Harmonizing Your Global Time Away and Accommodations Programs

A Complete E2E Policy & Process Journey



Presentation Objectives

What You'll Learn:

1. How to construct a global framework for your organization's time away and accommodations policies and processes.
2. Understand the important role that process differences play in informing policy and framework decision making.
3. A Case Study about adapting your framework country by country (solving for local/region specific "nuances").
4. Lessons learned about how to implement your framework, including design and implementation of critical project and change management communication components.

What is a Global Framework?

- A **concept** that typically expresses the **“floor”** for each benefit element

  EX: the minimum number of days for bereavement, or minimum level and length of pay for parental leave

- A **commitment** to deliver a company standard and eliminate inequities across regions

  NOTE: statutory benefits may be higher; the “floor” typically adds to statutory levels, i.e., ‘tops up’ where statutory benefits are lower in one or more elements.

- Harmonization does NOT mean the same exact benefit policy and process in every country; rather it is an **adaptation** in each country to align to the framework.

- The key to successful harmonization is establishing **Foundational Principles** that will be followed (more on that later).

Why Create a Global Framework?

Employers with teams in multiple countries, **regardless of size**, are taking the innovative approach to embrace a Global Framework for Leave & Time Away programs to:

- Reinforce their company values
- Reflect a unified benefit strategy & brand
- Create a fluid environment for between-country transfers & assignments
- Level set policies and processes as a foundation for future program evolution



The global "call to action" by many firms is the desire to harmonize the parental suite of benefits. While harmonization is very complex, these are typically the highest priority benefits to employees.

It's as Easy as 1-2-3 *(well, sort of)*

There are three key steps in the process (and dozens of steps within each of them)!

1. **MOBILIZE & DISCOVER**
2. **DESIGN** *(FOR EACH COUNTRY/GEO)*
3. **DELIVER** *(IN EACH COUNTRY/GEO)*

MOBILIZE & DISCOVER

- ESTABLISH GLOBAL TEAM, STRUCTURE, & PRINCIPLES
- COLLECT & INVENTORY ALL POLICIES AND PROCESSES
- COLLECT DATA ON UTILIZATION, COSTS, DURATION
- REVIEW WITH STAKEHOLDERS FOR PAIN POINTS

Mobilize :: Construct the Team & Work Structure

Construct your teams before starting any work and orient them to the project. Teams will align with the review sequence (more on that later) to represent key competencies in each geo.

Team	Representation
CORE	BENEFITS DESIGN ● BENEFITS DELIVERY ● GEO LEADS ● HRIS/TIMEKEEPING ● ACCOMMODATION
STAKEHOLDERS	PAYROLL ● HR LEADS ● COMMUNICATORS ● TECH ● EMPLOYEE RELATIONS
LEADERS	UPLINE LEADERS (BENEFITS, BENEFIT OPERATIONS, HR/ER, ETC.)
LEGAL	GEO-SPECIFIC

Discover :: Collect Policies, Processes & Data

Expect policy and their depictions to be:

- Inconsistent in format & approach
- Incomplete
- Outdated

Expect processes to:

- Be poorly documented, depending on individual rather than institutional memory
- Be quite siloed & vary greatly from country-to-country
- Reflect local culture and norms

Expect data to be:

- Difficult to obtain in some countries
- Incomplete if data don't reflect statutory programs

To succeed, you MUST address policy and process deficiencies.

You cannot build a successful program on a fragile or broken foundation.

Discover :: Craft a “Pain Point” Repository

Convene stakeholder groups to identify pain points.

- This is best done through dialogue – folks may be reticent to “publish” some concerns
- It builds trust to listen to concerns, even if unrelated to the project!
- Do NOT only address the benefit design, but also focus on processes, employee and manager experience, vendor feedback, etc.

Craft a “Pain Point” Repository by country and design element

- Be sure to include adjacent elements

  EX: the accommodation process and how it works with the Medical Leave policy.

