NEW WORK ORDER

ORGANISATIONS IN TRANSITION
his analysis is an in-depth follow-up of the first NEW WORK ORDER study, which described the start of a networked culture of work. The original study was commissioned by the Association of Office, Seating and Object Furniture (bso), because the association’s members wanted to know how new forms of communication will make future work more efficient and how the office as a workplace is changing. The bso became involved in this follow-up study because of the continuing need for a discussion of how the NEW WORK ORDER is being implemented.

IT’S ALL ABOUT A NEW CONCEPT OF WORK

Customers, logistics and goods management have all been networked by now, and the value chain has in effect unraveled from behind to form a net-like structure. Today the digital transformation is reaching the last and most important bastion of the status quo: the organisational and management structures. That’s because as long as the people in offices and boardrooms continue to communicate and lead just as they did in the analogue era, there will be no dynamically networked business processes and no new culture of work. Almost every company is feeling the pressure to transform itself into an agile organisation that meets the new demands of digital value creation and its related factors such as demographic change.

The study focuses on the job profile of the knowledge worker, who generally works in an office. However, the interviews and insights in the study show that knowledge workers can also be found in the cyber-physically networked production halls of Industry 4.0 or among the highly motivated employees of country inns. These innovations are the beginnings of a change that sometimes comes from below—through the emancipated self-image of (generally younger) employees—and sometimes from above—from increasingly numbers-driven managers.

The basic goals are clear: flexible collaboration, agile processes and entrepreneurially thinking employees. However, the ideas about how best to achieve a NEW WORK ORDER are still varied and vague. As a result, the emphasis of the study is primarily qualitative. The people represented in this study take it upon themselves to boldly overcome ossified structures, confront their colleagues face to face and try out new forms of work. After all, the NEW WORK ORDER is ultimately nothing less than a whole new concept of the way we work.
DIGITAL MARKETS AND NETWORKED CUSTOMERS ARE PUSHING FOR NEW ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

WORKING in the digital economy requires a new self-definition on the part of companies as well as their employees. Competitive pressure and networked communication are at last forcing us to organise our activities, data, communication and knowledge in ways that are efficient and socially beneficial. The ongoing structural transformation will not be mastered by simply implementing IT changes or getting new equipment for individual departments. The NEW WORK ORDER means a networked culture of work that encompasses all disciplines—and thus the way we organise all of our work—and ensures that it is fit for the future.

99.4% of the objects that could become part of the Internet of Things are not yet networked today. So far only about 10 billion of a total of 1.5 trillion objects are connected with one another. Networking the objects that are not yet networked (human-human, human-machine, machine-machine) would exploit a tremendous potential of 51.4 trillion.

Digital added value is more strongly customer-oriented, automated and networked than ever before. Partnerships, thanks to IT and communication interfaces, will become common. The NEW WORK ORDER means a networked culture of work that encompasses all disciplines and thus the way we organise all of our work—and ensures that it is fit for the future.

Disciplines of the NEW WORK ORDER

- The individual areas of activity must be prepared for the new culture of work and networked into a holistic NEW WORK ORDER. The areas that are focused on here—"Organisation and Processes" and "Leadership and Rules"—interact with the other areas.
- Disciplines—and thus the way we organise all of our work—and ensure that it is fit for the future.
- Disciplines of the NEW WORK ORDER are:
  - Strategy
  - Targets
  - Organisation
  - Process
  - Partnerships
  - Disciplines

The customer is the beginning, middle and end of digital added value

Digital commerce is a key driver of change. Because of its consistent focus on the customer, it forces manufacturers and dealers to enter into new alliances and leave behind the tunnel-vision value chains of the past.

Linear value creation still functions in the digital era only in very specific and fragmented areas. Service-oriented or for subsidized enterprises, or for companies that do not trade online.

GLOBAL CUSTOMERS ARE CLOSELY NETWORKED

They are not directly influenced by companies. On the contrary, on the Web they show the industry exactly who’s getting their "likes"—practically in real time. Today the gaming sector uses tracking systems to follow every player’s every move and every hesitation. Algorithms, constantly enriched by statistics and empirical values, use combinations of moves and players’ reactions measured in fractions of a second to compute future purchasers’ willingness to pay. They are used in other areas and applications. The "in-app purchase" is a game developers’ main source of income.

The Orto Group has also realized that it must allow its value creation to begin directly with the consumer, because closeness to the customer is the crucial factor. The trading company has purchased an interest in the Blue Yonder startup, where a team of IT specialists headed by the nuclear physicist Prof. Michael Feindt monitors the purchasing behaviour of customers. In their scrutiny of the "customer journey", they analyze individual preferences in combination with environmental factors and are even able to predict future purchases by means of predictive analytics. Their predictions can be networked with the company’s marketing activities and could be used to automate procurement, depending on the amount of demand and the suppliers’ conditions. In this way, the consumers are initiating a new kind of value creation in which flexible alliances are responding to the scalability of the customer wish.
Communication without friction losses is already a reality between vehicles, autonomous delivery drones and other machines in Industry 4.0. New intelligent software is also bringing such communication capacity to offices.

AUTOMATION WILL SIGNIFICANTLY ALTER THE WAY WORK IS ORGANISED AND EMPLOYEES ARE MANAGED.

