



AMERICAN
SUSTAINABLE
BUSINESS
COUNCIL

Good Workplace Business Profile

EILEEN FISHER

Founded in 1984, EILEEN FISHER is an American women's clothing retailer and designer. The company has an Employee Stock Ownership Plan and is dedicated to not only providing quality clothing to women, but ensuring a strong social consciousness component is incorporated. The company has several initiatives focused on sustainability, the environment, and increasing human rights.



Julie Rubiner of EILEEN FISHER

“EILEEN FISHER believes that the well-being of its employees has a direct impact on the success and profitability of the company. By recognizing the whole person we benefit from happy, highly productive employees who feel valued and recognized for their contributions to the company.”

-Amy Hall, Director of Social Consciousness

Why did you make it a priority to provide good leave to your employees?

We have distinguished ourselves in the clothing industry by making it a priority to promote employee well being by providing good leave. Workers earn leave depending on the length of time they have been with the company, starting with 3 weeks for first year employees and up to 6 months for 10-year employees. Long-term employees also have the option to take sabbaticals to enhance their personal and professional growth, a highly held value with the company. It's understood that every person who comes to work has additional obligations like family; by acknowledging these commitments, we create a better employee and a better workplace. Our policy helps to increase employee self-worth and decrease turnover.

What, if any, hurdles did you encounter implementing the policy and how did you address them?

Policies and legal requirements are constantly evolving so it is important to update them when necessary. We go beyond what is required. In addition to providing normal paid time off for employees who have worked for the company for 20+ years, we also provide an opportunity for sabbatical. We place a strong emphasis on equity; while some people may take time off for family purposes, others may take time off for religious or political reasons.

How does your company justify spending the money on these practices/policies?

By creating such strong employee loyalty and satisfaction, turnover at the company is low - around seven percent - and thus training and hiring costs are also low. This allows us to focus on other areas of the business. In turn, this has helped us remain continuously profitable and grow annually. The overarching theme of the leave policies provided by EILEEN FISHER focuses on flexibility, adaptability, and employee well being.

How has providing good leave affected the bottom line?

We don't measure the direct impact of our paid leave policies on the bottom line, but we strongly believe it is part of the whole formula.

How does your company advocate for the broader adoption of these practices in the economy?

We are very transparent about our success and how we achieved it, hoping to set the benchmark for other companies. We are also active in supporting legislation that improves employee benefits like sick leave.



About Amy Hall

As Director of Social Consciousness and a member of the Leadership Forum for women's clothing designer EILEEN FISHER, Amy supports the company's efforts to practice "business as a movement." In her role, Amy guides the company's human rights work in its supply chain, supports women and girls through strategic partnerships, ensures a growing commitment to environmental sustainability in product and practice and helps to foster a climate where living the mission ranks equally to job performance. Amy recently received a sustainable MBA from Green Mountain College.