



International
Center of
Work and
Family

Occasional Paper
OP no 06/3
March, 2006

University of Navarra

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WHY BECOME A FAMILY-RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYER?

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Abstract

In this paper we examine the reasons why companies might want to become family-responsible employers. Three models of the relationship between people and organizations are used to illustrate. In the mechanistic model, work-family policies are adopted as a marketing strategy. In the psycho-sociological model, companies use work-family policies to attract and retain talented employees. And in the anthropological/humanistic model, companies foster commitment through a family-responsible culture, as a consequence of treating employees as complete human beings

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Keywords: Family Responsible Employer (FRE) Model, Flexible policies, Work-Family.

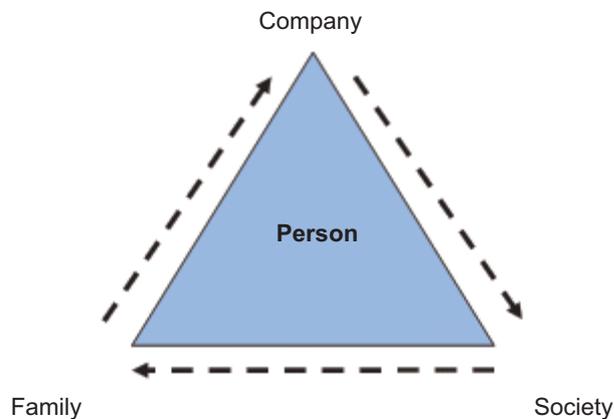
WHY BECOME A FAMILY-RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYER?*

Over the last two decades, important socio-demographic changes have occurred: women have entered the labor market in large numbers, the rate of divorce has increased, the number of single-parent families likewise, the birth rate in Europe has never been lower. Indeed, Spain has one of the lowest rates: 1.3 children for every woman of childbearing age⁽¹⁾. Diseases such as stress and depression are also on the rise.

And yet, organizations do not take these changes into account in the way they manage and organize their workforce. Work is still basically designed for male employees, as in the last century, with working hours that are incompatible with other needs such as caring for dependants (children, adults or the elderly) and being at home.

One consequence of these socio-demographic changes is that people experience major conflicts among different areas of life, especially between work and family. This is something that affects not only working mothers, who carry primary responsibility for the family, but also working fathers, who are now more involved in family tasks. According to the Families and Work Institute⁽²⁾, many people would be willing to forfeit certain benefits and compensations at work in exchange for flexibility to strike a more satisfactory balance between work and family life.

Employees' families are starting to become a new stakeholder of the company. Organizations are not the only ones responsible for people's family life, but they can contribute significantly to improving it. There are three main arenas that influence a person's life: family, company and society.



* Presented at the Princeton University Conference on "Ethics, Families and the Corporation: How the Family Molds Capitalism", March 9-11, 2006

We all know that the family is the basic nucleus of our society. The time a person spends with his or her family is important to organizations. Why? Simply because the family is the school where people acquire and develop competencies. The family performs a crucial and indispensable social function. Within the family, helpless babies are transformed from self-centered bundles of impulses, desires, and emotions to fully socialized adults. The family teaches trust, cooperation and self-restraint. Companies and society require these attributes, which only families can inculcate⁽³⁾.

The fact is that work time is organized as if the people who work in a company had nothing else to do in their lives. Many companies seem to ignore their employees' private lives, and parents often have to make an extra effort to get everything done – at work as well as in their personal and family lives.

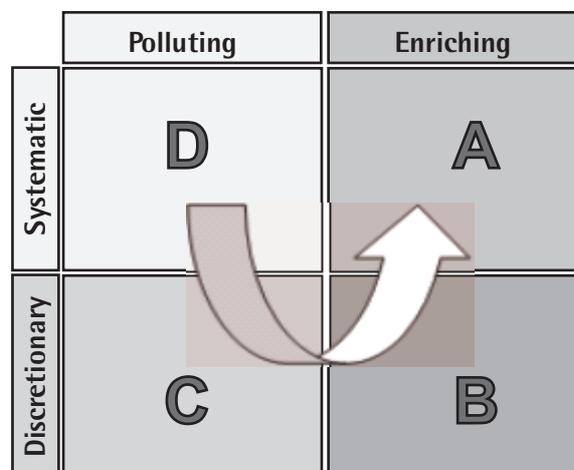
Looking back, fifty years ago there were no policies to actively protect the environment and the atmosphere. Nobody seemed to realize that some companies were destroying and damaging the environment. It took us a long time to understand and learn the many benefits we receive by protecting the environment. We now know that we need to conserve the planet's natural resources for our use and for the use of coming generations, and those who misuse them are being sanctioned.

