

2019

Managing Telework for maximum  
positive impact



# Contents

---

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Purpose of this e-book.....</b>	<b>3</b>
What is teleworking? .....	3
Why should I allow my staff to telework?.....	3
My job is to Plan, Organise, Execute and Control. How can I do that if my staff don't come to the office anymore? ....	5
My Director is against the principle of teleworking, she tolerates it but clearly doesn't like it. Can you help me better understand what is meant by "managing the work rather than the people?" .....	5
How can I make sure that the switch from managing the people to managing the work is accomplished?.....	6
How will we get all the work done if I can't give it to the efficient performers?.....	8
What questions do I need to ask myself in order to determine whether my team is truly ready for telework? .....	9
If I just don't trust some of my staff to telework honestly, what should I do?.....	9
What about people who need my supervision? .....	10
I have some people who I'm afraid will never know when to stop working if they telework. What do I do about that? .....	10
How do I address the difficult issue of not feeling that someone is suitable for telework?.....	10
How can I better focus on outcomes, not just for teleworkers, but for all staff? .....	11
What if someone who is teleworking keeps missing deadlines? .....	11
What about newcomers? How can I make sure they are doing their job, particularly if they are teleworking? .....	11
Tips on becoming more outcome-oriented. ....	12
If my staff are all teleworking, how can I organise meetings?.....	12
Body language is important to communication, won't messages get lost in translation if I don't hold physical meetings?.....	13
We need weekly/monthly status updates with the whole team/unit. What about those?.....	13
How can I build effective relationships without meetings? .....	13
Some of my teleworkers don't get back to me as quickly as they used to in the office and I find this frustrating. What can I do about it?.....	14
What if I like face-to-face communication best? .....	15
I think it important and courteous for people to communicate where they are working from if they are teleworking, what do you think?.....	15
<b>Communication: Things to try:.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>ADDITIONAL READING .....</b>	<b>18</b>

# Introduction

---

## Purpose of this e-book

This document has been designed and structured in a user-friendly format to answer common – and not so common – questions that managers ask themselves and others as they struggle with the ever-changing role of management and the rapidly evolving world of work.

It also contains some tips and ideas that you may like to try to implement as teleworking becomes an integral part of our daily lives.

## **"Work is something we DO, not a place that we GO"**

### **Q: What is teleworking?**

**A : Teleworking** is a work arrangement in which employees do not commute or travel to a central place of work, such as an office building. According to a Reuters poll, approximately "one in five workers around the globe telework frequently and nearly 10 percent work from home every day."

In 1995, the motto that "work is something you do, not something you travel to" was coined. Variations of this motto include: "Work is something we DO, not a place that we GO" and "Work is what we do, not where we are." Teleworking has been adopted by a range of businesses, governments and not-for-profit organisations. Organisations may use it to reduce costs (staff teleworking from home 100% of their time do not require an office, a space which has to be rented or purchased, provided with lighting and climate control, etc.). Some organisations adopt teleworking to improve workers' quality of life, as it typically reduces commuting time and time stuck in traffic jams. In addition, teleworking may make it easier for people to balance their work responsibilities with family roles (e.g., caring for children or elderly parents) and finally, some organisations adopt teleworking for environmental reasons, as telework can reduce congestion and air pollution, as it can reduce the number of cars on the roads.

### **Q: Why should I allow my staff to telework? Managing teleworkers in a team where some people do, and some people don't make my life even more complicated.**

A: Teleworking is an important tool in the European Institutions, originally intended to reduce stress, improve working conditions and increase productivity. There are many reasons why it makes sense, such as the need to balance work and family life, reduce the length and frequency of commuting and minimize the effects of traffic-related stress on staff well-being. When asked, most staff who telework believe that their productivity has increased as a result of their teleworking as it gives them uninterrupted time to read and think. They also feel more relaxed and less tense as a result of not having to come to the office one or two days a week.