Algorithms can carry out procurement operations in accordance with certain criteria, align such data with sensor data and environmental factors, make decisions autonomously, and manage processes. Algorithms can enable the intelligent assistance systems in self-driving vehicles, autonomously make stock-market transactions and can carry out procurement operations in accordance with contractual stipulations. Algorithms can also take over the routine operations mainly carried out by office workers today, given enough valid data, they can also conduct activities that require intelligent linking, evaluation, analysis, and forecasting for processes involving sales, the determination of customer requirements, and the assessment of risks to markets and market environments. Given the nature of global competition, it will be impossible to prevent, let alone use, the use of algorithms in Germany or the painful adjustments associated with it for many. At the same time, algorithms will force us to take the next development steps.

WHAT TYPE OF CONTROL?

The effects of digital value creation and automation are forcing companies to abandon their management approaches and organisational “silos.”

WHAT DEMANDS IS DIGITAL VALUE CREATION PLACING ON THE ORGANISATIONS DESIGNED TO MAKE SUCH VALUE CREATION POSSIBLE?

...and it’s a demanding challenge in terms of coordination. Algorithms will thus force office workers to take a development step that they either intentionally chose to forget or else never thought of before. That’s an interesting question. There are indications that value creation in the digital world will be characterised by organisations that set compartmental goals in a much more dynamically than in the past. A good initial step will be to create room in which people can reflect on the organisational form throughout the company and with a certain degree of continuity. We will no longer be able to count on an organisational structure resolving company-wide value-creation issues on its own—and such organisational forms will also be managed with less power projection and fewer hierarchies. In a manner similar to the introduction of new machines or computer technologies, technology progress here will also reveal which forms of work should no longer be considered part of a highly developed society.

WHAT WOULD BE THE MOST SUITABLE STRUCTURE? It depends on what a company does. Organisational forms that favour decentralization and temporary setups are one option—things like matrix, project organisation, and network structures. Unfortunately, functional organisational structures tend to promote a “silo” mentality that is increasingly impossible to assign to specific departments.

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WHY ARE QUICK REACTION TIMES SO IMPORTANT?

Intelligent algorithms present a blunt picture of just how little office workers have developed professionally. Even today, the focus on standard tasks for office employees poses a danger. For example, industrial workers in medium-sized companies today are no longer valued for their reliable piecework output but instead for their ability to flexibly convert machines and tools in order to adapt products to changing customer requirements.

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THE NETWORK STRUCTURE

The general dissolution of previously valid structures affects not only the networked economy but also society and the social fabric. A sharply divided society is finding more personalized support in network structures: in particular, employees are preparing for new and complex tasks; on the other, the deterioration of continuity and felt responsibilities are the glue that holds companies and societies together. The dissolution of previously valid structures changes and challenges management cultures in particular. On the one hand, employees are merging positions in the matrix. This two-track system allows managers to call upon either a technical expert (Owner) or a social skills expert. However, because People Managers usually know little about the actual tasks performed by individual employees, they can’t make much of an assessment when it comes to promoting employees. In this sense, they are like HR development managers. The People Managers’ evaluations of individual performance, which are made in team meetings and retrospectives, could basically be replaced by mutual evaluations among team members in the future.

Communication problems between human resources directors and CDOs and human resource managers are replaced by clear, frequent communication and cooperation among the three employees who are involved. The goal of individual self-determination is making one’s own multirad-traditional cooperation more important than loyalty to an employer. Shared interests are the glue that holds companies and societies together. The dissolution of previously valid structures creates new challenges and new management cultures in particular. On the one hand, employees are preparing for new and complex tasks; on the other, the deterioration of continuity and felt responsibilities have to be answered if success is to be achieved.

The framework model for addressing complex questions is known as Scrum. The large number of Scrum teams at SAP led to the creation of a multi-level organisation at the company, says Jochen Gürtler, a former trainer at SAP. “For example, the Chief Product Owner is responsible for a product that several hundred developers might end up working on. Below that level, there are often several Area Product Owners who are responsible for specific aspects of a product. Every Area Product Owner oversees several Scrum teams that perform development work in the special area. The Area Product Owner is responsible for the Scrum team level includes Product Owners who define the tasks to be performed (sprints) and the user stories (requirements) and goals that they want the teams to achieve. The teams organise themselves using simple rules, such as daily stand-up meetings and the release ceremonies. This type of matrix structure isn’t new, but it can be optimized, as Alistair Cockburn, one of the architects of the discovery framework, could basically be replaced by mutual evaluations among team members in the future.

Dynamically new: Many organisations and management structures in Germany are considered valuable in a dynamic business environment for new requirements regarding communication, employment management and customer focus.

The NTN structure is being held back.

THE STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION IS BEING HELD BACK

In terms of market analysis and investment, it is currently happening that when it comes to data collection and evaluation methods and the three employee models how much time, flexibility and virtual collaboration the measures are the effect of its medium-term strategy when it comes to data collection and evaluation, methods for search success, customer focus and market developments.

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SCALING AGILE @ SPOTIFY
NETWORKED AUTONOMY

The workforce at the music streaming service Spotify grew from 30 to 250 between 2009 and 2012. The company responded by modifying a matrix structure in a way that allowed it to grow in parallel, but without any negative impact on team agility.

SQUADS

THE UNIT: Spotify teams are known as Squads; they are similar to Scrum teams.
THE ORGANISATION: Product Owners prioritise the tasks to be performed, after that the Squad members organise themselves. They work virtually autonomously — like a mini-startup.
EASY RELEASE: Squad member skills are combined in a way that allows the team to design, develop, test and launch a product completely on its own.
LEARNING: Each Squad can also call upon the services of an “Agile Coach” to help it improve its work processes. Employees are expected to use around 10% of their time for their own projects during “hack days” and then present the results to their Squads.
MISSION: Each Squad has an overriding mission (e.g. further developing the Spotify Radio experience) above launches.

