



## **WOMENomics® Forum Toolkit**

### **Section II: Successful Workplaces Discussion Guide**

Welcome to the WOMENomics® **Successful Workplaces** Discussion Guide. This is Section II of a six-part Toolkit, designed to help you conduct a WOMENomics® Forum at your workplace or in your community. All six sections of the Toolkit are available on our website, [www.bpwfoundation.org](http://www.bpwfoundation.org).

- I. Introduction and Overview
- II. Successful Workplaces Discussion Guide (Equal Pay, Diversity, Work-Life Balance)**
- III. Empowered Workforce Discussion Guide (Empowering all Working Women, with targeted research on sub-populations such as Women Veterans, Young Careerists, Women in the Green Economy)
- IV. Media Guide
- V. Event Planning Guide
- VI. Webchat Guide

#### **How to Use this Discussion Guide**

Whether through a formal WOMENomics® Forum, a small-group discussion at work, or in a local BPWF meeting, we encourage you to utilize this guide as a conversation starter. Each topic contains:

- a brief summary of the issues
- suggested discussion questions
- resources

In this Successful Workplaces Discussion Guide, we provide you with an outline for leading a discussion on the following topics:

- A. Equal Pay (pp. 2-5)
- B. Diversity (pp. 6-9)
- C. Work-Life Balance (pp. 9-13)

A separate guide, Section III, focuses on issues for empowering all working women in our workforce, as well as targeted sub-populations such as women veterans, women in the green economy, and young careerists.

For a public policy update related to topics contained in this discussion guide, please contact BPW Foundation for the latest issue of *Policy Watch*, or visit the BPW Foundation [Public Policy webpage](#) and [Advocacy Center](#).

## **BPW Foundation’s Role in Creating Successful Workplaces**

What is a Successful Workplace? Successful Workplaces are those that embrace and practice diversity, equity, and work-life balance. BPW Foundation’s role is the bridge between working women and employers to establish and sustain work environments that quite simply “work” for women and families.

BPW Foundation began the [Successful Workplaces Movement](#) to collaborate with employers to transform and redefine today’s workplace. It combines [research](#), [policy](#), [resources](#) and programming to create systemic change. Such change is necessary to build supportive and successful workplaces and to break down the final barriers to full participation of women in the workplace. Creating systemic, sustainable change requires the collaboration of employees, employers and policy makers. Through groundbreaking research, our network of national supporters, and our unique role as a convener of employers and employees, BPW Foundation leads the way to develop and advocate for policies and programs that “work” for both women and businesses. To assist employers that value equity, diversity, and work-life balance, BPW created a list of [Successful Workplaces Guidelines](#).

### **A.) Equal Pay – Summary of Issues**

Equity and access for women of all generations is critical to the success of workplaces and families. It currently takes 16 months for a woman to earn what a man makes in 12 months, without factoring in racial diversity. Our goal is to make equity a priority in pay as well as access for workplace positions and promotions.

BPW Foundation has been a longtime advocate for equal pay and was instrumental in the passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1963 and Lily Ledbetter Act in 2009. BPW Foundation supports annual grassroots efforts around the country to support [Equal Pay Day](#), which is an excellent opportunity to organize activities and events that bring attention to the wage gap

Since our origins in 1919, when the U.S. government officially recognized the need to identify the available skills and experiences of America’s women, our goal has always been to make pay equity a priority among policymakers, businesses, families, and working men and women. BPW Foundation believes in a three-pronged approach to addressing the issue of equity in pay and access for positions and promotions: We believe that legislation should be passed to enact tougher laws that can be enforced. Businesses should be held accountable for their unfair pay practices and mindful of what they pay their employees. And, women should have access to the knowledge and tools to empower themselves to achieve pay equity at work through negotiation and advancement.

