

GUIDANCE NOTE

Empowering people

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1. Introduction

Over the years there have been many predictions about what the world of work would be like in 2020. Such predictions tended to focus on the impact that technology would have on work, for better or worse. Few, if any, of these predictions would have involved a novel virus leading to millions of people around the world working at home with minimal notice.

The pandemic has arguably had the biggest impact on the world of work since the micro-computer was introduced into workplaces in the 1970s and 1980s. However, whereas the effect of the computer was gradual, the changes in 2020 were implemented in weeks, if not days, and have affected organisations around the world simultaneously.

While the long-term effects will take years to play out, one of the short-term effects has been to cause people to rethink how, when and where they work. Survey after survey has revealed that most people don't want to return to working how they worked before their lockdowns, and that they would like more flexibility in how they work in the future.

This presents both an opportunity and a challenge for organisations. It's an opportunity to rethink how their people work and the workspaces and technology they need to support this, but it will also challenge them to rethink how they manage their people. Different organisations will respond to this opportunity and challenge in different ways; some successfully, others less so. Indeed, the success of their response may have a direct impact on their future performance and competitive advantage.

This, the first in the new series of guidance notes, explores the future of workplace through a cultural lens. It discusses changing attitudes towards flexible and distributed working and considers the critical role that culture plays in enabling or hindering changes to working practices in organisations. The overall aim of this guidance note is to enable workplace and FM professionals to have more informed discussions about the role that culture plays in changing working practices in their organisations or their client organisations.

WORKPLACE AND WORKSPACE – A QUICK REFRESH

This is how we use the terms 'workplace' and 'workspace' in this guidance note:

- workplaces are the social places where people use the tools available to them to get their work done - a workplace contains and involves people
- workplaces can be fixed (for example hospitals, offices or our homes) or flexible (for example a work van or a temporary place of work)
- workspaces are the physical spaces or environments available for people to work in - spaces are empty and they become places when they have people in them.

Remember that words can be defined in different ways. These aren't the only definitions of workplace and workspace, but they are the ones that we believe allow FM to make the best contribution to organisations.



If you would like to provide feedback on this guidance note or have ideas for other workplace information, guidance or research, please email: research@iwfm.org.uk

HOW TO USE OUR WORKPLACE GUIDANCE NOTES

This new series of guidance notes is intended to help organisations to think beyond the challenges of 2020 and explore what the future of workplace will look like over the next few years. In doing so, we consider the future through the interlinked facets of workplace that underpin all of our workplace guidance notes, namely:

- culture – how people work
- technology – the tools people use
- workspace – where people work.

We're starting with culture because we see this as the foundation stone for the future of work: organisations need to be clear about what they stand for and why, and the implications for how their people work. Culture is also the facet of workplace that workplace and FM professionals can have the greatest impact on, yet perhaps know the least about.

Our workplace guidance notes have been designed to be used as standalone resources or together as a series. Together, the guidance notes focus on the issues that organisations should pay attention to when changing existing workplaces or developing new ones. Previous guidance notes include:

1. **'Introduction to workplace'**, which explains what workplace is and the importance of viewing workplace in a joined-up way
2. **'Workplace data and decision-making'**, which discusses the role that data can play in helping organisations to make more informed workplace decisions
3. **'Selling your workplace vision'**, which explains how to communicate the value of workplace authoritatively and persuasively, and create a convincing case for change
4. **'Creating better workspaces'**, which is about helping non-designers to have a positive influence on the design of the workspaces they are involved with or responsible for
5. **'Leading successful workplace change'**, which provides guidance on the processes of change and practical ideas for bringing about effective workplace change.

2. Back to the future of work

‘Advances in IT and telecommunications remove many barriers of time and space, creating opportunities for adopting flexible work practices such as remote working...’

This statement could have been taken from one of the many recent articles and reports that have been written about the future of work. In fact, it’s actually from a paper that was published over a quarter of a century ago, back in 1994¹.

If the events of 2020 have shown us anything, it’s that anticipated changes in the world of work can sometimes take decades to come about. People have been writing about the benefits and practicalities of more flexible and distributed working for decades, but the reality is that until now they have failed to capture the attention and imagination of mainstream businesses, let alone become a reality. So why is this?

Well, as the quotation above illustrates, it’s certainly not due to a lack of technology. Effective desktop video conferencing software, mobile technologies and collaborative tools have been available in one form or another for years. For instance, the video-conferencing software Skype was launched in 2003 and had over 660 million users worldwide by 2010².

