

NEW MOMS[®]

HEALTHY RETURNS

by medela  | mamava

Why Supporting Working Moms is Key to Your Bottom Line



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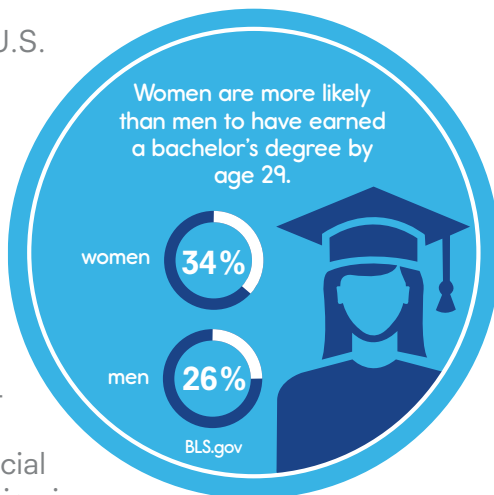
Women are a critical and growing segment of the U.S. workforce and according to the Department of Labor they currently account for 47%¹ of the labor force.

According to the Census Bureau racial minorities will outnumber white people for the first time in 2043 and younger generations are now more diverse than previous ones.² Employers need to continue to embrace diversity and inclusion to take advantage of the different perspectives, backgrounds and insight a diverse culture brings to an organization.

According to the U.S.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), women are more likely to earn a Bachelor's degree by age 29 than men. Reflecting these shifts are the current social and cultural movements relating to women's rights, racial equality and inclusion in the workplace and in the world. From #MeToo, #TimesUp, and The Women's March to organizations like the 3% Movement, women are taking a stand for their rights, choices, personal values and goals. This is especially true when it comes to choosing and staying with an employer.

Accordingly, it is becoming increasingly important for employers to ensure they are attracting and retaining women in their organizations. This can – and should – take many forms, but should certainly include supporting working moms with resources to make the return to work after baby an easier and more seamless transition. This enables them to maintain a healthy work/life balance once they choose to start a family and maintain their career.



Diversity is Good for Business

A 2015 McKinsey report on 366 public companies found that those in the top quartile for ethnic and racial diversity in management were 35% more likely to have financial returns above their industry mean, and those in the top quartile for gender diversity were 15% more likely to have returns above the industry mean.³

When we look specifically at working mothers, research reveals that 70% of moms with children under the age of 18 participate in the labor force, with over 75% of those moms employed full-time.⁴ In fact, 40% of moms are the primary or sole earners of households with children under 18, compared with just 11% in 1960.⁴

Not only are working women—and mothers—a growing employee segment in the workplace, but organizations have realized that their businesses are better when women are part of them. When companies embrace gender diversity in the workplace, they see results. In a recent survey, 91% of working Americans said mothers bring unique skills like communication, multitasking, and remaining calm under fire, to leadership that others don't.⁵

Organizations are being challenged to continually place more women in leadership roles, and ensure they have the right foundation and culture in place to attract, engage and retain women to maintain a long-term, steady pipeline of female candidates. In a recent interview, Goldman Sachs CEO David Solomon told CNBC that his investment bank will help companies go public only if they have at least one diverse board member. Solomon said the performance of public offerings of U.S. companies with at least one female director has been

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- CEO David Solomon Goldman Sachs

“significantly better” in the last four years than those without. “Starting on July 1st in the U.S. and Europe, we’re not going to take a company public unless there’s at least one diverse board candidate, with a focus on women. And we’re going to move towards 2021 requesting two,” he added.

