

family friendly workplaces:

A supportive and flexible work environment where employees are encouraged to have a healthy balance between their careers and responsibilities outside of work.

Workplaces *with* Balance: Creating Family Friendly Workplaces in Hamilton



Why is a Family Friendly Workplace (FFW) important in 2008?

Recruitment, Retention, Results!

- ▶ According to the 2006 Canadian Census, Ontario is home to 2, 210,800 children under the age of 14, and the majority of their parents work part or full-time
- ▶ Both parents (with children under 16) work in 69% of Canadian families, a change from 58% in 1992 and 36% in 1976...the times they are a changing!
- ▶ Your baby boomer employees are "sandwiched" between the demands of their growing children and aging parents
- ▶ This stress creates declining mental health and deteriorating attitudes towards work in men and women at all organizational levels
- ▶ Employers feel the impact in terms of absenteeism, low morale, and high turnover rates

What have you done for me lately...FFW style

The Family-Friendly Workplace Survey, a survey of more than 600 small business owners in Hamilton conducted by the Hamilton Training Advisory Board in September 2007 shows that flexible workplaces enjoy...

- ▶ Better relationship with employees: 90%
- ▶ Higher employee job satisfaction: 90%
- ▶ Higher employee retention: 86%
- ▶ Increased productivity: 68%
- ▶ More competitive in attracting employees: 66%
- ▶ Fewer work absences: 64%

The direct cost of absenteeism in Canadian firms due to an inability to balance work and life is estimated to be just under \$3 billion per year.

Source: Duxbury, Higgins and Johnson, 1999



Does your workplace have balance?

Check off this list of FF practices!

Savvy employers are finding ways to attract and retain the best employees, by helping them get more of what they are lacking: **time, financial benefits, and support.**

Time...

- Voluntary reduced work time/salary
- Time off for personal, child-related/elder-related issues
- Time off for jury duty, educational leave, community service leave, and sabbaticals
- Time off/compensation for extra hours worked
- Time off or a designated area for cultural or religious observances
- Flexible vacation scheduling
- Flexible work arrangements (tele-work, flex-time, job sharing, compressed work week, or part-time work)

Financial Benefits...

- Staff benefits
- Extended parental benefits
- Education reimbursement

Support...

- Employee assistance programs, including personal, legal or financial counselling
- Health/wellness programs, including access to health club facilities, stop smoking programs, stress management workshops, yoga classes, and massage therapy
- Family support policies offering assistance with childcare/elder care, including access to services, referral services or financial aid
- Concierge programs that assist employees with other tasks such as pet-care, dry cleaning, etc.



Concerns about FFW? Check your assumptions...

Family-Friendly policies are mainly for women...

Men and women at all levels of companies, in all stages of their career development and all stages of their life cycle are seeking flexibility to achieve a better work-life balance.

Flexibility is unfair and inequitable...

Different people need different forms of flexibility at different points in their lives (i.e., when they have a baby or when they want to continue their education). Other people are content to work a more traditional work week and prefer the stability and predictability of a standard work schedule. Solutions to employee needs for flexibility should be custom fits.

Hours at work = results...

With employees exploring alternate ways to work such as telecommuting, managers may no longer see them. Some may have concerns about what employees are doing during the day if working from home. The keys to success are good trust, regular communication and clear performance targets.

Hard to measure impact on bottom line...

Statistics show that family-friendly policies positively impact the bottom-line. Through employee attitude surveys, focus groups and pilot tests, management knows that employees with lower work-family conflict have less stress and anxiety about "doing it all" and are better able to focus on their jobs and their customers.

Source: Creating a Family-Friendly Workplace http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/spila/wlb/imt/08family_friendly.shtml

Check out some tips to creating a family-friendly workplace...

- ▶ **Assess your current situation and what you can afford.** There are many ways to promote work-life balance. You can allow more flexible work arrangements or offer paid/unpaid leave for family, education or other matters. Be creative and open-minded.
- ▶ **Determine employees' needs.** Communicate through formal and informal discussions. Hear their concerns and suggestions by conducting surveys, focus groups and briefings.
- ▶ **Get management on-board.** Make sure your management team understands the benefits of a family-friendly workplace. How much time and financial resources can you invest? Consider the bottom-line benefits.
- ▶ **Set objectives.** Determine how your FFW program will work. For small business an informal, case-by-case approach may work best. "Big business" generally prefers a formal written program.
- ▶ **Make it happen.** What are the barriers? Find creative ways to change internal processes and start to implement your program.
- ▶ **Commit to long-term success.** Establish measurable targets. Encourage communication between your employees and management team. Monitor and evaluate your FFW policies and programs, and keep work-life issues on your business agenda.

Source: Creating a Family-Friendly Workplace
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/spila/wlb/imt/08family_friendly.shtml

Want more information?

The Changing Face of Canadian Workplaces - Why Work-Life Balance is an Issue (2005) - http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/spila/wlb/awlbc/03changing_face_canadian_workplaces.shtml

Moving Beyond Policies and Programs to Bring About Culture Change (Culture Change) - http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/spila/wlb/imt/09culture_change.shtml

The Recruitment and Retention of Women: What Do Women Want (2004) - www.htab.ca/pages/publications

Work/Life Balance: Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (2002) - http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/worklife_balance.html

Work-Life Balance in the New Millennium: Where Are We?, Where Do We Need to Go? (2001) - <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/work-travail/report2/index.html>



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