April 27, 2017

Mr. Jason Bourne

Human Resource Management

Port of Spain, T&T

Dear Mr. Bourne:

Enclosed is the report “Introducing a Nursing Room into The Workplace,” per your request following my proposal memo previously submitted this month.

This report evaluates our employee’s reasons for needing a nursing room and their preferences of how to create one. Additionally, it emphasizes the benefits of having a lactation room at our workplace.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report, and I truly hope the findings in it will be considered useful and help make a decision regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



Kristine Yoon

Management Department

Introducing a Nursing Room into The Workplace

Submitted to Jason Bourne

Human Resource Management

By

Kristine Yoon

Management Department

April 27, 2017

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Purpose of Report**

Returning to work is a challenging experience for new nursing moms who have to juggle two full time jobs - as an employee and as a mother of a newborn. Since going to work requires for a mom to be apart from the baby, it is very difficult to keep a breastfeeding schedule without weaning earlier than she would want to. Providing adequate facilities and time for expressing breastmilk at the workplace is extremely important to breastfeeding mothers who wish to return to work as soon as possible. Nowadays, many business organizations have designated a private nursing room or an area, but further improvements are needed. The purpose of this report is to:

* Explain the importance of breastfeeding
* Show the benefits breastfeeding has for both mom and baby
* Demonstrate the benefits it would have to the employer
* Justify why the benefits of having a nursing room in the workplace outweigh the cost it would take to build one

A survey was conducted of preferences of our employees who are or will be nursing mothers to ensure that we are covering all angles. We have found an office room that can be a perfect space for a lactation room. By following our employee’s preferences, we have established that the only cost for our company would be outfitting the room with a chair, refrigerator, microwave, table, TV and possibly a pump that a mother can use while at work and that the cost for all of this will be minimum.

**Findings and Conclusions**

Based on our survey we found out that our female employees that are or will be nursing mothers prefer to have a safe and private space for expressing milk. According to their preferences, it has to be a clean, well light and organized room that is equipped with all the necessary items needed for pumping. After using my research skills, I also discovered that by providing this sort of facility in our work place, we will lower absenteeism and employee turnover which is very costly for a business. We will increase employee productivity and morale and with that build goodwill within the community that will give us a competitive advantage when recruiting and retaining employees.

**Recommendations to Build a Nursing Room**

* Find a clean and private space that can be transformed into a lactation room
* Conduct a survey to find out the preferences of female employees about the nursing room
* Outfit the room to match the preferences of our employees
* Consider contracting a lactation consultant to offer her services to nursing mothers who are having a hard time going back to work
* If budget allows us, consider purchasing medical grade pump that can be used in the nursing room
* Establish a breastfeeding policy that allows nursing mothers adequate time breaks

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3](#_Toc481051531)

[INTRODUCTION 6](#_Toc481051532)

[*Background* 6](#_Toc481051533)

[*Purpose* 6](#_Toc481051534)

[*Overview of Methodology* 6](#_Toc481051535)

[Methods 7](#_Toc481051536)

[*Primary Research* 7](#_Toc481051537)

[*Secondary Research* 7](#_Toc481051538)

[Findings 7](#_Toc481051539)

[*Importance of Having a Nursing Room* 7](#_Toc481051540)

[*Survey of Current Employees* 8](#_Toc481051541)

[Conclusion 9](#_Toc481051542)

[Recommendations 10](#_Toc481051543)

[References 11](#_Toc481051544)

[Appendix A: Employee Survey 13](#_Toc481051545)

# **INTRODUCTION**

## ***Background***

Breastfeeding provides the foundation for a healthy start in baby’s life. Mother’s breastmilk is the ideal food for newborn as recommended by the CDC and WHO, and exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first six months with continued breastfeeding for two years and beyond (BabyCenter, 2015, p.1). The close bond that forms between a mother and her child as a result of breastfeeding has positive outcomes for a child’s life and future. Breastfeeding is more than just a personal or family matter. Breastfeeding can have a powerful effect on the whole society by affecting the health of mothers and babies, the economy, and the environment. For example, increased breastfeeding would decrease health care costs worldwide. The US could save $13 billion each year on medical costs if 90% of women nursed their infants exclusively for the first six months (Norton, A.,2010, p.4,5).

