

Promoting Parenting Among Male Employees

A CHALLENGE FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY



Why this guide

As part of their commitment and actions aimed at promoting equal opportunity, ORSE [Observatory of Corporate Social Responsibility] and CNIDFF (French National Information Centre on the Rights of Women and Families) are providing companies with a guide to support their efforts to encourage greater involvement of their male employees in parenting.

The guide is intended for all those who can play a role in this field:

- in a corporate context: human resource staff, personnel representatives, managers, etc.
- externally, all those who can play a positive role such as public authorities, trade organizations, etc.

With a desire to capture the widest panorama possible of the issue of promoting parenting among male employees, without claiming to be exhaustive, the guide draws on practices implemented in companies in France and abroad, privileging those based on dialogue between the human resources department and union organizations.

The document covers the following themes:

- challenges faced by companies promoting parenting among their male employees,
- difficulties encountered by male employees who wish to have a greater day-to-day presence with their children,
- solutions adopted by companies to make progress in this area.

With its practical and pedagogical approach, the guide aims to address certain concrete aspects related to each of these themes. This information is presented according to categories identifiable by specific graphics:

- good company, union, and government practices
- recommendations
- presentation of systems set up in companies
- excerpts from corporate agreements negotiated over issues of equal opportunity



Preface

Although the portrait of the family has considerably changed these last ten years in all European countries, things have still moved too slowly in terms of parenting. The figures speak for themselves: 14.2% of mothers do not go out to work, compared with 1.4% of fathers. And when women do go out to work, they spend twice as much time with their children than fathers do.

Faced with this reality, our challenge, as ministers in charge of family affairs, is both to provide fathers who so desire with the means to spend more time with their children and also to encourage them to take a more active part in their daily education.

The stakes are twofold: progressing towards greater professional equality between women and men, by making work more attractive for everyone, at all ages and all stages of life, while at the same time providing the means for guaranteeing a dynamic European birth rate.

To achieve this aim, it is in the field, attentive to the needs of parents that we must continue to progress.

How should we do this? By accompanying companies and unions who volunteer, encouraging social dialogue through negotiations on subjects such as wages and job classifications, or, for instance, within the scope of skills and job enhancement management programmes, to go further, debate and exchange, to set up appropriate, made-to-measure solutions which accommodate both constraints and expectations.

We shall also work alongside companies by spotlighting their good practices in this field, to give them greater visibility and to encourage emulation. It is thanks to this kind of concrete initiative that we shall make things change.

This guide is one of those good practices. Designed by ORSE to be practical and pedagogical, it provides companies with the key information needed to establish a precise parenting diagnosis, draw up an action plan and also defend it in front of their male employees! In short, a tool for action!

Let us never forget that we shall only manage to alter mentalities if we work together, and abandon the grand speeches on equal opportunities in favour of practical workshops!

I wish you good reading

Xavier BERTRAND, French Minister of Labour, Work Relations, Family Affairs and Solidarity
Nadine MORANO, French Secretary of State in charge of Family Affairs.

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A guide primarily focused on fathers



The question of parenting and, more specifically, how to better reconcile parenting and employment, is one that many companies are asking themselves today. It must be said that among their employees there's a pressing urge for a better worklife balance.

Some feel that beyond a few formal commitments, things are hardly improving yet. However, a certain dynamic does seem to be underway.

The purpose of this guide is to contribute to that dynamic. More specifically, it aims to assist companies in their efforts to take parenting into account from the standpoint of their male employees. Focusing on men and fathers is not one of the most common approaches in the realm of working toward equal opportunity. This is why it seemed important to focus specifically on this area.

Continuing to consider the subject of equal opportunity between men and women solely as a women's issue runs the risk of:

- creating animosity between employee "categories": women against men in particular,
- generally focusing on only a small portion of their employees: women with children or future mothers, but not men and not women without children.

While the emphasis is largely on men, women will nevertheless not be left out. Companies that are currently addressing the issue of reconciling work with family life for their male employees and that wish to make progress in this area will indeed be required to ponder subjects such as work organization and career management processes, with positive fallout for all their employees, men and women alike.

As family models evolve, there are countless other subjects knocking at the corporate door: single parent families, civil union couples, same-sex parenting, or elderly parents.

In order to address them properly, however, all these subjects cannot be handled at the same time. As a result, the scope of this guide has been limited voluntarily to a single aspect - parenting and working life from the male standpoint - with the possibility, of course, of addressing the other themes in the future.

I . Promoting parenting among male employees: a challenge for companies

While companies today are being confronted with an ever-changing and open economic environment and have to deal with increasingly fierce competitors, a large number of them could be tempted to see the promotion of parenting among their male employees as nothing more than an ancillary subject. They could be wrong, because there are multiple reasons for taking action. Pressure is coming from both outside and inside.

1 Strong external pressure

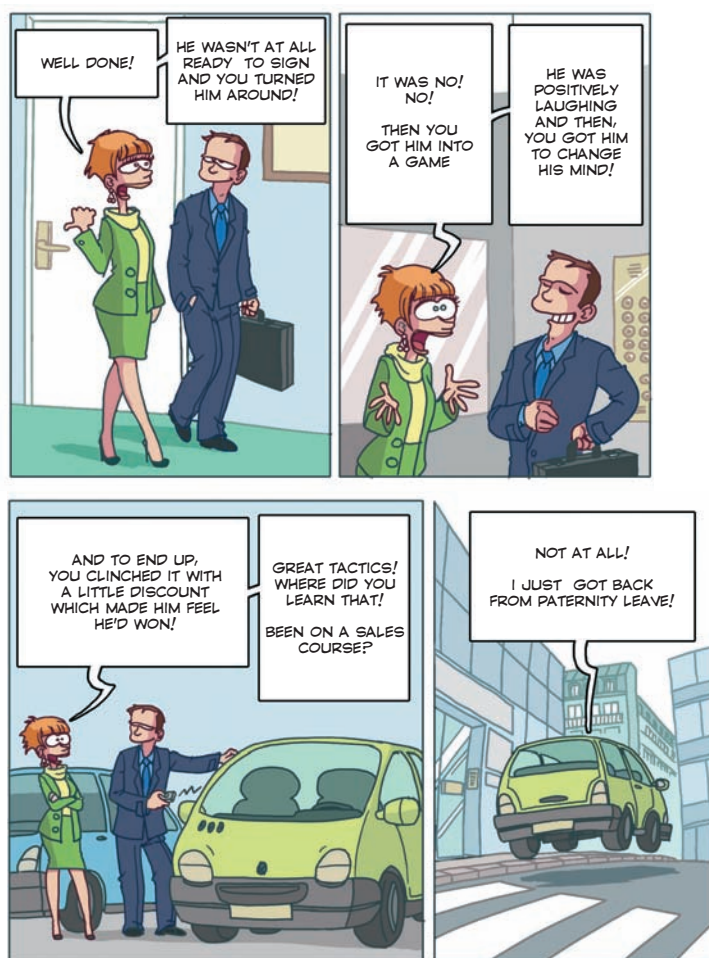
Legal pressure

The subject of equal opportunity between men and women can no longer be brushed aside by companies. Their legal obligations in this area on the national level have been intensified in recent years following the commitment of various agencies on the global and especially European levels.

International standpoints

International organizations such as the OECD, European Union, Council of Europe, or the International Labour Organization (ILO) have stressed on several occasions that a balanced participation of women and men in professional and private life is a necessary condition for a harmonious development of society.

As part of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the UN is reiterating that states signing the convention “are aware that the traditional role of men in the family and society must evolve as much as that of women if we wish to achieve true equality between men and women.”



European commitment

On the European level, the Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Policy dated June 29, 2000 issued a resolution that represented a milestone in these areas: "The principle of equality between men and women requires that we offset the disadvantage of women with regard to the conditions under which they access and participate in the labour market, and the disadvantage of men with regard to the conditions under which they participate in family life."

The European Commission's Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women feels that "it is important for efforts directed at men in the area of gender equality to support the accountability of women and greater equality," (advisory dated July 2006 on the role of men in the struggle for equality between men and women).

The European Parliament in turn notes that a "reconciliation of one's professional, private, and family life is one of the keys to increasing employment and asks the Commission to collect and distribute the best practices for a true balance between work and private life and a greater participation of men in family life," and "urges the Commission and Member States to encourage the participation of men in the implementation of gender equality policies, particularly with regard to reconciling professional, private, and family life" (Resolution dated 3 September 2008 on equality between men and women).

The Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men recommends in its report "Involving Men in Achieving Gender Equality" that the Parliamentary Assembly of The Council of Europe should urgently call on the governments of member states to:

- educate men and offer a framework to encourage them to take an active part in tasks traditionally assigned to women (childcare, management of social and educational matters)
- promote the position of women on the labour market and their access to the decision-making posts, and thus help to tackle the unequal pay
- introduce special programmes to promote parenthood and ways of reconciling work and private life among male employees in the civil service and encourage enterprises in the private sector to propose similar programmes, in line with the Recommendation 1769 (2006) on "The need to reconcile work and family life"

As for its part, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) requested in 2008:

"the launching of campaigns encouraging men to participate in household tasks and to use their rights and the systems available to them...

allowing women and men to combine a job and high-quality parenting with other educational and family responsibilities is a crucial prerequisite for achieving equality between men and women."

"Concrete actions are needed to encourage men to assume family responsibilities, namely through measures motivating them to take parental and paternity leave and benefit from the same holiday rights as women,"

Vladimir Špidla, European Commissioner of Labour, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunity, January 2007.

I. PROMOTING PARENTING



Excerpt from a comic strip promoting paternity leave in Finland

Mobilization of national governments

Numerous countries have made a commitment to promoting equal opportunity and parenting among fathers. Very often this is done by creating sufficiently-long paternity leave and by providing corresponding compensation.

Certain countries, such as Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, Lithuania, and Finland, are conducting promotional and awareness campaigns to encourage men to exercise their parental rights (see Appendix 2).



Social responsibility challenges

With the rise in the concept of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), companies are increasingly under the obligation to incorporate social, economic, and environmental concerns into their activities and interactions with their stakeholders.

Such stakeholders may be:

- public authorities,
- consumers,
- employees through their unions or individually,
- new players referred to as "socially responsible" investors. In order to select the most exemplary companies in terms of CSR, such investors make use of extra-financial rating agencies that, in recent years, have developed increasingly fine evaluation tools for assessing the social behaviour of companies,
- the media.

Whichever the stakeholders, they are increasingly watchful as to the impacts of corporate activities.

The question of promoting parenting among male employees and, more generally speaking, equal opportunity between men and women, falls under the rubric of CSR.

By neglecting this subject, companies could run the risk of being accused of inconsistency and/or negligence by their stakeholders.

On the contrary, taking this issue into account can have positive effects, particularly in terms of image. In any event, these are topics that the media enjoy reporting on.

