

THE SmartWorking HANDBOOK

How to reduce costs and improve business
performance through new ways of working
A practical guide



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RESOURCES FOR NEW WAYS OF WORKING

supported by:





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Flexibility as a journal has been spreading the word about the benefits of flexible working since 1993. We have seen flexible working move from an interesting fringe idea to the mainstream, even to the point where a 'right to request' flexible work is enshrined in law in the UK.

Now that the concept has moved into the mainstream, the potential benefits are widely recognised. Widely recognised – but less widely implemented. Or where implemented, often in a partial or piecemeal fashion. The UK legislation even encourages a reactive approach, making decisions on flexible working requests case by case. But that's no way to build a strategy or to reap the benefits.

We use the term 'Smart Working' to refer to the new ways of working made possible by advances in technology and made essential by economic, environmental and social pressures.

The purpose of this guide is to promote an integrated, interdisciplinary, comprehensive and strategic approach to Smart Working. Flexible working is linked in to changes in working environments, working culture, technologies and management techniques.

Smart Working is an integrated and above all practical approach to realising the benefits, based on using sound metrics. The approach we recommend is one based on almost 20 years of practical experience and cutting edge research.

The Smart Work Handbook is not long. But we trust it will provide for you an excellent starting point for taking an integrated approach to developing your Smart Working strategy and programme.

Andy Lake, Editor *Flexibility.co.uk*
June 2011

The way we work is changing – but not fast enough. In the current challenging climate, most companies and public sector organisations are looking closely at what they do and how they do it. Now is the time to take steps not only to survive the present crisis, but also to plan for the longer term. Becoming more flexible and working smarter should be at the heart of transforming and streamlining organisations.

An end to wasteful practices

Wasteful practices are built into traditional ways of working:

- The average UK worker commutes for just under an hour per day – equivalent to 4 years over a working life
- The average full-time employee is absent for 8 days per year, rising to 10 in the public sector
- There are some 10 million office workers in the UK occupying 110 million m² of office space...
- ...with average occupancy in a traditional office over the working day at around 45%.

Our vision for transforming the way we work through Smart Working focuses on achieving the following benefits:

- Increasing the effectiveness of our activities
- Reducing the financial costs of running an organisation
- Focusing our work on outcomes rather than processes
- Meeting the aspirations of staff for an improved work-life balance
- Creating office environments that facilitate collaboration and innovation
- Reducing the environmental footprint of our working practices.

Work in the 21st century is about what you do, not where you do it. Strategic use of new technologies enables much of the work we do to be carried out from many locations other than offices.

What is holding us back? There are technological limitations that vary between organisations, the challenges of traditional office culture, and paper-based processes. But Smart Working is about embarking on a journey, where the aim is to make continuous progress towards achieving these benefits.

Our aspiration here is to provide the framework for new working practices that will enable all employing organisations to work seamlessly across locations, and at times that are more advantageous to both customers and employees.

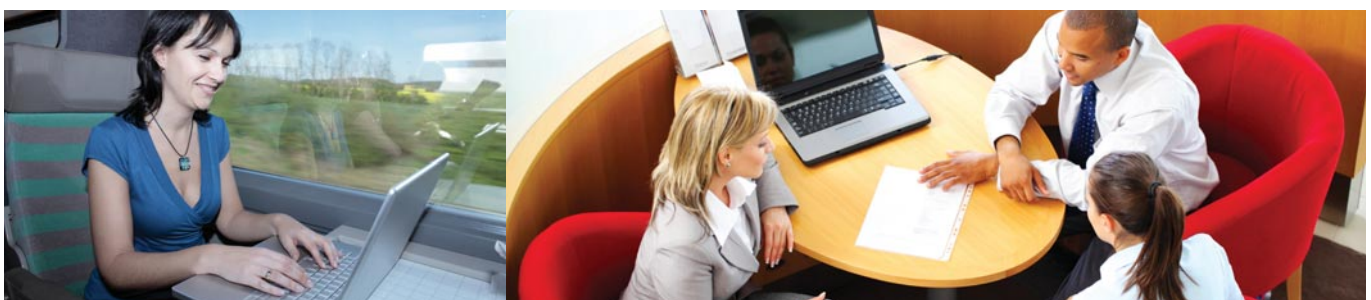
The workforce will be empowered by a new trust-based working culture. They will have access to offices that are designed for interaction with colleagues, partners and customers. And they will work for employers that have become more agile and in better shape to deliver their mission.

Why 'Smart Working'?

Smart Working is a comprehensive and strategic approach to implementing:

- The range of flexible working options
- Environments that enable the greatest flexibility
- Technologies that support the practice and management of flexible working
- New forms of collaboration (e.g. in virtual teams) that reduce the need for physical meetings and travel
- Culture change to enable greater organisational agility and innovation.

Underlying Smart Working is a commitment to modernise working practices, by moving away from the 'command and control' assumptions of traditional factory-style working about where, when and how work should be done. It's about doing more with less, working wherever, whenever and however is most appropriate to get the work done.



2 Principles of Smart Working

Smart Working is about taking a comprehensive and strategic approach to modernising working practices. It is based on the following principles:

- Work takes place at the most effective locations and at the most effective times
- Flexibility becomes the norm rather than the exception
- Everyone is in principle considered eligible for flexible working, without assumptions being made about people or roles
- Employees have more choice about where and when they work, subject to business considerations
- Space is allocated to activities, not to individuals and not on the basis of seniority
- The costs of doing work are reduced
- There is effective and appropriate use of technology
- Managing performance focuses on results rather than presence
- Smart Working underpins and adds new dimensions to diversity and equality principles
- Employees have the opportunity to lead balanced and healthy lives
- Work has less impact on the environment.

