company challenges
13	Financial help	We have guidelines for how occupational pension contributions are managed during parental leave and part-time work.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
14	Financial help	We have guidelines for how employees on (parental) leave are managed in performance and salary reviews.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
15a	Financial help	We have guidelines for how employees on (parental) leave take part in variable pay plans (e.g. eligibility for payout).	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
15b	Financial help	Other options identified in local companies	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High

Table 4. FFW assessment: components

No.	FFW support areas	FFW components	Is this in place in our company today?	Do we want this to be in place in our company in the future?	Importance for solving identified company challenges
15c	Financial help	Other options identified in local companies	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
16	Attitudes and behaviour	We offer support to parents in accordance with local laws and regulations.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
17	Attitudes and behaviour	Most of our managers see parenthood as an opportunity, not an obstacle.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
18	Attitudes and behaviour	Our male managers include fathers who have taken parental leave.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High

Table 4. FFW assessment: components

No.	FFW support areas	FFW components	Is this in place in our company today?	Do we want this to be in place in our company in the future?	Importance for solving identified company challenges
19	Attitudes and behaviour	The required commitment to a family-friendly workplace among managers on different organizational levels is satisfactory (e.g. managers display positive attitudes towards working parents, promote parental leave, and use parental and other benefits for working parents themselves, etc.).	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
20	Attitudes and behaviour	The required commitment to a family-friendly workplace among role models on different organizational levels is satisfactory (meaning that we have several role models with the attitudes and behaviours needed).	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
21	Attitudes and behaviour	We have guidelines for how employees on (parental) leave are invited to participate in staff surveys.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High

Table 4. FFW assessment: components

No.	FFW support areas	FFW components	Is this in place in our company today?	Do we want this to be in place in our company in the future?	Importance for solving identified company challenges
22	Attitudes and behaviour	We ask our employees how they perceive and value our FFW financial help.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
23	Attitudes and behaviour	We ask our employees how they perceive our FFW time- and IT-related support.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
24	Attitudes and behaviour	We ask our employees how they perceive the level and effectiveness of family-friendly policies in our company.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
25	Attitudes and behaviour	We offer an internal workplace programme and meetings for parents on parental leave.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High

Table 4. FFW assessment: components

No.	FFW support areas	FFW components	Is this in place in our company today?	Do we want this to be in place in our company in the future?	Importance for solving identified company challenges
26	Attitudes and behaviour	We offer an internal workplace programme and meetings for managers with employees on parental leave.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
27	Attitudes and behaviour	We support workplace networks for working parents (after parental leave).	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
28	Attitudes and behaviour	Employees are aware of the competence that is developed from parenthood and how that competence can add value in their role.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
29a	Attitudes and behaviour	Managers are aware of the competence that is developed from parenthood and how that competence can add value in their own role or in that of their employees.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High

Table 4. FFW assessment: components

No.	FFW support areas	FFW components	Is this in place in our company today?	Do we want this to be in place in our company in the future?	Importance for solving identified company challenges
29b	Attitudes and behaviour	Other options identified in local companies	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
29c	Attitudes and behaviour	Other options identified in local companies	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
Optional	Overall strategies	We have a company gender equality plan and/or policy.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High
Optional	Overall strategies	We have a company sustainability plan and/or policy.	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Yes Partly / to some extent No / not at all Don't know	Low Medium High

Source: Compiled by the author.

Table 5. FFW assessment: staff survey

Purpose	To provide suggestions and ideas for questions to pose in staff surveys on the FFW level within the company to inform the assessment and for a general staff survey to monitor changes in staff's perception of the company's FFW level.
Guidance	Use an online survey tool or the company's internal tool to survey the staff on their perception of how family-friendly their company is. The questions proposed are indicative and can be rephrased as needed. Be careful when posing background questions, as they may affect the anonymity of the respondents. This part of the assessment tool may also be copied to a separate Excel document to use in annual follow-ups after the assessment.

Area	Questions for survey	Answer format and options: short version	Answer format and options: extended version
• **Employee background**			
Family situation	I am …	A parent with a child or children of preschool age	
		A parent with a child or children of school age	
		A parent with children of both preschool and school age	
		A parent with a grown-up child or children	
		An employee with other caregiving responsibilities	
		An employee with no caregiving responsibilities	
	Alternative: Are you a parent?	Yes, with a child or children of preschool age	
		Yes, with a child or children of school age	
		Yes, with children of both preschool and school age	
		Yes, with a grown-up child or children	
		No	

Table 5. FFW assessment: staff survey

Gender	Gender	Woman
		Man
		Other
Experience working abroad where other social security systems (government support for families) are in place	Do you have experience working abroad where other social security systems (government support for families) are in place?	Yes
		No
		Optional: in which country or countries?
Age	My age:	19 or younger
		20–29
		30–39
		40–49
		50–59
		60 or older
Role in company	I am	A manager of a small team <10 employees
		A manager of a large team >10 employees
		Not a manager

Table 5. FFW assessment: staff survey

Employee's perception of the company's FFW maturity

Support for working parents: awareness of and knowledge about what is offered	My employer offers practical support to enable me to balance my work and personal life responsibilities.	Yes. Give examples: No. Which support would you suggest? Additional comments:	**Examples:** *Flexible working hours* *Ability to work from home if a child or other family member is sick* *Meetings only during core working hours* *Flexible parental leave* *More part-time opportunities than required by law* *General routines before, during and after parental leave* *Internal programme for employees on parental leave* *Babysitting or day-care support offered to employees* *Study support for children*
Perception of the attitudes of company leaders	I feel that parenthood is seen as an opportunity, not an obstacle, by most of our managers.	Agree Disagree Additional comment:	
Perception of the FFW culture within the company	Does the company have policies that support work–life balance and working parents?	No Yes, but only to the extent required by law Yes, beyond what is required by law Don't know	

Table 5. FFW assessment: staff survey

Perception of the FFW culture within the company	My company has a supportive culture around work–life balance and working parents.	No, working parents and work–life balance are not valued or not supported. Somewhat, employees are allowed, but not always encouraged, to take advantage of the policies. Yes, employees are encouraged to take advantage of the policies. Yes, very much. This is a key priority for the company. Don't know
Perception of company wins or returns on investment from introducing a family-friendly workplace	What benefits do you think your company gains from supporting working parents and employees in balancing their work and life responsibilities?	Attraction (recruiting employees) Retention (keeping employees) Gender equality Employee engagement Sustainable work–life balance Productivity Company brand (market position) Other, please comment: None
Parental competence as a win or return on investment	Do you think the skills gained as a parent are useful at work in your company?	Yes No Don't know

Source: Compiled by the author.

Developing your family-friendly workplace strategy

Introduction

This chapter provides templates that a company can use to link its family-friendly workplace (FFW) initiative to its overall business goals and ongoing projects and processes. Companies should use the document to share and present an overview of their reasons and goals for choosing to be more family-friendly.

Inputs for the strategy can be found in the chapters Assessing your company's readiness and Measuring returns on investment in family-friendly workplaces.

This chapter consists of the following suggested strategy support:

○ **An FFW ambition statement:** an ambition statement will explain clearly and concisely, in a way that makes sense to managers and employees, the company's commitment to and ambition for an FFW initiative.

○ **Analysis of the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) relating to becoming a family-friendly workplace:** a SWOT analysis will help a company discuss and understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of implementing an FFW initiative to help plan what steps to take.

○ **FFW strategy and 202X–202Y goals (template with guide):** the FFW strategy "canvas" can be used to gather all the strategic inputs for decision-making, from vision and ambition to concrete KPIs, in one place.

○ **Possible consequences of not becoming a family-friendly workplace:** to fully understand a company's wins from implementing FFW initiatives and to find an argument for decision-making, it can be helpful to identify the possible consequences of not becoming a family-friendly workplace.
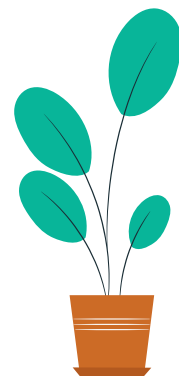
Ambition statement

Gather a group of key managers and/or HR staff to discuss and prioritize the core messages describing the company's reasons for becoming a family-friendly workplace, and summarize them in a short and clear sentence.

Examples of ambition statements:

○ Becoming more family-friendly aligns with our company vision and priorities in that … (e.g. outline how FFW initiatives are or will support your company's vision, strategy, priorities, challenges, etc.).

○ Becoming more family-friendly is important to us because it will generate… (e.g. a stronger employer brand, retention and increased employer attractiveness for a broader group of potential employees, as well as increased gender equality and social sustainability at work, etc.).

○ When we are more family-friendly, the following will improve:

- financially … (concretize)
- culturally … (concretize)

SWOT analysis

Gather a group of key managers and/or HR staff to undertake a SWOT analysis. This will help you plan the steps to take in developing and implementing an FFW initiative.

Table 6. SWOT analysis

Internal factors	
FFW strengths (+)	**FFW weaknesses (–)**

External factors	
FFW opportunities (+)	**FFW threats (–)**

Source: Compiled by the author.

Develop an FFW strategy

The FFW strategy canvas can be used to gather all the strategic inputs for decision-making, from vision and ambition to concrete KPIs, in one place. Fill in the template below with inputs from the assessment and accompanying documents to shape your company's strategic overview.
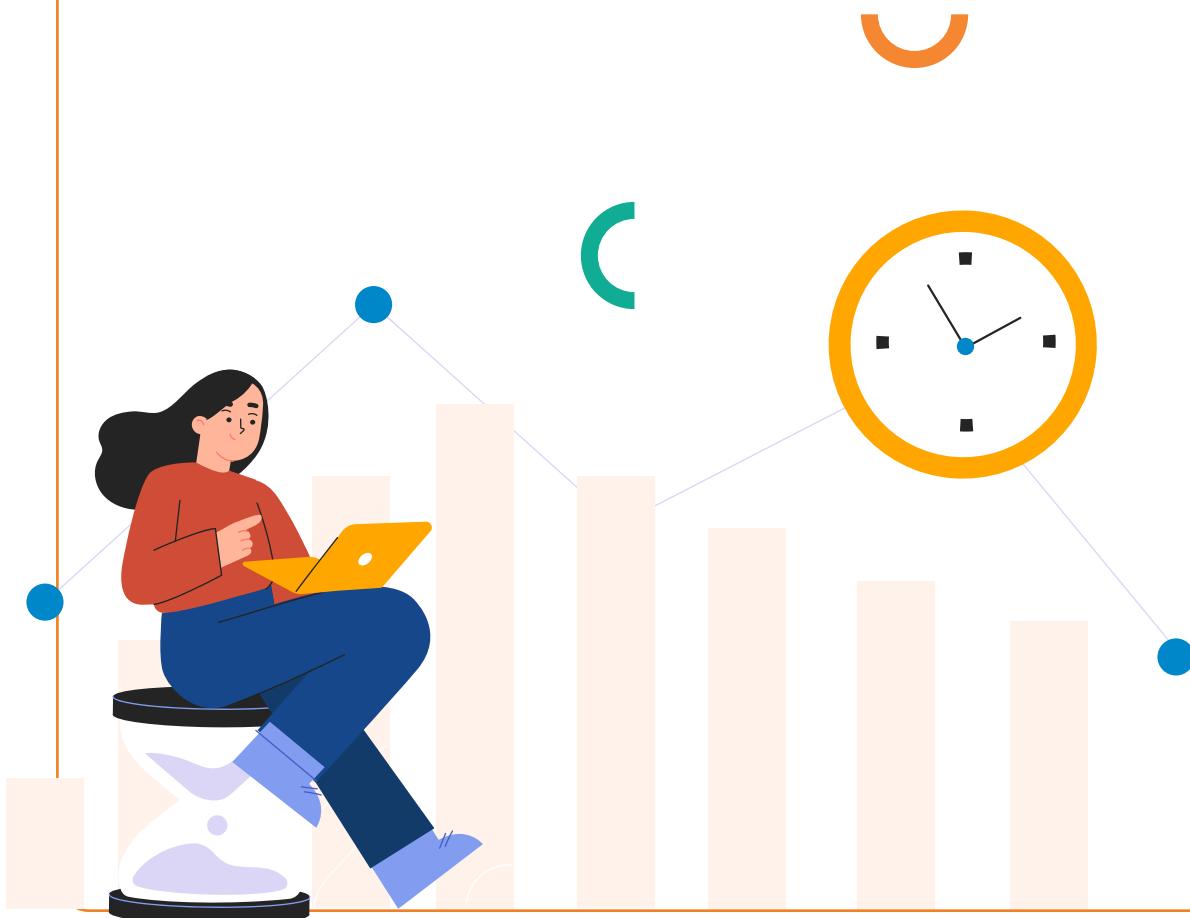
Step 1

Table 7. FFW strategy guidance

Current FFW position in 202X	FFW initiatives to implement	Desired FFW position by 202Y

What FFW support do you offer your employees today and why? Using the outcome from the FFW assessment, specify your current FFW position:
 	
• **Practical support:**
 	
• **Abstract support:**
 	
Mention three to five opportunities or benefits that your current FFW position brings about today:
 	
Examples (top priorities first):
1. Employee attraction
2. Health and time off (e.g. sick leave, parental leave, etc.)
3. Gender equality
4. Employee retention
5. Employee engagement
	Mention three to five major steps (e.g. projects, focused initiatives or prioritized areas) and actions to overcome the gap between your current and your desired FFW position. Include areas and actions that are realistic to deliver during the specified time period.
	
