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Making the Most of Mobility

By Paul Gibson



In 2011, the amount of mobile workers across the globe will have increased to up to 30% of the workforce. In order to make the most of this new modus operandi, both managers and workers need to adapt their previous, mostly structured understanding of their organisation to work this shift to their advantage.

According to a study released by the Institute of Corporate Productivity (ICP), by the year 2011 a whopping 73% of the US workforce is forecasted to fall into the category of "mobile workers". The ICP defines these mobile workers as telecommuters, who work from home, non-co-located workers who work with more people that are not in their same location and finally mobile vendors and partners outside the company.

This new paradigm shift creates a new vision in your company, both for workers and managers. The traditional role of managers as the visible head and supervisor of the team now takes on an entirely new face - their previous positional

power is replaced by influential power. Workers no longer embrace the 9-5 work timetable and are continually switched on and plugged in. This creates flexibility that can be either tremendously dangerous or extremely productive - it all depends on how you manage projects.

As managers' power passes from positional to influential power, they now have more time to think about other things. Since less time is spent in the office supervising activities, they take on an entirely new role in which more time is spent on strategic planning and execution and less on control and supervision.

A flexible workplace breeds a flexible job market, where businesses that embrace this tendency to go mobile will be rewarded, while other organisations that continue working under traditional corporate structures will undoubtedly be punished and left to fall on the wayside.

The new workplace also creates an entirely new type of business relationship even among employees and managers. Since many times managers and employees are not physically present in the same location, both players use cyberspace and other tools such as mobile communications and email to share information - the so-called buffer zone. This new medium has become an essential facet of

today's business. Workers are now project-oriented and managers need to manage more deadlines and project objectives than before. Managers especially need to design new ways of measuring corporate performance, and less didactic forms of communications.

While it might be hard to believe, older traditional instruction-based information has been replaced by anecdotal storytelling and even gossip or jokes among employees that create a sense of inclusion among workers and serves as an important motivation for off-site mobile workers. This coupled with short conversations about performance goals and personal development are key in today's corporate world.

The lines of communication in day-to-day operations will undoubtedly move from managing activities, to managing deliverables. Employees will be given the freedom to decide the tools, method and approach their projects, making their own decisions as long as they achieve the desired end results.

In response to the explosive demand for effective mobile management applications Congenia has introduced a new tool called **Mobities** (www.mobities.com) that promises to bring managers and employees together to share timelier, real-time information and immediately respond to their organisations' communication needs. Organisations such as Raiden and a score of multinationals are now studying how to adapt and implement this new management tool into their daily operations.