

Diversity consultancy uses latest PwC data to demonstrate need for gender equality

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd

Wednesday, 30 November 2016

Diversity consultancy, The Clear Company, has urged employers to better embrace women returning from career breaks in order to improve both their employer brand and bottom line figures.

Responding to the latest report from PwC – which revealed that two-thirds of women could be working below their potential when they return to the workforce – the diversity specialist has explained that attitudes must change or firms risk negatively impacting their competitive stance.

According to the whitepaper, Retaining and Advancing Women in Business: A model for success, 29,000 women returning to work on a part-time basis will be underemployed, potentially costing the UK £1.7 billion in gains.

Kate Headley, Director of The Clear Company, explains why just accepting women back into work after a career break won't provide the ideal results:

“In this modern world it's almost inconceivable that so many females re-entering employment from a career break still find themselves side-lined into lower-skilled and lesser paid roles – particularly given the improvements to challenges such as childcare with the introduction of shared parental leave. This does, however, also bring to the fore the question of how many men are also facing challenges re-entering work following a break. Employers of all shapes and sizes need to remember that we are operating in the gig economy which means that career breaks, flexible working and the like are only going to become increasingly common. The age-old attitudes towards those returning to work from a break cannot continue if an organisation wants to both compete for top talent and thrive. Expecting anyone to simply jump back into a role after a break without any support simply isn't feasible and employers must consider how they can better manage this, with a phased return to work, for example.

“The fact that a staggering three in five professional female work returners are moved into lower-skilled or lower-paid roles really demonstrates that this demographic is being significantly under-utilised. Having a career break for any reason isn't detrimental to an individual's skills and abilities – in fact in many cases it can help them develop new, much desired attributes.

“The figures really do speak for themselves. The fact that the UK could see a gain of £1.7 billion if women returning from career breaks are utilised to their full potential should provide organisations with all the incentive they need to create a more inclusive working environment. It's important to remember that even small changes can make a huge difference. Improving flexible working options or tackling the negative perceptions of CV Gaps, for example, can help reverse the stigma of women taking career breaks and ultimately, better ensure they are given everything they need to perform to their full potential once back at work.”

ENDS