

Boosting Satisfaction and Career Growth with Family Benefits and Inclusive Policies

Samir Sukkar, Board member in various insurance companies, Australian Institute of Business (AIB) Alumni

Dr Mahan Poorhosseinzadeh, Senior Lecturer, Australian Institute of Business

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Introduction

In today's constantly evolving world, fostering diversity and inclusion has become crucial for organisations to thrive. Embracing employees across different life stages and providing a supportive environment is not only the right thing to do but also beneficial for the success of any organisation. This article explores the organisational initiatives, policies and practices to support employees across different life stages. We also discuss the positive impact of these policies, procedures and initiatives on employee engagement and retention and their overall impact on their professional development. We first address the [power of inclusive culture in organisations](#) to set the scene. We will then provide some examples of organisational initiatives to support employees across their various life stages. Finally, we will discuss the benefits of such an initiative within the organisation.

The Power of Inclusive Culture

An organisation's diversity is defined by the individuals it employs. It includes a wide range of differences, such as visible and invisible aspects, such as disability, age, gender, values, personal preferences and beliefs ([Prasad, Pringle & Konrad 2006](#)). However, the organisation's dedication to inclusion is shown by how well its diverse workforce feels appreciated, respected, acknowledged and empowered to participate fully.

When an organisation promotes diversity as an essential component of its culture that [fosters inclusivity](#), it can unlock the potential of its diverse workforce. This can lead to enhanced productivity, better financial performance and a competitive edge. In addition, it acknowledges the uniqueness of each employee and fosters a sense of belongingness in the workplace.

Organisations can unlock creativity and innovation by embracing an inclusive culture, as it allows for a broader range of ideas, resulting in better problem-solving and decision-making processes. In addition, an inclusive culture improves employee satisfaction and productivity. Employees who feel included and valued are likelier to be engaged, motivated and committed to their work. This can lead to higher job satisfaction, decreased turnover, increased productivity and optimal professional growth.

Moreover, [companies with inclusive cultures](#) are better equipped to identify new opportunities, solve complex problems and develop innovative solutions. For instance, [Google is a company that highly](#)

[values diversity](#) and inclusion. They actively promote diversity in their workforce and have initiatives to ensure an inclusive environment. This inclusive culture has significantly contributed to Google's success in developing revolutionary products and services, such as Google Search, Gmail and Google Maps.

Supporting Employees Across Various Life Stages

Fostering an inclusive work environment that supports employees across various life stages and backgrounds is both a moral imperative and a strategic advantage for organisations. To foster an inclusive environment, it is essential to acknowledge and support employees at various stages of their lives, recognising that each stage has its challenges. By implementing policies that address these challenges, organisations can foster a sense of belonging and ensure that every employee's voice is heard. Establishing an all-encompassing workplace culture is crucial, but it is equally imperative to confront the difficulties that unfairly treated employees encounter. [Research](#) reveals a pervasive pattern of mistreatment in the workplace, often attributed to a toxic environment. Women and parents, in particular, face a multitude of obstacles related to caregiving and reproductive health concerns.

[Research](#) shows that although Australian workplaces have flexible work arrangements and family-friendly policies to support their employees during their reproductive years, discrimination and disadvantages are still prevalent. For example, in 2024, a [national review](#) was published that discusses the work conditions and discrimination among pregnant and parent workers in Australia. [According to the Australian Human Rights Commission \(AHRC\)](#), almost half (49%) of Australian mothers and over a quarter (27%) of Australian fathers had experienced discrimination during their parental leave or upon returning to work following the birth or adoption of their child. This discrimination could manifest in various forms, such as being denied training opportunities because of pregnancy, missing out on promotions while on parental leave or receiving negative comments about working part-time or requiring flexible hours.

Recent studies suggest significant progress in achieving greater equality in entry-level positions across various industries. However, there is still a long way to go when it comes to achieving diversity and inclusion at the top management levels and the C-suite. According to [Shah and Qosja \(2023\)](#), a considerable amount of work still needs to be done to promote equality and diversity in the top management and C-suite positions.