Nor is there a lack of desire amongst workers for greater flexibility. The plethora of surveys carried out during 2020 have highlighted that many people have an appetite to work more flexibly in future, but surveys carried out in the preceding years also pointed to a similar trend. For instance, a 2018 survey of North American workers revealed that 51% of them wanted more flexibility³. The reality is that significantly less actually had it.

The appetite for more flexibility is perhaps understandable given that most ‘knowledge workers’⁴ still spend the majority of time working from an office⁵, which for many people may entail a lengthy and costly commute. The events of 2020 can therefore be seen as a catalyst accelerating a trend that was already in place but nevertheless slow to emerge and achieve mainstream acceptance.

To understand the reasons why flexible and distributed working have struggled to gain traction we need to go back in time, to the 1970s, when the ‘oil shocks’ of 1973 and 1979 gave rise to global economic crises. They prompted thoughts about how people might work differently in future, in order to save scarce resources. The impact on people’s thinking can be seen through two publications from that time.

The first is a 1979 article from the *Washington Post*, written by Frank Schiff, then chief economist of the US Committee for Economic Development⁶. Anyone reading his article today will be struck by how relevant many of his points are to the current world of work. He even discusses (and provides arguments against) three commonly raised objections to people working from home, namely that:

- it will be difficult to tell how well they are working or whether they are working at all when they are not in the office
- their performance and morale will be negatively affected because they will be cut off from their co-workers
- working at home will be impractical, because they will lack a quiet place in which to work and there will be too many distractions.

It’s somewhat telling that all three of these objections are still widely heard today!



The second publication is a book actually written five years earlier, in 1974, by Jack Nilles and three colleagues at the University of Southern California. The book, entitled *The Telecommunications-Transportation Tradeoff*⁷, is widely seen as a foundational study in the area of distributed and remote working⁸.

The study explored how prospective (but soon to be commonplace) technologies would allow organisations to work in a more decentralised way, for instance by enabling people to work at home or at a local office, rather than commuting into a central location. They found a number of benefits with this approach, including reduced energy consumption and improved staff motivation.

In a 2015 interview⁹, Nilles reflected on why, some forty years later, ‘telecommuting’ still hadn’t become mainstream. He said he realised early on that *‘technology was not the limiting factor in the acceptance of telecommuting’* and that *‘organizational – and management – cultural changes were far more important in the rate of acceptance... That was the case in 1974 and is still the case today’*.

Nilles’ observations about the role of culture will chime with anyone who has been involved in an organisational initiative aimed at introducing ‘new ways of working’. It’s not unusual for organisations to invest in the technology and workspace to enable people to work more flexibly, only to find that people continue to work as they did before.

The reality is that we’ve known for decades¹⁰ that changes to working practices will only be effective if you pay attention to the social as well as the technical elements of an organisational situation. Yet businesses still make the mistake of focusing on the latter and neglecting the former.

Many people regard 2020 as a 'watershed' moment for the world of work – a change so monumental that most organisations won't want or be able to return to how they worked before. This may be true for some; despite the media headlines and industry rhetoric, only time will tell. However, as the economic crises of the 1970s demonstrated, it's all too easy to drift back into old habits. Particularly if those habits are deeply ingrained.

Peter Drucker, the renowned management thinker, is generally thought to have said that 'culture eats strategy for breakfast'¹¹. Whether Drucker originally came up with the phrase or not, we're inclined to agree, and it's important to bear this in mind when thinking about the future of work. An organisation may come up with a strategy for how it sees its people working, but it will need to invest time and energy in bringing about that culture change. Otherwise it's unlikely to happen.

It's telling that most of the recent commentary about the future of work has focused almost entirely on 'surface level' culture – the things we can witness happening out there in the world. Amongst other things, there have been predictions about a permanent shift towards more people working from home; organisations down-sizing their workspaces and the 'death of the office'; a reduction in commuting and a decline of city centres; and changes in people's home-buying habits.

In contrast, very little attention has been paid to the deeper cultural changes that will need to occur in organisations if these changes are to become reality. And what we know, from years of studying organisations and organisational change, is that deeper cultural change does not come easily. It's not simply a case of flicking a switch.