Although we have come a long way, we are not there yet. This is even more troubling as women continue to play an expanding role in supporting American families. According to a [March 2011 report issued by the White House](#), “Women In America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well Being,” dual-earner couples made up 57% of all married-couple families in 2008, up significantly from 46% in 1970. Unmarried mothers have a higher labor force participation rate than their married counterparts, yet female-headed families earn least of all family types. With more women in the workforce, and more families reliant upon women’s paychecks, the U.S must address the wage gap for the sake of American families’ financial stability.

### **Equal Pay Statistics**

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in September, 2010, women who work full-time (year-round) make (on average) 77 cents for every dollar a male earns.
- As of 2011, women make up half of the workforce, yet they earn 23% less than their male counterparts.
- Median earnings for women of color are consistently lower. In 2009, when compared to the earnings of white men, African American women earned 67.5%, Asian American women earned 90%, and Hispanic women earned 57.7% of their male co-workers.
- The [Center for American Progress reports](#) that, over the course of her lifetime, the average woman realizes a pay disparity of \$431,000 during a 40-year career, including Social Security benefits and pensions.

For details on women’s earnings and employment by occupation, see the Bureau of Labor Statistics [“Women at Work” Report](#).

### **Equal Pay and Workplace Practices**

**Higher Education Doesn’t Equal Higher Pay:** Nearly 50 years ago, when the Equal Pay Act of 1963 brought pay parity for women to the national forefront, critics argued that women did not attain the same educational achievements as men, and therefore did not merit the same wages. Today, trends in higher education indicate women have more than made up for any previous gap in education. [The White House’s Women in America Report](#) noted that more women than men now attend college, women are more likely to attend and graduate from college without dropping out, and women are more likely to earn a graduate school degree. Yet, wage disparity persists across all educational levels and in all states. Women with the most education take the biggest earnings hit. Women with a college degree or higher make \$713,000 less than male workers over a 40-year period, while women without a high school diploma earn \$270,000 less than their male counterparts.

**Pay Secrecy and Paycheck Fairness:** According to an [October 2010 Survey](#) by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, pay secrecy is common in the private sector. The survey reports that 61% of employees in the private sector are either discouraged or

prohibited from discussing wage and salary information, whereas only 14% of public sector employees reported that pay discussions were either discouraged or prohibited.

**Examining Their Own Practices:** It makes good financial sense to pay men and women equally to attract and retain the best talent. To help employers be more mindful about their pay scales, BPW Foundation has developed an [Employer Equity Self-Audit](#) that encourages employers to recognize and reward the skills and contributions of working women. The audit (based on information derived from the U.S. Department of Labor Women’s Bureau) assists employers in analyzing their own wage-setting policies and establishing consistent and fair pay practices for all.

### **Suggested Equal Pay Discussion Questions**

[Questions for Employers:]

- 1) Do you have a consistent job evaluation system? Are jobs scored or assigned grades? Are positions women and minorities hold scored or graded according to the same standards as positions held by men or non-minorities?
- 2) Do you have a method to determine the market rate for any given job? Do you ensure that market rates are applied consistently? (i.e.—Are you confident that men are not being compensated *at or above* market rates while women are compensated *at or below* market rates?)
- 3) Do you maintain an open dialogue about compensation with your workforce? Do you regularly post job openings and salary ranges within the workplace? Do you allow employees to discuss compensation issues on their own time?
- 4) Are you willing to conduct an [Employer Equity Self-Audit](#)?

[Questions for Employees:]

- 5) Have you seen examples of pay inequity at your workplace or among people that you know?
- 6) How can women be better advocate for themselves and negotiate effectively?
- 7) What are steps that you can recommend your organization take in order to be more mindful about their pay scales?
- 8) How can you help to advocate for the passage of legislation that supports pay equity?

