 

**Co-chair of Gowling WLG Family Network**

**What’s it like working with Educating Matters?**

In my role as co-chair of the working parents network initially at HSBC, I first thought about working with Educating Matters from an entirely selfish point of view. Being a new parent as I was back then. Being new and having lots of knowledge gaps myself in terms of how to start even thinking about looking for a school or which schools were best. I did speak to other parents, and other new parents in the business that I knew. And a lot of us did have knowledge gaps in that area. And when I came across Educating Matters, I thought this could be a really good benefit, not only to myself, but other people around the business that I knew. So my initial motivations were somewhat selfish, but I could see the benefits for other people across the business, that's for sure.

**What different mediums or formats have you worked with? And what's been effective?**

So we've used a number of different formats in terms of getting relevant information to our people. Everything from various recognition days that we've promoted on our internal communications channels, to having parenting cafes. And also we've had lots of very useful webinars with Educating Matters on number of different subjects that are very cyclical. They're not one-off. I know we've had Rachel deliver similar sessions with myself during my time at HSBC, and also at a Gowling WLG. So obviously parents go through different stages with their children at different times and new parents then go through those stages that other people might be past. So there's lots of opportunities to revisit information. And even though it might not be relevant for my children's age groups, there will always be people in the business who it will be relevant for.

**How hard is it to communicate or make people aware that this is available? And to get parents and carers on board, and to actually join the sessions?**

I'm quite lucky in that regard. To be able to help raise awareness, because aside from my co-chairing responsibilities for family matters within Gowling WLG, my day job is actually internal communications. So I'm able to use a number of different resources that we have at our fingertips. Those include our daily email, which goes across the business. We have workplace, which is our internal Facebook. When we're in the office, we also have plasma screens around the buildings to advertise events to our people. We have poster sites where we can do the same. So there's lots of different opportunities. We also have lots of cross network meetings, so I can share our events with the other network chairs and they can share their events with us as well.

**How transferable do you think our support is for more of a global audience?**

The remit of Family Natters at Gowling WLG, at the moment is just the UK. But recently our LGBT network has linked up globally with other offices around the world. And I think it's certainly coming for family matters to start doing the same. So there's definitely going to be an opportunity to start working more closely with our overseas offices that's for sure.

**How much do you feel that we actually cater specifically for your needs?**

We've been able to liaise with you directly to tailor them sessions to what I've been asked to put on, which has been really useful. And especially with the very short notice sessions that we've been able to arrange this year when lockdown was first announced, the work and family matters one back at the start of lockdown three was especially useful. And then also the back-to-school session that we had recently, again, very timely. **And it's great to see that you're able to adapt and deliver on sessions that will be very needed at very short notice as well**. And being able to crowbar those sessions into your busy schedule and our busy event schedule was really great. To be able to collaborate with you and get that in the calendar and advertise very quickly.

**How would you describe the main benefits or the impact of working with Educating Matters?**

There's certainly a lot of flexibility in terms of getting events booked very quickly. But it's the knowledge that you guys have that you can impart. As working parents, I would say to any organisation looking to help support their working parents. There's a lot of information out there, but being able to set up a session with Educating Matters, where you **can give your people time to sit down away from their normal day work and absorb and get involved in the conversation. So they have an opportunity to get some help**. We started when we were able to do sessions in the office, we enticed people in with lunch and they came for the free lunch, but they stayed for the expertise, which I think is a great testament that since we've had to go virtual, we've been able to keep people involved, and keep people coming back for the sessions.

**How do you measure the long-term impact and benefit?**

To gauge the long-term benefit from our people, we always have feedback surveys.. **And we always get very positive feedback after Educating Matters sessions. And it is great to see the scope of the different sessions available as well**. So, it's not uncommon for us to have an idea or to offer someone to come to us with an idea. And then we come to you and say, this is a session that we want to do and it might not be one that is exactly listed as one that you offer, but you're able to tailor it to us. And that's a real benefit.

Educating Matters can definitely help, by putting a session on that will help your people. And you can gauge that feedback with an internal survey or just an email address for people to fire their comments back to you very quickly.

**What are your plans for the future, for the network and in terms of working with us?**

It was a seamless transition working with Educating Matters to go from the in-person events to the virtual events.. I think the opportunity for the network is more collaboration with our other networks and also being able to do more events that will bring in some of our overseas colleagues as well.