In summary there are positive impacts from Smart Working on the 'Triple Bottom Line' – benefits for the business, the individual, and for the environment.

In traditional ways of working, flexibility is envisaged as an exception to the normal way of working. Flexible working is something that is applied for, and granted as an exception from the 'normal' ways of working. Often it is considered a privilege that can be granted or revoked.

Dealing with requests for flexible working on such an ad hoc or reactive basis can lack business focus and is inherently un-strategic. Smart Working provides a strategic and business-focused framework for flexible working.

The world of work is changing

- 3.7 million people – 12.8% of the workforce – now work mainly from home (Labour Force Survey, 2010)
- 27% of the workforce now work part-time
- 41% of all businesses are home-based
- 60% of new businesses start up from home
- 3 out of every 5 new jobs created are 'atypical' in some way – i.e. not fixed hours, full-time permanent jobs
- Over 90% of employers say they offer some kind of flexible working practices

However, most organisations do not yet take a strategic or coordinated approach to this new world of work.

Figures from Office for National Statistics and Department for Business Surveys





Smart Working involves developing a new work culture. It is not about doing things in the old way with some new technologies and redesigned offices – it is about new ways of working using new tools, new processes, and new approaches to management and teamwork. This requires different types of behaviours and different expectations about how work is done.

A Smart Working culture consists of:

- Higher levels of collaborative working – between individuals, between teams, with external partners and with the wider public
- The pursuit of continuous service improvements, in particular through the use of new technologies to increase efficiencies
- A commitment to flexibility – being constantly open to new ways of working and delivering services, avoiding temptations to try to “freeze” Smart Working into a rigid or prescriptive formula
- An emphasis on management by results rather than management by presence
- An emphasis on working in shared spaces and with shared resources, rather than with territorial or personalised ones
- An emphasis on promoting higher levels of staff empowerment and autonomy, to maximise the benefits arising from the new working styles
- An emphasis on using new ways of working to assist employees achieve a better work-life balance
- A commitment to using new technologies and new ways of working to reduce the environmental impact of workstyles, processes and delivery of services
- A commitment to using new technologies and new ways of working to recruit, retain and develop a more diverse and inclusive workforce
- A culture of learning using the new technologies to help employees, wherever they are located, to develop their skills and capabilities and move forward in their careers.

It is important to recognise that developing a Smart Working culture and ensuring that the changes become embedded is a collective responsibility, not one that can be imposed from above. However, strong leadership will be needed to ensure the changes are taken forward, and to galvanise teams to develop the new culture and new ways of working.

What do staff want?

Staff surveys within companies consistently show that employees want more choice. The choice to choose the best times and places to work.

The top 3 options that staff favour are:

1. To vary start and finish times – without the rigidity of most ‘flexitime’ schemes
2. To work from home 1-2 days per week
3. To work a compressed working week

Trust is key to making these arrangements work for both employees and managers.

Source: staff surveys by HOP Associates and Flexibility.co.uk

Practical Culture Change

Changing to a Smart Working culture is not carried out in isolation. It involves working with all staff throughout the programme of making changes to workplaces, technologies and processes.

It involves a combination of:

- Establishing the expectations for the new work culture
- Supporting staff through the changes
- Agreeing protocols for new working practices
- Management and staff training through workshops and online learning.

4 Flexible working options

Smart Working incorporates the full range of flexible working options. These broadly fall into two areas: flexible time and flexible place.

Flexible time options are:

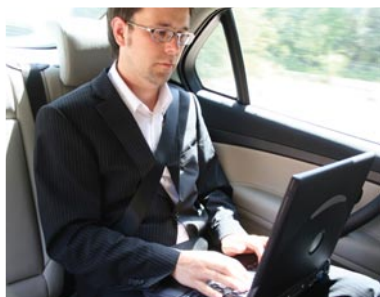
- **Flexi-time:** this typically operates with a 'core hours' requirement, i.e. employees are expected to be working between the defined core hours in the morning and afternoon. Staff surveys show that many employees feel the core hours can be too rigid, and in practice these are often varied by agreement according to circumstances. The trend will be away from defined core hours.
- **Time off in lieu (TOIL):** TOIL is a form of flexible hours working that allows hours to be varied across days, by paying back extra hours worked on one day with time off on other days.
- **Annualised hours:** employees are contracted annually to work a set number of hours, which can be worked flexibly over the 12 month period. This is useful for coping with peaks and troughs in work, as well as for meeting personal requirements.
- **Compressed working weeks:** employees work their standard working hours in fewer days – e.g. one week's hours worked in four days, or two weeks' worked in nine days. There is a range of patterns of varying complexity.
- **Term-time working:** this enables staff who are parents to work around school terms and holidays.
- **Part-time working:** staff are sometimes recruited on a part-time basis, while others seek to reduce their hours, with pro-rata reductions in pay and benefits. When this is done on a temporary basis, it is sometimes referred to as 'V-Time' (voluntary reduced hours). It is typically associated with parenting responsibilities, but surveys indicate this is an option of interest to older workers who are thinking in terms of phased retirement.

- **Jobshare:** this is a particular form of part-time working, where two (or occasionally more) people share a full-time job
- **Career breaks:** the option to have a career break or sabbatical to pursue professional or personal development.