2 Strong internal pressure

New aspirations and a risk of disengagement by men

Several studies conducted in recent years have demonstrated the will of fathers to be more involved in household responsibilities and their desire to “renegotiate” their role in the family, even if, for the time being, women in Europe continue to spend twice as much time in household activities: 4 hours and 29 minutes compared to 2 hours and 18 minutes (source: Eurostat, 2005).

Men give the following motives :

- to establish a closer relationship with their children,
- to prolong the period of parental care,
- to be present with their wives right after childbirth,
- to offer women more flexibility for greater involvement in their own professional lives and to earn more money, etc.
- younger, balancing-act fathers who are experimenting with parenting and reconciling it with their work life... These men best represent the contemporary father: rejection of a role division, parental fulfillment, de-specialization of roles, equal investment in their professional and private lives. They expect a cultural evolution from the company and concrete action to make their daily lives run more smoothly,
- egalitarian fathers who are hypersensitive to the issue of balance and who have made some real choices. For these fathers, their daily work must be capable of adapting to family imperatives provided results and efficiency are ensured. They are the most fervent militants for the implementation of a “family friendly” egalitarian policy involving a genuine cultural evolution within companies.

The study published in 2008 by EQUILIBRES entitled “House husbands in search of a balance” provides an interesting paternal typology:

- income providers who build their male identity through their work and participate very little in household and parenting tasks. For these men, it is not necessarily the company’s job to help them and they remain very discrete about their priorities concerning these issues,

The results of the study show that in 2008 most fathers in their thirties or forties in management jobs are “balancing act” or “egalitarian” fathers.

Companies cannot just ignore these new aspirations. They would run the risk of encountering growing difficulties in hiring and/or developing employee loyalty. Many of them, who already have to cope with a tight hiring market, cannot afford to take such risks.

IF THEY FAIL TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THESE CHANGES IN THEIR EMPLOYEES' EXPECTATIONS, COMPANIES COULD BE FACED WITH DEMOTIVATION AND A LACK OF COMMITMENT AMONG EMPLOYEES. AT A TIME WHEN MORE THAN EVER THEY NEED , EVERY POSSIBLE ASSET TO ACHIEVE THEIR CORPORATE GOALS.



[1] Study involving 400 fathers in their thirties in management positions as part of the QUALITEMPS project coordinated by the CNIDFF, downloadable from the site: www.equilibres.eu.

I. PROMOTING PARENTING

Cost of doing nothing

Certain companies are still hesitating to tackle promotion of parenting by men because they see it mostly as a cost generator.

However, the cost of doing nothing could soon prove to be even higher...

The costs that could be avoided by applying these worklife reconciliation policies have been identified in a certain number of projects or studies. The European project "All Together" mentions the results of a study conducted in Spain in 2006 that showed that companies were confronted with problems caused by a lack of balance between family and professional responsibilities:

- difficulty in hiring highly-qualified personnel (50% of the companies surveyed),
- absenteeism (32%),
- poor employee motivation (26%),
- lack of employee commitment to the company (26%),
- sick leave due to stress (5%).

On the contrary, companies that take action to promote parenting among men will reap a certain number of rewards. The "Families and Employers" survey, conducted in France between 2004 and 2005 by the INED [National Institute of Demographic Studies] and INSEE [National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies] on a sampling of 4,550 facilities with more than 20 employees, brings to light three primary reasons that motivate employers to become involved in reconciling the private and professional lives of their employees²:

- a drop in absenteeism (response given by 64% of facilities)
- wellbeing of employees (62%)
- improved productivity and performance (56%)

Development of employee loyalty and an improved corporate image are mentioned less often.



COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

In Switzerland, Prognos SA conducted a study in 2005 entitled "Cost-benefit analysis of a family-friendly corporate policy" at the request of the Federal Department of the Economy (the study can be downloaded from the site www.worklife.ch)

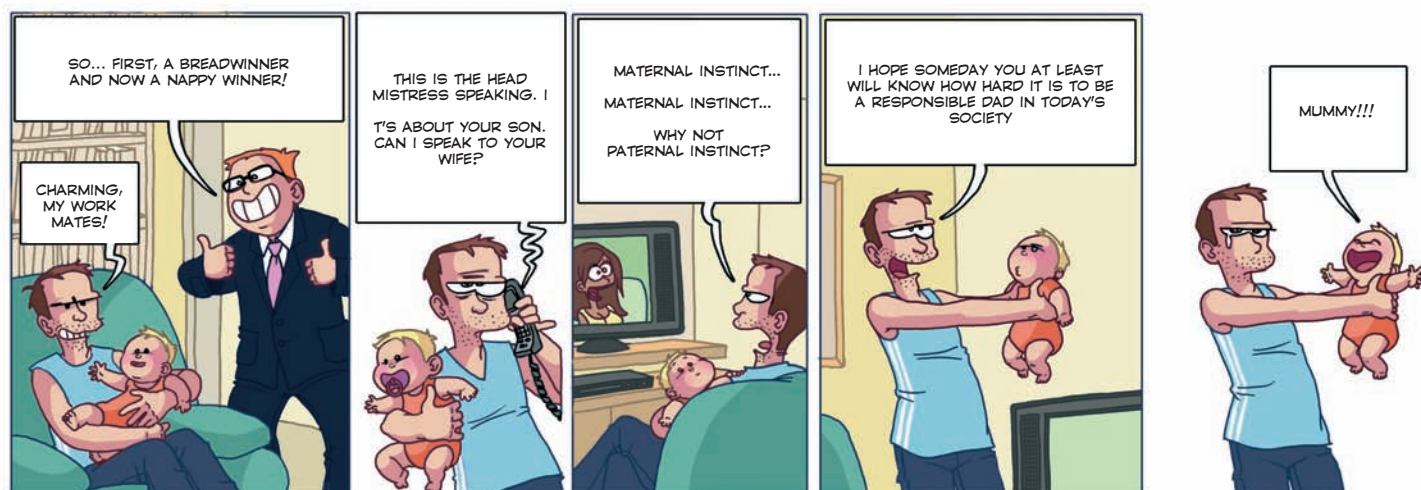
When this study was made public, the Federal Councillor in charge of the topic emphasized that:

"The study demonstrates that a family-friendly corporate policy pays off. In fact, the absence of measures is costly.

I would like the study being presented today to help change certain thinking patterns, which are sometimes firmly anchored in the professional world: in the long run, family-friendly corporate policies should no longer automatically be given negative labels such as "social measures," "feminist demands," or "to be implemented at some point." On the contrary, these policies should instil positive responses such as "improvement in the corporate results" and "current needs of many employees, both mothers and fathers."

[2] Lefèvre, Cécile; Pailhé, Ariane; Solaz, Anne, "Employers, another player in family policy?", Research and forecasts no. 92, June 2008

II . Day-to-day difficulties encountered by male employees



1 Social obstacles

Identities and stereotypes

Men who are now aspiring to a more consistent and daily presence with their children (and we have seen earlier that they are increasing in number) come face-to-face with representations of the respective roles of men and women that are still highly stereotypical in society.

The traditional role divisions between the breadwinning male, who bears the responsibility of earning the family's income while his perfect housewife takes care of the household and children, is far from having completely disappeared from the collective psyche.

Many men still hesitate to deviate from this father role for fear that they will not be perceived as "real" men.

As a result, the "woman = mother" equation is all too often prevalent in companies, with all the resulting difficulties for women considered "by nature" to be less available for professional life than men.

At the same time, the "man = father" equation almost never comes to mind.

Fathers who want to become involved in caring for their children without relinquishing their professional ambitions, to a very large extent, still have to invent a new role. They work to build a new male identity alongside the more traditional one.

In companies, men hesitate to take time off to care for their children, to request scheduling arrangements or part-time work, particularly on account of these identity concerns.

What will their colleagues think?

How will they be perceived if they say they want to spend time with their children toward the end of the day at a time schools continue to call "mummy time"?

And yet, the company can help to change these roles through the policy it decides to implement in order to promote parenting among men.

II . DAY-TO-DAY DIFFICULTIES

“All too often, men are probably still victims of stereotypes, we need to combat.”

Vladimír Špidla, European Commissioner of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunity

Not always easy to be a “breadwinner”

In the study published in 2006 by Lab’Ho Adecco entitled “From equality to diversity: men, women, and companies,” authors Juliette Ghiulamila and Pascale Levet comment on how the role of primary breadwinner of the family can be uncomfortable over the long haul:

“This role of being ‘ultimately responsible for the thing,’ as one of the directing managers puts it, is, in their eyes, difficult to bear... They suffer from the ‘Atlas syndrome’...

For fear of ‘losing their job,’ they have no other choice than to bear the brunt. ‘No waves’ seems to be their motto and too bad if they have to grin and bear it... Ultimately, they sometimes find themselves envying women and their ‘moods,’ their split between children and career, because they feel that they just do not have a choice. (...) Pigeon-holing men in a stereotype that is primarily occupational is all the more burdensome for them because, when problems arise in their careers, it is more difficult for them to recover than for women who are mothers and who have ‘two arrows in their quiver,’ an occupational identity but also another identity with their children.”

“It is still perceived as abnormal for a man to take care of his child when the child is sick. The school will always call the mother even if it's the father who has given his telephone number.”

Sophie Ponthieux (INSEE).





"We owe kids better" - Example of an advertisement by a cable channel for children

Gender stereotypes in advertising

The portrayal of fathers in advertising is still very stereotypical: companies should pay attention to consistency. Advertising plays an important role in the perpetuation of gender stereotypes. Sexism in advertising, which conveys stereotypes about women but also men, is denounced regularly. Advertising is monitored by the advertising regulation authorities in each country and, on the European level, the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality considers, for example, that advertising conveying discriminatory and/or demeaning messages based on gender and any form of gender stereotype is an obstacle to the emergence of a modern, egalitarian society.

The few professionals (in both advertising and psychology) who have studied the image of fathers and men in general conveyed by advertising find a reiteration of traditional stereotypes.

As stated by a Canadian media-awareness network (www.education-medias.ca): "groups defending the rights of fathers regularly complain that televised advertising presents men as clowns incapable of handling the simplest family tasks and who get no respect in the family" (see the advertising example above).

Companies that work to promote parenting among their male employees and that strive to change the portrayals of the roles of men and women internally will have to demonstrate consistency: care should be taken to ensure that changes in the internal portrayals do not contradict any external communication that might be more faithful to traditional stereotypes.

"Sexist portrayals freeze gender-assigned roles and thereby put limits on the freedom of action and choices of girls and women, but also boys and men."

(Excerpt from the report by the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality on the impact of marketing and advertising on gender equality, 2008)

2 Family obstacles

Wife's situation

We have just seen the importance of identity questions in the difficulties encountered by men who wish to be more consistently present with their children.

