

Let's Rejuvenate: Charting America's Path to Collective Rejuvenation (Working Paper)

Introduction

The National Government and Business Community have traditionally been the powerful institutional entities in our country. We have high hopes and expectations for these entities because they help create laws and jobs that advance our collective livelihood. After 2016's geopolitical events, it is also clear Americans want bold leaders whose big ideas can help translate hope and expectations into improved lives in immediate, concrete ways. The resulting public engagement necessitates a third entity to have a voice in shaping America's future: Ordinary Americans. To make meaningful collective progress on transformative issues, these entities need to view each other as equally important stakeholders. This paper's transformative change focuses on Collective Rejuvenation.

We Americans live in an economically advanced and prosperous nation. However, when it comes to jointly prioritizing economic and social progress, we have a great opportunity in front of us. For example, the 2017 UN World Happiness report says of 155 countries, the U.S. ranks 14th with researchers citing deteriorating social capital and suppressed happiness serving as an economic drag. The Social Progress Imperative ranks the U.S. 5th of 133 countries on GDP / capita yet 19th on social progress, indicating while GDP matters, so do the choices nations make about how to leverage economic performance into social progress. Perhaps the most striking call-to-action is the CDC's report that says for the first time in a decade, the U.S. death rate increased 1.2% in 2015 to 733.1 deaths from 724.6 per 100,000 people and U.S. life expectancy dropped from 78.9 to 78.8 years.

These examples start to paint a picture of why we need to prioritize Collective Rejuvenation. Our goal is to help Americans prioritize living happier, healthier, more productive and purposeful lives. Three pillars are core to this initiative: Professional Wellness (led by the Business Community), Comprehensive Paid Time off (led by the National Government) and Experiencing More (led by Ordinary Americans). While each stakeholder group influences all pillars, assigning ownership gives stakeholders a shared purpose for inclusive, lasting success.

Professional Wellness

Collective Rejuvenation should start with the Business Community's leadership because of its outsized ability to use economic influence to drive social change. We discuss Business-led Professional Wellness in two forms – Wellness at Work and Wellness away from Work – while highlighting the economic and societal benefits that can be realized when employers and employees prioritize wellness.

Wellness at Work

We discuss "at Work" in the context of daily working life at a workplace during our workweeks. In today's American professional culture, we are accustomed to talking about how busy we are and how we are working all the time. It has become so common that people often do so without thinking. For example, if someone asks "How are you?" we typically do not say "Fine" or "I'm well, thank you" but instead we say "Busy." While many people are extremely busy, this reflex may also make us feel sought after or enhance our perceived status. However, statistics show our obsession with persistent overwork is having detrimental effects on ourselves and our society.

A 2016 Mayo Clinic study indicates only 2.7% of Americans meet a low standard of healthy living – e.g. moderate exercise, proper diet, no smoking etc. One reason may be U.S. employees work ~1,800 hours a year, more than any country, even as the Labor Department says productivity has been declining and studies show the U.S. ranks 8th globally in productivity. International groups like the Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD) also rank the U.S. 30th among 38 countries in work-life balance.

Workplace stress is also a major issue, causing ~120,000 deaths per year and accounting for up to \$190 billion (or 8%) of national health care spending, according to Harvard and Stanford researchers. The CDC reports that health-related productivity loss can add up to over \$225 billion per year while RAND concludes sleep-deprived / absent employees cost \$411 billion (2.28% of GDP) or 1.2 million lost working days annually. Acute wellness challenges

also bring major annual costs to our economy – e.g. obesity ~\$73.1 billion, depression ~\$23 billion. Depression alone affects 9.5% of adults and the World Health Organization estimates that by 2020, it will be second leading cause of disability throughout the world.

Americans tend to be workaholics to our own detriment as we invest so much time into work that it impairs other important areas of our lives. A Gallup poll found 40% of Americans work over 50 hours a week and 20% work more than 60 hours, while the average work week has risen to 47 hours. According to Current Population Survey data, earners in the 60th to 95th percentile work ~2,015 hours a year, representing a full day's work every workday with no time off. While long hours have become a status symbol in a digitally connected global economy, excessive work has diminishing returns and can cause employees to devolve from higher states of capability. Studies show employees who work over 55 hours per week have a 33% greater risk of stroke and 13% greater risk of heart disease vs. those working 40 hours. Furthermore, employee output falls dramatically after 55 hours a week, with those working 70 hours being as productive as those working 55 hours.

As 86% of healthcare spending in the U.S. is on people with 1 or more chronic illness, employers spend \$8 billion per year on workplace wellness programs. Over 2/3rd of U.S. employers offer wellness programs and the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 99% of firms with 200 or more employees offer at least one program (e.g. gym, smoking cessation, weight-loss etc.). However, Gallup found that only 24% of employees at companies with wellness programs participate, mainly because they do not know about the programs. Another key issue is mistrust. According to EY surveys, only 46% of employees place a “great deal of trust” in their employer and only 49% of full-time employees have “a great deal of trust” in their managers and colleagues. Signing up for employer-led wellness programs can make employees feel their health data privacy and employment is at-risk, causing higher stress, especially if unregulated 3rd party vendors are collecting data.

Incorporating workplace well-being into company culture can be difficult if the right tone is not set at the top. According to a study by GfK, 39% of employees (48% Millennials, 39% Gen X, 32% Boomer) feel it is good to be seen as a “Work Martyr” or persistent overworker by managers. Furthermore, 35% of Millennials agree it is good to be viewed this way by colleagues, also higher than older generations. Employees may lack the desire or discipline to set work boundaries or may thrive from a feeling of self-importance, but workplace wellness and satisfaction suffers. For example, ~62% professionals eat lunch at their desks while half of American adults eat lunch alone even though doing so can detract from a collaborative and satisfying workplace. Furthermore, 70% of employees say they work beyond scheduled time and on weekends despite desires to scale back.

A lack of integration of wellness into work can negatively impact home life. According to Project: Time Off, ~75% of children surveyed said their parents do not fully disconnect from work at home and over 80% noticed their parents bringing work stress home. Parents who regularly check in with work after hours are 20% more likely to have stressed-out kids and 1 in 5 kids say parents do after-hours work at home almost every night. Beyond daily stress, family experiences take a back seat. ~60% of kids say their parents missed major events for work, 59% are upset by their parents' lack of presence in their lives and 58% “can detail the last activity their parents missed.”

While there are challenges to integrating wellness into work life, our society can shift from living to work towards working to live a more purposeful life. According to the American Psychological Association, happiest employees are those whose benefits help them get things in life important to them. We should not treat passionate overwork – and companies who perpetuate it - as the best marker of talent so this mindset does not extend to future generations. Whether it is more productive time at work or better integration of work into our broader lives, employers and employees need to be part of the solution.

For employers, employee wellness needs to be management's business given polls suggest only 32.6% of the U.S. workforce is engaged at work (costing businesses \$550 billion per year). Companies should work to enhance the physical, emotional and mental well-being of employees to maximize performance and morale while minimizing absenteeism and health issues. Healthy, thriving and engaged employees can generate a more productive

competitive advantage so the question then becomes how do companies build resiliency as technology extends work hours and interferes with necessary cognitive recovery. The workplace is the largest daily gathering of people in the U.S. with over 100 million people, so companies have employees' attention to communicate and deliver effective wellness programs. Studies show 79% employees who participate in wellness programs are extremely satisfied with them and more likely to stay with their company.

Companies should also consider that each successive generation of employees prioritizes wellness more and expects employers to share this priority. According to Nielsen, Generation Z (cohort born post-1995 and expected to be 20% of the workforce by 2020) is the most health-centric generation. Furthermore, Randstad & Millennial Branding research indicates 54% of the Gen Z cohort feels a company-supported wellness program is important and part of a holistic balance of physical, mental, emotional and financial health. Employers who show they embrace employee priorities – e.g. workplace wellness – can improve employee satisfaction and result in strong financial performance. According to a report in the Academy of Management Perspectives, companies with high employee satisfaction outperform peers by 2.3%-3.8% per year in long-run stock market returns.