On the other hand, it creates some challenges for managers who must step away from the long-standing belief that the office is the only place where work gets done and that staff need to be

physically present in order to be productive. As staff of the European Institutions are often (if not always) working on knowledge work-related jobs, how can productivity be effectively quantified? How can we ensure that the work gets done? How do we know what staff are really doing? How can we ensure that staff remain connected, support colleagues effectively and still feel part of a team? How can we ensure that teleworking has a positive, rather than a negative impact on staff performance?

But hold on for a minute. How do these criteria differ from those we use to judge the productivity of any staff member, regardless of whether they telework?

How do you know what they are doing on mission? In the cafeteria? In their office? How often do you have the opportunity to observe all your team members in action for the duration of a working day?

The fact is that the criteria we need to use for measuring teleworking effectiveness are the same for judging the productivity of any team member, regardless of whether they telework. Telework simply reinforces the need for clearly defined performance expectations and the need to act swiftly when a performance issue occurs.

Just like with managing staff at the workplace, teleworkers need managing according to their experience, and the importance of the task itself. Independent experienced and motivated staff may need little supervision while teleworking – just like they do now, while other staff may need more close supervision – just like they do now.

For new, less independent teleworkers, you may need to develop a certain level of trust – more frequent check-in times (meetings, phone calls, emails) may be required in the beginning. By assessing their progress on a frequent basis, you will be able to see how they are performing – or not.

Do be aware, however, that it can be counter-productive to request too frequent updates and reports of the work that they have done as this can be very time-consuming and have a negative impact on overall productivity.

Telework allows staff to schedule their days according to productive periods and personal needs, although they should be available to talk to colleagues as if they were at the office. Obviously, some jobs are bound by specific working environment demands while others may simply require the teleworker to accomplish their goals by a certain deadline, irrespective of the hours they work.

**Q: My job is to Plan, Organise, Execute and Control. How can I do that if my staff don't come to the office anymore?**

A: Management is evolving. Many managers struggle with the notion that they are no longer able to control what their teleworking staff are doing – after all, management is, among other things, about organising and controlling, is it not? How then can the European Institutions justify spending taxpayers' money on their salary?

The answer is that your role is to guide, to reassure, to help your people grow professionally. Once you embrace that change in your role, you may find that you enjoy being a manager more than you ever have before.

Letting go of the old "command and control" style of management can be difficult, but as mentioned previously, how do you know what your staff are doing now? And here is where the spotlight begins shining on the real problem: you don't know. You probably know when people are coming to the office, how much time they spend at their desks, how long their lunch breaks are, who is taking holidays when, and how many sick days everyone has. But when you have to answer the question of whether the work is getting done, the answer is not always straightforward.

Instead of managing the work, you might have been monitoring the corridors in your building and focusing on areas that end up derailing performance rather than improving it.

The following sections discuss some common traps that managers might find it easy to slip into while trying to manage the work instead of the people.

**Q: My Director is against the principle of teleworking, she tolerates it but clearly doesn't like it. Can you help me better understand what is meant by "managing the work rather than the people?"**

A : Here are some scenarios to help clarify what is meant.

**Scenario #1**

**Your director:** I'm concerned about the level of teamwork in your unit. I used to see people congregating all the time in the lunchroom to talk and catch up. When I come down to your floor, the place is invariably empty! Where are your staff? How about you institute 3 core days when everyone needs to come to the office?

Which do you choose?

- a OK that sounds good, which days would you suggest?
- b I'll think about that
- c Have you noticed any negative impact on our contribution and performance?

**The correct answer is of course (c).** You are being paid to manage the work . . . and helping educate your boss about focusing on results. Making assumptions about what things look like around you may or may not have anything to do with the quality of the work, « internal customer satisfaction » levels, or innovation probability. The questions need to centre on the work, not how often people are seen interacting with one another.