Nowadays, many companies are not aware that they are destroying human ecology. They are polluting our society with harmful practices that dehumanize it by not allowing employees to fulfill their responsibility as spouses or parents.

To assess the extent to which companies are polluting the human environment or have implemented work-family policies, the International Center of Work and Family at IESE Business School (<http://www.iese.edu/icwf>) has developed a Family-Responsible Employer Index (FREI) and a self-diagnosis tool (<http://www.iesedti.com/ifrei2006/ifrei.htm>).

In this paper we describe the model we use to categorize an organization's performance as a Family Responsible Employer (FRE). We all know that a flexible culture is not created in a day; companies need to work their way through different levels. (Chapter 5 "Female Ambition. How to Reconcile Work and Family", Ed. Palgrave).

Levels of development in the FRE Model⁽⁴⁾



D: Have no family-responsible policies

A: Have a family-responsible culture

C: Have a few policies but do not really use them

B: Have policies and put them into practice

Companies at Level D of the FRE Model have not yet assumed any responsibility for protecting human ecology with their organizational policies. They are not aware of the damage they are causing to their employees, their employees' families, themselves and society with their destructive practices. Companies in this category can be said to be *systematically polluting* (Level D) their internal and external environment.

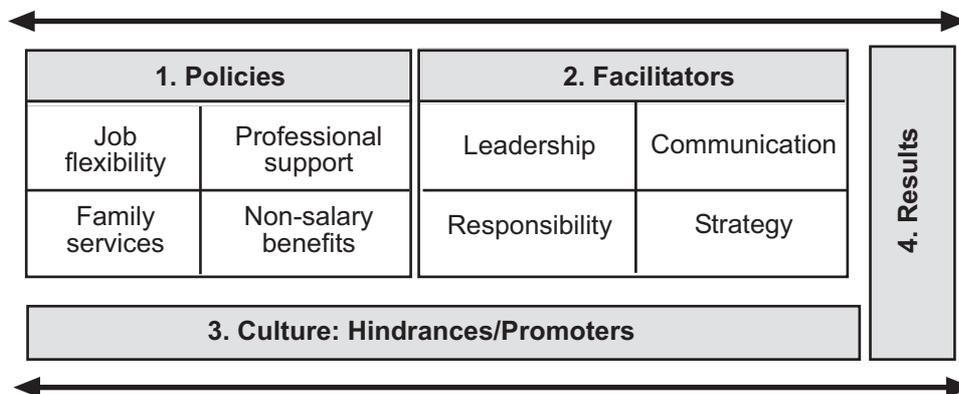
The first step, at this level, is for companies to open their eyes and see the damage they are causing as a result of not being aware of employees' work-family imbalance. This realization leads to a shift from Level D to Level C in the FRE model. At Level C, almost all policies that prevent work-family balance have been eliminated. The company starts to acquire flexibility and assumes part of the responsibility for the protection of the human environment. It may still have some practices that are contrary to work-family balance, but there is now less rigidity than before. Companies at this stage can be described as *discretionally polluting* (Level C).

The transition from Level C to Level B shows a different change. A company at Level B in the FRE Model not only recognizes the fact that employees have more than just one responsibility (professional, family, social and personal), but also makes efforts to help them balance all these aspects. Instead of being destructive, policies and practices now support the employees' attempts to balance all these different dimensions of their lives. Through these initiatives, instead of polluting the social environment, the company enriches it. Therefore, the company can be described as *discretionally enriching* (Level B).

The fourth and final phase, Level A, is a state where protection and support for human ecology – specifically the family – is part of the business culture and is perceived as such. Both company and staff are sensitive to the need for flexibility and a supportive environment – for the good of employees and of society, today and in the future. When these beliefs are present in all of the company's activities and work-family balance is a criterion which is taken into account in daily decision making, the company can be considered to be *systematically enriching* (Level A).

Like all cultural changes, this is a gradual process that takes time. It is not possible to move directly from Level D to Level A. Transition from Level B to Level A is probably the hardest, because it means having solid policies and practices, and an enriching, flexible and responsible culture.