Flexible place options are:

- **Working from home:** When employees regularly work from home it is typically for 1-2 days per week. Some roles may be based at home full-time. More mobile staff may work using home as a base rather than, or as much as, using the office as a base. Most staff will probably have at least some tasks that can effectively be carried out from home.
- **Mobile working:** Employees who work in many places need to be empowered and equipped to work when travelling, in public settings, and touching down in offices as needed.
- **Working from other offices:** Smart Working involves working from the most effective location and reducing the need to travel. Staff may choose to work from other offices – offices belonging to the organisation, third party serviced offices or partner/client offices, as appropriate.
- **Working as virtual teams:** to prevent relocation or frequent travel, staff work smarter as virtual teams, using online communications and collaboration techniques.
- **Sharing space in the office:** Employees do not have a permanent desk, but choose a work setting appropriate to the task in hand (see section 5), e.g. standard desk, touchdown space, quiet zone, confidential room, project room

In many cases, employees will blend different smart/flexible working options, according to the need of the tasks in hand. Enabling this involves a substantial move away from the idea that an individual applies for and is granted a single particular alternative workstyle that is set in stone.



All the options are important in terms of equal opportunities and diversity.

Choosing which styles of work are appropriate depends on:

- Analysing the tasks involved in the job role, in terms of how effectively they can be done at different times and in different locations
- The preferences of the employee and being able to meet their aspirations
- The potential of the smarter working choices to reduce the financial and environmental footprint of the organisation's working practices
- Any impacts on teamwork that may arise.

The law on flexible working

Legislation in the UK gives the 'right to request' flexible working to parents of children under 17 (or disabled children up to 18) and carers of dependent adults. About one third of the workforce are parents or carers.

Employers are not obliged to grant a request, but must give sound business reasons if they refuse.

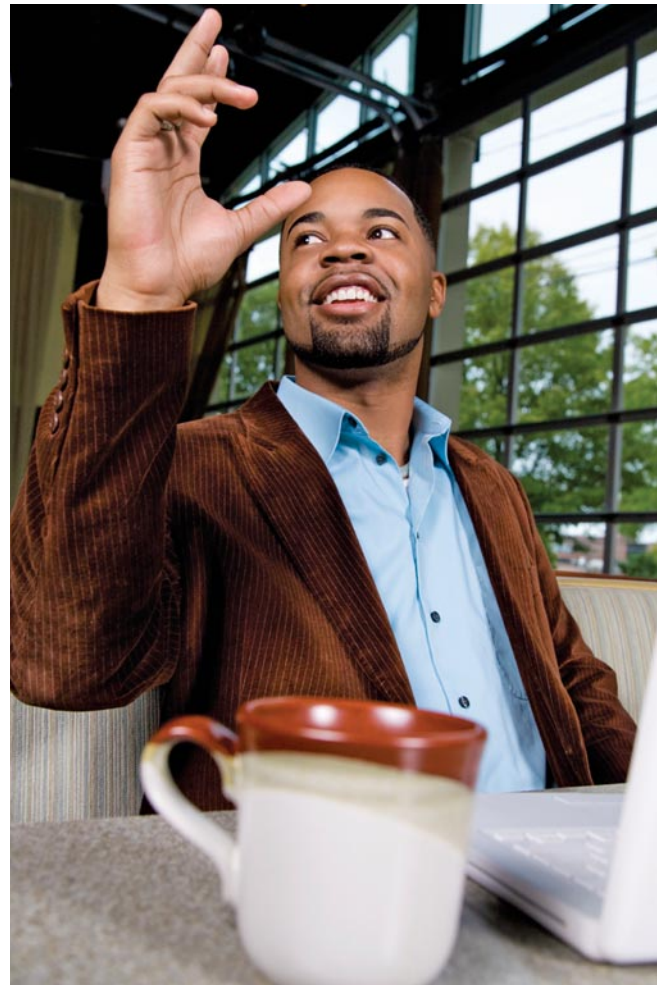
Employees may appeal if they feel a request has been unreasonably refused.

The law requires employees to make a case showing that the new work arrangements are workable and will not adversely affect business.

The UK government in 2010 is proposing to extend the right to all workers.

Most large organisations now have policies to address the needs of the law. But that is not the same as having a comprehensive flexible working policy that enables them to address all employees equally.

It is important to avoid as far as possible new working arrangements that inject new inflexibilities that could compromise business efficiency. Examples of this would be people saying they must always work at home on a certain day, or always taking the same day off as part of a compressed working week arrangement. While respecting flexible



arrangements, it is important to have the flexibility to alter them on occasion to meet service delivery needs or for essential face-to-face meetings.

It is then the responsibility of all employees to make flexible working work effectively to deliver both business and personal value.

All of the flexible working options have an impact on how space is used. Flexible location options will mean that the base office will be used less, though it may be used somewhat more by visitors. Flexible time options mean that the office space will be used differently, with use spread out more across a longer period of time each working day.

Managers need to think through how the changes in occupancy affect the way the office is used. These changes are covered in section 5 of the Handbook.

5 New environments for new ways of working



Smart Working aims to create attractive and inspiring work environments that support the new work styles, increase the adaptability of space, and increase business performance. A Smart Working approach to office design seeks to achieve these benefits while at the same time achieving significant savings and efficiency gains.

Smart working also enables a range of new working environments beyond the traditional office.