Australian statistics show that pregnant and parent workers represent a substantial and growing proportion of the Australian workforce. Over 20% of all Australian households have young children, and the percentage of dual-earner parent couples with children under 18 years has increased from 53% in 1996 to 61% in 2016. [The 2023 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#) reported that the number of children has increased over the last fifty years and is estimated to grow to 6.4 million by 2048.

Impact of Legislative Context on Employees' Growth

Embracing diversity and inclusion through supporting policies profoundly impacts employee engagement, retention and overall workplace satisfaction. Employees who feel supported and valued

are more engaged, motivated and productive. Moreover, organisations that prioritise diversity and inclusion create an environment where individuals can bring their authentic selves to work, leading to higher job satisfaction and a stronger sense of belonging.

Moreover, supporting employees through various life stages helps them achieve a better work-life balance and positively impacts their career progression. When organisations offer flexible work options and benefits for family planning, such as covering the cost of fertility treatment or egg freezing and providing coverage for families planning to adopt and reproductive health-related leave for all genders, employees are more likely to remain committed to their professional growth. This inclusivity fosters a sense of loyalty and dedication, which leads to higher employee retention rates ([Ravishankar 2023](#)).

Additionally, the implementation of family-friendly policies can have a profound impact on employee career progression. By offering flexible work arrangements and reproducible leave, organisations can create a supportive and inclusive work environment that allows employees to thrive personally and professionally. By adhering to best practices and providing the necessary support, organisations can unlock the full potential of their employees and foster a diverse and inclusive workplace. For instance, [Patagonia](#), an outdoor clothing company, has implemented best practices to support its employees in maintaining a healthy work-life balance and fulfilling their family commitments. These practices include generous parental leave policies, on-site childcare facilities, flexible work hours and flexible locations. As a result, Patagonia has created a supportive work culture that values its employees' well-being and family life.

Conclusion

Upon reflection of the principles and practices discussed, it is evident that cultivating an inclusive and diverse workplace transcends moral obligations and is a strategic imperative for contemporary organisations seeking sustained success. This paper has illustrated the advantages of instituting supportive policies that cater to employees at various stages of life, focusing on initiatives such as reproductive leave and family-friendly benefits. These measures bolster employee engagement and retention and notably foster career progression.

By studying the success stories of companies like Google and Patagonia, organisations can gain valuable insights into the benefits of implementing inclusive practices. These examples demonstrate that embracing diversity and inclusion enhances workplace satisfaction and drives innovation and competitiveness. However, it is essential to acknowledge that challenges of discrimination and inequality persist, especially against pregnant and parenting workers. This underscores the critical need for continued advocacy and reform.

In summary, incorporating family-oriented benefits and reproductive leave policies into the corporate culture is crucial for creating an environment where every employee feels genuinely valued and supported. Organisations must stay committed to this inclusive approach, ensuring that every employee, regardless of their life stage or family needs, can thrive professionally within a supportive and equitable framework. By doing so, companies meet ethical standards and unleash their workforce's full potential, creating a vibrant, dynamic and sustainable business environment.



Samir Sukkar

Board member in various insurance companies, Australian Institute of Business Alumni

Samir has over 40 years of experience in the dynamic world of the Insurance industry. A highly accomplished leader and managing director. Throughout the years, he has successfully managed a wide range of insurance operations, including all classes of insurance and reinsurance in MENA and Europe. Samir completed an MBA with the Australian Institute of Business in 2023 and a BSc in Mathematics and Computer Science with City University, London, England in 1981.



Dr Mahan Poorhosseinzadeh

Senior Lecturer, Australian Institute of Business

Mahan is a Senior Lecturer specialising in the fields of Employment Relations and Human Resources. She has extensive experience in teaching, research and academic leadership roles. Mahan has supervised research students, taught various subjects and managed academic programs at AIB. Her research interests specifically focus on gender equality, talent management, and workforce diversity and inclusion.

Mahan has published in high-ranking journals and presented at various conferences related to these topics. She is actively involved in professional committees and editorial roles, contributing to the advancement of industrial relations and gender studies. Mahan's ultimate goal is to create inclusive workplaces and empower individuals through education and research.

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