**Equal Pay Resources**

White House Report: Women In America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well Being, March 2011 [www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/Women\\_in\\_America.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/Women_in_America.pdf)

Employer Workplace Pay Equity Self-Audit 2011, BPW Foundation  
<http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/EmployerPayEquitySelfAudit2011.pdf>

Equal Pay Day Resources, BPW Foundation,  
[http://www.bpwfoundation.org/index.php/contact/info/equal\\_pay\\_day](http://www.bpwfoundation.org/index.php/contact/info/equal_pay_day)

Equal Pay Day Toolkit, Women’s Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor  
<http://www.dol.gov/wb/equal-pay/equal-pay-toolkit-20110412.htm>

National Committee on Pay Equity - <http://www.pay-equity.org/index.html>  
Center for American Progress  
[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/04/equal\\_pay.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/04/equal_pay.html)

“Women at Work” report, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 2011,  
[http://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2011/women/pdf/women\\_bls\\_spotlight.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2011/women/pdf/women_bls_spotlight.pdf).

U.S. Dept. of Labor, Quick Stats on Women Workers 2009  
<http://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/main.htm>

The WAGE Project <http://www.wageproject.org/>

Pay Secrecy and Paycheck Fairness: New Data Shows Pay Transparency Needed,  
Institute for Women’s Policy Research, Nov. 2010 release  
<http://www.iwpr.org/press-room/press-releases/pay-secrecy-and-paycheck-fairness-new-data-shows-pay-transparency-needed>

On Equal Pay Day, Step Up or Step Out of the Way, Deborah L. Frett, CEO, BPW  
Foundation, article in the Huffington Post, 4/11/11  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/deborah-frett/on-equal-pay-day-step-up- b\\_847223.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/deborah-frett/on-equal-pay-day-step-up- b_847223.html)

BPW Foundation Disappointed in Senate’s Failure to Vote on Paycheck Fairness Act,  
11/18/10  
[http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/BPW\\_Foundation\\_Disappointed\\_in\\_Senate\\_PFA\\_Vote.pdf](http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/BPW_Foundation_Disappointed_in_Senate_PFA_Vote.pdf)

## B.) DIVERSITY – Summary of Issues

Diversity related initiatives help to create the workplace environment and organizational culture for making differences work. Ultimately diversity is about learning from others who are not the same, about dignity and respect for all, and about creating workplace environments and practices that encourage learning from others and capture the advantage of different perspectives.

When conducting this discussion, keep in mind that:

- Diversity should be inclusive, defined as broadly as possible for a competitive advantage: race, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, etc.
- Diversity is inclusive of non-majority *as well as* majority employee populations.
- Diversity should not be presented or discussed as an “optional” part of today’s workplace, but rather an integral part of our modern workforce.

### **Workforce Diversity: Involving Everyone To Get Work Done**

What is the most significant trend in workplace diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Here is a look at some recent developments.

***It’s not just about the numbers anymore.*** Employers that took early action to increase the diversity of their workforces by increasing numbers of identified populations, are finding that an increase in numbers does not necessarily translate into increased productivity or more culturally supportive workplaces. These pioneering workplaces have begun to look, instead, at what types of policies and programs engage all employees effectively in order to get work done. New focus is being placed on changing workplace cultures that appear to have limited the advancement and engagement of diverse employees.

***Employers are contending with an increased understanding of what diversity can mean beyond the usual categories such as race and gender.*** Concepts of culture, age, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, functional discipline, and socio-economic status can be of significant importance to individual employees or to communities. Identifying which elements of diversity are appropriate to integrate into workplace policies can be extremely challenging.

***The concept of diversity is considered to be inclusive of everyone.*** Overall workplace diversity is focused on the differences *and similarities* that people bring to an organization. It is usually defined broadly to include aspects beyond those specified legally in equal opportunity statutes. Diversity is often interpreted to include dimensions which influence the identities and perspectives that people bring, such as profession, education, parental status, and geographic location. Many employers are establishing [affinity groups](#) to encourage and support diverse groups of employees, as they come together to share experiences and ideas.

**Gender diversity still has a long way to go.** Where do we stand now? A [recent Harvard Business Review article](#) tells us “Research shows that diverse talent supports innovation and business success, yet organizations underutilize and undervalue their highest-potential female talent . . . . While progress has been made in many firms, more work clearly needs to be done. Even among the best and brightest managers, gender equality has yet to be attained.”

