

A NEW WAY OF WORKING



Getronics

a KPN company

A NEW WAY OF WORKING

GETRONICS BELIEVES THAT A GENUINELY NEW WAY OF WORKING IS BEGINNING TO EMERGE. THE ORGANISATIONS WHICH BENEFIT WILL BE THOSE WHO TAKE TIME TO STOP AND EXAMINE WHAT IS HAPPENING. THE NEW WAY OF WORKING IS INTEGRAL TO GETRONICS' THINKING AND ACTION. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THIS SHORT PAPER WE WILL MAKE SOME SOUND AND PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS ON HOW BEST TO WELCOME NEW WAYS OF WORKING, BUT FIRST, WE'D LIKE TO SHARE SOME OF OUR THOUGHTS ON WHAT IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW.

THIS IS NOT A DESCRIPTION OF THE TECHNICAL ARCHITECTURE, FUNCTIONS OR MANAGED SERVICES RELATING TO NEW WAYS OF WORKING. THESE ASPECTS OF THE SUBJECT ARE FULLY DESCRIBED ON GETRONICS.NL/HETNIEUWE_WERKEN.

SOMETHING'S HAPPENED

Bit by bit, the world of work has changed. Although Information and Communications Technology has been absolutely central to this change, the scale of the shift is greater than the sum of its parts. We need to look further than the adoption and effect of individual technologies and think about cultural, economic and generational change in the world around us.

Globalisation has had a massive effect on the way we design, manufacture and distribute goods. Partly as a result of this, we have witnessed a swing in Europe towards service economies in which the information or knowledge worker becomes the defining professional role.

The perimeter of the individual organization is no longer a hard divide. The extended enterprise softens the separation between an organization and its suppliers, partners, clients and even competitors. This is also thanks in part to the ease with which available technologies help us to work outside previous organizational structure: mobile computing, social networking and web-based delivery models all break the divide further.

In this new world, the nature of the information worker has changed too. Just a few years ago, we saw information workers as being those who worked at the smarter end of business – people who earned their living by using their brains and intelligence to turn information into value.

Today, we see the characteristics of information working becoming an intrinsic part of a wider range of jobs and work-styles. This growth in information work is clearly reflected in attitudes to home-working and mobile working – both in terms of flexible contracts and of connectivity and access to information – it's been said before – but work becomes something you do and not a place you go to.

A Getronics survey of 1500 Dutch business users shows that half the employees have at least the possibility of working from home. This is still, however, regarded as a privilege rather than a productivity issue. Trends also change by role and sector with home-working options offered as follows: ICT (75%), Finance (59%), Sales & Marketing jobs (65%) senior management (85%).

We also need to consider how these fuzzier organizational divides and increased opportunities for collaboration and communication affect risk and reputation. When, for example, a segment of the workforce can so easily establish a common interest group entirely outside the company-defined communication structure (using Facebook for example), how can we be sure that the contributors will respect policy, governance and security issues? How can we ensure that blogs are used responsibly and that their content does not compromise the organisation?

Despite the turbulence, Getronics is positive about these shifts. The ease with which new web structures can become collective repositories for collaboration will actively encourage collaboration both across the workforce and the extended communities of people who work together. These practices will also be felt in approaches and strategies to Corporate Social Responsibility as individuals share and learn best behavioral practice in, for example, energy conservation and waste management.

Getronics itself has been actively promoting this shift to more flexible connectivity to company information and resources for a number of years. We have been hot to help our clients adopt mobile technologies and all forms of ICT-enabled collaboration and communication. We have also worked hard to develop the underlying security, compliance and support systems on which these new ways of working depend.

If anything, the question we are left asking is, why, when the potential and benefit of these more flexible working methods are so apparent, has the uptake not been even greater and even more dramatic?

LOOK TO THE BIGGER PICTURE

It's important to see the new world of work in a broad context – this is about more than ubiquitous connectivity meeting the digital natives of Generation Y. When seeking to get a grasp of the new way of working and thinking about how it is most likely to influence your own organisation, we have found it worthwhile to look at a number of specific themes, and to think about the ways in which they are inter-related.

