



HOW TO RETAIN PARENTS AFTER PARENTAL LEAVE

From handovers to re-entry strategies

HOW TO SUPPORT PARENTS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER PARENTAL LEAVE

Organizations that aim to utilize the full potential of their workforce need to provide a functional framework for parents. In times of demographic change and skilled labor shortage organizations depend on the skills and the labor that employees who are parents can bring to the table. Therefore, it is all the more fatal for organizations to lose members of their workforce in the context of parental leave.

In a 2019 survey by service provider Workplace Options, 23 % of employed parents indicated that they had at some point considered giving up their job – due to incompatibility with childcare. Women made this indication three times as often as men.

Increased turnover goes hand in hand with an increase in recruitment costs. Lacking support for employees after re-entry leads to lowered satisfaction, productivity decreases, absence from work increases and there is a risk of losing these employees over the course of a few months after re-entry. Additionally, organizations can strengthen their employer brand and unlock new talent pools through family-friendly policies. Since at least the entry of Generation Y into the workforce, this issue has been gaining in relevance

So, how to strengthen employees' ties to the organization? How to succeed in providing integrated support for parents that not only reduces stress but also conveys a sense of belonging?

With clear-cut planning and scheduling and by specifying an in-house concept for parental leave you can provide guidance for HR managers and other responsible leaders – and employees will also know about the framework, e.g. when this knowledge is made accessible through informational flyers.

DEVELOPING A PARENTAL LEAVE CONCEPT FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

According to UNICEF, family-friendly policies don't just lead to enhanced gender equality but they also heighten productivity of the workforce and motivation in employees. Your organization's parental leave concept might cover the following points:

BEFORE PARENTAL LEAVE

Provide information about your organization's support options

- Do you offer **extended paid parental leave**, e.g. extending the legally required minimum duration or payment?
- Do you offer a variety of **work time models** like flextime, part-time, job sharing or remote work? In a 2010 survey by the Ravensburger foundation 66% of all parents surveyed desired more flexible working hours. 38% were expressing a need for more home office hours. It is likely that the Corona pandemic has further exacerbated the situation
- Do you have an in-house **daycare center** – or do you support employees in finding a suitable day care?
- Is there a **breastfeeding room** or any other quiet space where nursing mothers can retreat to? Do you consider breastfeeding break time or working time?
- Do you offer **paid sick leave for children**?
- Do you **support** young families with single or multiple family bonuses? What are the respective requirements?
- Do you enable **parent groups**, offline or online, e.g. via Slack? In such an environment younger and more experienced parents can exchange ideas and give each other advice.

Initiate a well-organized handover in good time

- Involve the person who is going into parental leave in the **training** of their substitute. This way, they can leave a positive and structured impression and increase their own visibility.
- If a successor or replacement has yet to be found, involve the employee in question throughout the **recruiting process**.
- Develop a **handover plan** with the employee that includes timing, to-do's, responsible parties, and lines of communication.

Already consider re-entry before parental leave:

Preparing an individual re-entry strategy early on might seem laborious, however your organization will benefit from it: Studies have shown, that the probability of re-entry into the workforce diminishes when parents leave their job for more than a year.

- Develop an **individual re-entry strategy** in good time. Volunteer Vision's online mentoring program 'eParent' provides you with ideal support for this process: Mentors and mentees discuss various aspects of compatibility of professional life and family life in 8 digital sessions of 60 minutes. Mentors are experienced employees who have gone through the process of establishing such compatibility themselves. Mentees are employees who are expecting a baby. The sessions cover, among other topics:
 - success factors of re-entry strategies
 - preparation for potentially critical situations with colleagues and superiors
 - personal expectations regarding re-entry
 - support options by the employer
 - possible and preferred work (time) models
 - exchange of one's own experience with childcare

TIPS FOR SUPERIORS

- Clarify the rights and obligations of both parties.
- Document agreements and expectations in written form.
- Make sure to hold regular feedback conversations after re-entry. Does the employee feel overstrained?
- Don't schedule appointments outside the employee's new working hours.
- Go in for a conversation if you notice that the employee needs to take sick leave frequently.
- Convey a sense of security before as well as after parental leave.

TIPS FOR EMPLOYEES

- Ensure transparent communication.
- Enter your working hours and/or days in the team calendar.
- Create documentation for colleagues who are going to fill in for you on sick days.
- Plan vacations in good time
- Address problems early on.

ABOUT VOLUNTEER VISION'S ePARENT PROGRAM

Our online mentoring program eParent provides a reliable framework for mentors and mentees. Both meet on a regular basis and work on issues that the mentor has experience with. This mentoring can work as an extension to the actions of responsible managers. Mutual trust will be built up over the course of the sessions, which will serve to strengthen both employees beyond the framework of the program.

72%

72% higher retention rates for mentees and 69 % for mentors – compared to 49 % for non-participating employees.

68%

68% of mentors are more satisfied with their work since participating in the online mentoring program.

82%

82% of participants report positive impact of the program on gender balance.

If you want to learn more about our online mentoring software or about the eParent program in particular, click [here](#) to book a brief consultation meeting with us – or watch our demo [here](#).