### **Diversity-Related Statistics**

- According to a 2011 [McKinsey & Company report](#) on “Unlocking the Full Potential of Women in the U.S. Economy,” without the growth of women in the workforce, our economy would be 25% smaller today.
- By 2050, the workforce will have a very different look than it does today. The [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates](#) that 50% of the population will be non-Hispanic White, 24% will be Hispanic, 15% black, and 8% of Asian-descent.
- The labor force participation rate of the 55-64 year old age group increased sharply from 55.9% in 1990 to 62.9% in 2005. Compared with all other age groups in the labor force, the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects](#) that this age group has the most potential to increase its labor force participation further.
- In January 2011, [CNN's Money.com/Fortune article](#) reports that, although only a dozen of the Fortune 500 companies have women CEOs, two of the Dow 30 companies that delivered the best stock-market gains in 2010 were run by women.
- According to a [2010 Catalyst Survey](#) on Fortune 500 Women Board Directors, in 2009, Women held 15.2% of Board seats. Women of Color held 3.1% of all Board seats, whereas white women held 12.1%.
- A [January 2011 study by Rand](#) reports that Women Board Members create Opportunities for Women Executives.

### **Key factors expected to affect the composition and growth of the labor force**

**The aging baby-boom generation:** As this large cohort ages, the increase in the share of the older labor force and, eventually, the exit of the baby-boom cohort from the workforce will be the main factor in lowering the growth of the labor force.

**The stabilization of women’s labor force participation rates:** According to the [March 2011 White House Report on Women in America](#), the labor force participation rate for women After decades of significant increases, the amount of women in the workforce has held steady in recent years (from 33% in 1950 to 61% in 1999, where it remained through 2009).

**Increased racial and ethnic diversity:** Minorities, with higher population growth through immigration, higher fertility rates, and higher labor force participation rates, are projected to expand their share of the workforce considerably in the future.

**Suggested Diversity Discussion Questions:**

[Questions for Employers:]

1. Why are employers seeking diversity? What benefits can employers realize from having a diverse workforce? What are the challenges of having a diverse workforce? How are employers seeing trends in the workforce and deciding which ones to create policies and programs around?
2. Does your hiring process seek diversity in the qualified applicant pool for positions?
3. Are your HR managers trained in diversity policies and practices?
4. Do you have a method to determine the market rate for any given job? Do you ensure that market rates are applied consistently?
5. Are you willing to examine your organization's diversity and equity policies and conduct an [Employer Equity Self-Audit](#)?
6. Have you considered introducing employee [affinity networking groups](#), to allow employees to share ideas and experiences?

[Questions for Employees:]

7. What do you think is the main reason employees seek a diverse workforce?
8. What diversity policies and practices exist in your workplace? What has been your experience with these?
9. As a working woman, what do you think the affects are of being considered part of a “diverse” population?
10. How can you advocate for greater diversity and/or better diversity policies in your organization?

**Resources:**

“Unlocking the Full Potential of Women in the U.S. Economy,” by Joanna Barsh and Lareina Yee, McKinsey & Company, 2011.

<http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/WSJExecutiveSummary.pdf>

“Chipping Away at the Glass Ceiling, Gender Spillovers in Corporate Leadership,” by David A. Matsa and Amalia R. Miller, January 2011, RAND Corporation

[http://www.rand.org/pubs/working\\_papers/WR842.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/working_papers/WR842.html)

White House Report: Women In America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well Being, March 2011 [www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/Women\\_in\\_America.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/Women_in_America.pdf)

Employer Workplace Pay Equity Self-Audit 2011, BPW Foundation

<http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/EmployerPayEquitySelfAudit2011.pdf>

2010 Catalyst Census: Fortune 500 Women Board Directors

[http://www.catalyst.org/file/413/2010\\_us\\_census\\_women\\_board\\_directors\\_final.pdf](http://www.catalyst.org/file/413/2010_us_census_women_board_directors_final.pdf)

Top 50 Companies for Diversity, Diversity Inc.