Elements of the FRE Model⁽⁵⁾



The structure shown above illustrates the elements of the FRE Model. The organization's *results* reflect the existence of a flexible and responsible culture; they cannot be achieved only and exclusively by implementing formal *policies*. The policies, indeed the whole program, must be supported by certain *facilitators*, which are essential to bringing about cultural change.

During this change there are also hindrances and promoters (e.g. workaholism) in the organization's culture, which must be identified, so that they can be monitored and improved. Each of these elements contributes information to test and diagnose the company's situation, and its performance over a given time period.

Below, we present some basic concepts and definitions for a better understanding of the FRE model:

1. **Policies:** Determine the availability and degree of formalization of various policies, classified in four major categories: job flexibility, professional support, family services and non-salary benefits.
2. **Facilitators:** Identify how the company uses the four pillars (leadership, communication, responsibility and strategy) to develop and implement flexible and responsible policies.
3. **Culture (Hindrances/Promoters):** Recognize the existence or absence of the practices that most commonly hinder an organization's advance toward a flexible and responsible culture (e.g. workaholism).
4. **Results:** Measure the impact of the three elements above in order to establish improvement areas that will allow the company to make progress.

Studies carried out by IESE in more than 500 Spanish companies support the view that there is no "one" solution or action plan to become a family-responsible employer. Each organization will have to find its own solution. The specific design will depend on the company's current situation, size, geographic location and industry.

Introducing new policies should not be considered merely as an expense that detracts from the organization's financial results. On the contrary, research has shown that successful implementation of work-family programs contributes to higher productivity, as well as to a more healthy balance between work and family/personal life.

Why become a Family-Responsible Employer?

So why become a FRE? What would make a company want to become a FRE? Using the models of people and organizations proposed by Pérez López (1993)⁽⁶⁾, there are various possible answers to this question.

The three models proposed by Pérez López underlie the most varied management practices. They range on a continuum from pure business to a deeper, more human vision of the enterprise. The differences between them provide answers to questions such as: What makes people "tick"? What are their needs? What makes them grow?

A true and complete portrait of a human being should account for a person's unitary make-up, with all four dimensions: material, spiritual, individual and social. To have a complete vision of a person's make-up, companies should also be aware of the motivations that can satisfy a

human being's needs in all four dimensions. Basically, an organization can satisfy three types of motives in employees:

- *Extrinsic*: Any kind of motive that is satisfied by the action of someone other than the person who gets the job done. For example: remuneration or praise for work done.
- *Intrinsic*: Any motive that is satisfied merely by getting the job done. For example, any knowledge acquired in the process, or the pleasure of doing it.
- *Transcendent*: Any motive that is satisfied by the effect that getting the job done has on other people. For example, helping a colleague or giving a customer good service.

These three types of motives correspond explicitly to the satisfaction of material needs (having), cognitive needs (knowing) and affective needs (being).

A complete theory of human motivation – one that recognizes that the motives for performing any action can only be understood in terms of the three types of motivation just described – leads to a profound change in the way we think about organizations. The anthropological or humanistic paradigm is the one that underlies the concept of the business enterprise as an institution, not just as a simple machine or a social organism.

So basically, the way an organization conceives the relationship between work and family depends on how the organization conceives the person (what a person signifies for the company) and the nature of the managerial function. In fact, we could say that a company's conception of the person and its conception of the managerial function are the same, as the one follows from the other.

If a company ignores transcendent motives, it is unlikely to include work-family values in its organizational culture. Only companies that take all three types of motive into account can visualize their employees as complete individuals and not just as professionals or employees.

Organizational culture – a company's set of core values – is directly related to the organization's meaning and purpose. Therefore, depending on a company's values, the relative scope of work and family may vary.

Let's analyze each of the three paradigms proposed by Pérez López, the different ways in which managers see the business world. Table 1 sets out the basic concepts to be discussed.

Table 1

Models of People and Organizations

Conception	Model of organization	Model of person	Type of motivation	Dimension of organization	Talent of manager
Mechanistic	Machine	Stable system	Extrinsic	Efficiency	Strategist
Psycho-sociological	Social organism	Ultrastable system	Extrinsic Intrinsic	Efficiency Attractiveness	Strategist Executive
Anthropological	Institution with values	Freely adaptive system	Extrinsic Intrinsic Transcendent	Efficiency Attractiveness Unity in values	Strategist Executive Leader

The Mechanistic Model

In the mechanistic model, the question of how to motivate people is seen as a matter of what and how much a person has to be given in order to persuade him or her to do the job the organization wants done. This model is based on the belief that money is the universal motivator, so the problem of motivation is reduced to the problem of how much incentive to offer.