You may already be familiar with the 'iceberg model' of culture, which suggests that culture is comprised of:

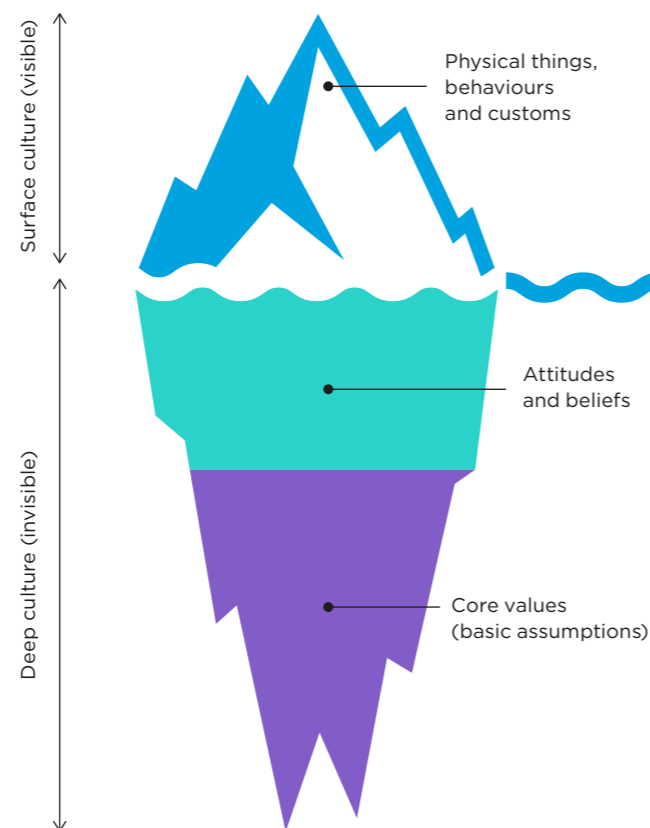
- observable behaviours, language and artefacts (physical things) – what we do and how we do it. This **surface culture** is the tip of the iceberg, demonstrated by things that can be seen above the waterline
- unobservable attitudes, beliefs, values and assumptions – why we do what we do. This **deep culture** is the larger iceberg mass hidden below the waterline.

The model suggests that surface culture is grounded in and influenced by deep culture. So, for example, if someone doesn't believe that something is important, it's unlikely that they will devote time, effort or attention to it.

Genuine and sustainable cultural change is about changing deep culture – those assumptions, attitudes and beliefs about how things should be done and what's valued as important or not. In some cases, these assumptions, attitudes, beliefs and values may be very deeply rooted, particularly if people have held them for many years.

The cultural iceberg

(adapted from Hall, 1976)¹²



CASE STUDY - ENABLING WORKING PRACTICE SHIFTS AT COVENTRY CITY COUNCIL

Many organisations are looking for agility and additional flexibility, changing the way they work to better suit employees, customers and the challenges that need to be faced now and in the future.

But changes have to start with the people and the culture, both being ready to adopt new ways of working. Without that cultural change any new processes or technology will fall at the first hurdle.

One such example is Coventry City Council, where they had started an initiative to develop a more agile workforce. But when the Coronavirus crisis hit the UK, it became critical for protecting staff and ensuring business continuity.

Coventry City Council is a unitary authority responsible for providing local government services to 360,000 people in the city. It has recently been nominated as the UK City of Culture for 2021. The council has implemented a digital transformation programme to improve the operation and delivery of services to the community. It is aiming to develop a more agile workforce with innovative technologies like Microsoft Office 365, communication and collaboration tools and giving all staff mobile technology.

One area targeted for improvement was ICT because it had become too accessible: it was easy for staff to drop in unannounced when they had an IT issue. The council needed to manage and distribute IT inventory efficiently and enable a channel shift away from unnecessary hand-holding to more self-service. But this was to be overshadowed by the Coronavirus.

Ricoh was already providing several business services and solutions to the council and, as one of its key partners, held regular strategy meetings to look at business plans and challenges. The issue of improving ICT resource productivity was raised and Ricoh suggested smart locker technology.

As part of its Workplace Services offering - aimed at improving work environments and productivity - Ricoh has deployed a Ricoh Smart Locker solution at Coventry City Council. It comprises a Ricoh Inventory Management and Smart Asset Management Locker system. There is a click and collect unit for new starters and replacement kit with 14 different-sized lockers; a unit with 25 individual lockers housing 16 laptops, keyboards and mice; and a vending machine locker for peripherals. New employees, for example, can pick up an IT equipment pack with everything they need including a simple, step-by-step set up guide, backed up by phone support.

The council is planning to extend the system by installing vending-style units to other council locations so that IT equipment is available to staff locally. It is also looking at how smart lockers can be used to improve parcel delivery. Currently parcels are put in the site manager's office and the recipient contacted via email. But sometimes they are lost or mislaid. With Smart lockers, parcels are secure, and the owner issued a code to retrieve their parcel when convenient.

This is an example of how the right technology can support a cultural change around new ways of working but it's been successful because the cultural change had already started.



To read the full case study and others visit: www.ricoh.co.uk/business-services/case-studies/coventry-city-council.html

3. Changing attitudes to workplace

2020 has arguably seen more surveys into workers' attitudes than at any time in the past. Together, these surveys have provided insights into people's experiences of working at home for an extended period of time, how well they have been supported by their employers, and their views on the future of work.

