1. Challenges
   1. Top down; educating managers
   2. Lip service but not implementing
   3. Wrong kind of perks/benefits
   4. Most people want flexibility - #1 priority for parents
   5. Macro level – federal mandated; institutional changes; family leave – the US is the only industrialized nation without a federal policy for paid family leave
   6. Wage factor
   7. Domestic effect; stress; responsibilities; sharing emotional and mental responsibility
2. What companies need to do:
   1. Dismantle the traditional; outdated views of a workday ; allow for flexibility in time and location; a hybrd home/on site work; freedom in hours; choose cetain hours during the day for meetings (such as 1-3)
   2. Make sure employees have timeduring the day to do workl instead of zooms all day and then they are expected to their work in off hours
   3. Mental health support
   4. Mentoring -

The modern age is here and yet our workplace infrastructure is decades old. We are breaking down barriers in so many areas. Workplace, it’s your turn. We’re coming for you. Our outdated sense of the traditional family unit and how the home functions has changed dramatically. COVID has revealed the excessive burden mothers bear at home and at work.

* 1. Results-oriented
  2. Flexibility
  3. Psychological safety
  4. Cultural training
  5. Wage equity
  6. Childcare support; sliding scale
  7. Better family leave
  8. Better hiring; more diversity; more sentio level womenl more representation

Intersectionality

We cannot discuss how to support women in the workplace without also discussing the influecne of race. Intersectionality within this context means that not only are womn experiencing more obstalces and biases but these are magnified when she’s a woman of color. According to McKinsey, for every 100 men promoted, only 85 white women are, 71 latina and 58 black women.

1. Why it’s important; the results
   1. Transparency;
   2. Less micromanaging
   3. Loyalty; happier employees;
   4. Less burnout – better productivity

We are in the midst of this pivotal moment. We are standing at the edge of a cliff and if we don’t build a bridge to support women through the transition into our post pandemic world we are going to fall and lose the efforts over the last decades and continue to set women back. Companies have to step up and do better. On the national level women, especially mothers, were treated as the backup plan when childcare options were left unavailable. Women, particularly women of color, were forced out of their jobs in record numbers, far exceeding other individuals. As we resurface and move out of the pandemic, how can we make sure we don’t return to old ways? In fact, how can we work extra hard to bring women back into the workplace and keep them there. Let’s do better.

The inflection point

Over 4 million women (bureau of labor) forced out of work. 9.8 million working mothers are experiencing burnout ; 28% more than working fathers (maven). It’s unsustainable for most working mothers, and this crisis has been a long time coming. Our society and our business culture consistently undervalues their contributions, despite the fact that their income is critical to household financial secuity and the financial well-being of their companies.

In short, companies can’t afford to lose working mothers–and in most cases, working mothers can’t afford to leave their careers, either. Aside from the obvious instant loss in income, women who take career breaks also take breaks from contributing to retirement, and lose earning power and retirement savings as they step back from their jobs during critical times for raises and promotions–potentially to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars over the course of their careers.

Retaining working mothers during COVID is essential, both for the performance of companies and for the overall progress and financial health of working women, who are bearing the brunt of a global health emergency. In my role connecting highly educated working mothers at companies who value their contributions, I’ve noticed that employers who are successful in attracting and retaining working mothers have a few things in common: open communication, flexibility, and clear work boundaries.

**Open Communication**

Open communication with employees is important anytime, but it’s essential when people are facing competing and urgent demands on their time and mental capacity. Over the course of the pandemic, we’ve learned a lot about our coworkers: what their home offices (or kitchen tables) look like, whether they have a dog, and what crazy outfits their kids have put together for the day. But there’s a lot happening behind the scenes that we maybe can’t guess at or fathom.

Many women hesitate to explain the current challenges they are facing with childcare or approach their managers with requests for flexibility, concerned that they’ll be judged or penalized. You may be able to accommodate these requests for your employees–but you’ll never know if you do not open up the lines of communication and make working parents feel comfortable discussing their needs.

Especially while we exist in a remote work environment where conversations are more intentional than casual, it’s important to make the effort for an open line of communication with your employees so that they feel comfortable speaking with you about their needs rather than become discouraged or frustrated that they cannot manage competing demands. This may mean creating opportunities for one-on-one check-ins that are about personal life as much as work, or developing a process to proactively solicit feedback on employee needs.

**Flexibility**

According to bureau of labor, 69% of workers, and not just parents, consider flexibility one of the most important factors in a job. Employees want to feel trusted and empowered, not micromanaged and babysat. Allowing them the freedom to choose when they work, and then institute common hours for meetings, enhances productivity and rewards results rather than time.

At MomUp, we work with successful experienced women at all stages in their career, whether they are returning to the workforce or looking for a more fulfilling work environment. The experience of matching companies with employees has been eye-opening in terms of understanding the power of flexibility. For some employers, the fear of change from a traditional workplace to a more inclusive, flexible one prevents progress. In many cases, employers’ unconscious bias leads to a systemic issue for women in the workplace.

The companies who really understand flexibility don’t just throw it around as a buzzword, as though they don’t care when and where an employee gets the work done–as long as it gets done. Rather, truly flexible companies work with their employees to decide on a situation that gets the best results for everyone involved. They infuse it at every level by cultivating a culture that values and trusts their employees. Consider what circumstances will actually deliver the results you need while bringing the best out of your employee as well.

Additional training for all employees and managers will minimize the unconscious bias that many women face when requesting flexibility. Openness to change and experimentation, and offering more flexibility to everyone, will help reduce resentment amongst a team while also bolstering a community of trust and autonomy. If a valued employee comes to you saying she needs a change, react with flexibility. Remember, this situation is temporary, but your relationship with the employee can be a much longer-term investment.

**Clear Work Boundaries**

Many working parents are on 24 hour clocks of work and childcare, unable to escape either. Encouraging employees to separate their work and life by creating clear work boundaries for your remote workforce is one strategy to protect working parents from burnout. What felt like a stray evening email pre-pandemic can now send an employee back into their home office for hours of work, simply because the access is there.

Encouraging employees to take care of themselves and their families–and to have “off” hours at work by establishing clear guidelines around remote work–is key to making working parents feel valued.

**An Urgent Call to Action**

As school started up this September, 865,000 women dropped out of the workforce–four times the number of men. Women, and working mothers in particular, have made hard-won progress in workplace equality. While there was still more work to do before the pandemic, the disproportionate departure of women threatens to reset the clock. And there’s no telling how long it will take to move the hands back to where we were.

There is, of course, a risk to women and their careers, and their long-term financial security. It is difficult to rebound from a loss of income–and lower-income workers are experiencing the most dramatic impact, with higher rates of job loss and departure. This places families in very vulnerable positions.

But there’s also an incredible risk for companies in losing working mothers. Companies that have women at senior levels do 50% better than their counterparts, according to the McKinsey/Lean In study. Getting these women back into their roles after they leave will be difficult, and the cost and time of hiring and onboarding new employees is significant at a time when stability is a valuable asset. Believing this issue will resolve itself is short-sighted.

For many years, working moms have stepped up and sacrificed to advance their position in the workforce. Now, it’s time for business leaders to do the same, and commit to the best practices in communication and flexibility that will enable working parents to continue to contribute.