	• **Practical support:**
	
	• Examples of measures to take
	
	  •
	
	  •
	
	  •
	
	• **Abstract support:**
	
	• Examples of measures to take
	
	  •
	
	  •
	
	  •
	
	Steps to take
	
	• Project 1 (name)
	• Strategy B (name)
	• Activity X (name)
	• Etc.
		What FFW support will you offer your employees in the future and why (current and new initiatives)?
		
		• **Practical support:**
		
		• **Abstract support:**
		
		Mention three to five opportunities or benefits for your company that your desired FFW position would bring about in the future, and give examples:
		
		What will the company look like then? What is in place in practice and regarding behaviour and attitudes, etc.? This should mirror the examples outlined under "current FFW position" but for the future.
		
		Examples:
		1. Employee attraction:
		   • We receive spontaneous applications every week.
		   • Our company is mentioned in the media and surveys as an attractive employer.
		   • Etc.
		2. Health and time off (e.g. sick leave, parental leave, etc.):
		   • Our sick leave rate is lower among employees with small children.
		   • We have increased the number of fathers taking paternity leave at our company.
		   • Etc.

Table 7. FFW strategy guidance

Current FFW KPIs to track		FFW objectives (KPIs)
• Quantitative reflection of the current position. The KPIs should also reflect the selection of KPIs for strategic objectives for 202Y to enable a comparison. • Agree on three to five prioritized and measurable KPIs to track progress based on a cost–benefit or return-on-investment analysis (e.g. recruitment cost, retention rate, sick leave cost, gender balance, employee engagement).		• Key KPI targets for 202Y. These targets should be a quantitative reflection of the desired position by 202Y. • For each prioritized KPI, specify the measurable desired, anticipated or needed position at the end of the time period.

Source: Compiled by the author.

Table 8. FFW strategy template

FFW strategy canvas template to be filled in

Current FFW KPIs to track	FFW initiatives to implement	Desired FFW position by 202Y
• **Practical support:** • **Abstract support:** Opportunities and benefits for the company that our current FFW position is bringing about today:	• **Practical support:** • **Abstract support:**	• **Practical support:** • **Abstract support:** Opportunities and benefits for the company that our desired FFW position will bring about in the future:
Current FFW KPIs to track		**FFW objectives (KPIs)**
•		•

Source: Compiled by the author.

Possible consequences of not becoming a family-friendly workplace

Companies can find it helpful to understand the wins from implementing FFW initiatives by identifying the possible consequences of not doing so. Discussions with the human resources department and management that go over possible scenarios as well as risks and costs facing the company as a result of not implementing any FFW initiatives may be conducted. The table below can be used to help facilitate discussions and map the outcomes and arguments.

Table 9. FFW risk matrix

	Probability / impact points: Low = 1 Medium= 3 High = 5	Probability	Impact	Risk (P x I)	Resulting risk points: Low = 1–9 Medium = 10–19 High = 20–25	Risk rating key: Low = OK Medium = To be addressed High = Highest priority
No.	Description	P	I	R	Comment	Action
1	Reduced work–life balance for employees	3	3	9		
2	Less sustainable workforce	4	3	12		
3	Reduced employer attractiveness	1	4	4		
4	Loss of talent to competitors that have more FFW policies					
5	E.g.					
6	E.g.					
7						
8						
9						
10						

Source: Compiled by the author.

Step 2
Plan

Planning your family-friendly workplace

Planning your family-friendly workplace

What is this chapter for?

This chapter aims to support the planning of family-friendly workplace (FFW) activities in line with a company's FFW strategy. It provides an overview of activities, people involved and time required to pilot/implement the company's FFW activities. The plan will help all those involved in the implementation of the FFW strategy to follow the same road map and keep track of timelines and responsibilities.

This chapter provides a template to help companies with their planning process. However, companies are encouraged to use any other internal planning tools they may already be familiar with, as long as doing so allows them to assess the resources (time, financial and HR) they need and to allocate them accordingly.

How to use this chapter

The chapter consists of two parts:

1. FFW planning: overview

Purpose

To provide an overview of activities, people involved and time required to pilot/implement FFW activities at the company. It is to be used together with all team members, from internal staff working on FFW initiatives to UNFPA staff. The plan will help everyone follow the same road map and keep track of their time and responsibilities.

Guidance

Choose the initiatives and activities to pilot and plan the required steps to do so. Identify the resources required based on the strategy.

Ensure that all chosen activities are in line with the local and legal context.

2. FFW planning: plan for each action

Purpose

To plan and follow each activity as well as to identify those responsible and the key dates for each chosen FFW activity.

Guidance

Copy Table 11 and rename it for each activity chosen. The template provides suggestions on the type of actions and activities that could be inputted.

Step 2

Table 10. FFW planning: overview

Purpose	To provide an overview of activities, people involved and time required to pilot/implement FFW activities at the company. It is to be used together with all team members, from internal staff working on FFW initiatives to UNFPA staff. The plan will help everyone follow the same road map and keep track of their time and responsibilities.
Guidance	Choose the initiatives and activities to pilot and plan the required steps to do so. Identify the resources required based on the strategy. Ensure that all chosen activities are in line with the local and legal context.

Family-friendly workplace planning for champion companies			Time with UNFPA			Internal time			Actual time				
			Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	P1	P2	P3	Total time	P1	P2	P3	Check
Process step	**Activity**	**Date**							**0**				**OK**
Introduction	FFW concept and process introduction	dd/mm/yyyy							**0**				**OK**
Step 1: FFW strategy	Prioritization of company's main challenges	dd/mm/yyyy							**0**				**OK**
	Assessment of current FFW status	dd/mm/yyyy							**0**				**OK**
	FFW ambition statement	dd/mm/yyyy							**0**				**OK**
	SWOT analysis	dd/mm/yyyy							**0**				**OK**
	FFW strategy	dd/mm/yyyy							**0**				**OK**

Step 2			Time with UNFPA			Internal time			Actual time				
Family-friendly workplace planning for champion companies			Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	P1	P2	P3	Total time	P1	P2	P3	Check
Step 2: FFW plan	Resource requirements	dd/mm/yyyy							0				OK
	Time planning	dd/mm/yyyy							0				OK
Step 3: FFW tool and activity kit	Choice of activities	dd/mm/yyyy							0				OK
	Inspiration and dialogue with other companies implementing FFW initiatives	dd/mm/yyyy							0				OK
	Start-up of activities	dd/mm/yyyy							0				OK
Step 4: Monitoring and adjustments	Implementation and evaluation	dd/mm/yyyy							0				OK
	Local adaptations needed after follow-up	dd/mm/yyyy							0				OK
			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Compiled by the author.

Step 2

Table 11. FFW Planning: plan for each action

Family-friendly workplace planning for champion companies			Time with UNFPA			Internal time			Actual time				
			Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	P1	P2	P3	Total time	P1	P2	P3	Check
Action to take	**Activity**	**Date**							0				OK
Introduction									0				OK
Step 3: FFW tool and activity kit	Planning the activity	dd/mm/yyyy							0				OK
	Start of implementation	dd/mm/yyyy							0				OK
	Inspiration and dialogue with other companies	dd/mm/yyyy							0				OK
	Evaluation No. 1	dd/mm/yyyy							0				OK
	Local adaptations needed after follow-up	dd/mm/yyyy							0				OK
	Continue implementation	dd/mm/yyyy							0				OK
	Evaluation No. 2	dd/mm/yyyy							0				OK
	Local adaptations needed after follow-up	dd/mm/yyyy							0				OK
			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Compiled by the author.

Step 3
Implement

Sample initiative: flexible working policy

Introduction

Providing flexible working arrangements is one of the most concrete ways to support working parents and employees with a lot of care responsibilities, and such arrangements can benefit all employees. This family-friendly workplace (FFW) tool provides guidance on what to consider before developing flexible or remote working arrangements for a company. It suggests activities to implement and communicate to managers and employees; these activities should be described in a flexible working policy. Details about how to implement different types of flexible working arrangements need to be adapted to local labour laws as well as business- and culture-specific circumstances and possibilities. The most important step is to engage managers in promoting a more flexible work culture and in communicating the importance and benefits of such a culture. To do so, the company should include managers in tailoring the flexible working policy to both company-specific and individual needs and objectives.

In addition to a policy, the company should (as with all FFW initiatives) decide how to do the following:

○ communicate and implement the policy in practice and to adapt it to the company culture and processes

○ monitor the utilization and impact of the policy

There are different ways of working flexibly and different reasons why flexible working arrangements could be a beneficial alternative for employees. Flexible working arrangements may include the following:

○ **Working from home / working remotely:** employees work part or all of their working hours somewhere other than their company's premises (as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, where many employees successfully worked from home).

○ **Flexitime:** employees choose when to start and end their workday (within agreed limits). Specific core hours (e.g. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. every day) can be arranged to ensure a specific time period where all employees are working.

○ **Part-time work:** employees can work fewer than full-time hours (usually by working fewer days).

○ **Non-regulated working hours:** employees work without strict verification in terms of the number of hours or the timing of the hours they work. This modality is based on trust and focuses on results.

○ **Job-sharing:** two people perform the duties of one position.

○ **Compressed work week:** employees work their total working hours in fewer workdays, resulting in a longer workday but fewer workdays each week.

○ **Everyday team flexibility:** teams create specific flexible working arrangements, for example:

  ● workaway days (working outside the office on set days)

  ● no emails after 6:00 p.m. or on weekends

  ● set quiet times where meetings cannot be scheduled

Considerations before developing a company policy for flexible working arrangements

A company that wants to develop flexible working arrangements for employees will need to consider a number of criteria, both for a general offer to all employees and for each individual arrangement and set-up. The aspects to consider depend on the chosen flexible working solution and may include the following:

- the costs associated with the proposed arrangement (e.g. a laptop and a mobile phone to enable remote work)
  - Does the company have a budget for providing the necessary equipment?
  - How many employees are expected to utilize the flexible working arrangements and need equipment?
  - If there are budget limitations, how does the company approve who can utilize the flexible working arrangements and who cannot?
- the effect of the proposed arrangement on other staff
  - Can flexible hours be applied for a specific team, or is it necessary for the team to be available to others during certain working hours?
  - If an employee works from home or remotely but needs office equipment (e.g. a printer) or access to physical files or mail, are there staff in the office who can provide support?
  - Are any employees going to be adversely affected by such arrangements? For instance, will remote work be used more by female employees, as they often deal with the lion's share of unpaid care work at home, and will this limit their time with their managers, potentially affecting their performance or career progression? Are there specific measures in place to assess these issues and address them?

- the need for and effect on supervision

  - How comfortable and successful are managers at managing or supervising remotely? Do they need training, coaching, etc.?

  - How comfortable and successful are managers at setting clear targets and evaluating outcomes and performance based on deliverables compared with the number of hours worked?

  - How comfortable are employees with using flexible working arrangements, and how prepared are they to do so?