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DESIGN

- ESTABLISH FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES
- CRAFT THE BLUEPRINT
- ESTABLISH IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Design :: Establish Foundational Principles

- As you begin to harmonize there will be challenges – demands to be more (or less generous) typically to address other problems through the project.
- These challenges come from real business problems (attraction/retention, etc.), and cannot be dismissed.
    - Your project team should document these requests; and,
    - Create a 'fast follow' parking lot to ensure these concerns are more appropriately addressed outside the project.
- **IMPORTANT**: Having a strong set of Foundational Principles **with explicit leadership support** is key to ensuring that these challenges are handled effectively

Foundational Principles :: An Example

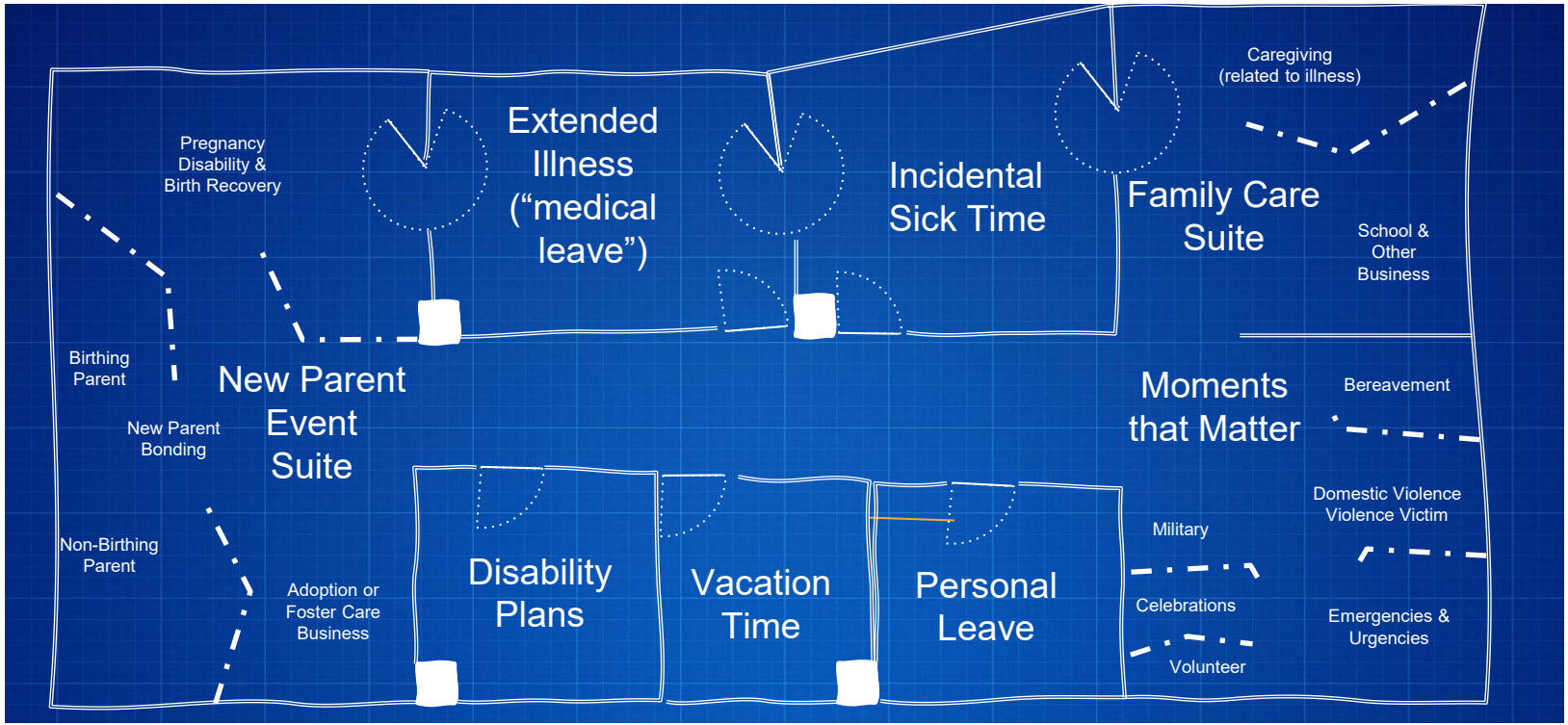
Our Global Framework will:

- Bring **all similarly situated*** employees to the minimum benefit/standard… although there may be trade-offs to achieve broad harmonization
- Not exceed the Framework levels, unless required by law
- Not result in takeaways from current benefit levels
- Support improved, efficient processes and deliver an optimal employee/manager experience
- Focus on country- and geo-specific groupings

