

## Family Friendly Organizations

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### **A REAL TREND**

There is a growing or emerging movement afoot in organizational America today and we are seeing it in our consulting and training travels. Diversity Training



Group is being asked by our clients to help them become more family friendly. You have heard it – all the buzz words and phrases - organizations are interested in winning the war for talent and being an employer of choice.

### **TYPICAL COMPANY A**

Why? It usually sounds like this. “A lot of relatively new supervisory and management talent is leaving our organization. We are losing our bench strength in times when we want to grow. Help us find out why. This is an ever increasing retention issue for us.” We conduct post-exit interviews and guess what we find?

Employees are leaving because their former employer was not a family friendly organization. That is, their former employer wants them to put their job ahead of their personal life, and in particular, their family and most often it is their new family. These former employees had no problem working fifty or sixty hour weeks, entertaining clients after work, living “la vida loca” when they were single and did not have any additional family responsibilities or duties.

### **OR SOMETIMES COMPANY B**

Or, you have heard the stories. It is a particular holiday and all of the single members of your employee team must “pick up the slack” so people with any

kind of a family duty or responsibility can go home and be with their families while the single employees “hold the fort” during Thanksgiving or Christmas for example. Of course single employees have families right? They have parents and siblings possibly but they don’t have a “family of their own.”

It always happens. Your employees progress in life and things change. You can count on it but do you plan for it? Do you anticipate it? Or is it status quo – keep managing our people the same way we always have – I mean, people have always put the job first and family second, right?

People get married and they start a new family. Or they are in a new serious relationship or they decide to adopt a child and their world changes dramatically – priorities change. How are you as an employer gauging whether this is happening in your workplace?

It sounds like this sometimes – “We want to be a lifestyle firm.” This will establish an expectation. I love when an employer says they want to be a lifestyle firm where you can balance work and home but they really don’t mean it. It is on their website, it is a core value and in their literature but they are not really doing things differently. Well, do you really mean it?

#### **A CHECKLIST – GAUGING THE ROOT CAUSE**

- Are you conducting exit interviews?
- Are you conducting post-exit interviews? (Our favorite)
- Are you polling your employees before they leave? (Be proactive, anticipate)
- Who is leaving your organization? Who is staying?
- Are your divorce rate rates higher among mid and upper level managers?
- Do you see trends?

#### **“WE WANT TO BE A LIFESTYLE FIRM.”**

Well, do you really mean it? Do your employees feel like they have to always put the job first? Where is your commitment to the company? Have you heard that? Actions and policies speak louder than words.

Do you offer these benefits to your employees?

- On or near site daycare or daycare subsidies
- On-site lactation facilities
- Daycare coordination or subsidy
- Paternity leave as well as flexible maternity leave
- A “mommy and/or daddy track” to management
- Adoption support
- Flexible place, flexible time or compressed work week schedules
- Elder care – support to help you take care of your parents – YES \*

\* Yes – if you are born after 1964 you will spend more time taking care of your aging parents than they did taking care of you. Some experts have coined the

phrase “the sandwich generation” where your employees are raising their own children and taking care of their parents at the same time. Any employer offering this benefit is way out in front and will be the most family friendly employer in the land!