While employers are integral to the wellness solution, employees in leadership roles help set organizational tone. Their behaviors determine whether internal interactions and relationships are characterized by trust, forgiveness, understanding, empathy, generosity and respect. Companies know while the status quo may not be sustainable, culture change in the modern workplace can be very difficult. Post-financial crisis, for example, employees across generations were impacted and faced difficult job prospects. Younger employees faced this challenge early in their careers as the first generation with technology and 24/7 connectedness being part of working life. For example, 52% of Millennials say that answering email during dinner is OK vs. 22% of Boomers. More broadly, however, surveys indicate 75% of employees see work-life balance as a top priority and Millennials report they would take a \$7,600 pay cut on average for improved work-life quality.

Employer-led solutions to workplace wellness should focus on meaningful programs, trust & engagement and ongoing education. A strong wellness program should be holistic - focusing on physical well-being, sense of "purpose," social relationships, financial welfare and community feel. If leaders feel good due to these programs, they are more likely to encourage their teams to participate and not let overwork inhibit staying healthy. Company CEOs and executives should explicitly communicate the importance of ongoing participation and act as wellness champions to remove barriers. Facilities and activities should be readily accessible, personalized and customizable (e.g. credible, accessible specialists and experts). Leaders can promote less expensive programs like intra-company competitions, healthy food options and incorporating wellness into goal setting, while destigmatizing mental health issues (e.g. depression) through free and anonymous online screenings.

Building trust and engagement is good for business because more productive, creative and resilient teams can improve overall effectiveness. Employers know their best employees want to continuously improve and value a company that promotes professional enrichment, responsibility and community where there is mutual respect, benefit and loyalty. An Indiana University study highlights that compared to less stressful jobs, those working in stressful jobs with little control were 15.4% more likely to die but those in stressful jobs with more control were 34% less likely to die vs. low-demand jobs. This suggests that engagement and involving employees in goal setting can let stress be energizing instead of debilitating.

Beyond helping to manage stress, trust can lead to happiness which in turn benefits organizations. The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology indicates that the top contributor to happiness is autonomy – defined as "feeling that your life, its activities and habits, are self-chosen and self-endorsed." Leaders can facilitate more autonomy within their organizations by showing a willingness to delegate, facilitating employee readiness to own more, providing rewards, assisting with success (vs. just avoiding failure) and furthering communication. A more empowered staff leads to higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment (less turnover) and increased effectiveness. Furthermore, employers who increase employees' psychological ownership (personalizing offices, choosing work title, owning ideas etc.) can dramatically improve engagement, happiness and productivity.

Employers can further trust and provide a broader sense of ownership in the form of flexible arrangements if done in a gender-neutral, non-stigmatizing way - especially as more employees juggle caregiving and breadwinning. A Pew poll indicates 70% of working mothers and 48% of working fathers feel having a flexible work schedule is extremely important. Once employees build trust within their teams and organizations, engaging them in a way that allows them to integrate work and life can be powerful tool for retention and productivity.

Employers can use established communication channels for ongoing education and training to encourage employees to be active participants in their own well-being. Companies have much to gain from preventative, proactive communication on topics including mental health screenings, meditation and sleep management etc. For example, research suggests meditation can sharpen skills (attention, memory), build resilience, improve emotional intelligence, enhance creativity and strengthen relationships. Additionally, studies show meditation is calming, lowers blood pressure and protects our brain from aging atrophy. According to a McKinsey survey, 70% of leaders feel sleep management should be taught at companies and embedded among broader well-being initiatives like exercise, nutrition, mindfulness and energy management.

Given how much money is spent on wellness programs and employee well-being, employers should realize there are financial benefits to the programs. A 2014 RAND study concluded each \$1 put into wellness programs yields \$1.50 return due to lower insurance premiums and health costs. Gallup polls suggest employees with high overall well-being have 41% lower health-related costs vs. struggling employees and 62% lower costs vs. suffering employees. The rationale for companies investing in these programs has also broadened to recruiting and retention – e.g. focusing on improved morale, job satisfaction, stronger community and higher productivity.

Beyond employer sponsorship, employees should to be proactive participants in their well-being by redefining work/life balance, embracing mindfulness and prioritizing downtime. The term “work/life balance” implies there is even distribution or mutual exclusivity even though the distribution of effort, time and mental energy for work and non-work life is uneven and can be unpredictable. Instead, “work/life integration” better reflects days as whole based in constructive and healthy reality. Research suggests maintaining strict distinctions between work and home roles can cause further stress. Instead, blurring boundaries and integrating work and life could help with “cognitive role transitions,” limit the drain on our cognitive resources and raise productivity. This change is not easy as the American Sociological Review recognizes 70% of people struggle with work/life balance. Work/life integration is about prioritizing working smart vs. working long, especially for the sake of working long.

Embracing mindfulness – or present moment awareness – can be effective in overcoming persist overwork, calming our minds and implementing work/life integration. Research from the University of Washington suggests practicing meditation can improve accuracy rates and the ability to multitask and handle stress. However, only 8% of Americans take meditation seriously despite the benefits and minimal time required (5-10 minutes a day). Redefining success as purposeful work that blends respect for family life, physical health, and spiritual health may also help refocus attention. Resetting expectations can help people understand how much they can handle and how far to push themselves. Mindfulness also encourages slowing down, which can help people think more rationally, become better listeners and rectify or avoid mistakes.

Taking tactical downtime or “strategically stopping” builds longer-term resilience by creating internal (intra-workday) & external (outside work) recovery periods making workplace wellness accessible and sustainable. Research on energy management at work shows taking micro-breaks during the day (e.g. listening to music, going for walks) can lead to less fatigue and more vitality. Furthermore, prioritizing daily downtime activities outside of work (e.g. hobbies, exercise, family time, community service etc.) and completely disengaging when workday is over can help make employees feel more engaged at work and more energized after work.

Wellness Away from Work

Our Professional Wellness discussion has thus far focused on workplace wellness, comprising of wellness in the workplace in the context of a workweek. To make the discussion holistic, we incorporate wellness away from work – e.g. vacation period away from the workplace. Americans uniquely treat vacations from work as unnecessary

luxuries instead of earned benefits and it can detrimentally impact companies and employees - e.g. fatigue, poor morale, health problems and reduced productivity etc. Businesses have a vested interest in employees' well-being and should encourage them to take time away from work and come back rejuvenated.

According to Project: Time Off, U.S. employees left 658 million vacation days unused in 2015 with the majority (55%) not using all their earned time off. 222 million unused days were lost because they could not be rolled over, paid out or banked. Furthermore, the average employee is taking off 4 less days compared to historical averages. By essentially volunteering or refunding these days to employers, Americans forfeit \$61.4 billion in earned benefits, deprive the economy of \$223 billion in spending, 1.6 million jobs and \$65 billion in job-related income. Due to years of employees rolling over unused vacation, businesses hold \$272 billion in liabilities (\$2,226 per employee) on their balance sheets - up 21% since 2015.

Data also shows national health implications for not prioritizing wellness away from work. According to the Framingham Heart Study - the largest and longest running study of cardiovascular disease - women who only took vacation once in six years or less were almost eight times more likely to develop coronary heart disease or have a heart attack vs. women who vacationed at least twice a year. A study by the Global Commission on Aging and Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies shows men who did not take annual vacation have a 20% higher risk of death and 30% greater risk of death from heart disease. Conversely, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute reported men who take frequent annual vacations are 32% less likely to die from heart disease.

Beyond national trends, employers and employees should better understand the current challenges to advance wellness outside of work. Employers may be contributing to cultures of mixed messages starting at the top. For example, GFK survey data indicates 93% of managers say time off is good for employees but 59% of managers - including 67% of senior executives - do not use all their days. Additionally, while 91% of managers say they encourage time off, only 55% themselves feel supported in taking it and only 43% talk to employees about it. Senior managers also struggle more to stay away from work when they take vacation with 46% saying they stay connected and 53% admitting to setting a bad example. If using time off benefits conflicts with organizational culture, everyone may feel more uncomfortable prioritizing wellness away from the workplace.

