

At the Office or at Work

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April 07, 2014

The  Moscow Times

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Have you ever gotten a call in which someone asked you "Hey! Are you at work"? Very likely, yes. But can you imagine that anyone from the Board of Directors may be asked in that way? The reason here is not about his or her power and position. Big bosses are usually at work 24/7. However, it doesn't mean that they spend all day sitting in the office. Furthermore, being involved in work processes doesn't affect their work-life balance dramatically. It is called flexible workstyle. What makes it possible and does it work for the rest of the organization? A flexible workstyle is supported by two main drivers: ability and responsibility. The ability here is considered as a set of tools and skills to use them. It is obvious that in order to have all things done in time you just need to have familiar tools and environment wherever you are — in the office, at home or even in a car.

Thanks to IT, we've got it all — lightweight tablets, Internet that is available almost everywhere, and most Line-of-Business applications tend to have mobile version. Once we get our employees so well-equipped, how to make sure that they have an intention to work? There is another part of flexible workstyle comes to discussion. Set up clear goals, articulate your expectation, sync up often and trust. This formula will empower about 40 percent of employees be more productive: middle management, sales representative, project managers.

Think about one more category of workers — operational staff, I.e. Finance, HR, procurement. Their work not as depended from particular location as we used to believe. Indeed, why don't allow them to save couple of hours daily working from home? At least from time to time. The idea is still the same. We have to provide them with the same environment they use at office and make sure they don't feel disconnected from their teams. This kind of workers are probably less incentivized for their performance so we need to give them a strong rhythm of business and clear procedures to make it working for them as well.



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There is still a significant part of employees known as "blue collars" or "uniforms." Miners, shop assistants, builders...

How about them? Is it ridiculous to offer flexible workstyle for this category of employees? It appears that their work couldn't be moved to home or to a cafe. The question is if they can benefit from the mobility concept. Definitely yes. Mobility in this case is not about moving them from the workplace — which does not make sense — it is about providing them with corporate services at their location. We can give such an employee opportunity to look at company news, or nominate their colleagues for reward, or vote for facilities changes, or submit innovative idea, which will not only increase their motivation but also can help the firm to save the money and even improve marginality of the business. Such a system can be deployed and implemented step-by-step.

Now we are getting the picture of how a flexible workstyle may be a part of company strategy, but what are the benefits for stakeholders from this approach? First, it is employees' loyalty and engagement which lead us to better quality of products and services. Moreover, study shows that loyal employees have significant impact on public image of organization. In addition to that, people who have more freedom in their actions usually spend extra hours on completing their work tasks. Being implemented, mobility concept can attract more young people and graduates to the firm.

The problem of different generations can be bridged better. Eventually, last but not the least, there are cost savings on electricity and other office services can be quite material — this could be positively taken by company stakeholders. In conclusion, there are always some risks related to innovation but taking these challenges with appropriate plan of risk mitigation will bring organization on a new level.

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