Changes to Work Attitudes

Look at attitudes to work within your own organisation and think about how you will deal with the radically different expectations you encounter. We are told how the baby-boomer craves continuity and approval, and regards responsibility as the ultimate reward for hard work and loyalty. We are told how this contrasts with the characteristics of Generation Y, whose commitment is directed more to developing their own skills than to the corporate success of their employers.

These contrasts are offset by common attitudes across the workforce. People are now more open about their desire to achieve a decent work/life balance, and this means there is a growing resentment of non-productive activity. People do not, for example, feel good about spending ten hours every week journeying to and from their workplace.

People are also increasingly clear about what they regard as making an employer an attractive proposition. Good pay is important and always will be, but people want more. Above all, they want opportunities for personal growth and development – opportunities to increase their own value.

All these shifts in attitudes to work both impact on and are impacted by the new way of working.

Changes to Management Style

Many managers now find themselves managing in a world they were not prepared for. They are expected to promote a performance-based working culture, but all too often are still operating within structures which are overwhelmingly presence-based.

Their teams are less stable. They form and re-form, expand and contract according to business need and policy, and this makes it tougher to establish the personal relationships on which good management practice has been traditionally based.

Add to this, the expansion of virtual work-teams and the rise of home-working and flexible contracts, and the management challenge increases even further. How can you guide and develop the talent and contribution of the individual when relationships are, at best, remote?

How can general management take the environment of the new way of working and use it as a vehicle for inspiration, encouragement and analysis of those they serve?

And most importantly, how can management set challenging yet achievable targets for their teams and how can performance be measured, improved and rewarded in the new way of work?

Changes to Accountability

Compliance, security and business accountability have stiffened beyond recognition. Although the organisation may have become looser in many ways with its virtual teams and extended chains of partners and alliances, when it comes to reporting and accountability, there is little room for manoeuvre.

This goes to the heart of employee behaviour and to the heart of the tools and systems people use in the new world of work. On the one hand, the breadth and depth of records which contribute to an auditable portrait of company activity has increased beyond recognition.

On the other, individual and shared obligation to operate for the greatest value of stakeholders means that everyone is under pressure to increase profit and reduce cost. This is not just at management level – ask any postal delivery worker, and it becomes clear that accountability is felt as a personal pressure across the organisation.

Changes to Environmental Responsibility

The green question is now undoubtedly mainstream in both public and private sectors. This is no longer just a question of social responsibility. It is also a question of sound business sense – particularly with regard to cost-reduction.

Environmental responsibility is tightly linked to the new way of working for a number of reasons. Increased reliance on electronic communications leads to corresponding decreases in both travel and premises requirements. Both of these mean a quantifiable reduction in the carbon footprint.

[KPN/Getronics has set itself the goal of being carbon neutral by 2020. This is an indication of corporate accountability to combating climate change.](#)

An increased reliance on access to electronically stored information and the tools used to manipulate it does, however, lead to an increased reliance on the data centre. Green data centre design and management is a hot topic, and in the new world of work, there is a strong tendency away from ownership and towards rationalised resources delivered via third parties.

MANAGEMENT PRESSURE AND OPPORTUNITY

We see each of these areas of change as a point of opportunity. In helping its clients think about crafting their new ways of working, Getronics is keen to stress the critical importance of extending dialogue across different professional disciplines.

We see four professional management profiles as being critical in helping envision and enable the new model, and we also recognise that members of each of these disciplines is under real pressure.

- **General Management** – how do you manage, inspire and measure success when teams are increasingly volatile and remote – and how do you actively pursue innovation?
- **Human Resources** – how do you attract and retain the right talent, creating employment frameworks which embrace new work-styles in a way which is fair and rewarding – and how do you track and identify new professional roles which emerge in the new way of work?
- **Facilities Management** – how do you ensure that physical space is fit for purpose in this changing scenario and how do you minimize cost and environmental impact?
- **ICT Management** – how do you ensure that the workforce has the tools and access to information it needs while balancing liberty with control?

