

**CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS**

**THE SHRIVER REPORT:  
A WOMAN'S NATION CHANGES EVERYTHING**

**BUSINESS UNUSUAL:  
BUSINESS' RESPONSE TO THE NEW AMERICAN WORKFORCE**

**WELCOME:  
HEATHER BOUSHEY,  
SENIOR ECONOMIST,  
CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS**

**MODERATOR:  
KATIE CORRIGAN,  
CO-DIRECTOR, WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY 2010,  
GEORGETOWN LAW CENTER**

**SPEAKERS:  
BRAD HARRINGTON,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND RESEARCH PROFESSOR, BOSTON  
COLLEGE CENTER FOR WORK AND FAMILY**

**CHRISTIE HEFNER,  
DIRECTOR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CENTER FOR  
AMERICAN PROGRESS ACTION FUND**

**PATRICIA KEMPTHORNE,  
FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TWIGA FOUNDATION, INC.**

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HEATHER BOUSHEY: While they're getting settled, I want to introduce our next introducer and moderator, the fantastic Katie Corrigan. Katie is the co-director of Workplace Flexibility 2010, a campaign to support the development of a comprehensive national policy on workplace flexibility.

She has been responsible for overseeing what I know is a massive effort over there at Workplace Flexibility 2010 to examine the strategy, the legislative (lawyering ?), policy research, media and constituent outreach components of their program. She was formerly with the ACLU and is a fantastic colleague and friend, and we're so happy to have you here today to introduce the business panel.

KATIE CORRIGAN: Well, thank you so much, Heather, and thank you for – the Center of American Progress, for the invitation. As you just heard, my résumé doesn't exactly scream corporate America. So anyone that clicks on the link, you'll see lots of government and nonprofit experience.

But I was invited, I think, to moderate this panel because for the past five years Workplace Flexibility 2010, the policy initiative I co-direct, has been taking a step back and looking at public policy that would advance workplace flexibility and trying to figure out, can you do that in a way that advances the interests of families, that absolutely takes into account the interest and needs of business?

And doing that job, that means I've talked to a whole lot of people over the years – lots and lots of companies, small, medium and large, nonprofit private sector. I've talked to unions, I've talked to researchers, I've talked a lot to Heather and Ann over the years and lots of other people in the room.

But essentially I've almost become a translator, I think, of sorts, to really look at this issue from these different institutional perspectives. In a sense, I've spent some time at the fault lines of the different institutions we heard from today, starting with government, looking at families and institutions, and now ending here and looking at business.

And I've seen where they can sometimes bump up against each other. Sometimes that means they're supporting each other and advancing the cause all around. Sometimes they rub up against each other, a little like the tectonic plates, so there's a little more rumbling. And sometimes there just is a gap and you just need more focus, attention and thinking through, what sort of public policy do we need here?

And, really, overall I think Ellen Galinsky at Families and Work Institute has a project about – you know, we've been trying to figure out, how do you make work work for both families and employers?

And just, again, thank you. I'm very excited that the kitchen table negotiations are going public. You can't get much more public than David Gregory in "Meet the Press," which is great. And then I'm going to go quick introductions.

Brad Harrington is going to lay the baseline for us on the data. He's the author of the chapter in the Shriver Report on business practice. He comes to us from the Boston College's Center for Work and Family, as well as lots of experience in the private sector.

Then we're going to turn to Christie Hefner and Patricia Kempthorne, our panelists today. Christie Hefner was chairman and CEO of Playboy Enterprises from '88 to 2008, overseeing the global expansion of Playboy's wide array of platforms and markets.

Patricia Kempthorne is the founder and executive director of the Twiga Foundation. Twiga works in partnership with lots of different organizations, including the Families and Work Institute and the Chamber of Commerce on the When Work Works Project. She has also been the first lady of Idaho and has served as an advisor, I know, to Maria Shriver in the development of the report.

So I'll turn it to Brad for a few minutes and then we'll have a Q&A and open it for conversation.

**BRAD HARRINGTON:** Thank you. Thank you. I hope never to follow the congresswoman again. (Laughter.) Next time I'll go earlier on the agenda.

Let me say first of all how proud and pleased I was to be asked to be the lead author on this chapter, along with my friend and colleague, Professor Jamie Ladge from Northeastern University. I would just say, in addition to being pleased, my other reaction was shock.

I say that for three reasons, really. First is I am not an inside-the-beltway person at all, and when people use terms like, I was just on the Hill meeting with a group of staffers, I break out in a sweat.

Second, I'm not a gender studies expert. I'm an ex-business executive who researches and teaches about leadership in organizations and careers and work life at Boston College. So gender studies are not really my area of expertise.

And third, and perhaps the biggest reason for all of you to be shocked, is I'm not a woman. (Chuckles.) So depending on your perspective, that either bolsters or undermines my credibility for the panel today.

But what I wanted to do is just give you a little sense of how we looked at this issue, and I think we really looked at this primarily as a business issue to be explored and analyzed, not as a gender issue per se.

So with that in mind, I just have four points from the chapter I would like to kind of make or leave you with. The first is when you look at this issue from a business perspective, not

though a gender lens per se, I think you will find it very easy to understand why we titled the chapter “Got Talent? It Isn’t Hard to Find: Recognizing and Rewarding the Value Women Create in the Workplace,” because this is essentially, for me, a talent management issue.

Present recession aside, in the last 18 months, if we can think back before that, HR leaders have talked incessantly for years and years and years about the worker talent and the tremendous emphasis that they place on making sure that they’re hiring and retaining top talent.