Both large and small organizations are learning they need to support working women from diverse backgrounds or they’ll lose even more from their bottom line. To help make the case, recent research has proven that when women make up more than one-third of promotions at a company, workers gave higher favorability scores in a variety of areas, such as teamwork, performance evaluation, retention, company image and senior leadership.⁶

Breastfeeding Support is Key to Retaining Working Women

An organization’s overall company culture is becoming increasingly important to potential recruits, and today’s generation of employees say they want more life/work balance. They care less about salary than they do about benefits that support their lifestyle choices, and companies are responding. In fact, a survey by the Working Mother Research Institute revealed that 91% of multicultural women stated they were satisfied with their job because they “were able to be their authentic selves” at work. Conversely, when women don’t feel they can be their authentic selves, job satisfaction dropped to just 36%.⁷

It’s never easy to find talented workers, and the cost of replacing an employee can be astonishing – as much as 200% of their annual salary, according to SHRM. That’s why it’s critical to retain valuable female employees once they’ve been



recruited. For working moms, particularly women returning to work after childbirth, the turnover statistics are alarming. Research has shown that 43% of women leave the workforce within 3 months of having a baby.⁸

The majority of new moms who want to continue providing breast milk to their babies feel they’re not getting the right support, products or educational resources to meet their needs when they return to work.⁹ These women are looking for companies that offer a family-friendly culture that supports their choice to breastfeed their baby once they return from maternity leave. They want a private, secure, comfortable lactation space where they can express milk to take home to baby, and they want additional help if and when they need it. Studies have shown that although 83% of babies begin their lives receiving breast milk, this drops dramatically when moms return to work¹⁰ and, unfortunately, a mother is more than twice as likely to quit breastfeeding in the month she returns to work compared to moms who are at home.¹¹

Employers That Support Breastfeeding See Higher Productivity & Morale

The good news is that employees whose companies provide breastfeeding support consistently report improved morale, better satisfaction with their jobs, and higher productivity.¹²

In a study of five different corporations with lactation support programs, 94% of employees returned to their company after maternity leave, compared with the national average at the time of only 59%.⁸

And because breastfed infants tend to be ill less often,¹³ working moms are likely to spend less time looking after a sick baby. Studies have shown that companies that provide comprehensive lactation support programs also see additional healthcare cost savings. Programs that support and encourage employees to

breastfeed longer, and to breastfeed exclusively to 6 months (as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics), see the healthcare savings benefits⁹ For every extra month a woman breastfeeds, it reduces the risk of a number of cancers, including those of the breast, ovaries and uterus.^{14,15}

Additionally, companies that are recognized for family-friendly benefits and policies often see benefits to their recruiting efforts; local, state, and national recognition; media attention; a lift to their brand image; public relations boosts and overall general goodwill in their local community.

Supportive Programs Beyond Current Regulations Are Key

It's no one's fault that the current support system for working moms isn't perfect. Over time, cultural and societal shifts have provided a new pool of diverse resources that were not a large part of the workforce generations ago. These women are now working, and want to continue working, even after they have children. And companies want them to remain in their employ. In 2010, the government enacted the federal Break Time for Nursing Mothers law that requires employers covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to provide basic accommodations for breastfeeding mothers at work. These accommodations include time for non-exempt (hourly) employees to express milk and a private space that is not a bathroom each time they need to pump.

The set of basic protections offered through the federal FLSA is a good start, but employers need to do more to support their breastfeeding moms. Look at California as an example of what support can look like for all working women. The new California state law¹⁶ that went into effect

January 1, 2020, requires that all employers (not just larger ones) provide all breastfeeding employees (both exempt and non-exempt) with break time and a private space to pump at work. The law also requires all employers to develop and implement a lactation accommodation policy—complete with a statement of an employee's rights and the process for lactation accommodation requests—for breastfeeding employees. Employers that are looking for ways to attract and retain their working parents can look to the California law as the gold standard and begin creating their own plans to support their working moms.