In considering these four disciplines, perhaps facilities management will face the greatest cultural change in the new way of working. To a greater or lesser extent, the other three management disciplines have already become familiar with the virtual and extended workspace.

For facilities management, the focus has traditionally been on the physical office, production and distribution space occupied by the enterprise. As, for example, increasing home-working arrangements come into being, facilities managers are also going to need to influence these virtual spaces. How, for example, do you ensure that the ergonomics of a home office are managed acceptably, or that the costs of heating and lighting in the home space are realistically and fairly compensated?

The key to bringing these disciplines together in a way which will create value is, we believe, to make the individuals and the different communities within the workforce, the point of departure. If you focus on individual and team needs and aspirations, then you will be on track to achieve increased personal productivity across the workforce – the new way of working is not an end in itself!

The good news is that creating this new way of working is not an isolated management responsibility – rather than that it is massively collaborative. Many business users of IT are already experimenting with its potential - using blogs and social networking to establish special interest forums – and all of this experience, energy and enthusiasm is there to be harnessed.

CREATING A FRAMEWORK FOR DIALOGUE AND VISION

KPN/Getronics has a very practical approach. In our own considerations of the new way of working, we have empowered a task force under the banner of Corporate Social Responsibility to examine, define and promote a program of action.

We are already finding this a hugely positive experience. By bringing together representatives of the four management disciplines described above, we have enforced a silo-busting approach which is working well. As described above, we have made individual and team behaviour the point of departure, and then asked each of the management disciplines to collaborate in framing new ways of working in response. It is the collaboration which delivers the results.

Working closely with facilities management, KPN/Getronics re-designed office-based resources for over 2,600 employees in The Hague, Amsterdam and Zoetermeer this year. The new way of work provides a flexible workspace for a more mobile and dynamic workforce, and satisfies the needs of both individual and group workstyles. In addition to increasing productivity, the new workspace also reduces site costs and occupancy.

The results are concrete. The use of the ConferenceCard for teleconferences at KPN/Getronics avoided more than 19 million road kilometers and saved 280,000 tons of CO² emissions in 2008 – 20% more than in 2007. The target for 2009 is to reduce CO² emissions by a 330,000 tons – a further 20% reduction. It will achieve this by allowing roughly one-in-five KPN/Getronics employees to utilize the ConferenceCard from the end of 2009. Another example of our high ambition is the KPN/Getronics target in 2009 to replace 22,500 site meetings with video conferencing.

The complete survey provides a useful snapshot of usage and attitudes and acts as a useful framework for examination of the new way of work.

We create and manage the foundation on which contemporary work-styles depend. We execute the transition programs needed to take an organisation into a new world of communication and collaboration, and we manage the unavoidable need to guarantee continuity and co-existence between the current and the new.

Placing this initiative under the Corporate Social Responsibility banner was not a casual decision: as the standard-bearer for company behaviour and culture, the drive towards new ways of working could not be given a more appropriate engine.

In all this activity we are also acutely focused on security and compliance. We have an innovative and practical approach to security which again is strongly rooted in the ability to increase personal productivity. Rather than focusing on pure organisational policing, we ask how security practice can be designed to act as a personal guardian for the individual employee.

We are also keenly focused on bringing the benefits of the new way of working to our clients, and within Getronics Consulting services, we have established a practical pathway to new work-styles. In this activity, our consultancy teams work with a broad spectrum of clients to analyse current work practice and to identify opportunities for improvement.

Effective security must be moulded to the working culture of teams and individuals – it must be an enabler to effective working and not a barrier. This is especially true in the looser structures of the new way of working where it must be possible, for example, to easily invite new team members to participate at an authorised level and remain in control.