At this point, we have to say that women sometimes have their share of responsibility. Indeed, numerous sociological studies and surveys indicate that in certain cases, women perceive care for the child as a kind of "compensation" for their sometimes unsatisfactory social standing and do not like the tasks to be performed in a "typically male" fashion...

Very often, the decision of men to become more involved in the family environment also depends on the financial status of the family: depending on whether his wife works or not, whether she has a more or less stable work situation, and the amount of income, the man will have varying degrees of freedom in his choices.

The survey entitled "Birth-related leave" by the DRESS (Directorate of Research, Studies, Evaluation, and Statistics) published in 2005 and conducted between April and June 2004 with 2000 fathers and 2000 mothers of children born between November and December 2003, mentions several factors involved in the decision to take a paternity leave:

- reduced wages have a negative impact on the family budget, especially for those with salaries above the compensation ceiling,
- partner's situation on the job market: if the wife is a housewife or is unemployed, fathers take leaves less frequently.



3 Corporate obstacles

A strong culture of presenteeism

The vast majority of companies are still highly steeped in a culture of presenteeism. In order to be perceived as strong and motivated, employees must be present. Presence, especially early in the morning and/or late in the evening, is virtually unavoidable for a manager who wants to "succeed."

It is well known that this culture of presenteeism is prejudicial to the career developments of women. Companies generally judge them to be insufficiently available and present to be able to give them the same level of responsibility as men, since women must first and foremost be present with their children... (see Lab'Ho study quoted above).

"We cannot get together as a team because the women in the department take school holidays off."

"Certain jobs and responsibilities are incompatible with flexible hours."

But men also suffer from this culture. Men who aspire to a lifestyle model with a better balance between work and family find themselves facing tough choices, just like women.

Too great an inclination by men to be involved in their parental role is often understood by companies as a sign of disengagement from the professional world (as is the case for women...). This presents substantial risks for their career.

Part-time work, for instance, is still generally experienced as a disorganizing factor in companies.

“Part-time work must be compatible with the obligations of the position to be filled in terms of availability and organization.”

Work organization and lifestyles

Obstacles due to work organization and dominant culture in companies that have a negative impact on the balance between men's private life and professional activity may be:

- deep involvement in work - a choice but also often a burden,
- long working hours (especially for managers and mid-level professionals),
- impossibility of finding a replacement (especially for higher management and independent professionals),
- job instability or insecurity (especially for fixed-term or temporary jobs),
- work overload just before taking leave and just after returning,
- refusal to mix private life with professional life (phone calls from work to resolve problems related to family life: day-care, school and medical issues, etc.).

Furthermore, certain studies, such as the DREES study on the taking of paternity leave, reveal that men are insufficiently knowledgeable about their rights:

- the procedures for obtaining leave are seen to be too long and difficult,
- fathers do not know what their rights and entitlement terms are.



“How men and women of today with aspirations differing greatly from those of the previous generation” can “create an anachronistic lifestyle (...) because they have no better choice.”



III . Actions companies

can set up for their male employees under the responsibility of Human Resources Department



When companies decide to make a commitment to promote parenting among their male employees, they may find themselves in one of two situations:

Either they have not yet worked on equality between men and women and this is an opportunity to start, and they will address the issue or parenting as seen from the man's perspective right from the beginning,

Or they have already worked on equality between men and women, but they "forgot" the issue of parenting as seen from the man's perspective... They then initiate a specific project on this subject in a secondary phase.

In any event, it is up to the Human Resource Department, with the support of the company management, a key success factor, to put in place such a policy organized around five major stages:

- **Stage n°. 1:** mobilize the various players and start negotiations with unions
- **Stage n°. 2 :** assess the current situation
- **Stage n°. 3 :** develop and deploy an action plan
- **Stage n°. 4 :** communicate
- **Stage n°. 5 :** monitor and measure the system over time

1 Mobilizing the various players and opening negotiations

The success of an approach aimed at promoting parenting among male employees is, to a large extent, based on a mobilization of all players.

Consequently, it is up to the Human Resources Department to associate key players right from the start:

- **internal players** (directors, communications department, managers, union representatives, employees, etc.)
- **external players** (trade associations, training agencies, networks promoting equal opportunity, public agencies and public authorities, human resource networks)

This initial mobilization allows the company to establish goals bearing in mind the employees' expectations (see diagnostic stage above), its field of activity, and the size of the company, and to determine which type of approach will be the most appropriate: negotiation of an agreement with management and labour and/or a certification approach.

Internal players

THE MANAGEMENT

Given the substantial, in-depth work that will be needed (change in portrayals and company culture, change in work organization, etc.), it is imperative that management support the project.

Its direct involvement will serve as a signal sent out to all company levels to let employees know that things can change.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

The communications department will also play a key role as an interface between the strategy developed by directors and the perception by employees.

The way in which employees perceive the measures concerning the systems for reconciling their professional and private lives depend on this department.



MICROSOFT IN NORWAY

The company developed a “programme for fathers.” Included among the proposed measures is an image of management as a model to show that priority for family life does not jeopardize work life.



Excerpt from the corporate agreement on equal opportunity American Express Voyages (2008)

“All levels of management must be exemplary in their attitudes, speech, and decisions. The “equal opportunity” dimensions shall be incorporated into management and organization issues.”

MANAGERS

The attitude of managers will be a determining factor on subordinate levels. It is important for the company to involve them in the project very early on to avoid rejection and obstruction. Managers, who struggle with stringent, short-term, bottom-line objectives may see such a policy first and foremost as a source of disorganization.

Both the directors and line-managers have a non-negligible ability to set an example for company employees: if they themselves take their paternity leave, it means that it is possible and no-one must be afraid to do the same.

In order for parenting promotion policies set up by companies to be relayed by managers, the managers' yearly job reviews may include equal opportunity or worklife reconciliation criteria.

III. ACTIONS COMPANIES CAN SET UP FOR THEIR MALE EMPLOYEES

Excerpt from the corporate agreement on equal opportunity Schneider Electric (2004)

"Schneider Electric wishes to participate in changing the gender-assigned roles in the company. The company feels that taking paternity leave is one of the ways of helping to make this change."

UNION REPRESENTATIVES

Promoting parenting among male employees in a company also comes under the responsibility of union representatives who have the possibility of incorporating this issue into negotiations for equal opportunity agreements. It is important for union representatives to become involved in sensitizing employees and setting up:

- joint actions with the company management (as part of the implementation of the company agreement),
- and/or promotional actions taken at their own initiative



"WORK AND FAMILY" IN SWITZERLAND

In Switzerland, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) developed a teaching manual in 2007 in support of a personnel policy reconciling work and family life intended for SME directors ("SME Manual. Work and family"). The Swiss union of crafts and trades and the Confederation of Swiss Employers support this initiative.

External players

Companies wishing to be strongly involved in this issue may extend their internal policy by participating in work conducted by other external players. A dual internal and external commitment will ensure consistency and credibility.

Many external players are also working on promoting parenting among male employees:

- trade associations,
- training entities (public and private),
- networks promoting equal opportunity,
- public agencies and authorities,
- human resource networks,
- ...



2 Making a company diagnosis

Prior to taking any action, companies wishing to promote parenting among their male employees should first draw up an assessment of the current situation within their organization.

A diagnosis may be made on the basis of information obtained:

- **by a review of the practices in place in favour of balancing worklife schedules within the company,**
- **from surveys among employees,**
- **from men's expression groups.**

Review of worklife balance practices

Before considering rolling out new provisions aimed at a better worklife balance, it will be in the company's interest to review existing measures.



EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS THAT EMPLOYEES MAY BE ASKED DURING THESE ENQUIRIES:

- **Has the presence of children led you to re-examine the balance between your professional and personal life?**
- **Is the involvement of fathers in family life an essential condition for equal opportunity between men and women?**
- **Do you feel that you are sharing family responsibilities and tasks with your spouse fairly?**
- **What career objectives do you wish to achieve in 1, 2, 3 years: become an expert, develop new products, achieve a better balance between your professional and private life?**
- **Have you already refused a promotion due to your family life? How about your spouse?**
- **Were you supported by your company when taking paternity leave? In what way?**
- **Of the following measures, which ones do you feel most facilitate the organization of your family life: scheduling arrangements, leaving earlier in the evening, company day-care, children and parents day?**

Surveys among employees

Conducted by human resources or communications departments, or externally (consulting firms, research centres), these surveys may be quantitative and/or qualitative.

Between qualitative and quantitative studies, several options are possible.

The company can initially decide to conduct a qualitative study (or rather to have it conducted by an external service provider for reasons of confidentiality).

Depending on the results, the budget, and the amount of time afforded, the company may then decide to supplement the qualitative study with a quantitative study. The quantitative study will then validate/invalidate the results of the qualitative study.

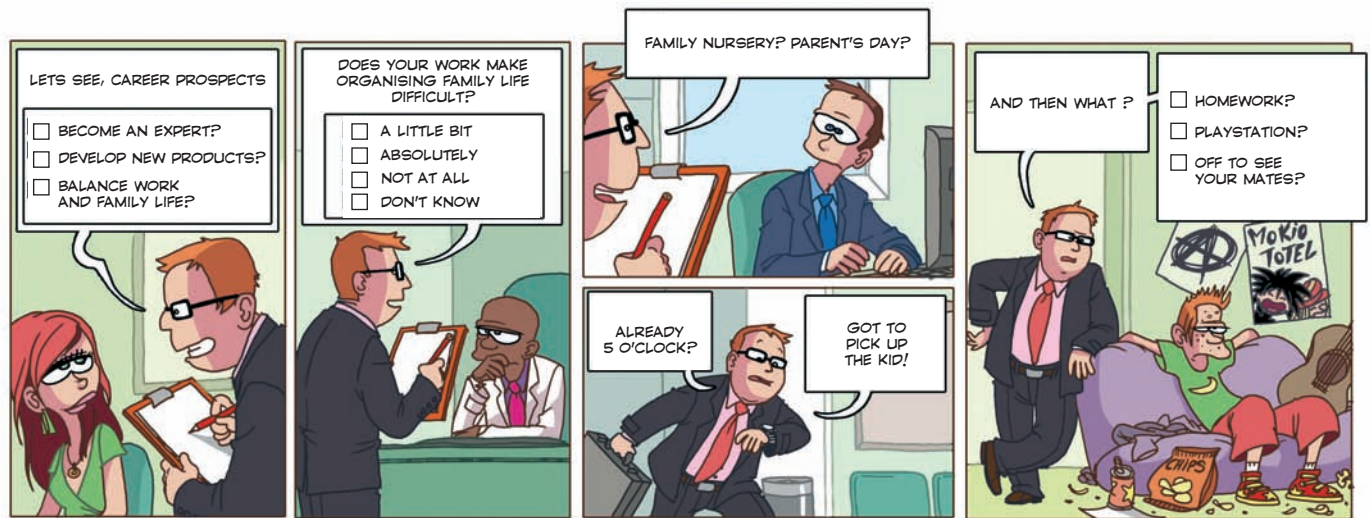
The company may just as well opt for the opposite approach: start with a quantitative study and subsequently conduct (or not) a qualitative study to refine the results of the quantitative study.