## Scenario #2

**Your Head of Unit:** I've heard that Marzena is going to start doing some work at home. I understand she has two small children. Have you made sure to ask her if she has child care lined up for them since we'll need her to be working from 9 to 6, not taking care of them?

**You:** Well, I haven't asked her that, but I assume she'll do what she needs to.

**HoU:** I've seen too many of these situations in the past where the work doesn't get done. Please address it as soon as possible.

Which do you choose?

- a. Consider it done. I'll talk with her first thing tomorrow.
- b. Let's see how it goes; maybe there won't be any issues.
- c. It sounds like you're worried about Marzena not delivering. She and I are very clear about her goals and how they will be measured. If her performance slips, I will address that—just like I would with any of our staff.

**If you answered (c), you're doing well. Directing the conversation back to the work and stressing that you'll handle performance issues if they arise is critical. It's not about what staff are**

Retraining your own, and your hierarchy's perceptions is not easy. Some of the behaviour we currently encourage might be acceptable, but when it comes at the cost of your staff motivation and engagement levels, for instance, it's time to ensure that you are focused on delivering results—that's a constant.

### **Q : How can I make sure that the switch from managing the people to managing the work is accomplished?**

A: One of the biggest, most dangerous management traps is focusing on time. It's easy to watch when people come in and when they leave. And, sadly, those have become major cornerstones of determining whether colleagues are delivering—not delivering the work but delivering their time. If they're doing this by showing up (during the right times of day and in the right location), then managers assume that the right work must be happening, too. It's a false assumption, of course, but it's become an anchor for managers. Time and physical presence provide a sense of security. When everyone is at his or her desk by 9 o'clock, that's a mark that the day has started off well. If five people aren't there by that time, the mission of the old-world manager is to find out where they are

and why they didn't come in "on time". Not surprising, then, that for some managers, teleworking is a problem.

Focusing on time lets everyone in an organisation continue playing the game – working more hours, not taking lunch, bragging about how many vacation days they have left from last year, rather than on focusing on where it should be – producing results.

The institutions can lay out all the right strategies for success, hire consultants, launch well-thought-out initiatives, but it's all for nothing if we continue to reward time. Some staff even seem to be in competition with each other, trying to be the first one who talked about skipping lunch, the one who sent e-mails out at midnight, the one who came into the office sick. People pick up on all of this quickly. And whether they're achieving anything meaningful, they notice that these are the types of things managers notice, even if only in subtle ways. "Sergio, you were up late last night—got that e-mail from you at 1 AM! You must be tired this morning!" Karel, who happened to be sitting right next to Sergio when these comments were relayed, probably heard this: "I love when people show their dedication by working at night (outside of 'office hours') and is likely to do the same.

It is critical to make it clear, through your actions and behaviour, that above all you value results and internal customer satisfaction.

When staff don't have to worry about being recognized for time spent in the office anymore, it gives everyone more energy to get on the same page with the results. Instead of seeing who can come in earlier and stay later, who is teleworking or not, they are more likely to focus on getting the job done, which is exactly where their focus should be.

Many managers believe they're already fostering this by accepting telework requests or allowing more informal flexibility. But this is also where a lot of managers get tripped up. You can say the right things: "I don't care when you come and go. Do whatever you need to do!" But then you get anxious, because some people need you to set boundaries for them, right? If you leave the door wide open like that, they might overwork themselves; they won't be able to decide for themselves when to stop. And isn't that what a caring manager does—help people figure that out? In response to your anxiety, you find yourself saying things like: "You've been working so hard over the past few weeks. Why don't you take Friday off?" "It's 6 PM already. You should stop working and go be with your family!"

If you want to create an environment where people feel truly motivated then you need to let them decide how they'll get their work done. You want them to make common sense decisions about that and let them know that you trust them to make the right decisions.

So, will things really get done if you truly leave the « how » up to your staff and encourage telework? Will they do the right things? What if they don't? These worries can lead to an urge to give the best performers more and more to do. You start to identify those you can consistently count on to go above and beyond and those become your go-to people.

