



eowa BAA winner 2003
case study



SC Johnson & Son P/L

EOWA Leading Organisation for the Advancement of Women (<500 employees)

The organisation is very aware of issues relating to women in the workplace such as pay equity, relative lack of promotional opportunities for women with children and issues such as the shortage childcare, challenge of elder care and work/life balance issues.

In 2000, having identified that “our employees are employee consumers” and that the organisation needed to meet their needs market research was expanded to include an employee survey of “What describes a good company?” and “What describes a family friendly company?” As a result of this survey SC Johnson undertook to strategically pursue the five critical areas of:

- Leadership,
- Career Development
- Training
- Recognition
- Work/Life Blend

Cross functional teams were assigned to assist in the development of strategies and measures for the strategies. In developing people/organisational strategies several career oriented women were invited to join the project team which had a particular focus on outcomes that delivered improvements in the “glass ceiling” issues. Focus groups were also used to identify specific needs gaps and to assist in determining changes the organisation needed to make and issues on which it should focus in order to better meet the needs of its employees.

Organisation Information

INDUSTRY SECTOR	=	Manufacturing
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	=	125
% OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES	=	31%
% OF FEMALE SENIOR MANAGEMENT	=	17%

How issues Were Addressed?

Educating the organisation on the issues affecting women’s employment required the development of a strategy document and a good deal of debate around terminology. There was the realisation that although perceived to be “fair” a second look was warranted as the group around the table were not diverse but all male.

- Transparency was cemented in policies.
- A performance management process was formalised.
- Salary reviews were linked to performance
- A market positioning for salary and benefits was agreed and implemented.



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- The agreed organisation aim is to fill 90% of positions internally.
- A three stage recognition process was formalised involving immediate managerial recognition, quarterly employee meetings and a formal recognition through a six-monthly award. In order to address the lack of flexibility for employees on parental leave a number of changes were made.
- A formal "keep in touch" program for the benefit of prime care giver was introduced.
- Core hours of 9 am to 3 pm were introduced
- A "Preferred Meeting Times" Policy which allows employees to opt out of meetings which commence before 9am and if they finish after 4pm was implemented.
- Telecommuting on an as needed basis has been introduced.
- Aged care information is provided
- Six months unpaid sabbatical leave is possible after five years of service
- There is unlimited sick leave,
- an on-site gymnasium, canteen and tennis courts as well as Pilates classes are provided
- Even though the return rate from maternity leave was already 100% the amount of paid parental leave was increased from six to nine weeks. This is (primary carer) paid parental (rather than maternity) leave.
- There is a zero tolerance policy regarding sex based harassment and this policy is put into practice when necessary. The expression "best people, best place" expresses the organisation's desire to attract top females who share the values of SC Johnson.

Results

Currently 75% of all internal vacancies are filled by women. The organisation is targeting 90%. A 95% overall retention rate has been achieved and there is 100% return rate from maternity leave.

Under the current leadership training programmes a common leadership vocabulary is used within the business. This provides a non-confrontational terminology with which to discuss issues such as performance, promotional and developmental opportunities.

64% of promotions have been women which is a significant improvement on the past. The performance management process, which is linked to salary reviews is transparent and received a great number of "excellent" ratings in a recent survey. In an external survey SC Johnson's staff scored 3% above the average of other participating companies in respect to satisfaction with work/family balance and also employee satisfaction.

As a global company opportunities are sought globally for employees. In terms of salary, women are not disadvantaged comparatively with men in the company.

Lessons Learned

The importance of providing a business environment which facilitates the blending of work and life commitments is critical to the retention of talented employees and the success SC Johnson has had in developing women in the organisation.

The focus of the CEO and leadership team not just on supporting but on proactively encouraging an environment which allows women to maximise their potential in the workplace is also key to success.

The use of cross-functional team approach has enabled the organisation to maximise ideas and so optimise solutions to issues which have limited women's potential.

Effective committed leadership, cross-functionality and a team focus on balancing work and the whole of life has been critical in achieving success at SC Johnson.