A culture of non-communication (and even a lack of explicitly encouraging communication) can create a wellness vacuum throughout the workplace regarding time off. Surveys suggest 65% of employees - and 70% of younger employees specifically - hear nothing, mixed messages or discouraging messages about taking time off. Furthermore, 80% indicated they would take more time off if they felt supported or encouraged by managers. Research shows managers may judge employee commitment by "citizenship behaviors" - or going beyond job tasks to serve the common good. If managers equate not taking time off with good citizenship or do not communicate effectively, employees may not use time off regardless of company policy. These behaviors can eventually be detrimental to companies in terms of financial and productivity costs.

When employers do not set the right example for wellness away from work, employees have a difficult time prioritizing it. Inherent insecurity and self-doubt play a role in Americans taking less vacation today than at any point in the last 40 years. Surveys indicate employees do not prioritize time off for fear of returning to lot of work (37%), thinking no one else can do the job (30%), lacking ability to afford vacation (30%), being away as one advances (28%), showing dedication (22%) and avoiding being seen as replaceable (19%).

Younger employees' fears may be exacerbated as the Great Recession is still in recent memory and came while many entered the workforce. Surveys show that 24% of Millennials forfeit time off (vs. 19% of Gen X and 17% of Boomers) even as they are the cohort allotted the least time off. Highlighting the importance of office culture for younger employees, 30% of Millennials say their manager is their most powerful influencer with family at 20% and health at 13%. This impact can be detrimental as Millennials become managers if they emulate the cultural mindset of their previous managers. For example, 47% of Millennial managers say pressure prevents them from approving requests for their teams to take time off (vs. 34% of Gen X and 37% of Boomers).

Beyond insecurity, American work culture celebrates bravado around not taking time off. Some employees brag about how long they have avoided vacation and take pride in punishing themselves to build self-esteem and show managers their toughness. This pressure creates a culture where employees want to seem totally committed to work and feel ashamed for taking time off. A survey by Alamo suggests ~50% of employees feel “vacation shaming” with younger employees most impacted - 60% of Millennials feel vacation shamed vs 40% of respondents over 35. Highlighting how detrimental mindsets can be passed on, Millennials are more likely to shame - 42% of employees under 35 shame co-workers for taking vacation vs. 24% of those over 35.

When employees associate guilt, insecurity and shame with time off, professional and personal wellness suffers. Vacation resisters cause office problems because they refuse to delegate, make colleagues feel bad and enjoy working nonstop in hopes of advancing. Regarding family life, surveys show 39% of parents had unused earned days off and 85% admit they could easily take another day off to spend with family. Furthermore, only 19% of kids say they are typically in a good mood but when parents take time off to spend with them this percentage rises to 60%. This vacation resistance mindset is worrisome because each generation continues to tell the next that working all the time is an acceptable norm and stigmas around time off may only get worse.

Recognizing America’s cultural resistance to time off, there are important reasons to find solutions. Firstly, scientific research indicates experiencing time away improves overall health and well-being with lasting positive impact on happiness. Beyond heart disease prevention, the American Psychological Association reports time away reduces stress by removing people from activities and environments associated with stress and anxiety. Furthermore, our bodies tell us we need breaks (even if we ignore them) and our brains need rest to improve skills we have already learned, solve problems and be more creative. Spending solitary time away from day-to-day work helps creativity because original thinking arises from the brain’s “imagination network,” a default mindful state which helps create meaningful thoughts, drive mental simulation and encourage perspective taking.

General agreement exists - 96% of those surveyed - that time away from work is important for productivity, well-being and relationships with 52% of employees and 46% of managers saying it is “extremely important”. While Americans love the idea of time off, ~40% consistently leave vacation days unused each year suggesting that there is room for better aligning priorities. Beyond personal and professional benefits to taking time away from work, past studies show the economic potential of returning to historical (pre-2000) vacation patterns would be significant - annual days taken would rise 27%, delivering a \$284 billion impact across the U.S. economy.

For employers, the benefits of encouraging employees to prioritize wellness away from work seem clear. An internal study by EY on productivity suggests for each additional 10 hours of vacation time taken, year-end employee performance ratings improved 8%. EY also concluded vacation helped reduce turnover with every 40 hours of free time taken extending employees' stay by eight months. In another study, 80% of managers said time off is important to maintaining team energy and 67% feel it makes employees more productive. HR managers agree that if employees who take less vacation would take more, they would be more engaged at work (67%) and productive (72%). Employers should not only feel good about giving employees time off, but should actively encourage them to detach and reenergize to be more satisfied and productive at work.

Employees understand the importance of and benefit from taking time away from work, especially as it relates to improving mental, physical, emotional health etc. Vacation can help renew perspective, creativity and clarity of thought drained during the fast pace of daily life. Surveys indicate 94% of vacations can result in higher happiness and energy if one plans ahead and prepares co-workers. Experts also say high levels of recovery and work engagement (thinking / learning) reinforce each other and are essential to enhance productivity and build vitality. In an interview, “Hamilton” creator Lin-Manuel Miranda said “It’s no accident the best idea I’ve ever had came to me on vacation...The moment my brain got a moment’s rest, ‘Hamilton’ walked into it.”

Taking vacation can increase the likelihood of getting a raise or promotion even though many think it would negatively impact their manager’s view of them. Studies show people who take all their vacation have a 6.5% higher chance of getting a promotion or raise than those who leave 11 or more days. Those who took less than 10

days per year had a 34.6% likelihood of receiving a raise or bonus vs. those who took more than 10 days having a 65.4% chance. Managers say the benefits of encouraging employees to use time off are increased happiness (31%) and productivity (21%), implying happy employees are more productive and collaborative. Not taking time off equates to a voluntary pay cut and whether you take a vacation or not, you will have a lot of work to do. Life is finite and work is always going to be infinite so consider using all earned time off.

There are tangible solutions to promoting wellness away from work which companies can own and implement. Providing a vacation policy is a great start, and employers should consider various program designs if needed to ensure employees take time off. Paying employees to take vacation – i.e. paid, paid vacation – is one way to encourage and incentivize breaks, especially if overwork a challenge, and serve as a recruitment tool. Another option is “use it or lose it” (with limited exceptions) as employees are more likely to use all their vacation if they cannot rollover. Only 25% of U.S. companies have “use it or lose it” policies, but 84% of employees use all vacation under such policies. Mandated vacation periods (e.g. office closures at specific times) can ensure employees take a break, eliminate guilt, give clarity and allow everyone to plan ahead.

According to the Society for HR Management, ~2% of companies offer unlimited time off but this concept can be vague, confusing and have the opposite effect of disincentivizing time off. It can also result in no codified policy regarding earned time off, effectively eliminating the benefit. The policy can cause employees to become perceived as lazy or taking advantage, can create need to always justify time off when there may never be perceived slow periods and can produce demoralizing inequities on teams. While companies may feel this policy frees leaders from administrative tasks, tools exist to track time off and teams still need be aware and adjust when members are away. Companies implementing unlimited vacation policies should add a mandatory minimum each year to ensure everyone takes a break and the policy does not have unintended consequences.

Once a policy is in place, employers should encourage leaders to set the right example by using their earned time off and modeling healthy behavior. The CEO should have open discussions with leaders and influencers about their behaviors, messaging and beliefs about time off – e.g. whether they are discouraging vacation or fully unplugging while away. Leaders using time off and choosing trusted staffers as backup provides a way to disconnect and give others opportunities to grow. Managers can move beyond compliance and implement policies with authenticity, making them more attractive to work for and matching company policy with culture. HR leaders can also educate employees about the value of time off and remind them how time off is an earned benefit, while also looking at accrued vacation time as a red flag for burnout.