Quantitative studies are increasingly being conducted in the form of self-administered questionnaires: employees fill out the questionnaire by themselves on a workstation.

The study already quoted *"House husbands in search of worklife balance"*, carried out by EQUILIBRES in 2008 thus enabled identification of several promising kinds of measure employees would be happy to benefit from.



III. ACTIONS COMPANIES CAN SET UP FOR THEIR MALE EMPLOYEES



SURVEY CONDUCTED BY A COMPANY WITH ITS MALE EMPLOYEES

BNP Paribas (2004)

Mix City, a group of experienced female managers, was created in order to propose concrete measures to increase the number of women among the higher level managers at BNP Paribas.

The purpose of the group is to rally men to join in action undertaken as part of the men/women equality effort. In 2007, male associates at BNP Paribas were interviewed by the sociologist Dominique Méda (Labour Studies Centre) as part of the “worklife balance” survey.

Some excerpts:

“We can only pride ourselves on working in a group that takes the time to think about this kind of issue.”

“The fact that women are now working has changed the role of men in the way they spend time with their children. Fathers devote more time and attention to their children, be it play time or in the way they take care of them.”

“The change is not forced upon them but rather freely chosen by both parents.”

The choice of method for the employee study generally depends on the company’s past history in this area. No method is prescribed as a matter of routine. All depends on the context.

The company guide drawn up as part of the European “All Together” project (see Appendix 4) proposes a sample, 20 question self-assessment guide, to be adapted, of course, according to the company. The diagnosis covers specific measures put in place to reconcile work and family life including collective bargaining agreements, forms of internal and external communication on the subject, ways of taking into account the family situations of employees, hiring, etc. The questionnaire can be downloaded from the following address:

http://www.all-together.org/images/products/files/39_anglu.pdf

IN ORDER TO CONDUCT THE MOST THOROUGH ASSESSMENT OF THE WORKLIFE BALANCE SITUATION, IT WILL BE HELPFUL TO QUESTION EMPLOYEES ABOUT THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THEIR VIEWPOINTS ON ACTION UNDERTAKEN WITHIN THE COMPANY. IN ORDER TO ADEQUATELY IDENTIFY ACTION OBSTACLES AND LEVERS ALIKE, SAMPLING SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE DIRECTORS, HR STAFF, AND MANAGERS.





FROM MATERNITY TO PARENTING AT TOTAL

De-penalize maternity and de-feminise parenting! These slogans encompass a very precise commitment of the Total group to responsible parenting. First, Total has chosen to avoid maternity leave rhyming with lost wages. Which is why, during her year of maternity, each woman is entitled to an individual salary raise at least equal to the average of the raises for the three previous years. This corrective measure furthermore encourages team leaders to incorporate the “maternity factor” into their management.

In addition, Total wishes to help young men assume their family tasks by providing everyone with tools to help manage the balance between professional and private life: an extranet site and a concierge offering personal services, a company day-care centre to which half of the babies are brought by their father. In fact, more than 75% of young Parisian fathers take their full paternity leave.

Establishing a precise and smooth link between maternity and parenting through structural and symbolic actions seems to be a promising way of encouraging men to benefit from equal opportunity schemes.

Men's expression groups

In addition to quantitative and/or qualitative study systems, the company may set up men's expression groups. These groups may provide male employees with an opportunity to express themselves collectively about their working conditions, difficulties in reconciling their professional and private lives, and their expectations from the company in these areas.

But since participation in such expression groups is not, by its very nature, anonymous and given the difficulties that men still have in expressing themselves in many situations, the “mindset” in the company will already have to be very mature: otherwise, these groups run the risk of having very few participants.



WORK GROUPS AT MACIF

“When speaking of equality/de-segregation, the topic of discussion is very often women, but we must not forget the men. For this reason, MACIF launched its Mutu'Elles project, devoted to the place of women in management. From the very start, it chose to incorporate women, of course, into its work groups, but also men. This made it possible to open up and enrich the discussion and build complementary solutions.

Many themes can thus be addressed in the name of de-segregation. Shouldn't a company that raises the issue of reconciling the professional and private lives of women also raise it for men?

In 2006, MACIF formalized its commitment in an active policy that acknowledges equality and professional de-segregation as a source of complementarities, workforce balance, and economic efficiency.

With changing family models, MACIF is now launching into the field of parenting, adopting HR measures, such as making good the wage gap by supplementing standard compensation for paternity leave.”

3 Developing and rolling out an action plan

As we have seen earlier with regard to promoting parenting among male employees, either the company acts within the scope of an overall gender equality project, or within that of a policy aimed more specifically at its male employees, employees who may have been somewhat “left out” in its initial approach to the subject of gender equality.

Whatever the case may be, most of the systems put in place (parental leave, sick child leave, part-time work, stricter meeting times, concierge services, etc.) will apply to both men and women. They will make for better management of the professional and family obligations of all employees regardless of their gender.

The action plan may involve various aspects:

- organizing the work schedule
- career evaluation and management
- services facilitating the daily life of employees

Excerpt from the amendment to the corporate agreement on equal opportunity EDF (2007)

“The parties signing this agreement reiterate the importance of improving work schedule arrangements and the creation of work methods promoting compatibility between professional and family/personal life.

To achieve this, they stress that work time organization and management must comply with the following principles:

- meetings are to be organized in keeping with the team’s work schedule and, if meetings exceptionally exceed the normal schedule, the personal needs of the employees shall be taken into account;
- schedules are to be drawn up in advance to allow everyone to make arrangements;
- a sufficient advance notice time must be allowed in the event of modifications to schedules and days off;
- the work load must be commensurate with the work time, particularly when setting objectives and determining the corresponding resources.

Organizing the work schedule

Arranging and organizing the work schedule are essential in making efforts toward a better balance between family and professional life.

The question is not new. But it is usually examined primarily with women in mind. As if they alone could (and should) be the beneficiaries. This is a reflection of the old stereotypes that leave the household environment for women to cope with.

And yet men are also concerned. Without any change on this score, it will be very difficult for them to spend more time with their children, particularly in day-to-day life.

Given that habits in this area die hard, companies that wish to make progress will be well advised to work (or work harder,) on:

- Managing meetings
- Work schedule arrangements and off-site work
- Part-time work
- Paternity leave
- Parental leave

CHANGES IN WORK ORGANIZATION AND HOURS MAY NATURALLY BE APPEALING TO PARENTS OF INFANTS, BUT ALSO TO PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS.

THE QUESTION OF A BETTER COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT PHASES OF PROFESSIONAL AND FAMILY LIFE IS FAR FROM BEING LIMITED TO THE SOLE ISSUE OF BABIES AND TODDLERS.

PARENTS OF TEENAGERS ARE WELL AWARE OF THIS...



MANAGING MEETINGS

Scheduling meetings?

The company should avoid or even forbid scheduling meetings too early in the morning or too late in the day.

Focusing meetings?

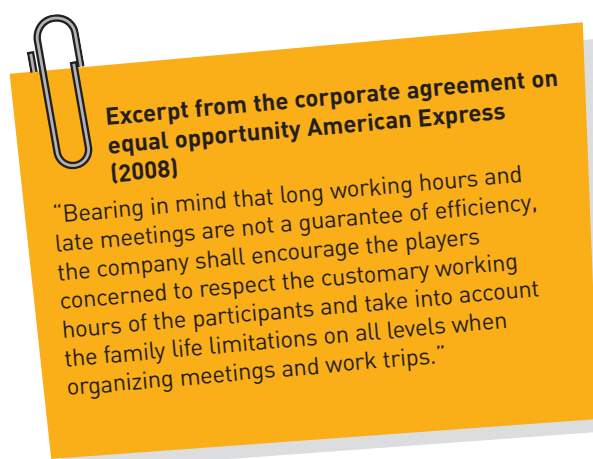
In order to combat the phenomenon of acute meetingitis, setting a precise agenda should be made compulsory for each meeting.

Convening meetings?

Excessively large meetings are to be avoided. All meeting organizers should focus on those persons truly concerned by the subject of the meeting.

Running meetings?

A timekeeper shall be appointed for each meeting also with the task of keeping to the agenda.



WORK SCHEDULE ARRANGEMENTS AND OFF-SITE WORK

According to employee expectations in this field (see Chapter III-2: Making a diagnosis), companies can facilitate work schedules and exercise flexibility during certain times of the year, such as back-to-school or school holidays.

In certain cases, a compensation system can be imagined for school holidays: days taken during holidays can be offset during other periods.

Divorced parents, and especially fathers when they have shared custody of their children, may be very interested in systems allowing them to leave work earlier at the end of the day when their children are with them. This work time can be made up during times when they do not have their children.



ICTs and lifestyle balance

The development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as cell phones and e-mail represent both benefits and drawbacks for employees. Very often, it will all depend on how the company makes use of them.

Benefits:

Employees can leave work earlier to pick up children at school. They can also help with homework, especially with teenage children. They can then resume working once the children are in bed or early in the morning. Thus they can better manage the various work and family commitments.

Drawbacks:

Employees may have trouble "disconnecting." The company may increase pressure: it may not hesitate to call on them since they are reachable at all times. There is a risk of blurring the boundaries between the various aspects of life, invading family life with work.

Unless the notion of a work community is upheld, there is also a risk which should be recognised of professional marginalization.

III. ACTIONS COMPANIES CAN SET UP FOR THEIR MALE EMPLOYEES



SCHEDULING ARRANGEMENTS FOR DIVORCED FATHERS

A hotel chain in Norway employs many divorced men who have joint custody of their children. The children live with them two weeks a month. In order to make it easier for these men to take care of their children, the hotel organizes schedules during which the men work less in weeks when they have their children and make up for it in weeks when they do not have them.

When there is a scheduling arrangement, the goal is to reconcile:

- performance objectives of the company
- employee aspirations and time for family life

It should be noted that more and more employees are now working on the basis of results and objectives, which do not always require a full-time physical presence “in the office.”

The development of new technologies and the possibilities offered by these work tools (especially for off-site work) are also reducing the need for physical presence in many cases. For certain employees who so desire and whose work permits, some tasks can now be performed off-site in the form of telecommuting.

PART-TIME WORK

While part-time work may be a good solution for reconciling schedules, it is always subject to a certain number of reservations on the part of both company management and employees.

Part-time workers are still mostly women. It is extremely rare to find men who take a part-time job so that they can take care of their children.

Furthermore, when part-time work for men occurs, it is often at the end of a career as a transition to retirement.