- the existing structure of the department

  - Is it possible for a specific department to apply flexible working arrangements? For example, if only some roles in the department can take advantage of remote working arrangements and others cannot because of the specific requirements of the role, what are the consequences in terms of employees' sense of fairness, engagement or productivity if remote working arrangements are in place in the department?

- the availability of staff resources

  - When must staff be available? How can their availability be aligned with the intended flexibility?

- the workload of the role

  - Are there any risks related to workload and work–life balance for a role with other flexible working arrangements? Will employees work too little, too much or according to expectations?

- health and safety issues

  - What is the employer's responsibility for the physical workplace when staff are working remotely? How can you ensure that this is fulfilled?

  - Do employees have the appropriate working equipment (e.g. chairs, a desk, a light, ventilation, fire extinguishers, etc.)? Will the employer's insurance cover employee accidents that occur outside the workplace?

  - Are there risks of mental health issues, such as burnout, related to work–life balance and flexible working hours?

  - Are there any security issues related to remote working arrangements — for example, regarding confidential information in documents?

Company policy for flexible working arrangements: structure and template

A flexible working policy helps both managers and employees understand what kind of support they can use and how to adapt flexible working arrangements to individual needs and circumstances. A policy ensures transparency and equal treatment of all employees, with the same rights and support options provided for everyone. The policy should be clearly aligned with the company's overall FFW strategy and goals and make sense for all employees at all levels.

The policy should be clear on the following:

- purpose and goal
- background
- scope
- definitions
- roles and responsibilities
- statement on flexible working arrangements
- references
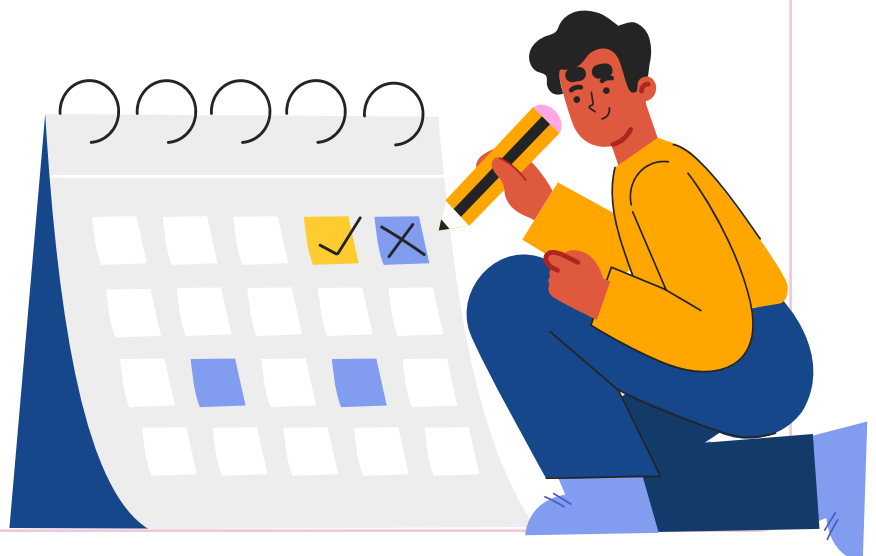
Purpose and goal: this section clarifies why a flexible working policy is needed and what the company aims to achieve through it.

Examples:

- This policy specifies our commitment to encouraging managers to offer employees an opportunity to take advantage of flexible working arrangements, which include the option of working from home and flexible working hours.

- With this policy, we want to support work–life balance for all our employees by offering the prerequisites for it.

- We recognize that a better work–life balance can improve employee motivation, performance and productivity, and reduce stress.

Background: this section describes the reasons for promoting flexible working arrangements as well as the possible gains and challenges stemming from such arrangements.

Examples:

Through this policy, the company aims to do the following:

- reduce commuting time for employees

- improve employees' productivity

- lower health-related absenteeism

- reduce turnover rates

- increase the talent pool and diversity (flexible working arrangements can support employees living with a disability and employees who have difficulties travelling to the office, as well as employees with a lot of care responsibilities who can more easily balance their work and care responsibilities when working from home)

- reduce the need for and cost of office space

Scope: This section describes who the policy applies to and whether some employee categories are excluded, while also providing the reasons for such exclusions.

Examples:

- We recognize that the nature of some employees' job functions means that working from home is not at all possible for those employees.

- We are committed to accepting any types of flexible working arrangements provided that the needs and objectives of both the company and the employee can be met.

- In order to be eligible for flexible working arrangements, an employee must have at least X weeks of employment service.

Definitions: this section specifies the meaning of all the terms that are referenced in the policy.

Examples:

- *Flexible working arrangements* refer to any type of working arrangement that gives some degree of flexibility in terms of how long, where and when an employee works.

Roles and responsibilities: this section clarifies who is responsible for the policy.

Examples:

- The Human Resources Director is the owner of the flexible working policy.
- The line manager is responsible for approving flexible working arrangements.

Statement on flexible working arrangements: this statement describes how flexible and remote working arrangements can be implemented within the company and also states any other considerations that must be taken into account.

Examples:

Employees can avail themselves of the following types of flexible and remote working arrangements:

- Remote work: employees can work X days per week outside the workplace.
- Flexible working hours: employees can choose their own working hours as long as the core hours from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. are maintained.

References: this section includes any other documents related to the policy.

Examples:

- request form for remote working arrangements
- approval process for flexible and distance working

Sample initiative: childcare and domestic support

Introduction

Local support for childcare offered by governments, schools and other actors varies a lot between countries. Many family-friendly employers want to support their employees with their care responsibilities in various ways. By providing such support, they are showing a commitment to work–life balance for all their employees. Described below are some ideas for ways to support employed parents with childcare and other household services.

Childcare and domestic support options in a family-friendly workplace

Companies can choose from a wide range of options, requiring various amounts of resources, to provide childcare and domestic support for their employees. Below are several examples that companies can implement. Discussing preferred options with employees prior to implementing them can help ensure that they are properly utilized and address the needs of employees, thereby increasing employees' satisfaction and well-being.

On-site childcare

Some employers offer day care at or close to the office, with professional childcare staff available. This can be a company-financed childcare space either in the office building itself or in a venue close to the office. The advantage for the employee and the child is that on-site day care makes childcare easily accessible to parents at both the beginning and the end of the workday, and sometimes during the day if the parent would like to be close to their child. If the child is still an infant, it also gives employees an opportunity to continue breastfeeding after returning to work following leave should they wish to do so.

Advantages:

- more time for working parents to bond with their children (parents can spend their break time with their child)
- less stress for employees to pick up their children at a certain time
- an attractive benefit for employees

Challenges:

- may result in long days for children (depending on the commuting time)
- may create distractions for employees, decreasing their focus at work
- potential loss of an opportunity for employees to become part of other parent support networks, such as ones based in their neighbourhoods

Child-friendly rooms in the workplace

Companies can set up a room or other space where children can come after school to wait for their parents. It can include an area for them to do their homework, as well as toys and games to keep them entertained. The company may also provide a childcare professional if necessary or desired.

Advantages:

- lower absenteeism related to childcare
- possibility for employees to work full-time hours
- more time for working parents to bond with their children
- an attractive benefit for employees

Challenges:

- may result in long days for children (depending on the commuting time)
- may create distractions for employees, decreasing their focus at work
- potential loss of important opportunities for children to network with other children in their neighbourhood

Breastfeeding and pumping room and paid lactation breaks

Companies can provide a breastfeeding and pumping room for lactating employees. This makes it possible for employees to return to work while continuing to breastfeed for as long as they choose. The room should be adequately equipped, clean, private and safe. UNICEF has developed a good guidance document on the minimum standards for setting up such rooms.

Advantages:

- an opportunity for employees to go back to work when they choose to, without having to compromise on their decisions around breastfeeding

- reduced maternity- or breastfeeding-related absenteeism and increased retention of female workers

- strong health and development benefits for the child, in line with the World Health Organization's guidelines

- an attractive benefit for employees

Challenges:

- Rooms need to be properly set up to be safe spaces for employees to breastfeed or pump, which can require a high initial investment.

- The introduction of breastfeeding rooms requires that companies also provide employees with paid lactation breaks so the rooms can be properly utilized.

- Having such rooms can send a message to employees that they should return earlier from maternity leave than they would otherwise choose to. It is important that managers, HR staff and employees discuss this option to ensure that the decision to return to work is in line with each employee's choice and what is best for both the mother and the child.

Financial support for care and domestic services

Companies may provide their employees with financial support or subsidies for care services (e.g. care centre fees, the hiring of a care professional, the hiring of a tutor, etc.) as well as domestic services. This does not need to be limited to childcare and may include care for older relatives, relatives with chronic illnesses or relatives with disabilities, for example.

Advantages:

- Employees can better afford care services and work when they wish to.
- Such services are an attractive benefit for employees.
- Companies can provide employees with the option of choosing their preferred type of care services and providers.

Case study: four champion companies in the Republic of Moldova open child- and family-friendly rooms and breastfeeding rooms

With support from UNFPA, four champion companies in the Republic of Moldova provide practical support to their employees in the form of child- and family-friendly rooms as well as breastfeeding spaces.

Panilino opened a child-friendly space on its premises where children are supervised by a qualified person employed by the company while their parents work.

Asena Textil set up a play area for employees' children and other family members near its premises in order to provide children with a safe and fun place to stay while their parents are working.

Orange Moldova created a childcare and breastfeeding space to ensure that working parents can better balance their work and life responsibilities and to provide lactating employees with a safe and private place for breastfeeding.

Premier Energy also created a child-friendly space on its premises where its management plans to hold regular interactive events for children and parents, including mothers and fathers on childcare leave, so the employees taking part can connect and get to know each other better.

Case study: Patagonia (US-owned global outdoor clothing company)

Type of support provided: on-site childcare

Benefits for the company:

Having on-site day care reduces employee attrition. The company claims it has seen the following benefits:

- 25 per cent lower turnover among employees who put their children in the programme

- 100 per cent of mothers returning to work after maternity leave, a statistic that the company attributes to the availability of nearby childcare

- total return on investment from on-site day care, including intangible benefits, ranging from 115 per cent to 125 per cent

> "Intangible benefits like worker loyalty and more women in management — roughly half of senior leaders at Patagonia are female — and the return on investment could run as high as 125 percent."

— *Rose Marcario, CEO of Patagonia*

Sample initiative: parental leave routines

Introduction

Parental leave is crucial in many ways for both employees and employers. It is, for example, a valuable opportunity to raise awareness of personal development through parenthood and how this can add value at work.

Taking parental leave can be very significant in an employee's work life and can make a strong difference in their well-being, productivity and engagement with their company. The development of a leave plan involving employees and their manager can ensure that employees still feel engaged, while following this plan can help create more trust between the two parties. Moreover, returning from a period of parental leave is a crucial moment to create a balance between work and family life, and it can ensure that both parents take on an equal share of the care and household responsibilities. Managers should be responsive to the changes that the employee — be it a woman or a man — has experienced and support them in balancing their work and life.

This chapter provides suggestions for determining the guidelines, processes and routines regarding parental leave within a company, for both managers and employees.

When developing parental leave policies and processes, companies should specify the following:

- the purpose and goal of the parental leave
- the reasons for promoting parental leave
- the scope and definitions of parental leave
- the roles and responsibilities in managing parental leave, including what managers and human resources (HR) staff must ensure before, during and after parental leave
- references

This chapter elaborates on all of these points and can be used as a template for developing a strong plan and process that will support managers in ensuring transparent, equal and fair treatment of all employed parents.