TRIBES

CHAPTE RS

GuILDS

There is no generally valid path that leads to the NEW WORK ORDER. However, the route to it is marked by milestones and experiences.

Organisations are currently experimenting with different approaches for aligning their employees and processes with the digital economy. Regardless of how progressive a company may be in the global competitive environment and on the labour market, the focus is almost always on workflow optimization and change processes that can be combined with other disciplines (see p. 4) to create a holistic NEW WORK ORDER. Nevertheless, each company defines its own starting point and main areas of action. Depending on the corporate culture in question, the radius of change might include specific units or work methods, or even the entire organisational structure. Changes to specific units could involve the gradual incorporation or radical outsourcing of a networked work culture — e.g. the launch of internal autonomous units or the acquisition of external start-ups.

PROF. HEIKO ROEHL

3 PATHS TO THE PALACE REVOLT

The fact that today’s rigid organisations are unable to accommodate digital and customer-focused business activity is threatening to topple established structures.

Heiko Roehl discusses three possible scenarios for the coming transformation.

SCENARIO 1: THE PALACE AND THE REFUGE CAMPS

Many companies are quickly outsourcing innovation-related activities to small external units that cannot be inhibited or destroyed by routine pressures. The advantage of creating loosely linked, innovative and decentralised units is that they are able to operate as highly autonomous entrepreneurial centres. Unfortunately, the reflexive use of the outsourcing tool is often an indication that a company is incapable of change.

+++ Enables the development of innovations that is the ideal case generate market-relevant potential for the entire organisation.
+++ In the worst case, outsourced units become peripheral playthings that are not strategically linked to, and do not cooperate with, the palace (the parent company).
In any case, this is a missed learning opportunity for the parent company.

SCENARIO 2: CAMPING IN THE PALACE BALLROOM

In order to make a home for innovation in the organisation, many companies set up special privileged “protected” areas. Such internal incubators are often viewed with an astounding degree of hostility by people in the main organisation, so certain management aspects should be noted. Most importantly, a learning strategy must be developed for the main organisation to ensure the new structures provide new knowledge for the old ones. A clever strategy would also interpret conflicts and rejection as signals heralding a new beginning. This is a very demanding task. Chapter Leaders are responsible for salary and continuing education issues in their Chapters.

+++ Advantage: Solid links and good learning potential for the main organisation.
+++ Positive initial impact on innovation.
+++ Risk: Absolve by the palace: Too much control/ treatment as an extended workbench can be a death sentence for innovation.

SCENARIO 3: WAR ON THE PALACES,
PEACE TO THE TENT CITIES

If, despite their specific peculiarities, innovation activities are incorporated into existing structures the way standard business operations are, the result in the best but also rare case will be a substantial change to the main organisation, which will gradually decentralise responsibilities and begin restructur ing standard business operations to make them more innovation-driven. In the worst case, organisational routines will win the day and destroy innovation.

+++ Good opportunity to raise awareness of all business as being the business of the organisation.
A difficult path, however, because the DNA of most brick and mortar businesses will fundamentally resist the approach.
Risk: Complete loss of innovation capability.

Physiological

Brick and mortar

The term “brick and mortar business” refers to companies whose contact with customers takes place in physical sales outlets rather than on the Internet — as opposed to companies whose activities are carried out exclusively on the Web (e.g. online shops). (Wikipedia)

Possessive mentality

Unlike US venture capi tulists, German in vestors tend to make the mistake of acquir ing a majority inter est in a startup and then attempting to control it. US investors, on the other hand, usu ally acquire 10 to 15% of a company and then leave the startup alone so they can wait and see how it performs.
a. A gender technique would be to introduce a new working method as part of an interdisciplinary project and invite anyone who is interested to experience the new work culture within the framework of the project. The freedom that this approach can establish is unfortunately counteracted at most companies by the fact that project work is usually assigned as extra work and extensively monitored. What’s needed instead are “long-leaders” and greater management confidence in project groups, since this is what will motivate employees to finally demonstrate their capabilities and successfully complete complex assignments. Once such freedom is established, employees will stop “fudging” and will also begin to observe and learn from their colleagues’ approaches, question existing standards and methods, and abandon their own established ways of thinking.

In a certain sense, the “fractal organisation” model with its independent teams also draws its strength from the juxtaposition of standard processes and “free projects”. The biggest changes can be achieved here at new companies, that move and those that undergo extensive downsizing or experience major growth. A complete restructuring of an organisation—to the extent that this can even be afforded—should only be carried out in combination with new physical surroundings. One shouldn’t underestimate the effect that a change of scenery and interior design can have on any change management process.

PEOPLE TEND TO ADAPT THEIR BEHAVIOUR TO THEIR SURROUNDINGS. This fact should be familiar to anyone who has ever entered a reading room at a library. The sudden silence and the concentration of the room’s occupants immediately shifts on folks who enter. Conversely, this means that one could use a certain type of spatial design to elicit a change in behaviour, such as a collaborative and mutual-learning approach towards work.

THE MORE STRUCTURES AND SECURITY DISAPPEAR, THE MORE IMPORTANT THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT WILL BECOME. The increase in communication via all available channels not only occurs in physical surroundings; it also increases the desire for physical encounters—e.g., to exchange information or to get a better idea of the person one is dealing with. Nearly all the new organisation models give knowledge workers and project teams more freedom and room for decision-making as to how and where they will work. Companies therefore have to establish clear conditions and appealing options.

