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Kaleidoscope Careers: Benchmarking Ideas for Fostering Family-Friendly Workplaces

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Kaleidoscope Careers:

Benchmarking Ideas for Fostering Family-Friendly Workplaces

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Kaleidoscope Careers:

Benchmarking Ideas for Fostering Family-Friendly Workplaces

Executive Summary (n=124)

This article details benchmarking ideas for companies to attract, motivate, and retain talent by creating more family-friendly, technologically superior workplaces. These ideas are based on a five year research investigation on the complexities of modern day careers and how technology and generational differences impact corporate career development systems. We found that today's workers, especially GenXers and members of the Millennial Generation, are forging Kaleidoscope Careers – careers that are defined by the individual, based on their own values rather than by a corporation. Kaleidoscope Careers are driven by the three needs of authenticity, balance, and challenge. Within the context of the Kaleidoscope Career Model, this article addresses how organizations can benchmark best practices to enable their employees to fulfill their needs while increasing firm effectiveness.

Kaleidoscope Careers:
Benchmarking Ideas for Fostering Family-Friendly Workplaces

Helen, a successful lawyer, is exhausted every day when she leaves the office. While at home, she is expected to catch up on her paperwork, shuttle the kids to music lessons and soccer practice, make dinner, and do a few loads of laundry before she is finally able to crawl into bed at midnight.

Deleted:

Robert and his wife have two high-octane careers. Frequent trips to Hong Kong or Brazil require they stay connected using their laptops and Blackberrys on weekdays and weekends. Wanting to start a family, they've decided that one of them will take a break from work and stay home while the children are young. They still haven't decided which one of them will actually take a career time-out.

Sarah, a recent college graduate, lives with her ailing mother. In college, she dreamed of doing meaningful, socially responsible work. But instead, her new job is boring, the pay is well under market, and sorting out all the paperwork associated with her mother's medical care is stressful and time consuming.

Martin is a divorced father with a sales job that requires a great deal of travel. Although he frequently exchanges emails with his two daughters, he still worries that he'll lose touch with what's going on in their lives. His busy life hasn't allowed him the time to get back into the dating scene, and with his fortieth birthday is on the horizon, he wonders it's time for a change.

We live in a technologically mobile society. Chained to our laptops, with personal data assistants, cell phones and wireless connections in constant attendance, the new rhythms of work have forced us to reshape our lives so that we now work 24/7. Caught within the workplace's long grasp are workers like Helen, Robert, Sarah, and Martin who find it difficult, if not impossible, to negotiate a successful combination of work, family, and personally fulfilling activities. Some companies have paid attention to the "work-family balance issue" and have adopted family-friendly programs that provide tacit or nominal worker support. Most firms, however, have not felt an urgency to take full advantage of technology and provide integrated, meaningful, family-friendly benefits. But increased worker mobility, reduced organizational commitment, and changing definitions of career success have created a shockwave in the very fabric of the workplace. Quietly, a worker revolt of surprising proportions is taking place that is

countermanding the high pressure demands of today's technologically mobile workplaces. Corporations without fully integrated family-friendly benefits are losing talent as workers walk out the door to craft more reasonable, personally fulfilling careers. These workers are developing careers based on their own life values and choices; they are defining success on their own terms.

. Workers are now changing their jobs every 4.5 years, and many of those job changes are prompted by a desire to allow a better balance between work and family life. This is especially true for the new breed of workers, GenXers and members of the Millennial Generation (GenMers), who bring a different set of expectations to the workplace than previous generations of employees. A survey by Catalyst, Inc. reported that 76% of GenXers desire a compressed work week and 59% want to telecommute or have flexible working arrangements. GenXers rated personal and family goals higher than career goals. Similar views are held by GenMers who readily engage in volunteer activities and desire meaningful careers that contribute to the betterment of society.

Organizational practices, however, have not kept pace with changing worker needs and attitudes. Career scholar and consultant, Professor Yehuda Baruch, who has conducted extensive surveys of company strategies in the U.S., U.K. and Israel, found that most firms still use traditional career management programs despite the fact that these older models no longer fit recent workplace changes. For example, only thirteen percent of the U.S. firms had any sort of programs related to issues such as dual-career couples or women and minorities in the workplace. Similarly, a relatively small percentage of Israeli (14%) and U.S. (24%) firms offered skills and self-development workshops. Thus, despite highly publicized, nontraditional career enhancement programs, such as American Express's program to provide formalized flexible work options and free back-up childcare, Lehman Brothers' "Encore Program" which

encourages women and men who want to re-enter the financial services workforce to apply for full-time or flexible schedule positions within the firm, or Ernst & Young's "Career Watch" committee, designed to review the progress of women and demonstrate that women with families can reach the top, such initiatives are the exception.

Companies today need a new, 21st century model of career development to articulate which programs and benefits will effectively attract, motivate, and retain talent, especially GenX and M workers. In the new millennium, the boundaries between work life and private life have become increasingly blurred. In this article we offer such a new career concept, The Kaleidoscope Career Model, that focuses on the evolving needs of employees in the new work landscape while attending to the nexus of work and family issues.

The Kaleidoscope Career Model

Not everyone wants to climb to the top of the corporate ladder anymore. A 2004 Burson-Marsteller survey of Fortune 1000 senior executives found that 60% had no desire to hold a top position in any company. Instead, many individuals are choosing varied career paths which change over the course of their lives. People take breaks from the workforce because of family demands or the need to engage in personal development. Increasingly, individuals are taking control of their own career management, defining success subjectively, on their own terms, beyond measures of salary and promotion rates.

In our research, we found today's workers had created "Kaleidoscope Careers," careers that were not defined by a corporation but by the individual worker, based on his/her own values and life choices. And like a kaleidoscope – the careers of these individuals are dynamic and in motion; as people's lives change, they alter their careers to adjust to these changes rather than follow company career norms. We developed The Kaleidoscope Career Model, (KCM), as the

result of a five year investigation into the complex issues surrounding today's workers' choices regarding career, family, and nonwork aspects of life. Our investigation had five parts: (1) a web-based survey of 109 women about their careers and aspirations; (2) a more comprehensive online survey of 1,647 men and women on career enactment and work/life transitions; (3) an online focus group in which we had "conversations" with 27 individuals, mostly men, about their careers and career changes; (4) a second online survey of 1,525 men and women which focused on flexible work arrangements, and (5) in-depth interviews with 52 individuals about their career choices and transitions. (Please see the bibliography for more details on our studies).