**for example, all benefit-eligible employees, or all hourly, or all salaried, etc.*

Design :: Construct The Policy Blueprint (“Floorplan”)

Construct your floorplan – here’s an example:



Design :: Tips for Guiding the Blueprint Discussions

Focus the development team on the following concepts – you can't "boil the ocean"

- This is aspirational – "reality check" later
- We will modify all concepts country-by-country, so be patient
- We will focus on a "floor" and "ceiling" approach – bookends, informed by benchmarks and current best practices
- We won't focus (at first) on laws – we'll later work backwards from our design to our compliant operational models in each country/geo
- The words we use won't necessarily go into the policies – they're our **design "shorthand"** – actual words will vary by country (i.e, vacation vs. annual leave, etc.)
- We're focusing high profile time away categories that serve as touchstones for other designs

Design :: Craft the Blueprint Concepts

With your team(s) work through the conceptual model **for each element**



An aspirational bookend – but still realistic (i.e., not everyone can have unlimited everything, but we may want to pick some that are more meaningful to push the edge of possible).

Think about the 'bridge" from "of course" to "wouldn't it be great.." It should align with current company values.

Design :: Establish Implementation Strategy

Address these questions to arrive at an Implementation Scope:

- What are our high priority elements (i.e., Parental? Incidental Sick?)
- What are our high priority countries?
- Are any countries or elements off the table (i.e., works council countries, etc.)

Next decide on Implementation Sequencing:

- Element country-by-country (i.e., cascade parental across all countries, then move on to other elements)
- Country-by-country all elements (i.e., take on one country end-to-end, then move to the next)
- Group like geos. For example, Ireland and UK together, APAC, EMEA, etc.

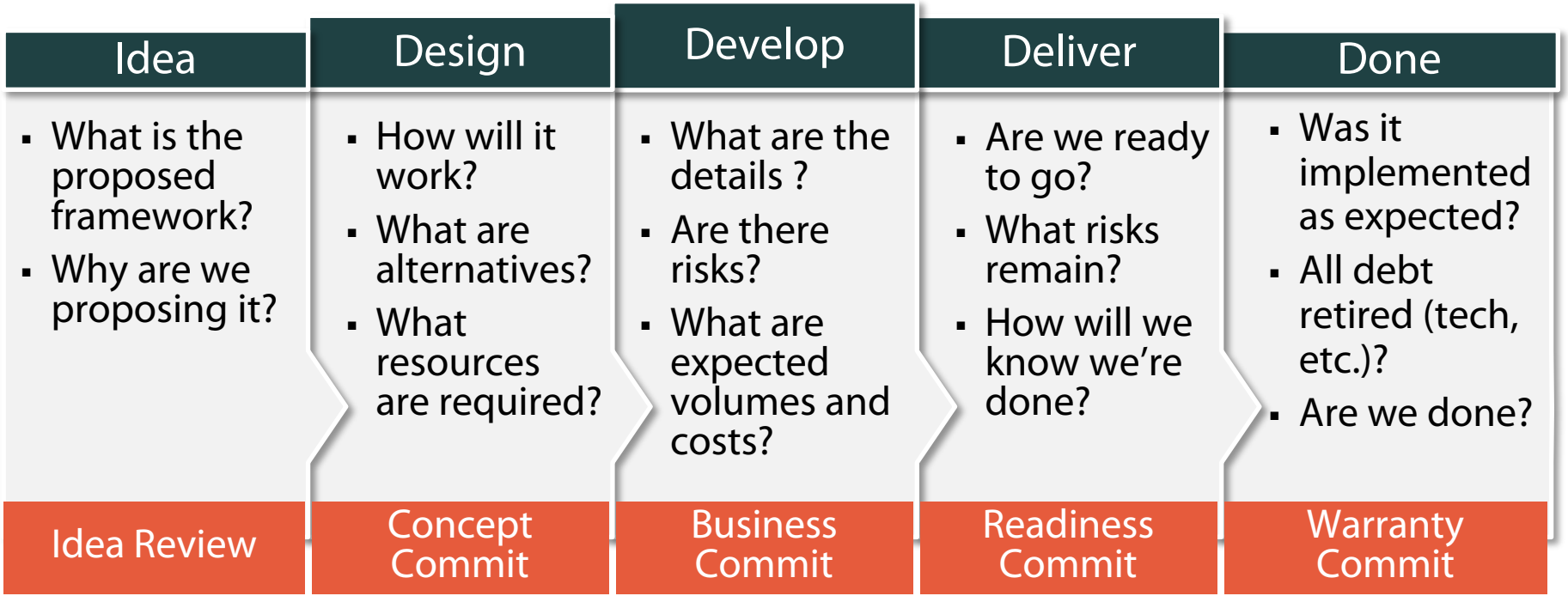
Design :: Establish Implementation Strategy (more)

