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BECOME A MORE  
BALANCE-FRIENDLY COMPANY  
THAT SUPPORTS  
WORKING MOM EMPLOYEES

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## Introduction

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The struggle for working mothers trying to balance all the things isn't new. The reality of working motherhood became a hot topic recently as the pandemic pulled back the curtain on the challenge of the juggle of work and life. You recognize these challenges and you're looking to become more balance-friendly for the working mother employees in your organization. You're not sure what to do or how to approach it. You've come to the right place! You'll learn more about the challenges of working motherhood today and see how you can create a more balance-friendly culture to support these integral employees.

## Part I. The Importance of Working Mothers in the Workplace

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Working mothers play an important role in the workforce. One in three women is a working mother.<sup>1</sup> As you look at women and diversity, working mothers play a big part in that effort.

### Women and Innovation

It makes sense that having women and moms on teams impacts innovation. Most employers want diverse teams, which include women. More diversity allows for a variety of views. You have different points of reference, experiences, ways of thinking, etc. You're also more likely to better represent the diversity of your customers and solve their problems. So, yes, diverse teams can be more innovative. Keep in mind that numerous studies and analyses show that diverse teams lead to better results for companies.<sup>2</sup>

If you're one of the many companies that sells goods or services found in the home, it's often mothers who buy these. Having team members who can understand the mindset of these fellow moms can make a big difference in how you innovate and evolve a product or service or add a new line.

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**One in 3 women is a working mother.**

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### Women and Soft Skills

Consider the college or post-graduate experience. You often learn theory about and skills relevant to specific roles, topics, areas, or industries. What you often don't learn is softer skills, which can be the things that unite a team, help create deeper relationships with clients, or create more innovative solutions. What do we mean by soft skills? These are skills like emotional intelligence, communication, and making meaningful connections. These are necessary in the business world today. Korn Ferry found that women are better at most of these soft skills than men.<sup>3</sup>

### The Financial Impact of Women in Leadership

There is also a financial benefit to companies with women in top leadership positions. A study conducted by the Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE) analyzed almost 22,000 global publicly traded companies in 91 countries and found a positive financial impact of women in leadership positions. "Going from having no women in corporate leadership (the CEO, the board, and other C-suite positions) to a 30% female share is associated with a one-percentage-point increase in net margin — which translates to a 15%



increase in profitability for a typical firm.”<sup>4</sup> Take this a step further and imagine the impact of this increase in profitability in highly competitive industries.

Think of it in another way. When women are in 30+ percent of leadership roles, everyone wins. That means employees, investors, suppliers, etc. all benefit. It’s not only other women who are impacted positively.

It takes time to groom women for those leadership positions. And it builds loyalty in the short and long-term. Don’t forget that this ability to recruit and retain women in the long-term is a competitive edge as well.

### Cost to Companies to Replace Working Moms

Since we’re on the topic of the financial impact of women, let’s consider the financial impact of companies letting women and mothers leave a company. The number you might often hear is that two million women left the workforce during the pandemic. Of those, 1.4 million are working mothers.<sup>5</sup>

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**1.4 million working mothers left  
the workforce during the  
pandemic.**

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Consider the cost implications of letting working mothers leave your organization because you’re not creating a more balance-friendly environment. You have worked hard to find, train, and retain the women in your organization. The cost of replacing employees who leave a company is between 50 and 200 percent of their current salary with more senior positions tending to lean toward the 200 percent side of things.<sup>6</sup>

This is the cost to find, hire, train, and get new employees up to speed. So, you are losing productivity and you have the cost of finding someone new. And you lose the knowledge and experience of the employee.

What happens if competitors are offering more flexible work solutions and those working moms and other employees who left go to competitors? So, you get the impact of losing institutional memory and experience, paying for a replacement, and having the competition get the benefit. That’s a high cost.

### Economic Impact of Working Mothers Leaving the Workforce

When you consider the importance of working mothers, you might not think of the economic ripples when they leave the workforce. Federal Reserve Governor Lael Brainard shares the economic concerns: “If not soon reversed, the decline in the participation rate for prime-age women could have longer-term implications for household incomes and potential growth...[which could harm] not only the prospects of these individuals, but also the economy’s potential growth rate.”<sup>7</sup>

Even if working mothers return in a few years, consider that they will likely be at lower income rates. It will take them time to get to previous income levels. That, too, has an economic impact. In the time it takes for working mothers to get back up to those levels, they spend less. There is a ripple from that reduction in spending.

