

McCarthy Mentoring

Newsletter: September 2007

Dear colleagues

It is an exciting time of year for all Australians as a Federal Election is imminent. Paid maternity leave for Australian women is one of the issues that many of us are talking about.

Along with the US we remain the only developed country in the world that has no legislation for paid maternity leave! The Europeans are light years ahead offering months of leave on full pay.

In Australia, women's participation in the workforce has steadily increased over the past 25 years, but a career path for women remains ambiguous and is the cause of much anxiety among young women and often their employers!

Much of this newsletter focuses on this issue - the statistics, the long term view and the implications for employers, employees and mentors.

We present a **checklist** for you to measure your own organisation. What conditions are offered for maternity and paternity leave and what kind of support for women returning to the workplace? Is part time work the answer or does it spell the end of a career?

In Conversation talks to Les Matheson, Chief Executive Officer of Citibank in Australia and New Zealand about his personal experience of mentoring and the program for his staff.

In my travels I manage to see many of you throughout the year however we would like to bring more of you together and will hold a series of lunches in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane in coming months. Look out for those invitations.

I hope this newsletter finds you well and happy.

Best wishes, Wendy

Suggested Reading



Off-ramps and On-ramps



The Feminine Mistake



Mothers on the Fast Track



Careers and Motherhood, Challenges and Choices



Let Go of My Leg



Opting Out?



Techniques for Coaching & Mentoring



Everyone Needs a Mentor



The **CEO Kit for Attracting and Retaining Female Talent** produced by **Chief Executive Women**, is an excellent publication emphasising the theme that what gets measured gets done. The kit poses the question "Why don't CEOs have programs and performance measures in place to develop and retain female talent?"

This is a practical resource that can help organisations attract and retain female talent. The Kit may be ordered at www.cew.org.au

News

Australian Social Trends, 2007



Population

[Recent increases in Australia's fertility](#)
[International fertility comparison](#)
[Australia's babies](#)
[Migration: permanent additions to Aus-](#)



Family and community

[Lifetime marriage and divorce trends](#)
[One-parent families](#)
[Before and/or after school care](#)



Health

[Overweight and obesity](#)
[Diabetes mellitus](#)
[Selected chronic conditions among A-](#)



Education and training

[Qualification profile of Australians](#)
[Training for a trade](#)
[International students in Australia](#)



Work

[Labour force participation – an intern-](#)
[Maternity leave arrangements](#)
[Work-related injuries](#)



Economic resources

[Purchasing power](#)
[Trends in household consumption](#)
[Low income low wealth households](#)



Housing

[Wealth in homes of owner-occupier h-](#)
[Larger dwellings, smaller households](#)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' Australian Social Trends 2007, released in early August, provides a snapshot of Australian life and details significant social trends that have policy implications for government.

Some key changes highlighted by the ABS were that Australians are fatter, greedier and increasingly single, which was not a particularly favourable description. Here is some of the detail:

- The probability of marrying has declined. If current rates were to continue, 31% of men and 26% of women would never marry. At the same time, the probability of marriages ending in divorce has increased. One third of marriages which took place in 2000-02 now end in divorce compared to 28% of marriages in 1985-87.
- In 2004-06 one in five children were in one parent families. These families are at a higher risk of disadvantage with 49% of one parent families with children under 15 having low income and low wealth, compared with 11% of couple families with children the same age.
- Australia's total fertility rate is 1.81 babies per woman, its highest level in 10 years. Women aged over 30 years and living in more advantaged areas are driving the increase.

- The Australian labour force participation rate for women of childbearing age (15-44 yrs) rose from 59% in 1980 to 71% in 2005. [read more](#)

Young Guns!

The six winners of the 2007 AFR Boss Young Executive of the Year awards were featured in the July edition of the magazine. Significantly, use of mentors was identified as a key strategy to success for these young achievers! One of our most experienced mentors Bonnie Boezeman was on the judging panel. [read more](#)



Long Work Hours

A recent University of Melbourne study of Australian work hours has found that most professional men in long hours jobs were not willing conscripts and would prefer to work less hours.

The study categorises workers as long hours “volunteers” those who usually work and prefer working more than 50 hours a week; long hours “conscripts” those who report working more than 50 hours a week and would prefer NOT to and “short hours workers” (those working less than 50 hrs).

Employed fathers with non-employed partners tend to voluntarily work long hours and do so persistently over time. Recent promotions were associated with “volunteer” status but more significantly linked with “conscript” status.

Women and public servants were less likely to work long hours, either as volunteers or conscripts. Less educated people were more likely to work long hours voluntarily to earn more money.

[read more](#)

IN CONVERSATION with Les Matheson, CEO, Citibank Australia and New Zealand

Les Matheson is a Division Executive in the Asia Pacific Region. He is Head of the Global Consumer Group businesses in Australia, the Philippines and Guam. Les is also CEO of Citibank Australia and New Zealand, appointed in January 2002.

From 1999 to 2001 he was Business Head of Consumer Banking in Japan, responsible for the branch banking liabilities business. He was Head of Internet Development Asia Pacific and Head of Marketing for North Asia, based in Taiwan from 1997 to 1998.