With **Scope** and **Sequence** defined, create an implementation strategy that will be refined in the next step (Discovery):

- During discovery, you will finalize priorities based on the reality of what you learn:
- Compliance concerns jump to the top of the list
- Highest pain point elements and countries/geos also get priority
- Countries/geos with already more generous benefits may drop to the bottom
- Policy and process concerns can also inform priorities.

Design :: Add Gates & Review Sequence

Part of the strategy will be how we will gain approval at each step (strategy, design, go-live). We recommend the following "gates" between stages:



Design :: Establish a Review Sequence

Once the design has been approved, and you start developing documents (policies, etc.), consider this sequence:

01 WIP	Work in Progress – project team comes to agreement
02 STAKEHOLDERS	Invite key stakeholders reviews
03 LEADERSHIP	Leadership reviews
04 LEGAL	May take a long time. Assess resources early on
05 TRANSLATION	Per country; address resource needs early on.
06 PUBLICATION FORMATTING	Project team reviews after formatting to ensure integrity
07 "AS PUBLISHED"	Maintain inventory with version control

DELIVER

- WRITE POLICIES
- CONSTRUCT WORKFLOWS
- DELIVER CHANGE MANAGEMENT
- COMPLETE TECH WORK

Deliver :: Write Policies

Determine if you are going to elevate policy depiction (i.e., change “look & feel”, make more user-friendly, etc.).

- Engage appropriate stakeholders in making this decision, and consider resource demands that come with this (tech, comms, etc.).

Determine if you will be standardizing naming conventions, time coding, etc.

- Assume you will need to maintain some country-specific vocabulary to align with statutory programs
- Maintain local grammar and spelling (don’t be US-centric)

Establish templates, so the team doesn’t begin with a blank slate

Deliver :: Construct Workflows

Engage stakeholders

- Start with conceptual workflows, then progress to step workflows
- Be sure to include hand-offs to other domains, escalation protocols, etc.

Have reasonable expectations

- In a country with very few employees, it may not be necessary to go crazy with workflows, so you may stop at conceptual workflows, but make sure each stakeholder group agrees to their ownership
- You may need to adapt your timeline if process development needs are the long pole to implementation (typically system/tech resource demands)

Expect surprises

Deliver :: Plan for Change Management

Create Change Management Plan, by country as early as possible

- Even good news – benefit enhancements – can create confusion

Consider transitions

- Are you "drawing a line in the sand?" For example, new Parental leave applies to births on or after effective date? This will be dramatic, so be prepared for the noise, and communicate early about the change.
- Map how you'll handle "in flight" leaves/absences – have comms and process to address individual cases.

Brief executives and leaders

- If there will be noise, they will hear it. Understand if you'll be making exceptions, and under what circumstances. Give leaders standard response text if possible.

Deliver :: Complete Tech Work

Understand tech challenges early on.

- Gain commitment at the early approval gates, and document requirements as soon as possible
- Address the entire tech eco-system (HRIS, timekeeping, payroll, portal, vendor integrations, etc.)

Understand the tech development sequence

- How are changes ‘groomed’ into releases? What is the team’s role in prioritization?

Have a worst-case scenario plan

- What’s the “roll back” plan if tech can’t be done?
- Are there manual backstops for key tech risks?

