

Firms woo working moms with flexible timings

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MUMBAI: Working mothers are considered assets at the workplace and more companies are trying to rope them back into their workforce, according to a recent survey.

In a global research conducted by Regus, a global workplace provider, 73% of the Indian businesses said that working mothers bring valuable skill sets and expertise to the workplace.

Companies are now strategising to get women back to the workforce through flexible hours, a workplace closer to home and the option to video-conference instead of travelling.

Around 83% of the Indian respondents said flexible timings would help bring more young mothers back to the workforce.

CLP India, a foreign investor in the Indian power sector, introduced a six-month maternity leave policy in 2012 to ensure their women employees got enough time with their children.

"Earlier, we used to follow the 84-day leaves norm. However, we decided to extend the maternity leave to six months, based on the feedback we received from women employees," said

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DEEPA SEBASTIAN, HR manager, CLP India

Deepa Sebastian, senior human resources manager at the firm.

Many women are also looking to get back into the workforce sooner, with 58% employers saying that they have seen women take shorter maternity leave, and returning to work in three months.

However, Veena Poonacha, director of women's studies at SNDT Women's University, said that giving benefits of flexible hours and work-from-home options to working mothers should not be exploited. "Often, women who work from home are paid less and they accept it for the opportunity. However, this policy must change, as quality of work should be the only criteria," she said.