Overall, our research brought the complexities of careers, family, and lifestyle issues to the forefront. We found that while many people still remain in jobs that require them to put in the standard 40 to 60 plus hour work week at their offices, there was a refreshing change in the way in which work is being accomplished for many others. Rather than being nakedly ambitious and focusing on climbing the corporate ladder, many individuals were creating careers on their own terms. They were searching for the best set of options that created the maximum fit between their work, family and personal lives. They had created Kaleidoscope Careers – careers defined not by corporate standards but by their own values and life choices.

Workers today want careers that allow them to create a sense of meaning in their lives. In his article "*Experiencing Career Success*," Peter Heslin details people's growing desire for subjective or internal career success. Heslin outlines how subjective career success relates to attainment across a greater timeframe, well beyond current job satisfaction, and includes a wide variety of outcomes such as a sense of identity, contributing to meaningful causes, and balance. Some firms have already begun to address these trends by creating innovative career development programs that focus on worker's needs for meaning and family balance. For

instance, Merck & Company recognized its employees' need to balance work and family by offering the "You and Your Success" program. The program uses peer counseling to help workers clarify their goals and make choices (e.g., switch to part-time work schedule, return to school) that best match their lifestyles. Additionally, the company introduced the "Managing@ Merck" program in order to provide first-time managers with training on topics including work/life balance and inclusiveness.

Advances in technology, coupled with new attitudes about the priorities of family versus work as well as the desire for personal development and to contribute to society, have reshaped attitudes towards careers, causing some firms to redefine how work gets done. A growing number of organizations are permitting employees to work part-time or job share, or have supplied the necessary technology so individuals can work from home. For example, over 9,000 of Hewlett-Packard's U.S. employees who work entirely from home and 70% of its U.S. workforce use some form of flexible options. Likewise, 80% of IBM's U.S. workforce uses flexible work arrangements. But it is not only large companies that are offering their workers flexibility; most of *Working Mothers Magazine's* 2006 Best Small Companies (e.g., Beacon Publishing Services, Data Dog Interactive Marketing) offered some form of flexible work scheduling.

Companies have found that such flexible working arrangements enable them to retain high quality workers because their employees are better able to achieve balance between work and family. Linear career models that demanded total allegiance to one's corporation were based on the 1950s employee archetype: a man who could focus 100% on his work while his wife, usually a homemaker, supported his career aspirations while nurturing their children at home and managing their social life. But today's dynamic and diverse workforce requires a contemporary

career model that allows for flexibility with family balance for women and for men. The Kaleidoscope Career Model permits employees to shift and re-arrange their roles and relationships in new ways. Consider the working of a kaleidoscope; as one part moves, so do the other parts change. Like a kaleidoscope that produces changing patterns when the tube is rotated and its glass chips fall into new arrangements, workers shift the pattern of their careers by rotating different aspects of their lives. Employees may evaluate the choices and options available through the lens of the kaleidoscope to determine the best fit among their many relationships and work constraints and opportunities. As one decision is made, it affects the outcome of the kaleidoscope pattern. Like a kaleidoscope, we found that individuals' careers were dynamic and in motion such that they were able to alter their career priorities to adjust to the needs of their families rather than letting corporations dictate it for them.

Just as a kaleidoscope uses three mirrors to create infinite patterns, our Kaleidoscope Career Model has three "mirrors" or parameters (authenticity, balance, and challenge) which combine in different ways throughout the lives of individuals, reflecting the unique patterns of their careers. Each of these parameters, or decision-making questions, was active as signposts throughout the career. Certain parameters predominated at different points in the life span, forcing decisions about opting-out or staying-in the workforce. The strength of a parameter to shape a career transition depended on what was going on in that person's life at the time. If money was needed, then career issues took priority. If family balance was needed, then adjustments were made to better serve family needs. If both of these parameters were less active, then the individual could take stock, smell the roses, and ask the question, "Am I living a meaningful life?" and become more centered, reflective, and spiritual in the process.

The ABCs of the Kaleidoscope Career Model

We found that over the course of an individual's life, the need for authenticity, balance and challenge, the "ABCs of the Kaleidoscope Career Model," shifted and rearranged themselves in response to life and career choices. But what exactly does each of these parameters represent? Consider the following descriptions.

The need for authenticity. Authenticity is the parameter that describes being genuine and true to oneself, knowing one's strengths and limitations, and acting on the best information at the time. The need for authenticity is the quest to discover one's true voice. We found that for the men and women we spoke with, this need was often drowned out in the discussion about bad bosses, lack of advancement, bringing children to basketball games, and the continual demands of childcare and eldercare. But this was the voice of individuals as they reflected upon their choices and asked: Did I make the right decision? Does this decision make sense for ME as well as for others around me? Does the decision reflect who I truly am?

For some of those we studied, authenticity took the form of artistic or leisure pursuits that were followed in spite of other demands on their time and energy. For others it took the form of being true to oneself at work, being secure in one's knowledge or leadership style. For still others it was reflected in a long awaited dream at the end of child rearing and salary earning that culminated in a perfect retirement. We met one woman who left work as a regional manager for sales at a well-known retail chain to form her own catering business. We discovered one man who gave up his accounting job to write a novel. Another developed a secondary, post-retirement career selling items on eBay. Although finding authenticity is difficult to describe, we heard this theme over and over again, from women late in their career and from men, during the latter part of midcareer. Authenticity has to do with congruence between one's own personal

values and one's behaviors. When competing demands are eliminated from the personal regression equation, this theme was the end result.

The need for balance. The need for balance, defined as bringing factors into a state of equilibrium, was the holy grail for most of the women we spoke with. Although women want successful and challenging work lives, the need for balance might overcome their wishes for a more directed, upward-driven set of career accomplishments. Seeking a job closer to home to better suit the needs of children or elderly relatives was often viewed as a means of achieving a better equilibrium. Prioritizing one's children as a reason to leave the workforce was another means of achieving balance.