In fact, in this model, all relationships between people are reduced to relationships between roles or functions, and the organization itself is seen as a complex machine that produces and consumes things. According to this model, the sole aim of business is efficiency and the maximization of profits.

The mechanistic view of business is a very limited one. In fact, it sees only the tip of the iceberg, that is, the formal organization (roles, procedures, systems...). It ignores all the informal aspects, such as needs, motives and interactions among members of the organization.

Any work-family policies these companies implement are merely to meet minimum legal requirements or the pressure and demands of their employees.

Mechanistic organizations will not implement work-family policies on their own initiative unless they benefit the company in the short term. They care about their image and will use work-family policies only as a marketing strategy to attract more job candidates and customers.

“Best employers” typically receive twice as many job applications per position as other firms⁽⁹⁾. For example, the number of job applications received by Edward Jones & Company, named by Fortune as the number one best company to work for in 2002 and 2003, rose from 40,000 to 400,000 after the company was featured on the list.

The Psycho-Sociological Model

The psycho-social model sees the firm as a social organism in which people participate in order to obtain the incentives offered by the firm, and also to satisfy other needs through interaction with other people within the business itself.

The person is seen as being motivated not only by extrinsic factors, such as rewards, but also by intrinsic ones, such as learning, professional development, sense of achievement, etc.

According to this model, the ultimate aims of the organization are twofold: efficiency and attractiveness. This is a step towards a more complete view than that proposed by the mechanistic model.

At this point, the organization is on alert, it does not want to risk losing valuable and efficient employees. Work-family policies are implemented in order to attract and retain people by creating favorable working conditions.

Research⁽¹⁰⁾ suggests that giving employees flexibility, information, and financial assistance can improve the whole organization's performance and raise employee satisfaction.

Many employers continue to strive to create better workplaces in order to⁽¹¹⁾:

- Increase employee commitment and engagement
- Improve retention
- Improve mental health and productivity

In the future, flexibility, as a part of the effective workplace, will not be a nice-to-have but a must-have.

The Anthropological/Humanistic Model

In this model the organization is seen as an institution whose purpose is not only to achieve efficiency and attractiveness, but also to provide unity or identification of its members with its objectives.

In the mechanistic model the only consideration was "what the company does". In the psycho-social model the important question was "what" the company does and "how" it does it. In the humanistic model, besides these two aspects, there is the further consideration of "why" the company does what it does.

Work-family policies, in this model, are part of the organization's aim. The company knows that its people have personal and family lives, which are important to the organization and become part of its values.

In the anthropological model, companies adopt a proactive approach to work-family policies in order to become Family Responsible Employers. This is the only model that has a long-term vision.

Flexibility is not seen merely as something employees want, but as something they need⁽¹²⁾. There is a real interest in people and their work in the organization, which is perceived as a service to others.

To summarize, the interest that organizations may have in supporting work-life balance moves between two parameters:

- To preserve and improve efficiency. Companies seem to focus more on the employees' performance than on their satisfaction.
- An authentic concern for employees (people-minded). Companies take care of the employees' needs, seeking a work-life balance.

Employees are smart and they can sense when companies do not have a real attitude towards people, a deep concern for individuals and respect for life. They feel it when work-family policies are implemented merely as a tactic to retain staff or attract new candidates.

Changes in an organization can only be made from top to bottom; therefore, employers must believe that work and family are not incompatible, but complementary. Also, employers must believe that having the opportunity to achieve a balance between work and family life is a matter of justice for all individuals.