As managers lead by example, they need to over-communicate to employees to use time off. Managers should set employee expectations to use all their time off, help create contingency plans and observe boundaries to ensure time off is encouraged, taken and meaningful. Managers can exert great influence: 70% would use more if managers helped manage workloads; 69% would use more if their employer created policies encouraging use. Leaders can drive the message that time off is not a voluntary luxury for a select few but a business and personal imperative for all.

While employers play a key role in shaping the culture of prioritizing time off, employees can take steps to advance wellness away from work through adequate planning and meaningful use of time off. Research suggests the largest rise in happiness comes from planning and anticipating time away from work. While only 49% of people plan ahead for time off, 51% who do so use all of it (vs. 39% of non-planners) and 69% of planners took one week or more at a time (vs. 46% of non-planners). When planning, consider confirming benefits, planning time off in January for the year (even if no plan is decided) and aligning with managers and colleagues for coverage. Before leaving, connect with colleagues - e.g. projects, status, deadlines, issues, arrange hand off - and bring managers up to speed. After vacation, consider returning on Saturday and / or starting mid-week, take time to debrief what happened in the office and share vacation stories gracefully with colleagues.

While on vacation, employees should remember that time off allows for “strategic renewal” – e.g. exercising, sleeping etc.– to replenish energy and enhance productivity, job performance and health & wellness. Being able to

disconnect as much as possible and enjoy personal time, however individually defined, is important otherwise we may be sacrificing the value of taking time off. While views may differ on what constitutes successful time off, what is most important is to take every day of earned time off given and not rationalize to the opposite. Even if it means staying home or taking a local trip, prioritizing wellness while away from work makes us better at work.

Comprehensive Paid Time Off

In this section, we focus on what the National Government can do to advance Collective Rejuvenation. Americans elect representatives to make laws and enact policies that set a tone and serve as a standard and then businesses can innovate above and beyond a baseline. A key learning from 2016 is Americans have a strong appetite for bold ideas and leadership if it can translate into improving everyday lives. Our National Government needs to enact legislation (joining the world's advanced economies) codifying Comprehensive Paid Time Off Policy with three fundamental components – Paid Vacation Days, Paid Sick Days and Paid Leave.

Paid Vacation Days

According to the Center for Economic Policy & Research, the U.S. is the only advanced economy with no mandated vacation policy for employees and 1 in 4 receive no paid vacation. In contrast, EU countries must provide at least 20 paid days off per year by law, Australia and New Zealand offer 20 days and Canada & Japan require 10 days. While some argue that paid vacation reduces competitiveness, the World Economic Forum ranks Switzerland and Singapore ahead of the U.S. in competitiveness and both require mandatory vacation.

Businesses know how important vacation is to productivity (85% of managers say teams are more productive when they take vacation) and talent strategy (employees rank vacation as a top benefit over raises and bonuses). Vacation is treated as a privilege (instead of a right) where the benefits skew to high-earners. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), ~23% of private sector employees receive no paid vacation but that rises to 45% in the service sector. Our national vacation attitude – not available to all and not fully used by those who receive it - may be due to the lack of federal legislation. A national policy would set a tone that our country values employees and recognizes the importance of an integrated personal and professional life. Many companies offer paid vacation today but not all do; therefore, a minimum standard could be a catalyst to drive cultural change and send a message that trickles from the National Government to the Business Community to Ordinary Americans.

Solutions should focus primarily on the existence of a national policy and secondarily on the number of days. A minimum of 10 days (like Canada and Japan) may be appropriate but the intent is to change a cultural attitude. 10 days seems like a reasonable floor since research shows Americans average 16 vacation days per year (down from 20 days historically). However, trends show Americans using nearly a half day less of vacation annually since 2009. If this continues, American will be using less than a workweek of vacation in 20 years and zero days by 2046.

It is important to remember America mandates minimums in other key areas of importance to our livelihoods – like the minimum wage – and then businesses innovate above and beyond this minimum. The National Government can set a minimum vacation standard and then businesses can offer more days and innovative solutions – e.g. mandatory vacation periods etc. Finally, it is important to note Congress receives mandatory paid vacation. According to the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, Congress' paid August recess is mandated by law unless the country is at war. Therefore, precedent exists for a fair minimum that can apply to everyone.

Paid Sick Days

The U.S. is the only wealthy country without mandatory paid sick time for employees. According to the BLS, 41% of employees in the lowest 25% of earners get paid sick days vs. 87% of the top 25% earners. Over 50% of food industry employees work sick with 45% saying they cannot afford to lose money. "Contagious presenteeism" causes sick people to come to work, infect co-workers and spread disease. The National Sanitation Foundation found 40% of U.S. staff works sick due to job demands, 25% do so because managers expect them to work and 33% cannot afford to be sick and miss work. Furthermore, a Harvard / NPR poll found on a weekly basis, 1.5 million U.S. employees without paid sick days work while ill and over 50% of employees in restaurants and hospitals work with a cold or flu.

The need for solutions starts with the ethics of allowing preventable, fatal illness to spread with disproportionate impact on lower-income Americans. CDC reports up to 20% of Americans get the flu each year costing \$87 billion. Cornell and the Swiss Economic Institute research suggests a national paid sick day policy could cause flu rates to drop by at least 5% while Google Flu Trends indicates flu rates in cities recently implementing paid sick leave laws saw declines of up to 20%. The National Bureau of Economic Research says the flu rate “decreases significantly” when employees can access time off for illness, noting 50% of U.S. employees do not get paid sick days. New York Times / CBS polling also suggests 85% of employees favor a mandate for paid sick days.

Solutions on paid sick days should also focus on having a set minimum rather than the specific number of days. Data suggests paid sick days do not significantly impact profits, lead to widespread abuse, significantly reduce wages, benefits and work hours or cause higher prices. Therefore, the debate becomes more philosophical about what we stand for as a country since this can be a life or death decision that can create economic hardship. Like the vacation proposal, the National Government should set a minimum and allow companies to innovate and expand beyond it. The previous administration proposed seven sick days while various states offer five days - e.g. Vermont, Oregon, Massachusetts, Connecticut and California. With a five-day minimum, we can strike a balance to ensure employees can care for themselves when sick without sacrificing needed paychecks.

Paid Leave

The U.S. is the only advanced country and one of only four countries in the world (others being Lesotho, Swaziland, and Papua New Guinea) to not offer any kind of paid leave to employees. Only 12% of U.S. private employees receive paid family leave benefits according to the Labor Department and less than 40% receive paid medical leave. Under the current Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), employees get 12 weeks of unpaid job-protected leave (applies only to full-time employees, working at least one year at companies with 50+ employees). FMLA does not cover 40% of U.S. employees and according to the Labor Department, 1 in 4 employed mothers return to work within two weeks of birth. Paid leave has been treated as a personal matter, but given men and women may face similar issues at the same time, paid leave should be addressed as a public policy issue.

According to the Labor Department, 22% of U.S. companies offer paid maternity and only 9% offer paid paternity leave and the impact is meaningful. A Glassdoor study of 15 advanced countries ranks the U.S. 12th in labor force participation and Pew reports that after falling to 23% in 1999, the number of stay-at-home moms rose to 29% in 2012. Ambiguous leave policies without company expectations for leave can create a “flexibility stigma” – a backlash when long-hours work culture professionals take leave. Research indicates men taking leave may be categorized as poor employees and disassociated from stereotypically male traits like competitiveness and ambition. Employers should consider whether they see vacation or sick days as necessary costs vs. paid leave as an optional, avoidable cost. We should not necessarily view the ideal employee as always available for work but instead as a person who also can successfully integrate caregiving duties.

Increased attention to family leave, for example, is not necessarily translating into better benefits. According to the Society for HR Management & the Families and Work Institute, of 920 U.S. companies with 50+ employees offering leave, the percent offering full pay to new parents fell from 17% to 10% between 2005-2016. The average maximum time off given to new parents also declined (from 15.2 to 14.5 weeks). While the share of companies offering some pay to new parents rose from 46% to 58%, coverage is not from expanded leave programs but temporary disability insurance, a free benefit with a narrower scope. These plans do not cover fathers, adoptive parents or women who did not give birth and typically only cover only 60%-75% of pay for 6 or 8 weeks.