Balance is a nexus issue for people as the demands of their work outstripped the time available to spend with family or for themselves. We heard all kinds of stories about the need for balance: racing from an important client meeting to attend a parent-teacher conference that was across town; dashing home to attend a child's music recital while discovering there is a crisis at the office that keeps the phone calls coming and requires rushing back to the office with child in tow; using lunch breaks to bring an elderly family member to a doctor's appointment, but getting delayed for the important worldwide 2 p.m. conference call; and traveling between airports miles away from home but catching time to read a book to a child over the phone to lull her to sleep.

Unfortunately, imbalance and disequilibrium are part and parcel of the human condition. There just aren't enough hours in the day to do it all. For some, as illustrated by the exodus of women opting-out of corporations, leaving the workforce is the solution. Recent surveys of Harvard MBAs found that only 38% of the women who graduated in 1981, 1985 and 1991 worked full-time. Moreover, 60% of the female undergraduates at Yale University planned to cut

back their work schedule or stop work entirely when they have children. For others, shifting into a less demanding job is sometimes the only hope of regaining sanity from the corporate rat race. We found that for women, the need for greater balance – fewer work demands, more family time – was often used as the reason for a career transition in mid-career, when the demands of child-rearing, eldercare, and work accomplishments peaked. For most men, the need for balance often grew stronger later in life, once career goals had been achieved.

The need for challenge. This parameter reflects a worker's need to learn, grow, and find stimulating, exciting work. The challenge of innovating a new product, defining a new entrepreneurial enterprise, partaking in a "stretch" work assignment, championing a cause, or bringing changes to their companies was a key motivation that many of our survey participants and interviewees mentioned as a driving force in their careers.

Individuals focused on challenge often hold themselves to a higher standard. Many work nonstop. As one single mother, who typically works until 8 or 9 p.m. at the office and then heads home with her laptop, PDA, and cell phone in tow so that she can work until midnight, told us: "I just can't stop [working so hard]. I can't help myself. I couldn't stop working if I tried."

Challenge is the voltage of work achievement. When people are challenged in their work, they don't mind putting in the extra hours that are required to get the job done right. Challenge springs from the underlying source of creativity and drive that exists within each individual, and spurs the accomplishment of great things. Challenge can be a powerful motivator. For some people it is a validation of who they are or a way to learn and grow. For others it is a way to develop a base of expertise. We found that most of the men and women in

our study focused on challenge early in career, before the demands of family became overwhelming.

Some smart companies have begun to recognize that individuals want authenticity, balance and challenge and that productive outcomes can result from encouraging employees to act upon the synergies which emerge from the interaction of these three needs. For instance, consider how Dan Robinson's personal struggles led to the development of a product that placed Intuit in a prime position to enter the health care software market. Robinson's son was born with a rare genetic disorder that caused him to miss work in order to care for his son. Robinson spent much time arranging services through government agencies for the disabled and making sense of the mounting medical costs and the related paperwork. Frustrated by his experiences, Robinson longed to develop a software program to help others in similar situations manage medical expenses. Although initially met with skepticism, Intuit gave him the resources and permitted him to devote half of his workweek to developing a financial case for his idea. Once his idea earned approval, Robinson worked full-time with over twelve other employees to create the software and the related marketing plan needed to launch "Medical Expense Manager." Robinson probably never would have conceived of the idea for this new software had Intuit not supported the intersection of his work and family life--- his need to care for his son while helping others who faced similar frustrations in managing health care paperwork.

Creating Successful Work-Life Programs that Support Kaleidoscope Careers

The KCM offers corporations a smorgasbord of possibilities in the areas of recognizing employee needs for authenticity, balance, and challenge over the course of the life span. The KCM recognizes that sometimes life can get in the way of work, but by integrating these three

parameters into a meaningful career plan that recognizes this reality, corporations can find ways to make work fulfilling while retaining and motivating quality talent for the years to come.

Implementing the KCM involves more than offering employees an annual family picnic or workplace seminars. Many firms wrongly believe providing "family-friendly" policies, such as childcare vouchers or employee discounts, are sufficient enough to make their firms attractive to potential recruits and retain current high performing employees. But what firms traditionally think is "family-friendly" simply isn't enough anymore. Such policies, while welcome, do not address the fundamental issues: how to create a workplace where authenticity, balance and challenge—the ABCs of The Kaleidoscope Career model—are recognized and enhanced (see The Kaleidoscope Career Company Audit).

-------Insert Table 1 About Here-------

Based on our research, we found two important caveats to implementing successful work/life programs. First, organizational leaders must be truly committed to work/life programs and not use them solely for the purpose of publicity. If organizations have work/life policies but foster a hostile culture that makes use of these programs unacceptable, the policies become worthless and will fail to produce the positive outcome intended. Men who believe, for example, that they will be ridiculed for taking advantage of an extended paternity leave policy or that such breaks will truncate their career advancement options, will not make use of family-friendly policies. Workers must feel that the corporate culture validates their choices about having a life beyond work. The idea that employees who have full and rich lives outside of the office, bring all these experiences back to the office and produce better work because of them, must be embraced by top management and woven in the organization’s strategic mission and culture.

Second, establishing work/life programs is just the beginning. Our research found that women make career decisions based on a complex and inter-related set of factors, and balance is just one of the needs that drives women. Women want balance but it must be coupled with meaningful, challenging work and opportunities for advancement. Treating issues of work/life balance in isolation from organization strategy and culture cannot continue. Work/life programs must be part of an integrated system. Gender-based inequities in wages, job placements, and training opportunities must be eliminated. For example, many of the women in our study talked about forgoing career opportunities in order to care for ailing family members, to be near aging parents, and to nurture small children. Common practices that work against women, such as using long hours or travel as surrogate measures for commitment and ambition, must be replaced and actual performance should be used instead to evaluate employees. Likewise, many of the men in our study faced similar dilemmas or regretted not spending more time with family. Corporations must adopt kaleidoscope-oriented job policies, such as time banks of paid parental leave, reduced hour careers, job-sharing opportunities, and options for career interruptions to retain both men and women caught in a parental work bind. Comparable programs should be developed to help workers manage eldercare issues (e.g., paid leave, subsidized daycare for the elderly), including expanding the definition of eldercare to include not only one's parents but other elderly relatives.