In addition to documenting the plan, a company should consider and plan for how to do the following:

- communicate and implement the policy
- monitor the utilization and impact of the policy

How to develop company routines before, during and after parental leave

Table 12. Guidance for developing parental leave guidelines

Steps	Methods	Examples
Specify the purpose and goal of the parental leave guidelines	Clarify why processes and routines for parental leave are needed and what the company aims to achieve by adopting and implementing these.	Examples of the purpose and goal of a parental leave plan: • This plan specifies our commitment to encouraging our employed parents to use the opportunity of parental leave. Employed parents, together with their manager, can decide the scope and level of company contact during the leave. • With this policy we want to make sure all employed parents get the same options and support regardless of the role of the manager or the company. • We recognize that time with family adds value for both parents and children and also for the company in many ways.
Specify the reasons for promoting parental leave	Describe the company's reasons for promoting parental leave as well as the challenges that may arise from doing so.	Examples of reasons to promote parental leave and of benefits for managers: • employer branding (i.e. it will be easier to attract and retain employees) • increased gender equality (i.e. gender balance in the workforce) • health (i.e. decreased sick leave costs) • employee engagement (i.e. greater motivation and loyalty among employees) • competence development (i.e. new parental skills developed that are valuable for employees' work) • market value (i.e. a competitive corporate branding advantage in the markets for customers and partners) • role-model public relations and other communication (i.e. general brand-strengthening values and role-model status for companies that are the first to introduce a family-friendly workplace) • productivity (i.e. increased innovation and efficiency among employees) • possible financial gains connected with cost savings relating to the recruitment and retention of employees Examples of reasons to promote parental leave and of benefits for employees: • competence development (i.e. new parenting skills developed that are valuable for employees' work) • increased gender equality (i.e. gender balance in the workforce) • health (i.e. decreased sick leave costs) • employee engagement (i.e. greater motivation and loyalty among employees)

Step 3

Steps	Methods	Examples
Specify the reasons for promoting parental leave	Describe the company's reasons for promoting parental leave as well as the challenges that may arise from doing so.	Examples of challenges that may arise before, during and after parental leave that parental leave routines can address: • A lack of information and manager contact may lead to a sense of distance from the company and result in the slow onboarding of employees after leave. • A lack of employer/manager contact and interest in sustained personal development during leave may result in lower self-esteem on the part of employees and decreased confidence in their future career path in the company. • A lack of a communications strategy and tactics may cause feelings of exclusion among non-parents.
Specify the scope of and target groups for parental leave routines	Clarify who the guidelines apply to and whether some categories of employees are excluded. If certain categories of employees are excluded, also provide the reason and criteria for exclusion.	Examples of the scope and target groups: • We want to adapt the level of contact between the parent and the company with respect to individual needs and wishes during parental leave. • A parent is defined as any employee caring for children. • Parental leave includes …
Determine the roles and responsibilities of different staff in implementing and using the guidelines	When an employee informs the company of their upcoming need for parental leave, it is crucial that managers and HR staff ensure that the employee is treated in a fair, transparent and equal manner. Roles and responsibilities can be divided into three steps: what should be done before, during and after the period of parental leave. The steps to take may include both mandatory and optional parts.	Examples of roles and responsibilities of managers and HR before, during and after parental leave: **Before parental leave:** • Make sure that there is a communications plan set up for the employee and the manager. • Decide on a strategy to inform staff and other relevant teams or clients of the plan to ensure that all parties feel comfortable prior to the start of parental leave. **During parental leave:** • Maintain communication and dialogue with the employee as per the agreed plan. **After parental leave:** • Maintain dialogue with the returning employee and ensure that they are able to balance their new personal responsibilities with their work. • Provide information about the changes that have taken place in the organization during the period of parental leave.

Step 3		
Steps	**Methods**	**Examples**
Develop a checklist for managers and HR	This step supports the determination of the roles and responsibilities of managers and HR staff and ensures that they are followed. As per the roles and responsibilities, this checklist can be divided into three areas: before, during and after parental leave.	Examples of what to include in the checklist for managers and HR staff: **Before parental leave:** • Arrange a meeting to develop a plan with the employee and discuss their availability during parental leave. • Decide what type of contact is preferred during parental leave (e.g. whether the employee is interested in being invited to and attending company social events; whether the employee wishes to be contacted by email and, if so, how often; whether the employee is interested in receiving company information or interested in taking part in staff surveys). • Check whether the employee wishes to keep their computer and mobile phone (if doing so is in line with the company's policies). • Discuss the employee's return to their current position after parental leave or other possible options for their career. • Invite the employee to take part in the internal coaching programme during parental leave (if one exists). **During parental leave:** • Ensure that the benefits the employee is entitled to are provided during parental leave. • Follow up on the employee's personal development if they are part of an internal coaching programme during parental leave. • Explore and arrange any other possibilities to enable employees on parental leave to meet with other colleagues (both those on parental leave and others). • Plan for a meeting a few months before the employee returns to discuss how to successfully return to work as a working parent, including their roles and responsibilities and issues of work–life balance. • Prepare a workspace, computer and mobile phone for the employee's return. • Inform the HR department and other staff of the employee's return date. • Check whether a salary or payroll audit has taken place during the employee's parental leave and adjust accordingly. • Include the employee in performance review and succession planning processes (if doing so is in line with the company's policies). • Plan to discuss the employee's personal and career development after their return from parental leave. **After parental leave:** • Offer full- or part-time working arrangements. • Allow for flexible working hours (if doing so is in line with the company's policies). • Discuss the new skills developed by the employee during their parental leave as part of discussions on their personal and career development. • Inform the team and other staff about any changes in the working situation, including workload and working hours.

Source: Compiled by the author

Sample initiative: keeping employed parents engaged during and after leave

Introduction

Parental leave is a period in an employee's life that is often perceived as an obstacle in their career. Even though it is important for employees with children to take parental leave, and despite the fact that some employers invest in topping up salaries in countries with limited government-paid parental leave, parents may feel like a cost and a burden when on leave. This may both lead to infrequent use by employees of (paid or unpaid) parental leave or other benefits during this period and decrease their job satisfaction or desire to stay in the company.

Employers rarely have regular contact with their employees during parental leave. The reasons for this are understandable, since many employers believe that they would be disturbing their employees' valuable private time. This is not always the case, however, and it should be up to each individual to determine whether or not they want to have contact with their employer: employed parents on leave often want to feel more included in the life of their company than many managers and employers realize. Many parents think that they will lose momentum in their career if they take lengthy parental leave. This is often the case for men, whose uptake of paternity or parental leave is limited by harmful gender norms and stereotypes that do not value or recognize men's caregiving role. Therefore, many male employees may not use paternity or parental leave if they believe that the company's culture or managers' attitudes will not support them in doing so.

This chapter provides inspiration and suggestions on how to establish a structured way of keeping in touch with employees on parental leave by inviting them to take part in an initiative involving voluntary and informal coaching meetings during parental leave. The chapter also provides suggestions on how to gather working parents who have returned to work after leave, since the first months back are often critical both for their motivation and for ensuring practical arrangements to improve their work–life balance.

The purpose and benefits of coaching initiatives

Coaching initiatives for employees during and after parental leave can in many ways promote growth and development on the part of both individuals and the company. Such initiatives provide proof of the company's offer of an inclusive, healthy and sustainable working life to prospective and current employees while also providing support to employees at a critical time in their lives.

Through such initiatives, commonly perceived challenges associated with parental leave can be avoided, such as a sense of exclusion, slow onboarding of employees returning to work due to a lack of information and contact from managers, or lower self-esteem on the part of employees and a lack of faith in their future career path in the company. These challenges are often caused by a lack of interest, real or perceived, on the part of employers and managers in the personal and professional development of employees on parental leave. Parental leave programmes can therefore ensure that employees are still connected with the company if and when they want to be.

As with all family-friendly workplace (FFW) initiatives, there are both tangible and intangible benefits to offering coaching meetings during parental leave. Such initiatives are connected with concrete key performance indicators (KPIs) such as employee attraction and retention and a reduction in absence-related costs, since many companies observe greater use of sick leave among employees with small children. However, such initiatives can also lead to other less tangible benefits: leveraging the skills and competencies that employed parents acquire when on parental leave. By starting to pay attention to skills developed outside work, and recognizing their value for the company, employers can improve attitudes as well as the culture and work environment, thus supporting work–life balance for all and sending a message that says that employees' personal life is not only respected but also valued by the company.

Phase 1: coaching meetings during parental leave

How to reach and keep in touch with employed parents on leave

In most cases, managers do not know how to reach or keep in touch with employees on parental leave in a way that suits the employee. The easiest way to find out how employees want to keep in touch with their employer during parental leave is simply to ask them. Each manager should make sure that both the channel and the frequency of contact are discussed before parental leave begins. It is important to adapt contact to each employee's individual needs and preferences since parental leave is private time for the employee. However, it is also important that all managers treat their employees equally when it comes to having this discussion and to the support they offer.

How to set up internal coaching meetings for parents on leave

The easiest and most agile way of gathering parents on leave on a regular basis is to invite them to monthly virtual or in-person group meetings arranged and led by an internal or external facilitator or coach. The facilitator or coach must have coaching and group facilitation skills; they could be either a manager or other employee or someone hired externally. Coaching meetings for parents on leave need to be rather agile to respect employees' childcare and other unpaid care priorities. The meetings generally last around two hours, with as many breaks as needed. In-person meetings can be held at the office or outside the office, in an area close to the building. By holding meetings close to the office, employees on leave have an opportunity to meet with their managers and colleagues before and after the session. It is also advisable to create a set of stand-alone topics for each meeting, since employees on leave may not be able to participate in every meeting.

Content for monthly coaching meetings

Coaching meetings give the employer an opportunity to keep in touch with employees during their leave and to keep them updated on what is happening within the company. Another purpose of these meetings is for employees and managers to get used to paying attention to the skills that employees have developed through parenting and caregiving, and how these skills can be utilized in the employees' current and future professional roles.

Companies may facilitate these meetings in different ways, but the following sessions are recommended at every meeting.

1. Check-in and catch-up

Many employees on leave appreciate having a chance to share their experience of being a parent and being on leave, which enables other parents to learn from these experiences. In addition, they can share advice and support with one another. This is valuable for the company as well, since it provides important insights into how employees on leave perceive their current situation. For instance, if employees show signs of dissatisfaction, the company can take measures to provide greater support and ensure retention of employees both during and after leave.

2. Company news

During each meeting, the facilitator can share some company news and highlights. This makes employees on parental leave feel included and ensures that they can make an easier start when returning to work. However, this session should not exceed 15 minutes, as not all employees will wish to discuss work-related matters or feel the need to keep up to date with the company while on leave. The facilitator should prioritize the most important news, including any positive or inspiring developments.

3. External inspiration lecture

When there is little company news, a short inspirational lecture could be organized instead, led by a company staff member or an external speaker. Choose a topic that may be relevant for employees on leave, such as ways to ensure work–life balance, personal development, career development, or personal and company values. Some companies invite high-level managers to listen and to discuss and share their own experience with work–life balance. When these managers share both the challenges they faced and the solutions they used, they become role models for employees and help promote work–life balance with others in the company. In a company with a high level of trust and openness, employees' immediate supervisors can also take part in these meetings. However, this should be decided on a case-by-case basis, as it is important to ensure that employees feel safe to share their personal experiences during these meetings.

4. One parenting skill per month

Each month, the coach or facilitator can highlight one parenting skill (e.g. stress management or prioritization) and its importance for the company or for employees' specific positions. In smaller groups, the employees can reflect on and discuss their own examples and their insights concerning their own development through caregiving or parenthood. Each parent may also choose one competence or skill to observe at home until the next meeting. This enables employees to support each other's development of parenting skills while also seeing benefits for their own professional development. This also allows the company to gather inspiring examples of parenting skills and see their importance to the company, which can help support other employees in taking parental leave.

Contact with managers during parental leave

It is crucial that managers show an interest in the positive personal development that their employees are embarking on as parents from the outset, and that all employees can choose how often, if at all, they want to be contacted and in what way. Some companies hold pilot meetings for a small group of parents on leave, but if the initiative is scaled up, then all managers should invite their employees on leave to these optional meetings. Closer to the end of the leave or when employees return from leave, managers should arrange for a meeting to discuss with each employee the perspective of being a working parent and balancing work and life responsibilities. This will also provide an opportunity for managers to provide information on practical support available within companies, such as flexible working hours, remote working arrangements or childcare options.

Make sure all managers know how to promote the parental leave programme; how they are expected to interact with their employees before, during and after leave; as well as why the company is promoting this initiative.

More information on this initiative is provided in the following chapters:

- Understanding the business case for family-friendly workplaces
- Measuring returns on investment in family-friendly workplaces
- Sample initiative: parental leave routines

Phase 2: follow-up meetings after parental leave

How to set up internal meetings for parents after leave

When employees return to work after parental leave, they often want to get onboard quickly, which is also in the managers' and company's best interest. However, it is important to show respect for and understanding of their new situation and discuss possible support and solutions if and when challenges arise. For instance, managers should reinforce the idea that employees will not be penalized or judged if they need to stay at home with sick children, need to leave early to pick up children from childcare, or need to work remotely or with flexible hours. Similarly, it is important that this level of understanding extend to all employees, who may not have infants but may have other care responsibilities (e.g. older relatives, relatives with disabilities, etc.).