The most commonly recurring themes to emerge from the different surveys are that:

- many people have generally had a positive experience of working from home, even though this has come with certain challenges
- it's shown them – both employees and organisations – that they can work differently and productively away from the office
- most people would like the option of working more flexibly in future.

The reasons why many people would like a more blended approach have become obvious through an extended period of working at home. Many (but by no means all) people have found it easier to concentrate at home than in the office; many (but not all) have also found a better work-life balance, not least because of the lack of commuting. However, people have also recognised (often, ironically, in hindsight) the benefits that offices can bring, particularly in terms of enabling social interaction, collaboration and knowledge-sharing opportunities with colleagues.

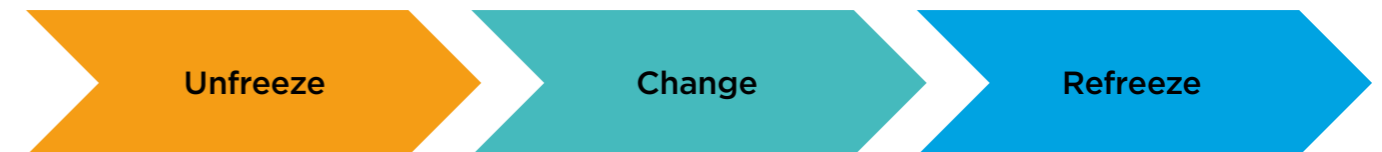
Survey findings like those above are very compelling and if aspirations for more remote working and flexibility come to fruition, they will clearly have significant implications for urban areas, transport infrastructure and the wider economy. They also echo a classic change management model, in that it appears that lockdown experiences have 'unfrozen' many people's working practices and allowed them to see the art of the possible.



74% would like a mix of office-based and remote working

Some surveys have provided a more granular insight into how people would like to work in the future. For instance, in a survey of 8,000 office-based workers in eight countries¹³ 74% of employees said that a mix of office-based and remote working would be their preferred way forward. On average, employees wanted to work remotely around half the time (although they expected that their employers would want them to be in the office two-thirds of the time).

Lewin's three-step model¹⁴



1. Recognise the need for change
2. Determine what needs to change
3. Encourage the replacement of old behaviours and attitudes
4. Ensure there is strong support from management
5. Manage and understand the doubts and concerns

1. Plan the changes
2. Implement the changes
3. Help employees to learn new concept and points of view

1. Changes are reinforced and stabilised
2. Intergrate changes into the normal way of doing things
3. Develop ways to sustain the change
4. Celebrate success

The challenge for organisations is how they build upon the experiences of 2020 in a positive and constructive way. If we look at Lewin's model again, it's clear that some organisations may only be partially 'unfrozen', for one reason or another. This implies that without dedicated attention they may revert to how they worked before 2020, whether they mean to or not. Others are struggling to move beyond the 'unfrozen' stage into a different future because, although they know the future will be different, they can't usefully capture what 'different' looks like for them.

Put bluntly, there's a risk that many organisations will 'sleepwalk' into new ways of working that are neither effective nor sustainable. It's very easy, during any crisis, to make knee jerk reactions and design future workplace strategies around current problems and priorities. It's also easy to make decisions around workspace and technology solutions that organisations subsequently regret.

This underlines the importance of approaching workplace change in the right order, something that we discussed in more detail in the fourth guidance note in this series¹⁵. In essence, organisations should:

- 1 start by understanding what they are trying to achieve – their strategic objectives and priorities
- 2 then consider how their employees will need to work in order to achieve those objectives – their working practices
- 3 finally, determine what workspaces and associated technologies will be needed to support and enable those working practices.

This might seem like common sense, but all too often organisations make the mistake of skipping one or both of the first two stages, with negative and costly results.

Another problem is that while the events of 2020 have helped employees and employers to see that people can work effectively away from the office, for many people it has created an artificial situation in which they have had no choice but to work from home for the majority, if not all of the time. This runs counter to the flexibility that many employees evidently desire, and also undermines true notions of flexibility by re-establishing the binary notion of only office or home.

When push comes to shove, flexibility can be distilled down to three basic components:

- 1** spatial – where you work
- 2** temporal – when you work
- 3** choice – the degree to which individuals have a say over the first two points.

It's the last of these three components that can be the most challenging issue for organisations to grapple with, because while many organisations talk about empowering employees, the reality is that they still rely on rules to manage and control them. To further compound things, rules can also be appealing to some employees because then they don't have to think for themselves and someone else can be accountable for their actions.

