



MINDING THE GAP

Columbus Chamber of Commerce Thought Leadership Series

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One of my greatest joys has always been traveling, and I have been incredibly privileged to see many parts of this country and the world through either pleasure or business trips. London is a favorite destination, with the convenience of hopping aboard the Underground to get about the city with ease and efficiency that I often take for granted.

Settling into a seat for a longer commute, or holding tightly to an overhead strap for a short connection, I rarely think about how “all of this” works. I assume that the train and engine are well maintained and being guided by proficient and safety-conscious drivers. It never occurs to me to inspect the tracks (what would I even be looking for?). Over the years, I have become vaguely aware of the recorded warning that encourages the passengers to “mind the gap” when entering and exiting the car.

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SETTING THE STAGE

VOLUME 2

***THE SHE-CESSION AND
IMPACT ON WORKING
PARENTS***

VOLUME 3

*FLEXIBILITY AS RECRUITMENT
AND RETENTION TOOL*

VOLUME 4

*YOU'LL BE HEARING FROM
US SOON*

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THE SHE-CESION AND IMPACT ON WORKING PARENTS

- ★ As we continue to track the economic impacts of Covid on the workplace and workforce, it becomes clear that women have been dramatically affected by industry layoffs and lack of access to safe and affordable childcare.
- ★ From February 2020 to February 2021, 2.4 million women separated from the labor force, compared to 1.8 million men—a difference of 600,000. In January 2021 alone, 275,000 women left the workforce, compared to 71,000 men. Women are highly represented in retail, restaurant, hospitality and many service sector jobs; all those industries that have suffered significantly in the last 20 months. Those who were able to successfully find employment in other fields often still face the very real dilemma of child care.
- ★ Even as some industries experience small rebounds, women are leaving existing jobs in order to care for their children. In September of this year, the number of women on payrolls dropped for the first time since December 2020, with the largest percentage being women age 25 to 44.
- ★ With child care facilities themselves facing worker shortages, many working parents are either leaving the workforce altogether, or relying on family members to act as their care providers. This has heralded in an increase of older workers retiring early to provide the care to their grandchildren and offer assistance to their adult children, who may be faced with giving up career opportunities that are not easily regained.

- ★ For those parents who have been fortunate to find a spot with a fully staffed childcare provider, costs continue to be a barrier. Across the U.S., families spend an average of \$8355 per year per child. In some markets, those costs can skyrocket above the average and rival or outpace a year's worth of mortgage payments.
- ★ For larger employers with more resources, onsite childcare for their employees' children is a potential solution, albeit a costly one. Though there is still a fee to the employee, it is often significantly lower than other options and the convenience of having children close by is not only a comfort, but also a time and travel saver.
- ★ Businesses who are eager to provide some type of childcare assistance outside of an onsite facility, may consider subsidies as part of an employee benefit package. These can come in form of either flexible spending accounts, educational help or bonuses. To maintain a level of fairness to those workers who are not parents, some employers offer elder care, the deductible required by the company-provided health care plan, the annual contribution to 401(k) retirement plans, health savings accounts, life insurance coverage (or additional disability insurance) and tuition reimbursement.

"Finding the right childcare provider was a challenge prior to the pandemic and has become an even bigger challenge as parents want to return to work. Many childcare providers weren't able to stay open during the pandemic and many were forced to close their doors forever due to a loss of revenue which creates an even bigger void in that space. Parents trying to return to work are forced to make tough decisions. Employers need to be flexible with an incredibly talented pool of candidates so that parents can find a balanced work schedule."

-Jenifer Garey, Goodwill Columbus

As we all continue our literal and figurative travels, we will encounter signposts along the way that provide direction and guidance. Let us all pay attention to those that warn us of potential pitfalls ahead; and create pathways and bridges that allow us to “mind the gap” and land safely on the other side.

Contact Kelly Fuller Today

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Reach out to Kelly today to discuss the minding the gap and workforce!



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