CASE STUDY

Caveat:

*this is a **work in progress** and reinvented policies will be rolled out over the next 12 months*

Case Study :: Foundational Principles

Cloudflare Foundational Principles for Time Away Program Harmonization are:

1) No benefit will be lower than the global framework (it is a "floor"), considering the combination of statutory & company benefits (concurrency assumption)
2) No takeaways from current benefit level
3) Changes will not exceed either current level or statutory level; i.e, this project is not intended to make the benefits richer for market or other reasons
4) Compliance is imperative (confidentiality, objectivity, benefit processes, etc.)
5) Simplify processes, "speed of trust" where allowed by law
6) Add accommodation (illness & religious) where possible

Case Study :: Design Discovery

Each leave type had durations not aligned with any benefit strategy, which seemed random to employees and hard to keep straight. The first design decision was to group leave types and durations in a logical framework (statutory may be higher, of course):

Max Paid Weeks at 100% of Pay	Program
4	Military Pre-deployment, Civic Duty, Jury Duty Basic Personal Leave
6	Family Caregiving, Survivors of Crime or Domestic Violence
8	Disability (including Pregnancy disability) Extended Personal Leave (service-based)
16	Parental (bonding) Leave
26	Military (Post-deployment)

Case Study :: Policy Discovery

Policy language and style varied widely:

- Some dense paragraphs in a handbook
- Some extremely detailed legal-based outline format (APAC)
- Some vague references, with referral to HR for more details
- Some missing altogether

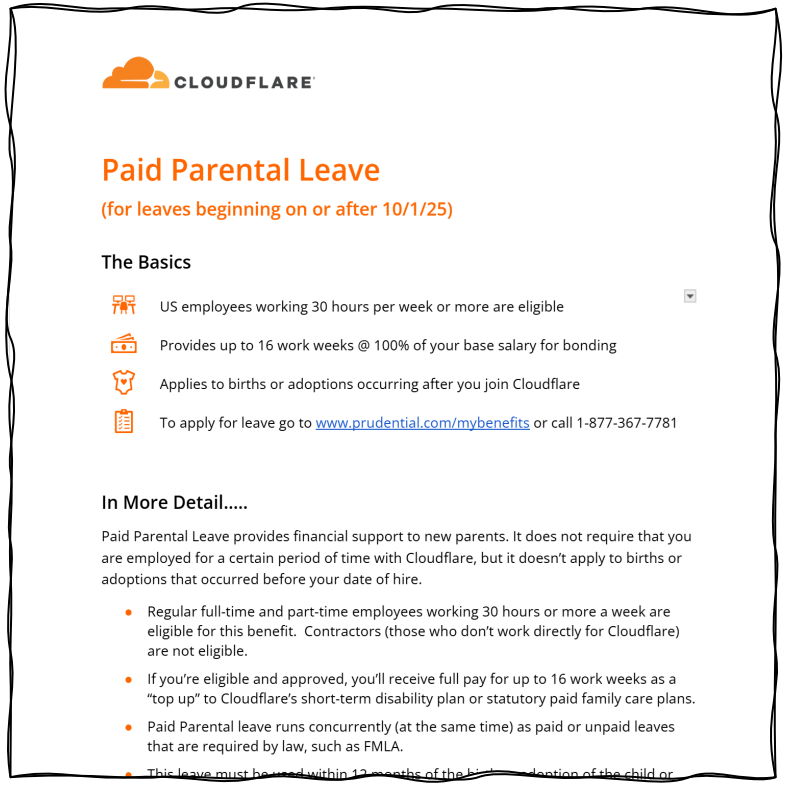
“Guidebooks” did exist in some geographies, but they:

- Were outdated and overly complex (average 28 pages)
- Leave information was buried in dense paragraphs
- Had few examples

Case Study :: Policy Look & Feel Standard

We established a simple format consistent with company culture and communication standards for policies:

- Simple summary up front
- New “Detail” section addresses standard set of policy parameters for all policies (eligibility, entitlement, pay, benefits, job protection, stock vesting, etc.)
- “How To” section outlines process for going out and returning from leave
- “FAQ” section addresses additional questions



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Paid Parental Leave

(for leaves beginning on or after 10/1/25)

The Basics

- US employees working 30 hours per week or more are eligible
- Provides up to 16 work weeks @ 100% of your base salary for bonding
- Applies to births or adoptions occurring after you join Cloudflare
- To apply for leave go to www.prudential.com/mybenefits or call 1-877-367-7781

