The Changing Workforce: Implications for Work & Family Integration

Module 4 – Course 15.343
Managing Transformations in Work, Organizations, and Society
Check-In From Module 3: Strategic Partnerships

Application Assignment:

• Pick a Strategic Partnership relevant to your work setting (not labor-management)

  – What lessons from labor-management partnerships apply?

  – What are the two or three key changes in management practice needed to successfully manage various types of strategic partnerships over an extended period of time?
Today’s Guests

• Beth Boland, Partner, Mintz, Levin, Colin, Ferris, Glovsky & Popeo

• Mark Byers, Director, Student Life Counseling, Harvard Law School

• Mona Harrington, Program Director, MIT Workplace Center
Today’s Objectives

• Explore How Work and Family are Related
• Discuss “State of the Art” Practices
• Outline the Elements of a Systemic Approach
• Focus on What Managers can and need to do!
• Discuss Practices in Your Organization—today and your vision 5 years from now
• Identify Changes Needed to Get There
“I wish there were more flexibility, especially in our production environment... this year alone I lost three excellent employees. They had each become single parents for one reason or another...It just breaks my heart. Traditionally production has been a male-oriented thing, where one partner stays at home with the children and the other one works crazy schedules...the world is changing, but the schedule is not.”

Our View: A Systemic Strategy

• A Dual Agenda:
  Integrating Work AND Family Life

• A Holistic Approach
  – Individuals & Families
  – Employers
  – Unions and Professional Associations
  – Community Groups
  – Government--local, state, and federal
A Holistic Approach to Work & Family Responsibilities

Governments

Firms

Community Groups & Intermediaries

Unions & Professional Assns.
Traditional Image of Work & Family

- A Male “Breadwinner” with a Wife at Home Attending to Family and Community Affairs

- Today less than 25% of all married families fit this image
Visible Changes in the Workforce

- 60% women work
- Women account for 48% of the workforce
- 75% mothers with children work
- 65% mothers with children under 6 work
- Hours of work up 24% for married women; 8% for single mothers since 1969
- 25-30% of households provide elder care; projected to double in next 10 years
So, Why is it so Hard?

• Cultural Barriers to “Putting the Issue on the Table”
  – A Private Matter
  – A Family Matter

• Piecemeal Approaches have Dominated--No Single Actor Can Solve the Problem Acting Alone
Hidden Assumptions: “The Ideal Worker”

- Hours of work signal commitment & productivity
- Fulltime work, ready to move, critical to career development
- Family care is women’s work and role
- Family issues are private and personal--not the responsibilities of business
Employers

• The First Group we Turn to for a Response

• Acting out of Self-Interest--to make it easier for more people to work more hours--produces:

The Family-Friendly Employer
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexible hours</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time option (for some)</td>
<td>80-90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid time off for family reasons</td>
<td>25-39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evidence: Practices in Use

- Considerable growth in “family friendly” practices on the books
- Mostly for high level, scarce employees
- But, consistent findings of:
  - Low use rates
  - Negative consequences feared if used
The Legal Profession as a Case Study

Expert Panel

Beth Boland

Mark Byers

Mona Harrington
Discussion Questions

• Discuss the current state of work and family practices and benefits in your work site.

• Outline the vision for work and family outcomes for your organization in five years

• List two most important changes in your organization needed to realize this vision
Moving Forward: Can we jumpstart a Collaborative, Systemic Approach?

Or

Are we Doomed to Replicate the old Battle Lines?
A Holistic Approach to Work & Family Responsibilities

- Governments
- Firms
- Community Groups & Intermediaries
- Unions & Professional Assns.

Work ↔ Family
Government Policy Agenda

- Paid Leave—flexible and linked to private practices
- Reduced hours—flexibility in scheduling
- Addressing Basic Economic Needs of Working Families
  - Living wage
  - Health coverage
  - Child care
  - Education and training
- Employee voice—reform of labor laws
- Creating State Work-Family Councils and a National Working Families Summit

What else is needed from Employers?

• Get to the root cause--work design--challenge hidden assumptions
• Work on changing the culture
• Give employees & co-workers a voice in shaping policies, schedules, implementation
• Work with other “actors” with a stake in the issue!
Unions & Professional Assns: What Else is Needed?

• Organize, Recruit for Work and Family
• Get more Women into Leadership Positions
• Work in Coalition with Community Groups
• Work Together with Local Employers
• Encourage Experimentation in Public Policy
• Build a Positive Workplace Culture
• Support Quality Part-Time Work Policies
Action Assignment

• Identify a policy in your organization that has been designed to address work/life issues – educate yourself on the specific provisions or intent of the policy
• Interview 2-3 people who should be able to benefit from the policy – in order to better understand how the policy works in practice (at least for this limited sample)
• Be prepared to discuss lessons learned
Summing Up

• Work with other actors--systemic approach
• Challenge traditional, hidden assumptions
• Put the *dual agenda* on the table
• Involve the workforce--shared control
• Develop a collaborative workplace culture
• Experiment with local solutions