The first few months after parental leave is also a great time to gather working parents and let them share their experiences and ideas about their new life as working parents. One way to do this is to invite them to optional monthly lunches or meetings at the office with a focus on increasing motivation and sharing experiences and advice.

Content for monthly meetings for parents after leave

There are different ways to set up meetings for parents after leave. These can either be unstructured networking meetings and lunches without any specific topic or agenda or more structured meetings facilitated by a manager or internal coach. When following a structured approach, meetings should be facilitated in such a way as to provide time for employees to share their experience. Meetings can include topics that working parents may want to discuss. It is recommended, however, to keep the focus mainly on work–life balance and advice and to include discussions on how parenting and caregiving skills can be useful in specific situations at work.

Growing community of parent role models and mentors

When starting monthly gatherings for parents on leave and working parents, the company will soon build a network of employees who can become mentors and advisers. This network can help the company and employees find creative solutions to balancing work and life responsibilities, as well as help create a supportive work culture and environment for all employees with care responsibilities.

Internal and external communication about initiatives

This FFW activity adds a great deal of communication and employer branding value. Many companies receive words of appreciation from both employees and customers in response to stories about these parental leave meetings. More information on how to communicate internally and externally on FFW initiatives can be found in the chapters Communicating internally about your family-friendly workplace and Communicating externally about your family-friendly workplace.

Including other employees with caregiving responsibilities

While working parents are an easy entry point, there may be other types of caregivers among employees. Meetings can be replicated for these other employees based on the demand and needs. Similarly, these meetings can also be used to promote more equal social and gender norms. In contexts where paternity leave uptake is low, companies could consider creating fathers' groups to promote engaged fatherhood and support their male employees' caregiving roles.

Sample initiative: paid parental leave

Introduction

In addition to local statutory financial support, a company-specific plan for paid parental leave (PPL) is a concrete way to enable working parents to spend time with their children and to enhance their work–life balance. The returns for the company from such a programme may include increased loyalty to and pride in the company on the part of employees, retained competence and the company's increased attractiveness as an employer. Paid parental leave can also be a great way for companies to support important social causes, such as engaged fatherhood, even when the national legislative framework does not have provisions for paid paternity leave.

When developing a PPL plan, companies should establish a strong purpose for the plan and align it with their overall values, strategy and goals.

This chapter provides guidance on how to establish a PPL plan, starting from its purpose to costing it as well as monitoring its benefits.

Table 13. Step-by-step guidance for developing a PPL plan

Steps	Guidance	Examples
Establishing a purpose for your PPL plan	Identify the business challenges and/or opportunities that are addressed with a PPL plan. Clarify why a plan is important to your company and how it aligns with your company's values and overall mission.	Example of a purpose for a PPL plan: Our company believes that all employees should maintain a healthy balance between their work and their personal life. Furthermore, all employees (men and women) should be provided with time to tend to significant family matters and provide care for family members without a significant interruption to their career advancement or personal income.
Identifying expected outcomes from paid parental leave	Clarify what you expect to obtain with paid parental leave and how that aligns with your company's overall goals.	Example of expected outcomes: The return on investment that is anticipated from paid parental leave is increased employee attraction and retention; enhanced employee morale; greater employee engagement, pride and loyalty; and improved employee well-being. There are also possible financial gains connected with cost savings in relation to recruitment and retention.
Establishing the terms and conditions that shape the PPL plan	Establish clear terms and conditions for employees to benefit from paid parental leave. Ensure that these are aligned with the overall purpose and expected outcomes.	Examples of what the terms and conditions could include: • level of income replacement (e.g. 100 per cent, 85 per cent, etc.) • other benefits covered during leave (pension, insurance, etc.) • length of benefit (minimum/maximum periods) • number of times an employee can use the benefit • eligibility requirements (e.g. full- or part-time employment, permanent or temporary employment, length of service) • events covered (maternity, paternity, adoption, a child's illness, etc.) and means of coverage • maximum age limit for a child needing care • integration of the PPL benefit with other forms of leave • whether the cost of benefits will be covered or repaid if an employee who uses paid parental leave decides not to return to work • whether an employee's job will be held during leave or if they will be offered a new position upon returning from leave • arrangements for an employee's return to work (e.g. part-time before full-time)

Steps	Guidance	Examples
Estimate the cost of paid parental leave	The actual cost of paid parental leave is the additional cost incurred when an employee is on leave (e.g. the cost of a temporary replacement worker, the loss of productivity when other employees are covering for the person on leave, administrative costs). The cost of the base pay, benefits and insurance for employees on leave would typically already be included in the company's budgeted workforce expenses regardless of whether an employee is active or on leave, and thus does not imply an additional cost.	• Examples of how to estimate the costs of paid parental leave: To estimate additional costs, company-specific assumptions must be made based on the following: • workforce demographics and employee eligibility requirements as stipulated in the terms and conditions (e.g. the number of employees that meet the eligibility criteria) • the utilization rate among employees (i.e. an estimate of the number of eligible employees who will choose to utilize the PPL benefit and to what extent they will do so) • the scope of and cost for temporary workers to replace employees on leave
Plan the implementation of paid parental leave	A plan for PPL implementation needs to consider practical aspects, such as information, communication and training, as well as the behavioural and cultural aspects required to encourage utilization.	Examples of questions to be asked concerning what the implementation plan should consider and include (for HR and management to discuss and adapt to the company's situation): • What are the prevailing norms regarding parental leave among men and women, and how will those norms impact the utilization of paid parental leave? • How can the company encourage utilization among men and women? • Is there a need for management and employee training to ensure that the corporate philosophy regarding parental leave for men and women is accepted and promoted? • How can role models in the company be identified and engaged to increase support for and utilization of paid parental leave? • How will the PPL initiative be marketed to current and future employees?

Step 3

Steps	Guidance	Examples
Determine the administrative processes for the PPL plan	Administrative guidelines, processes and routines need to be determined and shared with all employees on how to utilize paid parental leave.	Examples of the administrative guidelines, routines and processes that need to be determined: • application process • approval process • payout process
Monitoring paid parental leave and its returns on investment	Determine the programme's monitoring processes — for example, utilization, cost, impact on key business challenges and opportunities, employee perception and valuation. This input is used to modify the plan in order to realize the expected benefits and outcomes.	The following questions should be asked: • Who follows up on the number of employees per year that have used the benefit, and how should this follow-up be carried out? Do we have a data collection system in place? • Regarding the annual cost of paid parental leave, are accounting systems set up for accurate monitoring? Who is responsible? When should this cost be measured? • How can we measure the impact on key business challenges? • How can we assess employee perception? Who is responsible for conducting this assessment, and when should it be conducted?

Source: Compiled by the author.

Communicating internally about your family-friendly workplace

Introduction

1.1. About this chapter

This comprehensive chapter will help champion companies develop internal communications strategies and communication campaigns to promote a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace (FFW) among their employees. It aims to support businesses in developing best practices to communicate their gender-responsive family-friendly workplace policies to their employees. It outlines key concepts relating to efficient employee communications, the importance of internal communications in today's business environment and the role of internal communications in building an enabling and inclusive corporate culture, and it provides some practical guidance, tips and ideas to foster a clear understanding about the advantages of gender-responsive family-friendly workplaces.

The chapter covers internal communication objectives, specific target groups within companies who will be engaged and targeted by messages, messages to be communicated and communication channels to be used to deliver messages to employees.

1.2. Who is the chapter for?

The chapter will be useful for staff or business units responsible for internal communications in champion companies. Depending on the size of the companies and their organizational structure, internal communications may be entrusted to corporate communications or human resources departments, or to public relations or human resources managers if such departments do not exist.

2. Internal communications

2.1. The purpose of internal communications

The classic goal of internal communications is to raise awareness among employees of their company's business goals and objectives. However, rapid changes in the business environment, technology and processes as well as growing demands on the part of employees for more supportive workplaces have increased the importance and role of internal communications in the life of a company. Internal communications have become more than just a means of providing information. Modern internal communications also play the role of internal public relations (PR) since it supports goals such as increasing employee engagement, identifying and sharing best practices with internal audiences, carrying out activities to protect the company's internal reputation, playing a role in shaping corporate culture, etc. It is one of the cornerstones of employer branding work in modern companies, increasing the retention of employees.

2.2. Increased demand for internal communications during and after the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic, which made working from home a necessity, also increased the importance of internal communications. This is because employees, who were the target audience and were mostly working outside the office, needed more extensive and more accurate information, and employers, even more than previously, needed to keep employees in high spirits, support them in adapting to a new work environment, and sustain their engagement and productivity.

2.3. Promoting family-friendly workplaces as one of the main pillars of an internal communications strategy and plan

An internal communications strategy and plan is the main document that the internal PR activities of all large companies are based on. Naturally, an existing document or action plan for the establishment of internal communications should be aligned with elements of the company's business strategy and external communications.

As a result of its work to become a family-friendly workplace, your company may need to redesign or develop the above-mentioned document or activities after implementing a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace policy. This needs to be done because family-friendly workplace initiatives and policies become part of the workplace culture, and they will have to be considered as one of the focal points of your internal communications strategy.

Note that small companies may not have an internal communications strategy, as they do not always have the resources or demand for such a document. In this case, having a simple communications plan (monthly, quarterly and annual) with a list of activities aimed at promoting the benefits of a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace to their employees would be appropriate and sufficient.

Why should champion companies communicate about and promote their gender-responsive family-friendly working environment to their employees?

Company employees and their families are direct beneficiaries of a family-friendly workplace policy and should have timely, accurate and detailed information about the opportunities created for them. Employees of companies that offer flexible working hours or the possibility of working from home are more in need of communications that are both informative and entertaining in order to stay connected with the company.

This kind of communication is beneficial for companies as well, as it will result in increased employee engagement, a more positive work environment and culture, and greater employee satisfaction, which may lead to increased productivity and higher retention.

Providing information to company employees through various communication channels and tools will help them better understand their rights, become better acquainted with the rules and procedures, strengthen the company's positive image and increase employee loyalty.

During internal communications activities, it is also important to collect positive or negative opinions from employees about the family-friendly workplace initiatives undertaken by the company, to listen to their suggestions and comments, and to create an open environment for discussion. The inability of employees to communicate their views to their supervisors and decision makers in the company can prevent family-friendly initiatives from being implemented more effectively. For this reason, it is important to ensure two-way communication, which will be explained further in Section 3.6.

3. How to develop or redesign an internal communications strategy and plan

3.1. Think of a name for your family-friendly workplace programme

It is recommended that any programme or initiative be named to make it memorable and more attractive. If your company does not yet have a name for its family-friendly workplace initiatives or programme, then you can start by thinking of one. Suggestions regarding the choice of name can come internally from your own employees, your marketing communications, or your corporate communications or human resources (HR) functions if they exist, or you can get suggestions from a communications agency you work with. Try to make the name of the programme interesting, noteworthy, short, memorable and even creative. For example, use names such as "Happy parents = a happy employer" instead of "Family-friendly workplace project aimed at ensuring that our employees can create a better work–life balance", and use wording such as "responsible fatherhood" instead of "additional paid leave days for our employees who just became fathers".

3.2. Develop your family-friendly workplace manifesto

Once your company has developed its family-friendly workplace strategy and work plan, you can start promoting it by writing a manifesto. Here you can talk about many things: the importance of maintaining a balance between family and work, the purpose of implementing a family-friendly workplace policy within your company, the principles of the programme or policy, its benefits for your employees, the value female employees add to your company, the necessary rules, the safety of employees working from home and of their family members, etc.

To present this manifesto, you can arrange a meeting with your employees, introduce the programme or policy to them and answer any questions that may arise. In addition, the manifesto must be posted online, sent to employees via email or hosted on a file server so that the programme or policy is accessible to employees and can be viewed at any time.

3.3. Specifying your goal and objectives

The goal and objectives of the internal communications strategy implemented by large businesses as well as the separate communication campaigns or activities conducted by smaller companies should be clearly stated.

