

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

EXPERIENCE FROM IMPLEMENTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE POLICIES IN A SMALL ENTERPRISE

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Channel Crossings

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Company profile:

- **Language school**
- **Study abroad**
- **Translations, interpreting, conference service**

- founded in 1993
- ISO 9001:2000 certified
- EN 15038 certified provider of translation services
- 2004 – Label Award – European Language Award for innovative project in language training
- 2005 – awarded by Gender Studies the winning prize for the best small company applying equal opportunities policy for men and women in the Czech Republic

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Revenues 2011: **CZK 64,000,000** (rounded)
EUR 2,560,000

Staff: **39 employees**
- 34 office staff
(out of which 5 women on maternity/parental leave)
- 5 other employees (teachers)

Ration men : women: 5 : 34

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HR policy:

- necessity to react to the situation arisen in the company
- support parents on maternity/parental leave and employees taking care of small children

Objectives:

- maintain the team of qualified employees – loyal, stable and motivated
- develop pleasant work environment with positive interpersonal relations
- develop an image of a respectable employer/employer in demand

Economic objectives:

- maintain company trained employees, reduce costs related to recruitment and training of new employees
- achieve better economic results through the efficient work with HR potential

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Tools:

- maximize use of small company advantages (transparency, needs analysis, personal contact/individual approach, flexibility)
- maximize use of existing HR activities/costs (broader engagement, efficiency)

Work-life balance application tools:

- flexible working hours
- part-time work (4-6 hours a day)
- home office
- unpaid/extra leave
- 4 year parental leave (in specific cases)

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Tools engaging parents on maternity/parental leave into work and/or into the company life:

- on-going communication with parents on maternity/parental leave invitation to company social events (parties, outdoor weekend)
- invitation to company special events (annual meetings, conferences, workshops etc.)
- training (use of internal trainings)
- home office
- evening work in the company
- in-company babysitting (short-term purposes, mostly for teachers)

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Positive results of our HR policy:

- loyal employees, good terms
- reduced turnover of employees – lower HR costs
- good company/employer reputation
- engagement of parents on maternity/parental leave into work – up-to-date on company development/matters
- further training of women on maternity/parental leave – qualification upgrade, learn new methods, procedures applied in the company

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Negative aspects of our HR policy:

- more demanding coordination of work for managers
- necessity of intense communication between members of the team, clear specification of procedures and goals
- personnel changes in the team while employees on maternity leave may result in unwillingness from colleagues to accept people coming back to the team
- providing flexibility in combination with the labor law in effect brings inflexibility in shifting with labor force

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Broader context:

Implementation of our activities into our products and into our projects:

Language courses with babysitting services

Lifelong learning ESF project with the focus on women

Development of Center for Further Education Focusing on Programs, Courses and New Forms of Training with Focus on Women of all Age Groups including Blended and E-learning Courses

Project partner - Municipality Office of Prague 16

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Conclusion:

- applied HR policy has proved to be successful when implemented on a reasonable scale reflecting the needs of individual work teams
- work on further development of current HR policy based on needs analysis of company employees and company goals

Thank you for your attention

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