BOOK REVIEW

Daniels, K., Lamond, D.A., & Standen, P. (Eds.) (2000) *Managing Telework: Perspectives from Human Resource Management and Work Psychology,* London: Thomson Learning Business Press.

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This book aims to assist organizations in managing teleworkers by examining salient issues and developing a framework for understanding telework. The editors are academics at prominent institutions in the United Kingdom and Australia, forming the basis for a well-researched book. The book begins with the comment that one cannot assume that all telework is the same or similar, and offers a classification of telework based on the dimensions of the degree of knowledge intensity, intra- and extra-organizational contact required and the location of the teleworker. This classification is likely to prove very useful to future researchers and managers as the discussions throughout the book are based on the issues and possible solutions related to the various types of telework.

Chapter one provides an overview of trends regarding telework, highlights the key issues and offers a framework for managing teleworkers. Broadly, the framework covers aspects relating to the nature of the telework itself that is performed, the organizational context, the management systems required, managing individual teleworkers and the outcomes involved. Each of these key areas contains a number of issues that are explored in subsequent chapters.

The second chapter examines telework in its national context and makes the point that macro labour market conditions in different countries act to support or hinder telework. Specific aspects include the information society context, employer's and individual's attitudes to teleworking, and the role of government, industrial relations and trade unions. In many instances teleworkers do not fit conventional categories of employees or self-employed people and, depending on the legislative and company response to this, people are either encouraged or discouraged from entering this form of work. The relatively high or low incidence of teleworking also seems to be associated with nations' perceptions of the role of work and cultural aspects and the status of teleworkers.

Most previous research regarding teleworking has focussed on the telework itself and the forms it takes, rather than on organizational contexts or structures that could facilitate it. Chapter three provides an overview of organizational structure and the implications for teleworking, and then focuses specifically on teamwork and co-ordination. The discussion of organizational structure is brief and focuses on key issues such as organic versus mechanistic structures, and the difference between organizations that include a degree of teleworking versus those that have been shaped around it. The discussion regarding teams focuses on virtual teams. The author makes the point that the type of work required (high or low knowledge) and the degree of communication needed by the teleworking team members is crucial in influencing their interaction as a team. The question is also raised as to whether teleworking will be a voluntary or mandatory form of work in the future.

The chapter devoted to organizational culture and telework illustrates how society, regulatory bodies, managers and co-workers have traditionally perceived work, with an emphasis on the manager's control over workers and the visibility of work being performed, and a commitment to the organization as a physical place, among other aspects. These perceptions often form part of the organizational culture and are unlikely to support telework. By contrast, a culture that values outcomes, empowerment of the individual and more holistic jobs in likely to be more conducive to teleworking. The reasons for organizations using telework,

the role of occupational status and a framework for describing cultures in teleworking organizations are also covered in this chapter. The impact of teleworking on organizational culture is also discussed, such as the potential for teleworking to liberalize and dilute the culture.

While various mechanisms are available to socialize physically present newcomers into the organization, the processes involved in socializing 'invisible' employees are not as obvious. However, the fit between the individual teleworker and the organization remains an important aspect of ensuring that employees who are not an physically present acts in organizationally approved ways. In view of the lack of research into the socialization of teleworkers, the author of chapter five examines research regarding the socialization of office workers and extrapolates this to teleworkers. Various issues regarding the measurement of person-organization fit are raised and practical recommendations are offered.

Chapter six focuses on how distributed teams use and adapt technology to suit the particular task that they are facing. It is based on an eighteen-month study of work practices in a distributed design and manufacture centre with staff in the UK and the USA. The purpose of the research was to examine the role of various teleworking technologies involving different types of real-time video connections. It was found that participants chose to use different technologies depending largely on the type of task they were working on, such as decision-making versus problem solving issues. In other words, the decision as to which technology to use was often based on factors that were not related to the technology itself, but to the type of work that needed to be done at that moment and the ways in which the staff could adapt the technology to suit their needs. The criteria used to make these decisions were often very subtle. This is an interesting chapter that examines aspects that are not the traditional domain of the industrial psychologist, but which could have a significant impact on the performance of teleworkers.

The relationship between personality and telework is examined in chapter seven. The classification of telework (presented in chapter one) is used as a starting point, as the type of personality suited to a particular type of telework is likely to be related to the nature of the work and its context. The author provides an overview of the 'Big 5' model of personality and of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator and how these relate to job performance. He then presents hypotheses as to how these findings could relate to teleworkers, bearing in mind the initial point about how the demands placed on teleworkers differ according to the nature of their work. He concludes with comments about teleworkers, personality and virtual teams and provides some useful pointers for managers.