You might be wondering how this impacts you as an employer. Does it matter that these women lose economic strength? If you’re a product or service that appeals to families or women (or even working moms

specifically), the answer could be yes. Are you offering something that is a nice-to-have? If so, when working moms take a step back financially, they may no longer be able to pay for your product or service. This ripple effect of working mothers leaving the workforce is more easily traced and the impact is more obvious to companies.

### Work-life balance programs as recruiting and retention opportunities

Consider those top candidates that you're trying to attract as employees might go to competitors that are willing to be more balance-friendly for employees. And then there are employees who can leave because competitors are more in line with what working mothers want when it comes to how they want to work. Essentially programs that allow more balance and flexibility help attract and retain top talent. This becomes increasingly more important with Millennials, who are moving up the corporate ladder.<sup>8</sup>

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**Work-life balance programs can  
help with recruiting and  
retention.**

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## Part II. Social Trends Impacting Working Mothers

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Before we talk about ways to be supportive of working mothers in your organization, it's helpful to learn some of the external social factors that impact their lives. Specifically, we'll cover the impact of working mothers being sandwiched as caregivers and the shift to starting a family later in life.

### Working Mothers are Sandwiched

Mothers are getting sandwiched between caring for their children and their aging family members. It's not only that moms struggled with caring for their children during the pandemic. For several years now moms have had to care for their own children while managing the needs of their aging family members. Did you know that more than 10,000 Baby Boomers turn retirement age each day in the US?<sup>9</sup> It's not only about supporting working moms who are caring for their children. As companies create solutions and support structures, they must consider the impact, stress, and overall needs of working mothers who are caregivers for their families *and* aging relatives.

What happens if employers don't consider how moms are getting sandwiched? Moms can't stop being a mom or a daughter, but they can stop being employees. As a recent Harvard article reminds us, they could stop being *your* employees and go to a competitor.<sup>10</sup> Or they could leave the company and start their own company to create a balance-friendly environment if they can't find one.

### Educated Women are Waiting to Start Families

Also keep in mind that educated women are waiting longer to have children. About 40 percent of women with an undergraduate degree and 54 percent of women with a master's degree have babies at age 30 or older, which is four years older than the national average of 26.<sup>11</sup>

This matters because those mothers might be at a point in their careers where they might not return after maternity leave. Their experience in the workforce might have enabled them to move into mid-level or more senior level management. And if you remember, the more senior the person you're trying to replace, the more costly it is find, recruit, train, and get a new person up to speed.

## Part III. What Working Moms Want from their Employers

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Let's move the conversation to understand more of what working mothers are looking for from employers when it comes to supporting their needs. The trends and tips are based on my interviews with more than 110 professional working moms for my two books and subsequent conversations in-person and online. This information is based on the analysis of the feedback, comments, and overall information.

### Overview of the Interviews

You might be wondering about the interviews done for the Mompowerment books. I talked to more than 110 professional working moms in a variety of roles such as engineers, physicians, marketers, accountants, and information technology professionals in a variety of industries such as energy, consumer packaged goods, financial services, and design.

About 62 percent of the women I interviewed work for an employer, both big and small. The other 38 percent are entrepreneurs. Many started a company because they couldn't find what they were looking for in an employer. It wasn't just that their current employer wouldn't provide a balance-friendly situation; it was that they simply couldn't find it in their industry.

You might also be wondering about the content of the interviews. I asked everyone I spoke with the same general questions, adjusting a bit for entrepreneurs. I might have also asked a few additional questions, based on how the interview was going.

Specifically, I wanted to know about support from an employer. This was an incredibly interesting part of the conversations as working moms shared how different employers provided that support. Interviewees shared their thoughts on work-life balance and the benefit of this to their families (e.g., more time with family, not medical and dental benefits). And all those I interviewed provided advice that they would give to other working moms. When talking to entrepreneurs, I asked what led to starting a business and what their life looked like before and after starting a business.