Unlike traditional offices, which are based on having ranks of personal standard desks, smart office environments should have a mix of desk types and meeting spaces where work activities can be carried out.

How much is your office used?

- A traditional office used 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday is used only 30% of the year
 - Holidays account for 8% of an employee's time
 - Typical occupancy is around 45%
 - Average office costs per head are around £6k.
- Time to do the maths on empty space!

While one of the aims of Smart Working is to have offices utilised more efficiently and to save costs by eliminating wasted space, it is also an aim to use under-occupied space to provide other desirable work spaces that are closely aligned to the needs of modern flexible workers.

As desk-based tasks can increasingly be carried out from anywhere, the need in offices is less for ranks of workstations, and more for:

- Flexible meeting spaces – small meeting rooms, breakout spaces and café areas
- Space for quiet and concentrated working

- Spaces for confidential work and phone calls
- Touch-down spaces for people working on the move
- Resource areas
- Special project areas
- Flexible multipurpose spaces.

Understanding space requirements

It is essential to have an evidence-based approach to understanding the amount of space needed in the office, and the mix of different kinds of spaces. This should be based on:

- An accurate space audit, measuring how space is occupied across the working day over a number of days
- An analysis of how, when and where work is carried out
- An analysis of work processes and technology use, and how changing these creates opportunities for change in the workplace
- A storage audit and an assessment of the scope for storage reduction
- Consultation with staff to understand their working practices and preferences
- Mapping of the relationships and interactions between departments and teams.

Space audits in offices with traditional working practices have shown average desk occupancy levels of well under 50% over the working day.

The main value of a space audit is that it will deliver objective figures in terms of how often desks are occupied, how often they are “claimed” but with no one at the desk, and how often they are empty.

Figures of less than 45% average occupancy are normal for professionals and managers in most “pre-smart” office environments. Average occupancy for admin and support staff

rarely rises above 60%, despite what most managers would expect. Peaks may be around 60% for managers and professionals and around 80% for administrative staff, but are rarely higher. Individual teams will show higher peaks, but these peaks do not occur at the same time: this is the main reason why staff often have a perception of higher occupancy.

The end result is to provide indisputable data showing that space is not being used efficiently and that resources are being wasted – vital for developing the business case for change.

Modern, more mobile working practices and current flexible working options lead to a lower overall requirement for desk space. Smart Working staff surveys (see section 9) will provide evidence of enthusiasm on the part of staff for greater flexibility, and for higher levels of trust to manage their own work styles. This will lead in time to further reductions in demand for desk space, and adaptations in the office to support more flexible work styles.

The evidence gathered from these analyses underpins the design of new office space. The number of desks will reduce, and more collaborative spaces will be introduced. The exact proportions will depend on the evidence gathered locally.

Sometimes organisations define a default or target ratio to be achieved, e.g. 8 desks for every 10 people, or 1 desk for every 2. We do not advise this Procrustean approach, but one that is based on real data and will vary from department to department.

Desk-sharing

As the number of desks is reduced to align more closely with actual occupancy, desk-sharing solutions will need to be introduced.

Smart Working does not envisage hot desking policies that move people all around the building from one day to the next, dividing people from their teams.

Maintaining team cohesion and joint access to nearby resources is important, and space sharing arrangements agreed by colleagues in teams are more likely to work well. The Smart Working development process encourages team involvement in the design of new office environments.

Case study Islington Council

Islington Council have developed a comprehensive approach to transformation through their SMART Working programme. Having a strong focus on doing more with less, the Council has released 12 buildings and fitted out 13 others for Smart Working.

Team-based desk-sharing has become the norm, with no personal offices. Desk-sharing ratio is 7.5 workstations per 10 staff, with 8.6 m² per desk, equivalent to 6.6 m² per employee.

Remote working is encouraged, and supported with mobile technologies. Desktop PCs are being phased out, with laptops supplied as standard.

The SMART Working programme at Islington has released capital from disposal of buildings, and achieved annual property cost savings of 10%.

According to Paul Savage, Smart Programme Manager at Islington, “It’s been an interesting journey and we’ve learned a lot along the way. In an organisation like a Council, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. So, while building up an integrated framework for delivery, the roll-out of Smart Working in each service has to take account of the particular needs of that service, and where they are starting from.”

Implementing smart working has been supported by a strong evidence-based approach – understanding the detailed space requirements for teams, their mobility needs, adjacencies between teams etc.

Staff have been involved throughout, being consulted on workstyles and design options, and in developing team charters.

However, it is a key principle that while broadly defined team “zones” can be useful, these cannot be exclusive spaces. To increase occupancy levels and achieve the savings necessary to support new working styles, vacant desks must be open to people from other teams to use, without their being made to feel that they are intruders or that they are violating someone else’s personal space.

As well as sharing desks within a team zone, there needs to be some 'free address' space for visitors, for staff touching down briefly and who don't need a larger desk, and for meeting peak demand.

Any approach that allocates 1:1 desks to most of a team with a couple of hot desks for people working more flexibly should be avoided. 'Hotdesking at the margins' rarely works. It will also not achieve the space savings necessary to introduce more innovative working environments.

As well as helping to clear the way for more collaborative space, desk sharing can help to break down barriers between teams, and help to end 'silo working'.

Desk-sharing needs also to take into account the needs of staff with disabilities for any specialist IT or ergonomic equipment.



Open plan

Bearing in mind that there will be a range of other work settings, open plan should be the default setting for desk-based work. Wherever possible, private offices should be removed as they are very wasteful of space and can hinder good collaborative working practices.

