



## MERCK SECONDARY CARE PROJECT

### Overview:

### Helping Merck improve their Secondary Care Leave

### BACKGROUND

Merck Group is a science and technology company with 62,770 employees across 66 countries. They strive to find solutions to some of today's toughest challenges and create more sustainable ways to live. Their strategy is about unlocking their employees' full potential to take the company to the next level. They see engaging and retaining parents as a key part of this.

In a recent employee survey 70% of employees listed parental leave in their top 3 D&I priorities and research showed that their current offering of 2 weeks paid paternity leave was not competitive as an employer. The Merck DEI team in Switzerland wanted to address this by extending Paternity Leave and making it more flexible as part of their gender parity goals.

### ENGAGING THRIVING TALENT

After hearing TT speak on the topic of “Enabling Caring & Career” they reached out for guidance on how to best engage and retain parents. They wanted expertise to help create a business case to present to a steering committee to extend Parental Leave and make it more flexible for their employees in Switzerland. They engaged TT to provide:

- Data on the financial implications of expanding the parental leave including any implications on employee insurance/benefits
- Key findings on impact of gender equality in the companies where implemented
- Understanding of other competitors that have already introduced enlarged benefits and the benefits associated with doing so

*“Thriving Talent had the experience, knowledge and contacts we needed to compile the business case”*

**Sabina Reggioli D&I leader, SNO Transformation Program Manager, Merck Serono SA**



## APPROACH

Thriving Talent engaged with the D&I team to understand the unique culture in Merck and what was important to their employees. They highlighted the key stakeholders the D&I team could influence before the business case was presented to maximise buy-in and project success.

Thriving Talent then compiled the comprehensive business case by:

- analysing internal data, such as the recent Diversity survey and data from exit interviews, to demonstrate that this topic was of importance to the Merck employees and that inaction wasn't an option.
- sharing their experience of the benefits of retaining parents and the relevance of extending parental leave to increase an organisation's EVP.
- leveraging their vast network and client base to undertake a research project into the leave offered by Merck's competitors and any upcoming changes, to ensure the new policy would stay competitive into the future.
- undertaking a cost analysis of the investment needed based on the current employee demographic and how it would be offset in areas such as sick leave, staff retention, employee engagement.

## RESULTS

The policy was approved and implemented in November 2020 in Switzerland. Many new parents are already benefiting from the change. At the end of 2021 Merck had 56 Secondary caregivers, and the vast majority chose to take the option of two, 3 week leaves rather than 6 weeks in a row, allowing them to have a better work/life balance.

*"Thanks a lot for all your support over the past months, without your engagement we wouldn't have delivered this breakthrough improvement!!!"*

**Sabina Reggioli D&I leader, SNO Transformation Program Manager, Merck Serono SA**

Merck has also updated their terminology to be more inclusive. Substituting "Maternity" and "Paternity" with Primary and Secondary Caregiver. This new wording has been rolled out in Switzerland.

In 2022 a further employee survey highlighted a positive response to the new policy but that education within the management team and further flexibility was still needed. The policy was amended to allow a third option of 3 blocks of 2 weeks over the 1st 2 years of the child's life. Communication was also rolled out to managers to reassure them about the level of impact the new leave would have.

*"Our Parental Leave is now best in class and having a positive impact on families and work/life balance. It's one further step in our mission for parity"*

**Sabina Reggioli D&I leader, SNO Transformation Program Manager, Merck Serono SA**

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[getintouch@thrivingtalent.solutions](mailto:getintouch@thrivingtalent.solutions)  
[www.thrivingtalent.solutions](http://www.thrivingtalent.solutions)



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