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Project work can teach people to take the initiative and assume responsibility — provided a company trusts its employees and stands behind them. The resulting self-organisation frees up managers for other tasks.

MANAGER TASKS

AFTER THE PROJECT

KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND DOCUMENTATION:
Although managers serve as contact partners for queries or problems, they should avoid exerting any influence on the team until the internal presentation of the project results. The monitoring of progress and performance can easily be conducted via the networked collaboration platform, which can also be used to communicate important events or changes to all project partners. The internal project presentation is the first in a series of project meetings managers have to give the team feedback. Managers should only be concerned with the extent to which a project corresponds to the project plan. However, it is important to determine how effective specific promotional methods were and whether or not all team members were able to achieve the objectives they set out in their group agreements. Managers should respectfully utilize frank admissions of mistakes as a learning curve for all team members.

TASKS OF THE TEAM

After the project is completed, team members give each other feedback and document mutually approved evaluations in their business profiles. Such mutual feedback reduces dependence on the evaluations of individual managers or management bodies and helps knowledge workers better assess their own abilities. The evaluations should be drawn up in a way that allows knowledge workers to communicate them and the references they contain to their own networks outside the company as a means of marketing their skills. This doesn’t pose a threat to the company, since there’s always a danger that highly qualified workers could be lured away. That’s why it is even more important for companies to signalise appreciation their employees.

Companies tend to define themselves in terms of ownership boundaries, which customers have no interest in. Companies should therefore define themselves in terms of interaction boundaries.

Trust in employees at the startup Jendo: There are no general rules for home-office working time, vacations etc. Instead, employees enter the number of hours they’ve missed in a week, receive approval from their teams, which have self-organised.

For years, the New York startup works from 30 to 180 m people at four locations worldwide.

PROJECT WORK

Once it is disconnected from daily business operations, project work can focus on future challenges or complement current work on the project level—which is completely disconnected from daily business already runs as a standardized process that is needed at the process level either, because the daily business processes are a standardized process that gives everyone involved a feeling of security and belonging. In this way, the team members can be involved in ensuring that work on the project level—which is completely disconnected from the daily routine—can be carried out freely and with experimentation.

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(telephone survey for the hbrstudy, 2012)

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The basic assumption is that a new project organisation has its own set of principles, which can then be extended outside the company, and team members also need to be created at independent project spaces more often than other firms.
Information transparency and agile processes are also helpful in the services sector, where cooperation is especially crucial. Although the teams have to be present to a higher degree elsewhere, they can nevertheless organise themselves more and take on more responsibility so that customer proximity is always crucial. Although the teams have to be present to a higher degree elsewhere, they can nevertheless organise themselves more and take on more responsibility so that customer proximity is always crucial.

### A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Until now, work greatly benefited from past experiences and findings. However, to be successful in the future, we will have to learn from the future. That requires all employees to achieve a new level of openness, mindfulness and creative awareness.

When efficiency becomes important, the way something is done determines how good performance will be. Increasingly complex issues, highly specialised knowledge and customer-focused expertise can no longer be combined in old ways. Methods such as mindfulness training is a process of actively monitoring one's thoughts, feelings and actions. By doing so, individuals can learn to focus on the present moment and to accept their experiences without judgment.

Mindfulness is an ability that is sorely needed in uncertain situations — it is also something that people are much better at than software programs. We should therefore train this ability and make good use of it.

### HOW DO YOU DEFINE MINDFULNESS?

**ELLEN LANGER** Mindfulness is the process of actively monitoring one’s thoughts, feelings and actions. By doing so, individuals can learn to focus on the present moment and to accept their experiences without judgment.

**People often claim that the opposite of order and structure is chaos. But that’s only true if people are ruthless and rebellious. If everyone is mindful, chaos and structure are one and the same goal, their efforts complement each other, and we can no longer be divided into winners and losers. **

**WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR WORKING?**

Take work processes. When people say, “This is the way to do it,” that’s not true. There are always many ways, and the way you choose should depend on the job at hand and the people involved. That’s why mindfulness training is so valuable. It helps people to see that there is no one right way to do things. It makes them more resilient and creative.

**Mindfulness is the ability to accept things as they are, and to make repeated evaluations so that solutions are ultimately more in line with requirements.**

However, the assumption that complex issues can be resolved more easily if customer problems are viewed from a variety of perspectives, be means of a dialogue, the process of innovation needs to be made more proactively and to make repeated evaluations so that solutions are ultimately more in line with requirements. Mindfulness is the ability to accept things as they are, and to make repeated evaluations so that solutions are ultimately more in line with requirements.
NEW TASKS FOR LEADERSHIP

Management’s task is to introduce, adapt and practice a flexible and networked work culture. The challenge here is not the technological infrastructure, but the need to get employees to accept the new culture.

The question of how a company should be guided is closely linked to one’s conceptions of how society can be managed in its time and in line with its identity. An examination of the various organisational theories and the concepts and leadership that were derived from them over the years reveals that they point to parallel concepts of political systems and social forms and of theories of education and child care. It therefore comes as no surprise that contrary to the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s expectation for guiding companies, leadership styles began to devote themselves to organisations as a unitified entity in their own right.

More attention was given to communication—in particular where office and administrative work was increasing, but also because society was becoming more differentiated and emancipated, and people were demanding a greater say. Decisions and interrelationships were publicly discussed, and people called old dependencies and blind obedience into question. The systemic leadership and organisational theories that arose in the 1980s (Niklas Luhmann) rejected the leader’s pre-eminence and declared that an organisation’s overall structure was a kind of independent organisation with frequently uncontrollable communication processes being responsible for an undertaking’s success or failure. The transfer of responsibility from the leader to the communication within and by the organisation for the first time took into account the complexity that communication naturally produces.