In sum, mangers must recognize employees' needs for authenticity, balance, and challenge and the journey to fulfill these needs must permeate the very fabric of the workplace in order to make it truly family-friendly. It's no longer enough to just follow the pack. Today's workforce is rapidly changing and pay and benefit systems must also evolve if organizations are to remain competitive. If workers cannot be their true selves at the office and must deny their

connections to family, friends and community, then the firm becomes nothing more than a place to go to earn the rent. The firm also will lose any potential gains from the positive influence of the nonwork aspects of life on work performance. The old model of business as usual isn't good enough anymore; changes are needed if firms want to motivate and retain high performing employees.

Putting the Kaleidoscope Career Model into Motion

Firms that accept the necessity of the KCM approach can start to experiment with new ways to structure themselves to enable employees to experience authenticity, balance, and challenge. But changes in structure must occur within the context of a culture that recognizes that great synergies can exist between work, technology, and life roles (see The Five Steps For Putting the Kaleidoscope Career Model Into Action).

----Insert Table 2 About Here----

One company that acknowledges these synergies between work and family is JetBlue Airlines. In the global, wired economy, it is not unusual for companies to set up reservation offices or telephone help desks in many different cities—or even countries. But Jet Blue is unusual in that its entire staff of 550 reservation agents work from the comfort of their own homes, often while watching their kids play. Jet Blue found a win/win solution to a common work/life dilemma of working parents—childcare. And, an added bonus: Jet Blue saves 20% per flight booked by using agents working from home instead of a call center, the turnover rate for these employees is a mere 10%, and the company has won numerous accolades including being named in 2004 as the Best Domestic Airline by Conde Nast Traveler Readers Choice Awards.

Traditional brick and mortar companies built on the hierarchical, manufacturing age, pyramid structure are no longer necessary. Technology has enabled firms to change old structures and create new ones. But such changes can't occur in isolation. Compensation and benefit systems must be adjusted so that salary and raises aren't tied to level or organizational tenure but to performance. Likewise, old assumptions about focusing training on new employees and fast trackers need to be replaced with the idea that individuals – regardless of age or organizational level – desire training opportunities and the chance for challenging, on-the-job growth assignments. Leaders, subordinates and coworkers must assume developmental roles—sometimes providing information and feedback, other times serving as mentors, coaches or guides. Learning is not confined to the classroom or special conferences, but occurs everyday.

The KCM requires that corporate human resource planning be turned inside out so that focus is placed on the total gestalt of people's lives. Because our research shows that people have needs for authenticity, balance, and challenge, it is necessary that corporations be redesigned to accommodate this natural human search for fulfillment. In the following sections we offer specific suggestions on how corporations can use the KCM for re-thinking their structures and strategies to more effectively attract, motivate, and retain qualified personnel.

Practices to Support the Quest for Authenticity

Our research found that individuals are searching for meaning in their work and in their lives. They want to discover (or rediscover) who they are. They want to come to know and to express their true selves. They are tired of putting on a false mask and hiding their real wants and needs when they enter the office door. What can organizations do to help fulfill this parameter of the KCM? We offer three major suggestions.

--Insert Table 3 About Here---

First, to aid the quest for authenticity, firms should focus on corporate social responsibility. In this day and age of the Enron fiasco, the Arthur Andersen implosion, stock market scandals and CEO debacles, there is a growing interest in corporate ethics and social responsibility. GenX and GenM workers are especially interested in social causes and are more likely to be attracted to firms that have a strong sense of corporate social responsibility.

Ice cream giant Ben & Jerry's is well known for behaving as a good corporate citizen. The company not only supports its local community through its employee-led community action teams but also funds grassroots organizations for social change through the Ben & Jerry's Foundation. The company website provides "50 Ways to Promote Peace" as well as information on its initiative to "Lick Global Warming." Ben & Jerry's goes out of its way to help others such as by securing vanilla beans from disadvantaged countries and providing advice to small business owners, especially those led by minorities.

Likewise, Timberland, the boots and shoe maker, has developed several community programs targeted to improve youth leadership in Boston and has actively worked with Habitat for Humanity. The company is well known for nurturing the whole employee by the use of such policies as supporting volunteer work through paid time off, providing monetary adoption aid, and paid time off for eldercare.

Dancing Deer Bakery is well known for its $8 million donations to charity, its use of recycled packaging materials, and its commitment to producing all natural, preservative-free, products. All of the company's 65 employees have stock options and get free lunches. And although the company wishes to expand, CEO and co-founder Patricia Karter is committed keeping the firm's headquarters in its low-income Boston neighborhood rather than move to a less-expensive location outside the inner city. Similar to Dancing Deer Bakery, Patagonia Inc.,

the outdoor equipment and clothing retailer, is well known for its value-driven, company mission---to produce the highest quality product while doing the least harm to the planet. Each of Patagonia's stores has an area set aside for surfers and environmental groups to meet. Many of its employees have turned down higher paying positions for the chance to work in the firm's environmentally responsible, worker-friendly culture. The firm's headquarters has an on-site day center, full medical benefits are given to all full and part-time employees, workers can take sabbaticals at full pay to work with environmental groups, and the firm's founder and chairman, Yvon Chouinard, encourages workers to get out of the office to test new equipment and to hit the beach when the surf is up.

And one of the best known corporations that models authenticity is Harpo Productions, lead by CEO Oprah Winfrey. Harpo Productions has not only raised awareness of world problems but also is involved in building rural schools in ten different countries (e.g., China, Mexico, Haiti, Ghana), supporting women's shelters, building youth centers and homes, providing scholarships to students dedicated to using their education to give back to their communities, and giving awards so that charitable organizations can expand their programs. The Angel Network alone has raised over $27 million for charity, with all administrative costs covered personally by CEO Winfrey. The types of socially responsible programs exemplified by Ben & Jerry's, Timberland, Dancing Deer Bakery, Patagonia and Harpo Productions other companies attract younger workers while providing older workers, searching for greater authenticity in their lives, a way to find meaning through their work.

Second, firms should renew company efforts to promote total wellness—in mind, body and spirit. Some companies have realized the importance of focusing on employee health beyond the typical statement of the company healthcare co-pay. Companies have provided their

employees with on-site gyms, sponsored stress management and relaxation classes including yoga and ti chi, provided mental health and family counseling, funded treatments for addictions, and provided on-site ministers and spiritual guides. Nationwide, the insurance and financial service company, for example, used an approach that combined many different wellness programs. They upgraded their employee work-life benefits programs, including establishing a full fitness center at its headquarters in Columbus, Ohio, and sponsoring clubs geared to employee interests – whether in astronomy, bird watching, or chess.