Whenever I hear these discussions, I must say I find them pretty ironic in light of the fact that right under the noses of so many human resource professionals are an enormous number of talented individuals – women – who are either lost to the organization because they go to another employer, they opt out of employment altogether, or they’re underutilized within their workplace because they cannot follow the rules that have been established by a male-dominated organization or culture.

So for me, when I hear people talk about talent management being such a challenge, I just ask the question, why is it that these human resource people who are so intelligent can’t understand that the biggest talent drain that they suffer from is the fact that they are not making adjustments to their labor force practices to think about working women.

For a knowledge-based economy like ours, the numbers around talent management are staggering. I think you’ve already heard today that 57 percent of all college degrees in the United States go to women each year and nearly 50 percent of the professional degrees and Ph.D.s also are awarded to women.

Yet many organizations, in my mind, in business are still reluctant to make even minimal adjustments to ensure they’re creating jobs that fit the needs of their, quote, “most valuable resource.” If women made up 10 or 20 percent of the workforce, it would be easy to argue that organizations don’t need to adjust in order to retain top talent, but modifying HR practices for 57 percent of the new college graduates is not an accommodation; it’s facing reality and it’s using common sense.

So that’s the most fundamental point of the whole chapter. You don’t have to be a gender advocate to look at the numbers and say, this doesn’t – you know, the way we’re playing this just doesn’t make sense in light of the realities of the demographics of the workforce.

The second point is while we’ve made progress toward gender equity on many fronts and it’s encouraging that 38 percent of women in business are in professional and managerial roles, but working mothers, as we’ve heard today a number of times, still face what we call a maternal wall. And that’s not our term; it’s a term that was coined by other authors.

Working mothers still, when it comes to family life, face an undue burden when it comes to responsibility for domestic tasks and for child-rearing activities. We’ve heard repeatedly that men have increased their involvement in families.

The person I turn to as my expert on this – other than Ellen – is a woman named Suzanne Bianchi, who studies families and has been at Maryland for so many years and is now out on the West Coast at UCLA. She tells me that the latest statistics say that men's involvement in tasks around domestic activities and child rearing have doubled – their involvement has doubled in the last 40 years.

But that doubling is now 16 hours a week that they're involved in these kinds of activities versus 32 hours a week that working women spend on the same task. So in spite of the fact that men's efforts have doubled, they're still only half of where women are today in terms of the responsibilities they take for this.

And when I had Suzanne speak at one of my meetings, I asked her, you know, just to be clear on child care, when I'm watching the Patriots and I tell my kids they can sit down and shut up and watch with me, is that child care or isn't it? (Chuckles.) And Suzanne said it was not.

So the third part I'd like to make is in spite of the progress women have made in business, they are at the helm of only 3 percent – 3 percent of the Fortune 1000 companies in the United States, okay? And I can assure you that the 97 percent of male CEOs virtually all have stay-at-home wives, okay?

So this means that women must continue to operate and try to succeed in organizational cultures that are designed by and for men. This, for me, creates a myriad of challenges for women who need to adapt to male-dominated organizations and ground rules and adopt – perhaps adopt more male-oriented approaches to leadership.

Recent research suggests that women's ways of leading are at least as effective as male-oriented approaches but, unfortunately, the dominant culture tends to discount new and different ways of leadership as inappropriate simply because it does not fit a preconceived notion of what leadership is and how leaders should behave. And that's dictated by the way men think they should behave because they're at the top of virtually all of our large organizations in the country.

The fourth and final point is that the highest impact actions employers can take to help women thrive in business cost almost nothing, and I'll go a step further and say, in fact, many of these things are cost-cutting and cost-saving. These include letting go of outdated mental models that suggest there is only one way to work, there is only one place to work, that only a 40-plus-hour work week is the definition for contribution, and that a standardized, rigid career path for everyone is a desirable thing.

Rather, what we should aim for, I think, is highly flexible career models that can be customized to maximize the contributions for all employees, not the one-size-fits-all approach that we've been so used to in corporate America.

I think most organizations that have embraced this more flexible model or view have seen that it's an absolute winner in terms of productivity, employee loyalty, employee engagement, cost reduction, and becoming an employer of choice. And I'll just give you three quick examples to sort of end.

IBM, who's been a leader in this area for many, many years, has 40 percent of its 300,000 people work virtually. That is to say, they do not go into an IBM office ever, except on an exceptional basis for a meeting or whatever it might be.

What they have found is that when employees can work from home or work from a client site, that there are increases in efficiency because they're not wasting time driving to and from offices to exhibit face time. And at the same time, IBM has drastically cut real estate costs as a result of this kind of a flexible approach to telecommuting.

A second example is Deloitte Touche. Like all accounting firms that I know of in the large public domain, they had a very rigid career structure for many, many years, and that career structure was move up or move out, okay?

In recent years they've been promoting an idea called mass career customization, which allows individuals to have a very strong voice in determining the way their career is going to follow and how much time, you know, they can invest in their work days within Deloitte.

And what they found is that this is an exceptionally good way of maintaining top talent, and for them, more than 50 percent of accountants in the United States are women right now, and they were losing those women at a very rapid rate.

So allowing women a stronger voice in terms of customizing their career is something that Deloitte has decided is in their best interest, not just the best interests of their female employees. And men within Deloitte also utilize this approach called career customization.

Final example is I worked for a Hewlett Packard company for 20 years. In the mid-1970s, Hewlett Packard offered all of its employees – which was, by the time I left, about 130,000 employees – flex time. Way back then it was simply seen as a way to make employees' lives easier, and it's always been viewed by employees of the company as a benefit, although it costs the company absolutely nothing, okay?