[http://www.diversityinc.com/pages/DI\\_50\\_2011.shtml](http://www.diversityinc.com/pages/DI_50_2011.shtml)



Leading with Diversity, written by Jason Forsythe, Advertising Supplement to The New York Times, 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/marketing/jobmarket/diversity/index.html>

The White House Project, Benchmarking Women's Leadership, 2009:  
<http://views.washingtonpost.com/leadership/panelists/2009/11/our-leadership-crisis-where-are-the-women.html>

“Women CEOs Top the Dow’s Gains,” by Patricia Sellers, CNN Money.com/Fortune, January 4, 2011 <http://postcards.blogs.fortune.cnn.com/2011/01/04/women-ceos-top-the-dows-gains/>

“Women In Management, Delusions of Progress,” by Nancy M. Carter and Christine Silva, Harvard Business Review Magazine, 2010.  
<http://hbr.org/2010/03/women-in-management-delusions-of-progress/ar/2>

*Long-Term Labor Force*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006: <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2006/11/art3full.pdf>

“Diversity Helps Your Business—But Not The Way You Think,” Katherine Phillips, Forbes.com; June 2009.

“Recruiting a Diverse Workforce,” Kansas City Power & Light, Successful Workplaces Digest, BPW Foundation, 2008.  
[http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/BPW\\_Foundation\\_Successful\\_Workplaces\\_Digest.pdf](http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/BPW_Foundation_Successful_Workplaces_Digest.pdf)

“Universal Strategies to Promote the Retention of Older Workers,” The National Center on Workforce and Disability, Successful Workplaces Digest, BPW Foundation, 2008.  
[http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/BPW\\_Foundation\\_Successful\\_Workplaces\\_Digest.pdf](http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/BPW_Foundation_Successful_Workplaces_Digest.pdf)

“Diversity Business Networks: A Strategy for Retention and Business Evolution,” Weyerhaeuser, Successful Workplaces Digest, BPW Foundation, 2008.  
[http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/BPW\\_Foundation\\_Successful\\_Workplaces\\_Digest.pdf](http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/BPW_Foundation_Successful_Workplaces_Digest.pdf)

### **C.) WORK-LIFE BALANCE – Summary of Issues**

In order to have [successful workplaces](#) that will ensure a productive workforce, it is recommended that employers offer their employees the tools (telecommuting options, shift exchanges, compressed work weeks and predictable schedules) to better manage their lives inside and outside of the workplace.

Working women are no longer alone in calling for this important change in the workplace. Maturing workers, entry-level workers, and a growing percentage of male

colleagues are also seeking greater work-life balance, demanding more flexible work options, and advocating for more autonomy within their workday.

One reason for this is a greater need for caregiving. Mothers are not the only ones tending to the needs of their families. Caregiving applies to the grandmother watching her grandchildren, or the uncle watching over his injured niece coming back from Afghanistan, or the son whose father joins his household. A [2010 Work-Life Balance report by the President's Council on Economic Advisors](#) tells us that in 2008, approximately 43.5 million Americans served as unpaid caregivers to a family member over the age of 50. Nearly one-fifth of employed people were caregivers who provided care to a person over age 50.

Moreover, more adults older than 25 are attending school. Because these changes have caused many workers to face conflicts between their work and their personal lives, they also inspire a need and desire for more flexibility in the workplace.

Employers should allow for flexibility and compassion, and their employees will reward them in productivity. But, according to a [poll by Monster.com](#), more than 80% of the respondents indicated that they are not happy with their work-life balance. A recent survey showed that both working women and men were increasingly likely to want flexible work options (59% wanted telecommuting options, 67% compressed workweeks) but few got them (17% telecommuted and 6% had a compressed work week).