Other companies have gone beyond programs to infuse their employees with the sense that the company truly cares about their well being. For instance, Townsend Engineering, a company that designs and manufactures meat-processing equipment, provides each employee with a free five-hour medical exam. One of those physicals allowed physicians to discover that an employee's longstanding liver disease had reached the critical point and a transplant was needed. Upon hearing of this employee's plight, Townsend's CEO put his three company pilots on standby for when a donor liver became available.

There are a wide variety of programs that companies can initiate to enhance the total individual – mind, body, and soul. Some companies, like Xerox and Plante & Moran offer sabbaticals, and others, like J. M. Smucker Company and Computrition, gives their workers paid time off to volunteer in the community. At PricewaterhouseCoopers, trainees are given leaves that can be used to care for dependents, to increase maternity leave, for paternity leave, to do volunteer work or for travel. Health insurance premiums at TD Industries are indexed to income so entry-level employees can more easily afford to cover their whole families. Additionally, the company pays 100% of an employee's tuition, fees and books at any state-supported university and provides 12 weeks of paid personal time off after three years of tenure.

Third, firms should help individuals find meaning in their work so employees can make a difference, have an impact on others, and come to know themselves better. By giving employees freedom and trust, employees can fulfill their potential. The Container Store (TCS) is a firm that treats their employees with respect and creates a culture of support. TCS pays above industry average in terms of salary and benefits while also offering workers yoga and stretching classes, monthly chair massages, and personalized online exercise and nutrition diaries. In addition to being a leader in extrinsic rewards, TCS also provides high intrinsic rewards. Ninety-four percent of TCS employees surveyed said their work for the company "made a difference." Additionally, 98% thought it was a friendly place to work and 97% believe that people at TCS care about each other. There is a climate of mutual respect that pervades the firm. The company's books are open so everyone knows the firm's financial status. Employees have the freedom to address customer concerns, even spending money to fix problems without first seeking permission from management to do so. TCS encourages employees to expand their minds, with first year employees receiving 235 hours of formal training and all employees receiving 162 hours of training per year. Employees with 10 years of tenure are encouraged to take a sabbatical. People think TCS is such a great place to work that over 40% of the firm's new hires come from referrals from current employees.

Practices That Achieve Improved, More Realistic Balance

Our research found that workers are tired of having to "hide" their children, their elderly relatives, and their personal concerns. While there are some companies that provide ample leave for medical appointments, snow days when children are home from school, and the last-minute necessity of picking up poster paper for a child's forgotten project assignment, most don't. The fact is people have lives outside the company, and if their work for the day is accomplished and

no urgent meetings or emails are pending, why is it necessary employees sit in their offices? Individuals experiencing high levels of work/family conflict bring stress to the office whereas those who have the flexibility will bring positive life experiences which enhance their work.

How pervasive are flexible work schedules? The U.S. Department of Labor reports that about 29 million full-time salary workers have schedules that permit them to vary the start and end time of work, a 50% increase from just ten years ago. Approximately 33% of these individuals worked flexible hours as part of a formal, employee-sponsored program. Surprisingly, men (30%), perhaps because of higher positions in their firms, were slightly more likely to have flexible schedules than women (27%). It's puzzling, however, that the percentage of firms with flexible scheduling is not greater, especially because those typically rated as the best companies to work for often emphasize this option. Stellar company examples include:

- Bristol-Myers Squibb Co., which provides a full range of child care options and invests in manager training on flexible scheduling;
- Eli Lilly and Co., which offers comprehensive flexible scheduling, and job-guaranteed leave for new moms;
- Fannie Mae and General Mills, both of which offer programs to improve the advancement of women as well as promoting flexible scheduling options;
- IBM, long known for its alumni relations networks that keep former employees "in the know," has a return to work program for employees who have previously left the firm; and
- PricewaterhouseCoopers, where once unheard of flexibility has penetrated the management ranks of this traditional accounting firm and 10% of the partners have adopted flexible schedules.

Flexibility can exist beyond the boundaries of standard corporate assumptions. Job sharing, reduced work hours, and other flextime arrangements become possible when the work is designed more creatively. And this is especially true when systems are in place so that employees can make recommendations for improved work schedules – and see their suggestions actually implemented. One such example of employee empowerment was suggested by Sally, a female security guard who participated in our study. Sally requested flextime, the ability to determine her own hours, and the opportunity to secure a laptop to work at home. Her request was initially met with a resounding: "No!" Yet, as Sally explained her rationale, it became apparent that the security guards – men and women alike – had already developed a workable solution: a flexible time schedule in which all hours were covered but were designed differently from the standard 8 hour corporate shift model. In addition, the security guards were responsible for some paperwork that could be accomplished from home if they were provided laptops. The answer to Sally and the other guards' time needs seems simple in retrospect. It illustrates that employees themselves often hold the key to maintaining workplace effectiveness while permitting work/family balance.

In addition to flexible schedules, there are many other ways firms can help their employees achieve greater balance. Some firms have already taken this step by creatively redesigning work to eliminate unnecessary tasks and unconstructive meetings as well as streamlining activities that have little or no effect on the bottom line. For instance, JetBlue's reservation agents – and other telecommuters – don't need childcare centers because they work from home. Booz Allen has "unbundled" the standard series of tasks, identifying chunks of consulting assignments that can be done by telecommuting or short stints in the office. Covenant Healthcare of Milwaukee offers workers a choice of shift lengths, ranging from four to twelve

hours, as well as solid benefits, ample maternity and time off policies, and a laptop so work can be done at home. And the firm realizes that some working mothers prefer part time work; 80% of Covenant's nurses work part-time.

The KCM calls for firms to develop programs that allow for natural stop-outs, opt-outs, and other interruptions over the course of a career. One case example from our research concerned Mallory, a woman who left her job at the Social Security Administration to rear twins and care for an elderly relative. Ten years later, feeling the pressure of college tuition upon her, Mallory elected to return to her old job in the same area of responsibility. She was denied a management position so instead took basic pay as an assistant claims officer. Two years later, HR recommended Mallory receive a promotion as manager of the unit. Five years later she earned the position of "administrative head." The HR department monitored Mallory's progress, rewarding her based on performance and not on uninterrupted company tenure.