STAYING GROUNDED

Getronics styles itself 'the workspace company' – it's what we do. Our business portfolio is built around workspace management, connectivity and data centre services and these three areas of expertise establish the operational foundation for the new way of work.

Survey Summary

Getronics recently conducted an extensive survey into current ICT usage, with a particular emphasis on work-styles. Here are a few of the key findings:

FINDING

- 1% of employees are still not satisfied with ICT performance.
- Senior management and younger workers have similar levels of ICT awareness and education.
- Marketing and sales show the highest levels of adoption of smart technologies.
- 60% of respondents believe there security issues in homeworking.

IMPLICATION FOR NEW WAY OF WORKING

- Make performance a priority for remote and flexible workers.
- Actively target these two communities in New Way of Work initiatives.
- Use marketing and sales as a stimulus for wider adoption – make them the evangelists.
- Address security concerns head-on and explain required behaviours.

NEXT STEPS

For the past twelve months or so, most of us have been pretty much focussed on surviving recession – the emphasis has been on paring down cost and achieving practical scalability. It now looks as if we are beginning to emerge from all this. We must continue to put lessons learned into practice – an upturn is not an invitation to profligacy.

But now is also a time to be bold in our thinking – to ask 'what is work?' and 'how best can we make it a productive and rewarding part of people's lives?' Talking about the new world of work in 2005, Bill Gates described the foundation of the new world as being all about 'transforming ideas into value.' His observation remains a bold and solid starting point.

The new way of working is more about behaviour and commitment than technology. In actively promoting new ways of working among its employees, KPN has organised numerous cultural workshops, at which people are encouraged to talk about their ideas and concerns, and to get a taste for the changes ahead.

Much of the message and received imagery of the new world of work revolves around the individual. (We've all seen plenty of pictures of the executive with a laptop on the beach). The empowering technology of the new way of working is very much focussed on individual empowerment, but we shouldn't accentuate individualism at the expense of collaboration and teamwork. The technologies which now allow anytime/anywhere access to tools and information invite – above everything – participation – and that means making involvement rather than individualism the goal.

In January 2009, employees of Getronics gathered at a convention held in Utrecht. Our management team issued a challenge. We were invited to invent new ways of working for ourselves and our company. Since then, we have begun to formally examine the exploitation of communications and collaboration technologies within the context of changing business cultures with real and tangible results.

In short – we want to lead by example – practicing what we preach.

The organisation is a community and the new way of work impacts the way that community functions. When, for example, people begin to spend more time working from home, they lose the natural point of reference once provided by the coffee machine. KPN has been keen to finance staff association initiatives to help nurture a new sense of community for the new way of working.

In terms of practical suggestions, we are keen to share our experience to date.

- We recommend our clients to consciously bust silos – specifically bringing together HR, Facilities Management, ICT Management and general management functions to brainstorm new ways of working.
- We specifically ask ICT Managers to look for natural upcoming breaks in the ICT life-cycle and consider these as breakpoints – these may be due to current contracts coming to an end or to current technology investments approaching super-annuation.
- We encourage HR and Facilities Management to review actual working practice and consider in hard terms how many square meters of office space need to be sustained for given business functions.
- We suggest that you set concrete targets for the reduction of travel budgets, road miles, square meters occupied and CO² emissions and examine how new ways of working can help meet these targets.

- We recommend that you pay particular attention to compliance and security, identifying any areas of risk which could jeopardise your own organisation's shift to the new way of working.
- We strongly promote experimentation, introducing new ways of working to specific business functions with enthusiasm and vision.
- We offer our own consulting services as a catalyst to consider ways to accelerate the accrual of benefits from new work practice.

At Getronics we have already begun to experience the benefits of new ways of working, and we have begun to share ideas and opportunities with our clients. We will never lose sight of the need to contain costs and guarantee continuity – but we are equally convinced that work should be inspiring and fun – and that the way you design and sustain the workspace has a direct and positive influence on individual and business performance.

LET'S TALK ...

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