The result is often a 'half-way house' form of flexibility, in which people have a small degree of choice over where and/or when to work, but not very much. For instance, they may be 'allowed' to work at home on days when they – classically – have a personal appointment, are expecting a delivery, or are getting something fixed urgently. Such rules are often also couched in terms of 'fairness', because not everyone in the organisation can work at home or vary their working hours. You can spot this type of controlled flexibility because it typically involves people asking for their manager's permission.

The reality is that flexibility will always mean different things to people in different roles within an organisation. Trying to devise rules that are 'fair' to everyone and pre-empt every eventuality usually results in a 'lowest common denominator' solution that creates resentment and constrains those individuals who should be able to work more flexibly.

Giving employees genuine choice over when and where to work can be a frightening prospect for many managers and leadership teams, particularly if ruled-based cultures are all they have ever known. A natural response is to raise concerns about people putting individual needs above those of their team or their customers, but such concerns are not based around a starting position of trust. Quite the opposite, in fact.



ACTIVITY

Pause and think about your own organisation's workplace experiences since the initial lockdown and beyond:

What workplace changes have been required?
Were they easy to achieve?

What effect have these changes had on your people and their performance – both positive and negative – and why?

What have you learnt over recent months – are you proactively considering your future workplace needs?

Do you have good information or evidence to support your perspective? If not, what sort of data do you need to think about?



CASE STUDY - UNLOCKING WORKPLACE CHANGE OPPORTUNITIES AT IEMA

Another organisation who knew they wanted activity based working implementation was IEMA. They were already looking at how they could restructure the organisation and wanted to change the working environment and practices to become more efficient and productive, and provide staff with a better work experience. From here it was possible to explore how they could use technology and processes to recognise how people currently function and to help them change the way they work and implement more efficient business processes.

IEMA is the professional institute for environmental and sustainability practitioners, either within organisations or as independent consultants. It sets sustainability qualifications and standards by developing and offering a number of training courses, advice and resources, to help members enhance skills and expertise. It has 14,000 members, primarily from the UK but also ranged across 100 countries.

Like many businesses, IEMA has a traditional-style office with individual desks, several offices and meeting rooms, along with lengthy processes and too much paper.

IEMA was already in contact with Ricoh through their shared interest in sustainability. IEMA decided to work with Ricoh, because its team was able to reassure IEMA and demonstrate that a Ricoh workplace transformation solution was both affordable and achievable, regardless of scale or business type. It started with a comprehensive investigation into IEMA's people, processes, technology and property (environment).

Over a couple of months, Ricoh worked on-site to audit and analyse two aspects of IEMA - the physical environment and how employees work.

Use of office space was monitored and measured with desk and meeting-room sensors, while location of people, furniture and equipment and storage space was assessed and evaluated. IT resources, infrastructure and equipment, such as servers and hardware assets, were also analysed. To understand working practice and processes, Ricoh conducted a company-wide e-survey followed up by in-depth, face-to face interviews with selected staff.

Neil Fray, Finance & Performance Director at IEMA said, "Ricoh's approach to getting to know us was different. It wasn't a quick dive into counting paper copies, but rather really getting under the skin of what we do and how we work. The start-point, for example, asked people what their job and preferred way of working was, but also what held them back."

The Ricoh solution has provided a framework around which IEMA can deliver a number of change and improvement initiatives to transform its workplace and business operations to achieve a more efficient, productive and sustainable organisation.

This is an example of how activity based working implementation suits organisations already making cultural changes to how they work. It's been successful because the cultural change had already identified and started.



To read the full case study and others visit:
www.ricoh.co.uk/business-services/case-studies/iema.html

4. Addressing the ‘trust deficit’

The events of 2020 have arguably revealed a ‘trust deficit’ in many workplaces – between managers and their teams, but also amongst colleagues. Prior to lockdown, it was still common to hear terms such as ‘shirking from home’ being used in organisations – allegedly in jest, but with the subtext that people who were working at home weren’t really working. Yet one of the things that lockdown has demonstrated is that many people can in fact be trusted to work remotely.

The lack of control that many people had over their working lives before 2020 is also borne out through survey data. For instance, in the survey we referred to previously¹³, prior to COVID-19, only 7% of employees said that they had complete control over their work schedule, a figure that increased to 22% during lockdown.

The changing attitudes to workplace also create another risk for organisations. Many organisations have achieved substantial goodwill in their workforce for the way they have supported them during lockdown. But at the same time, many employees now have an expectation that they will be allowed to work more flexibly in the future – after all, why wouldn’t they, because they’ve shown that they can?