As more employees have dual priorities of work and caregiving, a lack of paid leave policies impacts male and female employees. According to Deloitte, Fatherly and the Labor Department, 50% of men and women would prefer more leave vs. a pay raise underscoring this alignment in priorities. For men, 70% of new dads go back to work within 10 days of birth, 57% of men feel taking family leave jeopardizes their professional position and 41% believe they would lose opportunities. This study goes on to highlight that even though 64% agree men and women should get equal parental leave, 54% feel dads would be judged if they took the same leave as moms. A separate

study indicated that from a sample of 28,000 fathers, ~10.4% suffer depression between the 1st trimester of their partner's pregnancy and their child's 1st birthday.

According to a Vice documentary, 88% of U.S. women have no paid leave when they give birth even though they make up 2/3rd of minimum wage employees. The documentary suggests that the employment system assumes women do not work, even though 8 in 10 moms work. A separate report suggests 42% of unmarried mothers live below the poverty line in the U.S. while 30% of minimum wage employees are single parents. A report in the American Journal of Sociology concludes American parents have the highest parenting happiness gap (13%) when compared to 22 developed nations. In countries with strong family-friendly policies (paid leave, paid vacation & sick days, work flexibility, subsidized child care etc.) the parental happiness deficit is eliminated by raising parents' happiness rather than lowering nonparents' happiness. While parents are not necessarily unhappy or unfulfilled, stress can overshadow happiness, which can impact motivation to have or care for kids.

Paid leave has broad support across the country. According to the Brookings Institution, 81% of the public favors a national paid leave policy (94% Democrats, 80% Independents, 65% Republicans). Paid leave promotes inclusive growth, raises female labor force participation (declining since 2000 with a growing gap internationally) and disproportionately benefits lower-wage employees. The National Partnership for Women and Families found 79% feel updating FMLA to be paid is important – 94% Democrats, 80% Independents, 61% Republicans, 72% Men, 86% Women, 97% Black, 84% Latino and 75% Whites. Paid leave is neither a partisan, parent nor solely a dependent issue but a critical personal and family one which needs National Government leadership.

Beyond public support, paid leave has many professional benefits – e.g. reduced turnover, increased loyalty, cost savings, increased efficiency, engagement & productivity etc. However, society cannot depend on all businesses to act just on these benefits, necessitating federal legislation. If every business offered paid leave to each employee, they would all be better off, but if one offers it and others do not, that business may feel it risks losing competitively. Even if businesses believe paid leave is the right thing to do, they may not want to take a risk and thus most employees do not get paid leave. Federal legislation can help move businesses past this dilemma. What is good for employees and their families can ultimately be good for businesses and our national economy.

There are many ways companies can benefit if their paid leave policies are enforced and modeled effectively by those in positions of influence. Regarding retention, women who take paid leave are 93% more likely to be in the workforce 9-12 months after birth vs. those who take no leave and replacing skilled employees can cost 150% of their salaries. Paid leave helps attract talent (77% of those receiving the benefit say the amount of leave offered influenced their choice of employer) and improves engagement (80% of companies see a positive impact on morale and 70% see improved productivity). Paid leave also allows for companies to enhance brand equity and reinforce their values, especially as programs modernize towards being gender-neutral, combining family & medical leave and including same-sex couples, adoption, surrogacy and foster care.

A national paid leave policy can also specifically benefit small businesses. According to the Center for American Progress, a national policy could level the playing field for small businesses that cannot offer the same benefits and attract the same talent as larger companies but often want to provide benefits. A 2013 survey by Small Business Majority indicated a majority of small businesses offer paid leave today so having a national program could relieve them from bearing the full cost. Surveys from California employers with less than 50 employees indicate the state's paid leave laws are a win-win for employers and employees. Data shows the law had positive or no noticeable effect on profit & performance (91%), productivity (89%), turnover (92%), morale (99%).

Paid leave benefits are important to both male and female employees. Men were 46% more likely to take paid leave in a child's first year when California's paid leave laws became available, highlighting how policy can advance culture change. Fathers also took 2.4 more days off from base of 5.2 days. A survey from ZERO TO THREE & the Bezos Foundation found 90% of Millennial and Gen X fathers say parenting is their greatest joy and 86% work hard at being more effective. Furthermore, 60% want more information on being better parents and 70% say if they knew more positive parenting strategies, they would use them. These fathers also suggested that

commitment to fatherhood is not necessarily validated or supported broadly. A New York Times columnist noted that in 2015 only 14 companies offered men at least 10 weeks of paid leave. As more working fathers publicly discuss caregiving, the importance of taking leave and their experience, the stigma may recede.

For women, the American Association of Pediatrics (AAP) suggests there is strong evidence family leave decreases maternal depression, which impacts mom-infant bonding and can negatively affect a child's cognitive, social & emotional development. Family leave can aid breastfeeding, which can stimulate positive neurological & psychosocial development, strengthen a baby's immune system and reduce risk of health problems. A report by the American Enterprise Institute says mothers who take paid leave are more likely to retain full-time jobs post childbirth. This retention emphasizes the case to make paid leave more accessible, especially for lower income families who benefit from higher future earnings. Paid leave is currently a private benefit that also serves a public good and should evolve to becoming broadly accessible through legislative policy leadership.

With broad public agreement and clear benefits for all stakeholders, a national solution to paid leave should be an immediate priority. Like vacation and sick day policy, the primary objective should be putting a meaningful compromise policy in place. Congress should create a social insurance fund - within the framework of social security - where employers and employees jointly contribute a small percent of an employee's salary. Eligibility should include a minimum employed period (e.g. 6 months) with an employer to encourage stable employment and have paid leave be an earned benefit. This period assumes an employee worked elsewhere if they are new to a job, but accounts for a situation where an employee was previously not working.

The program should be long enough to enable family or medical care for oneself or a family member but not so long to risk skill depreciation or leaving the labor force. The National Partnership for Women and Families indicates 76% favor a fund for 12 weeks paid leave with support across constituencies - 92% Democrats, 75% Independents, 57% Republicans, 66% Men, 85% Women, 90% Black, 86% Latino and 71% Whites. The International Labor Organization recommends at least 14 weeks paid leave. Specific to family leave, EU countries must offer 14 weeks paid maternity leave and the AAP says 12 weeks or more is critical to increase early childhood checkups and immunizations. The AAP also notes by 6 months, parents are in a different place with children so leaving them for part of the day is more feasible and finding child care is easier. Experts recognize more than 6 months may not work in the U.S. since Europeans have more job protection and stronger unions & social insurance. Starting cautiously with 12-14 weeks and reevaluating over time may be the best approach.

The size of the benefit should be a meaningful percent of weekly wages (e.g. $2/3^{\text{rd}}$, $3/4^{\text{th}}$) noting a higher value may encourage more people - especially lower-income earners and men - to take leave and better assist those being cared for. For those worried about deterred employment, economists suggest the employer portion may be passed on to employees through wage adjustments if needed. Integral to the design is that paid leave should be equally available to men and women - evolving from antiquated gender roles of women as caregivers and men as breadwinners. The outcome should also truly be a paid leave program in that it covers both family and medical leave because this ensures the program's relevance to all Americans.

A study of 22,000 companies across 91 countries found places with the highest percent of women in leadership offered fathers 11x more paternity leave days than those countries at bottom, an indication of robust support for working families. It also highlights companies and countries offering much more leave to women vs. men reinforce caregiving as a female's job, especially antiquated among younger generations. In the U.S., Pew polls suggest 81% of Democrats and 62% of Republicans believe paid leave should be available to both sexes, driven by 82% of adults under 30. A strong blueprint for a national policy is the proposed Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act. This national insurance program would give employees 12 weeks paid leave covering $2/3^{\text{rd}}$ salary (to a cap). Funding would be done via a shared payroll contribution between employers and employees (0.2% each or \$1.35 a week each for a typical employee) modeled after Social Security and leveraging its infrastructure.