BPW Foundation is proud to be “walking the walk” when it comes to work-life balance. In May 2010, the Foundation went virtual. Not only did we leave our brick and mortar office behind, we started operating under a Results Only Work Environment ([ROWE](#)). To make it our own, we had to be flexible, adaptable and open-minded. We are driven by our definition of a successful workplace (one that embraces diversity, equity and work-life balance and our successful workplace guidelines. Employers can view [BPW Foundation's guidelines](#) on how to create a work model that links profitability and flexibility.

### **Changing Views on Work-Life Balance Issues and Policies**

There are significant changes in the conversations and activities surrounding work-life balance policies and programs since the mid-1990s.

- *Having a list of programs and policies is not enough; the workplace culture must support the use of programs without penalty or stigma. The answer to reducing health care costs, says one researcher, is not about gyms or healthy eating habits; the complete solution is changing workplace cultures.*
- *The term work-life balance is slowly being switched to “work-life effectiveness,” a realization that employees are less likely to neatly cleave work from life in proper proportions. The Young Careerists discussion guide (Toolkit Section II), explores ways in which Gen Y challenges the traditional approach to work/life balance (they have one life and work is an integral part of that life).*

- *Employers are considering new ways to ensure effective productivity vs. micromanaging and dictating.* While practices and policies enacted by employers engaged in work-life effectiveness programming vary greatly. Some new trends include:
  - Adapting career advancement tracks to accommodate employees who are willing to advance at a slower pace in return for increased flexibility
  - Creating flex-work benefits that accommodate a range of life-span needs (e.g., phased retirement, parenting, care giving, meeting personal goals)
  - Conducting internal focus groups with women employees to determine specific needs for them and/or their families (see [Gen Y Women in the Workplace, Focus Group Summary](#))
  - Results Only Work Environment ([ROWE](#)) is a management strategy where employees are evaluated on performance, not presence. Originally created by Best Buy, in a ROWE, people focus on results and only results. BPW Foundation instituted this strategy in 2010, and has put together “[Ten Tips to Create a Flexible, Virtual Work Environment.](#)”

The following changes reflect a new understanding of the work environment and the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.

- ***Technology has transformed the workplace.*** Employers have ways to stay connected to workers even when they are not on-site.
- ***Many existing work-life balance policies were written for what is a shrinking segment of the workforce.*** The post-industrial style single-income family that includes an employed father and a stay-at-home mother now makes up less than 25 percent of the U.S. workforce. New work-life effectiveness policies try to include the needs and goals of singles and single parents as well as single and dual-income families in the workforce.
- ***A lack of employee work-life integration can directly impact an employer’s bottom line.*** Studies are showing that personal goals, ill relatives, and sandwich generation responsibilities can all impact an employee’s ability to effectively integrate life and work, and therefore, negatively impact their job performance.

#### **Employer Issues**

- For many employers, work-life effectiveness is still **not** considered an issue, and many have not enacted the flexible work options that appeal to groups of employees such as retirees.
- Many firms cite costs or limited funds as obstacles to implementing workplace flexibility arrangements. However, according to the [President’s 2010 Report on Work Life Balance](#), the benefits of adopting such management practices can outweigh the

costs by reducing absenteeism, lowering turnover, improving the health of workers, and increasing productivity.

- A factor hindering a deeper understanding of the benefits and costs of flexibility is a lack of data on the prevalence of workplace flexibility arrangements. More research is needed on the mechanisms through which flexibility influences workers' job satisfaction and company profits. This data will help policymakers and managers alike.

