

## CASE STUDY:

# The Primary Breadwinner Sales Star

## Keeley Patterson

- New York City, 41 years old
- SVP Sales Strategy and Operations, theSkimm
- Brightly, 2, and Sonny, 8 months

### HER JOB:

She manages revenue strategy, operations, creative, and production for theSkimm, a women-focused media company with a total audience of 12 million.

### PARENT SUPPORTS SHE USES:

- Maternity leave
- FSA for child care
- Child care discount and backup care

## Keeley's Story

"I'm not someone who feels a lot of mom guilt," says Keeley. "If anything, I feel guilt stepping away from the business we were building to go do this."

"*This*," is two kids under two (and two maternity leaves) that Keeley didn't expect to have when she started at theSkimm, right on the heels of their major series C funding from Google, five years ago. But in the years that Keeley married and started her family, the massive-hit newsletter for Millennial women grew just like she did, taking on motherhood and becoming more successful as a result. Keeley helped launch influential public service campaigns focused on paid family leave and



child care. "When I started, there were almost no parents, and now we have these waves of babies—we call them 'classes'—all born around the same time to parents who go out, come back, and support the class after them." That support comes in the form of culture and top-notch benefits that help Keeley, a primary-breadwinning, traveling, facetime-mandatory employee, do her best and feel great about it. "I'm obsessed with Vivvi's child care. I'm obsessed with my kids. The biggest gift that work has given me is the ability to have this whole other life I'd never really pictured. I enjoy it so, so much."

**"In sales, it's all about the ability to say yes to the meeting without hesitation. I feel so lucky to have the perfect benefits to make that possible during my childbearing years."**

### Why she's staying

"This is the longest I've ever spent at one company," says Keeley, who previously had job-hopped in two-to-three-year stints. It's a commitment she attributes to both the benefits and the alignment of the company's mission with her own new personal priorities. She got pregnant right after one of the founders had her first baby, and helped launch theSkimm's "Show Us Your Leave" campaign—in which employees at 500+ companies shared their policies for greater private-sector transparency. "I had gotten to a point where I was, honestly, going through the motions in my career, and this movement made me so proud and empowered to work at a company that really lives its mission. Plus, now

that I'm a mom, I would never go somewhere with lesser benefits." The cost of losing a high-level employee like Keeley is estimated to be 213% of her salary. Retaining her avoids that financial hit and quickly offsets the cost of her 18-week maternity leave. And employees like Keeley who find greater meaning in their work also generate an additional \$9,078 per worker per year.

### How she's growing her work

Keeley's work directly feeds the company's revenue. As she grows, so does her value to her employer. During her leave, she empowered her direct reports to delegate some easier tasks and to take on pieces of her coverage that they were ready to grow into, so the whole group could level up. "They were great at stepping up," she says. "And it let me come back and say, what's the next thing that I want to sink my teeth into?"

### When showing up is everything

One of Keeley's most intense work sprints hit right as she was coming back from leave, including a sales trip to secure key business. Her child care wasn't totally set yet, but her ability to access backup care made it work. In sales, explains Keeley, your schedule is not necessarily your own: "When you're trying to get in front of clients, if they say they're free on X date, there's no negotiation—you take the meeting, you go on the trip, you win the business and provide bottom line revenue. Backup care gives me the ability to say yes, with no hesitation." Keeley says she maxes out the backup care credits she receives.

### How parenthood gives her a new sales lever

(And it's not the emergency exit!) Keeley says she's become very passionate about helping friends advocate for themselves at work—and uses her new lived experience in connections with clients. "Another woman on our revenue team just came back and told me how it gave her a new lever, a new way to connect from a business perspective with clients." That's the ripple effect of visible parenthood in leadership.



## Calculating the employer's estimated R.O.I. on benefits she used in the past year

#### INVESTMENTS

Backup care and care cash:	<b>\$2,000</b>
FSA administration:	<b>Typically around \$60</b>
18 weeks of paid maternity leave (calculated with a day rate based on estimated industry benchmark salary data for role/level at other media companies):	<b>\$73,728</b>
<b>One-Year Investment</b>	<b>\$75,788</b>

#### RETURNS

Retention savings:	<b>\$453,690</b>
Meaning-driven productivity increase:	<b>\$9,078</b>
Biz trips/days worked thanks to backup care:	<b>\$8,192</b>
<b>One-Year Savings</b>	<b>\$470,960</b>

**5.2x R.O.I.**