While the National Government should set a baseline paid leave policy, businesses can set policies to fill the current void and then innovate above and beyond an eventual national program. After deciding to offer paid leave

and when designing policies, companies should ensure their values are reflected, embed necessary support systems, set a leadership tone to use leave and track via metrics to measure success. While well intentioned to give paid leave to women only, it can derail their careers and prevent re-entry into the workforce. Companies should determine the most time they can offer and provide the same leave to men and women. Then consistently communicate and foster a culture where everyone is expected to and feels safe taking it. Otherwise leave-takers may be stigmatized as less desirable and may choose not to return if it means a sidelined career.

When leaders take paid leave, it sends a message that company policy is authentic and acknowledges the importance of a workplace where any employee can be out during a period of need and have their work covered. Companies can also build loyalty and enhance productivity when a strong leadership team promotes cross-training and collaboration so employees can also take on more responsibilities when leaders are away. Leaders who role-model using paid leave can highlight its importance by sharing their own stories and career progress of those who use leave. For example, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg's high-profile leave upon the birth of his child is an important reminder to all employees that paid leave is not a favor but an important business imperative.

Company leaders can commit to paid leave by hosting orientations and meetings to communicate the intent to enforce the spirit of policies and ensure managers & employees partner to ensure smooth coordination. Leaders are uniquely positioned to reassure employees there is a place for them after taking leave and the experience does not diminish their value. Men need to be more vocal and proud about using leave to set an example and make it more common and professionally acceptable. Companies can tactically set up a multi-meeting model for off-ramping, employ a gradual return-to-work program, designate leave liaisons and encourage use of "out of office" emails saying employees are on leave. Having multiple touchpoints and assigned contacts for employees when on leave provides safety and comfort and can aid in retention and loyalty.

Given the wide range of options for offering paid leave, and without a national policy, many companies across industries are trying to take innovative steps forward. Services businesses (e.g. financial, information, professional, scientific and technology etc.) offer the best policies and increased coverage over ten percentage points from 2010-2016, but the total for these industries remains under 40% in 2016. As a specific paid leave example, Deloitte now offers 16 weeks of paid leave to care for a family member with a birth mom able to add 8 additional weeks disability, while Nike offers 8 weeks paid family leave + 8 weeks paid medical leave.

Other companies are working to make paid leave policies gender-neutral. For example, Netflix offers 52 weeks, Etsy 26 weeks, Twitter 20 weeks and Bank of America increased to 16 weeks of fully paid gender-neutral family leave, countering stereotypes keeping men from taking leave and women from fearing leave could negatively impact their careers. Other innovative solutions include Vodafone's leave plan which is followed by six months of 30-hour weeks all at full salary, EY's plan provides for a dedicated coach to help prepare for leave and Hilton's plan now extends to hourly employees which represent 75% of employees at corporate and managed U.S. hotels.

The National Government has also taken steps to expand paid leave with President Obama granting federal employees six weeks paid family leave and federal contractors being required to allow employees to accrue paid medical leave. The military recently doubled paid maternity leave for women service members to 12 weeks, expanded adoption leave and daycare hours and increased paid paternity leave to 2 weeks. At the state level, New York recently announced gender-neutral paid leave for up to 12 weeks for all employees – full-time and part-time – who have been employed for 6 months. In each of these cases, male leaders – President Obama, VP Biden, Secretary Carter and Governor Cuomo - made paid leave their priorities. Their investment in these issues is an important lesson on how a fight that has been considered a women's battle can be won faster when it can be applied more broadly across society and seen as a male and female battle.

Comprehensive Paid Time Off as a public policy issue prioritizes Ordinary Americans while aligning America with and advancing it beyond global peers. Supportive businesses also could see improved productivity, retention and diversity among senior leaders while lowering turnover costs, absenteeism, health expenses and workplace safety issues. For example, when Google raised maternity leave from 12 to 18 weeks, it saw 50% rise in retention.

Comprehensive PTO ensures benefits can be realized by everyone without disproportionately benefiting any group – e.g. family leave benefits parents – and creating resentment. This policy could normalize caregiving by allowing anyone to take time to care for family, children or themselves and reduce bias against hiring or promoting younger employees. A national policy would be key to making regular time off, self-care and caregiving of others less attached to demographics (e.g. gender, age) and more focused on people actually taking time off.

Solving paid leave as part of Comprehensive PTO can help address a related challenge – a lack of affordable, high quality, and easily available child care. In the U.S., 12 million kids under 5 need child care and the majority of families with kids under 18 have all parents working for pay outside the home. According to New America and Care.com, full-time U.S. child care in a center for ages 0-4 costs \$9,589 a year (18% of median & 64% of minimum wage household income and 85% of monthly U.S. cost of rent) while in-state college tuition costs \$9,410. Infant care is 12% more expensive than for older kids and costs more than in-state tuition and fees in 33 states. For in-home care, caregivers cost \$28,353 a year - 53% of median and 188% of minimum wage household income. A national, gender-neutral paid leave program would be foundational to child care discussions because it helps families save costs during the leave period and gives all parents the necessary time to get situated and become comfortable leaving their child with others.

UNICEF ranks the U.S. 26 of 29 developed nations on overall well-being of kids (ahead of Lithuania, Latvia, Romania). According to demographers, the U.S. fertility rate – average births per woman - was 1.87 in 2015 vs 2.12 in 2007 with the ideal number at 2.1 (worrisome because an expected post-recession baby boom has been less than expected). The Economic Policy Institute reports significant public investment in affordable, quality child care could also raise GDP by \$210 billion. Child-care is a private benefit but should be treated as a public-sector issue with associated government engagement since even those without kids pay for the cost of welfare and the criminal justice system.

Patagonia - famous for its family friendly culture including on-site child care - sees 100% of women who had kids in the last five years return to work (U.S. average is 79%) and 50% of managers & senior leaders are women. Singapore is addressing its aging society issue with a plan to co-locate eldercare and childcare facilities to spur intergeneration interaction and innovation – an applicable solution for the U.S. given only 11% of U.S. child care establishments are accredited by the National Association for the Education of the Young Child or the National Association for Family Child Care.

Solving Comprehensive PTO and addressing child care may also help advance gender equality. According to the World Economic Forum, the U.S. ranked 45th in global gender equality in 2016 (measured by differences in men and women's health, education, economic participation & opportunity and political empowerment), dropping from 28th in 2015. The Forum suggests affordable, good-quality childcare is key to gender equality because it allows women to combine work and family (women care for kids more than men in most countries). The study notes while the U.S. has many high-ranking women leaders, overall share of moms staying home is rising.

A study by McKinsey and Lean-In suggest men are 30% more likely to be promoted to management and while women make up 46% of entry-level jobs, they only represent 24% of SVPs and 19% of C-suite leaders. Women are 7x more likely vs. men to bear the majority of home duties, especially during maternity leave when women take on greater share of home and family duties, and this continues after returning to work. America's 24/7 work culture can also lock gender inequality in place since work and family balance tends to be recognized as female problems, reminding us how our culture of overwork affects everybody.

When each partner has the same access to paid leave, the balance of responsibilities can be aligned and shared. Gender-neutral paid leave - and broader Comprehensive PTO - policies empower and address all people (e.g. not just women or parents) and help the U.S. improve gender equality. While Comprehensive PTO can be part of the solution, only 45% of employees think companies are doing work needed for gender parity so there is room for progress. Gender equality is also economically smart - the McKinsey Global Institute reports \$12 trillion can be added to global growth by advancing gender equality. According to a separate McKinsey study, \$2.1 trillion can be

added to U.S. GDP in 2025 if states can make progress with women's participation in the workforce, the share of women's jobs that are full-time and the mix of sectors in which women work. This report suggests the full potential of gender equality can be \$4.3 trillion by 2025.

