



ERG LEADERSHIP HANDBOOK



COMPANY **Ernst & Young**

ERG Today's Families Network (TFN)

In the U.S., the evolution from EY's Working Parents Network to its established Today's Families Network reflects the firm's recognition that employees build and care for their families in different ways.

Paying attention to the needs of employees who are parents or plan to become parents is a priority for Ernst & Young (EY). The firm's workforce is expected to be 80 percent millennials and Gen Z by 2020, and according to its global research, 78 percent of millennial employees are in dual-career relationships. A recent internal survey of the firm's global workforce found that parents are EY's most engaged employee group. EY understood that to attract and retain the best talent, it needed to offer inclusive parental benefits that met the needs of all employees, regardless of marital status, gender identity or sexual orientation, or how they planned to grow their family.

The Today's Families Network (TFN) was a source of important insight in the firm's initiative to expand parental leave benefits. With nearly 3,000 members, representing families with or without children, including nuclear, extended, couples/domestic partners and

singles, the input of the employee network helped ensure the new policies were accessible and equitable to meet the varying needs of all soon-to-be parents. Under the expanded leave benefits, primary care men and women welcoming a child through birth, adoption, surrogacy, foster care or legal guardianship are eligible for up to 16 weeks of fully paid parental leave. In addition, the policy offers financial assistance of up to \$25,000 lifetime maximum per family for adoption, and makes advanced reproductive technology procedures for infertility and/or surrogacy benefits available to same-sex and opposite-sex couples.

EY's equalized, gender-neutral parental-leave policy is on the leading edge of parental benefits. However, the firm recognized that simply implementing a new policy did not guarantee success unless there was a culture to support it. EY sponsored research on parental leave

concluded men felt it was socially acceptable to take only two weeks of paternity leave. The research found that while mothers traditionally take all of their parental leave, most men take less than their allotment. To proactively address the stigma associated with paternity leave, the TFN took steps to communicate the new benefits and create a culture that empowers men to take advantage of them:

- Local TFN chapters hosted events and panel discussions to increase awareness of the benefits for new dads and to encourage expectant and new dads to take the full leave available to them.
- TFN's executive sponsor sends a quarterly email to new dads with guidance on taking parental leave.
- To break the stigma of taking paternity leave, TFN's newsletter includes personal accounts of EY dads encouraging expectant fathers to take advantage of the new policy.
- TFN produced and released a video showcasing the 16-week parental leave experience of a new EY dad. The video was featured on Fortune.com.
- TFN's Career and Family Transitions Coaching program helps women and men navigate the challenges associated with taking parental leave and returning to work.
- TFN has a dedicated male executive coach available to interested dads.
- Virtual sessions using ThinkTank technology were scheduled with EY dads to collect insight and data on their parental-leave experiences.

Two years of data show that EY dads are taking more of their allotted paid parental leave. The average number of days taken off by new fathers has increased from three to eight since 2016 when the equalized leave policy was implemented. In 2018, approxi-

Addressing Intersectionality via Collaboration With Other ERGs

The Today's Family Network (TFN) partnered with EY's Pan Asian Professional Network (PAPN) to examine how the cultural expectations of Asian women impact career goals and family life. The two networks co-produced a 30-minute podcast that addressed Asian stereotypes and provided tips and guidance on learning to navigate culture expectations at work. Members of the two employee networks shared their personal stories, including insights and tips on achieving success as Asian women at EY. Topics covered included being more transparent with teams to build better relationships, suggestions on how allies can support team members, and strategies for raising visibility and self-promotion. There were 2,500 hits on the podcast announcement in the US and Canada alone.

In 2018, the TFN partnered with the firm's LGBT+ employee network, UNITY, and the employee-led Parents of LGBT+ Youth to co-host a Zoom video conference presentation on National Coming Out Day. The broadcast features a young woman who shares her personal experiences coming out. Her presentation was not only helpful to LGBT+ young adults and those considering coming out, but also spoke to the trials and tribulations all teens face as they transition to adulthood. EY employees and their teen-aged children were encouraged to participate together as a family and the session was scheduled late in the day to accommodate adolescents/teen children who wished to tune in. Two senior EY executives hosted the event and a live Q&A followed the presentation.

mately 200 dads are on track to take the full 16 weeks — twice the number from 2017.

These are important milestones. The firm's business impact research found that in groups where employees are most supported and able to use flexibility, they achieve greater balance between work and home, feel more fairly rewarded, and experience higher levels of retention.

"As the definition of family continued to evolve, it was important for EY to take a bold step that supported all our people and their many different pathways to parenthood. Our inclusive benefits will not only continue to attract and retain the best talent, but help us to deliver exceptional client service, while also encouraging our people to live fulfilling lives."

Carolyn Slaski, EY Americas Vice Chair -Talent