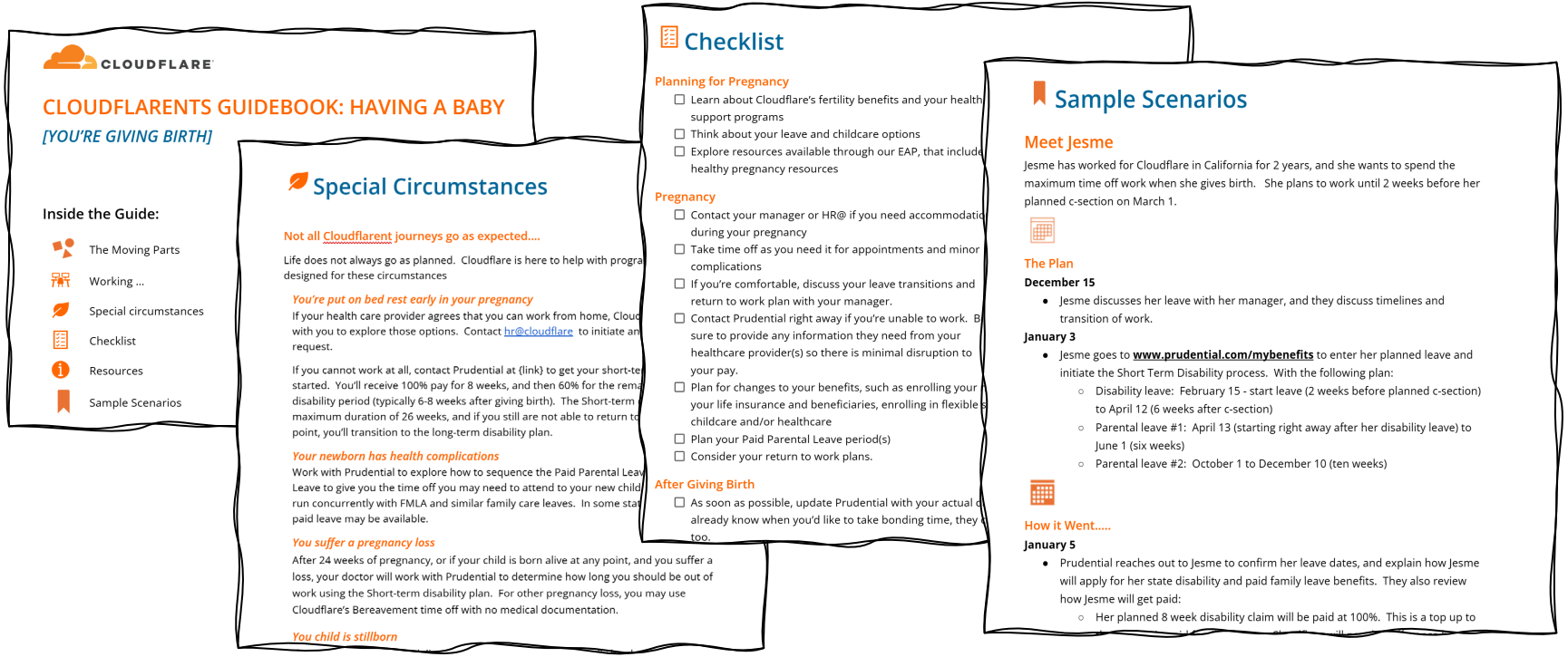
In More Detail.....

Paid Parental Leave provides financial support to new parents. It does not require that you are employed for a certain period of time with Cloudflare, but it doesn’t apply to births or adoptions that occurred before your date of hire.

- Regular full-time and part-time employees working 30 hours or more a week are eligible for this benefit. Contractors (those who don’t work directly for Cloudflare) are not eligible.
- If you’re eligible and approved, you’ll receive full pay for up to 16 work weeks as a “top up” to Cloudflare’s short-term disability plan or statutory paid family care plans.
- Paid Parental leave runs concurrently (at the same time) as paid or unpaid leaves that are required by law, such as FMLA.
- This leave must be used within 12 months of the birth or adoption of the child or

Case Study :: Guidebooks

We established a simple format consistent with company culture and communication standards for Guidebooks..



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CLOUDFLARENTS GUIDEBOOK: HAVING A BABY

[YOU'RE GIVING BIRTH]

Inside the Guide:

- The Moving Parts
- Working ...
- Special circumstances
- Checklist
- Resources
- Sample Scenarios

Special Circumstances

Not all Cloudflarent journeys go as expected....

Life does not always go as planned. Cloudflare is here to help with progra
designed for these circumstances

You're put on bed rest early in your pregnancy

If your health care provider agrees that you can work from home, Cloud
with you to explore those options. Contact hr@cloudflare to initiate an
request.

