

SECURING MANAGER/SUPERVISOR BUY IN: MAKING THE BUSINESS CASE

MAY, 2001 WOMEN'S BUREAU CONFERENCE CALL

Host: Frances Jefferson, Women's Bureau Regional Administrator, Region 8

Speakers: Peggy Chase, MSW, WorkLife Solutions

SUMMARY OF TOPIC

Peggy Chase a long time work/life advocate and consultant including the development **WorkLife Solutions** a company which addresses people issues in the workplace. This conference call focuses on the criticality of gaining manager/supervisor "BUY IN" and how to make the business case for work/life initiatives. Peggy focuses on First Tennessee National Bank recognized in 1995 by Business Week's as the most family friendly company in the country and Forbes most profitable bank over the past five years. First Tennessee uses the service profit chain concept and has gained manager buy in, partly by sending 1,000 managers through a 3 1/2-day training course on family friendly programs. Specifically their approach to employee's work/life issues was to ask, listen and then take action. They really focused on the take action piece as very critical. This work demonstrated the service profit chain link traced from addressing work/life issues to employee satisfaction and retention to customer satisfaction and retention to increased profits. The approach of ask, listen and take action resulted in a 7% increase in customer retention and \$106 million profit gain over two years. Manager training is key to the success of this model. Training needs to be done on the initial roll out of any new project, but also needs to be ongoing to sustain the support.

KEY POINTS "BUILDING THE CASE"

- Use current trends and research to support proposed programs.
- Integrate company mission/values into the work/life proposal.
- Use employee profiles and demographics to build your case. Focus groups and surveys are good tools (Where is the current pain).
- Know your competitors and what they are offering, this can motivate upper management buy in.
- Involve mid level managers early in the process to give input and gain buy in.

ADVANTAGES/SUCCESES

- Increases the organizations awareness to the needs and values of today's workforce.
- Ties retention and morale to profitability.
- Educates key personnel to the changing demographics in the workforce.
- Introduces new concepts and strategies for organizational effectiveness.

DISADVANTAGES/ROAD BLOCKS

- Lack of support from management team.
- Inability to provide hard numbers.
- Company culture does not support change.
- Back lash from single workers.
- Failure of other programs due to low utilization.
- Managers do not view work/life initiatives as business tools.

RESOURCES

- Karen Furia, Women's Bureau Regional Director, Region 10 furia-karen@dol.gov
- The Women's Bureau <http://www.dol.gov/wb/>
- Kelly Tyler, Child Care Resources, Business Liaison tyler@childcare.org
- Child Care Resources, King County, Washington www.childcare.org
- Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral www.childcarenet.org
- The Child Care Bureau <http://nccic.org>
- Alliance of Work Life Professionals <http://www.awlp.org>
- Life Work Strategies <http://www.nationalpartnership.org>
- National Partnership for Women & Families <http://www.nationalpartnership.org>
- Boston College Center for Work & Family <http://www.bc.edu/cwf>
- Labor Project for Working Families <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~iir/workfam/home.html>
- Blue Suit Mom <http://www.bluesuitmom.com/>
- National Network for Child Care <http://www.nncc.org/>
- Child Care Partnership Project <http://www.nccic.org/ccpartnerships>
- Woman's-Work <http://www.womans-work.com>
- Human Resources Executive/Cornell <http://www.workindex.com>
- Families and Work Institute <http://www.familiesandwork.org>
- The Life Station <http://www.thelifestation.com>
- Work Life Benefits <http://www.wlb.com>
- Child Care in Health Care <http://www.childcareinhealthcare.org/>

The Women's Bureau Region X office has compiled this "Work and Family Virtual Conference Call Summary Sheets" for information sharing and does not endorse any programs or organizations included in it. These summaries include information on programs and policies that employers have tried or ideas and thoughts that work and work/life professionals have shared.