

Forbes

LOG IN

YOUR READING LIST

8 Ways To Retain Female Talent After Maternity Leave

Morgan StanleyVoice: Five Startups Set Up Shop Inside Morgan Stanley

PODCAST: Gimlet Media's Host Of 'The Pitch' On How To Spin Your Business Story

5 Crowdfunded Side Projects That Became Million-dollar Companies

How Continuous Learning Leads To Happiness For Millennials

Northwestern MutualVoice: Why Your Accountant, Lawyer and Financial Planner Should Talk

Success Without A Diploma: How 3 MIT Dropouts Made It Big

How One NFL Team Is Innovating To Better Appeal To Millennial Fans



JUN 18, 2017 @ 01:00 PM

9,168

12 Stocks to Buy Now

8 Ways To Retain Female Talent After Maternity Leave



Kaytie Zimmerman, CONTRIBUTOR
FULL BIO

Opinions expressed by Forbes Contributors are their own.

TWEET THIS

- The National Partnership for Women and Families reported that only 14% of workers in the United States have access to employer paid leave
- According to a newly released survey by Job Seeker Nation, only 20% of job seekers have taken or plan to take parental leave.

With the rise in feminism among millennials comes the natural debate around parental leave and work-life balance. Having recently returned to full-time work after the birth of my first child, I looked into the reasons why new moms do or do not return to work after maternity leave.

Ultimately the reasons mothers work or stay home with their child are deeply personal and based on their own situation, but there were a few common threads that stuck out. If an employer is looking to retain their female talent after maternity leave, there are eight areas they can focus on to increase their odds.



Credit: InkHouse
Employers can follow a few tips for retaining their millennial female talent after a maternity leave.

1. Have A Generous Maternity Leave Policy

This tip is a given as it's an extremely popular topic among millennial channels today. Nearly everyone knows that the United States has one of the worst leave laws among developed nations in the world. This leaves the opportunity up to employers to bridge the gap.

The National Partnership for Women and Families reported that only 14% of workers in the United States have access to employer paid leave , while unpaid leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is only an option for fewer than 50% of the workforce, as it requires the person to be employed for at least 12 months before the birth and the company to employ 50 or more people within a 75 mile radius. Even for those who qualify, many can't afford to take 12 weeks unpaid leave.

In light of all of this, employers who provide 12 weeks or more paid leave greatly increase the likelihood that their employees will return to work after leave.

"With my first child, I was pregnant when I got hired, so I didn't qualify for FMLA because I hadn't been there long enough," said Kathy Haan, CEO of [Idyllic Pursuit](#), a coaching business mentoring company. "I returned to work after 6 weeks unpaid and stayed for a couple of weeks before deciding to leave that job and work temp assignments. Had I been given actual maternity leave with a flexible schedule I would have stayed."

2. Make It Financially Worthwhile To Return

According to a newly released survey by Job Seeker Nation, only 20% of job seekers have taken or plan to take parental leave. A full 32% of those who have not cite workload as the primary reason for not taking time off, followed by cost and lack of company policy.

With the large number of households today that depend upon both incomes to get by, not returning to work isn't even an option for many women. However, women who make less are more likely to consider the trade offs and struggle to find the value in paying child care costs so they can work. The more they are paid, the higher the trade off cost for them to quit their job. Make it hard for them to quit.

"Aside from needing to earn an income to help support my household, I also genuinely want to be working," said Christine Lewis, Account Director at [InkHouse Media + Marketing](#), a public relations firm. "I am a better mother and a better wife because I work full-time at a job that I love."

3. Be Understanding In The Transition

Not every situation is the same, so it's important for employers to understand that policies around maternity leave and workplace flexibility might work for most, but not for others. Adjusting policies to account for individual scenarios helps new mothers feel valued and appreciated.