The first step is to determine the overall goal or objectives and then the tasks that will serve the achievement of that goal or objectives. It should also be noted that goals and objectives should be measurable.

For example, the goal of an internal communication campaign may be to promote the positive impact of the company's gender-responsive family-friendly workplace policy on new parents.

To achieve this goal, the following objectives should be set: to organize separate meetings and discussions for new parents, to develop various communication products in order to share best practices in this field and to create opportunities for new parents to share their stories.

The next step will be to think about the communication activities arising from these objectives. This is connected with the idea of communication activities put forward by each company's team or an employee engaged in internal communications. In the rest of this document, you will find a number of communication ideas that can be used in the future.

3.4. Target audience

The target audience of any internal communication activity is all the employees of a company or organization. However, there are cases where some of an organization's initiatives or policies could affect certain employees more than others. The introduction of a family-friendly workplace and related communication fall under this category: while all employees are interested in and will benefit from the creation of a favourable environment, some groups will have greater needs for and more interest in such initiatives. These groups will be the main target audience for your internal communication activities; examples are provided below.

Female employees: gender-responsive family-friendly workplaces can have a significant impact on eliminating discrimination against women and inequality in the workplace, supporting women's economic empowerment and labour force participation, and expanding choices for women, including working mothers, in terms of their careers and family aspirations. It is important, however, that all communication activities and language be gender-sensitive and not reproduce harmful gender norms and stereotypes.

Male employees: the concept of a family-friendly workplace for men is vital for increasing their participation in unpaid care work and paid paternity leave and encouraging them to be responsible and engaged fathers. Unfortunately, both existing stereotypes and labour law, which may not provide benefits and opportunities such as paternity leave, restrict the participation of men in unpaid care work. With this in mind, special communication activities and messages that show how your company's family-friendly workplace affects men and how they can benefit from it are very important for ensuring uptake of the benefits and policies.

Single parents: single parents who care for their children alone are considered to be a more vulnerable group and will benefit greatly from a supportive and flexible work environment.

Parents raising children with disabilities: balancing work and family responsibilities can be more difficult for parents of children with disabilities, as these parents may have more urgent and time-consuming responsibilities, such as taking their children to regular medical check-ups and participating in consultations with specialists and teachers. As a target audience for communication activities, they should feel that their employers demonstrate special concern for their families and children.

Employees with care responsibilities: in addition, the FFW model supports all employees who have care responsibilities, whether for an elder relative, a relative with a chronic illness, a relative with a disability or someone else's child (e.g. a grandchild, a step-child, a niece or nephew, etc.). As is the case with working parents, gender-responsive family-friendly policies will enable employees with care responsibilities to better reconcile work and life responsibilities as well as advance the well-being of their families. Including them in communication activities will empower them to use the policies and benefits as they need them.

Employees with disabilities: employees with disabilities who may benefit from the family-friendly workplace model through the use of flexible working hours and remote working arrangements need to be equally included in all communications, even when not physically in the office. Moreover, communications messages and modalities should be accessible, and messages should be inclusive of these employees. When the company provides specific benefits and arrangements for employees with disabilities, communication should ensure that they are aware of them.

Managers: managers at all levels play a special role in properly presenting the benefits of a family-friendly workplace to the company, employees and society as a whole. Communication activities must therefore ensure that they understand their role when it comes to establishing a family-friendly workplace in order to act as a role model and create an enabling work culture.

All employees: communicating with employees about the introduction of a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace will help the company increase employees' awareness of the benefits of the programme as well as strengthen its reputation and increase employee loyalty and engagement.

In addition to the target audiences listed, a business may have other target audiences as well depending on its field of activity. For example, target audiences could include young people, older employees, employees of offices located in different geographical areas, employees carrying out special activities or involved in working groups, night-shift workers, employees who are in direct contact with customers, interns, etc. From this point of view, when carrying out internal communication activities, it is necessary to deepen the understanding of your audience in order to properly plan the working principles, the available communication channels and the messages that need to be delivered, etc.

Moreover, your company may have employees from other vulnerable and marginalized groups. Depending on the geographical area, these can include refugees, war veterans and their families, conflict-affected individuals, ethnic minorities, as well as LGBT individuals, etc. Sometimes you may need to conduct communication activities for such groups that focus on inclusion and rights.

3.5. Messaging

An understanding of the expectations, concerns and needs of the target audiences is crucial for developing proper content and the language of messages. Every message should be understandable and clear to the relevant group of employees it is targeting.

Ideally, any internal communication activity implemented within your company should be linked with at least one specific message.

Table 14 provides some sample messages and their rationale. Of course, based on your own situation you may be able to think of different messages as well.
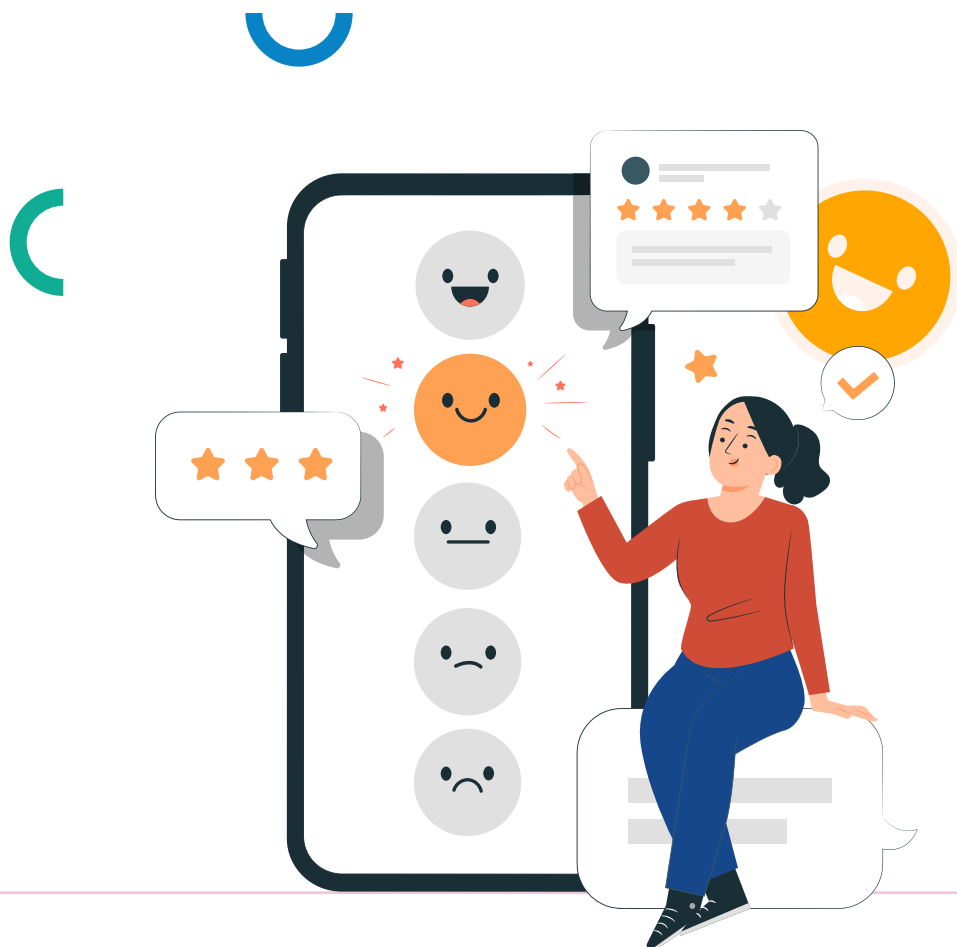
Table 14. Sample messages and rationale

Message	Rationale
Women in our company are not discriminated against for being a mother or for being pregnant.	We understand that we must pay special attention to pregnant women and mothers while not discriminating against them in matters such as hiring, division of labour, wages and career development.
In our company, we promote gender equality and respect the rights of all our employees regardless of gender.	More proof of this is the creation of a gender-responsive family-friendly environment in our company.
We care about not only our employees but also their families.	For this reason, we create flexible work schedules for employees and provide additional leave options to ensure that all employees can have time for their care responsibilities.
Instead of a time-based culture, we prefer quality-based results.	Achieving the desired result is more important for us than how many hours we spend at the office. We focus on the efficiency of the work, not on the hours spent in the workplace.
By caring about the families of our employees, we are creating best practices in our society.	Implementing a gender-responsive family-friendly policy in our company means that we are a few steps ahead of some other employers.
Happy employees make happy customers.	Those in the management hierarchy — the owner, shareholders, top management and function heads — must understand that customer satisfaction depends directly on employee satisfaction.

Source: Compiled by the author.

3.6. Internal communication channels

Internal communication products that promote the benefits of a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace and any informational documents provided by the HR function can be delivered to company employees using the following communication channels:

- corporate intranet
- corporate emails and email groups
- employee newsletters
- private messaging software
- document sharing software
- employee app
- print collateral: leaflets, brochures, etc.

3.7. Communications plan

An internal communications plan — a document outlining the communication activities you plan to carry out — should contribute to the achievement of the overall goal of your internal communications strategy.

Ideally, any communication activity implemented should be linked with at least one specific message indicated above.

You can use the sample communications plan implementation matrix in Table 15 to compose your own communications plan.

Table 15. Sample communications plan implementation matrix

Activity	Target audience	Communication channel	Responsibility	Key performance indicators	Timeline
"Why I took paternity leave": working fathers tell their own stories (dedicated to International Day of Families)	Working parents, male employees	Internal e-bulletin, intranet	HR and internal communications	Number of bulletin recipients, number of reads on the intranet	During May 2022

Source: Compiled by the author.

In addition, by adapting some of the communication activities outlined in Section 4 of this chapter, you will be able to create and implement a communications plan in accordance with the implementation matrix.

3.8. Evaluation

Evaluation is important for measuring the effectiveness of internal communication activities. Indicators for both a quantitative and qualitative assessment will enable you to see to what extent your communication activities were useful for your employees. Evaluations should consider the following factors:

- the number of employees reached by email, newsletters, etc.
- intranet analytics
- online polls, surveys and quizzes

Note that reviewing responses and feedback from employees will help you to find out what your employees think about internal communication activities, as well as the policies and initiatives they are related to, and enable you to improve those further.

4. Sample communication ideas

This section covers some recommendations and ideas aimed at raising awareness of gender-responsive family-friendly workplaces and promoting new initiatives or policies. In addition to choosing those that best suit your company and adding them to your communications plan, you might also be able to come up with other new and creative ideas.

While designing a communications plan, it is recommended that you avoid any monotonous activities and use various types of communication products and tools because effective internal communication involves a mix of articles, news, fun events, games, employee feedback, etc.

Communication activities should be positive, motivating, inspiring and caring. Also, it is very important to include some fun activities in your internal communication initiatives.

4.1. Raise awareness of the benefits of a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace

What are the fundamental principles of your company's gender-responsive family-friendly workplace policy? What benefits does it bring to employees? Why does your company use this model? What are the advantages of working in a family-friendly environment?

Prepare on a regular basis short videos, infographics, articles, quote cards, posters, etc. that contain answers to these questions. It would be tedious for the audience if you gathered all the components of the family-friendly workplace model applied in your company and their benefits in a single communication product. Therefore, it is a good idea to dedicate each communication product to one important component of the policy. In this case, the message will be addressed to a clearer and more specific target audience.

In addition, it would be useful to announce an awareness-raising month and organize regular meetings and discussions on the topic of gender-responsive family-friendly workplaces for employees and your company's management and responsible HR representatives.

As a part of the awareness-raising month, you can also set up desktop background images dedicated to family-friendly workplaces and brand your intranet page with relevant visuals.

4.2. Creating a role model: family-friendly manager

Directly involving the company's top and middle management and having them serve as an example is crucial during the implementation of the family-friendly workplace model. Although the company claims to have adopted such a model, some employees may sometimes find it difficult to take advantage of it and may think that doing so could hinder their career progression and employment security. Therefore, managers, especially the company's senior management, can participate in the internal communication process and serve as role models. They can do this by playing an active role in the communication activities outlined in the following sections (e.g. employee stories, online photo exhibitions, etc.) as well as by highlighting their use of the various family-friendly initiatives (e.g. paternity leave, remote work, etc.) to normalize their uptake.

