

Parental Leave Management

Parents have the right to take 420 days of parental leave between them according to current Swedish legislation. It is every parents wish to spend as much time as possible with their new family member. The balance between family and career becomes difficult for the individual when he or she has an interesting and demanding job. Companies have to manage without a specialist, manager or executive for many months, which leads to compromises on many levels and potentially lost business or internal efficiency.

There is a risk that an organization with an employee, in a management or executive position who goes on parental leave, loses direction and momentum. There will be one team member missing when the objectives are to be met and the team may fail to deliver or run the risk of being overworked and lose yet other team members in the absence of the manager.

The demands on the team will not change during the parental leave period and the risk of staff being “burned out” is likely to increase in periods with lack of direction and high work load.

Advantage for the company

The company will engage a Parental Leave Management (PLM) consultant for the duration of the employee’s parental leave period. The PLM consultant’s competencies shall match what is specified in the job description for the person who is going on parental leave. In addition, the PLM consultant shall be a notch more senior than what is actually required for the position.

List of advantages:

- An outside view for a period of time may bring new insights
- Increased employee satisfaction
- Reduced risk of staff being “burned out” due to lack of direction and too high work load in the absence of the manager or executive.
- No loss of business due to parental leave
- No loss of internal efficiency during parental leave

Advantage for the employee taking parental leave

The employee will have a better chance to disconnect from work when someone else has taken over all the responsibilities. The effect may be a more focused and motivated employee after the parental leave period. The employee will avoid being torn between family and work during the leave. An option in the assignment can be for the PLM consultant to coach the employee during and/or after the parental leave period based on learning’s during the time in the company.

List of advantages:

- Less stress and bad conscience during parental leave period
- More motivated when coming back after having spent time with family
- Access to a coach with full insight to the dynamics of the workplace

Advantage for the team

The team will have a better chance of staying motivated and on track in the case the employee going on parental leave is replaced. Not replacing him or her may have negative implications on team goals and eventually on the team spirit.

List of advantages:

- An outside view on current activities
- No reduction of team members during parental leave
- No absence of management during parental leave

The PLM model

The objective with the PLM assignment is first agreed between the company and the PLM consultant. Three phases follow when the assignment is agreed, Preparation – The Parental Leave Period – Reintegration.

There may be follow-up activities as a result of the assignment that has to be agreed on a case-by case basis.

1. Define assignment
 - a. Fill the gap
 - b. Review organization and report
 - c. Coach/Mentor employee on parental leave
2. Preparation, knowledge transfer from employee leaving for parental leave to PLM consultant
3. The Parental Leave Period
4. Reintegration of employee on parental leave, end of assignment and report
5. Optional coaching/mentoring/improvement activities