Earlier, we have seen (see Chapter II-3: Corporate obstacles) the reservations on the part of companies are still strongly steeped in a culture of presenteeism.



Excerpt from the corporate agreement on equal opportunity France Telecom (2007)

“The company will look for solutions that can be mediated through specific off-site work capabilities, provided there is prior managerial agreement.”



TELECOMMUTING AT RENAULT

The aim of the company telecommuting agreement signed in 2007 is to offer employees who so desire the option of better reconciling family and work life and limiting their travel by allowing them to work at home on certain days.

Numerous provisions of the agreement structure the use of telecommuting in a very precise way:

- Volunteer implementation (by amendment to the employment contract).
- The proportion of the number of days at home and on company premises should be balanced.
- The employee may terminate telecommuting in keeping with an advance notice time.
- Equipment for working at home (ergonomic chair and filing cabinet) is provided by the company, which also provides technical support.

Out of respect for the employees' private lives, the agreement defines the work hours during which the employees must be reachable.

Companies can lift these obstacles if there is a genuine policy of promoting part-time work for both women and men, especially with the aim of allowing parents to be more available to their children. And this not only during the period of early childhood, but also at the time of adolescence.

In their study entitled “Reconciliation in companies: gender-based implementation?,” Danielle Bayer and Muriel Nicolas note that regardless of the profession and socio-professional category, it is always more difficult for men than for women to obtain a part-time job, if they so desire: indeed, more than half of the men of each profession and socio-professional category say that this would be impossible for them or that they would have to change jobs (compared to about one third for women).



Request for part-time work. Excerpt from a comic strip promoting parenting among men in Finland.

PATERNITY LEAVE

Most companies grant mothers their entire salary when they take maternity leave. Logically, companies that wish to promote parenting among their male employees should likewise grant fathers their entire salary on the days of paternity leave called for by the laws in each country.

All studies concur that if the intention is to have fathers fully exercise their parental rights, a sufficient level of compensation must be provided either by the public authorities or by companies.

(See Chapter II-2: Family obstacles.) This issue of compensation is being debated in all European countries.

Companies that make this financial effort should accompany this measure to encourage new fathers to take their leave:

- communicating to the employees on the measure,
- organizing work schedules to avoid work overload upon their return and/or for their colleagues during their absence,
- possible existence of a replacement system during leave.

Excerpt from the corporate agreement on equal opportunity AGF (2006)

"Paternity leave allows for a rebalancing of roles in family life and thus calls into question the cultural stereotypes concerning the image of men and women in light of family obligations. In order to promote this right, the parties have decided to maintain the father/employee's compensation during leave."

Excerpt from the corporate agreement on equal opportunity Renault (2004)

"Paternity leave is one of the components that promote the sharing of child rearing, family chores, and the imperatives of work life between men and women. In order to allow fathers to participate in the birth and arrival of a new infant in the household under good conditions, such fathers receive 100% of their net compensation throughout the period of paternity leave, after deducting the Social Security benefits."

PARENTAL LEAVE

As with part-time work, parental leave is currently a feature that mostly pertains to women in a majority of countries. Men who take parental leave are the exception. This is not true in Scandinavian countries where the mother and father always share this leave (which is furthermore a prerequisite for full financial coverage). Even though shared leave is not always equal (with women generally taking more time than men), the image of a man on parental leave is no longer a surprise to anyone.

Excerpt from the corporate agreement on equal opportunity SNCF (2007)

"In terms of compensation, we reaffirm that during maternity, adoption, and paternity leave, all employees—both men and women—will continue to receive the same monthly work bonus and fixed compensation benefits."

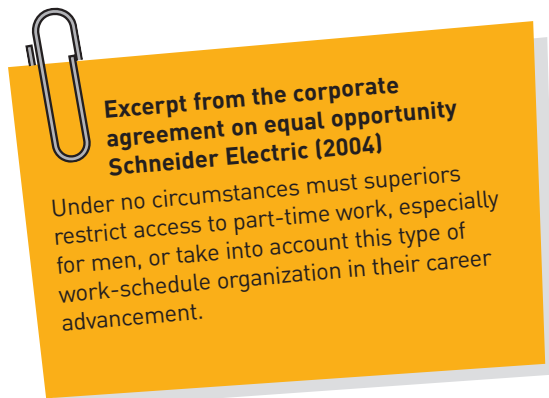
III. ACTIONS COMPANIES CAN SET UP FOR THEIR MALE EMPLOYEES

Career assessment and management

We have just seen how important it is for companies wishing to promote parenting among their male employees to reflect on how they organize their work and work schedules.

Such a thought process and the arrangements that may arise, however, will go unheeded if the company does not modify its assessment criteria and career patterns.

Not only must men who wish to spend more time with their children deal with portrayals and stereotypes that are generally not favourable to them, but like women they must also deal with corporate difficulties (see Chapter 2). As long as companies remain steeped in a strong culture of presenteeism, it will continue to be too “risky” to come across as a father at work, a fact of which women are already well aware...



With regard to part-time work in particular, generally realistic employees have several reservations:

- fear of reduced compensation as the production objectives remain the same,
- uncertainty about the ability to switch from part-time to full-time work (fear of being “locked” into part-time work when requesting a switch back to full time).
- fear of having trouble achieving career advancement equivalent to that of a full time employee;

People who have at one time requested a reduction in their work schedule or, “worse still,” who have taken parental leave, are most often perceived as “not very committed,” with the consequences that one can imagine for their career advancement.

MEN MAY BE PREVENTED FROM TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE FOR FINANCIAL REASONS. THIS IS ALSO IMPEDED BY MORE GENERAL IDENTITY ISSUES (ROLE DIVISION BETWEEN FATHERS AND MOTHERS...) OVER WHICH THE COMPANY DOES NOT HAVE ANY DIRECT CONTROL. HOWEVER, THE MEASURES THAT A COMPANY PUTS IN PLACE TO PROMOTE PARENTING AMONG MALE EMPLOYEES WILL SERVE AS SIGNALS GRADUALLY ALLOWING THEM TO ABANDON THE TRADITIONAL MALE ROLE.



As a result, a company wishing to promote part-time work, parental leave, off-site work, or any other type of work organization allowing for a better worklife balance should:

- **Guarantee that employees will not be penalized in the continuation of their careers.**

When the company expresses reservations over the ability to offer a part-time job or telecommuting, it will have to justify this to the employee by explaining that the refusal is due to analysis of the job and its demands.

- **Guarantee a revision of the objectives and work load for part-time employees.**

Some employees who work part time, especially when they work 4 out of 5 days, wonder about the benefit of this arrangement: although their salary is cut, the work load is often the same.

In order to respond to this criticism, the company must contemplate reassigning work loads without, however, assigning the additional work load to colleagues, because this will generate tensions among those working full time.

The principle of prorating the objectives for a part-time employee must be stressed.

The company may also help its employees by preparing them for the interview they will have with their boss when requesting, for example, a work schedule arrangement or part-time work. (See Appendix 3.)

Services facilitating the daily life of employees

In its effort to promote parenting among men, the company can also set up services in response to the daily needs of its employees.

These services concern both men and women.

They may relate to:

- **collective day-care** options with the financing of company or inter-company day-care centres,
- **individual day-care options** by providing financial assistance to employees who make use of them,
- reflecting on the **means of transportation** for home/work place commuting,
- **information and service platforms** to help employees in all their daily procedures and provide services (concept of corporate concierge).

The intervention of third parties to fulfil certain household or parental functions inside the home (ironing, academic assistance, and school-related day-care).



Excerpt from the corporate agreement on equal opportunity France Telecom - Orange (2004)
 "The established managerial objectives shall be prorated to the work time."

Excerpt from the corporate agreement on equal opportunity American Express (2008)
 "The choice of part-time work must not be perceived as a sign of a lack of commitment to the company and must not be an obstacle to career advancement."

TO ALLOW MEN TO DARE TO REQUEST MORE TIME OFF SO THAT THEY CAN TAKE CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN ON A DAILY BASIS, COMPANIES MUST, IN ADDITION TO THE SYSTEMS THEY HAVE PUT IN PLACE, BE ABLE TO ENSURE THAT THESE EMPLOYEES WILL NOT SUFFER ANY "CONSEQUENCES" IN TERMS OF THEIR CAREERS, FOR INSTANCE... AN ISSUE THAT WOMEN ARE WELL AWARE OF BECAUSE IT IS AT THE HEART OF THE INEQUALITIES THEY CURRENTLY ENCOUNTER IN COMPANIES.



III. ACTIONS COMPANIES CAN SET UP FOR THEIR MALE EMPLOYEES

4 Communicating

In order not to counteract the desired effect (promoting parenting among male employees), the company must ensure that communications about the systems put in place target both men and women.

The will of the company to work to promote parenting is being formalized to an ever greater degree in company agreements, equality plans, and other charters.

Given the resistance it is liable to encounter (cultural and organizational obstacles, etc.), the company should put serious work into its communications.

Internal communication

Communication campaigns are intended for several targets within the company which may be the entire personnel, male employees, managers, or human resources.

They can use the most diverse communication tools (written material, video, Internet, promotional objects):

BROCHURES

Packages targeting male employees have been designed as part of European projects or national initiatives (in Belgium and Switzerland, for example). In most cases, these brochures have also been distributed in companies.

They can be downloaded from the following addresses:

<http://www.iefh.fgov.be>

Brochure: "Choosing to be present"

Brussels Institute for equality between men and women

<http://www.infofemmes.com/projetequal.htm>

Brochure: "Let's take the time to be fathers"

National Centre on the Rights of Women and Families (CNIDFF), France

IN-COMPANY NEWSLETTERS

(PAPER-BASED NEWSLETTERS, INTRANET, ETC.)

In-company newsletters may be used to distribute information: on legal rights and on supplemental measures offered by the company, or to provide testimonials or information on training campaigns on the subject. The publications may highlight men who have made use of the parenting systems.

VISUAL INFORMATION MEDIA

Some companies have monitors in the reception area or close to high-traffic areas (elevators). The monitors can be used to disseminate information, testimonials, and vox pops.

In addition to the dissemination of information on the measures the company has set up, communications can allow it to participate in changing the portrayals of the respective roles of men and women.



"THE WAY IN WHICH MEN AND WOMEN ARE 'PORTRAYED' IN ALL OF THE COMPANY'S INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS MUST BE LOOKED AT AND EXAMINED, AND THE QUESTION MUST BE ASKED WHETHER THEY CORRESPOND TO THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN THAT THE COMPANY NOW WISHES TO PROMOTE.

