

ESTÉE LAUDER'S HR DIRECTOR ON DRIVING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Many organisations support their working parents, but the global beauty company has gone a step further: it's working families.

"The demands on working families and carers today are exponentially different compared to 30-40 years ago." Heidi Philips, Human Resources Director at Estée Lauder, and her team recognised the need to invest in further supporting their working parents and parents-to-be. The Circle In portal for Estée Lauder employees was launched in March 2019, providing them with abundant resources that could be accessed anytime, anywhere. Eight months in, we check in with Heidi to see how it is benefiting their business.

Tell us about why you saw a need for Circle In?

As a working mum of two children, I experienced firsthand the challenge of navigating your absence from work, then re-establishing communication with your line manager when you are ready to return and to top it off, trying to work out who you are as an individual after such a life-changing experience. I have also seen line managers struggle between how much they should stay in touch with the employee on parental leave whilst wanting to keep a respectable distance to ensure the employee has the space and time away from work to focus on their biggest priority. It was from those two perspectives that we saw the opportunity to provide more support to employees and line managers and close the communication gap for both whilst an employee is on parental leave.

We saw the opportunity to provide more support to employees...and close the communication gap... whilst an employee is on parental leave.



Heidi Philips,
Human Resources Director at
Estée Lauder Companies

Building a business case

I didn't have to build a business case! As soon as I met Jodi and Kate and saw their incredible product offering I knew our employees would find tremendous value in the portal and the available resources. I took a leap and hoped everyone else saw what I could see.

On-boarding and launch experience with Circle In

The entire experience was seamless, the Circle In team did a lot of the groundwork for us. We established a regular meeting cadence so we were kept up to date along the way and we were provided templates that we needed to populate so the work was easy from our end. We were able to brand our platform and leverage a lot of what Circle In had already available.

Employee feedback and impact to date

The reaction far exceeded our expectations. We received an instant response the moment we launched, not just for working families or those who were expecting at the time but line managers and other employees were very complimentary that we had taken the step to provide such a high touch level of support for our employees.

Three months after launch we worked with Circle In to facilitate a pulse check survey. The results blew our mind. 90% of our employees using the portal said the support for working parents made them feel more positive towards us as their employer. 80% of employees said the portal had exceeded their expectations. This positive sentiment continues to grow more and more as employees leverage the portal.

Beautiful resources available anytime, anywhere

We absolutely love the real life, practical resources available to someone who is on parental leave and trying to figure it all out – nothing prepares you for how much your life changes when you become a parent. Not everyone is able to get out and about with a new born, mothers / fathers groups aren't for everyone either however we now have these beautiful resources for everyone, mums, dads, grandparents, carers that they can access in their own time, anywhere! We also feature our working parents and managers as part of our Real Life Stories. Never underestimate the power your employee community has when you have an opportunity to leverage them.

The importance of investing in working parents

I believe we have a duty of care to ensure our employees are able to bring their true selves to work and have the support in order to do so. As they say “the juggle is real” and the demands on working families and carers today are exponentially different compared to 30-40 years ago.

A great return on investment

We are incredibly happy with the ROI, our engagement rates are beyond what we were hoping. To be provided, regular data and analysis from the Circle In team to see what our employees like and where they are spending their time navigating through the portal is amazing.

Finish this sentence:

Circle In is...one of the best initiatives we have provided our working families. It speaks to our #ELCfamily and is well aligned with the values of our amazing organisation.