### Working Mothers Want More Time with Family

In the interviews the primary thing that working moms talked about without prompting was time with family. As an employer what initiatives can you put in place that help employees get more time with their family? That can mean a lot of different things, depending on your industry. It could be how, when, or where working moms work.



## Working Moms and Flexibility

The second most popular topic in the interviews was flexibility. Flexibility can vary from industry to industry, company to company, and even from role to role. The desire for more flexibility doesn't really change, though.

Maybe working moms want to go to appointments for their aging parent first thing in the morning or they want to start earlier so that they can pick up kids from school. Working moms want to be able to head out unexpectedly when a child needs to go home sick from school or a repairman needs to fix their washing machine. They want to be able to work from home on the days when school is closed for a teacher workday. Making each of these circumstances require a negotiation with a manager is unnecessary and inefficient for all involved. Besides, employees who work from home are often more productive than those in the office.<sup>12</sup> And you want your employees to be efficient and effective, right?

Flexibility has been in the spotlight during the pandemic. Teams in all sorts of industries have proven that remote work is a real possibility. This showed us the impact of being flexible in *where* employees worked. And skipping the commute allows working mothers especially to get a jumpstart on their day and wrap up their day by walking into the next room, so they can fit in all the things.

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**Employees want more flexibility from employers. Move this to P6**

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Flexibility has many different forms, though. It's more than location. One of the challenges facing working mothers during the pandemic was getting work done while facilitating their children's remote learning. It wasn't enough to be able to work remotely. They needed flexibility in their schedules, the *when* part of the equation. This is still something that working mothers would find helpful. It's the ability to set your own schedule, keeping in mind the needs of your team and of your family.

Related to the *when* is *how* they work. Working moms want to excel in their careers and still be the moms they want to be. These two things can battle for the same time and energy. Being able to work in a way where they can combine these two areas can help working moms be at their best in both. Consider if it's important to control when and how moms work or if you believe in the employees you hire to get the work done, however they get it done. You can have designated times for meetings and for being available to the team, but you don't have to require employees work 8+ continuous hours.

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**Consider where, when, and how employees can work as you create more flexibility.**

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And don't forget the more unstructured flexibility so that working mothers have an opportunity to deal with a childcare emergency like a broken arm or have the repairman fix the washer. You want your employees to feel empowered to take the time to address personal needs. Train managers to empower their teams. Trust that employees will get the work done.

The *how* is a powerful way to differentiate yourself from your competitors. What working mom doesn't want to feel empowered and trusted by their employer?

The *how* you allow employees to work is a great way for small businesses to offer flexibility in ways that have little cost. It can be hard to compete with larger companies with deeper pockets.

### Working Moms Crave Greater Work-life Balance

I also heard consistently that working moms were looking for more work-life balance. Again, balance can mean a lot of things. I'll share that this is the topic I'm most asked about now. The consistent questions about the many sides of balance is what led me to write the second Mompowerment book. And I have new information and ideas regularly that I share in posts and social media that don't appear in the books. No question many working moms are looking for help as they create the work-life balance they crave.

The challenge with this is that work-life balance is personal. It looks a bit different for each working mom and her family and that's OK. The idea is to create initiative and provide resources that can be adjusted to an individual working mother's needs instead of providing advice, tools, and resources that are so specific that it's unhelpful.

These resources can be blogs that live on your intranet, recommendations on outside content (e.g., the Mompowerment blog, studies from HR experts, books, etc.), in-person or online workshops, or even individualized coaching, to name a few options. Let's dive more into what you can do as an employer.

## Part IV. How Employers Can Become More Balance Friendly

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Let's talk about what this can look like from an employer perspective. There are a variety of ways that you can become more balance friendly. You'll get ideas here to help you start thinking differently about how to support your working mom employees.

The first thing to consider is that there are *structured* and *unstructured* types of flexibility and support. Structured is the more formal policies, initiatives, and types of roles that you can create to help working mothers create more of the work-life balance they crave. The unstructured part is being flexibility when working mothers have things that come up. As I have mentioned, you don't want these unusual situations to require a negotiation each time.

Most of the things in the following sections are about structured time. We will cover several options for you to consider and offer in your organizations.

