

Aussie Mums Welcomed to Work

Australian businesses intend to take on more mothers returning to part-time work during economic recovery

(FV Newswire) January 06, 2010 -- More than half of Australian businesses are intending to hire more mothers returning to work in the next two years, according to a global survey. The survey conducted by leading [serviced office](#), [virtual office](#) and workplace solutions provider Regus, of over 11,000 corporates across 13 countries, found that nearly half (44 per cent) of businesses plan to hire more mothers returning to part-time work over the next two years.

Australian hiring intentions are well above the global average, with 55 per cent of business leaders saying they will recruit more mothers on a part-time basis over the next 24 months. The finding indicates that the Australian work culture is, overall, keen to support the balance between work and family responsibilities.

The survey results precede new Australian workplace laws, which come into effect on January 1, 2010, giving parents of young children the right to request flexible working conditions. Claudia Keech, Founder and CEO of leading mother's website, MotherInc.com.au, said that while the economy is still recovering, it makes a lot of sense for businesses to take advantage of the expertise that mothers and fathers returning to work can offer - be that part time, casual or working from home. "By the time you become a mother or father, you have also acquired a wealth of expertise in the workplace. It makes sense for businesses to offer flexible working conditions to attract such valuable employees," she said.

Regus' multi-national global economic indicator survey, the Regus BusinessTracker, asked more than 11,000 respondents about their hiring intentions with regard to part-time, returning mothers over the next two years. The resulting data offers economists a consistent survey benchmark with which to assess national outlooks versus global averages.

The survey found that Australian businesses intend to take on more mothers returning to part-time work than their international counterparts, with 55 per cent reporting that they expect to hire more over the next two years. Australia came second only to India, where 64 per cent of businesses expect to welcome more mothers into the workplace. The most conservative hiring estimates appeared in the Netherlands, with only 24 per cent expecting an increase.

On the global level, size of company seems to have little impact on firms' intentions to take on more returning mothers in 2010 and 2011. In terms of slight variations in the Regus survey statistics, 77 per cent of larger firms (1,000 employees plus) expect to see more part-time mothers in their workplaces, whereas firms of 250-999 employees expect to see fewer than any other size bracket (39 per cent expect to hire more).

Under the new Australian National Employment Standards in place from January 1, 2010 an employee who is a parent or has responsibility for the care of a child under school age, may request a change in their working arrangements including changes in hours, changes in work patterns and work location.

William Willems, Regional Vice President of Regus in Australia and South East Asia, comments: "As businesses worldwide take the tentative steps towards recovery, we're starting to see the emergence of shifting workplace strategies. Businesses have learned that adhering to a rigid 9-5, five-days-a-week mentality with no room for flexibility can mean sacrificing talented workers - and in a time when companies are focusing on cutting costs and maximising profitability, firms cannot afford to operate without the best and brightest talent available.

"While we have seen that companies intend to take on more mothers as part of their strategy to combat the financial downturn, there is much work to be done in making the transition from maternity leave back to the workforce as smooth as possible. Allowing mothers to take advantage of workplace flexibility demonstrates an understanding for the challenges that they face and paves the way for them to be more productive and less stressed at work.

Mr Willems welcomes the introduction of the new workplace laws which means that parents can request changes in location. "One of the most significant factors in improving employees' work-life balance is offering the flexibility to work remotely, either in whole or in part. Flexible workplace solutions are now available that allow corporations to offer new mothers the ability to work in whole or in part from home, along with a whole host of other workplace possibilities. By taking advantage of such measures, businesses worldwide will be better positioned to attract and retain the most talented personnel to their working environments," he said.

Case study:

Flexible mum starts up own business

Amanda Segers, Buyers Agent, Amanda On Your Side

After eight years in real estate working as a contractor, Amanda Segers went into business for herself as a buyer's agent in September 2009. A mother to a five year old boy, Ms Segers says that working for herself has provided the flexibility and control that wasn't generally offered in the workplace. "I knew that working for myself would mean that I could have the flexibility I needed to balance home-life and work," she said. Based in a Regus serviced office in Darling Park Sydney, Amanda says that she is now looking at expanding the business and recognises that employing other mothers returning to work may provide her business with benefits. "In my experience parents returning to work are hard-working and focused - they have to be."

About Regus Australia and New Zealand

The Regus Group is a leading provider of workplace solutions, including [meeting rooms](#) and [office space in Australia](#) and New Zealand. Regus has 20 business centres in major metropolitan cities including [serviced offices in Sydney](#), Melbourne, [Adelaide](#), Brisbane and Auckland. Australian and New Zealand clients benefit from access to services ranging from virtual offices, to fully equipped offices, professional meeting rooms, video conferencing studios and business lounges.

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About the Regus Group

The Regus Group is the world's leading provider of pioneering workplace solutions, with products and services ranging from fully equipped offices to professional meeting rooms, business lounges and the largest network of videoconferencing studios. The Regus Group delivers a new way to work, whether it's from home, on the road or from an office. Clients such as Google, GlaxoSmithKline, and Nokia join thousands of growing small and medium businesses that benefit from outsourcing

their office and workplace needs to The Regus Group, allowing them to focus on their core business.

Over 500,000 clients a day benefit from Regus Group facilities spread across a global footprint of 1000 locations in 450 cities and 75 countries, which allows individuals and companies to work wherever, however and whenever they want to.

For further information or to arrange an interview with William Willems, please contact:

Matthew White, Regus, 02 9006 1019 or [Matthew\(dot\)White\(at\)regus\(dot\)com](mailto:Matthew(dot)White(at)regus(dot)com)

OR

Hollie Jenkins, Porter Novelli 02 8987 2100, 0402 843 933 or

[hjenkins\(at\)porternovelli\(dot\)com\(dot\)au](mailto:hjenkins(at)porternovelli(dot)com(dot)au)

Notes to Editors

Methodology

The Regus Business Tracker surveyed over 11,000 business respondents from 13 countries from the Regus global contacts database during August and September 2009. The Regus global contacts database of over 1 million business-people worldwide is highly representative of senior managers and owners in service businesses across the globe. In this research project, respondents were asked about their hiring intentions with regards to new mothers returning to part-time work over the next two years. The survey was managed and administered by the independent organisation, MarketingUK.