The FRE Model together with the Models of People and Organizations

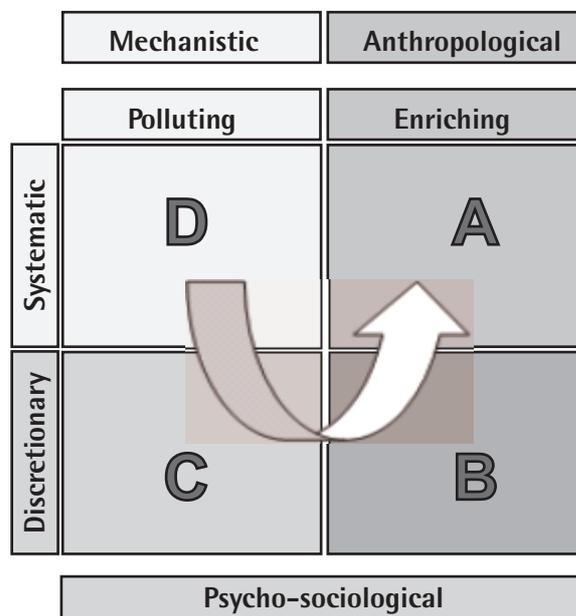
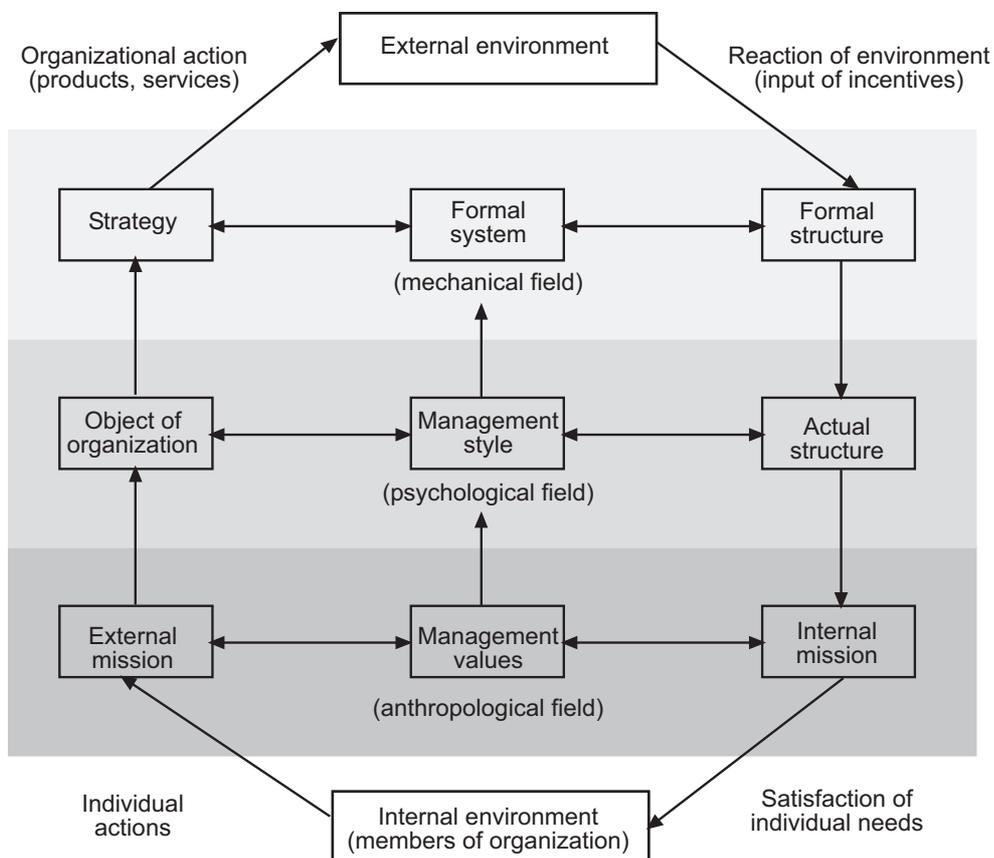


Table 2

Organizational models related to Work and Family

Organizational models	Work-Family Focus	Work Emphasis	Person's Needs	Work-Family Policies
Mechanistic	Company is not responsible for work-family balance	Employee is evaluated according to the time he or she works and is assessed by results	Material needs (having) Company grants economic benefits	Legislation / Marketing
Psycho-sociological	Company sees that work-family balance is a real problem that should be taken care of (Reactive)	Employee is evaluated according to the tasks completed and the learning achieved	Cognitive needs (knowing) Company appeals to knowledge development	Employee attraction and retention
Anthropological	Company is a Family Responsible Employer (Proactive)	Employee is evaluated according to his or her contributions to the fulfillment of objectives	Affective needs (being) Company is aware of personal needs and is proactive towards work-family balance	Employee Commitment

The following diagram shows the minimum set of variables required to represent a company within the anthropological paradigm (“an institution with values”: a group of free people who are capable of learning – both positively and negatively).



Variables may be interpreted as follows:

Variables of the Mechanistic Model

- *Formal structure (organization chart)*. Formal roles, functions or jobs assigned to people when designing the organization and allocating tasks.

A person in the organization is only there to complete tasks, and for those tasks he or she receives a payment. Any other activities or functions that an employee could perform are beyond the company's scope and are not taken into account.

