



Changing the way we work

Teleworking

Professor Charles Handy

I said about ten years ago that we would be selling offices as apartment houses and everybody laughed at me, but I have to tell you that one half of the old head office where I used to work, is now advertising itself as apartment block. Organisations are getting much smaller in the centre, big organisations. More and more people are able to work outside, organisations are becoming, in a sense, club houses where you only go in to if you've actually got a specific purpose like a meeting or whatever. Instead of just going there to pick up your mail because you can pick up your mail anywhere now.

Man In Car

If you were to put some of those into Chapter Five.....

Commentary

The principle of not spending more time at the workplace than you have to is of growing importance to knowledge-based companies like Digital, where much of the work can be done anywhere Digital's headquarters in Reading is one of the few large office blocks left in an organisation which realised that each desk space was costing £8000 a year.

Alan Evans

It began when we started to have difficulties and realise that we looked more like a property company than a computer company. At one time we had 13 offices in Reading alone - today we have 1. Our workforce is 7,000 and a goodly proportion of those are either mobile or work some sort of flexible arrangement, we think about 20% of the workforce ah spends most of their days in a car um don't have an office to, to call home - about 150 who work directly out of home.

Commentary

One of those people is John Holland His job as an organisational development consultant with Digital is based at the Reading office, but he lives in Northumberland.

John Holland

When I was commuting I probably spent on average fifteen hours a week in a car, I was doing in excess of seven hundred miles in the south east of England I rarely saw my children literally between Sunday nights when they went to bed, and Saturday morning when they got up because I was leaving at seven o'clock in the morning and not getting home until seven or eight at night. Now, when I'm not travelling I'm actually at home; during the summer holidays er I actually choose to work six till two, so I do an early shift it allows me to spend the afternoon with the children doing other things I've actually got much more accustomed to the fact that what's important is the outcome of what I do, not how long it takes me I do have a very clear set of goals, and I'm very much left to to get on with it.

Alan Evans

I think trust is probably the most vital component of a new manager's style. So many things happen off the site, er managers don't have the opportunity to sit and watch over what their people do.

(On phone) What about Monday - where am I supposed to be first thing?

Commentary

But flexible working isn't just about working from home. It's about being on the road and working anywhere you can plug in your laptop.

Cathy Mccaul

Today Friday in the Reading Touchdown Centre in the UK and during the course of this week I've been mostly in Geneva and came back to England last night. Next week I'll be off in Geneva, France and Germany so as you can see I lead rather a nomadic life. So what I do is come into a facility like this that's been set up in most of the offices around the world plug my lap top into the mains because that gives me a chance to recharge the battery and then use connections like this to link into the network.

Gary Kerrison

I think it's the, the lack of people contact your usual colleagues aren't always there you don't have a place where you can put all your belongings in the office. That sort of thing are the things which are the down sides.

Cathy Mccaul

Before I guess I was one old fashioned manager and I used to carry a lot of paper around, and I've become very dependent on my lap top computer. "so many cables here ifs unbelievable" So between lap top and mobile, I'm dead if I don't have either of those. 'And off I go".