FROM GREAT MAN LEADERSHIP TO INDIVIDUAL EMPOWERMENT

A management by objectives approach that is derived from the Great Man Theory and spreads like a virus is obviously used to focusing only on themselves. “Before a task is solved, I often hear bosses saying that they have to be cleverer, faster and better than the others will take notice of this, but it won’t convince them to give individuals more freedom. However, the individual promotion of the employees’ development inevitably interferes with the operation of the positions they occupy and still has a hierarchical structure and top-down class consciousness. “Special treatment” and individual privileges need to be justified within the various levels of the hierarchy and require a clear normative structure, which basically comes down to an individual performance measurement. This, in turn, is difficult to determine. The importance of individualised support is also reflected in the human resources departments, which have shifted their focus in recent decades from personnel structures to a results-based orientation and are now concentrating more strongly on boosting individual performance.

Individual support is impeded by the traditional divisions between a company’s department and its workforce, which still affects employees’ self-image and motivation. Knowledge workers need to know the context in which they operate. However, if employees aren’t initiated into a company’s strategies and don’t take on business responsibilities until they take over a management position, they won’t begin to think in the interests of the company until they become executives. A self-created condition of this is the impression that “underlings” primarily pursue their own interests—which are, in the case of leaders of the company. still the realities the employees continue to foster a structured and restrictive information policy on the part of the company’s leaders and causes the workforce’s representatives to be willing to go on strike. Both sides continue to try to impose their will and to externally manifest the cultural differences that they have overcome long ago by working together and implementing cooperative measures (e.g. in times of crisis and Germany’s Agenda 2010 programme).

In addition, management tools have rarely been updated to bring them in tune with the times. Dr. Josephine Hofmann, who heads the research unit Business Performance Management at Fraunhofer IAO, has noticed that “traditional business objectives and key performance indicators continue to dominate incentive and control systems in real life. Development and employee-oriented targets are rarely thoroughly defined and cascaded. The focus remains on the traditional parameters of turnover development, quality targets and other profitability-oriented objectives. However, future-oriented companies are not so much concerned with the employees’ development as they are today becoming the true key asset. Says Hofmann: “With the increase in knowledge work in absolute terms and its growing contribution value added, it is the employees and not the companies who now dispose of and control the most important resources: the employees’ knowledge, experience and networks.”

According to the human resources managers surveyed, the best ways to motivate young employees are with structural factors such as flat hierarchies and personal interactions (48%), personal feedback (38%) and recognition opportunities (35%). However, young people’s wish to work on their own tends to be greatly underestimated by older human resources managers and managing directors in particular. The same applies to young employees’ wish to do meaningful work that helps them learn new things, gives them clear objectives and enables them to obtain personal feedback.

IN THE NETWORKED ECONOMY, INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT IS INSEPARABLE FROM A COMPANY’S SUCCESS.

Management trainer, Dialog im Dunkeln

Dörte Maack

Further managers require employees to perform tasks in pitch-black rooms. “Management by objectives” is a concept which this approach is counterproductive. In most processes, employees to contribute their own expertise. The responsibility of leadership is much rather to orchestrate networks, task forces, hierarchies, solitary workers and project teams. For employees, this means that they can no longer rely on their previously obtained skills and development potential. In some cases, an outstanding programmer who lacks a high school diploma can earn more money and advance faster than a long-serving employee.

For organisations, this has meant that the working environment will become more prone to conflict. Organisations will have to deal with more tension in the future. In other words, a conflict of interests between organisations. Organisations simultaneously have networks, task forces, hierarchies, solitary workers and project teams. For the employees, this means that they can no longer rely on their previously obtained skills and development potential. In some cases, an outstanding programmer who lacks a high school diploma can earn more money and advance faster than a long-serving employee.

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Leadership in Transition Between Two Worlds

Guiding a workforce through the digital transformation process requires the utilization of both “old” and “new” management concepts.

The Old World

The old paradigm is characterized by a linear view of leadership – mining the old order of management, the relationships of authority are derived from the position of the hierarchy. Employees are expected to comply with their superiors’ orders. In this system, innovation is not an option, but rather a threat. Changes are only made if they are top-down, not bottom-up.

The New World

The new world view is one of leadership as an open invitation to discuss how to find the best solution for everyone. In this context, change is a constant factor that requires everyone to be involved in the process. New approaches are necessary, and the principles of leadership are expected to be redefined.

Consensus-Driven Leadership

This “withdrawn” and discursive management style accommodates the desire for participation and the adoption of new ideas by employees. It encourages employees to share their ideas and participate in the decision-making process.

Reflection and Perception

Whenever the principles are applied, the employees are expected to be open and receptive to new ideas. The manager’s role is to facilitate the discussion and encourage open communication.

Consensus

A decision is reached when consensus is achieved. This approach prevents decisions from being made hastily, ensuring that all stakeholders are satisfied with the outcome.

STRict Freedom

Decisions that have been made can be implemented immediately without having to go through official channels or worry about the needs of others. Instead, every employee is free to express their ideas and opinions, and a decision made.

Sociocracy

In this system, everything is decided by democratic decision-making, and every employee has a voice. Decisions are made based on what is best for the organization as a whole, ensuring that everyone feels heard and valued.