### Maternity Policy

Maternity leave is an area that can generate a lot of debate. I won't cover how it's paid (since that is often part of the controversy in the US), but I will remind you that we're one of not even a handful of countries that doesn't offer paid maternity leave at a national level. Let's keep in mind that we want and need women to



have babies. They are the generations of tomorrow and they fuel our economic engine long-term. These babies could grow up to be your employees of tomorrow.

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**Companies can empower  
working moms to create greater  
work-life balance.**

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Perhaps you already have maternity leave where you allow mothers to heal and bond with their babies while getting into a rhythm. You are supporting working mothers at the beginning of their motherhood journey. Is it a long enough? Is it paid? There are often ways to improve on the maternity leave you already have in place.

And consider how you treat employees during maternity leave. For example, do you say new moms have 16 weeks, but everyone is expected to return after 8? Do you create a negative environment within teams because everyone else must take on work while someone is out on maternity leave? Or do you make those returning to work after baby dread the pile of work that hasn't been done and awaits them?

A way to deal with many challenging aspects of maternity leave is to hire a temporary employee to get work done while a new mother is out. You want to make it highly likely that new working moms want to come back to work post-baby and be excited about her return to work.

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**There are a lot of different ways  
to bring flexibility into the  
workplace.**

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When trying to understand what maternity leave could look like, do the research on what your competitors and adjacent industries are offering. You don't have to offer something identical but it's your female employees can easily look at these companies to see how supportive they are of working mothers. There are many top 100 lists that you can find information on as well as List Your Leave, which allows employees to list the leave policy of their employer.

### Return to Work after Maternity Leave

What things do you provide to new mothers? Could you create a return-to-work resource kit with helpful resources for new working moms to get back into the rhythm of work post-baby? Could you provide specific resources that make life easier for a new working mothers? For example, can you create a calendar for your pump room that new mothers can access to make pumping easier?

As part of your maternity leave, think through how new working mothers will re-enter the workforce on one of your teams. Will you provide part-time hours so they can slowly ramp up back to their full-time hours? Do you have a mentor program, engaging mentors who are further along in their work-life balance journey as working mothers? The time off and the transition back to work can empower women to have a family and a

career and not have to choose. Consider the tremendous message this gives and the impact to your recruiting and employee retention.

### Non-traditional work options

There are many structured options that provide flexibility because not all roles need to be 9-5 in an office. I'm introducing several of these here to help you brainstorm a bit on what you could include. See which of these might work best in your workplace. Even if you don't have any employees using these non-traditional work options at this time, an openness to them can help attract and retain women over time. Empowering the first employee to make changes and be creative with when, how, or where they work helps show others that you support creative and flexible work options.

An important thing to consider with all of these is that you don't put working mother employees on a mommy track. You want employees who are still engaged and making things happen in their careers, regardless of when and where employees work.

*Remote work.* Remote work has gotten a lot of attention because of the pandemic. If you continue to have employees work remotely, it's not only about changing where they work. Take steps to support working mothers who work remotely. Provide the tools and the training so that employees working remotely are efficient and effective with those tools and their time and energy. Help managers and in-office employees understand how to be more effective in engaging with remote (or hybrid) employees.

This can be an attractive option for working mother employees, especially those with a long commute so that they can maximize their time and energy for whole day. Provide coaching to remote employees so they understand how to maintain boundaries at home. Offer coaching to employees in the office with remote or hybrid colleagues or employees, so they know how to work effectively with remote team members. You don't want remote employees available 24/7 because they become less productive. The brain needs rest each day to be at its best. It's so easy to hop back on for one more email that turns into hours of work. Empower employees to set schedules, designate non-meeting times or days, and define emergency protocols so employees know when they need to respond and what can wait until the morning.

*Part-time roles.* In part-time roles employees work fewer than full-time (e.g., 20 or 32 hours/week) so they stay engaged in your organization *and* spend more time with family. These could be temporary roles like for the four to eight weeks after maternity leave or more permanent opportunities over many years. Consider which roles and departments are best served with part-time opportunities because this option won't be a match for all situations.

These less than 40+ hour/week roles can attract incredibly high caliber candidates, who simply can't or don't want to work full-time. And not wanting to work full-time doesn't mean you're not engaged or excited about your career. On the contrary, you want to stay engaged in your career.