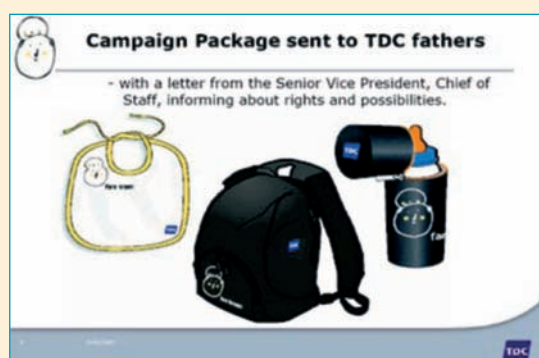
IN CONDUCTING THIS CRITICAL EXERCISE, THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THE COMPANY WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED. NATURALLY, IT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DO ITS 'SPRING CLEANING' IN ONE FELL SWOOP, BUT IT CERTAINLY CAN BECOME AWARE OF WHAT IT IS PORTRAYING AND WHAT IT AUTHORIZES AND CULTIVATES AS A PORTRAYAL OF THE WORLD IN THE SUBCONSCIENCE OF ITS EMPLOYEES, CLIENTS, AND SOCIETY IN GENERAL..."





DAD'S HUG, A KIT FOR YOUNG FATHERS

In the Danish bank TDC, the company designed a "Dad's Hug" kit that is given to fathers whenever a baby is born; it contains a baby bottle, bottle heater, and bib in a backpack together with a letter from the vice president and personnel director providing information about existing options and rights.



External communication

Companies that work to promote parenting among their male employees may also choose to provide external communications on this theme (see Chapter 1). They may choose to focus on their initiatives in this area in their hiring communications targeting young graduates.

However, be wary of disillusionment: if the company provides external communications on parenting and lifestyle balance, it must truly be capable of following through.



WORKSHOP FOR FUTURE FATHERS AT CITIGROUP, GREAT BRITAIN

Citigroup organized an initial workshop for 24 future fathers in June 2008 as part of its policy of supporting male employees who are new or expectant fathers.

"If we compare the cost of these workshops to the return on investment in terms of employee loyalty and satisfaction, there is no comparison," says Carolanne Minashi, Head of Diversity at Citigroup.

Events

In order to help change portrayals, particularly those about men, the company can also organize a certain number of events:

"FAMILY OPEN HOUSE" DAYS

On these open-house days, children are brought to their parents' work place, they visit the offices of the directors and their parents, and participate in activities set up by the organizers.

These days may take place either on a work day or on a weekend.

Companies prefer weekends for several reasons: greater availability on the part of parents, who are more relaxed on a day off; fewer "logistic" demands when it comes to bringing in children (coming directly from home); no changes in the organization of work, especially for employees working directly with clients.

From the company's perspective, the demands that arise when organizing these days on a weekend are predominantly related to security and insurance aspects.

THEATRE

A theatre group may be chosen to address the subject with humour, as in the play entitled "Active Fathers... you said Active Fathers... How strange!" (Belgian Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2006)

TRAINING ACTIONS

Very often, training is a necessity when it comes to helping to effect change in mentalities and behaviours. Training sessions may be intended for employees, managers, human resource directors, unions, members of the Equal Opportunity Committee, and also trainers. They supplement the other provisions suggested earlier.

For example:

- information day for fathers: a plenary meeting during lunch to inform fathers about their rights and to provide a question and answer session, such as the workshop entitled "Breastfeeding for the expectant father" organized at the SAS Institute in the United States for 4000 employees,
- training conducted by managers and union representatives

III. ACTIONS COMPANIES CAN SET UP FOR THEIR MALE EMPLOYEES



EXAMPLE OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING, AUSTRIA

Austrian companies can get help from a programme put in place by the government of the State of Lower Austria called: "The end of models: new models for men in leadership positions." This project includes, among other objectives, that of "supplementing all leadership training with a module on how to reconcile work and family, especially for men called upon to fulfil leadership duties in the future."

COMMUNICATION IS A NECESSARY COMPONENT OF ANY POLICY PROMOTING PARENTING AMONG MEN. NOTE, HOWEVER: THAT COMMUNICATION ALONE WILL NOT SOLVE ANYTHING. WHAT MOSTLY NEED TO CHANGE ARE THE RULES OF THE GAME, WORK ORGANIZATION, AND THE COMPANY CULTURE. WITHOUT CHANGE IN THESE AREAS, ACTION TAKEN IS LIABLE TO BE NOTHING MORE THAN A FLASH IN THE PAN, WITH ALL THE DISAPPOINTMENT THAT WOULD ENSUE FOR EMPLOYEES.



5

Monitoring and measuring the system

All efforts toward progress require measurement tools to be put in place for the purpose of assessing the results compared to the objectives that the company has set itself.

The indicators that the company can use to monitor the effects over time of its policy to promote male employee parenting are in part the ones that it will have used during its diagnostic phase.

A few examples of indicators:

- part-time work taken by men (number of men working part time; part-time work arrangements; age of the men working part time and their positions),
- number and duration of parental leaves taken over the year (for men, for women, and the total),
- number of days taken by employees for sick child leave (for men and for women),
- number of paternity leaves taken and the duration of the leaves,
- turnover rate among men (age of men involved, positions occupied, men with or without children, etc.),
- number of directors trained in equal opportunity issues,
- percentage of men/women taking advantage of the worklife balance schemes put in place by the company.

In addition, the company can measure the change of behaviours through surveys (work-climate barometer and qualitative studies) that it may conduct alone and/or in conjunction with specialized firms.



MONITORING THE CAREERS OF PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

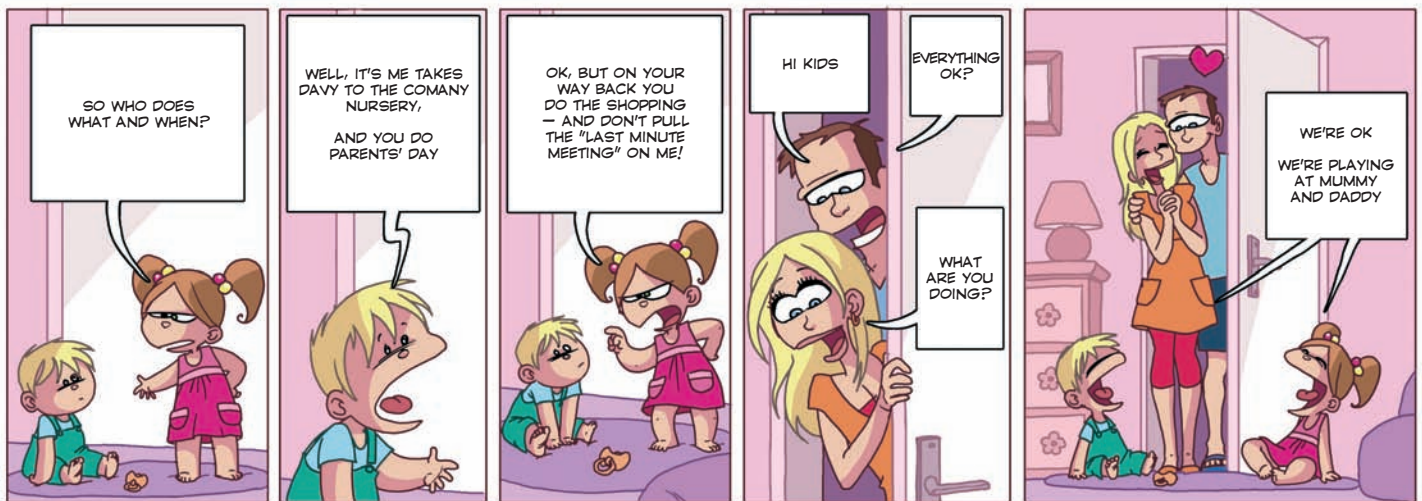
To ensure that male or female part-time employees do not incur any discrimination in their career advancement, companies can implement an indicator of the percentage of part-time employees being promoted compared to the percentage of full-time employees being promoted.

REGARDLESS OF THE CHOSEN METHOD, IT WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE COMPANY TO MONITOR ITS ACTION. OTHERWISE, THE RISK IS THAT A "ONE-OFF" ACTION WILL BE TAKEN ON A FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE THAT REQUIRES TIME FOR PROGRESS. BE WARY OF FASHION SYNDROMES AND ACTIONS THAT FALL INTO OBLIVION AS SOON AS THEY HAVE BEEN PRESENTED. HERE AGAIN, THE RISK OF DISILLUSIONMENT IS GREAT, WITH A POTENTIAL LOSS OF CREDIBILITY AND CONFIDENCE IN COMPANY/EMPLOYEE RELATIONS.



Conclusion:

Suggestions for further action



As the guide has demonstrated, the slow uptake by male employees on the various parental provisions is explained to a large extent by the still very dominant corporate culture of presenteeism. Things will have to progress on this front in order for men who so desire to truly be able to play a father role on a day-to-day basis in the lives of their children without running the risk of paying dearly for it in their professional lives. A dilemma of which many women are already too aware.

But the difficulties encountered by men can also be explained more broadly by the persistence of highly stereotypical portrayals in society and the company alike when it comes to role sharing between men and women.

These traditional portrayals often still lead to misunderstanding and even hostility by employers and/or work colleagues toward men who seek to adopt a more complete identity: “real” fathers but also “real” professionals.

This hostility is not only expressed in the work environment. Fathers may fear a lack of understanding by their family or friends, or even society in general.

This is why public authorities as well as all economic

players and society have an important role to play in promoting parenting among men. Information campaigns intended for the general public carrying the same message as those contained in the guide would effectively complete the system required for a change in mentality.

As proposed by the COFACE (Coordination of the European Union Family Organization Confederation) as part of a report published in December 2006, changes in male roles in European families, “the various media should be mobilized to provide maximum promulgation for these campaigns. In order to popularize the message more effectively, the campaigns could possibly be accompanied by advertising...”

The public authorities of numerous countries (see Appendix 2) have made a commitment to this approach.

The sponsors of this guide wish to follow this path in the coming months, in partnership with public authorities and with the support of advertising professionals.

Promoting parenting among men means moving toward a more harmonious society, respectful of the place of every individual, men and women alike, both in the work environment and society at large.

Appendices

- No. 1:** Presentation of the European projects
“Taking the time to be a father” and “Qualitemps” [QualiTime]
- No. 2:** Examples of national awareness campaigns in Europe
- No. 3:** Self-assessment questionnaire about daily family life organization
- No. 4:** Example of a campaign sent to companies to facilitate the involvement of its male staff in household and family responsibilities

Appendix 1:

Presentation of the European projects “Taking the time to be a father” and “Qualitemps” [QualiTime]

Project name: «LET’S TAKE THE TIME TO BE FATHERS», (project conducted as part of the European “Men equal, men different” project)

Partners: Ministry of Family Affairs and Childhood of Latvia, National Information Centre on the Rights of Women and Families (CNIDFF) in France, Roskilde Research Centre on Gender Equality in Denmark, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Bulgaria, “Gender Projects for Bulgaria” Foundation in Bulgaria, “Coalition for Gender Equality” Association in Latvia

Period: 2005 – 2006

Actions:

- An analysis of “economic, institutional, and social barriers to the active involvement of fathers and a reconciliation of personal and professional life for men”
- An opinion survey conducted with men and fathers employed in three companies on their involvement in family life
- Interviews conducted with company directors
- An awareness campaign: vox pop, documentary film on company practices aimed at reconciling professional and personal life, information packages, posters, and sensitization seminars.