Organizational structures

One of the main factors that determine the success of leadership is the structure of the organization. There are two primary types of organizational structures: hierarchical and flat.

Hierarchical Structures

In hierarchical structures, there is a clear chain of command, and decisions are made by those who are at the top of the hierarchy. This type of structure is often used in traditional organizations.

Flat Structures

In flat structures, all employees have equal opportunities to participate in decision-making. This type of structure is often used in innovative and startup organizations.

The goal of any leader is to transform their organization into a sociocracy, where everyone has a voice and every decision is made democratically.
WE CAN EXPECT THE YOUNG GENERATION TO PUSH FOR CHANGE WITH REGARD TO NETWORKED STRUCTURES, BUT JUST HOW MUCH CHANGE CAN A MINORITY IN THE OFFICE ACHIEVE?

It used to be the case that young employees learned from older ones, and their increasing numbers served to rejuvenate a company. These days, (comparatively few) well-educated digital natives face a majority of older employees who have very little desire for change, as was reported in an Allensbach Institute survey conducted in 2013. At the same time the digital transformation requires decision-makers in particular to be committed to change. This creates a tremendous challenge for the companies.

REVERSE MENTORING MANAGERS AND LEADERS OF ORGANIZATIONS WITH EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIGITAL NATIVES PROVIDE A FEEDBACK LOOP ALONGSIDE THE TRADITIONAL CAREER PATH.

The professional success of Generation X and baby boomers is based on their ability to subordinate themselves and their lifestyles to the demands of their workplace. When workloads increase, the impact of those demands on personal performance and professional ability is an ever more important factor. The ever-increasing spiral of external control can even lead to a mental disconnect from the job. Reverse mentoring managers and leaders find a new source of inspiration in the “digital natives” who work under their direction. These new employees provide managers and leaders with a feedback loop for their career paths which can offer a perspective on the future. The new employees can contribute their networking expertise and knowledge of new consumer requirements and cooperation possibilities. They would benefit both the company and its Generation Y employees. Unfortunately, the new employee generation is still not present in sufficient numbers, nor is its education and media expertise sufficiently homogeneous to ensure consistent structural transformation. It is also being held back by a majority of older workers whose understanding of economics, value creation, and work organization is a product of the dialogue machine age.

The older generation comes that competition in the digital economy operates according to principles similar to those that apply to the way digital natives view the world around them. However, they are not yet ready to accept the fact that the new work culture requires the replication of the old way of doing business. For one thing, the continued success (for the time being) of the German economy seems to indicate otherwise. For another, such a replication would call their own careers and experiences into question. Still, despite their lack of inner conviction, many are aware of the changes that are occurring. Baby boomers and the Generation X cohort understandably have doubts as to whether their media skills and level of efficiency are sufficient for addressing the coming challenges. However, instead of accepting their deficiencies and learning from their younger counterparts, they devise the new forms of communication as superficial.

A GENERATIONAL CONFLICT IS COMING

The older generation believes values such as self-discipline, hard work, and the performance of duty are the “right” ones for the working world. This could lead to conflict, because many digital natives clearly dislike the dull work ethic of the older generations. They don’t want to be committed to work as they want their lives to be. Baby boomers are still in control.

Constance Buchheim founder and CEO of i-Potentials

Constance Buchheim is an expert on work and careers in the digital age. After studying business administration, Buchheim began her own career at the digital commerce company Spreadshirt, where she set up the HR department in 2006 and 2007. She quickly realized how difficult it is for young and fast-growing companies in the digital age to find the right employees. In 2009 she established i-Potentials GmbH, a human resources consulting specializing in recruitment and executive searches for companies in the digital economy, sees in her daily work how far apart the ideas and goals of young knowledge workers are from those of their older colleagues.
Philipp Riederle: WE WANT TO WORK IN A DIFFERENT WAY

Digital native Philipp Riederle talks about Generation Y’s values, attitude towards work, expectations, and visions for the future, many of which are fundamentally different from the current norm.

WHAT ROLES DO HIERARCHIES PLAY FOR YOU?
That varies sharply depending on the profession, task, project, and situation in question. Given the fact that we were brought up to be very independent and that freedom therefore has different concepts regarding how work should not be standardized; it needs to be both individualized and cooperative so that the proper expertise can be applied to a task or project.

WHAT WILL MANAGERS DO MORE OF IN THE FUTURE, AND WHAT WILL THEY NO LONGER DO?
For us young people, investing time in developing and implementing things we’re passionate about, achieving something great, proving our ability, and demonstrating leadership are of utmost importance. We don’t work for our bosses; we work for the goals we set and achieve that’s why we’re so good for us. The create optimal conditions that enable us to do the best work possible in each assignment. They are our role models, mentors, coaches, partners and advisors—anything but powerful “commanders.”

WHAT IS IT THAT THE “OLDER PEOPLE” DON’T UNDERSTAND?
The working world is currently undergoing the biggest type of change imaginable. Digitalization, automation and robotics will completely do away with the conventional notion of the working world. There will be fewer and fewer young people in society in the future, and companies are already having trouble finding sufficient numbers of skilled professionals. We, however, are encouraged (global) opportunity for personal fulfillment, and we have more choices than any generation that came before us. We will simply stay away from organizations that refuse to adapt to the needs and requirements of Generation Y. It’s really not that difficult to accommodate us (not that we are asking for it!), but the company would have to deal with us.