A number of firms, such as Beacon Technologies (specializing in software development, e-commerce and web design), Gwaltney Fleming (office designers and builders), and Milestone Capital Management (investment advisors), have formalized, phased re-entry programs to help working women ease back into workplace as they adjust to having a new baby at home. The consulting firm of eXude Benefits Group has taken the phased re-entry idea to the next level by using a six month phase back program which includes reduced work hours at full pay. And these types of programs have been found to benefit employer and employee alike. For example, Deloittle & Touche found that its "Personal Pursuits" program had a positive impact on its bottom line. The program, which permits senior-level professionals to take up to five year off for reasons including childcare, eldercare and travel, provides individuals with support including training, career counseling, mentoring, opportunities for networking as well as ad hoc work

assignments. While Deloittle & Touche found that the program costs about $2500 per employee, the cost of replacing an employee would be much higher---at least double of that individual's salary.

Such on and off ramps may also be useful to helping older workers phase into retirement or return to the firm part-time or on a project-to-project basis. Although retirement used to be described as the time when workers declined and were seen as contributing less and less to their organizations as they disengaged to play golf and spoil their grandchildren that is no longer the case. Our research found that retirement does not have to be a black hole for productivity. Some "retirees" long to stay connected to the firm through part-time work while still having more freedom to travel, pursue leisure activities, or engage in volunteer activities. Others may take a time out for a few years, test the retirement waters, and then return as a consultant, mentor, part-time employee or an outsourced worker. To help employees make decisions about the retirement transition, some companies offer training that goes well beyond the traditional financial planning seminars that have long dominated retirement preparation programs. Weyerhauser, for example, offers a one-day program for employees under the age 50 and a two and half-day "Healthy-Wealthy-Wise" program for workers age 50 and over. Some companies, including Methodist Healthcare of Memphis, Tennessee, are offering online retirement assessment programs such as "My Next Phase." These programs include personality tests as well as exercises to help individuals develop retirement plans and consider "work after retirement" options. Other companies, like Travelers Insurance, are well-known for their programs that permit their retirees to return to the company as part-time employees or to work in areas different from their pre-retirement jobs. Although these ideas for promoting balance may seem like the road to reduced productivity, this is not the case. For example, research has found that while office face time is

lower in family-friendly firms, job performance is just as high and organizational commitment is higher than in firms with less family-friendly environments. Work/family programs can be a win/win; what is good for the employees can also be good for the bottom line.

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Practices to Achieve Greater Challenge

Challenge is a potent motivator, and when valuable workers no longer have a sense of challenge in their work, they turnover, with men usually moving to other firms and women typically moving out of the workforce. Firms wishing to retain talented workers need to examine the level of challenge and support they are providing.

Firms must provide advancement opportunities that allow for executive development, especially for women who are leaving corporate America in record numbers. The top-rated companies for working women monitor the number of women in senior, profit and loss, and pipeline positions, holding senior managers accountable for the advancement and development of women. IBM, for example, conducts annual audits of the base pay of women and minorities. When inequities are found, a recommendation is made to the manager who either implements the raise or provides a written explanation of why the raise should not be given. The manager's manager must also explain in writing why the raise was not implemented. If the department lacks funding for the raise, headquarters provides it. IBM's system is unique in that while other companies that use this process typically look for two standard deviations of difference in base pay rates, IBM looks for only one standard deviation. Similarly, BP rates executive on behaviors and business results including diversity initiatives with these rating directly impacting bonuses. BP's rigorous measurement of goals and behaviors has paid off; from 2000 to 2005, the number of women in the 600 most senior leadership positions rose from 9% to 17%. Chubb Corporation

and Safeway both use accountability programs similar to BP's program. Chubb Corporation reports that representation of women in senior vice president positions rose from 16% in 2001 to 23% in 2005 while the representation of women in the executive vice president level rose from 0% to 17% for the same period. Likewise, Safeway found a 40% increase in female store managers from 2000 to 2005; the percent of women at the vice president level increased from 12% in 2000 to 25% in 2005. Other company examples which promote challenge include:

- Formal job rotations, similar to Wellpoint's program, which identifies and trains high potential women for profit and loss responsibilities;
- Skill-based mentoring programs, such as IBM's "subnets" of 10 to 20 women who meet monthly to brainstorm about specific operational and management problems; and
- Flexible fast tracks, such as Federated's executive program that supports women's decisions to work part-time by permitting them to retain their management position.

But challenge involves more than removing structural sources of discrimination that insidiously or openly affects career planning. The KCM suggests that real challenges, in the form of meaty, interesting, stimulating work assignments, is vital. One key is making technology work for the workers rather than having workers become slaves to technology. For instance, consider how one manager used technology to change how business was usually done at Ford Motor Company. Traditionally, e-commerce teams based in Dearborn, Michigan, usually moved to a production pilot site full-time, having weekly, in-person meetings with architects and other agencies. This required a major relocation for the team that sometimes would go on for weeks, even months. For its planned pilot retail store in San Diego, the manager and her team decided to stay in Dearborn, replacing face-to-face meetings with videoconferencing and conference calls. The use of technology enabled the successful completion of the project while

greatly reducing travel expenses. Additionally, team members, who may have been prevented from participating in this challenging assignment because of personal demands, were still fully engaged without needing to temporarily relocate or lose daily interactions with their families.

--Insert Table 5 About Here---

Kaleidoscope Careers and The New Millennium

The U.S. is facing a unique juncture – a collision of economic, worldwide, and demographic forces. Such trends are creating major human resource challenges and opportunities for the next decade. Beginning in 2012, the annual growth rate of the U.S. labor force will decline. There will not be enough younger workers to replace those retiring as part of the "Baby Boomer Bubble." Additionally, the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that in the next decade, over 10 million jobs will open in highly skilled service occupations, but there will be a significant gap in professional, skilled, and leadership talent across multiple industry sectors. Because of these changing workforce demographics, coupled with increasing work hours and a general decrease in employee satisfaction, a 2005 SHRM survey found that HR professionals ranked recruitment and retention among their top challenges. The Kaleidoscope Career Model offers the means to meet these challenge by providing a framework for enhancing an organization's efforts to attract, motivate, and retain the most qualified workers. The KCM shows that the key to retaining talent is to offer flexibility alongside advancement opportunities as well as activities that permit employees to be their authentic selves.

