

IDI Guides
FINAL
August 2016

15 interviews small business owners (under 50)

10 interviews medium size businesses, HR decision makers/executives

5 interviews among large size businesses, HR decision makers (over 100 employees)

GOAL: 45 Minutes

ACTUAL: 50 Minutes

- l) Standard Introduction (5 minutes)
 - A) Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling from Lake Research Partners, a national research firm. We have been hired as an independent firm to gather your opinions, whatever they may be. The interview is totally confidential, and your name and the name of your business will not be shared with anyone or used in any kind of report. I invite you to share as much as you are comfortable sharing. We will collect and compile all information obtained to better understand business views toward paid family and medical leave. Your candid input will be important to this process. This interview won't take more than about forty-five minutes of your time. You are one of the few people we have been asked to speak to and your opinions and ideas are invaluable to providing greater insight and understanding into these issues.
 - B) **ASK THEM FOR PERMISSION TO AUDIOTAPE:** Remind them that this is totally confidential and is solely for report writing purposes. Tell them if you can't audiotape then moderator will have to take notes during the call that could lengthen the time of the interview. (If they refuse moderator will need to take good and thorough notes.)

II) Background (15 minutes)

A) First, tell me a little bit about your company. How many people work there?

- 1) Do people tend to work there for many years or not really?
- 2) Are there more men than women, more women than men or is it about even?
- 3) What is the average age of the people who work at your company?

B) As you know, we are going to talk about what happens when an employee at your company experiences a few different scenarios. If you have never had an employee at your company experience the scenario we are talking about, just let me know and we will move on. The first one is having a child.

- 1) How does your business adapt to an employee having a child?
- 2) Is there a difference if someone adopts?
- 3) Are things different when a woman employee becomes a mother versus when a man employee becomes a father? How so?

C) What about having an immediate family member, like a spouse, child, or parent who has a serious illness, like cancer. What happens when one of your employees has a close family member with a serious illness? (Probe if any difference between spouse, child, parents)

D) Finally, what happens at your company when an employee is seriously ill? Again, I'm talking about a serious long term illness, like cancer, or recovery from surgery, not a cold or infection.

- 1) What are things like for the other employees?

- E) Next I want to talk about your company's paid leave benefits. What benefits do you provide your employees? Are all employees eligible? Which ones are/are not?
- 1) Some companies provide leave for a new baby, an adoption, a serious illness for a close family member of employees, or the employees own serious illness. Does your company provide paid leave for any of those scenarios? Which ones?
 - (a) Is it a separate benefit, or are these allowable uses for sick leave, paid time off, etc.?
 - 2) Does your company provide unpaid leave?
 - (a) Does your company provide some combination where you pay for some forms of leave and don't pay for other forms of leave? Describe that for me.
 - 3) IF PROVIDE PAID LEAVE (OR SOME COMBINATION) ASK THE FOLLOWING
 - (a) How long does the paid leave period last? Is there a difference in the length of time for the different reasons someone might take leave?
 - (b) If someone takes leave from work, will their job probably be there when they come back or are there cases where you can't guarantee their job will be there?
 - (i) Can you describe a scenario where a job wasn't there after someone took family or medical leave?
 - (c) How does their paycheck look – do they get their full salary or only part of it?
 - (a) Do employees in your company have the ability to donate time to an employee's time off for a major family event?
 - 4) IF PROVIDE UNPAID LEAVE (OR SOME COMBINATION) ASK THE FOLLOWING
 - (a) How long does the leave period last? Is there a difference in the length of time for the different reasons someone might take leave?
 - (b) If someone takes leave from work, will their job probably be there when they come back or are there cases where you can't guarantee their job will be there?

(i) Can you describe a scenario where a job wasn't there after someone took family or medical leave?

5) IF DO NOT PROVIDE PAID LEAVE, ASK:

(a) What is keeping your company from providing paid family or medical leave?

(b) What – if anything - would make it easier for your company to provide paid family or medical leave?

III) Reaction to Program (25 minutes)

A) There is an active conversation in Washington state about requiring a paid family and medical leave program to provide paid leave to employees for circumstances that may arise within their families.

1) What do you think about this?

B) Different states have adopted programs, including New York, California, New Jersey and Rhode Island. These states provide between 4 and 12 weeks of paid family leave and 26 – 52 weeks of medical leave depending on the type of leave they offer. In most of these, benefits are financed through payroll premiums, paid by employees, or a combination of employees and employers, varying from state to state.

1) What do you think about this? How does the time offered sound to you?

(a) Is this realistic? Why or why not?

(b) What would you say is the appropriate amount of time for someone to take family or medical leave -- to care for a new baby or adopted child, to care for a seriously ill family member, or when they have their own serious illness?

- C) Now I want to describe some of the possible elements being considered and get your reaction to each. The program could be used to provide paid family and medical leave for the following:
- (a) leave for the employee when they have a serious illness or injury (Probe: What do you think about including that? How long would you have this?)
 - (b) leave for the employee when they need to care for a seriously ill family member (Probe: What do you think about including that? What family members would you have qualify? How long would you have this?)
 - (c) maternity leave for a new baby or adopted child (Probe: What do you think about including that? How long would you have this?)
 - (d) paternity leave for a new baby or adopted child (Probe: What do you think about including that? How long would you have this?)
 - (e) wage replacement (Probe: What do you think about including that? What would you set this at?)
 - (f) job security (Probe: What do you think about including that? how important is job security? How long should an employee have worked at a job to have that job protected? 3 months? 6 months? 1 year?)
- D) What do you think about both men and women being able to use this leave?
- E) For wage replacement, employees would receive some portion of their normal salary during a family leave period. For example, one state program pays about half the salary, and another pays 2/3 the salary, and each state has an upper limit. What do you think about this?
- 1) Is this realistic to you? Why or why not?
 - 2) What do you think is the appropriate salary that someone should be paid if they take family or medical leave?
 - 3) Some people in Washington have said that employees who earn minimum wage should get a higher percentage of their salary than people who earn above the minimum wage. What do you think about that?
- F) Some estimates of a paid family and medical leave program with the benefits we have discussed above would cost between two and three dollars per week per Washington

worker. What is your reaction to that cost? Does that sound like too much, not enough, or about the right amount?

- 1) Who do you think should pay for this program to provide paid family and medical leave for workers?
- 2) I have a few different funding options that I want you to consider. They are all payroll taxes which are a tax on wages, salaries, and bonuses to cover the cost of leave. Here they are:

One - Payroll taxes split equally by the employees and employers

Two - Payroll taxes paid entirely by the employer

Three - Payroll taxes paid entirely by the employee

- (a) Which one sounds the best to you? Which one is the worst?
 - (b) Which one feels most realistic to you?
 - (c) What if there was a tax credit for small businesses?
- G) If there was a program like this, would it change how you do business compared to what you do now? In what ways?
- 1) Would it change things for your employees or not really? In what ways?
 - 2) Would it change your community or not really? In what ways?
 - 3) Would it change your life personally? In what ways?

IV) Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

- A) Tell me what you think is the most compelling reason to consider providing paid family and medical leave?
- B) As an employer, what might make it easier for you to implement such a program?
- C) And what is your biggest concern about providing paid family and medical leave?

Thanks, have a great day!