In chapter eight, the author examines the relationship between job features and psychological well being. Research regarding this relationship for workers in general is summarized, and then extrapolated to teleworkers. Once again, the different types to telework are referred to, as some are more susceptible to certain problems than others are. Specific job features that are commented upon include the opportunity for control, the opportunity to use one's skills, variety at work, balanced work demands, job and organizational clarity, the availability of money, good physical conditions, social contact and interpersonal support and the holding a valued social position. Possible interventions are recommended, but the author notes that any intervention should begin with an assessment of the job's features and their relationship to well-being in order to identify the job features need to be altered and whether any particular groups are at risk.

For home-based teleworkers, managing the interface between home and work is often an issue. In chapter nine, the author

provides an overview of research into home based workers and the issues involved, including spillover and compensation theories, physical, temporal, work/family, and work/community boundaries. Although many of these issues need to be managed by the teleworker him/herself, other issues can be more directly influenced by employing organization, such as autonomy, equity in relation to office based employees and the social value attributed to home-based telework.

The psychological contract between organizations and teleworkers is likely to be complex. Although it may include many of the expectations held of office workers, the basis for the contract may differ in some ways and the potential for perceived breaches seems to be large. In chapter ten, the concept of a psychological contract is reviewed, followed by a summary of certain agreements negotiated with employers on behalf of teleworkers. Pertinent issues are raised, such as the degree of control that organizations have over the decoding of psychological contracts, the creation of normative contracts, the potential impact on virtual teams and areas where breaches of the psychological contract are likely to occur with teleworkers. This is a forward-looking chapter with much food for thought.

In view of the fact that the managers of teleworkers cannot physically observe the teleworkers working, there is a shift in the emphasis of the managerial role. While the management style required is not necessarily fundamentally different from that required for other forms of work, a greater degree of trust is needed. More importantly, the management style that is deemed most appropriate will be related to the features of the telework being conducted such as location, information and communication technologies, knowledge intensity and intra- and extra-organizational communication.

Omari and Standen, the authors of chapter eleven, argue that it is important to look beyond the attributes of the individual when selecting teleworkers. The more obvious aspects such as personality, skills and motivation contribute to the success of teleworkers, but aspects such as the continuity between the task performed and the organization's technical systems, the social relations between the teleworkers and other members of the organization and clients and the suitability of the remote environment are also important. Further, some organizations perceive teleworkers as short-term 'fix-it' solutions to problems, while others embrace them as an aid to organizational strategy and as an innovative work process. These organizations approach the selection of teleworkers in very different ways.

Managers of teleworkers are faced with the challenge of including the teleworkers in organizational learning despite their geographical distance and lesser visibility. In chapter thirteen, a simple but pertinent overview of organizational learning is provided. This is followed by a systematic analysis of the barriers to learning that could apply to teleworkers. Many practical tips are provided and an integrated approach to including teleworkers in the processes of organizational learning is offered. On a similar theme, chapter fourteen discusses the training and development of teleworkers. A case study is covered, providing useful insights and an overview of the processes involved.

Assessing and managing the performance of traditional workers is often problematic and the same tends to hold true of teleworkers. The author of chapter fifteen criticizes the existing literature regarding the management of the performance of teleworkers as frequently being prescriptive and being based on inconsistent principles. As an alternative to this he offers a theoretically grounded approach based on principal agent theory. The difficulties typically encountered in managing the performance of people who work at a distance are discussed. Recommendations are made for specific types of job environments.

Organizations are facing numerous changes, of which teleworking is only one. These changes have major implications for managers, the teleworkers themselves and human resources practitioners. Some people will be required to develop a broader and deeper range of competencies and will need to challenge the assumptions underlying the way in which they have operated in the past. Chapter sixteen examines these issues and suggests ways of preparing people and organizations for teleworking. The final chapter looks at the future prospects and perspectives of teleworking and emphasizes the need for an integrated approach to all aspects covered in the book.

The usefulness of this book lies in its theoretical grounding combined with the authors' ability to adopt a systemic and holistic approach to the issues. Although recommendations are made, they are not prescriptive or offered in the form of a 'quick fix.' Rather, managers are urged to analyze their particular situations and to examine the broad context of issues before deciding upon solutions. Where the existing research is sparse, the authors have successfully examined the implications of related research and offered tentative comparisons and suggestions. This book is easy to read and the theoretical introductions to each chapter are easily accessible to line managers from various disciplines. The authors have struck a sound balance between accessibility to managers and the book's research and theoretical grounding.