Site : <http://www.infofemmes.com/projetequal.htm>



Project name: « QUALITEMPS »

Project conducted by: Project conducted by: French National Centre on the Rights of Women and Families

Partners: EQUILIBRES, CFE-CGC, CFDT Languedoc-Roussillon Regional Union

Associated partners: Observatory of Corporate Societal Responsibility (ORSE), Times Office of the City of Paris, Observatory of Gender Equality, City of Paris

Period: June 2007 – June 2008

Actions:

- Survey: “House fathers in search of a balance. Portrait of a generation wishing to reconcile work and family”
- Support guide for companies
- Training of facilitators in the challenges of male involvement in family life and facilitation of sensitization days
- Development of a training module intended for HRDs and managers
- Communication campaign: information packets, post cards, posters, and organization of sensitization and information events

Site : <http://www.qualitemps.fr>



Appendix 2:

Examples of national awareness campaigns in Europe

1. GERMANY

The Ministry of Family, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend) organized a campaign in March 2001 to sensitize society to the involvement of fathers in the life of children, "Aktionsprogramm zur Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf" (action programme to reconcile family and work).

Actions and tools put in place: a conventional communications campaign (posters, radio spots); an Internet site; a day dedicated to fathers; visits to companies in the country to promote and explain how federal law applies to the parental education benefit (Bundeserziehungsgeldgesetz) dated 5 December 2000; an information brochure about the actions of the Ministry for Family, Women, and Youth.

Site : <http://www.bmfsfj.de/>

2. FINLAND

The public authorities have conducted several awareness campaigns to promote paternity leave.

One of the campaigns took place in 2002-2003 with the aim of encouraging fathers to take a paternity leave and providing information on the amendment to the law giving them the right to a paternity leave.

The campaign was conducted in several ways:

- advertising and interviews with fathers in daily newspapers and specialized publications, dissemination of information on the Internet and at shows, children's clinics, other organizations;
- 12 black-and-white comic strips provided for free on the site of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, to trade publications, and to various organizations;
- a brochure containing the 12 comic strips distributed to fathers of young infants;
- an informational TV spot

Site : <http://www.stm.fi/>

In 2007 the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health launched a new, one-year information campaign on parental leave. The primary objective of the campaign is to promote equality between men and women in their professional lives and in training by increasing the number of paternity or parental leaves taken by fathers. Labour market agencies are involved in the project. The campaign is being financed by the European Social Fund (ESF). It consisted of several radio and TV spots, direct mail, and a telephone information process focusing on fathers, mothers, and labour organizations concerning maternity, paternity, and parental leave.

Site : <http://www.isyys.net/articles/511/>

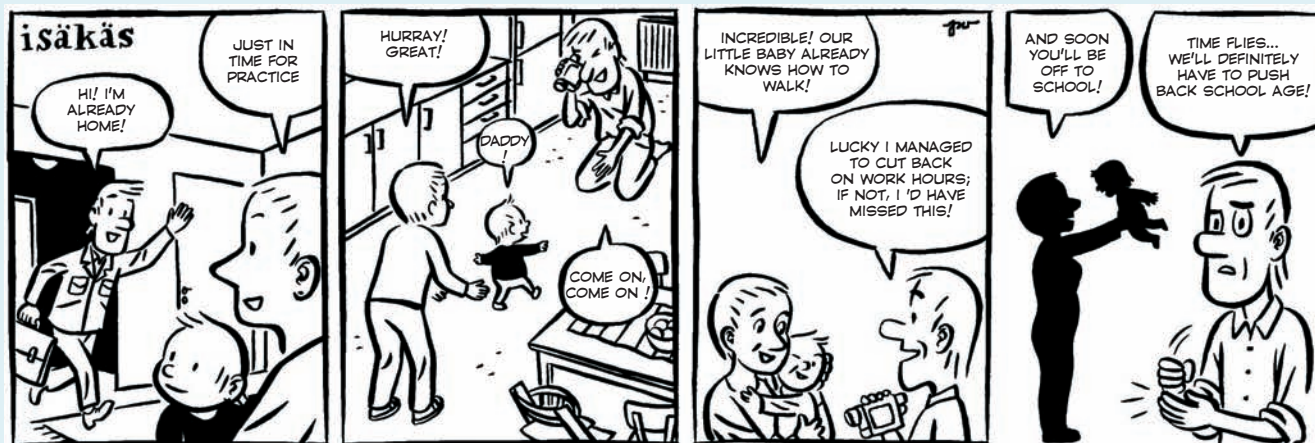
3. ITALY

The "Padri Coraggiosi" [Courageous Fathers] campaign of 2008 is being led by the Bologna Region with co-financing from the European Social Fund. This campaign is aimed at informing working fathers about the parental leave law (Law 53/2000) through several channels: press conferences, inclusion of information materials on the Bologna Province web site, information brochure on the parental leave law sent primarily to working fathers.

Site : www.provincia.bologna.it/pariopportunita/



"Isäkäs" ou "Papsen" ("Papi") has become the symbol of this campaign.



4. SPAIN

The “CO-RESPONDE” campaign (2008) is a project being conducted by the “Asociación de hombres por la igualdad de género” (AHIGE, Men’s Association for Gender Equality) and subsidized by the “Instituto Mujer del Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales” (Women’s Institute of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) to facilitate the joint household and family responsibility of men. The specificity of this programme is that it is being developed and managed by a men’s association. The central message of the programme is to establish male role models different from the traditional ones. This message has been conveyed with the help of information brochures, articles, and discussion forums on the Internet.

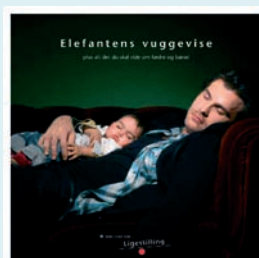


“Remove the disguise, win with change”

Site : www.ahige.org/co-responde.html

5. DANEMARK

The Danish Ministry for Equality has set up an awareness and information campaign intended both for male employees and companies. This action is part of the European project entitled “Men and Parenting – an Active Fatherhood” according to the European Union framework strategy regarding equality between men and women, 2001–2005.



Brochure “All you need to know when taking paternity leave”

The information tools used are:

- a brochure and CD intended for fathers who are considering taking a paternity leave
- a brochure sent to organizations that wish to encourage men to take paternity leaves (the information in the brochure was gathered through a survey by the Danish National Research Institute)
- a “toolbox” containing frequently-asked questions and answers concerning men, paternity leave, and organizational culture (brochure: **“All you need to know when taking paternity leave”**)

Site : <http://fatherhood.social.dk>

6. SLOVENIA

The Government Office of Equal Opportunity of the Republic of Slovenia conducted an awareness campaign, “Daddy, be active,” on the active role of fathers. This action is one aspect of the European project entitled “Men and Parenting – an Active Fatherhood” incorporated into the European Union framework strategy regarding equality between men and women, 2001–2005.

The strategy was implemented by setting up a TV spot, “Daddy, Be Active,” (2005), radio spots and programmes on the theme of paternity (2006), and a documentary with an educational role on paternity (2006).

Site : <http://www.uem.gov.si/index.php?id=813&L=1>

7. BELGIUM

In Belgium, the public authorities have conducted several awareness campaigns targeting companies.

One of the equality campaigns was organized by the Federal Ministry of Labour in the 1990s.

The Brussels Institute for Equality between Men and Women set up two awareness campaigns intended for private and public employers, union organizations, and local and regional decision-makers.



An initial campaign as part of the European “Active Fathers” project took place between 2002 and 2003. The tools put in place were:

- the brochure “Paternity leave – choose to be present,” written for the occasion and of which 300,000 copies were distributed to the local authorities, hospital maternity wards, and NGOs, and distributed over the Internet through the sites of insurance companies and women’s organizations; theatrical portrayals. This brochure can be downloaded from the following address: <http://www.iefh.fgov.be/ShowDoc.aspx?levelID=37&objectID=148&lang=fr>
- theatrical portrayals (script + video and DVD presentations)

The second campaign, which took place as part of the European “Men and Parenting – an Active Fatherhood” project in 2004 and 2005, reused the same tools mentioned above but also organized a theatrical portrayal on the university square.

Site : <http://www.iefh.fgov.be>

8. HOLLAND

The media campaign around the slogan “Who does what?” as part of the Development Partnership (PDD) “Voyage Through Cultures,” was coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (May 2002 – November 2004). The project, financed by the EQUAL initiative of the European Commission, encourages men to start a discussion with their employers about equality in the sharing of family tasks, and also with their colleagues.

The media campaign took place in two stages:

- a campaign on professions conducted by the PDD for one and a half years with the slogan “Who does what?,” which drew a great deal of attention and also launched a national debate in Holland. Various types of media were used: advertising spots on television and radio, press conferences, Internet site (www.wiedoetwat.nl), televised debates, and several individual events.
- a campaign on motivations and examples by addressing some of the cultural dilemmas encountered by both men and women. The types of media used were: TV and radio spots, Internet site (with information on legislation, good practices of daily living, and surveys), electronic maps, and popular games such as “victim of the vacuum cleaner” and “how to invent a good excuse.”

Site : http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/

APPENDIX 2

9. LUXEMBOURG

The Luxembourg Ministry of Equal Opportunity launched a campaign in 2003-2004 aimed at focusing awareness on role changes in society, "Equality of women and men."

The communication tools used were the following: inclusions in the national daily, weekly, and monthly press, posters and display stands, and radio and/or TV spots.

Site: www.mega.public.lu



Design: Comed S.A. - Photography: Frank Weber

10. LATVIA, DENMARK, FRANCE AND BULGARIA

Several awareness campaigns were conducted in the countries participating in the "Men Equal, Men Different" project:

- Monthly broadcast on the Latvian national channel of documentary films on the role of fathers in the contemporary family in Latvia at a peak viewership time
- Making and distribution of films on reconciling professional and private life in Bulgaria and France
- Distribution of information brochures intended for fathers in Latvia and France
- Distribution of a calendar of recommendations for balancing professional and personal life in Latvia to employers and employees
- National review of family benefits and parental leaves in existence in Latvia

Other accomplishments of the project:

- of national analyses on "economic, institutional, and social barriers to the active involvement of fathers and reconciling the personal and professional lives of men," conducted by the Denmark Gender Equality Research Centre
- Report on surveys conducted in 4 countries with company leaders and employees on the balance between professional and family life
- Organization of awareness seminars and conferences in Latvia, Bulgaria, Denmark, and France.

