

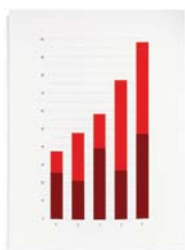
# 10 basic steps to a successful working parent & carer strategy

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*July 2010*

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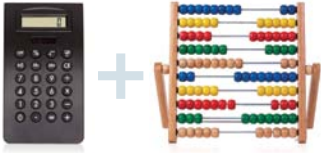
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Making work+family work

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## 10 Basic steps to a successful working parent & carer strategy

A well structured and clearly communicated strategy supporting working parents and carers will enable your organisation to maintain high levels of performance, attract the best talent and achieve deeply engrained diversity, even during an economic downturn! We've produced a basic 10 step guide to help you understand the key milestones during strategic development and implementation.

- 1. Identify key business objectives, performance targets, and drivers for change e.g. levels of absenteeism, turnover, recruitment & training costs.** Make sure you know the project parameters and prioritise the objectives. What is more important to your business: improving the productivity and engagement levels of working parents? or increasing post maternity return to work rates?
- 2. Talk to your working parents and carers to identify the challenges they face in your organisation e.g. the lack of flexible working.** Make sure you don't fall at the first hurdle by sitting alone in your office and guessing what all the key barriers and challenges are. Make sure you go out and talk to the people you're trying to help. It might be worth hosting an internal focus group to gather ideas.
- 3. Understand the full implications of each challenge and the impact this is having on key business objectives and performance targets.** This is an important stage to go through even if you have the ideas in your head. Get them down on paper and clarify the true scope of the project's impact. Not only will this help gain buy-in from other managers but it will also keep you focussed.
- 4. Gather information on all options and opportunities available to resolve the challenges and support working parents and carers.** Now the fun part! Do your research and find out what's available out there. There are plenty of guides around to give you reasons for and against different options. Talk to people and get their experience.
- 5. Design a strategy that is conducive to the business aims.** Compare all your options and select the right mixture of solutions. You may need to phase implementation. This is where you decide which options are most important to your business objectives. Always assign each activity appropriate measures of success (staff satisfaction surveys, return to work rates, productivity levels).
- 6. Carefully select the most influential project team to drive change.** This will be the team that drives the project and overcomes any obstacles. Sometimes certain role models within the company can make great board members by spreading the message and acting as ambassadors for the project. Make sure you get your working parent and carer network involved.
- 7. Develop a realistic implementation and communication plan.** Make sure you plan for quick wins. Try and have something positive you can show for the project early on in the implementation phase. Work with your internal communication and marketing team, they'll be experts in this field and will know how to spread the word through the organisation.
- 8. Get buy-in from senior and middle managers (Appropriate training for front-line managers)** Ideally, you will have buy-in from all the right managers by this point of the project, but if you don't then the first 7 steps should have produced a pretty hefty business case that should be hard to refute.
- 9. Roll out the strategy and communication plan.** Now's the time to get started, provided you have followed the first few steps, then this should be easy. Just follow the steps and stick to the plan!
- 10. Monitor and communicate ongoing project success.** Always communicate the short, middle and long term wins, but at the same time don't communicate things that aren't true. You can put a positive spin on almost anything and remain truthful. Great strategies are an ongoing investment, projects shouldn't be dropped and forgotten about once they 'appear' to be a success. Occasional progress checking will make sure the project initiatives continue to be successful.

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