4.3. Employee stories

Audiences often find employees' stories, personal experiences and impressions more meaningful and easier to understand than reports and figures. To demonstrate how important the family-friendly workplace policy is for employees, it is recommended that preference be given to employee-generated communication products with a human story at the centre.

Share your story. Ask the employees who benefit from your gender-responsive family-friendly policy to write down their experience in the form of short stories and to take photos or record short videos that reflect on their experience. To make this request, you can send your employees an email, place an ad on the intranet or use other channels.

In their stories, employees can describe how their lives have changed since the introduction of a family-friendly workplace and how they have benefited from this policy. Afterwards, share these stories with other employees via the intranet, email, etc.

4.4. Events

There are countless ideas with regard to employee events — for example, family day events. These types of activities are effective ways to improve employee engagement and loyalty. Employers can organize picnics, parties, sports and art activities and other entertainment events in a family-oriented environment. Such events involve the participation of the company's top management and their family members as well as other employees and their families.

4.5. Online photo exhibitions

On the eve of International Day of Families, online exhibitions can be organized around topics such as "my family's weekend", "my family's day", etc. on the company's intranet. Employees can participate in such exhibitions with photos related to the topic.

4.6. Bringing children to the workplace

It is common practice for employees to bring their children to work on International Children's Day. On this occasion, a playroom can be set up with toys and activities for younger children, while older children can get acquainted with the workplace in a child-friendly atmosphere. The implementation of such activities depends on the field in which the business operates. For example, it may be very interesting for children to visit a confectionery factory, but such a visit may not be suitable for a company operating dangerous machinery.

4.7. Share your responsive-fatherhood experience

In order to demonstrate how your company's family-friendly workplace impacts fathers, you can organize special activities dedicated to the engaged-fatherhood experience on the eve of special days, such as Father's Day. In this case, you can announce activities similar to those previously mentioned (such as asking fathers to share their fatherhood story) and share stories, photos and short videos on this topic.

4.8. Office branding

When branding a company office, you can use posters, images, banners, etc. dedicated to a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace.

4.9 Print collateral

While digital tools and communication products are generally preferred in many workplaces, the use of printed materials may sometimes be more effective. In such cases, you can design and use printed products, such as leaflets describing opportunities provided by the family-friendly workplace model applied at your company, posters with a related message, etc.

4.10. Employee promo items

Some companies traditionally prepare employee appreciation kits or other employee promo items each year. On such products, in addition to your company's logo, you can place messages and slogans used in your communication campaign related to a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace.

Communicating externally about your family-friendly workplace

Introduction

1.1. About this chapter

The aim of this chapter is to support champion companies in planning and implementing external communication activities to raise public awareness of their family-friendly workplace (FFW) initiatives and policies. Such activities will enable companies to strengthen their brand's image and reputation, as well as to share with other companies and society at large the importance and benefits of gender-responsive family policies within the private sector.

This chapter defines key concepts involved in effective external communications and specifies the importance of external corporate communications, the role of promoting family-friendly workplaces in strengthening the image of a business, the target groups who will be engaged and who will be the target of messages as well as the communication channels to be used for delivering messages.

Champion companies can refer to this chapter while developing their corporate and/or external communications strategies and communications

plans to communicate their gender-responsive family-friendly workplace initiatives and policies to external audiences.

Champion companies can also use this chapter to support their advocacy and communication as role models around gender-responsive family-friendly workplaces and policies and ultimately to increase the commitment of all stakeholders to create an enabling environment for such policies.

1.2. Who is the chapter for?

This chapter will be useful for staff or business units responsible for external communications in champion companies. Depending on the size of the companies and their organizational structure, external communications may be entrusted to the corporate communications and/or public relations function or to a staff member who is responsible for public relations in a business entity.

2. External communications

2.1. The purpose of external communications

External communications take place between a business and an external person or entity (e.g. customers, potential customers, potential employees, suppliers, investors, stakeholders, shareholders, media, social media users, society at large, etc.).

External communications are aimed at facilitating cooperation with an audience outside a business, presenting the brand's purpose and personality as well as a positive image of the organization and its products and services to the public. External communication helps make a company more competitive in the goods and services markets as well as the labour market, ensuring that it can attract and retain talent.

2.2 Comparison of external and internal communications

Both external and internal communications are crucial for an organization. Although the messages, target audiences and communications channels differ significantly, both external and internal communications are a part of corporate communications, and the strategies for both types of communications need to be aligned.

Table 16 outlines key differences between them.

Table 16. Comparison of external and internal communications

Basis for comparison	External communications	Internal communications
Meaning	Considers communications that take place between a business and an external person or entity	Considers communications among employees within a business entity
Types	No such classification	Vertical and horizontal communications
Participants	Customers, potential employees, shareholders, investors, clients, general public, suppliers, creditors, etc.	Management and employees
Form	Mostly formal	Both formal and informal
Messages	Aimed at an audience outside an organization	Aimed at employees only
Target audiences	External audience, including customers, potential customers, potential employees, suppliers, investors, stakeholders, shareholders, media, social media users, society at large, etc.	Employees
Communication channels	Media, social media, external events, etc.	Email, intranet, internal events and some print collateral
Frequency	Comparatively low	High

Source: Compiled by the author.

2.3. Why communicate with an external audience about family-friendly workplaces?

Family-friendly workplaces and policies are good for all employees but especially for those who have care responsibilities. This is particularly important for women, who still bear the lion's share of unpaid care work, as family-friendly workplaces and policies can help them better balance and realize their career and fertility aspirations. Family-friendly workplaces are also in the interest of employers, as covered in step 1 (see Understanding the business case for family-friendly workplaces).

What are the benefits of such policies for the public? In other words, why should a business communicate about or promote such policies externally?

Gender-responsive family-friendly workplace policies and initiatives are not only one of the elements of an effective human resources policy; they are also a business strategy in general. Here are some advantages of the FFW model for society at large that can be integrated into the messages used in communications activities later:

○ A family-friendly workplace creates equal opportunities for all employees — both men and women.

○ Family-friendly workplaces are a private sector effort to dismantle harmful social norms and gender stereotypes.

○ There are also a number of indirect beneficiaries of such policies: people who need special care, children and families of employees.

○ By creating a more productive workforce and supporting women's labour force participation, family-friendly workplaces can contribute to a country's economic growth.

○ A family-friendly workplace can support the design and implementation of national family-friendly policies, and vice versa.

○ By piloting a family-friendly workplace, your company is supporting the work done by the state in this direction (improving social welfare, developing social policy, creating equal opportunities and ensuring gender equality, child development, etc.) and creating true value for society.

○ By piloting a family-friendly workplace, your company is encouraging a sustainability culture and incorporating the UN Sustainable Development Goals into its business operations.

○ Creating a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace is an innovative approach to human resources management that contributes to building a better corporate culture.

○ And finally, by piloting a family-friendly workplace, your company is acting as a role model for the country's private sector.

2.4. Promoting family-friendly workplaces as one of the main pillars of an external communications strategy and plan

An external communications or public relations strategy and communications plan is the main document that large companies' external corporate communication activities are based on. Taking into consideration the above-mentioned advantages of family-friendly policies for the public in general, communicating, advocating and promoting your family-friendly workplace may create or support a positive perception of your company's brand.

Therefore, following the implementation of the gender-responsive family-friendly workplace model, you may want to redesign your company's external communications strategy by adding one more goal related to the family-friendly workplace itself or related to one of the initiatives that was piloted in your company. (Section 3 of this chapter provides a step-by-step guide on developing or redesigning your external communications strategy.)

Moreover, following your company's piloting of the gender-responsive family-friendly workplace model, you can rethink your corporate values and add additional values that are connected with the new working environment. Such values could be, for instance, work–life balance, employee well-being, respect for employees' family responsibilities, etc.

Small and medium-size enterprises may not need to have an external communications or public relations strategy, as they do not communicate with a large external audience. However, they may still want to create some visibility around their businesses, and they can use the momentum created in implementing the FFW model to make a statement about themselves.
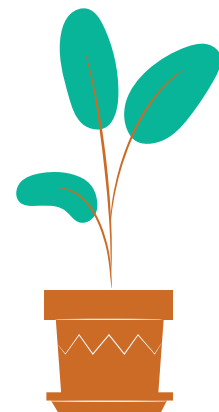
3. How to plan external communications to promote the FFW model

This section provides a step-by-step guide to designing an external communications strategy. Individuals and units responsible for external communications can use this guidance to build or redesign an external communications strategy by integrating the promotion of your company's work on creating a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace.

The implementation of the FFW model involves various parties: from a company to external stakeholders. Think about which stakeholders you can involve in the process of introducing a family-friendly workplace and get their support to develop proper messaging and identify target audiences. Doing so will help you build evidence-based communications and plan strategically.

3.1. Use analysis outcomes

Data related to analyses of gender stereotypes and gender equality in workplaces as well as the implementation of FFW practices in your country should be reviewed before starting related communication activities in order to ensure that all messages are context-specific and in line with local laws and regulations.

The following could be reviewed to inform your communication activities:

- labour laws and legislation related to gender equality
- family-friendly policies
- surveys and research related to employee rights, benefits, expectations, etc.
- coverage of topics in the media and on social media concerning family-friendly workplaces, gender equality in the workplace, maternity and paternity leave, gender-equal employment and any other related topics

3.2. Specify goals and objectives

A communications strategy is designed to support organizational objectives, and the organizational and communication goals therefore need to be linked and consistent.

It is necessary to first determine the overall goals of the external communications strategy and then the objectives that will enable your company to achieve those goals. Goals and objectives should be measurable.

For example, one of the goals of your strategy may be to create or maintain your image as one of the best employers in the country. Objectives may be very general, such as to raise awareness of your family-friendly workplace, or more straightforward and focused, such as to promote the elimination of gender discrimination in the workplace, to promote family-friendly workplaces as your company's contribution to the labour market and employment policies, to contribute to advocacy efforts to foster an environment for family-friendly policies, etc.

Make sure that your goal is realistic: remember that not every goal can be achieved through communication.

3.3. Identify target audiences

Knowing your target audience will help you to develop your messages and create more targeted and effective content.

External communications typically target specific groups that you can expect to buy your products or services, groups that you want to reach, that you want to talk to, etc. These groups will be the main target audience for your external communication activities; examples are provided below:

Media: the media play a major role in increasing visibility, communicating messages to the public and promoting a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace in general.

Families of employees: enabling employees to reconcile their work and family responsibilities supports not only employees themselves but also their family members.

Social media users: social media users are one of the most important target groups, as they represent mainly young people who have career aspirations and who may be interested in joining your company. Segmented and targeted approaches need to be applied for this target audience, which most social media platforms allow you to do.

Existing and potential consumers: modern consumers expect a business to be more socially responsible and accountable. Brands' beliefs and values are becoming increasingly important for people and impact their buying decisions.

Jobseekers: in addition to a well-paying job, jobseekers in today's world are looking for family-friendly companies that respect their need for flexible working conditions and work–life balance.

Private sector, business associations and competitors: a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace makes your company both a local champion and a pioneer. These two factors may encourage other businesses to apply this model, while differentiating your company from its competitors.

Policymakers and government officials: policymakers and government officials who are involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of national gender-responsive family policies can be influenced by and have an impact on family-friendly policies and initiatives in the private sector.

Development organizations: by introducing a family-friendly workplace, your company will contribute to social change, gender equality, economic stability, etc., which are among the priority areas of national and international development organizations.

Civil society and labour unions: organizations working in the field of gender equality, women's empowerment, social welfare, labour rights, etc., as well as labour unions are among the target audience for your messages.

Broader community: FFW practices implemented by businesses support not only families, children and parents but also the well-being of the broader community.

3.4. Develop messaging

What do you want the target audience to know about your company or about the family-friendly workplace or policies piloted by your company? This is the main question in creating relevant messages for the right target audiences.

Moreover, any external communication activity should be linked with at least one message.

In Table 17, you can find some sample messages and their justification. Of course, you can think about additional or different messages as well based on your own situation.

Also, note that some messages indicated in Table 17 are relevant for both external and internal audiences.