The full benefits of implementing programs based on the ABCs of the Kaleidoscope Career Model may be difficult to measure and quantify. However, organizations which have adopted progressive HR programs and policies such as those suggested by the KCM and outlined in this article, have reaped real bottom line results. For instance, Johnson & Johnson reported

that employees who used flexible work options and family leaves had a 50% decrease in absenteeism. DuPont employees who used its work/life programs were 45% more likely to say they would “go the extra mile” for the company and were least likely to experience burnout. Half of Google’s new launches have resulted from the weekly “free days” the firms gives its employees to pursue new ideas. And although Sun Microsystems expends $3 million per year in direct costs to provide half of its 34,000 employees with flexible, technologically-enabled work options, it reports savings of approximately $53 million in reduced IT costs and $71 million in reduced real estate costs. Moreover, Sun Microsystems also gains free publicity because potential customers can readily see how Sun is effectively using its own networking technology with its own employees.

In sum, the Kaleidoscope Career Model involves re-inventing the wheel of the corporation so that all the colors of the arrangements of the kaleidoscope of life and work can shift into new and innovative patterns. By accepting nontraditional career paths within the firm, by broadening compensation and benefits policies to encompass alternative forms of work, by recognizing that everyone needs balance in their lives, by abolishing obsolete norms such as using long hours or travel as a surrogate measure for commitment and promotability, by establishing ethics programs that address wholeness issues, spirituality and leisure interests, and by encouraging a variety of measures for work/life balance, corporations will have an easier time recruiting, retaining, and shaping talent. The time is right for organizations to create such options.

Selected Bibliography

This article is based on an extensive, multi-method five year research project. More detailed information about our research is available in our book, *The Opt-Out Revolt: Why People are Leaving Companies to Create Kaleidoscope Careers*, (Mountain View, CA: Davies-Black, 2006). Study 1 was an online survey of women members of a national organization of female professionals. Surveys were returned from 109 women via email for a response rate of almost 10%. Participants were asked to describe their careers and detail the reasons behind their career transitions. The respondents ranged in age from 20 to 68, 80% were white, 71% had a spouse or significant other, and 42% had children living at home. Study 2 was an online survey of 1,647 individuals (837 men, 810 women), and was conducted in partnership with an internet market research firm, Greenfield Online, Inc., (GOI). The survey was self-contained and was not merged with any other surveys that GOI was conducting at that time. GOI's response rates normally range from 20-30%; the response rate for this survey was considered "good" as over 33% of individuals available chose to complete our survey. Respondents reflected the overall population of the GOI website; 87% were white and 76% worked full time. Study 3 describes a series of online conversations conducted with 5 women and 22 men enrolled in an Executive MBA program. Participants ranged in age from 25 - 55, had achieved income levels from approximately $60,000 - $200,000, and worked in various locations all across the U.S. This study employed an online interactive format for discussion on the topic and was undertaken to learn more about men, as considerable data had been collected regarding women in Study 1. Participation was voluntary and respondents were assured of confidentiality. Online conversations occurred in response to question prompts offered each week and in response to comments made by other participants. Study 4 was the second online survey completed in partnership with GOI. Surveys were completed by 1525 individuals (675 men, 850 women) who answered questions on why women and men leave the workforce, and the reasons behind their career transitions. Study 5 consisted of 52 interviews to gather case histories of careers. The interviews were completed by one of the co-authors and took the form of a telephone interview, a face to face discussion, or an online conversation about the individual's career. This sample was not representative; subjects came from all walks of life and were chosen based on the authors' knowledge that this person had an "interesting" career. Much has been written about changing demographic trends, the brain drain of female executives, and generational differences in workers' attitudes and behaviors. Many of the statistics used in this article are from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' website, www.bls.gov. Additional sources include the research organization Catalyst's publication, "The Next Generation: Today's Professionals, Tomorrow's Leaders" (2001, New York: Catalyst) and S.D. Friedman and J.H. Greenhaus's book "Work and Family—Allies or Enemies? What Happens When Business Professionals Confront Life Choices" (2000, New York: Oxford University Press).

In "Experiencing Career Success" (Organizational Dynamics, 2005, 34(4), 376-390), Peter Heslin provides a detailed discussion of objective versus subjective career success. He documents how many people have moved away from defining success solely in terms of money and have begun to focus on more intrinsic outcomes.

Yehuda Baruch has conducted extensive surveys of career management practices. Some of his recent publications include "Career Practices: Comparing India vs. UK" by Y. Baruch and P. Budhwar (International Business Review, 2006, 15(1), 84-101) and "Career Management Practices: An Empirical Survey and Theoretical Implications" by Y. Baruch and M. Peiperl (Human Resource Management, 2000, 39(4), 347-366).

Individuals seeking help in re-entering the workforce after a career interruption can attend programs such as Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business's eleven day "Back in Business: Invest in Your Return." The Dartmouth program, which is underwritten by Citibank, helps men and women update their skills and learn job-search techniques. Similarly, Babson's "Act II: Stepping Back Into the Workforce" focuses on helping women re-enter the labor force after a career time-out.

Other information was obtained from websites including www.harrisinteractive.com, www.catalyst.org, and www.shrm.org. Some of the bottom line outcomes detailed in the conclusion of this article are based on information from the Society of Human Resource Management's website, where much additional information is available on ROI for work/family programs as well as other progressive HR initiatives. Useful online articles include: Jon Kirchhoff's (April 2006) "Understanding Work/Life Balance and Organizational Productivity"; Joanne Sammer's (June 2004) "Generating Value Through Work/Life Programs"; Kathy Gurchiek's (June 2004) article "Poor Work/life Balance Undercuts Leadership"; and Nancy Lockwood's (June 2003) "Work/Life Balance: Challenges and Solutions" (all accessed July 3, 2006). See Lisa Belkin's article (October 2002) "The Opt-Out Revolution" in the New York Times Sunday magazine, Oct. 26, and also our co-authored article in The Academy of Management Executive, "Kaleidoscope Careers: An Alternate Explanation for the Opt-Out Phenomenon"(2005, February, 19:1, pgs.106-123) for more information on the opt-out phenomenon, including statistics quoted in this article.

