

We are family: how DNA's work culture puts family first

DNA's working environment thrives on a culture of responsibility and flexibility where work-life balance is more than just a pretty phrase. Don't believe us? Just ask the grandparents.

Finnish society is no stranger to progressive ideas. The country has challenged functional norms around education, social welfare and sustainability (their highly successful 'Be More Like a Finn' tourism campaign promoted more sustainable travel). But the country's appetite for doing things differently doesn't end there: work-life balance is also set firmly in their crosshairs. At the vanguard of this effort to modernise working life is the telco DNA. Work, their mantra goes, is just one part of life, and it shouldn't take over. And so, the company has been on a mission to equip their employees with the perfect (or as near to perfect as possible) work-life balance. In practice this means a concerted commitment to true flexibility where employees are encouraged to find the working environment that best suits them and are ultimately responsible for their own work and attaining their goals, free from the strictures of the post-agricultural norm of the 9-5. Perhaps most interestingly, though, is the role

Family first

Ask most parents and guardians what the most stressful part of their day is, and they're more than likely to respond with "Crisis pick up". That manic dash from work to the school or kindergarten, contending with aggressive traffic, packed public transport and the sense that you're leaving all sorts of unfinished tasks behind you at work is a heady mixture of stress and guilt. "An employee should never feel guilty about picking up their child", says Marko Rissanen, SVP of Human Resources. "At DNA, such things are handled through a family-friendly model, with the child taken to or picked up from kindergarten and the employee attending meetings by phone. We trust our employees to know the best way to arrange their own work-life balance."

'These things happen'

At the core of DNA's commitment to flexible, family-first work-life balance is a clear understanding that 'these things happen', and regardless of the unforeseen events in life, all employees are responsible for completing their own work and meeting their deadlines. Along the way, they have the support and the understanding to manage both as it suits them. That commitment by DNA hasn't gone unnoticed. Through a family-friendliness survey (considering the quality and implementation of DNA's

development plan) and audits by the Family Federation (FFoF), the FFoF recognised the company as a Family Friendly Workplace. They are the first private listed company in Finland to receive the recognition. Achieving firsts, however, is something of a habit for DNA. Just this year, DNA was chosen the best place to work in Finland in the Great Place to Work ([GPTW](#)) 2019 survey's large companies

A Grand old time

Paid parental leave is arguably one of the most attractive employment benefits in the Nordics (in 2015, Telenor announced that it would extend a minimum six-month maternity leave to all women in all of its markets). But what about taking that one step further? What about Grandparental Leave? In 2017, DNA became the first company in Finland to offer Grandparental leave to first-time grandparents. It's safe to say the initiative was a success. Awarded The Working Life Action Of the Year, the 'granny leave' category ([GPTW is a global authority on workplace culture auditing](#)) initiative became a vital window for busy grandparents to spend much-needed quality time with the tiniest members of their family. Among the DNA employees who have availed of the leave is Tuulia Tahvonen who, in late October 2018, was told that her new-born grandson, Nooa, would urgently have to undergo heart surgery. While Nooa's parents were busy at the hospital caring for their infant son, in stepped Granny Tuulia to take care of the family's daily affairs and her older grandchild. Finnish broadcaster Yle was on hand to [report the story](#). Today, one-year-old Nooa is doing well and her grandmother is central to one of DNA's most dramatic flexible work-life stories.