



mums@work

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Who is Johnson & Johnson?

Johnson & Johnson Medical is helping doctors and nurses to save lives, treat disease and Restore the Joys of Living for millions of people. Our employees come to work inspired by knowing that their caring transforms lives.

Johnson & Johnson Medical is part of the Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies, one of the world's most comprehensive health care organisations. Our first medical products were marketed here in 1904 and Johnson & Johnson Medical now operates across Australia and NZ. Products and technology from our core businesses units – [Cordis](#), [DePuy](#), [Ethicon](#) and [Ethicon Endo-Surgery](#) – support many medical specialty areas including orthopedics, vascular disease, obesity, gynecology, urology, sports medicine, neurology as well as general surgery. We live by a set of shared values set out in [Our Credo](#).

This guides our actions and behaviours and helps us to create an environment we're proud of. We believe that employees who are valued, respected and treated fairly bring passion and focus to their work and make important contributions.

Challenges

In 2007 we had feedback from a high potential employee who had been on parental leave. She was courageously open in talking about the challenges she had experienced in returning from leave - how difficult she had found it to come to the point of understanding what she wanted out of her role and her time with J&J, and how she could best work with her manager and HR to get to the right solution. She also talked about the challenges once she did come back to work, how she struggled with her identity, and how alone she felt – surely everyone else did this easily – why couldn't she?

Our employee shared this information in a focus group environment, as a result other people in the group became equally open and it was quickly apparent that there was a significant gap between the support we provided and what our employees needed.

We started talking about putting together a toolkit for parents and managers, and also about ways of breaking down communication barriers. As in any large organisation there were often plenty of people going through the same challenges however they were not necessarily known to each other.

We researched a variety of organisations that provided support in this area and found that mums@work had done significant work with other organisations that covered the breadth of what we were trying to achieve.

Solutions

We had identified two key requirements in how we wanted to support our employees. Firstly a toolkit that helped prepare parents – both in the policies that J&J had that could help them, and also the more general areas of managing their career, communication with the organisation, managing their workload, and thinking about flexible work options when they return etc. The second focus was on helping employees link in with each other, build relationships with



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individuals in similar circumstances, share ideas on what has worked for them, and talk to other employees who have transitioned through this phase in different ways to understand some of the options available.

The mums@work team were able to help in both areas. They produced the template for our Parental toolkit and worked with us to add the relevant J&J policy information. In addition they consulted with us to develop the facilitation guide for the Parents@J&J workshop – they then assisted in training facilitators across the organisation so that the ownership for this forum was broader than just HR.

In December 2008 we ran the first Parents @ J&J workshop – this was in pilot form and was also utilised as an opportunity to ‘train the trainer’ for future sessions. The initial feedback was very compelling with employees clearly engaged in the forum. In early 2009 several senior managers within the business volunteered to work with HR to refine the program further and to deliver the next workshop. This was run in August 2009. Again the feedback was very positive with two individuals attending both the 1st and 2nd workshop as they saw it as a way to reconnect with the business – in addition they wanted support to help them deal with the next stage they now found themselves in having previously attended their children were born. A further workshop is planned for Sydney early 2010 and additional employees have now volunteered to run the program in Melbourne (our next employee base).

The Parental Toolkit was completed in mid 2009 and sent to all employees who were either on leave or currently expecting a child. Our initial print run was expected to be enough for 1 year however we quickly found that the demand was so high we had to reprint within 2 months!

Feedback was exceptional with managers and employees alike indicating that they had never had anything so thorough provided to them to help support them through the parental leave and return from leave period.

Results (to date)

Overall the experience to-date appears to have opened the communication lines within the organisation and helped new parents feel more confident about their rights as well as the options available to them. The workshop forums have also helped to provide continuous feedback to the organisation as new issues are raised and discussed openly.

Feedback from the workshop has indicated that employees value the opportunity to meet others in similar circumstances and to learn from the ‘real life’ experiences of other parents who have returned to work.

An added benefit has been the level of engagement from senior leaders in the organisation, most have now attended a forum themselves either as a participant or presenter, and they have openly shared their own experiences (good and bad) in how they have juggled their career and family life. This has again served to break down some of the barriers employees perceived in relation to how the business might support them in how they make their own work/life balance decisions.



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Future plans

The programs we have conducted so far have also helped to raise further suggestions on how we can develop in this area. Other initiatives on the horizon include:

Increased management training, guidelines on flexible work practices, further refining of our Parental leave benefits and assistance in vacation care.