*Job share.* Job share essentially combines two part-time opportunities to meet the needs of one full-time role. Many elements of a part-time role apply here. The one thing to add is that this could be ideal for transferring knowledge from one employee to another (e.g., Baby Boomer trains a working mom) or for two working mothers who are both looking for part-time roles.

*Split shift.* Split shift roles empower employees to divide up their day in a more structured way. Essentially in this situation employees work in the morning and then again later in the day after a specific break. It's a great way for working mothers to pick up kids from school and take them to after-school activities. It could also be a way for employees to get involved with organizations they're passionate about.

*Shifted hours.* This approach enables an employee to either start the workday early and end early or start later and end later.

Some pre-schools start later (e.g., 9 am). How do you get your child to pre-school if your day starts at 9 am. and then head into the office? Or maybe an employee is interested in starting earlier to be available to pick up a child after school since most elementary and middle schools end before 4. It's easy for those parents to drop off children early or put them on the bus and then get started with their workday. How can you facilitate these working mothers having the ability to shift when they work to meet the needs of their team and their families?

This can also be a helpful option for working mothers who are helping their aging parents. It could allow them to grab the first appointment of the day for recurring appointments and not consistently miss work or start the day late. Shift the start of the day later and they can work later or do a split shift.

## Employee Resource Groups

Another form of support is creating opportunities for working mothers to engage with other working mothers, especially through an Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). Enable conversations with peers in a more structured environment so that working mother employees can ask questions of and learn from one another. (ERGs for women and/or working parents could be great options as well.)

Take this a step further and have training and speakers as part of the initiatives in your ERGs. Remember that Mompowerment does workshops for company ERGs regularly that have benefited from engaging content and practical tips that working mothers can implement quickly.

## Mentorship Programs for Working Mothers

A professional network is incredibly important to working moms. Enable working mothers to create those work relationships with more senior employees who can act as a personal board of directors, providing a sounding board on career and life decisions.

*Benefits of mentorship programs for employers.* Mentorship programs are helpful in attracting and retaining top talent. They provide a form of training of and sharing knowledge with more junior staff. They allow more senior staff to practice soft skills. In addition, they could be a way for employees to naturally learn about new roles and initiatives that help to move employees around a company (sometimes up the corporate ladder or in a lateral role).

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**Mentoring programs can help attract and retain working moms as employees.**

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*Mentorship programs provide various benefits to working mothers.* At its core mentorship programs enable participants to transfer knowledge, learn new skills, get tips for greater balance, develop new areas of expertise, help staff develop soft skills, and even create connections between departments.



*Connect working mothers to senior leaders.* Senior employees, especially senior female employees, can share their seasoned advice with women and working mothers. This is a great way to provide sage advice to those interested in moving up the corporate ladder, helping create long-term career paths and loyalty. You're creating the space and support to connect these two groups, which might not usually interact or have the chance to naturally share ideas.

## Long-term Career Planning for Employees

You have worked hard and engaged many resources to attract the women in your organization. You don't want to lose them when they become mothers.

Enable your female employees to understand how they fit long-term in your organization. Have opportunities for HR, managers, mentors, and sponsors to provide ideas and guidance.

Consider how family-friendly your current roles are. This could mean you add or change roles or provide new family-friendly structured roles (e.g., job share or part-time roles) when working moms want to down shift. Show how they can re-engage in more demanding roles over time when they're ready to take on more responsibility again. You could provide training, online or in-person, to help these women develop and master new skills that allow them to move laterally or change departments.

The idea is to enable long-term trajectory so they can move up the company ladder or across the company. Remember that there is a financial benefit to women in leadership roles. And you create a diverse workforce where all employees are given the opportunity to succeed and be fulfilled, both at work and at home.

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**Look at what benefits truly address the needs of working mom employees.**

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## Re-entry Programs

What about the employees who leave the company? There could be an opportunity to help working moms who have left the workforce for a time, often to care for their children or an aging family member, and now they want to re-enter. You could create alumni programs where previous employees return to your organization. Or you could give new employees a chance. There are great resources to help with creating these types of programs such as iRelaunch, ApresGroup, Prowess Project, and The Mom Project, to name a few. If you choose to build returnships or other similar structured programs for re-entry, please consider tapping into these invaluable resources that can help you create something to meet your needs and goals.