HOW CAN YOU TELL WHICH MEMBERS OF YOUR GENERATION ACTUALLY HAVE THIS NEW ATTITUDE AND WHICH ONES WERE SIMPLY BORN IN THE GENERATION OF THE 1980s?
Like every other generation, ours also has its loud and quiet members, strong and weak individuals, those who like to be at the forefront and those who prefer to stay in the background, those whose drive cannot be stopped and those who need to be pushed. In that sense, nothing has changed.

The only difference is that today’s “loud” and “strong” individuals will make their demands and refuse to compromise. Today the “quiet” and “weak” ones will be more inclined to accept existing structures or simply more quickly on the next job without ever having done for a company the things they would have been able to do given the right conditions.

WHAT IS IT THAT THE “OLDER PEOPLE” DON’T UNDERSTAND?

“WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?” SHOULD ALSO BE QUESTIONED BY THE GENERATION OLDER.

After years of loyalty to a company, not much remains from a once fulfilling job. Even those who have spent their lives in a high-level position will at some point realize that without the corporate logo and their own (social) network, they’re not worth much more on the market. If the desire for a full and active life before and after retirement is to be fulfilled, the last hope for knowledge workers lies in networking as a means of expanding their personal contacts beyond what was possible in the companies they work for. It thus becomes clear that a focus on social and being part of a community leads not to security but rather to dependency over the long term. The top priority for both companies and employees in the networked work culture will be to create networks of expertise and resources across different disciplines and companies that will help individuals and organizations optimize their performance. If older workers would realistically update their vision of their own future, this would go a long way towards bringing the generations closer together. Knowledge workers who establish solid networks would be able to act more independently and have greater decision-making opportunities after retirement that virtually no HR manager would even consider for today’s employees.

BASICALLY, GENERATION Y WANT THE LIBERAL VALUES OF THE BABY BOOMERS TO BE INCORPORATED INTO THE WORKPLACE.

Indeed, participation and having a say in things were also very important to baby boomers, who successfully fought against established conventions in society. However, their ideology of individual emancipation was not directed at companies, so their values never made it into the corporate world. It is exactly such values that the digital natives are seeking to introduce to help the business world — and to further their own development, which they will need to do in the digitally networked future.

“WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?” SHOULD ALSO BE QUESTIONED BY THE GENERATION OLDER.

The generational conflict is not just due to differences in media use and communication. It’s also caused by different values and work ethics.

The fundamental changes that have occurred in the area of information and communication technology were more or less already in place while we were growing up. We therefore have different concepts regarding how work should be performed, the structures we need, and the way we exchange information, cooperate, organize responsibilities and further develop our skills. When several generations work together, it’s important for each to understand where the others are coming from. This attitude mainly results from the stable upbringing we were brought up to be very independent and that freedom therefore have different concepts regarding how work should not be standardized; it needs to be both individualized and cooperative so that the proper expertise can be applied to a task or project.

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For us young people, investing time in developing and implementing things we’re passionate about, achieving something great, proving our ability, and demonstrating leadership are of utmost importance. We don’t work for our bosses; we work for the goals we set and achieve that’s why we’re so good for us. The create optimal conditions that enable us to do the best work possible in each assignment. They are our role models, mentors, coaches, partners and advisors—anything but powerful “commanders.”

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If the agility needed for a successful transformation is prevented not only by an outdated organizational structure but also by different cultures of work, then a company will need to offer incentives to get everyone interested in experiencing the new networked culture. Open spaces are a good option here because it’s easier for employees in open areas to learn from one another and choose a work environment that fits them. However, the spatial concept is not the most important aspect. That’s because our previous understanding of the workplace doesn’t fit with the implied boundlessness of the networked culture of work. Everything “has been too focused up till now on the workstation and the surrounding office,” says the architect Dietmar Ley. Over time, people tend to view their workstations as their property. However, the feeling of security conveyed by small spaces also limits the employee’s perceived radius of influence, which, in the networked culture, would be expanded and — depending on team connections and areas of responsibility — could also vary. The elimination of hierarchical structures will increase employees’ need for security as a compensating factor. Ley believes the problem of generating such a feeling of security throughout a company will need to be solved. Nevertheless, architectural design must create different types of working atmospheres in order to liberate employees from the notion that they should only do their work at one single station assigned to them.

MOVEMENT IS NEEDED IF NORMAL ROUTINES ARE TO BE BROKEN AND OLD WAYS OF THINKING ABANDONED.

Employees need some type of external stimulation to get them to switch from being passive recipients of orders to active and independent workers. This new attitude should be tested at various levels and applied to work content, procedures, spaces, and emotional and sensory aspects.

Before a company completely restructures itself, its employees should first be given a taste of what the networked work culture feels like. This means that employees (especially those who have been socialized in the hierarchical system for many years) should first be offered incentives over a long period of time to abandon routines (including always working in the same physical location) and start working for limited time periods to achieve goals at other workstations with colleagues who work differently than they do. If such a change is combined with a successful shared experience through interaction thatresults in an employee adopting a new perspective after observing a colleague, the associated positive memories will help the employee to take the initiative more often in the future, and encourage him or her to seek out interdisciplinary contact.

SENSORY STIMULATION THROUGH ARCHITECTURE

Having employees switch workstations also has a positive secondary effect, as studies have shown that an enhancement of the surrounding environment brought about by new people, changed light conditions, and a more direct connection to the outside world subliminally stimulates the human metabolism and improves the hormonal balance. This, in turn, improves concentration and receptiveness. Such sensory stimuli can include rooms with many windows and contact points with different types of pleasant surface textures.

Whereas mental agility is promoted by the pressures of digital change, physical agility (which is just as necessary) can be improved through more appealing interior design.