The failure of employers to recognise and respond to this expectation in a positive manner is likely to erode goodwill and breach some employees’ psychological contracts. This is because they will be implicitly sending a message to their employees that they don’t trust them, regardless of whether or not that’s actually the case.

Some organisations will seek to satisfy expectations for more flexibility by – paradoxically – creating more rules. In doing so, they risk tying themselves in knots by trying to cater for every possible scenario or eventuality. Or perhaps even worse, they will place the onus on managers to make decisions about how their teams should work, which becomes problematic if a manager equates employee performance with employee visibility. Presenteeism is insidious in many organisations, and while technology can liberate, it can also be used to contain and surveil.

However, it doesn’t need to be this way. Over the years, there have been examples of organisations that have eschewed rules and adopted a trust-based culture. Examples include Semco (a manufacturing company)¹⁶, Valve Corporation (a computer games developer) and Netflix (the film streaming company). In these organisations, individual employees are responsible for their own decisions and ultimately accountable for them.

Reed Hastings, the CEO of Netflix, describes this approach in his recent book *No Rules Rules*¹⁷. He explains that *‘If you give employees more freedom instead of developing processes to prevent them from exercising their own judgement, they will make better decisions and it’s easier to hold them to account’*. The notion of ‘good judgement’ is central to the way Netflix operates, but Hastings argues that it only works because they have increased talent diversity and candour.

It’s all too easy to look at examples such as Netflix and say that what they do wouldn’t work in our organisation because we’re different; or to take the opposite stance and try to mimic their approach without understanding the time and effort that those organisations have put into developing their unique cultures. The reality is that all organisations are different and operate in different contexts, but that’s not to say organisations can’t learn from each other.

Organisations typically avoid trying new things in the workplace for fear that they will raise expectations, be irreversible, cost too much money or harm their business. Organisations also often fall into the trap of seeing their workplaces as fixed, rather than something that can – and indeed does – change over time. Such change is usually iterative, but the events of 2020 have made many people more open to trying new things.

When it comes to workplace change, encouraging teams to try new ways of working and experimenting with low-cost or no-cost pilots can be a great way to help people explore the art of the possible, challenge their assumptions in less threatening ways and to solve their own problems. After all, most people learn best by doing – which also provides an opportunity to evaluate (qualitatively or quantitatively) the impact of their trials, and then share their lessons with others.

Both psychological safety¹⁷ and accountability need to be an implicit part of the process if this approach is to work effectively. People need to know that it’s okay to try new things, and that they’ve got the support of management, even if those things end up not working. But they also need to ensure that their actions don’t have a negative impact on their colleagues, the business as whole or their customers.

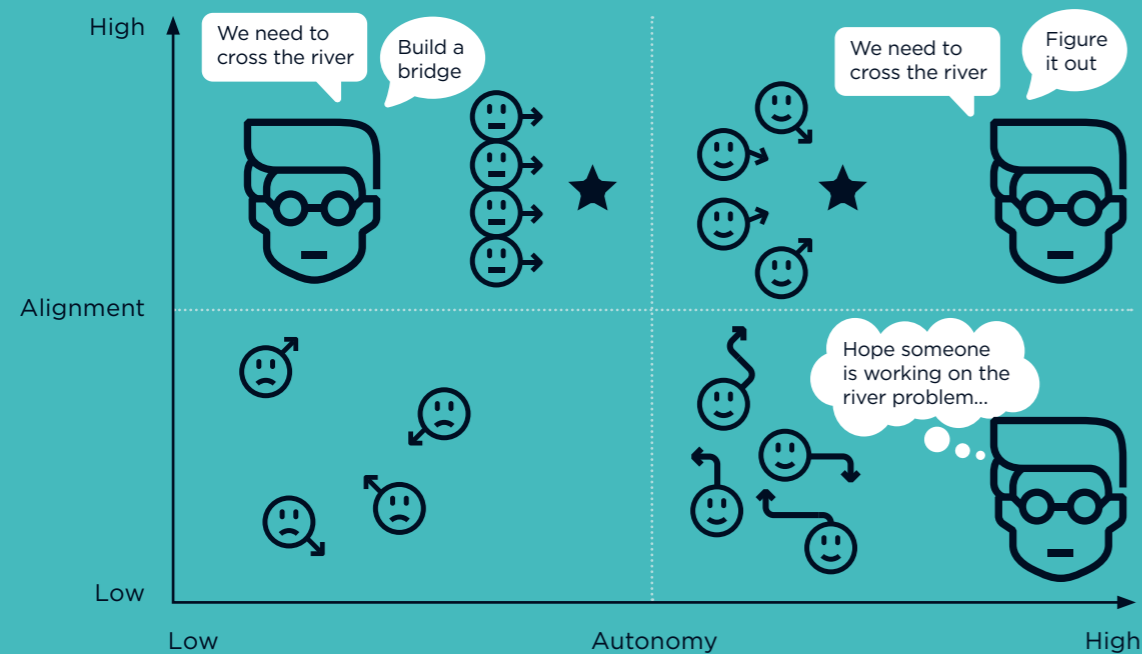
One way to go about this is to identify ‘pioneers’ – people and groups in an organisation with a high degree of ‘readiness’ for workplace change, in terms of both need and appetite – and to get them communicating honestly and frequently. Through supportive coaching these pioneers can be encouraged to try new things and publicly document and share their learning through dedicated communications channels. This serves to legitimise successful new workplace behaviours, encouraging others to do the same as them through positive association¹⁸.