- *Formal system (management systems)*. Includes selection, compensation, promotion systems, etc. Also, the systems needed in order to implement (structure and plan) a particular strategy and ensure that tasks are carried out (control).

All actions are directed towards a single aim: efficiency. One possible risk is misuse of power. In formal systems, work-family issues are irrelevant to the organization.

- *Strategy*. Organizational actions are aimed at keeping the organization alive and able to achieve its objectives, while adapting its actions to the state of the external environment. Depending on their function, we may distinguish between financial, marketing, personnel strategies, etc.

An organization will do anything it can, depending on the circumstances, to obtain the greatest possible benefit. Work and family policies will be considered only if social utility offsets the organization's social cost.

Variables added by the Psycho-Sociological Model

- *Actual members of the workforce*. The people who perform the formal functions or roles. Their cognitive and motivational qualities must be right for the tasks assigned to them.

The organization is genuinely concerned about who works in the company and in what position. This concern enables the organization to recognize specific employee characteristics and circumstances; it also allows the beginning of individualized work-family policies through personalized management.

- *Object of the organization (distinctive competence)*. What the organization is able to do well (products or services). This depends on the skills and attitudes that the organization's members develop – sometimes over long periods – in performing their tasks. It is closely related to intrinsic and transcendent motives. Merely by adopting an opportunistic adaptive strategy, for example, a company may start to produce inferior products – even if in doing so it makes more money – and allow the entire production and sales organization to become demoralized.

“Knowing how to do things” is important to the organization and there is an open work atmosphere and a concern for people's life outside work.

- *Management style.* The way the company's operations are conducted and decisions are made, in order to help the organization's members develop the necessary skills and attitudes to improve the organization's distinctive competence. Two processes determine management style: communication (explaining why employees must follow a certain line) and participation in the various stages of decision making (defining the problem, generating alternatives, evaluating the alternatives in the light of certain criteria, deciding, and preparing an action plan).

Employees' concerns about work-family balance are recognized by the organization. Top management supports efforts to investigate the problems, and improvements are gradually implemented.

Variables added by the Anthropological/Humanistic Model

- *External mission.* Real needs of external customers, which the organization seeks to satisfy with its products and services.

The way employees treat customers is a reflection of how employees are treated in the organization. Having good role models in the workplace is an important target.

- *Internal mission.* Real needs that the organization seeks to satisfy in its members as producers; that is, insofar as their actions determine the quality of the products or services required in order to achieve the external mission. The internal mission is about developing the intrinsic and transcendent motivation that the organization seeks to foster in its members through appropriate learning.

Family is clearly acknowledged as one of an employee's most important motivations. Consequently, employees are willing to do a good job, work hard and make efforts for flexibility and for a good work-family life balance. The employee's family becomes a stakeholder of the company.

- *Management values.* These are expressed in the way people are treated in the organization, and the criteria that are used in decision making. They include what the organization understands by real needs when it comes to making decisions and how priorities are established among them (which are sacrificed, and to what extent, in order to satisfy others).

Implementation of flexible policies in the company is based on a trustful relationship and communication between employer and employee. Commitment and identification with the company will increase if the organizational culture favors work-family balance.

As previously stated, in the anthropological model or paradigm, the company is viewed as an institution – a human creation – whose ultimate purpose is to organize people's abilities to satisfy their own needs. Any realistic view of the company will include two characteristic dimensions that define a company's quality: its *ability to do things* through the learning it brings about in its members with respect to operational capabilities, and its *ability to know*

what things must be done in order to satisfy the *real needs* of its *consumers* (external mission). In that sense, we can say that the company is an *instrument that serves* to satisfy human needs *by raising the motives* of the people who belong to it.

It is often said that the company is a place where people must learn, and that it is the job of managers to teach their employees. Very likely, many of those who say this do not realize just how true it is, and how deep the learning must go for the company to become stronger and more united. In companies, people need to learn more than just the technical side of their profession; they must also learn to be *professionals*, to turn their technical knowledge into an instrument to serve others. This latter kind of learning – motivational learning – is the *primordial function of true leadership* by those who manage the organization.

An important reason why a company might want to be a FRE today is the change in the decision-making process of new graduates. In a study of 2003 IESE MBA graduates, 70% ranked intellectual challenge and work-family balance before money. Consequently, in order to attract and retain scarce talent, many sectors need to consider the changing values of recruits, so that they are able to hire the most qualified people possible.