Experiencing More

Professional Wellness being led by the Business Community and Comprehensive Paid Time off Policy led by the National Government makes sense because these stakeholders can meaningfully create change in these areas. Ordinary Americans are crucial to both pillars because advancing progress requires public buy-in. For example, employees need to use all their days off and engage wellness initiatives to broaden the acceptance and promotion of rest and rejuvenation. Similarly, the public needs to clamor for and use working family benefits, otherwise politicians will not campaign on these issues and they risk becoming deprioritized. Therefore, Ordinary Americans need to lead the third pillar - Experiencing More of their lives.

While we may think of experiences as planned events that we can control, it is key to note that unexpected, challenging experiences can suddenly arise that require immediate attention. For example, if a family member unexpectedly becomes sick or an unexpected need for self-care arises, society should not discourage people from taking leave they have earned. If an employee has access to paid (medical) leave or sick days and a period of need arises, they should take the time to be a caregiver or prioritize self-care. The more people take existing earned time off to address medical needs, the better chance there is to advance national policy on paid medical leave and paid sick days. These issues highlight why paid leave cannot just be paid family leave but should also include paid medical leave. This ensures everyone can look at the policy and feel it applies to them during a time of need.

Taking earned time to care for a new child through paid (family) leave is another key cornerstone of experiencing more of our own lives. As discussed, while new moms and dads may find joy in becoming parents, many do not feel able to experience this joy fully due to financial (e.g. FMLA is unpaid), societal or professional pressures. Children are born with a need and desire to connect with those around them, necessitating that parents and / or caregivers establish positive relationships with them from birth. Building this foundation by experiencing more meaningful time together allows children to feel safe and secure, building a path for healthy long-term social and emotional development. This foundation affects how children experience the world, express themselves, manage emotions and establish positive relationships with others.

Taking family leave especially in infancy is crucial to a child's development in nurturing early cognition – e.g. in the first two years, 700 new synapses form every second in a child's brain. The first six to nine months is critical bonding time for parents and children, forming a basis for parents responding to a child's needs as they get older. Hence, the AAP concludes six to nine months of family leave should be minimum. Highlighting the importance of newborn care, the CDC reported that in 2014, 23,000 U.S. infants died in the first year of life – or 6 per 1,000 born – ranking the U.S. #26 among industrialized nations in keeping babies alive.

It is important for both men and women to take their earned family leave if they have it and experience more time with young children. As previously discussed, the mother and child bond is extremely important but studies show that fatherly bonds are also critical. Research shows men who take family leave are more likely to be involved with their children in years ahead, aiding cognitive & emotional development and building a strong foundation for a baby's mental health. Fathers also want to be more involved. Over the past 30 years, U.S. fathers increased time spent with kids by 65% and homes where fathers take more than 40% of caregiving responsibilities are associated with positive outcomes in children's test scores and cognitive achievement.

Experiences discussed thus far focused on necessary self-care or caregiving of others – e.g. paid sick days and paid leave. In these cases, there is a personal event requiring prioritizing (e.g. baby born or illness) and a clear way to prioritize that event (e.g. paid leave). The barrier to experiencing more of these need periods may be involuntary and due to a lack of paid policies allowing employees to prioritize a need period and giving comfort their careers are safe upon return. On the flip side, many employees earn vacation each year and voluntarily do not use it. Employees proactively experiencing more of life away from work – i.e. using all earned vacation days - and

communicating the benefits of doing so is critical to advancing the dialogue on paid vacation. Employees would may then feel vacation time is a necessity, not an unnecessary luxury, helping drive an important cultural shift.

Experiences have the ability to make us happier because they can be more unique, they help connect us with others (or ourselves) and they live on through stories. Compared to buying material goods, research indicates anticipating future experiences can be more enjoyable and the abstractness of future experiences can make them more gratifying. According to the Harris Group, share of consumer spending on live experiences and events versus total U.S. consumer spending has risen 70% since 1987. This trend has accelerated among younger Americans with 72% of Millennials preferring to spend more money on experiences versus material things. As society shifts towards spending on experiences & living in the moment and social media creates broad interconnectedness, we can use earned vacation time to experience more of life.

An easy way to enjoy vacation is by taking a staycation – i.e. a vacation where you stay in or near your home. They can be less stressful (e.g. avoid travel, airports), less expensive and offer learning experiences as a tourist in one's own city. According to Wakefield Research, 40% of Americans take five or more days off each year just to catch up on sleep. Taking time to relax, reflect and unwind allows a return to work feeling restored and renewed. According to MMGY, 55% of younger travelers expected to take staycations in 2015, growing 14% points over 2014. Staycations offer flexibility and take all forms – from visiting local attractions, attending events or engaging in physical activities, there can be something for everyone.

Even with active daily lives, vacation can also be used for developing, learning and striving. For example, adult camps allow time off to be used to learn new skills (e.g. cooking) or master existing ones, offering a fun way to bring new skills home. Even simple strenuous leisure activities – e.g. exercising, hiking, camping, nature walks etc. - can help the mind and body rejuvenate. Summer staycations offer educational opportunities – e.g. visit science centers, museums, state capitols etc. Field trips can build curiosity, creativity and knowledge while children bond with friends, family and classmates. Long weekend trips can be great if participants do not overextend themselves, stay near attractions, focus on a few key activities and return having relaxed.

Beyond staying local, employees should consider that a meaningful way to use all earned vacation time could be to incorporate more travel into leisure time. With ~40% consistently not using all earned vacation, there is an opportunity to embrace the happiness travel can produce. Research suggests those who plan vacation in advance enjoy the experience because while trips come and go quickly, we consume anticipation of experiences and enjoy sharing stories afterwards. Planning unique vacation experiences which cannot be compared to others - or at least making some aspects of a trip unique – creates lasting positive memories and builds the desire to plan future trips. To help make travel an ongoing occurrence, consider seeing it beyond just a discrete period of time but something to talk about and think about long beforehand and for many years afterwards.

Leisure trips themselves can be meaningful ways to experience more of our lives away from work. According to Phocuswright, 66% of U.S. adults traveled for leisure in 2014, rising towards to a 2008 pre-recession high of 71% after falling to 61% in 2009 with household travel spend growing to \$3,441 in 2014 vs. \$2,720 in 2009. According to AAA, December 2015 holiday travel rose above 100 million Americans for the first time, marking the seventh consecutive year of year-end holiday travel growth. Americans are also prioritizing travel experiences over material gifts. American Express indicated that 145 million Americans – 62% of the U.S. adult population – would forgo presents for the gift of travel. Furthermore, a Hilton survey indicated 82% of working Americans would travel for a year without pay if money were not a concern.

Experiencing more through travel spans generations. According to AARP, Baby Boomers spend \$120 billion a year on leisure travel with nearly 50% planning to travel more than in prior years. According to Phocuswright, Millennials travel most – over 70% took a leisure trip – while Gen X travel grew most in 2014. Younger generations are also prioritizing travel with a purpose. Tourism Cares indicates Millennial travelers are the most “generous generation,” giving 2.5x the hours, 3x the money and 4.5x in-kind vs. those over 55. Furthermore, 81% volunteered, 78% donated money and 83% gave in-kind on their most meaningful trip in the last 2 years. A study

from the Cassandra Report suggests 47% of Millennials and 42% of Gen Z feel travel is essential (not a luxury) and say they need travel to feel like life is complete.

Recognizing the challenge of taking time off to travel amidst a culture of overwork, Americans are experiencing more leisure in combination with business travel ("Bleisure"). According to Travel Weekly's 2016 Consumer Trends report, the percent of leisure trips with a business component rose to 17% vs. 14% in 2015 and 11% in 2012. The Association of Corporate Travel Executives & American Express Global Business Travel suggest in companies where most travelers are between age 20-30, the top business travel priorities are combining business & leisure (70%) and work/life balance (69%) vs. 42% & 48% respectively for all companies. MMGY reports 77% of Millennials (and 58% of Gen X, 43% of Boomers) expect to engage in Bleisure travel in the next 12 months. Addressing Bleisure desires may help companies increase engagement and differentiate themselves given successive generations want to prioritize experiencing more of life by incorporating leisure travel.