Table 1 The Kaleidoscope Career Company Audit

Want to find out if your company is truly a "family-friendly" firm? Many firms believe they are offering "family-friendly" human resource policies, but in fact workers feel such policies fall short of what they truly need. Based on our extensive research, this audit focuses on the programs and policies employees really want and need. If you would like to rate your company's policies and encourage innovation in this area, score your firm on these fifteen questions and see how your company stacks up.

My company:

	Yes	No
Provides flexible work scheduling so that I can work remotely from home?	_____	_____
Allows workers to leave their jobs for 1 - 5 years and return to the firm?	_____	_____
Allows workers to leave their jobs for more than 5 years and return?	_____	_____
Offers health care benefits to part-time workers?	_____	_____
Provides additional benefits for long tenure with the firm, such as help with employee and their children's college tuition payment plans?	_____	_____
Maintains active full and part-time job listings available for alumni who have left the firm but may be interested in returning some day?	_____	_____
Allows job-sharing opportunities for workers who prefer reduced schedules?	_____	_____
Rewards and promotes workers who utilize flexible schedules but are putting in full hours outside of the workplace to get the job done?	_____	_____
Offers flexible fast-tracks for promotion that permits people to opt-out, return after a period of time, and still be promoted?	_____	_____
Offers a time bank of hours to deal with childcare and eldercare issues so that when needed, employees can leave work early?	_____	_____
Provides opportunities for short (one or two month) paid sabbaticals?	_____	_____
Offers corporate wellness programs, focusing on health and the whole person?	_____	_____
Offers opportunities to participate in corporate social responsibility programs, such as Habitat for Humanity, in lieu of work for a few days?	_____	_____
Allows the formation of employee clubs associated with leisure activities, such as golf, tennis, chess, crafts, and other possibilities?	_____	_____
Provides workshops on skill development, such as assertiveness, negotiation, and other skill development activities?	_____	_____
Total:	_____	_____

Answers: If you have checked 10 or more yes responses, then your company is truly a family-friendly firm. If you checked between 5 - 10 yes responses, then your company is building strengths as a family-friendly firm. If your company has less than 5 yes responses, then your company needs to improve its score by utilizing true family-flexible benefits. Talk with your Human Resource Director about the possibilities, and consider forming an employee group to take action. You may be surprised at the response from top management. Sometimes it takes the power of a small coalition to create innovative changes for the greater good.

Table 2

Five Steps For Putting the Kaleidoscope Career Model into Action

1. Create a vision based on the fundamental principle that workers want authenticity, challenge and balance in their lives.
2. Build commitment to the vision at all levels, especially with the help of change champions who not only talk about integrating the ABCs of the KCM throughout all organizational systems but also walk the talk in their own lives.
3. Take action to turn the vision into reality, because vision without action, without successful implementation, kills employee hope.
4. Continuously support the vision and its implementation by committing adequate resources to training, development, incentives, equipment and the like. Ensure that not only is performance equitably rewarded but that benefits are equitable and employees who need the most assistance, but may be the least able to afford it, receive more benefits.
5. Measure attitudes, behaviors and other outcomes and based on the data obtained, make changes – big and small – to keep pace with, and even anticipate, organizational and environmental changes.

Table 3 Ideas to Support Authenticity
• Offer paid corporate sabbaticals for 3 to 6 months to pursue education, personal development, or community service activities • Provide corporate wellness programs, focusing on health and the whole person • Offer workshops on spirituality and finding a higher purpose in life and work • Provide centralized corporate gyms and recreation centers so employees can support their health while on-site • Offer coaching services to assist employees with career and life planning • Offer workshops that address hot button issues, such as learning how to become more assertive, or negotiating well • Consider maintaining an employee leisure interest time bank of free hours • Encourage employee clubs for interests, such as golf, tennis, chess, crafts, dance activities • Establish procedures for recognizing skills and knowledge gained during personal leaves, career interruptions, and nonwork activities including community service, in job placement decisions • Establish corporate social responsibility programs, such as opportunities to engage in Habitat for Humanity or walk-a-thons for charity • Provide workers and customers with information on the company website on what the firm is doing to be socially responsible and how individuals can contribute to these efforts • Make corporate social responsibility part of the firm's mission statement, strategy, and culture with top managers demonstrating ethical behavior

Table 4 Ideas to Support Balance
• Provide opt-out career interruptions for 1 or 2 years; Stop-out career interruptions for 2 to 10 years • Offer reduced hour careers, job sharing, active part-time job listings, and managerial training on the effective use of flexible scheduling • Create job banks that give potential “boomerangs” (i.e., former employees) first priority of consideration over external candidates • Establish job-reentry and training programs that permit re-acclimation to the workforce • Provide "tech for flex" programs so workers can work from home • Offer time banks of paid parenting and eldercare leave • Restructured retirement plans, making use of phased retirement and work after retirement options such as part-time work, consulting and mentoring • Provide healthcare and other benefits for part-time workers of long standing • Offer onsite daycare, after-school programs, and Saturday and summer camps for employees’ children • Offer benefits that encourage long term retention, such as college tuition reimbursement benefits for employees and their children • Reward and promote individuals who effectively use flexible schedules or are “balanced life” role models for others • Redefine family beyond children and provide programs that support care-giving

Table 5 Ideas to Support Challenge
• Redesign work so employees at all levels are empowered to do more meaningful tasks and make more decisions • Outsource or mechanize menial work • Create opportunities for early field or international experiences • Develop skill-based mentoring and networking programs • Create on-the-job learning assignments with time for reflecting upon knowledge and skills gained • Use job rotation to increase early skill development across departments • Create a culture that encourages lateral moves for learning and skill development • Make top level managers accountable for turnover and advancements rates for women • Monitor the number of women in executive, pipeline, and profit and loss positions as well as gender inequities in pay and benefits • Provide career succession plans that include time off for career interruptions without penalty • Create reward systems based on outcomes and actual performance, not face time • Offer training, technical support, and equipment to enable employees to creatively use technology to enhance their authenticity, challenge and balance