## Create New Policies and Benefits for Greater Work-life Balance

Another aspect of creating a balance-friendly environment is the benefits you choose to support your employees. Some of these will be companywide while others will specifically impact working mom employees.

### Company-wide Policies and Benefits

Let's start with no-cost benefits/initiatives that you can implement. Some teams or companies in general have engaged new policies that limit meetings and emails. For example, define meeting-free times (e.g., no meetings before 10 am or after 4pm) to provide flexibility to employees who must drop off or pick up

children from daycare or school). Utilize meeting-free days that enable employees to work with little to no interruption unless there is an emergency. This way work time isn't during non-work hours (i.e., there are so many meetings that employees can only do work at night after kids go to bed). This is another way for smaller businesses to provide flexibility at little to no cost.

Employees are also now looking for a broader version of wellness. It's not enough to have paid gym memberships and health insurance. Employees are looking for new ideas on eating healthier, managing stress, and keeping their mental health in check. In addition to this, companies are now starting to offer resources to help employees with financial wellness, which isn't simply joining the company 401K. They are looking at tools to help with this holistic view of wellness since all of these elements impact employees at the office and at home.

### Benefits Specifically for Working Mothers

In addition to benefits and policies that help all employees, consider those that truly impact working mothers specifically. We've talked about maternity leave and its importance to working mothers with new babies or children who have recently joined their family (i.e., mothers through adoption). Create a pump room with a dedicated fridge for breastfeeding mothers with access to a calendar for the room. This can help new working mothers better manage time management and lower stress (i.e., it's hard to pump in a bathroom, closet, or other shared space that doesn't have privacy or cleanliness).

It's not only about what you can do in the office that helps working mothers, though. Consider back-up childcare. If your employees' children are like most, they are often getting sick when initially sent to daycare. What happens if a daycare closes because too many employees have called in sick. What if a nanny calls has a family emergency? Backup childcare can help in these unexpected situation.

There are several ways to manage back-up childcare. Employers usually pay for some hours, either because you pay a membership and a bank of hours or you pay the membership and then subsidize the hours. For example, if an employee is hiring a back-up childcare provider, it's only \$5/hour instead of the usual \$20. It's much more reasonable to pay \$40 instead of paying \$160 if there is a childcare emergency for a day. There are also back-up caregiver solutions for elderly care since emergencies can come up on that end too.

For working mothers who travel, pay for the milk to be sent home. There are services such as Milk Stork that do this.

There are more robust (i.e., more expensive) benefits you could create such as paying for a family member or nanny to travel with baby if the working mom travels a lot or for long stretches. Or you could pay for a local nanny at the remote location if it's a traveling mother. You get the idea. You create a way for the working mom to take her child with her and a caregiver to take care of the baby/infant.

Paying for those resources could keep working moms being productive and can keep them as happy employees. Similar resources can also be available for care for aging parents, which can be equally as helpful.

Don't consider the costs for benefits that help working mothers in a silo. Look at the overall costs, especially when you factor in recruiting and training. Finding and training new people and dealing with the big gap

because working moms have left can become costly. Especially as a larger company, you want to make sure you compare all the costs as you strategically look at the financials.

### Don't Forget about Working Dads

One of the most important ways to support working mothers in your organization is to support working father employees. The focus of many companies is on working moms. It makes sense with the more traditional care arrangement that families have had in the past to focus resources on moms. Roles are changing, though, and supporting working dads with resources and initiatives is increasingly more important. And the shift to supporting working parents actually does support working moms. For so many of the initiatives I mentioned, replace working mothers with working parents.

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**Supporting working dads gives support to working moms.**

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And it starts with initiatives such as paternity leave, allowing for non-traditional schedules for all working parents, and ERGs that support working parents. Normalize working dads taking the time off when baby arrives or the shift in schedule so that they can leave to pick up kids and take them to soccer or violin practice. You want working dads to take advantage of these things without penalty.

## Part V. Getting started

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Your wheels are turning and you're excited to get started. So now what?