Open plan does not mean having vast open spaces of desking. Good design can create identifiable team areas for desk-sharing, interspersed with other flexible work settings (confidential rooms, break-out spaces etc) for nearby teams to use.

With Smart Working, space is used according to need, rather than being allocated on the basis of status.

Desk-sharing and clear desk protocols

The following are suggested protocols that can be adopted or adapted to ensure that space-sharing works effectively:

1. Use of space is determined on the basis of the activities being carried out.
2. While there are team priority zones allocated, this should be seen as non-exclusive team-space, available also to other employees of the organisation as the need arises.
3. Non-team members working in specified team areas should be made to feel welcome. This will help to break down silos and encourage cross-team working.
4. Staff should use the appropriate space for the activity – e.g. informal meetings should not take place at desks but in break-out areas or meeting rooms.
5. If your plans change, rethink your space requirements and move to a more appropriate work setting.
6. Calls or discussions with private or confidential subject matter should be held in a workspace designed for privacy.
7. Space is not to be allocated on the basis of seniority, habit or personal preference.
8. Work-in-progress should not be stored on desks, but in team storage or project areas
9. Personal items should be stored in lockers, and only located on desks during periods of active occupation
10. If a desk or other work area is to be left unoccupied for more than 2 hours, the desk should be cleared for use by others.
11. When a desk or other work area is vacated, it should left completely clear for use by other members of staff
12. Teams are advised that exceptions to these protocols should be few, and based on genuine need, e.g. reasonable adjustment for staff with disabilities, or a specialist function that requires a particular location, e.g. receptionist or team administrator.
13. Finally those employees who are allocated personal desks should still abide by the clear desk policy and expect others to use their desks when they are absent.

Clear desk policy

Successful desk-sharing requires a clear desk policy. This means that personal items – including 'personal professional' items – must be cleared from desks when the desk is vacated. These items should be stored in personal lockers and team storage respectively.

Even those who work only in the office should be part of the clear desk policy, not only to allow all desks to be available for use but also to maintain the quality of the working environment and a consistent storage and security discipline.

There are different approaches to this, depending on local circumstances. It is generally not good practice to allow someone to book or lay claim to a desk for a whole day when during that day they may be gone for hours at a time. Typically a threshold of two or two and a half hours is applied. That is, if the desk is to be left unoccupied for such a specified period, then it must be cleared for someone else to use.



Booking systems

Offices may wish to consider space booking systems, both for desks and meeting rooms. Generally speaking, desk booking systems are less necessary for smaller offices where teams can work out their own arrangements.

A key problem with space booking systems is that space is frequently booked for longer than is needed, so measures need to be taken to ensure that space is released when not needed, and cannot be 'blocked out' for long periods. Clear desk thresholds should still apply.

Planning for adequate 'expansion space' into touchdown positions and other alternative work settings is usually sufficient to meet situations of peak demand.

Case study British Council Guangzhou

The British Council in Guangzhou moved to their new office in January 2008. The new office is a flexible working environment and supports some 50 staff, including the Director, who share 38 desks.

The project was driven by the belief that cultural relations is about working together by linking with staff outside the office in the South China region and the UK.

Increasing staff creativity and innovation was a key aim, as well as the staff wishing to create a more sustainable office.

The process for implementing flexible working involved launching a staff survey which revealed that work/life balance was a key issue, exploring the flexible working options with the staff, and resolving the difficulties relating to trust, contacts management and team work.

The final design for the office included more casual and formal meeting spaces but fewer desks and no private offices. A generous provision of breakout areas encourages knowledge sharing between teams.

A new telephone system was introduced to allow personal log-in on any phone and allow staff to direct their main phone number to their mobile or home telephone to ensure continuous communication, and remote access for home-working.

The Guangzhou office has acted as the model for the offices in Beijing and Chongqing.

A location board system – e.g. magnetic or stick-pin – is a useful and simple-to-manage alternative, so that staff can find out where their colleagues are and where there are available seats.

When there is extensive desk-sharing and people are working in distributed teams, it can be useful to develop a 'concierge' role as part of a reception or administrative support function. The concierge manages the smooth working of the flexible workplace, shared resources such as printers, space booking and release processes, and keeping track of where and when colleagues are working.

De-cluttering offices and smarter storage

A key constraint on the introduction of smarter working is a dependency on paper documents and other physical resources. While there are some statutory obligations to retain paper documents, the reasons for using and generating paper are becoming less and less compelling in an age of electronic-based working.

Typically in organisations where there are crowded, untidy and inefficient offices, people complain of lack of space. But space audits usually find they do not have high levels of desk occupancy: instead they are crowded with “stuff” that is not rationally organised.

In most departments where paper-dependency is high, there are significant space savings that can be made by reducing duplication, archiving, and moving to electronic-based working.

In developing smarter working practices, there are essentially three trajectories for reforming storage practices:

Personal	Team
Physical	Electronic
On office floor	Off floor / off site

In a desk-sharing environment, there can be no personal shelves of storage allocated to individual desks, nor can there be permanent desk pedestals. Files and resources used for professional work should be kept in team storage areas – this is good practice anyway, reduces duplication and makes resources easier for other people to find.

Personal storage should be in lockers provided. One technique is to use boxes for transporting necessary items from locker to desk and back. Mobile pedestals are another alternative.



