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[Rana Florida](#)

CEO, The Creative Class Group & Author, Upgrade

Tech Giants' Freeze-Your-Eggs Policy Is Not Enough

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Work now, live later. That is the mantra behind the egg-freezing initiatives recently announced by Silicon Valley tech giants Apple and Facebook. [Apple's statement](#) read in part:

"We continue to expand our benefits for women, with a new extended maternity leave policy, along with cryopreservation and egg storage as part of our extensive support for infertility treatments. We want to empower women at Apple to do the best work of their lives as they care for loved ones and raise their families."

It is a PR ploy. What Apples wants is to convince its top female talent to delay motherhood for as long as possible so they can give all their attention to their jobs. The \$20,000 it is giving them to freeze and store their eggs is chickenfeed, compared to what they are getting in return.

This initiative is anything but empowering. All medical procedures have risks, but the most common complications from egg harvesting run the gamut from infections to sterility. There may also be as yet unknown risks to the children conceived from cryo-processed eggs. While eggs frozen at a younger age are more usable than fresh oocytes produced years later, still the procedure can give would-be parents a false sense of security, as not all the frozen eggs will survive the thaw when they are ready to be used at a later date, and not all that survive the thaw will fertilize, implant successfully and go on to a live birth.

The world's most innovative and creative organizations should be dreaming up new ways to establish a better work-life balance for all their employees. Instead of holding out a carrot on a

stick for would-be mothers, they should be establishing best practices to keep them engaged, productive, and excited about work while they raise their families.

They should be looking to Sweden for inspiration, which has some of the highest maternal employment rates in the EU (and among the lowest levels of childhood poverty). Many Swedish parents -- male and female alike -- take advantage of flexible working arrangements -- part time employment rates for women and men are 39.6 and 14.6 percent respectively, compared to EU averages of 32.5 and 9.4 percent. Sweden's parental leave policy grants mothers and fathers together up to 16 months paid leave.

Of course Sweden is a country and Apple and Facebook are just companies. To their credit, they do offer more than four months maternity leave -- and Facebook also offers a \$4,000 cash bonus to new parents.

Leave is good, but what would be even better is in-office daycare, flexible hours, work-from-home and Mommy-track careers that don't lead to the sidelines. That would help them attract and retain top female talent. It's time that these tech giants showed some real leadership. It would pay off in spades.

Rana Florida is the author of the best-selling book [Upgrade, Taking Your Work and Life from Ordinary to Extraordinary](#).