CHAPTER 6: Workplace Policies

CHALLENGE

It’s easy to forget that only a hundred years ago, women did not have substantial control over their own income, nor the social freedom to determine the shape of their own lives. Workplaces and policies were not designed with the needs of women and mothers in mind. To make matters worse, women across the economic spectrum are experiencing extreme financial, physical and emotional stress from current workplace conditions that are increasingly competitive and insecure. Multiple sources of stress include: 24/7 work culture; a long history of undervaluing women’s work; concentration of women in lowest-paid jobs; lack of pay equity; unpredictable work schedules; wage theft; and juggling responsibilities to employer and family, which most men are not culturally required to do. The cumulative impact of less pay and fewer hours worked due to caring for children/spouse/parents leads to lower Social Security payments and greater financial stress among older women, who tend to live longer than men and therefore are more likely to use up dwindling financial resources.

Humane management practices that fit the modern workforce, which is about half women, contribute substantially to strong, healthy communities. When work policies support all workers’ ability to meet their commitments in and outside the workplace, both families and businesses are more successful and robust. Mayors can model humane employment policies that establish healthy norms, so businesses can see the value of those practices and emulate them. They can also help pass laws that set certain
minimum standards such as paid sick days, fair pay and minimum wage requirements. Many European countries have model policies that create better conditions for women, supporting success at home and at work. Most importantly, those policies increase the general well-being of women and entire families.

Fifty years ago, most children had someone at home to take care of them and employers assumed that employees had no other primary day-to-day responsibilities. Many employers still presume this, yet a majority of children today do not have a stay at home parent. The reality is that modern working parents—especially mothers—need good child care, good schools and the capacity to take care of their families as well as be great workers. When employers give them the flexibility to do this, women enjoy work-life balance and everyone wins.
Run a public education campaign about workplace conditions, address 24/7 workplace culture, fair pay and other key issues affecting working women.

- Promote the idea that policies that are good for women are good for everyone (and they can result in increased profit).
- Encourage men to talk about the importance of equal pay; equal pay impacts everyone.
- Screen films such as *Girl Rising* and then hold discussions in your community.
- Encourage more communication within companies about these issues to diffuse reaction and promote understanding.

Look at the hiring process in your city to ensure fairness.

- Create gender-balanced hiring goals for projects in your city.
- Target outreach to hire more women on publicly funded projects.
- Address non-linear career paths and mid-career transitions for women when you hire.

- **Transparency:** Make wages transparent by publishing an annual list of salary ranges that correspond to relative job positions, so wage discrimination can be easily discerned.
- **Paid Sick Days:** Ensure workers receive paid sick days.
- **Minimum Wage:** Enact necessary policies to raise minimum wage (many minimum wage workers are women).
- **Equal Pay:** Mandate equal pay for city workers and the private sector.
  - Create equal pay boards, as *San Francisco has done*.
  - Find and follow best equal-pay practices.
  - Do not base starting salaries on previous salaries, as this sometimes perpetuates pay inequality.
- **Higher-Paid Jobs:** Open up access to higher paid city jobs (construction, police officers, firefighters) to women.
- **Wage Theft:** Take action to stop wage theft, which is the illegal underpayment or non-payment of workers’ normal and/or overtime wages by an employer. Wage theft disproportionately affects female low-wage workers. You can provide information to workers about actions to take if their employer is not paying their full wages (go to small claims court or report to a union representative, for example), and introduce legislation to hold employers accountable, like the *The Fair Day’s Pay Act*, which was recently enacted in California.
**Family Leave:** Many women feel that they are “dinged” when they take advantage of opportunities made available to them, such as maternity leave. They may experience peer pressure, and feel that taking leave damages their professional standing.

- Offer paternity/maternity leave in the city, and support national legislation. Make sure the details of these policies are transparent and accessible to all city workers.
- Work to change cultural attitudes in your city. Family leave and public childcare are associated with higher earnings for mothers when cultural support for maternal employment is high.
- Offer paid leave to care for sick family member(s).