Case study Ofsted

Ofsted is the UK inspectorate for standard in education and social care. To accommodate a substantial expansion of its role and large increase in staff, Ofsted took the bold decision to become a primarily home-based organisation. With around 1500 home-based inspectors, it has the largest home-based workforce in the public sector. Team managers and area managers are also home based.

Great care is taken to ensure the proper set-up of homeworking, with good ICT that includes:

- Encrypted laptop and docking station
- Printer and shredder
- Digital landline phone and a mobile phone or Blackberry
- Broadband connection.

Homeworkers also receive an allowance of £700 for initial set-up of the home office with approved furniture, and an annual allowance of £460 (of which £156 is the non-taxable element allowed in UK tax rules for heating and lighting).

Though inspections are carried out by teams, much of the work is solitary. So a range of techniques are used both for carrying out remote teamwork and management, with training, coaching and mentoring, clear target setting and monitoring, plus monthly face-to-face team meetings and social events.

Increasingly, the use of paper processes is being replaced by electronic ones. There is still some way to go in most organisations before we reach the Holy Grail of the ‘Paperless Office’. All the same, it is important as an aspiration to move towards.

The use of electronic processes is essential to smarter working, and ‘untethers’ people from the office, enabling more effective working from other locations. It also enables a rethink and helps to challenge assumptions about the location of work for those involved in process work. Many organisations, for example, now have home based call centre or data processing workers.

As much storage as possible, if remaining in physical format, should be moved off the office floor. Office space is extremely expensive, and must be prioritised for human interaction, not storage.



The home office environment

When people are working more than occasionally from home, it is important that the home working environment is set up properly, with a desk and appropriate chair. A homeworking policy will typically provide more details of the specification.

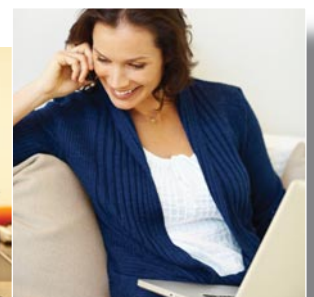
It is best if there is a separate room to work in, that can be closed off from the rest of the house if needed.

For people working regularly from home, a health and safety risk assessment must be carried out and training provided on the health and safety issues. There are no specific H&S regulations for homeworking: all the provisions that apply in the workplace apply wherever an employee is working.

Particular regulations to consider include:

- Display screens
- Heating, lighting and ventilation
- Workplace ergonomics
- Electrics, cabling and trip hazards
- Working time
- Lifting and carrying equipment
- Security, including data security
- Safety of third parties, including family members.

The Health and Safety Executive has a helpful booklet on Homeworking which can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg226.pdf



In general, however, the evidence is that working from home does not carry substantial additional risk, and where it reduces travel it plays a part in reducing risk. Even so, it is necessary for everyone to be aware of the regulations that need to be observed and how to optimise their remote work spaces ergonomically.

It is important that working from home is not a degraded experience compared to working in the office. When working at home, staff should be fully contactable and able to connect to all office systems and processes. The ideal scenario is one of seamless connection, with the computer integrated with the office network and the phone acting as if it were an extension within the office.

It is also important that home-based working has a 'professional face'. While it can help staff achieve a better work-life balance, it is important that home does not intrude into work, e.g. having domestic interruptions when on business calls.

The reverse also applies – staff need to feel able to feel in control of the home/work interface, and not feel pressured into allowing work to intrude into their personal time.

Working on the move

If the office and home are becoming the two 'official' locations for work, a growing proportion of work is being undertaken in 'third places', for example:

- Other people's offices: clients, suppliers, business partners, shared offices, etc.
- Cafés, hotel lobbies and airport lounges
- In trains, planes, buses and cars.

The ability to work anywhere is made possible by laptops, tablets and other smart devices with wireless internet connections and by mobile phones.

The main issues are to do with security, confidentiality, safety and health.

Safety concerns relate both to personal security (e.g. using portable equipment while driving, or being mugged) and data security. Prolonged use of laptop computers in inappropriate positions can lead to health problems.



These kinds of issues are sometimes raised as reasons for not working more flexibly. The key principle is the same as for homeworking: the employer's duty of care is the same wherever employees are working, whether in the employer's workplace, at home, on the move or in some other 'third place'.

This means that employees need to be properly equipped and trained to work in these other places, and a mechanism needs to be in place for periodic assessment of risk.

The aim has to be to enable rather than prohibit – that is to enable staff to work safely wherever is the most effective and efficient location to get the work done.

Third-party offices / Workhubs

Several third-party serviced office suppliers offer a range of services to support Smart Working: short-term rentals, virtual offices, touchdown, meeting rooms and so on. You only pay for what you use so overall costs can be lower than running your own offices.

There is also a growing number of local 'Workhubs' emerging across the country. Their focus is on collaboration space and touchdown space for their members.

These work environments provide a professional 'third space' between home and work, and have many advantages compared to home or working in open public areas such as cafés. Their use can be integrated into a flexible approach to property and support the downsizing of corporate offices.

Currently the evidence is that the smaller local workhubs are used almost exclusively by smaller businesses and freelancers, while the larger providers with national and international networks of flexible workspaces also attract employees from large organisations.

This may indicate that larger organisations – especially public sector ones who are in many areas the largest employer – are missing opportunities to use viable local facilities. Using local workhubs could reduce employees' need to travel and increase the opportunity to reduce central office requirements while finding local bases closer to customers and clients.