In the 20 years I worked at HP, we always had flex hours and I never once heard it discussed as a female issue. Nor did I ever hear anyone complain about its existence. All managers and employees took it for granted and all of them liked it. It was just the way we operated.

So for me just to wrap up, the title of this report is "A Women's Nation Changes Everything," and for me I really feel it's high time that it did. So that's it. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. CORRIGAN: Thank you so much, Brad.

MR. HARRINGTON: Thank you.

MS. CORRIGAN: So we just heard from Brad all of the data, you know, from the research community, but we have the advantage of two people who know a lot about what's happening on the ground inside large and small companies. So to start us off I'd like to turn to Christie Hefner.

And, you know, like I said, we know from Brad, corporate voices, lots of other researchers and HR people, that there is a strong business case for flexibility and diversity practices. But you've been at the center of some pretty big-time corporate decision-making in good times and in bad. How would you describe the state of play of women in business? You know, what sorts of policies and practices really matter inside a company, both to women but also to the company?

CHRISTIE HEFNER: Well, I think we have come a long way since I joined corporate life in 1975, a time when it wasn't unheard of for a male CEO to say, with a straight face, we tried a woman in that job and it just didn't work out. And I think we live now, and the report underscores it, in a moment in time where these are now broadly accepted truths in terms of the value of diversity and the role of women in the business world.

What I've found was most valued by women were the same things that are valued in this report. So 20 years ago we put in flex time, health-care benefits for part-time workers, and the third was reaching some critical mass in terms of diversity.

I think no one wants to be the only person who looks like themselves when you're sitting around a table making decisions, and there is ample evidence that much better decisions are made when there is sort of a critical mass of diversity around the table.

So my feeling is that the issue is more an implementation gap and less that there is a disagreement anymore about what we need. And in that regard, I think that we have to remember that a lot of the policies that we now want to either implement or, in some cases upgrade, come out of a period of time in which the assumption was women might choose to work or not work, and if they did work, their paycheck was the second paycheck and sort of went for the extras in the household.

And the system is built around that assumption. So since that's no longer the world in which we live, to foster change I think we can look for visionary leaders, but my experience is that we would be better off looking for circumstances to provoke change and for the people affected by the needs to provoke change.

And I think we've got the circumstances because we're in a global competitive economy, we're in an environment where every business wants its people to be more productive, and in which the need to engender generational loyalty among young men and women is much harder than ever before, all of which speaks to creating a workplace in which people are valued.

The other half of it is I think people, both women and men, have to advocate for those changes forcefully.

MS. CORRIGAN: So Patricia, I'm thinking about mass career customization or results-oriented work environments or – you worked in a pretty big corporation. Patricia has been around the country in about 36 different communities, working, again, with Families and Work Institute and the U.S. Chamber on the When Work Works Project. And you've been giving out awards to small, medium and some large – depending on the city – companies who have best practice in this area of workplace flexibility.

But one thing I think is interesting about this project is Patricia hasn't just been, you know, talking to the companies; she's actually been in communities. And I think one of the things that came up this morning was around – you know, you've been in communities where we might think of it as a red state, we might think of it as a blue state, and yet you've seen, I think, some common themes emerge no matter where you are, no matter what the particular economy of that locality is dependent on.

So I wondered if you could just share some of your experience from your travels, literally. Do they echo what we've heard in terms of what the findings are around corporate America? Are there some new and different variations for small and medium-sized companies? And, also, you know, if you could tell a few specific stories maybe of why communities are so engaged on this particular issue.

PATRICIA KEMPTHORNE: They absolutely do support both what the report said and what Christie has said, and it's very personal. When you get into the communities and you go into the small businesses and you recognize them, it becomes very personal to the people there.

And I think – the quote I want to share with you comes from a plant manager a little under of 100 employees. They're a power plant of course, so they're 24/7 – possible to have flexibility in 24/7. They're in California, and possible to have flexibility in California. They've got more laws than – well, they're trying to figure that out.

And he says, "I give my employees flexibility to release them to do their job." And I thought it was – he is one of our biggest advocates because he says his plant wouldn't work without flexibility, hasn't had an accident in nine years.

So we were talking about this and I'm saying, well, okay, so what about absenteeism; what about turnover? He kind of laughs at me. Absenteeism? Turnover? Why would I have that, because I treat every one of my employees as if they're a CEO. They know what their job is. They work together to figure it out and how to get it done. They have flexibility from there's a nine-year-old sitting in the corner doing her homework one day to somebody had to bring the baby in today because they babysitter was sick or whatever it is.

And every time I talk to him he says – he'll call over his HR person and he says, what time do you come in in the morning? And she'll look at me, she goes, uh, whenever I want to. But they've figured it out, because basically they feel the loyalty to the company the way – it's not just management saying, this is what you're doing to do for us, it's what are we doing together?

And what we found when we went out into the communities – and I think – my understanding – I’ve been doing this since the 1980s myself as a young mother trying to job share and people thought I was absolutely nuts that I would – you know, I had a business degree, I had a friend with an English degree from William and Mary, but the idea of hiring us to job share a job where they would never have absenteeism or vacation issues didn’t make any sense to them.

But it also said, okay, we’ve got some work to do. So I’ve been doing this for quite. And I think what we found through this, when the opportunity came up – we were talking about it and the opportunity came up after all the research – and I read some other work that Brad sent me – I mean, this is not new news necessarily. The research has been going on for 20 years. But what are we – why can’t we seem to make everybody just grab hold and own it?

