



## THE WORKING MOTHER OF THE FUTURE

### How Demographics Will Force Change for Women at Work

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Societal norms regarding women, work and families have changed significantly over the past 50 years, but workplace norms remain stuck in the 1960s. Consider recent data on women, marriage and reproduction from the Pew Research Center:

- The median age of marriage in the U.S. is at a record high for women, as is the share of American adults who have never been married.
- Women are waiting longer to have children - Women under 25 only account for 22% of mothers with infants, down from 40% in 1960.
- More women are having children without marrying - The percentage of births from non-married women in the U.S. has risen from 5% in 1960 to 41% today.
- 70% of all women with children under 18 work in the U.S. That number is even higher (74%) among non-married women with children.



Now consider the implications of these changing statistics for the American workforce.

The number of working women in their 40s and 50s with young children will increase dramatically over the next decade. This is a noteworthy departure from past generations of working women, who had children in their 20s and early 30s and were empty nesters in their 40s. Specifically, it will mean that:

- Women will be entering a timeframe of peak career and earning opportunities -- defined by current workforce norms as between ages 45 and 55 -- just as the demands on them as parents intensify.
- Corporate America will see a rising share of female employees in senior positions -- roles traditionally associated with significant after hour social obligations -- with young children.
- Employers will experience a growing proportion of working mothers who will not be relying on the conventional economic, physical and psychological support structures associated with marriage.

The competitive advantage of the future will be defined by a company's ability to attract and retain talent. Organizations that change their practices, benefits and cultures to accommodate the needs of working mothers (and fathers!) will be positioned to reap significant economic benefits in the coming decade. Recent announcements from Apple and Facebook that the companies will pay for egg freezing in support of women having high-powered careers and children is proof of this trend.

Human capital professionals play a decisive role in successfully recruiting, developing, and keeping 21st century female leaders, but they must take a critical look at their company's generational and gender biases, recruitment tactics and talent management practices. Specifically they will need to develop targeted strategies for:

- Engaging a multigenerational female workforce
- Attracting and onboarding women for long-term retention
- Building and promoting a strong pipeline of women leaders
- Providing workplace flexibility that adds real value to working parents
- Addressing financial security and equal pay for women

The demand for family and women friendly workplace practices and cultures will gather steam due to changing generational and societal shifts. What will you do to ensure your company's standing for the future?