HOW SPOTIFY APPROACHED THE ISSUE OF AUTONOMY

One frequently heard argument against giving employees more flexibility and choice is that it will erode organisational culture and lead to chaos, as individuals and teams do their own thing without consideration of the wider organisational purpose. Music streaming service Spotify frame this problem in terms of alignment with broader organisational goals (which is important for consistency) and *autonomy* (which is important for innovation).

Alignment and autonomy at Spotify²⁰



Spotify's practical solutions to this problem have included:

- spending a lot of time and effort in ensuring that employees understand the organisation's goals because it believes that '... *alignment enables autonomy – the greater the alignment, the more autonomy you can grant.*'
- creating 'Loosely coupled, tightly aligned squads', each of which is accountable for a particular part of its product. Its philosophy is '... be autonomous, but don't suboptimize – be a good citizen in the Spotify ecosystem.'

- encouraging testing and learning and contained experiments, which lower the cost of failure because only one part of the user experience is affected if something goes wrong. Decisions are based on data, experimentation and dialogue rather than opinion, ego, and authority²¹.

These examples illustrate the art of the possible by showing how one particular organisation has sought to tackle a problem that many organisations grapple with: how to create a culture in which people have the freedom to be creative and innovative, whilst ensuring that the work they do is in service of the broader organisational goals.



5. What should I do next?

We recommend that you:

1 give this guidance note to colleagues (including clients and senior managers) who you think might be interested in it. Make sure to have a follow-up conversation about it and what it means for your organisation's or your client's organisation's approach to the future of workplaceWorkplace Change²².

2 complete the self-assessment below for your own organisation or your client's organisation. This will give you a high-level indication of where your organisation (or client) stands in relation to the future of workplace, and the opportunities and challenges this may present. Use the results of your assessment as a basis for a follow-up conversation with your colleagues and/or client

3 read the earlier guidance notes in the series, but particularly the one on Leading Successful Workplace Change²².



EMPOWERING PEOPLE - SELF-ASSESSMENT

This thinking tool has been designed to help you reflect on the degree to which your organisation, team or client empowers its people. It will help you to identify things that you do well or less well and identify areas for improvement.

As with any self-assessment, this tool requires you to reflect on your own situation critically and honestly. Remember, sometimes honest truths can be uncomfortable!

You might find it helpful to complete this self-assessment individually within your team and then come together to discuss your responses.

To complete the self-assessment, read each statement and pick a point on the corresponding scale that feels about right for you. Try not to overthink the statements!

Let's take statement 1 as an example. If you think that your organisation isn't very good at trusting people to work the way they need to, you might pick a point somewhere to the left hand-side of the scale.

	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
1 Our people are trusted to work in the way they need to, to get the job done	●	●
2 We do not need to rely on formal rules and policies to work effectively	●	●
3 People have a choice over where they work	●	●
4 People have a choice over when they work	●	●
5 People have a choice over how they work	●	●
6 We manage according to output rather than time spent working	●	●
7 Our leaders throughout the business lead by example	●	●
8 Our people would say that they have the right tools to work effectively	●	●
9 We recognise that individuals and teams have different workplace needs	●	●
10 Our people have a say in the workplace changes affecting them	●	●

Once you've put a mark on each scale, draw a line down through the marks so that you can see the profile of your responses.

Then take stock of the overall picture and ask yourself:

- what are your strengths and weaknesses?
- are there any obvious areas for improvement?
- who do I need to talk to about implementing these improvements?

LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF WORKPLACE

There are a number of ways you can learn more about this topic:

- IWFM's 'Navigating Turbulent Times' webinar series, which can be found at: www.iwfm.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/webinar-series-navigating-turbulent-times.html
- Ricoh's Work Together, Anywhere webinar hub, which can be accessed at: <https://tools.ricoh.co.uk/work-together-anywhere-webinar-series>
- the other workplace guidance notes in this series, which are available to download from at: www.iwfm.org.uk/insight/research-partnerships/creating-better-workplaces.html

We have also partnered with workplace specialists 3edges to provide workplace and leadership CPD courses which explore many of the issues discussed in this guidance note. These courses can be attended individually or delivered for groups 'in-company'.

Multi-course discounts are available. To find out more about our courses or to book a place, visit: www.iwfm.org.uk/professional-development/academy

The ideas and approaches in this guidance note also form part of our 'Level 6 Diploma in Workplace Leadership, Insight and Change'. This is the first workplace qualification of its kind. If you would like to learn more about the Diploma, please contact: qualifications@iwfm.org.uk

Endnotes:

- ¹ Skyrme, D. J. (1994). Flexible working: building a lean and responsive organization. *Long Range Planning*, 27(5), 98-110.
- ² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skype>
- ³ Mercer Global talent trends 2018 study: unlocking growth in the human age. Available at: www.mercer.com/content/dam/mercer/attachments/global/webcasts/gl-2018-pdf-global-talent-trends-study-us-canada.pdf
- ⁴ People whose jobs involve novel activities and problem solving for a living, rather than routine, repetitive tasks. The term was originally coined in 1960, independently by Peter Drucker and Fritz Machlup (Greene & Myerson, 2011).
- ⁵ Ojala, S., & Pyöriä, P. (2018). Mobile knowledge workers and traditional mobile workers: Assessing the prevalence of multi-locational work in Europe. *Acta Sociologica*, 61(4), 402-418. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/000169931772259>
- ⁶ Schiff, F (1979) Working at Home Can Save Gasoline. Available at: www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1979/09/02/working-at-home-can-save-gasoline/ffa475c7-d1a8-476e-8411-8cb53f1f3470/
- ⁷ Nilles, J., Carlson, F., Gray, P. and Hanneman (1974) The telecommunications-transportation tradeoff: options for tomorrow. Wiley.
- ⁸ What Nilles and his co-authors called 'telecommuting', a term that is still widely used in North America to describe working away from the office.
- ⁹ What Telecommuting Looked Like in 1973: A vision of remote work from before the personal computer www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/12/what-telecommuting-looked-like-in-1973/418473/
- ¹⁰ See for instance Trist, E. and Bamforth K. (1951) Some social and psychological consequences of the longwall method of coal-getting: An examination of the psychological situation and defences of a work group in relation to the social structure and technological content of the work system. *Human Relations*, 4(1), p.3-38.
- ¹¹ <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2017/05/23/culture-eats/>
- ¹² Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond Culture*. Garden City, Nueva York.
- ¹³ Full details of the study are available here: www.adecgroup.com/reset-normal/
- ¹⁴ www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_94.htm. Despite its age, Lewin's pervasive model from the 1940s is acknowledged as the foundation for many of the more current change management frameworks (Elrod & Tippett, 2002).
- ¹⁵ Pinder, J. and Ellison, I. (2020) Creating better workspaces. IWFM guidance note available at: www.iwfm.org.uk/resource/creating-better-workspaces.html
- ¹⁶ Semler, R. (1989) Managing without managers. Available at: <https://hbr.org/1989/09/managing-without-managers>
- ¹⁷ Hastings, R. and Meyer, E. (2020) No rules rules: *Netflix and the culture of reinvention*. Virgin Books.
- ¹⁸ Psychological safety is being able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences of self-image, status or career (Kahn 1990)
- ¹⁹ This approach is explained in more detail in 'How to change organisational culture' by www.thepioneers.co.uk (2017)
- ²⁰ Adapted from *Spotify Engineering Culture - Part 1* (2019) by Henrik Kniberg. Available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yvfz4HGtoPc
- ²¹ Mankins, M. and Garton, E. (2017) How Spotify balances employee autonomy and accountability. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2017/02/how-spotify-balances-employee-autonomy-and-accountability>
- ²² Pinder, J. and Ellison, I. (2020) *Leading successful workplace change*. IWFM guidance note available at: www.iwfm.org.uk/resource/leading-successful-workplace-change.html

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We exist to promote excellence among a worldwide community of over 17,000 and to demonstrate the value and contribution of workplace and facilities management more widely.

Our Mission: We empower professionals to upskill and reach their potential for a rewarding, impactful career. We do this by advancing professional standards, offering guidance and training, developing new insights and sharing best practice.

Our Vision: As the pioneering workplace and facilities management body, our vision is to drive change for the future. To be the trusted voice of a specialist profession recognised, beyond the built environment, for its ability to enable people to transform organisations and their performance.

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