Implications for property strategy

Smart Working, it is clear, has very significant implications for an organisation's property strategy.

As the nature of work changes and organisations use a wider mix of physical and virtual spaces for doing business, real estate needs to become a flexible resource to be deployed according to the changing requirements of the business.

In the short to medium term, the opportunity is there for organisations with an extensive property portfolio to reduce the amount of property they have and to consolidate on the best performing and most strategically located buildings.

This may bring capital receipts, but most importantly reduce the running costs of the organisation. There will probably be changes to strategy in terms of escaping from longer leases and greater use of third party offices.

The nature of property strategy will also change with Smart Working. The development of a strategy that embraces Smart Working requires the integration of expertise in people, property and technology into a single vision, so that the smart workplace can continue to evolve as new opportunities for business improvement and cost savings arise.

6 Technologies for Smart Working

Effective use of new technologies is key to smarter working practices. With the right technology choices, people can work just as well away from the office, using the internet and wireless communications to work anywhere and at any time.

User technologies

The technology platform for smarter working is likely to include:

- Laptop rather than desktop computers support greater mobility of work both within and away from the office; modern laptop computers are high-performing, secure, lightweight and offer good battery life; they can also be used safely and ergonomically.
- Local area wireless networks (known as WiFi) in offices and other locations (public areas, cafes, home, trains, etc.) allow people to work at places other than a conventional desk. In the office this can include touch-down spaces, breakout areas and meeting rooms.
- Wide area wireless networks (e.g. using 3G “dongles” or mobile phones) allow people to work anywhere there is a high speed digital mobile phone signal.
- Modern corporate telephony uses VOIP (voice over IP) to support full location-independent working, including staff working at home, overseas and while travelling; it can also reduce dramatically the cost of long distance calling.
- Online and video conferencing have been around for some time as an alternative to long distance travel. Top-end video meetings can now recreate better the feel of face-to-face meetings. Low-cost webcam solutions allow groups of people to use the internet to meet online from their homes and other locations. Conferencing solutions should ideally incorporate document sharing, white boards and live messaging.
- Mobile phones have become multi-function devices supporting e-mail, internet access, photos, video and navigation as well as telephony. It is becoming less necessary to carry a laptop computer to connect to the corporate network while travelling.
- Remote access technologies allow employees to access their corporate networks, including legacy applications, securely from home and on-the-move.
- Online collaboration and document management technologies let dispersed teams work together on “live” documents and handle the processes of archiving, version control and integration of paper documents.

- Also consumer applications such as instant messaging, blogging, social networking, “wikis” and so on are being adapted for the corporate environment.

Technology also has an important role to play in managing Smart Working. For example online booking systems can help optimise the use of desks, meeting rooms and other valuable resources and “self-service” HR systems streamline the management of flexible working arrangements.

Working at home for at least some of the time is now viable and attractive for many people. Apart from a fast and reliable corporate remote access solution, or fully web-enabled applications, all that is needed at home is a broadband connection and either a corporate laptop or, where permitted, a home computer. Many organisations also allow a home telephone to behave like an extension on the corporate phone network and those with VOIP (see opposite) connect over the internet, either through a special handset or a “soft phone” using a headset connected to a computer.

Technology strategy and choosing the right technologies for staff needs to be based on a rigorous assessment both of operational needs and the potential of individuals and teams to move to more flexible working practices.





Technologies for teamwork over distance

One of the major concerns that people express about Smart Working is about maintaining the integrity of teams and preventing isolation and ‘atomisation’ of the workforce.

There are effective technologies for remote meetings using web, audio and video conferencing techniques that are used extensively in leading organisations. These not only enhance productivity, they also contribute to the bottom line through business travel savings. Solutions chosen need to be flexible to allow people to participate from any location as long as they have access to an internet connection. They must also be simple to set up, and make it easy to include additional participants as needed.

While training events are often the kind of activities that bring people together, effective training and learning is also increasingly possible with geographically dispersed participants and trainers using webinar technologies and e-learning solutions.

Investment in these technologies incorporates the principles of Smart Working as well as delivering cost savings. Promoting their use is also a key part of taking a practical approach to changing behaviours and achieving the necessary cultural change.

Unified communications (UC) are also becoming increasingly important for virtual teamwork. UC integrates into a single user interface services providing both real-time communication (voice telephony, instant messaging, video conferencing) and non-real-time communication (voicemail, email SMS and fax). It incorporates call control to route calls/messages according to the selected preference or status of users, plus speech recognition and text-to-speech software to convert messages from voice to text or vice versa.

It can also integrate with business processes so that, for example, customer information can be called up or appropriate company experts can be flagged and brought into conversations if they are available.

Technology and the working environment

Technologies need to be appropriate to the working environment, and enable staff to work comfortably as well as productively.

Using laptops for prolonged periods in an office or home office environment requires the use of a laptop stand and/or additional properly positioned screen, with possibly a separate keyboard and mouse.

The acoustic environment needs also to be considered. In a possibly noisy open-plan office there need to be alternative settings for dealing with calls. Wireless headsets that enable mobility, and/or noise cancellation capabilities may be important considerations.

Homegroup halves travel costs with online meetings

Homegroup, one of the UK’s largest regional social landlords, is using web conferencing technologies to help transform the way they do business.

The tools are enabling more than 4,000 employees to communicate online across Homegroup’s 565 UK locations. This is on target to halve their million pound travel expense budget, while increasing employee productivity and customer service.

