 

**UK Diversity & Inclusion Director**

**Can you just give a bit of background as to why you first started working with Educating Matters?**

We started working with Educating Matters back in 2015. We'd just launched our Parents@Page strategy and network, which was looking at how we support all of our working parents and carers. And we knew we needed to bring something extra in. **We needed to bring in an expert basically, because we weren't. But we knew if we had our parents and carers being more effective as parents and carers when they were with their kids, then they would give us more when they were at work.** And so we did a little bit of hunting around and once meeting Rachel at Educating Matters, it was just, we knew straight away she'd be great. She was so relatable. Well, she was, she still is. **Very relatable and approachable. And just our people would find her just invaluable. And they do.**

**What kind of different formats and mediums have you tried?**

We've used quite a few actually. So we did all the **face-to-face seminars** when we could, all be together in a room, and that was where we started probably doing about five to six of those a year. We've then done different things over time. So we've done the **one-to-one clinics**. And Rachel’s always promoted her **parenting course,** which our parents can of course get involved in. We then modeled a whole **new parents workshop** that Educating Matters and I do in conjunction. So, that's part of our own resources plus Rachel's expertise as well. They've gone down a storm. And then of course we've done a lot online, particularly throughout 2020 and 2021.

**How easy is it to communicate it to employees and get them to actually engage with this support?**

It should be really simple because it's something that we all really want. We just use our internal social media tool, which everybody has access to. We specifically have a Parents@Page group, where all of our comms go on.

But also I have champs across the offices who I make sure I promote the information out to. I have a Parents@Page calendar every year, so people know what events are coming up, what webinars, what the topics are, when the workshops are happening. So that everybody can see that really clearly at the beginning of the year. And people can plan accordingly.

**I think a lot of it does come from word of mouth as well. Suddenly a few parents will have been to the session and they'll talk about it**. So, we have multiple ways of getting to our people. But we're also a global business, and clearly there's opportunity for people globally to get involved too. Because being a parent is being a parent, doesn't matter where you are. So, time differences allowing and language allowing we have people dialing in globally.

**To what extent do you feel we tailor make our offering to suit your specific needs?**

**Educating Matters tailor make the offering perfectly**. And in fact, that's part of what I like about working with them. Is that over the five years, six years or whatever it is that we've been working together now, Rachel always contributes with what's been working well in other areas. So, she might share some experiences of how other clients have used her. We bounce around ideas. We've done external events together for our clients.

And I think what works one year might need to change the next year, depending on your audience, depending on global pandemics, depending on all sorts of things. So that's a really nice relationship that's formed between us and Educating Matters. Is her being **so understanding and flexible with different ideas. Because to keep our strategy fresh, when it comes to our parents and carers, things do need to evolve.** You constantly need to be looking at different ways of engaging with people and also giving them what they want.

**If you were describing to someone who hasn't worked with us before, what would you say are the main benefits, or the real impact of having Educating Matters support your employees?**

**To those who haven't worked with Educating Matters before, don't hesitate. I mean, really don't. Do it. Because what it gives your parents is something really different. And the feedback I get from all of mine is that, I just feel better about getting more out of my time with my kids**. And it's hard enough when people are trying to parent and work. And if there's any guilt going on about the fact that being at work more than with their kids, how do you get the best out of your kids? And the truth is we all want to be given that permission. And when your employer gives you that permission to be with your kids, I mean, especially at the moment when they're at home, and how that's managed. But when your employer gives you resources, support, training, sessions to say, this is how you can be a better parent. Then it's like, crikey.

That's nothing to do with the commerciality of a business. That's about them **valuing me as an employee. Them knowing that I'm a parent, supporting me being a parent, and making me a better parent.** I mean, I've been lucky that Rachel came into my life when my children were just one and two.

So, everything about how to be a parent is interwoven in our day-to-day, and my kids have grown up being managed and educated and praised and supported in all the ways that she's taught me. So there's just no reason not to. There is only good that could come out of it.

**Is there any way that you can measure the long term impact?**

We do **global employee engagement survey** every two years. Our 2019 one, which of course are our most recent results, **our parents population are our most engaged group. They feel they get the support. They feel they're understood. They feel their opportunities are the same as the next person.** And so we know we are doing right by our parents. And that is because we do offer such good support, understanding, resource. And just help them manage the two parts of their lives in tandem.

It certainly wasn't the case before we established Parents@Page. Because we actually didn't have a huge parent population. Some of that was because people didn't feel they could do both. There seemed to be quite a disconnect with particularly our mothers and them thinking that they could have a career here and actually see their children during the week. So we started to change a lot of that. That's when we launched the strategy.

It is more than just offering flexible working or part-time hours. It's about really giving people that additional support. So, **helping them with elements of parenting that no one's told you before. Or** give them time, in working hours, to have a one-to-one with a parenting consultant, Educating Matters. I mean, that says a lot about an employer, when you are valuing the importance of your working parents and what they can bring to your business. Because let's be honest, there's no one who knows how to multitask and prioritise more than a working parent. So you want them as part of your workforce, they're just such a key part.

Word does get out. I mean, we do a lot for a lot of our demographics. And I just think when it comes to being a parent, there's too many cases where people don't share their private life at work. Because it's when I'm at work, I've got to work. We don't want you to resent being at work. So if we can make you a better parent when you're with your kids, then you're less likely to resent work when you're in it. Because you know you're getting the best out of your home life when you're there. And we've got so many more parents that work for us now. I mean, our perceptions changed even externally to know that we are a very family friendly employer.

**How have you changed the culture internally?**

How we promote certain things, visibility of people who work part-time. And of course, that's men and women. It's not just mothers at all. It's not even just parents who work part-time. We've got all sorts of profiles who do.

But it is being really, really transparent about that. Because you can't assume someone knows. So you've got to tell them. So we do profiles, we profile our people. And sometimes that might be under an International Women's Day campaign. It might be under a Pride campaign. It might be under a Unity campaign. Because being a parent, often you straddle multiple groups. And it's just so that it doesn't hold you back. Being a parent doesn't mean you can't have a career. Doesn't mean you can't be a leader. Doesn't mean you can't relocate. ... It's just whatever people want.