Table 17. Sample messages and rationale

Message	Rationale
We care about economic growth and the resilience of our society.	This model contributes to economic growth, greater prosperity and financial resilience in respect of both families and society.
We support national or government-led gender-responsive family-friendly policies.	Our activities with regard to providing a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace are in line with the work done by the government. We are ready to do more to expand and further develop this model.
We support global goals for a better and more sustainable future for all.	By piloting a family-friendly workplace, we are contributing to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the European Union Plan of Action for Gender Equality (2016–2020).
We bring best practices and social innovation to our business environment.	We bring innovation to our work culture by being one of the first companies to pilot a family-friendly workplace in the country; we have learned from regional and global best practices to improve it further.
In our company, women are not discriminated against for being mothers or for being pregnant.	We understand that we must pay special attention to pregnant women and mothers, while not discriminating against them in matters such as hiring, the division of labour, wages and career development.
In our company, we promote gender equality and respect the rights of all our employees regardless of gender.	More proof of this is the creation of a gender-responsive family-friendly environment within our company that benefits all employees regardless of gender.
We care about not only our employees but also their families.	For this reason, we create flexible work schedules for employees and provide additional leave options to ensure that all employees have the time for their care responsibilities.
By caring about the families of our employees, we are spearheading best practices in our society and contributing to the social well-being of citizens.	Implementing a gender-responsive family-friendly policy within our company means that we are a few steps ahead of some other employers.

Source: Compiled by the author.

3.5. Communication channels

The following communication channels may be used for promoting the FFW model:

- traditional media
- social media
- events
- print collateral
- face-to-face meetings

Communications plan

The communication activities you carry out within the framework of your external communications strategy should contribute to the achievement of the strategy's overall goal.

Ideally, any communication activity implemented should be linked with at least one of the specific messages indicated in Table 17.

You can use the sample communications plan implementation matrix in Table 18 to compose your own communications plan.

Table 18. Sample communications plan implementation matrix

Activity	Target audience	Communication channel	Responsibility	Key performance indicators	Timeline
Presentation of a company stand at a job fair	Jobseekers, media, social media, competition, government bodies	Face-to-face, media, social media	PR and HR	Number of stand visitors Number of news stories in the media Number of social media posts	During June 2022

Source: Compiled by the author.

3.6. Evaluation and setting key performance indicators

In order to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the communication activities considered in your external communications strategy, the following indicators need to be tracked:

- number of stories published
- number of web banners
- number of clicks in online media
- number of TV and radio programmes
- total airtime (and other specific key performance indicators) on TV and radio
- number of social media posts as well as reach and engagement rate
- number of video materials
- number and circulation of printed materials
- number of events (conferences, training sessions, meetings, webinars, etc.)

One of the best ways to measure the outcome of your communication activities is to include a set of questions regarding relevant surveys (e.g. questions for a brand perception survey, etc.).

4. Recommendations for and examples of external communications ideas

This section includes some recommendations and ideas aimed at promoting and advocating gender-responsive family-friendly workplaces.

4.1. Start with visibility and awareness

Family-friendly workplaces are becoming a requirement for the modern business environment, and this is good news to share with external audiences. For this reason, you can start your communication by increasing your visibility and raising awareness of your family-friendly workplace. In a press release, you should inform the public about your company's introduction of a family-friendly workplace, its advantages and its connection with the factors listed above.

After that, you can prepare various feature stories, interviews, infographics, video materials and other products in order to provide more detailed information about gender-responsive family-friendly workplaces. It is recommended that you answer the following questions when preparing such materials: What is a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace? What are the advantages of a family-friendly workplace for employees and employers, as well as for society? Which companies in the world or in your country have introduced family-friendly workplaces?

4.2. Equal opportunity employer statement

Many companies and organizations add a brief statement at the end of their job postings to inform their audience about the provision of equal opportunities to all employees. An equal opportunity employer (EOE) statement is a short paragraph that conveys a business's commitment to diversity and inclusion in its employment practices. It is typically included at the bottom of job descriptions and on career pages.

If your company uses such a statement, you can also add a sentence about your implementation of the FFW model. Otherwise, your introduction of a family-friendly workplace provides an excellent opportunity to add an EOE statement to your job descriptions. You can use the following wording to express the idea: "We are committed to providing a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace. This policy helps our employees to create a better work–life balance and fulfil their family and career aspirations. We are partnering with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to support and promote gender-responsive family-friendly workplaces and initiatives." [28]

4.3. Sharing best practices

Businesses are invited to various events to share their experiences, including human resources forums, public relations and human resources panel discussions, conferences, etc. If you attend such events, you can talk about the gender-responsive family-friendly workplace initiatives taken within your company and share your company's experience in this area.

---

28 Note that the last sentence can be included only if your company has a legal partnership with UNFPA (through a memorandum of understanding or other type of legal partnership).

Speeches and presentations on these topics will attract the attention of event participants as well as the media.

4.4. Promoting gender equality and women's leadership

A lot of companies are committed to fostering gender equality and supporting women's leadership in the modern workplace. It is recommended that you highlight this in your communications. You can highlight the importance of the role that women play within the company, the fact that your organization supports gender-diverse leadership by putting more women in executive roles and making them feel that this is the right place for them to build their career and succeed, and, most importantly, the fact that your company provides a gender-responsive family-friendly workplace that ensures that working mothers and fathers can balance their work and life responsibilities.

4.5. Using social and professional networks

By using social media channels to raise awareness of the family-friendly workplace model applied by your company, you will be able to facilitate open communication and discussions, ask questions, share thoughts as well as improve the image of your company as a business that promotes gender equality and social inclusion.

The LinkedIn professional network is especially recommended for communication.

You can also tag the following UNFPA channels and share information about the Expanding Choices project on your page.

Facebook: @unfpaeecaro

Twitter: @unfpaeecaro

Instagram: unfpaeecaro

LinkedIn: unfpaeecaro

Two of the hashtags used on social media are #ExpandingChoices and #FamilyPolicies.

4.6. Celebrate and communicate special days and occasions

One of the best ways to underline how your company is creating a family-friendly workplace is to celebrate special days and occasions such as International Women's Day (8 March), International Day of Families (15 May), International Children's Day (1 June), Father's Day, World Children's Day (20 November) and other relevant occasions.

Here are some tips on how you can celebrate these days:

- by providing non-working or flexible working days and communicating this to external audiences (through social media channels)

- by supporting or sponsoring any dedicated event or activity held by NGOs, CSOs or other groups and communicating about it (through a press release, logo placement, posts on social media, etc.)

- by congratulating your employees and customers on the occasion of any special day (posting cards on social media channels or sending bulk text messages, e-mails, etc.)

Communicating about these types of activities will give you an additional opportunity to mention that your company has introduced a family-friendly workplace (in a press releases, in social media posts, via hashtags, etc.).

4.7. Co-branding of your FFW model

The purpose of co-branding is to combine and leverage the strength and awareness of and positive associations with multiple brands, and to transfer those qualities across other brands in the co-branded campaign so that each brand benefits from the others. With this in mind, it is recommended that you mention the strategic partnership in this area in your communication products related to family-friendly workplaces — in other words, that you use co-branding. Depending on the communication product, you may use the following disclaimer: "We are partnering with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) within the regional Expanding Choices project, to expand choices for women so that they can fulfil their career, family and fertility aspirations, by supporting and promoting gender-responsive family-friendly workplaces and initiatives."

Step 4
Adjust

Monitoring and adjusting your family-friendly workplace

Introduction

It is vital for companies to continuously monitor the implementation of their family-friendly workplace (FFW) strategy, plan and actions in a structured way to achieve long-term impact and ensure their integration into existing processes, policies and workplace culture. This will ensure that a company's family-friendly workplace can mature in a sustainable way.

A company's FFW monitoring and adjustment framework outlines how to plan, manage, evaluate and adjust its FFW ambition, strategy, goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) as well as the initiatives and actions piloted by the company. The FFW monitoring and adjustment framework must be adapted to each company's specific structure and overall governance model.

Guidance for establishing an FFW monitoring and adjustment framework

The following input may be included in an FFW monitoring and adjustment framework:

- **FFW components:** make a list of all the initiatives established to introduce a family-friendly workplace, from the strategy to new routines and policies. Include all the FFW governing documents, metrics, tools and activities developed so that each of them is properly monitored and adjusted in line with the company's priorities and needs.

- **Prepared by:** identify the staff member who was responsible for preparing each FFW component.

- **Monitored by:** identify the staff member who is responsible for continuously monitoring and adjusting each FFW component. The staff member monitoring the component may or may not be the same as the one who prepared it.

- **Adjustment process:** agree on the process for adjusting each FFW component to ensure that the consequences of changes are considered and understood before adjustments are approved. The adjustment process may be different for each FFW component.

- **Referral body:** identify the staff members and stakeholders who should provide their input on suggested adjustments to the FFW components.

- **Approved by:** identify the staff member accountable for approving adjustments to each FFW component.

- **Due date:** specify when each FFW component should be monitored and adjusted.

Company FFW monitoring and adjustment framework (example)

Table 19 includes examples to illustrate how a monitoring and adjustment framework could be designed, depending on the FFW components.

Step 4

Table 19. Example FFW monitoring and adjustment framework

FFW component	Prepared by	Monitored by	Adjustment process	Referral body	Approved by	Due date
FFW ambition and strategy	Company Director / Human Resources (HR) Director	HR Director	Referral to concerned stakeholders required	Top management	CEO	Annually
FFW return on investment and cost–benefit analysis	Financial analyst or HR analytics professional	Finance Director	Referral to concerned stakeholders required	HR Director	Top management	Annually
FFW Plan	FFW (project) leader or coordinator	FFW (project) leader or coordinator	Minor adjustments by FFW (project) leader or coordinator Substantial adjustments with approval from sponsor	HR Director	Sponsor (e.g. HR Director)	Ongoing
FFW key performance indicators	Financial analyst or HR analytics professional	Finance Director or HR Director (depending on KPIs)	Referral to concerned stakeholders required	Finance Director or HR Director (depending on KPIs)	Top management	Annually
FFW tool and activity (e.g. flexible working policy)	HR Director	HR Director	Referral to concerned stakeholders required	Employees, managers	Top management team	Annually
FFW tool and activity (e.g. workplace programmes for parents on leave)	Internal coach or training manager	Training manager	Referral to concerned stakeholders required	Parents on leave and their managers	HR Director	After first programme

Source: Compiled by the author.

Step 4

Table 20. FFW monitoring and adjustment framework template

FFW component	Prepared by	Monitored by	Adjustment process	Referral body	Approved by	Due date

Source: Compiled by the author.

Developing a long-term family-friendly workplace policy

Introduction

This chapter provides guidance on how companies can document a policy for their family-friendly workplace (FFW) and ensure its alignment with their overall FFW strategy and goals.

The policy should clarify the following:

- the purpose and goal of the FFW policy
- the policy background
- the scope of the policy
- definitions of terms used in the policy
- the roles and responsibilities of various staff members
- selected FFW initiatives
- references

In addition to documenting its policy, a company should consider and plan for how to communicate about its initiatives as part of its ongoing internal and external employer branding, PR and other communication areas, as well as other ongoing initiatives related to inclusion, gender equality, social sustainability, etc. Taking these steps will ensure that the FFW initiative is perceived not as a new project but more as a way to achieve the goals of other ongoing projects and processes.

Template for a family-friendly workplace policy

Purpose and goal

This section should clarify why an FFW policy is needed and what the company aims to achieve through it.

Supporting material:

- Revisit the company's FFW ambition statement and strategy.

Background

This section describes the company's reasons for promoting a family-friendly workplace and the possible gains from doing so.

Supporting material:

- Revisit the company's FFW assessment and the FFW components prioritized based on their impact on the company's goals.

Scope

This section explains who the policy does and does not apply to. It also clarifies and justifies selection and exclusion criteria.

Definitions

This section clarifies all the terms that are referenced in the policy.

Roles and responsibilities

This section clarifies who is responsible for the policy within the company, including overall responsibility for the whole policy and responsibility for each of its parts.

Selected FFW initiatives

This section describes what a family-friendly workplace encompasses, specifically the tools, activities, attitudes and behaviours that have been tested, implemented and evaluated.

Supporting material:

- Revisit guidance documents and other materials on the different tools and activities that have been selected, implemented and evaluated.

References

This section lists other documents related to the policy, including all other documented policies and routines for every FFW tool and activity implemented.