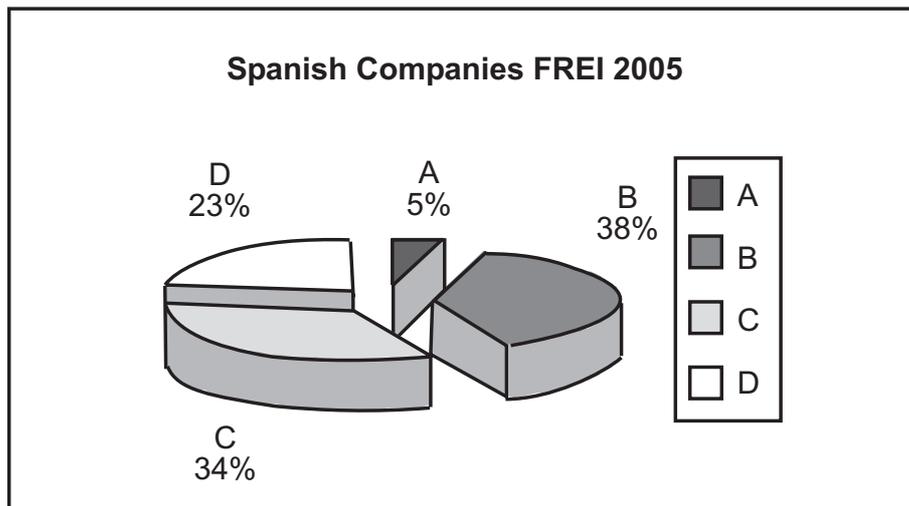
One way to retain talent is through policies and a culture that support the employee's family. The organization should understand that an employee is a person with varied interests and different roles in his or her life. In addition, the family is the place where important competencies are developed –competencies that all companies need, such as helpfulness, team work, negotiation, delegation, empathy, leadership. For that reason, family-responsible employers are not a luxury but a necessity for 21st century society, in which both men and women work outside home and need to reduce stress to become better professionals, spouses, parents and citizens.

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Appendix 1

Spanish Companies as measured by the FREI Model



Appendix 2

Transition Levels in the FRE Model

<p>Transition D to C</p>	<p>A company in quadrant D should begin the process of developing towards being a FRE by introducing formal flexibility policies in order to establish the framework or structure for a Work-Family Reconciliation Program.</p> <p>Introducing these policies will help to convey the message that the company – or at least top management – believes in the need to reconcile work, family and personal life, and that it is willing to provide resources to design and implement policies supporting this balance.</p> <p>Creating and implementing these policies constitutes a systematic improvement, but it is only one of the first steps within the process of ongoing development. The shift towards being a FRE requires commitment, motivation, and perseverance. Furthermore, even when the first improvement measure is somehow programmatic in nature, it could turn into an empty gesture if not properly implemented. These policies must “have a life of their own” and not merely be written norms. It is crucial that top management set an example in word and deed, and that regular assessments be conducted to check whether the policies are meeting the needs of the people who work in the organization.</p> <p>One of the first steps in this development process is to diagnose the needs of the organization and its staff. A fundamental characteristic of these needs is that they inevitably change over time, reflecting people’s priorities as they go through different stages of their lives. What is important is that both the initiatives and the organizational climate be flexible enough to meet these changing requirements.</p>
<p>Transition C to B</p>	<p>Having formal policies in place that support a balance between work, family and personal life is the first major step on the path to becoming a FRE. However, having policies is one thing; whether employees know about them and use them is quite another.</p> <p>Formal policies in themselves are not enough to create a flexible environment that is compatible with personal interests. To fully carry out this shift there must be a supportive corporate culture, not one set out in a formal document but one that actually permeates the company.</p> <p>Labor practices and management’s behavior are the two factors that most influence the corporate culture. To achieve this shift the practices that act as obstacles to employees’ reconciling work, family and personal life must be identified. Then, the support and commitment of a broad group of executives and supervisors to implement the Work-Family Reconciliation Program must be gained.</p>
<p>Transition B to A</p>	<p>This last transition, from quadrant B to A, culminates all the efforts to transform the company into a FRE. Very likely it will have taken the company several years to reach this phase of development. Now it faces the most challenging step: to strengthen its commitment to flexibility and work-family balance at all levels of the organization.</p> <p>When a company reaches Level A, work-family practices permeate all levels of the organization. The notion that achieving a balance between family and professional responsibilities leads to a more satisfied, committed staff while also leading to improvements in performance and productivity is widely accepted.</p>

In order to reach Level A, a company needs to have the support and commitment of the majority of its staff, both those with family responsibilities and those without. All practices that work against flexibility and work-family balance must have been detected and, as far as possible, eliminated. There must be appropriate formal policies in place to facilitate the desired balance. All prejudices associated with the use or application of these policies must have been overcome.