Since Yves can really handle a big workload, why not give him more? He's efficient, productive, and really knows what he's doing, so there's nothing wrong with that . . . or is there? Think about it this way: Yves and his colleague are both responsible for achieving X by 30 June. Yves achieves it by 19 June and feels great, because he delivered before the deadline. He believes he'll have a chance to breathe before the next project starts. His colleague delivers right on the deadline of 30 June. In the meantime, Yves has been given another project that has the same due date of 30 June by his manager. His efficiency was rewarded with . . . more work.

On 1 July, Yves and his colleague are both given another project with a deadline of 31 July. What has Yves learned? Better not to submit anything until 31 July . . . he you might find yourself in the same position as in June with just getting more work!

This is a common behaviour among managers. There's a lot accomplish; why not find the people who can deliver quickly and efficiently and give them more? Because this approach undermines the efficiency you could experience. Some staff may well tell their colleagues to "slow down," because they're making others on the team look bad. When managers get wind of this, they deal with it by saying (again, the right words), "We want efficiency in our work. This is what we strive for!" But giving more work to the efficient staff negates the words. After all, no one wants to be rewarded with more work. So, then the question for a manager becomes,

**Q : How will we get all the work done if I can't give it to the efficient performers?**

A : Perhaps the greatest fear for a manager who really does want to let go of control is handling staff who don't deliver their results because they're paralysed by the notion of actually having to deal with these people.

On one hand, this is understandable; these are difficult conversations to have. On the other hand, organisations exist for a reason, and people who work in them are paid to deliver results. There needs to be consequences when that doesn't happen.

Usually people are either afraid to talk about the consequences, say that there aren't any or that they have no idea what they are. We are all aware that managers in the European Institutions have a relatively limited range of consequences at their disposal. However, far worse than this is that some staff claim to have no idea what the results are that they're supposed to work toward, never mind the consequences of not doing it!

Organizations that have a clear focus on results have done two things: 1. They've made those results and associated measures very clear to staff and 2. They've fostered a culture of accountability and ownership in which staff are able to verbalize what will happen when they achieve their results—and when they don't.

It's a problem if, when posed the question, "What happens if you don't achieve your results?" the answer from staff is "nothing".

Staff need to understand that they are being paid for producing results, not putting in time, being in the right place, or making an effort. Claiming to be focused on results but then not executing consequences doesn't work. The walk doesn't match the talk.

But often, that's not on purpose. Managers want to give people a chance; they start justifying why staff aren't performing. They tell themselves that it's more trouble to recruit someone new and train them, or that there are no posts anyway, so they just make do. But all this does is lay the foundation for a lot of inner team turmoil. The lack of consequences – or worse – promotions for people who aren't pulling their weight in any system will hurt the whole, and this is where a lot of managers fall short.

Countless managers try to rationalise why they haven't taken action on staff they know aren't performing. It's not easy to take action but take it anyway. You need to follow a consistent process when performance is suffering.

**Q : What questions do I need to ask myself in order to determine whether my team is truly ready for telework?**

A : There are several important questions you can ask yourself.

1. Do you believe that your staff are intrinsically motivated to perform versus feeling entitled to more and more given by the institution? Do you believe they understand that they are receiving a salary in return for achieving measurable goals that meet the needs of the institution?
2. Do you believe that the majority of your staff support the fact that management will (and should) deal with performance-related issues swiftly? Do you believe that, once we're on the same page with outcome-based goals and measures, your staff will be up to the challenge of determining how to approach the work in the most productive, efficient ways possible?
3. Do you believe that you can confidently move out of your "babysitting" role and into that of coach, guide, and mentor?
4. Do I have staff right now with whom you should be addressing performance, whether they are teleworking or not?