Site : <http://www.menequal.lv/eng/>



11. LITHUANIA

The Ombudsperson of the Office for Equal Opportunity launched a communication campaign in the media (TV spots on the national channel and posters in public areas) called "It's cool to be dad" as part of the European project "Modern Men in Enlarged Europe II: Family-Friendly Policies" (Denmark, Iceland, Italy, and Lithuania) with the objective of convincing women and men to abandon gender-assigned stereotypes.

Site : www.dadcomehome.org



12. SWITZERLAND

Between 2002 and 2006, the Federal Department of the Interior organized national campaigns to help reconcile the family and professional activities of fathers.

Various paper-based publications, post cards, and posters were sent out to key people (pregnancy consulting services, men's office, etc.). The Internet, advertisements on television, publication of articles in periodicals, and billboards were also used.

Two brochures were created at that time:

- "FAIRPLAY-AT-HOME" (2002) which includes a questionnaire to accurately assess the current sharing of tasks in the couple.
- and "FAIRPLAY-AT-WORK" (2003). (See Appendix 3.)

Site : www.fairplay-at-home



13. GREAT BRITAIN

The UK Government has launched a campaign around fatherhood issues called "Think Fathers". They aim to stimulate a national public debate about fatherhood and raise awareness of the roles that fathers play in Child Development. Here's how we can get our views heard.

Site : www.think-fathers.org

Appendix 3:

Self-assessment questionnaire about daily family life organization

Project name : « Choose to be present », a brochure developed by the Brussels Institute for Equality between Men and Women

Site : <http://www.iefh.fgov.be/ShowDoc.aspx?levelID=37&objectID=148&lang=fr>



Active father ?

Sir,
Are you up for a simple game ? Just try to estimate and add up the time (in hours per week) you and your partner will spend on your child during the first years of its life.
Pass this test along to your partner and then compare your results.

TIME FOR THE CHILD	HOURS/WEEK	TIME FOR THE CHILD	HOURS/WEEK
<input type="checkbox"/> pampering and playing	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> shopping	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> taking walks	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> clearing up the baby's room	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> changing and dressing	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> doing the dishes	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> bathing	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> taking the child to the day-care centre, the pediatrician...	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> putting the child to bed	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> nursing the child when it is ill	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> feeding	<input type="text"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/> meal preparation	<input type="text"/>		
TOTAL HOURS PER WEEK		<input type="text"/>	

A small calculation...

Madam,
In all honesty, without letting yourself be influenced by your partner's answers, please estimate the time you and your partner will spend on your child during the first years of its life.
Compare your results and then check the following page for the average time a family spends on these activities and how they are organized!

TIME FOR THE CHILD	HOURS/WEEK	TIME FOR THE CHILD	HOURS/WEEK
<input type="checkbox"/> pampering and playing	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> shopping	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> taking walks	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> clearing up the baby's room	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> changing and dressing	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> doing the dishes	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> bathing	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> taking the child to the day-care centre, the pediatrician...	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> putting the child to bed	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> nursing the child when it is ill	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> feeding	<input type="text"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/> meal preparation	<input type="text"/>		
TOTAL HOURS PER WEEK		<input type="text"/>	

Take your time !



Your summary
Take a minute to look at the average times! Where do you fit in?
This table is a great starting point for discussing the daily organization of your family.

TIME SPENT ON THE CHILD BY THE COUPLE ALONE	AVERAGE TIME	FATHER	MOTHER
<input type="checkbox"/> pampering and playing	3,5	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> taking walks	3,5	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> changing and dressing	7	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> bathing	3,5	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> putting the child to bed	3,5	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> feeding	10,5	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> meal preparation	3,5	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> shopping	1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> clearing up the baby's room	1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> doing the dishes	2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> taking the child to the day-care centre, the pediatrician...	4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> nursing the child when it is ill	2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
TOTAL HOURS PER WEEK	4,5	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

0 5 9

As you see, the arrival of a child into a family corresponds to the equivalent of a fulltime job. When combining this with professional activities a minimum of organization and repartition of the (paid and unpaid) work is necessary to live in harmony as a couple and as a family.

Today fathers have the right to live at the baby's rhythm from the moment of its birth and to reorganize their family life according to it. This is made possible by different types of leave that can be taken.

Stick this page on the door of your fridge or put it in your child's health booklet, so you can look at it often !



Appendix 4:

Example of a campaign sent to companies to facilitate the involvement of its male staff in household and family responsibilities

Project name: « ALL TOGETHER »

Site : http://www.all-together.org/images/products/files/39_anglu.pdf

TEN REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD FOSTER THE INVOLVEMENT OF YOUR MALE STAFF IN DOMESTIC AND FAMILY TASKS:

1) A happy employee is a productive worker

More family harmony leads to better performance at work. Giving your staff the chance to better their family life is an economic solution, insofar as for a cheap investment (mostly organisational) you will get better productivity and more efficiency at work. Considering your employees as people and not only workers, you'll facilitate and transform their lives.

2) You can enhance the motivation of your staff, by meeting their desire for a better balance between work and family

Opinion polls show it: young male workers value time balance a lot more than their elders.

They consider the chance to balance work and family better as one of the main criteria of today's ideal job.

3) You can satisfy female co-workers better by showing you are aware that time balancing between work and family is not only a woman's responsibility

Making no difference between your male and female staff in your handling of their needs of managing time balance will make your organisation fully egalitarian and will favour teamwork.

For instance, if you avoid meetings late in the afternoon for everyone, executive parents won't feel guilty any more.

4) It will result in building among your male staff new interpersonal skills, usually acknowledged among women, that enrich professional performance

Handling family and domestic tasks produces benefits which can be strategic at the workplace: interpersonal, communication, ability to listen;

5) You will be able to profit conveniently from the personal and labour potential of your staff

Making no difference among the way you manage men's and women's time balance could make a huge difference in the way women will feel about their labour promotion possibilities, and you will increase your whole staff's motivation.

6) This will result in developing the loyalty of your staff and reduce turnover

The turnover of valuable workers is an important problem for managers. Such a progressive policy could make the difference between you and your competitors. Helping your staff meet their personal and professional responsibilities, you will increase their loyalty.

7) More balance between men and women management leads to better social relationships at work

Making no difference between male and female staff in the way you manage time balance could make a huge difference in the relationships between men and women in your organisation. Such a management will lead to fewer problems and conflicts, less frustration, more collaboration between both genders.

8) It is a social marketing means, insofar as it improves the ethic and the image of your company

Your progressive human resources management is an added value that could make a difference on the competitive market and build loyalty of your customers and partners.

9) It opens the way to a new, modern, socially responsible management style

You blaze the trail of a new management style, where there is a life outside work. Therefore you stay open to social innovative solutions which can only lead to more opportunities for improvement.

10) It is a corporate communication which expresses the concern of your company for social welfare

Setting better conditions for gender equality in your organisation, you are having an indirect positive impact on your social environment (i.e. you make your employees' private life easier), and as a result you contribute to building of a fairer society.

ORSE and CNIDFF wish to thank all those involved in the design, writing and publishing of this guide.

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Schneider Electric

Many of the best practices described in the guide are taken from corporate agreements on equal opportunity.

List of corporate agreements signed by companies and trade unions, mentioned in the guide:

AGF (December 6, 2006)

American Express Voyages (February 25, 2008)

EDF (December 21, 2007)

France Telecom-Orange (April 28, 2004 & October 24, 2007)

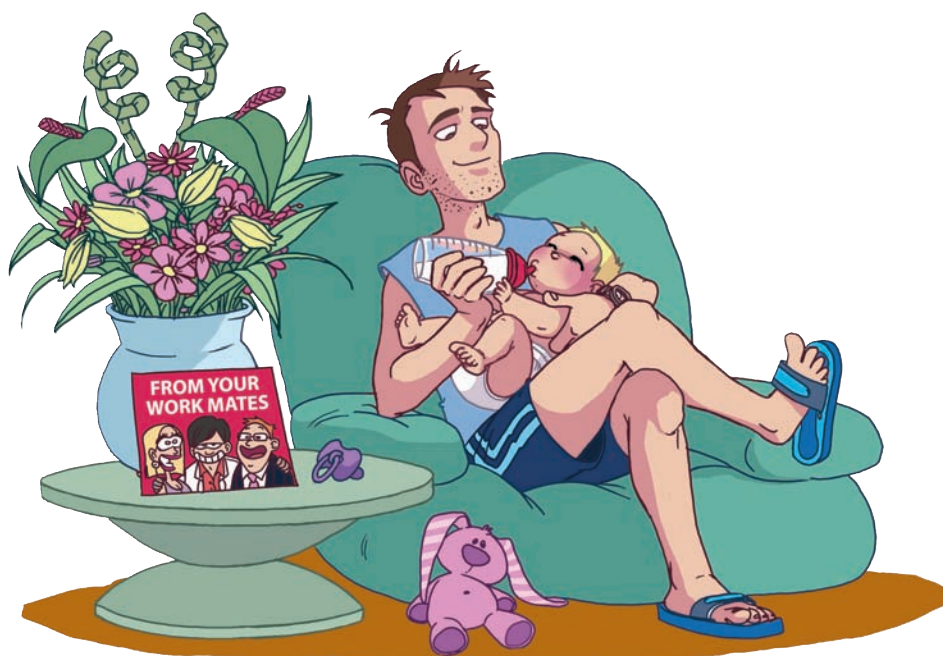
PSA Peugeot Citroën (November 26, 2007)

Renault (February 17, 2004)

Schneider Electric (November 17, 2004)

These corporate agreements can be downloaded at:

www.egaliteprofessionnelle.org



ORSE : Observatoire sur la Responsabilité Sociétale des Entreprises, a study center for Corporate Social Responsibility, is a French network designed to study and promote socially responsible investment (SRI), corporate social responsibility as well as all the issues related to sustainable development. ORSE is a non-profit organisation that was set up in June 2000.
www.orse.org

CNIDFF : The National Information Centre for Women and Families' Rights (CNIDFF) is a national association entrusted by the State with a general interest mission coordinating and representing the 115 women's rights information centres (CIDFF) present throughout France. This assignment is based on the principle of equal opportunities for women and men. Each year, CIDFF handles more than 700,000 requests for information in all civic fields (civil rights, family and social life, health, employment, vocational training, etc.).
www.infofemmes.com

Promoting Parenting Among Male Employees



This practical and instructive guide aims to provide companies, with useable advice about getting involved in the promotion of parenting among their male employees as part of a drive for gender equality.

The document covers the following themes:

- challenges faced by companies promoting parenting among their male employees,
- difficulties encountered by male employees who wish to have a greater day-to-day presence with their children,
- solutions adopted by companies to make progress in this area.

The guide is intended for all those involved in parenting issues at company level: company heads, human resource staff, personnel representatives, trade union representatives, public authorities, and professional organizations