"I worked at a great communications job for five years before my daughter was born, but chose to return as a casual worker after 10 weeks of maternity leave," said Erin Goodnow, Founder and CEO of [Going Ivy](#), a college admissions consulting group. "I'm so thankful for that casual option! I did not adjust to motherhood right away, and I needed a bit more time to get my daughter eating better and into a routine. My boss was so supportive and started feeding me assignments in almost a freelance relationship. I could turn down the assignment if I was too busy, but I almost never did."

4. Don't Derail Her Career Growth

For many new moms in the workplace, they are trying to be the master of everything. They want to be able to do it all, but often times can't. In many cases, giving a mom options about her working conditions relieves this pressure. Be careful though, as no career-driven woman wants to hear that they are being demoted or additional responsibilities withheld because of her new status.

New moms still want the option to invest in their work more and climb the ladder, so make that a possibility for your best employees, regardless of if they have a new baby at home or not. She will tell you if she's not ready, but give her that choice. Even better, if she's earned a promotion and you offer it, you'll be showing support for her during a busy time, while making it easier for her to invest further in your company.

"My employer is incredibly generous and flexible when it comes to sick time and doctors appointments for my child," said Brittney Garneau, Senior Account Supervisor at [Pierpont Communications](#), a public relations firm. "As the first millennial in my workplace to have a child, I feel I have done a great job setting the example for a working mother in our office space. In fact, I was recently promoted into a management position."

Comment on this story

Page 1 / 2

Continue >

SHARE:



Print

Website Feedback

News Tip

Report Corrections

Reprints & Permissions

RELATED TOPICS

01. BEST WORK AT HOME 2017 >
02. 50 BEST EMPLOYERS >
03. WORK AT HOME ZERO COST >
04. CIVIL ENGINEERING JOBS >
05. WORK FROM HOME JOBS >
06. ENVELOPE STUFFING JOBS >

From the Web

7 Time Lottery Winner Says "You're All Playing The Lottery Wrong!"

SMART ADVICE DAILY

Ever Googled Yourself? Do a "Deep Search" Instead!

TRUTHFINDER

Diabetes Breakthrough Leaves Doctors "Speechless" (This Works - Try It Tonight)

247LIFEADVICE

New Rule In Phoenix, Arizona Leaves Drivers Fuming

BETTER FINANCES

There's A Reason Amazon Doesn't Want Women To Know About This Site

TOPHATTER

Subaru's New Legacy Is The Stuff Dreams Are Made Of

KELLEY BLUE BOOK

Did This American Doctor Capture Photographic Proof of God? Click to See

NATURAL HEALTH RESPONSE

Alzheimer's May Only Be Temporary This is Leaving Doctors Speechless (This Works)

MEDICAL HEALTH ADVISOR

Help Your Business Accept Credit Cards

Get a **FREE** Credit Card Reader for Mobile*



Sign Up »

FLAGSHIP PAYMENT SYSTEMS

*When you order over the phone.



Sign Up »

FLAGSHIP PAYMENT SYSTEMS

*When you order over the phone.

MOZ PRO

Leading brands use Moz Pro for their SEO

Try it for free for 30 days to see why

Try It Free

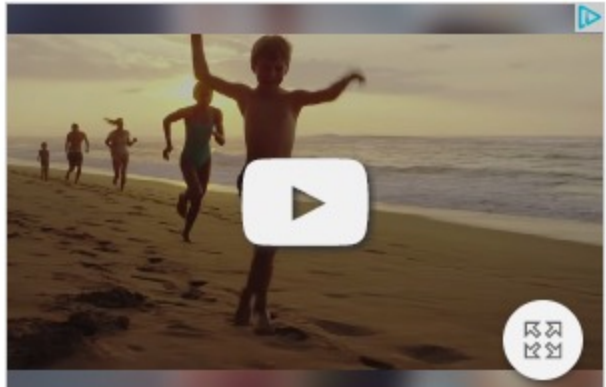
HostGator WEB HOSTING

60% OFF

Starting at \$2.78/mo



GET STARTED



See How Smart Data Marketing Drives Direct Website Bookings

Ads by Revcontent