Shifting the platform that managers have been standing on for decades can be daunting, but it is completely necessary. Talking about how things need to change and acknowledging the reality of the situation has been a good admission . . . for the past 20 years. But there comes a point when it's time to move on from the "aha!" statement (which isn't so aha! anymore) to the solution, changing what it is that management means and what it focuses on.

**Q: All this is fine in theory, but I just don't trust some of my staff to telework honestly – what should I do?**

A: If you don't trust some of your staff to achieve their results, why would you want them to continue working for you in their current role? The chances are, if you don't think they'll deliver when teleworking, they probably aren't delivering now. Managing to results will expose those non-performers very quickly. As they're exposed, you can move forward with a performance conversation. Sometimes, managers experience the opposite of what they think will happen and staff feel re-motivated. Try asking them to submit their ideas to solve a particular work-related challenge you are having (put a deadline on when you need their ideas). Ask your potential teleworking staff how they would want to keep you informed of how their work is progressing. You'll be surprised at the creative ways you'll be able to notice work happening.

**Q: What about people who need my supervision? They want it and I can't do that if they are teleworking.**

A: Definition of SUPERVISION : the action, process, or occupation of supervising; especially: a critical watching and directing (as of activities or a course of action)

After everything you've read so far you will see how this falls into the old world of managing the people and the how. What does it really mean to be able to critically watch and direct activities if you never achieve the right results? It's not your job to dictate how every little thing gets done throughout the day, the week, or the year. You're not a parent, or a babysitter. You are a results-focused manager—a guide, a mentor, and a coach. You're putting the control over the how into your staff's hands and trusting that they'll deliver. And 95 percent of them will.

Some staff may say they need or want your supervision because they don't know anything different. They're accustomed to following orders and may feel lost in a world where they determine their next steps, instead of waiting for them to be handed down. This is where you must help staff see that the barometer of "doing a good job" is all about achieving measurable goals, which will be the main thing you're watching. As they become more comfortable with the new approach, where they decide how to complete the work and you simply address their results, you'll hear less and less about any desire for supervision.

**Q: I have some people who I'm afraid will never know when to stop working if they telework. What do I do about that?**

A: This was something managers worried about in the old world of work. It was up to management to help put up the boundaries and stop people from overworking.

This is where the points discussed earlier come into play: "It's 6 PM. Why don't you stop reading your emails and spend time with your family?"

Managers and staff should agree on goals and measurements; how they go about achieving those is their own business. What might look like overworking to one person might be someone else's comfort zone. Similarly, what might look like laziness to one person might be someone else's perfect productivity zone. It's the staff member's responsibility to initiate that conversation with you if he or she is feeling overworked.

**Q : How do I address the difficult issue of not feeling that someone is suitable for telework?**

A: Here are two things to try when discussing teleworking requests:

1. Express any anxiety you have about the work directly to your staff member(s). For example, say, "I'm worried you may miss important deadlines."
2. Look for performance-related (measurable) outcomes to be achieved together with the staff member in question.

**Q: How can I better focus on outcomes, not just for teleworkers, but for all staff?**

A: Try this little exercise :

Ask your team, "What is our ultimate outcome as a directorate/unit/team? Why do we exist?" Have each person write down what he or she thinks it is on a piece of paper. Some will struggle to regurgitate the mission and others might remember the vision. All of the answers will likely be different, maybe extremely or slightly so, but they certainly won't be 100 percent perfect. And therein lies the first problem: the outcome simply isn't a part of your staff's DNA. It's not what makes people wake up in the morning raring to go.

Even though they don't hold the precise answers, the mission and vision of your institution/DG/Directorate are good places to start. They'll prompt your people to determine a broader outcome, one that they can own and feel excited about and that drives the right activities and gets them thinking creatively. It's a response they can give when someone at a cocktail party asks, "So, what do you do?" Most people answer this question by mindlessly reciting their job title. People are attached to it and feel that it shows their status (or lack thereof). It's something to which people can say, "Wow, nice job, lucky you!" or "Oh. Just an AST 1 then..."

