Kimberly-Clark Family Caregivers Network

Case study date 2014

Organizational information

Industry: Manufacturing  
Profit Status: Public  
Region: Multi-national

Workforce Size: 57,000 working in 36 countries (note: The Family Caregivers Network serves the 4000 employees of the Consumer Products Division in the Fox Valley region of Wisconsin.)

Practice families  
Dependent care, Diversity initiatives

Business drivers

The Family Caregivers Network is one of many Employee Resource Groups supported by the company as part of its diversity initiatives. The business drivers for Kimberly-Clark's diversity programs include:

1. Building a more diverse and inclusive global organization.
2. Recognizing that talent and skills are not defined by race, color, religion, sex/gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, gender identity, genetic information, veteran status, education, or background.

Response implemented

Goals & Objectives

The goals of the Family Caregivers Network are to:

- Support the informational needs of family caregivers.
- Increase awareness on the part of managers about employees with caregiving responsibilities.

Project Highlights

As part of its diversity initiatives, Kimberly-Clark encourages employees to form groups reflecting the needs and concerns of its diverse workforce. Employee Diversity Networks, now called Employee Resource Groups, began more than 20 years ago. Groups are started by an individual employee or group to connect with others who share a common interest. Groups vary between regional locations of the company. The Family Caregivers Network was initiated by one employee who had elder caregiving issues and wanted to connect with colleagues with similar concerns.

Employee Resource Groups elect their own leadership. Employees who spend time on the Family Caregivers Network are accountable for all their regular job responsibilities. Time used for managing the network or other network-related activities must be made up. Although many of the group members are hourly workers, the leadership of the Family Caregivers Network is primarily comprised of salaried employees who have the flexibility to do the work necessary to maintain the network.

Features of the Family Caregivers Network include:

1. A volunteer Executive Board of the Family Caregivers Network represents a range of employee types; managers, technical professionals as well as support staff from a variety of different departments. The executive board meets monthly to set objectives, share information about community resources and programs, and to plan the quarterly activities.
2. The leadership reaches out to local and national resource professionals, conferences and agencies for information in order to educate themselves and develop contacts.
3. Quarterly events are offered and usually include three forums and one workshop a year. Forums are presentations by local/state aging or caregiving resources professionals, agencies and organizations. Topics have included self-care, elder law, scams against the elderly, and Share the Care training.
4. A Caregiver Starter Kit is available for free to any employee. The kit includes a document organizer, a caregiver's handbook, pamphlets and materials about local resources, referral information, and a variety of other useful tools and samples.
5. Because this program is a voluntary program and not a formal activity of the employer, marketing is done by the Network Executive Committee itself, largely through e-mail to the opt-in distribution list (about 2400 subscribers as of 2014), a Share Point site and bulletin board announcements.

Outcomes

Although no formal evaluation of the Family Caregivers Network has been conducted, some indicators of its effectiveness in reaching employees with caregiving needs include:

- Approximately 2400 employees are on the FCN email distribution list (as of 2014).
- Attendance at forums ranges from 40 to 80 people.
- The most recent version of the customized family caregiver kits created by the network was “sold-out” within the first hour of being made available to employees via an email promotion. Four times the number of family caregiver kits (100) were assembled this year, as compared to the last offering which was distributed over the course of a year. The response is confirmation of the tremendous need for these types of helpful resources and the growing audience.

Perceived benefits to the employer include:

- Enhanced employee retention, satisfaction, and an ability of employees to effectively balance work and caregiving.
- An improved approach to managing employees with caregiving responsibilities.
- Brand and customer teams for the Depend product lines have benefitted from access to subject matter experts for assistance in the development of caregiver programs for consumers and customers.

Resources needed

- Although this program is not a “formal” program of Kimberly Clark, the organization has approved the development of the Family Caregivers Network and has provided resources (budget, meeting rooms, Diversity Coordinator/Advisor) to this network for use in their activities.
- A small budget was provided by Kimberly-Clark for the group to use in developing the forums, securing needed informational products, and traveling to aging conferences.
- The Family Caregivers Network has established partnerships with other organizations to provide additional resources and access to professional subject experts. These include the Caregiver Action Network, the Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and area county Aging and Disability Resource Centers. Kimberly-Clark’s Employee Assistance Provider, Achieved Solutions, also provides resources and support.

Age feature

Membership in the Family Caregivers Network is open to employees of any age with eldercare responsibilities or who have an interest in understanding the needs of employees who are caring for an older family member, such as managers or those involved in product development and marketing of Kimberly-Clark products.

Editor’s Note: The Sloan Center on Aging & Work recognizes that age is a multi-faceted concept. For a discussion of the aging experience, see our issue brief, Through a Different Looking Glass: The Prism of Age. The innovative practices adopted by employers might address one or more than one of the different aspects of age.

Additional information

For additional information, contact The Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College: age.work@bc.edu


Copyright © 2014 Boston College The Sloan Center on Aging & Work

Source URL (retrieved on 2016-04-05 22:59): http://capricorn.bc.edu/agingandwork/database/browse/case_study/25117