Travel offers an opportunity to prioritize health and wellness beyond the workplace. According to the Global Wellness Institute, Wellness travel – i.e. vacationing while enhancing and maintaining physical, mental, spiritual well-being - is a \$563 billion industry, projected to grow to \$808 billion by 2020. While overall tourism grows 6.9% annually, wellness tourism grew 14% in the last two years with over 690 million trips in 2015 alone. 67% of wellness travel is being done domestically within a country and the U.S. is the largest wellness tourism market by expenditure at \$202.2 billion in 2015. Reflecting a global trend, European travelers take the most wellness trips while Asia-Pacific is the fastest-growing market. Wellness travel reflects the evolution of society whereby employees cannot return to work feeling worse than when they left.

No matter where one goes, travel can help citizens adopt and expand global views. According to a MetLife survey, over 60% of Fortune 1000 executives identify global awareness as very important or essential to be ready for a career. As an occasional tourist in office, President Obama showed how travel can encourage intellectual curiosity, replenish intellectual capital and strengthen ties to other countries and peoples. Travel can promote professional growth by strengthening emotional intelligence, appreciating diversity, inspiring innovation, engaging communities and pushing beyond comfort zones. Studies also suggest traveling helps expand our sense of reality, enhance brain power, improve memory, increase creativity and build resilience.

Travel provides opportunities for memorable shared experiences with close ones. According to NYU and the Family Travel Association, family travel is one of fastest-growing tourism segments representing over 1/3rd of leisure trips. 93% say they are likely or very likely to travel with kids in the next 2 years, valuing the educational and emotional benefits of travel. Parents spend on travel – a typical U.S. vacation costs \$4,580 for a family of four - because of its importance to family bonding. Baby Boomers also see travel with grandchildren as valuable to family life. According to the U.S. Travel Association, 35% of grandparents travel with grandchildren and spend \$4 billion on travel and recreation with them. Research by the Family Holiday Association indicates family trips can also serve as "happiness anchors" - 49% said their happiest memory was on family vacation, 33% said they vividly remember childhood family vacations and 25% use these memories to get through tough times.

As travel increases across generations, kids are important beneficiaries. Travel is educational - offering freedom from daily routines, learning of new cultures, trying of new cuisines and exploring of new places. Kids are also showing more interest in planning travel with 54% of parents saying kids have influence over family vacations and spend. Child psychotherapists suggest travel with kids can also be beneficial to their brain development since enriched environments offer new experiences that strengthen social, physical, cognitive, and sensory interactions. These environments can make kids smarter by enhancing executive functions like stress regulation, attention, concentration, good planning, ability to learn, and improved physical and mental health.

Parents can also use travel to create lasting memories for their kids - 61% of kids want to spend quality time with parents on vacation and 75% of parents feel family vacations are worth the time and money because they give kids experiences they remember years later. Families can use travel and time off to strengthen their own relationships. 84% of kids feel closer to parents when they take time off, 82% say parents are more fun to be around when they

take time off and 60% say they see a different side of their parents on vacation. Socializing across generations among relatives is also important for kids as they remember multifamily gatherings more than other kinds, enjoy hearing family stories and develop a sense of identity as part of a family with shared past.

Travel's importance extends to national economic growth and prosperity that benefits all Americans. According to the U.S. Travel Association, travel facilitates \$2.3 trillion in economic output, supports 15.3 million (1 in 9 total) American jobs and helps generate \$157.8 billion in tax revenue. Furthermore, America's \$87 billion international travel trade surplus in 2016 is the largest of any U.S. sector. Travel is one of America's best performing exports and without it, the trade deficit would be 17% larger. The World Travel and Tourism Council's 2016 data also indicates Travel and Tourism grew 3.3% globally (outpacing the global economy for the 6th straight year), generated \$7.6 trillion (10.2% of global GDP) and supported 292 million (1 in 10) jobs.

Travel's national importance can also extend to infrastructure development. With Americans prioritizing experiences to material items, research suggests well-being can be advanced by investing in infrastructure that affords shared experiences — e.g. parks, beaches etc. Increased travel draws attention to the fact that the U.S. has no airports ranked in the top 25 and our aviation system ranks 9th globally (20% of flights are cancelled or delayed). More broadly, 20% of the 900,000 miles of U.S. interstates or major roads needs resurfacing or reconstruction and 25% of the 600,000 U.S. bridges are considered structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Beyond the impact to travel and tourism, the American Society of Civil Engineers gives U.S. infrastructure an overall D+ grade in 2017. For example, roads, aviation and dams received a D grade and transit was downgraded from D to D-. The group indicated America's infrastructure requires \$2 trillion in investments.

America has been making progress to promote travel in recent years – e.g. the 2010 Travel Promotion Act created Brand USA to market the U.S. as a premier destination, more countries are joining the Visa Waiver Program, TSA PreCheck was created and Global Entry expanded etc. U.S. destinations are key beneficiaries of this focus. For example, the National Parks Service – which saw an all-time high of 331 million visitors in 2016 - says spending in national parks supports 318,100 jobs, injects \$34.9 billion into the economy and provides \$12 billion in labor income. Visitors also spend \$18.4 billion in communities near parks. The NPS concludes each tax dollar invested in the service returns \$10 to the U.S. economy. America should expand travel as a national priority – e.g. create a Ministry of Tourism and / or become a national member of the UN World Tourism Organization.

Conclusion

Collective Rejuvenation is about America's major stakeholders taking shared ownership of a better future. While the pillars focus on social and personal progress, they are instrumental to driving meaningful long-term national economic prosperity. America remains the wealthiest country in the world, but leaders need to do more to empower Americans to live happier, healthier, productive and integrated lives. Success is possible if stakeholders collectively prioritize communication, collaboration and co-creation of lasting solutions.

First, communication - openly, extensively and regularly - is critical since culture change is hard and takes time. Leaders need to say loud and clear – and then lead by example – that wellness is essential to personal and professional success and working smart is more important than working long. Managers and colleagues should encourage each other to use earned vacation regularly and sick days or paid leave when necessary. Instead of persistently overworking and overusing “busy”, we should feel excited experiencing more of life during our personal time. Communication should be more inclusive so all Americans feel part of progress. It is a meaningful difference committing to “work/life integration” vs. “work/life balance,” and “paid leave” vs. “maternity (or paternity) leave.” Furthermore, communicating a national Comprehensive Paid Time Off policy makes it clear these solutions are available and applicable to everyone, irrespective of demographics and family status.

Second, collaboration within and across stakeholder groups is important to making progress. Colleagues and friends/family should work together and encourage one another other to take time off, experience more of life and share stories; business leaders can share best practices and continue to listen to employee ideas on improving workplace well-being and productivity; lawmakers can work together to act on what constituents say they need to

feel meaningful improvements in their lives. Collaborating to address Collective Rejuvenation can improve the well-being and livelihood of Ordinary Americans and enhance performance (and reduces costs) for Businesses while not adding significant costs to the National Government.

Third, co-creation of policy and legislation is essential to ensure Collective Rejuvenation becomes embedded into American society. For example, having some (and not all) companies take Professional Wellness, Comprehensive Paid Time Off and Experiencing More seriously is not enough to bring broad and lasting change. Beyond the specific pillars in this initiative, prioritizing Collective Rejuvenation can further important discussions on issues like child care & gender equality (in the context of Comprehensive PTO) and infrastructure & tourism (in the context of Experiencing More). In order to effect culture change, we should recognize that certain initiatives that are good for Ordinary Americans can be good for the Business Community and the National Government and thus our country.

Leaders across all stakeholder group should consider drawing conclusions and taking action based on numerous polls, evaluating American social progress & care systems vs. other advanced countries and leveraging research & studies from major professional, educational, media and non-profit organizations. By prioritizing bold action, America's leaders can show they care deeply about the social, personal and professional progress of its citizens and the broader economic prosperity of our country.