And imagine if someone recited his organization's 50-word mission statement when asked this question. People would think he was a little mad (unless, of course, he owned the organisation). So put your mission or vision statement up in front of everyone and ask, "So what? If we do this, then what?" Ask them to create their own vision and mission and, importantly, tell them that they will be using whatever they come up with when asked.

**Q: What if someone who is teleworking keeps missing deadlines?**

A: A deadline is part of "getting the work done"; it's not a suggestion. Each staff member is accountable for the work. They should be accountable for letting you know that he or she can't meet a deadline (eg. Someone else hasn't done the work so I'm late") so that you can take the appropriate action.

**Q: What about newcomers? How can I make sure they are doing their job, particularly if they are teleworking?**

A: Newcomers, just like anyone else in your team, need to start with clear direction on what they have been recruited to do and how their progress will be measured. This should be an objective conversation between you and them.

## **Tips on becoming more outcome-oriented.**

Meet with your team and align on the ultimate outcome of your work

Agree on what activities are a waste of time and stop doing them

Review and remove all ambiguous language from your goals and replace it with concrete, measurable goals (eg. "optimise" is ambiguous. Increase by 20% is clear.)

Review timelines and deadlines for any goals you feel are at risk.

Make it clear that deadlines are not *suggestions*.

Talk about the work, not about personal circumstances

Do not assume that your expectations are clear

***Empowerment + accountability = engagement***

***Time + physical presence does not equal results!***

**Q: If my staff are all teleworking, organising all the meetings we have will be a nightmare! How can I do that?**

A. We think that if people gather in the same physical space around the same time, work will somehow magically happen. We believe that it is best to build relationships face to face and that meetings are an effective means of completing work. Work hours ensure that we are managing the people effectively and that work will get done as a result.

According to research, people feel that they waste anywhere from 30 to 80 percent of their time in unproductive meetings. Although the meeting instigator (perhaps that person is you) feels that these meetings are vitally important to the work, most participants feel like it's a waste of time. Meetings dominate the way we work today. However, when asked, most professionals who meet on a regular basis admit to daydreaming (91%), missing meetings (96%), missing parts of meetings (95%). A large percentage (73%) take other work to meetings, and 39% admit to falling asleep! Too many meetings have been identified as the number 1 time waster at the office, cited by 42% of staff. Recurring meetings can be huge time wasters because they create a block of time that you and your colleagues must then fill in some way!

***It's easier to get everyone's bottom on their chairs in the office than it is to get everyone clear on what they were recruited to do!***

**Tip: Before scheduling a meeting, ask yourself the following (and get your team members to do the same if they are the ones organising the meeting):**

What do I need exactly?

Is what I need relevant to the outcome or the people I'm working with trying to achieve?

Is having a meeting the best way to get what I need?

Is there a better way that uses everyone's time more effectively?

Who is an integral part of helping me get what I need?

**In your meeting invitation state:**

The outcome the meeting intends to create

The role the person you are inviting has in the meeting

What each person needs to do to prepare or come prepared to contribute and how it affects the outcome or need for the meeting.

**Q: Body language is important to communication, won't messages get lost in translation if I don't hold physical meetings?**

A: The important thing to do is focus on the outcome you need and continue to ask questions to gain the clarity and understanding for this. Relying on the correct interpretation of someone's body language does not guarantee effective communication.

**Q: We need weekly/monthly status updates with the whole team/unit. What about those?**

A: Why do you need them? If people need information, they can find it equally well via a shared platform. What is the outcome of the update meeting and is it truly the best way to get the outcome?

**Q: How can I build effective relationships without meetings?**

Start with what everyone has in common – the work. The outcome of the work and how it's measured will require relationships to form. Prescribing how people interact with each other – "It's important to meet face to face at least once a month to build relationships" – re-inforces this belief.

