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Our 2010 SMB Award Applicants Go Far Beyond the Federal Requirement for Employee Leave

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Our past annual conference speaker Sue Shellenbarger of *The Wall Street Journal* wrote a blog today on a notable development when it comes to the intersection of workplace culture practices and the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Shellenbarger notes that with Australia now requiring their employers to offer paid leave, the U.S. is now "alone among developed nations in offering no financial support for new parents post-childbirth."

The 12 weeks of leave that our government does mandate, for both eligible new mothers and new fathers, is unpaid.

Where the government is in supporting unpaid versus paid leave is a stark contrast to what the applicants, finalists, and winners of our 2010 Top Small Company Workplaces competition offer. Here's what we see in our employee engagement research of this pool of 497 total small businesses:

- 100% of the 20 winners offer paid time off (PTO)
- 100% of the 20 finalists offer PTO
- 97.6% of the remaining 457 applicants offer PTO
- 11 (2%) of the 497 total applicants go further and specifically offer paid paternity in addition to maternity leave (above and beyond general paid leave)

Why do these organizations, which are small and lack many of the resources (including financial) of big companies, make this kind of investment as part of their employee benefits packages? Certainly it keeps them competitive on the recruiting front. Yet, considering their overall people practices allow them to keep workers for a long time – 7 years on average among our 2010 winners and finalists; 4 years among the remaining applicants – they see being generous in supporting time off for personal as well as family commitments as a means toward achieving industry-best retention and employee leadership development. *This* in turn directly affects their ability to maintain and improve both customer and vendor relationships.

Related: This article on our website describes the push for paid sick leave legislation in the U.S., including some of the major players involved.

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You can also find this article published on Our 2010 SMB Award Applicants Go Far Beyond the Federal Requirement for Employee Leave, and on the tag pages 2010, Applicants, Award, Beyond, Employee, Federal , Leave, Requirement.