



Enhanced Employee Health, Well-Being, and Engagement through Dependent Care Supports

Webinar Question & Answer Session Transcript June 23, 2010

Dave Lissy, Chief Executive Officer, Bright Horizons Family Solutions
Dr. Lucy English, Senior Consultant, The Consulting Practice at Bright Horizons
Dr. Jamie Ladge, Professor of Management and Organizational Development, Northeastern University

Question: *Was there a difference in the findings for men and women?*

Dr. Lucy English, Senior Consultant, The Consulting Practice at Bright Horizons:

There was not a big difference between men and women in our study, and I think what we are looking at is the reality of dual working parents in the workforce. We didn't see that men were answering the survey terribly different from women at all. In fact, one of the findings was that men were as likely to report having experienced issues with finding dependent care for their loved ones as were women. So we are seeing men are as involved and invested in this as women.

Dave Lissy, Chief Executive Officer, Bright Horizons Family Solutions

: As a working father, this issue is not gender specific and not a women's issue, but rather an issue that both partners in a family who are both trying to be successful at home and at work.

Question: *You remarked that organizations need to support the continued usage of dependent care programs; in what ways can organizations do this best?*

Dr. Jamie Ladge, Professor of Management and Organizational Development, Northeastern University

This is a common issue that a lot of organizations face, because while many organizations might provide the various supports and put them into place, often it comes down to the manager to support those for the direct report. Often times you have to balance what the organization actually offers and what's being supported by your direct manager or your supervisor.

It's bit of a training and education issue that has to be permeated throughout the organization that it's all well and good to offer these things, but managers have to be educated on how to offer them, and who needs them, and why they need them. Not everyone is going to get a manager that's going to be a working parent or

someone caring or needing these services for themselves. So, everybody has to understand the benefits of these programs.

Dave: I couldn't agree more. In our experience over time, having these be viewed as productivity tools by managers on the front line to help with their goals and helping to make their own organization successful is really the key, and not for them to be these programs that simply sit out there that maybe people could take advantage of or maybe not. But they are kind of baked into the organization's DNA. And, I think that research has always showed us over time that people tend to quit managers, not companies, and I think that being sure that this can get into the mix, particularly at the front line manager levels, has been the challenge for a long time and continues to be one of our greatest challenges.

Question: *What types of companies do you work with, and, specifically, any in higher ed?*

Dave: We feel very proud to work with companies of all kinds in every industry that we can think of within our economy. In particular, we have the good fortune of working with many leading universities and institutions of higher learning all across the country. We provide work-site child care centers for almost 30 universities around the country and also other work/life programs and consulting services to many others.

Question: *Did you control for income and job type?*

Lucy: Yes, in the study we used regression analysis to control for income and also for age. We looked at those as the two most important factors when we are looking at health outcomes. Obviously the age of the respondent is extremely important, as well as their income level, as we know from research. We didn't want those two factors to influence our results and give us anything spurious, so we did control for both age and income, and all of the results we presented here today were statistically significant with those controls.

Question: *How many back-up centers do you have, and how large are they? What size is your largest center?*

Dave: At Bright Horizons we manage 81 dedicated back-up centers, so that's back-up only, within our centers, and many of our full-service centers have back-up care associated with them along with full-service care.

We have centers of all sizes. I believe our largest is in the neighborhood of 80 or 90 capacity back-up only plus school age. So, I think they range in size depending on the needs of who our client partner is, and obviously we offer back-up care beyond just the four walls of any one of our centers, because we have a national network of both centers and in-home care providers that can provide back-up child and elder care when needed.

Care is provided either in the home if that's the preference, or at a center that's either a Bright Horizons center or other centers that we've contracted with if we're in a geography where we don't have a Bright Horizons center. So, pretty much if you have a back-up need anywhere you are in this country, Canada, the UK, or Ireland, we can provide you an answer.

Question: *Do you see any differences in the impacts of work/life and dependent care programs across different generations?*

Jamie: I think that there is a lot of similarity actually in terms of the desire of what the different generations want. You will see baby boomers and millennials now really desiring the same thing around flexibility. We all want flexibility, and we all want support. The millennials especially, and what I hear from my students is they have this expectation that they are going to work really hard for their first five or 10 years and then they're going to go off and do their own thing. They have an expectation that employers are not going to be there for them, because they came off having parents who probably got laid off and felt that their organizations weren't loyal to them.

And I think this is a big issue, but this is how the current generation is thinking, and I think you have to be able to provide these supports to deal with these generational value differences. The current generation is not the same as the older generations in terms of loyalty. They may desire the same thing, but they are not the same in terms of what they want.

In terms of the type of support, you've got to be able to offer support to different generations such as Bright Horizons that support early child care in addition to elder care. You have some generations who are dealing with both of those things simultaneously.

Dave: Millennials are a generation of "show me, not tell me," and I think that rhetoric isn't going to cut it, and what they observe actually happening in their daily work/life or in this case their workday and what the common practices are within your culture. They will sniff out the reality pretty quickly and make decisions based on that, not based on rhetoric or promises. So, I think that that's a real important thing to consider.

Any time I have seen a survey of the millennial generation, they've always talked about what they want to achieve in life is a healthy integration between what they do in their professional and personal lives. That's how they are able to find success and that's always at the top of every survey, very different than what you saw from people coming out of college or business schools 20 years ago. So, I think that's another compelling aspect of all this.