Resuming work is often considered an obstacle for continued breast feeding. Employers’ lack of knowledge about breastfeeding is of significant concern. Most employers are not aware of the potential benefits they can get and lack specific policies regarding breastfeeding. There are many economic benefits to employers who provide support breastfeeding and provide proper lactation facilities at work, such as place where a mother can express milk or actually breastfeed. Workplace breastfeeding may help to lessen health care costs, increase productivity, improve morale and reduce absenteeism (Ryan, Zhou & Arensberg, 2006, p.8). The most important benefit that employers get by supporting and encouraging breastfeeding is the lower number of employee turnovers. Employee turnover can be very costly for business. Every company likes to retain its valuable employees, including those who go on maternity leave. By providing adequate circumstances for nursing mothers who go back to work, it helps employees balance family and work commitments, which leads to positive retention rates and potential cost savings to the company. Public relations are very important to any business organization. By supporting breastfeeding in the workplace, employers can build goodwill within the community and it can give them a competitive advantage when recruiting and retaining employees (US Office of Personnel Management, 2013, p.5).

## ***Purpose***

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not a nursing room would be beneficial for our business. By surveying employees, we can identify ways to build a proper lactation room, thus improving employee’s performance and morale and reducing employee absenteeism and turnover.

## ***Overview of Methodology***

The following methods were used in this study to analyze the benefits of having a nursing room in the workplace:

* Surveyed female employees that have been, are or will be nursing mothers
* Conducted secondary research to determine the importance of continues breastfeeding and best ways to do so while going back to work
* Analyzed primary research data to determine the benefits a nursing room would have for our workplace
* Explored preferences from our employees and from secondary research data about creating the ideal nursing room

# **Methods**

## ***Primary Research***

Primary research was performed at our workplace. We selected all of the female employees and presented them with a survey of preferences and benefits from having a nursing room in the building. The results of this survey were used to determine whether or not a lactation room can be beneficial for us and all the information needed to outfit the space and make it comfortable and private for nursing mothers.

## ***Secondary Research***

Secondary research data was collected from various peer-reviewed and open source articles to support the benefits of having a nursing room in the workplace for both employees and employer. This data was also used to explain the benefits of continued breastfeeding for the child and mother and the information acquired was used to support the study.

# **Findings**

## ***Importance of Having a Nursing Room***

One of the barriers for mothers who wish to keep breastfeeding is their return to work. This is especially hard for full-time employed moms and it can have a negative influence on the duration of breastfeeding their child. Working women usually wean breastfeeding earlier as a result of unsupportive work environments. The main barriers are the lack of privacy and adequate time to express breastmilk. Although the numbers remain small, some workplaces in the U.S. have begun to provide accommodation for women to continue to breastfeed or collect milk after they return to work (Murtagh, L., 2010, p. 217). Mothers do not need a large space to pump milk, however they do need a private space where they can safely express milk when needed and without being interrupted. Since bathrooms are not an appropriate or a safe place to pump due to the risk of contaminating the milk, a dedicated lactation room or an office with a locking door and access to a sink with clean, running water would be an ideal place for a pumping break. Employers need to make sure that the room contains a comfortable chair, a power outlet for electric pumps, a refrigerator for milk storage and preferably a microwave or sterilizer for cleaning the pump parts. An additional benefit that would help both the employee an employer would be the access to an efficient hospital-grade breast pump, which can reduce the time needed to pump (Mills, S.P., 2009, p. 229, 230)

Aside from providing an adequate space, nursing mothers need multiple breaks for expressing breastmilk. Women typically require 2 or 3 pumping sessions of around 15-30 minutes each. The International Labor Organization recommends two thirty minute breaks in an eight-hour shift in addition to normal breaks (International Labor Organization, 2012, p. 5). If extra time is needed for milk expression, employees should have to option to make up the time before or after the usual work schedule in order to help make this expenditure of time manageable. Even though in most countries the law requires for pumping breaks, it does not require that they need to be paid. However, if the employer already offers paid breaks, the employee can use those breaks to express milk and the time should be paid in the usual way (US Breastfeeding Committee, 2016, p.5).

Providing adequate facilities and time for expressing breastmilk at the workplace is extremely important to breastfeeding mothers who wish to return to their workplace as soon as possible. This would not only help our employees that are nursing mothers, but it can also improve our company’s business by increasing morale and productivity and reducing absenteeism and employee turnover.