And I want to say, I think we are making progress, but we’re making progress into what Christie says. It’s more than just the leadership and it’s all of the above together. So at the community level, we’re identifying organizations that use flexibility as a part of an effective workplace.

Flexibility is one thing that they do. Many of the other things they do in the effective workplace they couldn’t do if they didn’t have flexibility to allow that to happen. But we also found that many of them – they weren’t as big as Hewlett Packard, which was also a star in my community and taught us all a lot about what we know – have been doing it for years, but they didn’t call it anything.

They didn’t know that they had to – they identify it as something. They did it as the way to get the work done. HR worked very hard to be in compliance with whatever they had to be in compliance with, but they did it because they could keep the best and the brightest, because they cared about the people in their organizations.

And one of the things we do when we identify these organizations, we – Deloitte is a part of this award process. Deloitte is a large organization but we identify it site-specific. So you’re really looking – because one of the challenges you can have – you can have all kinds of policies, but that doesn’t mean every manager within that organization is going to buy into that policy and say it’s okay.

And we’ve had people who will say, well, I don’t want to ask my boss for flexibility because even though he has to let me have it, I’m not sure that he’s comfortable enough with it that the next time I’m up for review or promotion that they’re going to see me as somebody who is not as committed. That’s a real thing out there, but the conversation is changing and that’s what we’re working on.

I think, too, is that we have to recognize that it is working out there. We have to somehow get that mass – critical mass, and that’s where the community comes in. One of the things we have worked on through this project is creating core leadership collaborations.

So the same way you're talking about – and the people here in this room that represent something on a national level, the people we would bring together in research, we need to do that at the community level, so that if you're talking about workplace flexibility, you're also talking about how does that impact transportation in your community? How does that impact health in your community? How does that impact child care if you've got flexible hours?

And Hewlett Packard went through that all over the country, trying to figure out how to match child care to what they did in flexibility. So it's pulling in the communities. And there's some wonderful stories – and just to share that you can change – Salt Lake City, Utah, which was probably not one of the cities that you would expect to find this – I was just there last week.

And we had a panel of winners, of organizations, and this young man, who is probably early 30s, said, oh yes, my wife works. She works because she really likes to work. It's really good for her, and we figure out how to make it work.

So the kitchen table conversation from this 30-year-old in Salt Lake City that says to me, okay, the message is out there; we're moving forward. And that's what we want, to just keep that same message going.

MS. CORRIGAN: So, yeah! (Laughter.) And I hate to bring the conversation down but you know, not everybody is buying into the program. You've laid out a pretty powerful case on all levels, but we know, for example, for flexible work arrangements, less than half of employers provide all or even most of flexible work arrangements for their employees.

And low-wage workers, in general, have even less access to flexibility as many work in industries where unpredictable schedules are common, where they're subject to rigid work schedules, or where they have little control over overtime.

And I don't know if some of you have seen some recent reports on different compliance issues over at DOL, but the statistics on the lack of compliance with current law – so things like the FMLA – are pretty dismal. And so people are really struggling.

So as Ellen Bravo said this morning – and she always says things with such flare – employers don't always do what makes sense. So I just wanted to follow up on that and ask you all the question, why? So maybe Christie will start with –

MS. HEFNER: Well, one factor I think is some of what we're talking about is easier with a larger organization, and we should acknowledge that. That doesn't mean that it can't be done with a smaller organization, but flex time is easier if you've got 8,000 employees or even 800 employees than if you've got eight employees.

My response to that is not to say, so that's just the way it is, but to say, okay, so how can we bring into the conversation organizations like the National Association of Women Business Owners, like the Committee of 200, like the Young Presidents Organization and make them a part of a dialogue that is about solving problems that create a win-win.

There are more people today employed by women-owned businesses than the Fortune 500. You know, we tend to look at, you know, the largest companies. And there's nothing wrong with that. The fact that there are only 15 percent, you know, directors and executives of the largest companies is just ludicrous.

I mean, when I left Playboy over 40 percent of our executives were women. But I think when we get to different sectors, we can and should partner with organizations that can help engage in this. And I also think the SBA can be a really useful partner in this.

I live in Chicago. We have a very robust Small Business Administration in Illinois. We have a very robust contracting process for minority-owned businesses in both the city and the state, and I think the SBA can be both a – I didn't bring my bag of tricks, but the carrot and the whistle of the previous panel.

So those are some thoughts.

MS. CORRIGAN: Mm-hmm. And, Patricia, anything else?

MS. KEMPTHORNE: Yeah, really, we've looked at this from going to the communities, and we've used the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Institute for a Competitive Workforce as sort of our in, in most of the communities we're in, and then in some other places we've done with organizations, we've really found that nearly 70 percent of the organizations who meet the requirements as an Alfred P. Sloan Award winner for Business Excellence and Workplace Flexibility are small or medium-sized business.

And we start at 10 – you have to have at least 10 employees, and that's, as much as anything so we can get a statistical number and go all the way up. So we've found that they – but they do it in different ways; you're right. The way a company of 8,000 might implement flexibility may be different than the way of a company of 18 or 80 would do it but, you know, as the plant manager says, he does it because it works for him.

But that's what they've done. They've found a way to make it work, and flexibility – and I think Brad pointed to this too – is one of the most – the best low-cost ways to make that happen. You have to think differently. You don't necessarily have to spend a lot of money, though you may have to invest in some computers, or somebody may say, hey, I've got my computer; let me use that for right now until we're ready to go.