Prior to joining Citibank, Les worked across a number of divisions of Kraft Foods International, based in South America, Western and Eastern Europe. Les began his business career with Proctor & Gamble with a classic brand management training. Les has lived and worked in the UK, Belgium, Switzerland, Argentina, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan and Australia. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree (Honours).



Les, you arrived in Australia in 2002 to take up the position of CEO and soon after you sought a mentor. Why did you need one and tell us about your experience of mentoring.

A mentor was useful for me both in terms of my general personal development and also in getting to know a new country and establish a personal network. The mentor that I had was head of one of the large strategic consulting companies and had worked in Australia and the UK. He had an international perspective and was able to talk to me about Australia, the culture and the different approach to work. He helped me adjust. As well as talking about my strengths and weaknesses, we looked at ways in which I could develop my strengths and ameliorate my many weaknesses.

Were there particular issues you wanted to address with a mentor?

I hadn't actually had a mentor before. My impression is that some of the HR principles and methods are as advanced in Australia as anything I've seen around the world. Across the financial services industry there are many companies that have done a pretty good job of utilising the latest tools for helping people grow and develop across an organisation. I was interested in the program because I hadn't come across it before and was interested in seeing how it worked, what worked and what didn't. The best way to understand that was to experience it myself ... [read more](#)

Guardian
Unlimited

Politics,
philosophy
and society

The Hidden Brain Drain

The Guardian, 4 June 2007

*Five years ago, Sylvia Ann Hewlett terrified women with her book *Baby Hunger*, a warning against leaving motherhood till too late. Now she's back with another shocking message: employers are writing off women once they've had children. And we're all losing out, she tells Emily Wilson.*

Sylvia Ann Hewlett first veered off the career highway - or "off-ramped", as she calls it - in her early 30s. She was assistant professor of economics at Barnard College, part of Columbia University, New York, and in the running for a permanent teaching position, when she lost twins in the seventh month of pregnancy.

Then she lost her job too: she was told that she hadn't made tenure because she had "allowed childbearing to dilute [her] focus". [read more](#)

Snapshot

Maternity Leave in Australia

Drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Australian Social Trends 2007, released in early August.



- In 2005, 73% of women (198,000) with a child under two years who were employed in their last job while pregnant reported using some type of leave for the birth and subsequent care of their child.
- Fourteen percent of those women used only paid leave, 22% used only unpaid leave and 37% a combination of both.
- Just over one quarter (27%) did not use any leave, with the majority of those women leaving their jobs permanently.
- Women who used leave had on average 34 weeks (nearly eight months) approved leave.
- Women with the longest periods of leave worked in the public sector (37 weeks on average) in organisations with 20 or more employees (36 weeks) or had been with their employer for more than one year (35 weeks).
- Women using paid leave had an average 12 weeks of approved paid leave. [read more](#)

What are the numbers?

Is your workplace an employer of choice for working mothers?

Apply this checklist to your workplace.

- How many women are in senior positions?
- What is the return to work rate for women having babies?
- How many women in senior positions are mothers?
- How many men take up paternity leave?
- How many staff actually use flexible working arrangements?
- Do managers have accountability for work/life initiatives?
- What does the organisation's culture say about work life balance?



Managing Maternity Leave in 2007

By Wendy McCarthy

It's time to reframe the issues around maternity leave. We need to recognise that maternity leave can be a disconnecting experience for many women. Our society sends mixed messages to new mothers. Governments exalt women to become mothers and offer financial – albeit small – incentives while organisations often see maternity leave as a problem. Observing the issue over 40 years I can see that the present realities of what was so dearly fought for may not be the dream we anticipated.

As a working parent maternity leave was not available to me and it was hard to argue that it should be seen as other than a privilege. In the seventies the Women's Movement ensured that maternity leave became a right and part of the feminist agenda. But culturally the thinking was that if you were going to be a good mother you would not dream of returning to work.

Many women like myself were in a state of conflict about wanting to go back to work and contribute to our society while wanting to be good parents. We truly believed that it was possible to be both. If it was not the world looked bleak and women could never assume leadership positions.

As a consequence we turned our minds and activities to policy development and government leadership. We went to court and argued for equal pay and for maternity leave despite the opposition of employers and most unions. We won landmark cases and naively thought we had won the battle and the war.

We did not realise that we had not changed the deeply embedded cultural attitudes about working mothers and today it remains a significant issue ... [read more](#)



Your Feedback

McCarthy Mentoring conducted three workshops with mentors in Sydney and Melbourne in April.

These sessions were a great opportunity to bring mentors together to discuss techniques, challenges and other issues. There was a role play scenario where mentors collectively gave advice to a young woman struggling with her decision to leave her high flying job, or be a mum. It seemed our mentee had not considered being both a worker and mother and she received some very sound counsel. We appreciate you are all busy but feel these workshops are an important part of the calendar.

Next Edition: The business case for mentoring

Please **send us** your news, articles and feedback for the next edition

Please send your comments and suggestions for our newsletter to sophie@mccarthymentoring.com

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