### **Being ruthless with meetings: things to try:**

Remove one recurring meeting from your calendar

Ask your staff how they want to communicate progress on files and projects, rather than the typical update meeting where 20 people sit around a table with each person giving an update one at a time.

Look at any meeting that has an agenda. Is there a clear outcome? If not, ask for one before committing to the meeting.

Ask staff not to put "tentative" as an attendance response. Either they are coming or they are not.

Ask staff not to multitask during meetings.

### **Q: Some of my teleworkers don't get back to me as quickly as they used to in the office and I find this frustrating. What can I do about it?**

A: One of the biggest management mindset shifts is that you cannot expect an immediate response from your teleworkers. After 2 minutes and you haven't received a response, the old-school manager mindset kicks in. Where are they? What are they doing? You must learn to send the email and trust that the person will respond within a reasonable, acceptable timeframe. It may not be within 2 seconds, but perfectly acceptable none the less.

How many of your staff currently see it as important to be seen by you at all times and be seen to be responding to you immediately... if necessary. They call this passive face time. Passive face time requires merely being seen in the workplace, it doesn't matter what you are doing or how well you are doing it. In a nutshell, we are expecting them to be available should something come up, so even if they are mentally absent, they are giving the impression of being present. Being available for work just in case was relevant in the Industrial Age but today we have the technology and the tools we need to respond.

## **Tip: make sure voice mail messages are useful!**

### **Traditional message:**

"Hi this is Yves. Sorry I'm unavailable to take your call right now. I'll be away from my desk for most of the day. Please leave a message after the tone and I'll call you as soon as possible".

### **Result-oriented:**

"Hi, this is Yves. Please leave a detailed message about what you need and when you need it by and I will respond. You can also call X + phone number if this would be helpful."

You are asking them to give you what you need in order to give them what they need. Simple! This also reduced the phone tag syndrome where you keep missing each other that paralyzes people into doing nothing until they've spoken to a "real person".

Encourage teleworking staff to use the out of office email response only in the instances they'll be truly non-responsive for an extended period. Or ask them to stipulate when they WILL be responding to emails again or indicate a back-up person – whether they are physically out of the office or not is irrelevant – what people want is an answer.

*Communication and teamwork aren't things you achieve by having everyone sit in the same place at the same time. Being a team isn't stimulated best by proximity. A team works best around a common goal, outcome or needs.*

### **Q: What if I like face-to-face communication best?**

A: If you are going to slow down productivity, think twice. Make sure you choose face-to-face interaction for situations where it makes the most sense to achieve measurable results. Be open to communicating using other means.

Stop systematically managing by wandering around. First think about what you need. Send an email to staff in the office as you would a teleworker rather than interrupting the flow of work with a spontaneous phone call or visit. Be specific and clear about what you need. If you think it necessary, let the person know that you'd like to meet face to face and ask when it would be convenient.

### **Q: I think it important and courteous for people to communicate where they are working from if they are teleworking, what do you think?**

A: Why? Are you afraid that people might not be working if they are not in the workplace? Think about what you need then contact them. It doesn't matter where people are working from, what matters is that the work gets done.

## **Communication: Things to try:**

Try not having face-to-face communication with someone in your team for one week. Get what you need another way.

Use a form of communication that you've been avoiding or don't like

Work from another location without using your out-of-office email response.

Change your voice-mail message to a useful one and get your team colleagues to do the same

Pick a couple of face-to-face meetings on your calendar and choose to communicate in a different way to get to the same result.

## **Things to avoid:**

Driving in rush-hour traffic, you don't have to be in the physical office at 9.am and leave at 6 pm to communicate effectively

Using communication tools that don't fit the situation, e.g. emailing a time-sensitive urgent request... send a text/SMS instead.

## **Summary**

It's no secret that lacking control over how, when and where work happens e.g. Having to respect core working hours in a specific workplace or office causes great amounts of stress as people struggle to juggle work and personal life balance. Research suggests that 51% of employees are less productive at work as a result of stress. Teleworking is one step towards reducing that stress as we move towards work being something we do rather than a place that we go.