A comprehensive strategy, consistent leadership, effective communication, and personal responsibility at all levels are the foundations of a solid supportive culture that permeates activities throughout the organization. This culture promotes individual initiative in terms of flexibility and practices that facilitate work-family reconciliation, such that any employee may identify and suggest ideas to improve the situation.

Given positive, tangible results, such as a reduction in absenteeism or greater job satisfaction, employees begin to notice their contribution and support FR initiatives. They truly believe in the value of a FRE and "live the issue".

Appendix 3

Elements on each level of the FRE Model

Element	Description – Level D
Policies	Very few, if any, policies implemented to support balance between work, family and personal life.
Facilitators	<p><i>Leadership:</i> Upper management is unaware of or seems not to value the conflict associated with inflexibility. Very little or no evidence that the company supports flexibility and work-family balance.</p> <p><i>Strategy:</i> This issue does not formally factor into the company's overall strategy or mission, nor are any resources earmarked to develop it.</p> <p><i>Communication:</i> Very little or no communication on work-family balance.</p> <p><i>Responsibility:</i> There is no apparent commitment to the issue, nor is anyone designated to be responsible for it.</p>
Culture	A variety of practices within the organization prevent people from reconciling their family, professional and personal responsibilities.

Element	Description – Level C
Policies	Certain policies supporting the balance between work, family, and personal life have been put into place. However, there are still shortcomings in how these policies are applied.
Facilitators	<p><i>Leadership:</i> Upper management is aware of the conflicts being generated between work and family responsibilities, and it truly believes in the improvements it could achieve. Despite this, there is no formal commitment.</p> <p><i>Strategy:</i> This issue is on upper management's agenda, but it is still not formally included in the company's overall strategy or mission. Limited resources have been allocated to development in this area.</p> <p><i>Communication:</i> Some communication on FR policies is issued, but not at all levels of the organization. There is a disparity between the perceptions of executives at different levels and employees.</p> <p><i>Responsibility:</i> There is no formal responsibility for the issue, although there is a certain degree of involvement at the higher levels.</p>
Culture	Certain polluting practices still prevail at most levels within the organization.

Element	Description – Level B
Policies	The majority of work-family reconciliation policies have been instituted and are broadly accepted.
Facilitators	<p><i>Leadership:</i> A larger number of executives at different levels within the organization take responsibility for the issue with conviction and encourage practices that enable people to better balance their responsibilities. There is a belief in the majority of the organization that a healthy balance between work, family and personal life will lead to a more satisfied and productive staff.</p> <p><i>Strategy:</i> There are already quite a few FR policies in place, although they are not yet sufficiently implemented, and a portion of the budget has been earmarked for future improvements in this area.</p> <p><i>Communication:</i> Employees are aware of the policies and practices supporting work-family balance; however, confusion persists as to the availability of these initiatives.</p> <p><i>Responsibility:</i> There is a person or a team formally in charge of the Work-Family Program and a greater degree of involvement by the organization.</p>
Culture	There are still areas within the organization displaying rigid practices that hinder the

	balance of work, family and personal life.
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Element	Description – Level A
Policies	Thoroughly implemented, understood and accepted.
Facilitators	<p><i>Leadership:</i> Executives fully understand the changing needs of their employees at all levels with respect to work and family. The issue is included within the formal processes of staff performance reviews. There is true respect for each individual's choice in the matter of professional/personal/family balance.</p> <p><i>Strategy:</i> Work-Family balance is fully integrated within the company's corporate mission and implemented as part of its competitive strategy at all levels. Sufficient resources are earmarked for the implementation of new initiatives.</p> <p><i>Communication:</i> There is an open and honest discussion of the issue at all levels of the organization.</p> <p><i>Responsibility:</i> Everyone (with or without family responsibilities) accepts and feels responsible for promoting improvements in this matter, thus creating a supportive, understanding work atmosphere for all personnel.</p>
Culture	There are informal practices or policies that truly and effectively help people reconcile their family and professional responsibilities, without any type of potential backlash (such as limited prospects of promotion, loss of social benefits, etc.).