## ***Survey of Current Employees***

To show just how important a nursing room is in the workplace, we surveyed all of our female employees in our building. The questions asked about reasons why a nursing room is needed, benefits continued breastfeeding has, preferences of how a nursing room should look like and most important if they felt that breastfeeding was highly supported by their employer. I have copied the survey at the end of this document in Appendix A. The figure bellow shows how our employees rated the available workplace breastfeeding support.

The ratings collected from the survey illustrate how our female employees feel about the support they receive at the workplace regarding breastfeeding. Based on the results, our employees feel highly supported by their co-workers, supervisors and the employer. However, it seems that our workplace lacks the space and proper equipment to encourage breastmilk expressing or breastfeeding at work as well as lacking proper breaks for doing so.

# **Conclusion**

From the research performed, it is apparent that a nursing room would be highly beneficial for our workplace. The research also indicates that by introducing a nursing room in the building, we can increase employee productivity and morale and reduce absenteeism and employee turnover.

Our employers need to play a crucial role in providing supportive workplace environments, appropriate facilities, strong management support, and relevant policies so women can feel supported and encouraged to continue to breastfeed when returning to work. Lactation rooms can help a nursing mom transition back to working much faster and easier without risking losing her milk supply and having to wean her child from nursing. We have already found an available office that can be a perfect space for a lactation room while our current business moves from there to one of the remaining offices. By conducting a survey of preferences of our employees we can stay ensured that we will be covering all angles. We would have to outfit the room to match our employee’s preferences with items such as a chair, refrigerator, microwave, table, TV and if budget allows us, a medical grade pump that a mother can use while at work. All of this will cost us less than five thousand dollars. We can even consider contracting a lactation consult to ensure that the transition of a nursing mother back to work goes smoothly without interrupting her breastfeeding schedule.

Most important of all is that our workplace can establish a breastfeeding policy allowing mothers to take the needed breaks to express milk. Most states already have laws regarding this giving us an even bigger reason to create this sort of policy within our office as well (Kelly Mom, 2016).

Even if we convinced one employee to stay working for our company, the benefit would outweigh the investment. Providing this benefit to new mothers will also make our company more competitive in the marketplace, allowing us to recruit talented employees. Breastfeeding and working is not only possible, but it can also good for business.

# **Recommendations**

* Find a clean and private space that can be transformed into a lactation room
* Conduct a survey to find out the preferences of female employees about the nursing room
* Outfit the room to match the preferences of our employees
* Consider contracting a lactation consultant to offer her services to nursing mothers who are having a hard time going back to work
* If budget allows us, consider purchasing medical grade pump that can be used in the nursing room
* Establish a breastfeeding policy that allows nursing mothers adequate time breaks

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# **Appendix A: Employee Survey**

1. What is the name of your department?

2. How many female employees are there in your business?

1. 0-50
2. 51-100
3. 101-250
4. 251-500
5. >500

3. Does your business have a written policy to support breastfeeding employees?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unsure

4. Does your business allow breaks for breastfeeding employees to pump?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unsure

5. Does your business allow employees to flex their work hours to accommodate breastfeeding or pumping?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unsure

6. Does your business provide a private place to pump other than a bathroom?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unsure

7. Does your business have a sink in close proximity to the pumping area?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unsure

8. Does your business provide a pump in the pumping area for employee use?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unsure

9. Does your business provide breastfeeding information to employees or offer professional help from a lactation consultant?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unsure

11. Is your business aware of the amendment under section 4207 in the new healthcare law that requires employers to provide reasonable break time and a private, non-bathroom place for nursing mothers to express breast milk during the workday, for one year after the child’s birth? The new requirements became effective when the Affordable Care Act was signed into law on March 23, 2010.

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unsure

12. How does your business support breastfeeding employees at this time?

13. Do you think a nursing room benefits a workplace and why?

14. What would you prefer to have in a nursing room? List some items you think are necessary for expressing milk.

15. Rate your workplace breastfeeding support

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Positive co-worker and supervisor support | Positive employer support | Flexible hours or break times for expressing milk | Private space for breastfeeding or expressing milk | Suitable space for storing breastmilk |
| Excellent |  |  |  |  |  |
| Very Good |  |  |  |  |  |
| Neither Good or Bad |  |  |  |  |  |
| Not That Good |  |  |  |  |  |
| Not Good at All |  |  |  |  |  |