

Flexible working to get more mothers back into the workforce

Latest research by [Regus](#), the flexible workspace provider, confirms that mind-sets are rapidly changing as 80% of African firms believe companies that will not employ women returning from maternity leave are missing out.



Far from returning with an obsolete address book and a rusty memory, working mums bring valuable skills and expertise, say 68% of African businesses. These are the key findings of the latest research by Regus that canvassed the opinions of more than 19,000 business owners and senior managers in 98 countries.

Respondents reported that flexible hours, working closer to home and the option to video conference instead of travelling at least some of the time are among the top strategies to get more mothers back into the workforce.

Other interesting figures

Other interesting figures show that:

- 63% of African respondents think more women are demanding to work remotely when they return to the workforce
- 40% say working closer to home is a key incentive
- 15% report that the option to video conference instead of travelling would help returning mothers

Commenting on the results, Joanne Bushell, VP Africa at Regus says: "Reports highlight that the non-participation of women in the economy is costing as much as 27% per capita GDP in some countries^[1]. When combined with the fact that companies with a higher percentage of women on the board are more profitable^[2], it is clear that businesses need to adapt protocols to better suit working mothers.

"When women return to work after maternity leave, they often find that juggling professional and personal duties can be very demanding, if not impossible. It is not surprising, therefore, that more and more mums seek flexibility. Whether that's through flexi-time, the opportunity to work closer to home at least some of the time, or the option to choose video conferencing over business travel, these incentives are increasingly key to encouraging more women back into employment and driving the workplace into the future."

Regus customer, Zandra Persson, a web based masters student in Kigali says: "For businesswomen that are on the move and who want to cut expenses this is an attractive concept. I have a small son at home and need to work somewhere quieter and not too expensive so the business lounge in Kigali is great."

[1] IMF, Women, Work and the Economy, September 2013

[2] The Financial Times, Research shows profitable companies have more women on the board, 25 July 2013

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