But I do think it's out there. I really think, too, it's education. I remember when I was working this, when the FMLA – and I come from a very small state of small businesses, and when the FMLA came in, people were just sure their businesses were going to fall apart tomorrow because the government had put this on.

And what I felt like was needed was really a better education and understanding for those small business people as to what this meant. How really will it impact them? And there's still some challenges around there but we heard already that we found out that it didn't make everything fall apart. In fact, it taught us a lot.

So I guess I think a big part of that is there needs – we need to educate as we make these changes, and part of what we're trying to do on awareness and even with the award is let people know, yes, it does work; it really does.

MS. CORRIGAN: Yeah, I mean, I think that definitely goes along with what we heard from a lot of different companies was that sometimes it's actually the mundane that stands in the way of progress and that a lot of the issues were either how do you do this, or how do you do it better, but also not just for the top level of the company but also for those midline managers; you know, how do I actually manage flexibility? How do I have that conversation when someone comes in to talk about flexibility?

And, you know, and some of it too is – I've just always been amazed at how much good work is out there but how people have not absorbed it. So I think that's interesting that whether it's through associations or through governmental entities, there might be some roads in.

But I did want to turn to Brad for a moment to see if you had anything more concrete to say on low wage and hourly workers, and maybe some of the barriers they may be facing in this area.

MR. HARRINGTON: Well, I think the barriers they face are pretty obvious, right? I mean, it's the same barriers that we face with the exception of a lot of these people are in jobs with virtually no flexibility whatsoever. I mean, if you think of the lowest, you know, flexible jobs you can think of, it would probably be a cashier at a retail store or a housekeeper at a hotel chain, or whatever it might be.

And oftentimes these are folks who have very limited economic resources so they can't do what a lot of us do who have a little bit more money where we outsource some of our domestic tasks or we outsource some of our childcare. They just aren't in a position to do that.

And they rely oftentimes on public transportation to get to and from work, which doesn't sort of say, well, we'll hold the bus until you're ready or your boss is ready to let you go. And they oftentimes work for employers where the hours, like in retailing, have become longer and longer and longer and daycare is not available necessarily when Wal-Mart is open at 10:00 every night, or whatever it might be.

So I think what's clear is the challenges they face are just the same ones that others face except they're more daunting because of the lack of flexibility and the lack of resources these folks have to support them. But, I mean, the argument in favor of working with them is the same.

I mean, you might take a situation where you'd say, well, we'll take a narrow view of flexibility and we'll say a housekeeper at Marriott can't telecommute. No kidding, okay? But can a housekeeper at Marriott job share? Sure, why not? Could they work reduced hours? Why not? Could they work on different shift times or start and stop earlier or later, depending on what's convenient for their family? Of course they could do those kinds of things.

So I think what needs to happen is first of all, it needs to be acknowledged that flexibility is not just one thing.

There's lots of different varieties of flexibility that can be utilized. Secondly, I think these people have to be respected like every other worker. The fact that they may not have a college degree is pretty meaningless when I go to order something at a restaurant or check out of the hotel. If I'm treated well and with respect, then as far as I'm concerned, that's the face of that institution to me.

And I don't really care whether that person's educational level is if they smile, if they're courteous, if they're responsive to my needs, if they do their job well, that's a moment of truth for me as a customer. And I think those organizations have to realize, that employ a large number of low-wage workers, that their moments of truth are going to be conveyed more oftentimes by low-income people than they are going to be by the CEO.

And then, finally, they need to recognize – and it's easy not to do that in a time like this, but in times when the recession isn't so prevalent as it is today, the turnover costs them just as much money on a percentage basis as it does for professional employees. And it isn't easy in low-wage jobs to necessarily find people who are willingly going to replace the people that you lose.

So I think the arguments are keep a broad view about flexibility, understand their challenges are more acute even than people who are middle and upper income, and realize that these are the face of the company to the customer and so they make a huge difference in how, you know, customers will perceive the organization that you work for.

MS. CORRIGAN: Right.

MS. KEMPTHORNE: Katie, can I add just one thing –

MS. CORRIGAN: Absolutely.

MS. KEMPTHORNE: – because I think this brings up a good point about what's the definition of flexibility because it's broad range. Some of it we haven't even defined yet. We'll figure it out, depending on the industry, depending on where we are.

But when I think about a low-wage earner or some hourly low-wage earners is the predictability – and I just wanted to get that word in there because we don't always think about predictability as flexibility.

So they get their hours, but if they knew when they were going to work, it would help them to be able to manage that with their work family. And it's not that they don't want to work and that they wouldn't be there, but when they have no predictability so to plan doctor's appointments, to find out if they can make it to the kids' meetings, or to find out when the bus runs –

So even that could be considered flexibility without reducing hours, without that kind of thing, and I think that's an important part of the hourly –

MS. CORRIGAN: Absolutely. And one thing I just wanted to note, because I know we have someone from labor movement in the audience, or maybe a few, you know, unions have actually done stuff in this area. And Netsy Firestein out at the Labor Project for Working Families has a great database of actual collective bargaining agreement language where there are work and family practices embedded in there so people can go online and actually see how other union jobs have done it.

And also, some researchers out at Michigan State – Peter Berg and Ellen Kossek – have done some great research looking at hourly workers in the context of a union. And Ellen's also done some stuff with grocery store employees, both mid-level managers and hourly workers.

So I think, again, there is a lot of knowledge out there on how this can work across industry and across income. The question is how to tip that scale. And that really turns me to my next question – and we just watched that nice video where, you know, David Gregory, at the end of that “Meet the Press” interview, said something to the effect of, you know, this is a big issue. (Laughter.) Government, private industry – you know, we need some momentum.