More than anything, start the conversation with employees, especially working parents, to understand what they need. What needs do they have? Where are they struggling? What is going well? What support do they need as caregivers for their children versus for their aging parents?

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**There are many different ways to start the conversation with employees.**

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We know that working moms and likely other employees (especially Millennials) want some flexibility.<sup>8</sup> Start to dig into what kind of flexibility they want. Ask. Sure, you can ask point blank, which I suggest you do to see how they answer. You likely need to ask a few different ways and times, though, to get to the information you want. And definitely read between the lines.

You could ask a group of working moms at various levels to put together a proposal, based on input from a larger base. Working moms talk to each other. Not sure who to ask? Put out a call for proposals. Let working moms self-select and channel their passions on topics related to their work-life balance.



Ask ERG leaders about what they're hearing in their groups to see what is working and where members are struggling. Consider talking to mentors about what they're hearing from the working parents they mentor. See what managers are hearing and what adjustments they're making for their employees.

5 tips keep in mind when developing new initiatives to empower employees to create more balance:

- *Start small.* Make small changes before you make major moves. As we see with our kids, they must crawl before they can walk and then run.
- *Do a test.* Even if you ask the “right” questions and think you're getting the answers that will make a difference, do a trial run of new initiatives. Get a group to test an initiatives and deal with the kinks. And, yes, there will be elements you must work through. There always are.
- *Take time to adjust as necessary.* Don't think you'll make changes overnight without having to make additional adjustments along the way. Some things will require research (e.g., which milk delivery company to use) and some will take some noodling to get the timing right (e.g., developing a maternity leave policy). Don't be afraid to experiment and get feedback about changes over time.
- *Consider your competitors but focus on your employee needs.* No question you want to be competitive in your industry and/or marketplace because it can help with recruiting and retention. Don't let that be your only guide, though, because your competitors might not have it right.
- *Don't make changes in a bubble.* Ask for feedback from your internal teams. Even have it be anonymous if people are concerned about providing feedback. That conversation will make your initiatives and solutions that much more powerful and relevant.

## Final Thoughts

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As you can see it makes business sense to support working parents who are employees. It's not simply an HR problem with a quick fix. In addition to these business, economic, and social implications, it's also the right thing to do to more actively support working mothers in your organization. They represent one-sixth of your workforce, if not more, and their voice will be missed if they leave. Become a true partner to the working mothers who are actively making things happen in your organization.

If you'd like Mompowerment to help you create resources or programs, act as a sounding board, or provide consulting, please reach out. Whether brainstorming with your internal team, helping you create the right programs for your employees' needs, providing in-person or online workshops, or providing books in bulk (special pricing for purchases of 20+ books), Mompowerment is here to help. Let's get the right resources in place now and in the future. Give your teams practical tips and tools to start creating more balance in their lives. Email the Mompowerment team at [info@mompowerment.com](mailto:info@mompowerment.com) to set up time to speak about your needs.

## Resources

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- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/05/the-choices-working-mothers-make.html>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://hbr.org/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are-smarter>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.kornferry.com/about-us/press/new-research-shows-women-are-better-at-using-soft-skills-crucial-for-effective-leadership>
- <sup>4</sup> <https://hbr.org/2016/02/study-firms-with-morewomen-in-the-c-suite-are-more-profitable>
- <sup>5</sup> <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/03/moms-work-and-the-pandemic.html>
- <sup>6</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/julie-kantor/high-turnover-costs-waymore-than-you-think\\_b\\_9197238.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/julie-kantor/high-turnover-costs-waymore-than-you-think_b_9197238.html)
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2020/10/28/928253674/stuck-at-home-moms-the-pandemics-devastating-toll-on-women>
- <sup>8</sup> <https://www.inc.com/ryan-jenkins/this-is-what-millennials-value-most-in-a-job-why.html>
- <sup>9</sup> <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/12/20/baby-boomers-approach-65-glumly>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/why-business-should-support-employees-who-are-caregivers>
- <sup>11</sup> <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/01/15/for-most-highly-educated-women-motherhood-doesnt-start-until-the-30s>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.inc.com/scott-mautz/a-2-year-stanford-study-shows-astonishing-productivity-boost-of-working-from-home.html>



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