If you cannot work at all, contact Prudential at {link} to get your short-te
started. You'll receive 100% pay for 8 weeks, and then 60% for the rema
disability period (typically 6-8 weeks after giving birth). The Short-term
maximum duration of 26 weeks, and if you still are not able to return to
point, you'll transition to the long-term disability plan.

Your newborn has health complications

Work with Prudential to explore how to sequence the Paid Parental Leav
Leave to give you the time off you may need to attend to your new child
run concurrently with FMLA and similar family care leaves. In some stat
paid leave may be available.

You suffer a pregnancy loss

After 24 weeks of pregnancy, or if your child is born alive at any point, and you suffer a loss, your doctor will work with Prudential to determine how long you should be out of work using the Short-term disability plan. For other pregnancy loss, you may use Cloudflare's Bereavement time off with no medical documentation.

You child is stillborn

Checklist

Planning for Pregnancy

- ☐ Learn about Cloudflare's fertility benefits and your health support programs
- ☐ Think about your leave and childcare options
- ☐ Explore resources available through our EAP, that include healthy pregnancy resources

Pregnancy

- ☐ Contact your manager or HR@ if you need accommodatio during your pregnancy
- ☐ Take time off as you need it for appointments and minor complications
- ☐ If you're comfortable, discuss your leave transitions and return to work plan with your manager.
- ☐ Contact Prudential right away if you're unable to work. B sure to provide any information they need from your healthcare provider(s) so there is minimal disruption to your pay.
- ☐ Plan for changes to your benefits, such as enrolling your your life insurance and beneficiaries, enrolling in flexible childcare and/or healthcare
- ☐ Plan your Paid Parental Leave period(s)
- ☐ Consider your return to work plans.

After Giving Birth

- ☐ As soon as possible, update Prudential with your actual d already know when you'd like to take bonding time, they too.

Sample Scenarios

Meet Jesme

Jesme has worked for Cloudflare in California for 2 years, and she wants to spend the maximum time off work when she gives birth. She plans to work until 2 weeks before her planned c-section on March 1.

The Plan

December 15

- Jesme discusses her leave with her manager, and they discuss timelines and transition of work.

January 3

- Jesme goes to **www.prudential.com/mybenefits** to enter her planned leave and initiate the Short Term Disability process. With the following plan:
  - Disability leave: February 15 - start leave (2 weeks before planned c-section) to April 12 (6 weeks after c-section)
  - Parental leave #1: April 13 (starting right away after her disability leave) to June 1 (six weeks)
  - Parental leave #2: October 1 to December 10 (ten weeks)

How it Went.....

January 5

- Prudential reaches out to Jesme to confirm her leave dates, and explain how Jesme will apply for her state disability and paid family leave benefits. They also review how Jesme will get paid:
  - Her planned 8 week disability claim will be paid at 100%. This is a top up to

Case Study :: Global Policy Discovery

We identified 10 policy families for prioritization:

- Parental Suite
- Employee's Own Illness (EOI) Suite
- Family Caregiving Suite
- Bereavement
- Vacation
- Military
- Public/Civic Duty
- Reproductive
- Incidental Absence
- Other/Combined Purpose

These **10** policy families were comprised of **61** policy groups and **137** individual policies across **16** countries

10 countries were missing employee-facing descriptions of one or more policies that were already considered global.

Case Study :: Policy Priority #1 is Parental (bonding)

The company standard for bonding leave was 16 weeks at 100% pay. In the US this ***included the disability period*** for the person giving birth; which is not aligned with benchmarks or the intent of the policy.

Even though all countries had the same process elements (WorkDay, payroll, HR assistance, etc.), some parameters varied widely:

- Involvement of manager, HR and the leave team
- Degree to which documentation was required, collected & maintained
- Offsets for statutory benefits
- Management of changes (statutory, company, etc.)

This **1** policy family was comprised of **6** policy groups and **35** individual policies. **3** countries did not have any articulation of the company parental policy in their employee-facing materials.

Case Study :: Step 1 – Country Policy Analysis

The first step is to look at the suite of policies describing Parental Leave, and address gaps, overlaps and alignment with statutory leaves:

For example, in India:

- Parental policy existed (one paragraph)
- Paternity policy existed (one paragraph)
- Existing policies did not address any of the areas in the standard policy template
- Separate policies regarding the person giving birth did not describe how the Parental Leave policy was aligned.

