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NEW MEXICO

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The Key to Your Hiring Challenges is Real Leadership for Working Moms

In New Mexico, over 60% of children under 6 have all parents in the labor force. One of the greatest challenges working moms face is that we're expected to mother like we don't have a job and work like we don't have children. This makes absolutely no sense, and I believe we can change this for all families in this decade. Because mothers are still the ones who are responsible for the majority of family caregiving, we need to focus solutions on supporting moms to participate in the paid labor force as well as meet their care labor responsibilities. As Dr. Caitlyn Collins points out in her book, *Making Motherhood Work*, "to achieve work-family justice is to create a system in which each member of society has the opportunity and power to fully participate in both paid work and family care."

There are four steps derived from the Well Woman Transformation Framework™ that, when applied here, can elevate good intentions to more meaningful support of working moms. The first step is to create awareness about and acknowledge this impossible work-family conflict. Talk to any working mom and she will tell you there is nothing more challenging than trying to meet work expectations when your children are in need of care. Yet, as a society we expect this of working parents. The problem is we are so used to it that we don't see it as the crisis it is. Most employees don't have access to sufficient paid maternity leave, paid family medical leave or flexibility. And the childcare infrastructure we currently rely on is underdeveloped and unreliable, though recent changes by the current administration are a big move in the right direction.

Second, educate yourself so you can authentically empathize with working moms. This step is equal parts curiosity and research.

Your research can include asking the moms in your life how they are managing their career and their caregiving, and what could support them to do it with more ease and joy?

Third, take action. If you're an employer, support can include paid time off for school meetings, for when your employee or a dependent is sick or for bonding with a newborn, and being allowed and encouraged to breastfeed or pump at work.

The fourth and final step is to make it official and long lasting by integrating these actions into social norms and culture so that new systems, habits and policies are formed. This can be in the form of agreements, checklists or written policies.

There are many different yet aligned solutions to the work-family challenge, including systemic change, workplace changes and cultural or societal norms changes. We need everyone to contribute to the solution: government, business, community and families. Luckily there are plenty of tools and resources that have been developed over the last decade at Family Friendly New Mexico. These include toolkits, expert blog posts and workshops designed for busy professionals that will support any business, large or small, in any industry, to compete for quality applicants.

Two programs worth highlighting here are the Family Friendly Business Award® and the "Create a Family Friendly Workplace Culture" online course. The award program is free and is actually a great educational tool for you and your leadership team. And the online course walks you through eight modules that together will prepare you to meet the highest standards of Family Friendly New Mexico's list of workplace policies.

You likely want to implement paid leave, flexible scheduling, childcare and other low cost or no cost policies that will attract working moms back to the workforce. Family Friendly NM is here to help you do just that. Visit nmfamilyfriendlybusiness.org to book a free consultation or get started with free tools and the award application process.

Listen to Giovanna's interview with Dr. Caitlyn Collins on the Well Woman Show at NPR.org and learn more about earning the Family Friendly Business Award® at nmfamilyfriendlybusiness.org.



Giovanna Rossi

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Giovanna Rossi is a results strategist and the President/CEO of Collective Action Strategies, LLC, a consulting firm dedicated to improving the health and lives of women and families through personal, policy and leadership development. Giovanna holds a Master of Science degree in Public Policy from the London School of Economics, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish and Latin American Studies from the University of New Mexico. Giovanna was the first ever women's health policy advisor for the state of New Mexico and was a women's studies adjunct professor at the University of New Mexico. She is passionate about improving the health and lives of women and families through work-life policy, economic self-sufficiency and health for women, making sure all children are supported and thriving, and addressing gender inequities in programs, policies, and services. She is the founder of Well Woman Life™, which supports women to achieve their highest level of fulfillment and well-being and founder of the Family Friendly Business Award®. Giovanna is host of The Well Woman show on NPR One, a regular panelist on New Mexico PBS In Focus, contributor on Forbes.com and a 2018 Women of Influence honoree.

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