And I actually thought that was interesting to hear, yeah, we need some momentum to build this up. So he said, you know, what's really going to force change here? So I feel like we're heard from all three of you different aspects of the problem, but do you have a big idea? You know, do you have a big rock to throw in that pool that's going to have a ripple effect?

And when I think about the congresswoman's speech just now, how many different issues did she embed in that speech? She even hit women farmers. (Laughter.) So you know, there's a lot of things to do in this area; there's a lot of good ideas already on the table. But, again, from the business perspective, how are we going to create that tipping point, make that culture change? And, I don't know, maybe I'll just start with Brad and go down the row.

MR. HARRINGTON: So the way I look at it is, you know, four major parties that are involved in this. There's kind of government and social policy, and as a businessperson I've got to say that while I have hopes for what the government can do, a lot of the people that we work with that are in Fortune 100 companies would see working with the government as a big-time investment with pretty low payback, or low likelihood of payback.

So I think they are an important player but the question is, is the business community prepared to invest in that player to help change cultures when they know that the chances of something dramatic happening are pretty low?

The other three parties that are involved is the organization itself in terms of the human resource function, creating policies and programs that really support, you know, the flexible needs of the worker. And I think HR departments in large enough organizations, if they have an HR department, are well-positioned to play that role.

The third party is managers and leaders, and what they need, I think, is to – we believe and the folks in our roundtable at Boston College really believe that the leaders are going to make or break this issue because they're the ones that really translate policy into individual supportiveness for individual employees.

So the question is, can we get out and educate managers enough to really help them understand that the business case for this is an absolutely no-brainer, okay? It makes sense if you're trying to foster employee engagement, if you're trying to retain top talent, if you're trying to create flexible, adaptable organizations, then flexibility fits perfectly with that kind of model, and what we need to do is educate managers about these best practices and really help them realize this is in their own enlightened best interest.

The final thing I will say – this is my rock in the pool, or whatever you call it, my big idea – or usually my big ideas go over like a –

MS. CORRIGAN: Like a rock.

(Laughter.)

MR. HARRINGTON: – like a rock, yeah, exactly, but the last thing is that no matter what we say about government, organizational policies or leaders in the United States, it is never going to change, in my mind, that at the end of the day this is the responsibility, first and foremost, of the mother and the father, okay? It's the working individual who has to make these kinds of choices and tradeoffs.

So the other thing we do – I teach at Boston College and I work with our MBA students to help them really get – they teach a whole semester-long course to help these folks become more aware of themselves, their motivations, their aspirations, their values, their skill sets and so forth, so that they can really say, I have a clear understanding of what my priorities are, and that clear understanding of my priorities and my identity will help me to navigate this thing because I can't expect any employer, no matter how supportive, to navigate it for me. And so, many of the old milestones and ground rules have changed in sort of the new employment contract that we see ourselves in.

So my point is, I think the four parties have to work together, but ultimately what we have to do is educate individuals within the workplace to say, how do I navigate and negotiate this complex set of issues that I'm trying to deal with in such a way that I can then be, A, clear on my priorities, and then, B, negotiate and discuss those priorities with my manager so that I come up with a work arrangement which maximizes my productivity and at the same time doesn't compromise my role as a parent or a spouse or whatever.

MS. CORRIGAN: Christie?

MS. HEFNER: Well, I had a slight variation on Brad's point about HR departments, and it came from my thinking about the fact that one of the fundamental challenges here is for

businesses to see this as an investment, not a cost. So how do you do that? And while I loved my head of HR, HR departments tend to be seen as cost centers.

MR. HARRINGTON: Yes.

MS. HEFNER: So I thought, what if we went in through the CFO instead of the head of HR, and what if the people carrying water on this were not Mercer and TPF&C and the consulting firms that do HR consulting, which do very good work and have all of this evidence that we've been talking about.

But Deloitte or Grant Thornton, the accounting and audit firms, many of whom, interestingly, actually are leaders in their own practices, and the presentation would be about effectiveness and efficiency and return on investment and return on human capital – and even a firm which also generally gets high marks in this environment and has done some very interesting work on what makes women effective as leaders, which, not surprisingly, has a lot to do with work/life balance, McKenzie (sp), that maybe we need to draw another path into the company that goes that investment-CFO route in addition to the HR route.

MS. CORRIGAN: Patricia?

MS. KEMPTHORNE: Yes, all that is good. (Laughter.) Yes, let's do all that. Exactly.

When I started my organization I used the word “family consciousness” as opposed to family friendly, and part of that was because I wanted more than just a program or – I wanted a consciousness – and I think it's to what Brad is saying – for teaching at Boston College, and I wish they were teaching at a lot of other places because they aren't teaching at a lot of places in the business –

MR. HARRINGTON: No, they're not.

MS. KEMPTHORNE: – but really building that consciousness that our workforce, there is a family – and it was said earlier today – whether that family is two dogs and Great Aunt Sadie who – you know, that you're responsible for, or a single mom with three kids and elderly parents that they're taking for – or mom, dad and 2.3 kids, I mean, being conscious of that in the workplace.

So when we set out to do this we said, what does that really mean? And that also goes to another comment about devaluing of both family and children. And if you're going to get everybody into this conversation, if you talk about families – and I don't care what their political persuasion, their culture, their race, anything else, they care about their families and they want to have that conversation.

Several years ago we were down at – my husband was at Pebble Beach speaking to a big group of – a PAC on energy companies. And they were ready for this person, this politician to come in and talk to them about all this kind of policy, and he said to them, how many of you were involved in early childhood? And they all looked at him like he was crazy.