Question: *What measures can employers use to determine the actual cost of offering dependent care support, and do you have examples of what organizations have*

actually documented in this regard with respect to savings and/or the return on investment from dependent care supports?

Dave: Over the course of our 24 years in partnering with organizations, we have made the specific case or helped to make the specific case for many organizations. If you take back-up care as an example, historically what we've been able to document is when you take the investment that a company is making in providing back-up care against the fact that three out of every four people who use back-up care say they wouldn't have been able to get to work that day without it, and you can document what the missed work cost was. You have a pretty clear way to measure just in absenteeism and lost productivity against whatever your investment is.

Our Consulting Practice at Bright Horizons and our client services team would be happy to share with you case studies of what companies we've had the privilege of working with over time have documented with respect to savings, if that will help you make your case within your organization. And if you're interested in that specifically, please just make yourself known to us, and we are happy to have somebody from the Bright Horizons team be in touch.

Question: *Is your research specific to employer-sponsored care/support or more generally any dependent care support?*

Lucy: What we were looking at in this study was specifically employees who have dependent care supports available to them through their employers. So these are people for whom the work culture somewhat permeated with the knowledge that this employer is providing you with the kinds of supports and services as well as the actual physical provision of those services. We are comparing a group of parents of children under the age of 13 who have employer-sponsored care in any of the three kinds we just described (full-service, back-up, and adult/elder care) to a group of similar working parents who do not have the same supports available through their employers.

Question: *What do you think the effect on the survey results are that companies with dependent care supports for employees are overall better companies to work for, offering wellness programs, for example?*

Lucy: That's a really good question. Some of the respondents to the survey who had dependent care programs available also had other kinds of benefits including wellness programs and flexible work schedules available. We asked about that on the survey specifically, so that we could play with the data and make sure that it wasn't other kinds of programs influencing our results. So we played with pulling out the other kinds of flexibility and wellness programs to make sure that that wasn't driving the results, and it wasn't driving the results — the dependent care supports were driving the results.

But that being said, culture is really important. People won't use the work/life programs if the culture doesn't support them. So what we found here was more evidence that culture comes from the formal aspects of the organization, that the policies and programs are what set the stage for an organization to have the kind of culture that's supportive of work/life effectiveness of parents finding the balance they need to be effective at work and at home.

Question: *Do you think that the current economic climate lends itself to companies investing or continuing to invest in companies' philosophies toward dependent care supports?*

Dave: I'll share with you our experience at Bright Horizons. We've had the good fortune of growing our organization I think largely based on the fact that trends in this area have been very positive and there has been a continued recognition that between the changing demographic profile of who is in our workforce and also the value stream of the millennials, and all the things I talked about before that we use to think about all of these things as trends, and I prefer now to think about these things as permanent realities.

If you are serious about trying to build a workforce for the future, then you have a different challenge than what existed 10 or 20 years ago, and we are no longer trying the hybrid approach.

Our own experience over the course of the past year actually gives me some comfort that these kinds of things stick even during down economies. While it's true to say that any organization has to adjust or may be forced to adjust during any kind of cyclical time, it is spending in one way or another and so may choose not to invest in new things based on current economic realities. What we saw was a continuation of programs that were already in place and slight additions here and there. So what that suggested to me was, yes, the economy has its realities, but that the programs in place are sticky, are important, and are here to stay.

Question: *Now that you have released the study, were there any surprises? Do you have final thoughts that you would share as a result of what you've learned over the course of the past year? Anything surprise you, anything compel you more than anything else that's worthy of just briefly commenting on?*

Lucy: We went into this not knowing what we were going to find. We had a hypothesis that was based on our experience and supported by research that we know that stress affects health. But we didn't know if we were going to be able to see it through the data that dependent care would reduce stress enough to make a difference between these two groups. I found the enormity of the difference in the major health issues like high blood pressure and diabetes and high cholesterol to be somewhat surprising. I was amazed at how big that difference was, and I think that moving forward we'll want to continue to look into these issues and continue

to understand how various kinds of supports in the workplace can really help employees in truly dramatic ways like this.

Jamie: What's surprising to me is that we are still talking about this. This is such a no-brainer in my opinion that these studies are very important and very relevant today, but we are still pushing for these things in this day and age, although I would like to think that given all the things that we talked about in this webinar even in applying to our own personal situations, Lucy just having a baby, me talking about the struggles in my doctoral program, and us even just sharing stories before this about our children, that barriers and stereotypes are hopefully a thing of the past.

But the reality is that organizations still need to support their employees in a lot of different ways and to be able to support the different generations as we've already talked about. But to really do this takes this cultural shift, and clearly in this study we see the strong correlation between these dependent care supports and workplace culture. They really tie together and it's an old issue, but it still needs to be addressed and being able to provide these amenities to individuals and employees to me is a no-brainer, it should just be something that everybody needs and should capture.

Dave: Being at this for as long as I've been at this, I recognize that data is really important and many of the folks on the phone are in the position of having to make the case within their organizations to make these important investments, and we've always viewed our role as kind of that intermediary, that partner of choice to help you. Our client partners continue to make the case to sustain and grow which we are already doing, and those of you who have yet to make an investment in this area, we can help you make a smart investment and to manage that for you over time.



To learn more about how Bright Horizons can help your organization, please visit www.brighthouse.com/employersolutions, or contact us at clientservices@brighthouse.com or 800-453-9383, ext.1600.