### **Employee Issues**

- ***Longer hours impact health:*** American employees work more hours per year than workers in any other industrialized nation. The 60-hour work week is becoming a new “norm” in many workplaces; high demand and low control workplace cultures result in twice the rate of cardiovascular problems, higher rates of anxiety and depression, and higher levels of alcohol and prescription drug use. Chronic distress also adds to abdominal obesity, which is linked to increased rates of heart disease.
- ***Less-skilled workers have fewer options:*** [A 2010 Presidential report on Work-Life Balance](#) found that less-skilled workers have fewer options for workplace flexibility in terms of the scheduling of when they work than do more highly-skilled workers.
- ***Women have more responsibilities at home:*** The 2011 [White House Report on Women in America](#) states that, in families where both husband and wife are employed, employed wives spend more time in household activities than do employed husbands.
- ***Many workers don't have paid sick days:*** [Research released in 2011 by the Institute for Women's Policy Research \(IWPR\)](#) revealed that more than 44 million private sector workers in the United States — 42% of the private sector workforce — don't have paid sick days that they can use to recover from a common illness like the flu.

### **Suggested Work-life Balance Discussion Questions:**

[Questions for Employers:]

- 1.) A key trend in the work-life effectiveness movement is the acknowledgment that having a list of programs is not enough; the workplace culture must support the use of programs without stigma. What do you think needs to happen in order for employers and employees to change workplace cultures?
- 2.) What work-life balance policies does your organization have in place? What has worked, and what has not?
- 3.) Have you considered implementing a ROWE environment? If not, why?

- 4.) Each generation has different levels of care giving responsibility. What supporting policies and practices are in your workplace to support caregiving needs?
- 5.) How well does your workplace meet each generation's work-life needs? What is missing?

[Questions for Employees:]

- 6.) Does your employer offer work-life balance policies? Have they provided the tools and training necessary to support these policies?
- 7.) In the past, work-life balance advocates spoke about flexible work arrangements and work-life balance programs as the “right” thing to do for working parents. Now, they are linking work-life effectiveness to the bottom-line. What do you think are the benefits or downfalls of this strategy for working women?
- 8.) Do you think work-life effectiveness is a better description of what working women are striving for rather than work-life balance? Why or Why not?
- 9.) Sometimes employees are told that stress caused by work-life imbalances are just the price of working. Recent studies are showing that stress can have real-life effects on people's health and their productivity. How did reading these statistics affect you? What was your first impression on reading them? What effect do you think studies like these might have on policies in your organization?

### **Resources**

White House Report: Women In America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well Being, March 2011 [www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/Women\\_in\\_America.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/Women_in_America.pdf)

White House Report: Work-Life Balance and the Economics of Workplace Flexibility, Executive Office of the President, Council on Economic Advisors, March 2010  
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/29199643/U-S-President-s-Study-of-American-Work-Life-balance-March-2010>

“Ten Tips to Create a Flexible, Virtual Work Environment” by BPW Foundation,  
[http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/BPWF\\_virtualtips.pdf](http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/BPWF_virtualtips.pdf)

Young Careerist: Gen Y Women in the Workplace, Focus Group Summary Report, BPW Foundation, April 2011  
[http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/YC\\_SummaryReport\\_Final.pdf](http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/YC_SummaryReport_Final.pdf)

Results-Only Work Environment website: <http://gorowe.com/>

Successful Workplaces Digest, BPW Foundation  
[http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/BPW\\_Foundation\\_Successful\\_Workplaces\\_Digest.pdf](http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/BPW_Foundation_Successful_Workplaces_Digest.pdf)

U.S. Department of Labor's Flex Options website: [www.flexoptions.org](http://www.flexoptions.org)

"Do You Have Work/Life Balance?" By Thad Peterson, Monster.com <http://career-advice.monster.com/in-the-office/work-life-balance/do-you-have-work-life-balance/article.aspx>

"Reap the Benefits of a Flexible Schedule Program," Women Thrive Worldwide, Successful Workplaces Digest, BPW Foundation, 2008  
[http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/BPW\\_Foundation\\_Successful\\_Workplaces\\_Digest.pdf](http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/BPW_Foundation_Successful_Workplaces_Digest.pdf)

*Women in the Labor Force: A Databook*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009,  
<http://www.bls.gov/cps/wlf-databook2009.htm>

*101 Facts on the Status of Working women*, BPW Foundation, 2005

National Partnership for Women and Families [www.nationalpartnership.org](http://www.nationalpartnership.org)

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