Plan: ***no need to change the policy in India, but just to articulate it clearly and publish a Guidebook with examples, resources, etc.***

Case Study :: Step 1 – Another Example

In Australia:

- In-depth description of statutory benefits for Parental Leave
- Very vague reference to the existence of a company policy, but no detail

PLAN: ***roll out the full Parental Leave policy and publish a Guidebook with examples, resources, etc. Because of the complexity of the statutory programs, pay special attention to how the company policy is integrated with statutory benefits.***

Case Study :: Step 2 – Country Process Analysis

We discovered a significant difference in how policies were being handled. In EMEA, one leave person handled most aspects of the leaves. In APAC, the HR service team handled the leaves, with little engagement of the leave or accommodation teams.

We concluded:

- Nothing was broken in APAC, but we need to create escalation pathways for the leave and accommodation teams.
- There was a different standard for service in EMEA, and we needed to address turnaround times and the role of the HR service team in assisting limited leave resources.
- We need to standardize definition of documentation, collection and maintenance of confidential information across the organization.

Case Study :: Step 3 – Country Tech Analysis

For each country, we are in the process of determining if any of our proposed changs have a tech impact. In our experience, the assessment and implementation of tech is the ‘long pole’ for implementation of revised policies.

Case Study :: Step 4 – Country Staging

With completion of the Policy, Process and Tech assessments, we'll be read to stage the policy implementation.

Our current plan:

1) Establish country priorities and groupings.
    - Priority 1: Parental Suite, EMEA
2) Per the priorities groupings:
    - Write Policies and Guidebooks, aware that the process descriptions may change. We are following the Review Sequence addressed earlier in this presentation
    - Follow the Gating Process to move to implementation

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IN CONCLUSION

- LESSONS LEARNED
- CLOSING THOUGHTS

Lessons Learned – DO NOT be US-centric

Outside the US, there is often no distinction in 'maternity' leave between pregnancy/recovery and bonding.

- Thus, in some countries the model for parents giving birth may combine elements to align with statutory programs

You may find a focus on 'primary' versus 'secondary' parents; rather than a distinction between those giving birth and not (for example, Australia).

- This "gender neutral" model doesn't translate to other countries where the benefits are strongly gender-defined.

Lessons Learned – again, DO NOT be US-centric

The US disability plan model is also unique. In many countries, disability-like benefits may be a combination of sick leave, disability pension, private plans, etc.

- Focus on crafting an income replacement 'floor' and assessing the best way to deliver country-by-country regardless of the vehicle for delivering the benefits

The concept of accommodation (leave, stay-at-work, ergonomics, etc.) looks very different across the globe.

- Some countries, like India, have relatively new regulations. Some have no statutory plans, but an assumption of a higher level of job protection.
- Deep dive accommodation climate in each country. Paralleling the US model may not be possible, but craft consistency in philosophy and processes.
- Focus on the employee and manager experiences as a great starting point

Lessons Learned :: Change Management

Employees often expect harmonization = equality (literal)

- Change management is critical in setting expectations and rolling out new program elements, particularly in nearby geographies

Managers may push back, worried that the “floor” is too high for the culture

- Change management program must include managers, supervisors, regional leaders, etc.

Select your project and stakeholder carefully – these are your ambassadors

- Make sure Sr. Leaders know what noise to expect and are well-prepared!
- Plan for the unexpected, such as changes in statutory programs while you are in flight.

Lessons Learned :: Trust the Process

Create a solid plan, with mechanisms for design, development and deployment

- Folks may think it ‘bureaucratic’, but once they’re used to a disciplined process their concerns abate.

Be sure to craft formal “sign-off” mechanisms

- Folks can forget what they approved when it gets noisy!

The first few countries are the hardest

- Take those first few one-by-one, and avoid creating ‘global’ templates until you road-tested a few

Closing Thoughts

Crafting a Global Framework is a worthy endeavor

- It communicates company values and benefit branding
- Employees appreciate the balance of benefits, particulary when explained in the context of a cohesive benefit strategy

It's Challenging

- Expect gaps in information and availability of resources
- Set reasonable timing expectations – it is near impossible to do a 'big bang'

It's Interesting & Rewarding

This is a new endeavor for most organizations, and the teams we've worked with have found the process intriguing. It's been a fertile ground for team development!

Questions?