**Workers’ Rights:** Protect workers’ rights so they can bring up issues like more flexible work hours without being fearful of losing their jobs.

- Introduce legislation: San Francisco’s **Family Friendly Workplace Ordinance** allows certain employees to request flexible or predictable work schedules.

**Childcare:**

- Create an incentive for private companies to provide childcare solutions (e.g. issue bronze, silver, gold awards for gender-balanced policies).
- Offer government-subsidized childcare.
- Encourage company-sharing childcare.

**Predictability:**

- Form a “predictability” task force:
  - Many different parties can participate (business, workers, government, etc.).
- Discuss how all parties can benefit from more predictable schedules.
- Mandate predictable scheduling for workers.
- High Commitment: Create high-performance, high-commitment work environments—**ROWE** (Results-Only Work Evaluation), **HPWP** (high performance work practices), and **self-management** systems.

**Remote Work:** Allow remote work from home or other locations. Some cities and states have created incentives for employers to embrace telework, which has been shown to improve productivity, increase resilience, reduce congestion, reduce pollution, reduce the production of greenhouse gasses and more.

**Programs:**

- Support and encourage, offer and/or promote programs that help women gain access to previously closed-off markets, high-paying jobs and traditionally male dominated jobs (including construction, police
officers, firefighters)
- Offer pre-apprenticeship programs to women
- Offer mentorship programs to women and girls
- Offer vocational training to women in high school and college

**Partnerships:**
- Men need to be involved because they hold positions of influence and often do the hiring. Involve men and encourage them to reflect on how they judge women.
- Partner with workforce training boards to provide women with certain skills that will allow them to excel (training in high-paying jobs).
- At a summit on women’s economic security, convene business, labor and government leaders to collaborate in making certain jobs accessible.

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Salesforce started a program called **Women’s Surge** in 2013. The goal was to achieve 100% equality for men and women in pay and promotion, and to make sure that at least a third of all participants at any meeting were women.

Patagonia is a leader in **workplace innovation**. Their book, **Family Business**, to be published in July of 2016 illustrates what high-quality child care looks like and why providing **on-site child care** to working families is at the heart of responsible business today.

Cisco is dedicated to supporting the **work/life integration** of employees and their families with a full set of services and programs ranging from breastfeeding support, to childcare, Elder care, parenting classes and much more. **Cisco Family Connection** is the onsite childcare facility at the company’s San Jose campus that serves more than 400 children from infancy through kindergarten.

In San Francisco, the award-winning **Gender Equality Principles** Initiative is a groundbreaking program that helps businesses and organizations achieve greater gender equality through implementation of seven **Gender Equality Principles**. Below are a few examples excerpted from their **Gender Equality Challenge** that highlights promising initiatives just getting underway and features model practices that are yielding significant measurable results and are replicable to other workplaces.

**Gap, Inc.: Equal Pay for Equal Work**
To mark its 45th anniversary, Gap Inc. launched the Equal Pay for Equal Work project, supported by 100% of the executive leadership. The company provided a complete dataset of pay information for its 129,992 global employees to **Exponential Talent**, a strategic human resources management consultancy for pay equity analysis. Controlling for numerous variables, including tenure, FTE status, and span of control, the analysis demonstrated that, on average, women employees at Gap, Inc. are paid at a one-to-one ratio compared to their male counterparts, not only across the organization but also across countries.

**Palantir: Women in Engineering Scholarships**
To address the underrepresentation of women applying to and employed in technical positions, Palantir began in 2010 awarding scholarships, ranging from $1,000 - $10,000 to women. Over time, the focus was narrowed to support female students in undergraduate and graduate programs in STEM fields. This year, the target group is female undergraduate students. Since the scholarship’s inception in 2011, Palantir has awarded more than $100,000 to finalists, and receives between 35 – 90 applications each year for the scholarship.
Articles, Books, Organizations, Videos