Well, how many of you plan to be in business 20 years from now? Of course, they all raised their hand, yeah, we're going to be – well, if you haven't done something to at least think about an invest in what's happening to our children today, you're not going to have a workforce 20 years from now.

And I think that's the consciousness that we're talking about. And to me the flexibility comes in because it allows us, as individuals, as mothers and fathers, as family members, to be a part of the workplace and a part of that family consciousness in making those decisions.

We know that it works for business. We know – we have 20, 30 years of research to say it does. So where do we have to go from here to move it forward? So I'll just – I'll add something kind of different over here.

What about the media? What about the message we heard – it's been, what, 17 years since this discussion took place on "Meet the Press." What about more discussions? But then to get with my children – Mom, why aren't you – you know, what about the social media that really exists today in the world? That is different than it was when I got my degree in business, when I started thinking about starting what I was going to do.

I can promise you I don't understand it; I don't know how to work it. Every now and then it shows up and I try to respond to it, but I'm not there yet. But I think we have to use who we are today, all of this great research that we have developed, all of these great experiences, and maybe that rock is, are we really utilizing the media the way we could? And, I mean, all kinds of media to get this message out.

MS. CORRIGAN: Great, well, I'm looking over to Heather just in terms of time. Eight more minutes? Okay, great, so you're not cutting us off early.

MS. BOUSHEY: No.

MS. CORRIGAN: Excellent. Excellent. I like that. Well, you know, I asked the big idea question because, again, you know, like I said, before, as we heard from congresswoman, there have been really great ideas on these issues for a long time, and there have been a lot of them and they've been varied.

And one of the pieces – and I think, you know, obviously some of your big ideas get to this, is how do you create the traction for movement? And so, again, this is really much more of just a practical question.

And maybe I'll start with you, Christie because I feel that one thing I saw when I was doing research for this panel was a great interview you did out at Google. And I hadn't realized that you – when you took over Playboy Enterprises, it wasn't in the best of shape. So you kind of come at this from having been in a place where you've had to make some tough calls on, okay, we have a big problem, we need a solution, and how do we almost like take away the brush?

So just thinking on your big idea, what would be your first step as we leave this room today? What should we be doing?

MS. HEFNER: Well, I would start by just commenting on what you said, which is that crisis can be very motivational for change because, frankly, when everything is going well, it's human nature not to be so inclined to want to do things differently because it's more comfortable to do things the same way.

And so, just as the fact that the company was in financial trouble when I took it over actually gave me permission to do things differently. The present economic crisis that America and the global economy is in, as painful as it is for the millions of unemployed and underemployed people, may have a small silver lining in that it is going to necessitate rethinking how we do things.

And programs that are being implemented right now with no more thought than that they will help save money in the near term, like furloughing and different kinds of job sharing, could be the way to plant seeds for different ways to think about how work is done as we come out of the recession.

And when you combine that with the fact that I think that there is a more permanent change towards the recognition that not only products but companies have brands and that people are going to choose to be affiliated with those corporate brands or those business brands that they feel reflect their values – when I talk to students I always say, don't interview for the job; interview the company because that's what you're joining.

So I think that there are some circumstances here that can help us, but I do think that if we're actually going to try and make it happen, it will not be enough to sit back and hope that, you know, the waves wash everything forward, and that we are going to need to organize, and that this can be the beginning of a set of organizing tools that we can take into communities and with different both for-profit and not-for-profit and government entities, to actually try and drive not just the message but the change home.

MS. CORRIGAN: Yeah, I think that's just such a great point. I mean, again, taking something that's very hard and seeing if you can build off of it. I think that's interesting. And I'm looking over at Heather because she's the economist in the room that I know.

And, Brad, you know, actually I'm going to slightly shift it up because I thought it was interesting taking that corporate experience, you know, and applying it to this issue. Just as a researcher then and thinking about the tools you use, which is the data, is there a piece of information that we need to know? Is there – I know there's never one magic bullet but, gosh, if we could answer this question more clearly, it would smooth a path.

MR. HARRINGTON: Yeah, the undisputable piece of empirical evidence that always wins people over is, what's the competition doing – (laughter) – which is not very scientific but it turns heads. So if we could get, you know, CEO to CEO, line manager to line manager, CFO

to CFO to be able to talk about these issues and share best practices and understand what's really going on in leading organizations – and I think Patricia talked about how HP in Boise played a role in that, you know, along with I'm sure many other good employers.

I think that that sort of corporate exec or corporate manager to manager kind of conversation really works wonders in terms of getting people to say, you're actually doing that and it isn't – you know, your company isn't imploding and things are really working well?

And when business managers and business executives hear that from their peers – not from policy people, not from government people – excuse me, but not from government people, and not necessarily from inside staff people – but when they hear from peers in similar positions who are running businesses and have PNL responsibility that they've employed these kinds of activities, and even in a down economy, furloughs, allowing people to work reduced hours.

Getting rid of real estate by allowing people to telecommute is a cost-cutting measure, not a cost-increasing measure. These are the kinds of things that I think people will pay attention to. So I think if there is a way we can get line managers who are – you know, and especially at the senior levels – I've already pointed out, the majority of those are men – involved in this conversation, get them talking about it and realizing their competitiveness in doing it, it's working well, and it actually can be enhancing the profitability and the flexibility and adaptability of their organizations, then I think we will have – from a business perspective that may be part of the way to reach the tipping point.