Employers Struggle with Fragmented, Confusing & Complicated Options

- Dozens of different vendors
- Health plan controls lactation support options
- Low employee engagement with wellness offerings
- Unique concerns of traveling employees
- Limited space affecting lactation room availability
- Purchasing process for breast pumps and products
- Lack of educational resources for parents
- Inconsistent lactation room design and access

COVID-19 Creates Additional Challenges for Employers

With the arrival of COVID-19, organizations must also prepare to address new challenges and employee concerns when it comes to pumping breast milk in the workplace. The actions employers take now could help them retain their current female workforce and help attract new employees. In a recent survey (May-June 2020) conducted by Medela and Mamava, nearly 1,400 working moms were asked questions

about planning for pumping when they return to the workplace in a post-COVID world. Results revealed that more than 40% of moms are more committed to feeding their babies breast milk because of COVID-19, citing that they want to help support their babies' immune systems. The survey also showed that nearly 50% had concerns that their pumping space at work may not be a sufficiently sanitary space to pump.

Employers should take the time to review their current lactation accommodation policy and determine if they need to revise it with post-COVID guidelines. If an organization doesn't

baby still feeling a lack of support and receiving inconsistent answers when it comes to simple questions, like "Where is a private space for me to pump?", "Will I have resources to help me?", and "What will I do when I have to begin traveling again?"

There have been attempts to help clarify, expand and strengthen requirements that protect and support breastfeeding women in the workplace. States have passed new legislation that adds on to the federal protections already guaranteed, and some proposals have been brought forward to strengthen the national

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have a formal policy now is the time to develop one. Beyond a policy, one of the best things employers can do is provide a dedicated lactation space where pumping is the only activity allowed. Not only does this signal employer support of breast milk feeding, but it may also limit viral exposure for workers. Regular cleaning and disinfecting, and use of a posted cleaning schedule that ensures the lactation space is cleaned along with other common areas, like break rooms and bathrooms, can go a long way to help workers feel they are pumping in a clean environment. It's also a good idea to provide sanitizing supplies for employees, including hand sanitizer, wipes, and disinfectant to be used on surfaces in the lactation space between each pumping session.

A Robust Lactation Support Program is More Important Than Ever

To be fair, many employers are still confused over disjointed plans and benefit options. This results in employees returning to work after

regulations. However, many organizations struggle to understand how to implement programs that support returning workers while meeting all federal and state requirements.

And some employers are not yet aware of existing regulations, or simply may not know how to best implement breastfeeding policies and programs to better support their employees. What exactly does – or does not – meet the legal requirements of a secure, private lactation space? And why are the legal requirements perhaps not sufficient? What other resources and tools should they be providing? Happily, there is a growing set of creative new products and services to meet these requirements, such as expanding available private pumping spaces by adding portable lactation pods and providing access to lactation consulting for new moms. And there are new offerings that employers are not required to provide (yet), but are highly valuable for new working parents, such as breast milk shipping for traveling moms and having hospital-grade (multi-user) breast pumps available in the office.



Supporting Working Moms Goes Straight to Your Bottom Line

Racial and gender diversity is important to organizations, and a big part of achieving diversity is the hiring of women. Female workers are important contributors and companies need to embrace their talents and utilize their strengths to create a more successful business.

What most employers are realizing is that providing breastfeeding support and resources to working parents is a necessity. Women and mothers are a growing segment of the employed population, and they bring diverse skills, views and experiences that businesses need. These women also have unique needs and expectations for how their employers can help them successfully contribute to the organizations they join – including supporting their choices in how and when to feed their babies. Companies that want to remain competitive in the market need to take steps to build programs that support a woman's choice to build both a career and a family.

This paper was sponsored by Medela and Mamava—the partners behind New Moms' Healthy Returns. The New Moms' Healthy Returns program offers a single source for benefits that employers need to attract, support, and retain working parents. This customizable solution offers breastfeeding products and educational resources from Medela; freestanding lactation pods by Mamava; 24/7 virtual support from pediatric experts and lactation consultants; and breast milk shipping services from Milk Stork. For more information contact us at NewMomsHealthyReturns.com.

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