## **We need to start letting go of the following notions:**

**Space that denotes a certain status** – the larger the building, the more beautiful the architecture, the greater the number of on-site amenities must all equal a fantastic place to work. Not to mention size of office and number of windows!

**The allocation of a “spot” to each member of staff**

**Beliefs about how, when and where work should happen.**

**That the workplace defines the work or proves that the work is being done.**

**Key messages that need to be transmitted to staff by their managers in the new world of work are:**

- Take care of your business, do the job that you are paid to do wherever, however and whenever you need to. But remember that you will be measured on your results. If the results aren't there, telework is not an option for you.
- No one is impressed with, or sympathetic to the amount of time you work. It is about the quality of your work and the results that you produce.

**If you manage to get the message across to your team, you will have fewer of these kinds of awkward conversations:**

“I see you're 10 minutes late”

I see you've taken a lot of time off this month”

No, you can't work from home 2 days a week.

**What you will need to achieve this:**

- Hold bilateral discussions about goals and measurements for everyone in the team, particularly those who are teleworking
- Have real discussions about performance issues, not just vague directives like “you need to work harder”.

Our traditional workplace rules have taught managers to manage people but not how to manage the work. Instead imagine a place where:

People automatically edit their work and remove low-priority tasks

You could stay out of your team's lives and give them total control over their time, at least for a few days a month

You monitor the outcomes, not the corridors

You don't have to worry about the work getting done, you have ultimate trust in your staff

People flex with the needs of the service all the time without regard to time or day.

**The question of whether this happens for you and your institution sooner rather than later sits in your hands, so are you focused on what matters?**

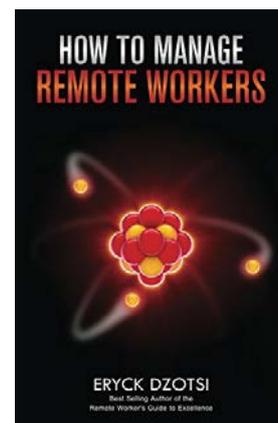
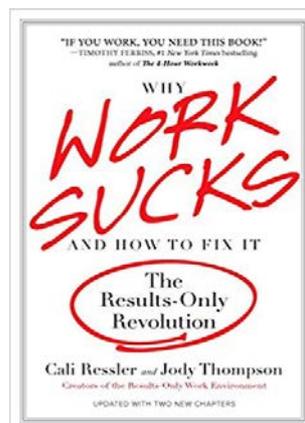
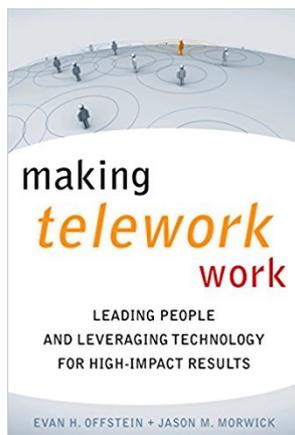
## **Additional Reading**

---

Many of the ideas included in this document are based on or have been adapted from the work of Cali Ressler and Jody Thompson, authors of *Why Managing Sucks and How to Fix It*, a book dedicated “To adults in the workplace who want to be treated as such”.

Although their approach to a Results-Oriented Work Environment remains somewhat radical for the European Institutions, we can still extract some excellent ideas and approaches from their experiences in the hope that one day we will go beyond teleworking and create a truly results-based and adult-minded workplace.

### **Suggested further reading and information**



### **Links to useful sites:**

[www.apaexcellence.org/resources/goodcompany/blog/2014/04/managing-teleworkers.php](http://www.apaexcellence.org/resources/goodcompany/blog/2014/04/managing-teleworkers.php)

<https://www.cio.com/article/2422138/leadership-management/six-strategies-for-managing-telecommuters.html>