MS. CORRIGAN: Right. I mean, that's, I think, almost capturing what the spillover effects are of this disconnect that's going on between what people need and how workplaces are structured.

And I think about a recent briefing we did on health and flexibility, but really amazing stuff that the NIH is doing, has funded researchers to do across the country, again, a very interesting multidisciplinary study where the bottom line that the researchers came out with was, wow, when you amend workplace conditions – i.e. practice, and lots of it involves different time off policies and flexible work arrangement policies, they actually had a measurable impact on things like how many hours you're sleeping, your cardiovascular health.

And one researcher at Penn State was even exploring the impact on children at home and their own stress levels and happiness. So it's a very – but I feel like that is part about the next wave of this research, you know, creating a more clear package of goods, like this is how it impacts business; this is how it impacts our health.

MR. HARRINGTON: And just one quick thing is when you talk about cost, businesses right now are – wherever they stand ideologically on health-care reform, the one thing they understand is how much health-care expenses are costing them.

So if we can make – I'll just point to my friend Ellen Galinsky and other people who have been doing projects lately that link work-life programs with good, positive health outcomes, that is a huge attention getter on the part of management.

Because I don't know if you knew this, but GM, even prior to its troubles – the single-largest supplier to the Gen. Motors Company, do you know who it was? Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan, okay, in terms of cost.

And what that means is that cost is something they would be interested in driving down, and the way they might drive that down is by promoting better work life and better health and wellness for their people. So it's an attention getter.

MS. CORRIGAN: Excellent. And now, Patricia, I think I'm going to put you on the spot a bit too, and this will be the last question from me. You know, we heard from David Gray this morning and he talked a bit about, you know, a Republican perspective on some of the government policies that Ann O'Leary and others were talking about.

You know, one other thing that David Gregory tried to surface – and I don't know that he was very effective because I don't know that it's true – is, is there a partisan divide on this issue? And regardless, I think sometimes, certainly from my observation, there is traditionally in Washington a split between kind of the business or employer interests and employees that can tend to split along party lines.

But I wondered if you had any observations on the issue writ large. Clearly you talked about family consciousness, which seems to me like an American principle, not a partisan principle, but any other thoughts on that?

MS. KEMPTHORNE: I think I would be naïve if I said no, not at all, but I think it's – the conversation is starting. And I go back to some things Brad said. It depends on how you start the conversation. If you come into a – say a Republican setting and say I've got some new great government programs that will help your business thrive, they're not going to listen to what you have to say.

But I think when somebody will say to me – and I've had people because I've been doing this for years – and say, well, aren't you being sort of on the wrong side to talk about this? I said, well, let's see; I'm talking about family, self-sufficiency, personal responsibility, business – I'm not sure what part of this isn't whatever party you're with, but, no, I think it's just fine.

But it is coming to the table and it is bringing people to the table, and I really want to – I didn't know – didn't think it was possible, but one of the other things – and I don't have time to talk a little bit about Katie here a little bit, because the other opportunity that I've had is to work in Washington – I come back and forth. I'm very flexible. I live in Idaho, my husband lives here, and I fly back and forth. So we kind of traded places for while.

But part of that reason is because I tried to bring – and I think somebody brought it up earlier – what are the regions? Are we bringing the messages from the regions of the country here, you know? How do you feel on the coast and in the big cities? But what's happening in rural America? And I do try to bring that up every now and then where I'll say, well, that sounds

really good maybe in Washington, but I don't think I can take that statement back to where I may go and they'll listen.

So what we've really been able to do – and I give credit to Workplace Flexibility 2010, and I can say I wasn't sure it was possible when we started – was to have a bipartisan or nonpartisan conversation about flexibility on the Hill in Washington. And, you know, we started by just sort of talking to some people.

And what we have now is a Senate study group that is supported by six senators, three Dems, three Republicans. One of the Republicans is from my state of Idaho, which is a fairly red state – (laughter) – and the other from – Blanche Lincoln from Arkansas, first female head of Ag.

Both work together very well. Both are very happy to work on this issue because they really believe in it. And just, what it is is a conversation with Senate staffers, the kind of stuff that makes Brad uncomfortable – (chuckles) – but really talking about what does it mean? And so I think it is. I think we'd be naïve to think it wasn't perceived that way sometimes, but that's why we have to continue to have the conversation.

And I wanted to answer one other question that came up earlier, and it relates, again, back to Ellen Galinsky's good study that said, in this time of recession, in this time of economic challenge, is flexibility even something we even want to talk about? And what I can tell you that the studies show us is that 94 percent of businesses who use flexibility are either keeping it or adding to it. Only 6 percent have cut back.

So I'm afraid that could be an easy, well, we don't have to do this now because we've got this problem, so I think we have to just push that aside and say, no, that's not reality. Reality is this is the right time to have the conversation; we just all need to come to the table.

MS. CORRIGAN: Well, on that positive note, I will turn it to the audience. And just tell me how many minutes we have?

MS. BOUSHEY: We're out of time.

MS. CORRIGAN: Oh, we're out of time? We're out of time. Okay. (Laughter.) Sorry. No questions. But everybody I'm sure will be available to chat afterwards, so thank you so much.

(Applause.)

MS. BOUSHEY: Thank you. We're going to take a quick just 10-minute break. We've got just a couple more things on our agenda. We're going to come back and talk about the poll and answer the questions that were up on the screens all day, and then we're hearing from the chairman of the EOC, who is going to finish up our day, and then we have a reception.

So I do hope that you all can stay for that, and I'm sure the panelists will be available for questions if you have any. So see you in about 10 minutes.

(END)