



chief executives unplugged 2003
case study



**Household
 & Body Care**

Sara Lee Household & Body Care

Sara Lee aims to create an inclusive culture and to attract and retain high performing staff and graduates. The Australian organisation is part of the U.S. based Sara Lee Corporation with a global network employing 150,000 people. Diversity is a key operational driver both world-wide and in Australia.

Organisation Information

INDUSTRY SECTOR	=	Manufacturing
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	=	218
% OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES	=	58.9%
% OF FEMALE SENIOR MANAGEMENT	=	33.3%

How Issues Were Addressed

- Formed a Diversity Team to manage ongoing Diversity Program
- Work from home introduced
- Established an emergency child care room
- Determined to be a market leader in maternity leave which led to introduction of paid maternity leave which increases with length of service, ie eight weeks after one year, twelve weeks after two years and sixteen weeks after five years of service
- Implemented flexible hours
- Part time employment
- Additional annual leave
- Introduced personal services including: dry-cleaning, car service, internet access, banking and shopping, massage, yoga, diet and fitness programs,
- Significant training study aid assistance and up-skilling of employees
- Annual two-day forum for exploration of diversity issues
- Introduced a 'Keep in touch" program for employees on maternity leave and a mother counselling initiative
- Meetings now scheduled during core business hours of 10 to 4 so that attendees are able to pick up/drop off school-aged children
- Leveraged the advances in technology to assist in providing work-from home options eg if a report needs to be lodged at a certain time emailing it from a laptop beside the swimming pool while caring for children is absolutely acceptable
- Some jobs have been reconfigured to accommodate the needs of staff and enable Sara Lee to retain excellent staff
- A playroom is provided for emergency care of children
- Additional unpaid leave can be taken if requested
- Sara Lee subsidises yoga, diet and nutrition classes
- High profile women in the organisation are encouraged to speak out – as are all staff – and so to inspire others and to assist in ensuring an open transparent environment



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- Reports are required around achievements in diversity specifically:
 - Number of women in key roles
 - New appointments of senior women
 - Overall gender-based statistics

Results

- Remuneration analysis between male and female employees indicates a zero differential at executive level and 5.75% at senior management level
- Women returning from maternity leave now 95%
- More women in non-traditional roles at all levels eg CFO, MIS, Factory Services
- A quarter of the management team are women
- 33.3% (two out of six) of executive team are women
- Women are now working in non-traditional areas such fork-lift drivers
- Employees now 58.9% women
- Company has achieved record profit over the last year
- Increase in the calibre of would-be employees
- One manager works from 6.30 to around 4.30 so that he can get home to his family, another spends the early part of the day with his young family and starts and finishes later in the day.
- High profile women in the organisation act as role models and inspire others

Lessons Learned

- Commitment to diversity goes hand in hand with business success
- High profile support from a CEO who fully understands the issues
- Initiatives to encourage equity cost surprisingly little. It is often low cost initiatives which can win credibility for, and commitment to organisational programs.
- The cumulative effect for staff of lots of small easy-to-implement ideas is strong
- Programs such as paid maternity leave can definitely give the edge when competing for excellent staff