WHAT IF YOU OFFER TO REFRESH IT WHERE IT COMES TO THE KNOWLEDGE WORKER?

Mostly subconscious muscular activities that positively influence our physical and mental well-being throughout the day. For example, restless sliding around or rocking back and forth, tip-toeing on chairs, and movements and shifts made while standing, walking around, drumming fingers on a desk, gesturing while talking and so on. The associated muscular contractions release molecular semiochemicals (including proteins, enzymes and hormones) that trigger physical-mental-emotional interactions.

WHAT IMPLICATIONS DOES THIS HAVE FOR OFFICE WORK?

The call for greater mobility and flexibility must be applied to the work environment as well. If physical and mental well-being is to be ensured, work spaces must also subtly elicit the type of movement that promotes self-organized and primary mobility in the office. By comparison, singular preventive approaches that focus solely on orthopedic and traditional ergonomic aspects — for example, swivel chairs — are just as insufficient here as a focus on recommendations for specific forms of exercise, rest time, or periodic sitting-posture changes. Just four hours of uninterrupted sitting is enough to bring our entire metabolism out of balance. How should movement in the office be supported?

Office spaces must be designed in line with both the activities that are performed in them and the individual somatosensory needs of people. The key thing here is to use the most effective type of sensory stimulation possible (e.g. natural light, fresh air), stimulating physical activity and activating our deep sensitivity (the vestibular-preperception system) and promotes interaction between physical and mental processes. We should therefore view offices more like anthropogenic spaces and use them to offer a suitable environment for people, who are complex organisms, to develop in. This point of view clearly rejects approaches that seek to continually reduce space in order to achieve spatial efficiency. After all, it makes no sense to demand sufficient space for hares, for example, but not for human beings in schools and offices.

Footnotes

1. The idea here is to “take in” or name not only via the conscious perception, but also by the fact that using a name makes it easier to remember something.

2. Dr. Breithecker recognizes a neglected power in our office environments. Via "environmental enrichment" we could integrate much more stimulating aspects and therefore enhance our physical, mental and emotional well-being. What does this mean for the new workplace?

3. The protocol was tested under diverse conditions, including those in which employees were voluntary allowed to sit in a swivel chair.

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MOVEMENT doesn’t mean homelessness

Moving between different types of

establishments doesn’t necessar-

ily translate into non-territoriality.

(People who work in a non-territorial

manner can be found in 12% of all

companies. A total of 3% of employees

work this way, and another 21% could

imagine doing so in the future. 15% of the

members work this way, 28% could imagine

doing so.)

In every case if employees are

exposed to a new work culture, it’s important to create spaces that look and feel different than the traditional office environment but are appealing enough to get older employ-

ees to try them out. Such an approach must also include spaces that more effectively support (as described in the main study) the various knowledge worker activities of today (concentration, re-

laxation, learning, creative thinking, networking, collaboration). In this way, employees who enter

such spaces immediately begin to feel the way they should for the type of task they are to perform.

(See the NEW WORK ORDER study, pp. 36–37.) "Architecture can break up rituals by suggest-

ing other forms of movement or creating new territories," Leykexplains. What’s needed are clearly
designed spaces that are initially used voluntarily and sporadically by employees, who then eventu-

ally begin repeating them on a temporary basis. These spaces should not resemble the fa-
miliar "office" or "conference room".

IT’S NOT ABOUT THE FLEXIBILITY OF BUILDINGS BUT ABOUT FLEXIBLE USE

Here, the share of building space accounted for by offices can decline and the share of special areas

can increase. "Circulation areas, as well as outer surfaces, will also increasingly be used as temporary

work spaces in the future," says Fels. This development can already be seen with mobile freelancers.

That’s why many freelancers have difficulty imagining a return to the office environment — they

don’t want to "step back into the ranks".

If you consider the self-driving vehicles that are already being developed, and which could

be used as mobile offices in the future, it becomes clear just how far the radius of a networked work

culture could be extended, and how much we need to free ourselves from entrenched ideas of what

an office should be like and how work should be conducted.

SPACES SHOULD REFLECT THE CONCEPT OF NETWORKING

Loosely cohesion supported by shared assignments and content, free interaction between individuals

with various areas of expertise, coincidental encounters that generate spontaneous ideas — spaces

are needed for all of these things. Despite the vast variety of communication channels today, it is

wrong to believe that the networked work culture of an agile organisation no longer needs com-

munication channels. Physical exchanges not only make up for a type of sensory deficit; the use of simple and

basic support they could never receive when shut up in their offices.

The exclusive club-type atmosphere in the open space makes up for the "lax of prestige" that working in one’s own

offices entails.

Open space at the World Bank

The 11th floor of the World Bank’s head-

quarters is designed as a single open space.

World Bank President Jim Yong Kim and his

team all work together there when they’re in

Washington.

The open space is also available for use by

senior executives any time

they feel like getting

out of their own

offices.

This setup allows executives to quickly obtain important infor-
mation from the presi-
dent or members of his

team — not to mention

the type of spontane-

ous support they could never receive when shut up in their offices.

The exclusive club-like atmosphere in the open space makes up for the "lax of prestige" that working in one’s own

offices entails.

Second Analyses

Further Analyses

In the Second Analyses section of the report, the

authors provide further analyses of the findings.

These analyses are based on additional data and

extend the discussion of the main findings.

FEATURED SOURCES

Birgit Gebhardt is a trend consultant and the founder of compressedtime.

She has written several books and is a regular speaker at conferences and workshops.


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