- **The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap** - This guide is designed to empower members and other advocates with the facts and resources they need to tell the simple truth about the pay gap.
- **Graduating to a Pay Gap** - Discusses the earnings of women and men one year after college.
- **A Stronger California** - Site addresses the questions: Why women? Why California? Why now? Focuses on anti-poverty, equal pay, work/family policy, access to higher-pay opportunities and pregnancy accommodation.
- **California Work & Family Coalition** - An alliance of community organizations, unions and nonprofits protecting every California worker’s right to put their family first.
- **Family Friendly Workplace Ordinance** - This ordinance discusses the changing demographics of American women in the workforce—specifically, an increased number of women in the workforce; fewer households with children that have at least one parent staying at home full-time and more single-parent households.
- **Healthy Mothers Workplace Coalition** - Tries to reward and incentivize employers who are adopting healthy workplace policies.
- **The F Word: Feminism in Jeopardy** (book) - Argues there's not a huge bias against women, but a huge bias against mothers.
- **Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard** (book) - Research in psychology, sociology and other fields sheds new light on how we can effect transformative change.
- **Moms Rising** - Organization takes on the most critical issues facing women, mothers and families by educating the public and mobilizing massive grassroots actions.
- **The Custom-Fit Workplace** (book) - Research-based book argues that policies that are good for women are good for everyone.
- **The Raising of America** - A documentary that explores how women’s stress negatively impacts their children.
- **Unnatural Causes** - A seven-part documentary series exploring racial and socioeconomic inequalities in health.
- **UC Davis Study of California Women Business Leaders** - Study by Amanda Kimball shows the enhanced performances of companies' profitability when women are in higher positions and on company boards.
- **San Francisco Predictable Scheduling and Fair Treatment for Formula Retail Employees Ordinance** - Ordinance introduced by David Chiu as part of a larger legislative package known as the Retail Workers Bill of Rights.
- **Paid Family Leave California** - Website provides information on California’s Paid Family Leave (PFL) program.
- **The Work & Family Medical-Legal Partnership** - Works to ensure that low-income pregnant women who give birth in San Francisco can access pregnancy disability leave, pregnancy and lactation accommodation, and paid time off for prenatal care appointments.
- **The Work & Family Helpline** - Provides free, confidential advice about time off work, paid leave and accommodations for pregnancy, parenting, breastfeeding and caring for an ill family member or an employee’s own serious health condition.
- **Workers’ Rights Clinic** - The Legal Aid Society Employment Law Center operates Workers’ Rights Clinic locations throughout California that provide free and confidential information to workers about their legal rights.
- **Office of Labor Standards Enforcement** - Enforces labor laws adopted by San Francisco voters and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.
- **A Healthy Mother’s Workplace Coalition** - A collaboration of nonprofit organizations, government agencies and employers created to improve the working conditions and health of new parents.
- **Telecommute Connecticut** - A free and comprehensive resource for employers interested in implementing telework programs or for employees seeking to introduce teleworking in their daily work schedule.
- **Equal Rights Advocates** - A legal organization dedicated to protecting and expanding economic and educational access and opportunities for women and girls.
- **Interfaith Worker Justice Center** - Advances the rights of workers by engaging diverse faith communities into action, from grassroots organizing to shaping policy at the local, state and national levels.
- **Predictable Scheduling: The Bottom Line of Economic Security** - This fact sheet by Susan Lambert outlines the difficulties facing workers today and efforts in San Francisco to find solutions.
- **Julia Parish** - Staff Attorney at Putting Justice to Work
- **Great Work Cultures** - Working to collectively create deep, broad workplace culture change so that all workers can expect and experience a respectful work environment; workplaces that do not aspire to achieve this goal are recognized as substandard and underperforming.
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<th><strong>CHECKLIST</strong></th>
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<td>2. Make wages transparent.</td>
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<td>4. Offer paid family leave to city workers; encourage or mandate paid family leave for all workers.</td>
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<td>6. Raise the minimum wage.</td>
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<td>7. Stop wage theft.</td>
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<td>8. Protect workers’ rights.</td>
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<td>9. Offer subsidized childcare to city workers and incentivize private sector to provide childcare.</td>
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<td>10. Mandate predictable scheduling for workers.</td>
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<td>11. Allow remote work from home.</td>
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