Their adoption of the technologies is part of a company-wide transformation programme to improve customer satisfaction, rationalise complex business processes and reduce company expenditure.

Cloud computing and virtualisation

One of the most significant trends in corporate technology is towards so-called “cloud computing”. The ‘cloud’ is basically the Internet, and cloud computing means that your organisation in the future won’t need to host its own IT at all, but will be able to outsource it to a third-party provider. Software and applications will be provided as a service rather than installed on client computers.

Once this happens a computer in the office has no higher capability or status than any laptop or other device attached to the Internet. In one sense, even the staff in the office will be ‘remote workers’.

For the remote worker, this means ‘remote access with bells on’. Everything is accessed over the Internet, and there is no need for any permanent local storage or applications on any device they may be using.

The office may still be a good place to be based and to collaborate with colleagues, but it will no longer be the only or even the best place to do most of our work.

Of course most organisations have made substantial investments in their existing technologies and networks and are not about to abandon these. And ‘cloud computing’ is an increasingly muddled term as vendors rebrand many of their existing products to fit the current fashion.

A related trend in corporate IT is towards “desktop virtualisation”. What this means is that, rather than running their own programs, user computers run all their applications through a server. Support and upgrade costs can be cut dramatically and flexible location working is supported automatically.

Recognising trends and the key role of technology should help shape decisions in the short and medium terms. ‘Future-proofing’ technology investments has never been more important.

An organisation does not need to embrace cloud computing and virtualisation before they can develop smarter working. But any technology that helps people to work more effectively and efficiently wherever they are needs to be considered.

It is also important that organisations do not develop IT strategies for cloud computing in isolation from a wider approach to Smart Working. Through Smart Working the IT strategy can be linked to savings in property and travel, as well as potential increases in productivity.

Case study **Lionbridge**

Lionbridge saves costs and boosts productivity with Unified Communications.

Lionbridge is a global provider of translation and localisation services, employing 4,500 people in 26 countries, and working with 25,000 translation partners. Clear and easy to manage communications are central to their work.

In 2007, Lionbridge began to replace their traditional telephone system with Microsoft Office Communicator Server for a Unified Communications (UC) environment, with Plantronics speakerphones and headsets.

Conference calls and video conferencing are essential tools of the business. Previously Lionbridge was using an external conferencing solution which on its own cost in excess of \$1 million per year. Now they have software-powered VoIP, web conferencing, presence with instant messaging, email and voicemail at their fingertips.

USB speakerphones are used to transform any workplace into a conference room and provide 360° room coverage.

On average, there are between 75 and 100 conference calls per day, with typically 20 to 30 happening at the same time, consisting of anywhere between 2 and 80 participants. It is estimated that each employee is involved in 20 to 30 hours of conference calls per month. With the implementation of UC, Lionbridge estimates an overall reduction in communications costs of approximately \$2 million in the first year.

Source: Plantronics case study

Data security

When the network stayed in the office, or only connected to other locations such as branch offices over secure leased lines, data security was more straightforward. The only ways for data in or out were via floppy discs (remember those?) or e-mails and required the conscious effort of an employee to force a security breach.

The days when data can simply be contained physically are now long gone and the IT director is faced with a big challenge – how to give employees all the flexibility they need to work smartly while at the same time protecting corporate data assets.

In broad terms there are two approaches:

1. Make the remote access service as secure as possible, for example:
 - a. Prevent access away from the office to sensitive applications and data
 - b. Only allow access using corporate laptops with appropriate built-in security
 - c. Prevent CDs and unencrypted flash memory drives from being used to save data
 - d. Use a number of advanced user validation and authentication methods
 - e. Enforce on users a range of strict rules and sanctions.

2. Move towards a new 'cloud computing', 'software as a service' or 'online applications' model designed from the outset for use from anywhere and with built-in security.

In practice most organisations need to take the precautions listed above and put in place a strategy to migrate towards a newer model.

Whatever approach is taken it is vital that staff are made aware of and trained in good information management and security practice.

Staying green

Smart Working also envisages a leaner and greener approach to our use of personal computers. Wherever possible, a principle of non-duplication should be adopted when rolling out laptops and equipping home offices. That is, situations should be avoided where an individual has a desktop PC and an individually-assigned laptop or home PC paid for by the company.

Power consumption of IT equipment can also be a problem unless it is recognised and managed. Great steps have been taken in recent years to reduce power, for example through replacing CRTs with flat screens and reducing power consumption in standby mode. However IT has become



more demanding and power management in data centres and the proliferation of chargers for mobile phones and laptops have become issues.

Greening *with* IT

While making IT 'greener' is important and can be implemented through well-defined projects, much more significant is the potential for 'greening with IT' – that is, using IT for wider changes that can reduce energy and resource consumption.

Chapter 8 covers the sustainability agenda in more detail, including the role IT can play in reducing travel and the need for offices.

Wider involvement in technology decisions

Non-technical managers can shy away from dealing with technology issues, all too often not challenging the views of the IT department. This contrasts with office design and flexible working policies, where everyone seems happy to take a view and fight their corner.

Technical jargon should not get in the way of good business management and it is up to the IT people to communicate in a way that non-technical people can understand.

However, the key principles are that:

1. Business need, in the context of Smart Working, needs to drive the strategy for IT and for the technology procurement decisions both in the office and beyond
2. IT strategies need to be integrated with property and people strategies in order to maximise the business benefits.

Case study **Lewis & Hickey**

The benefits of unified communications

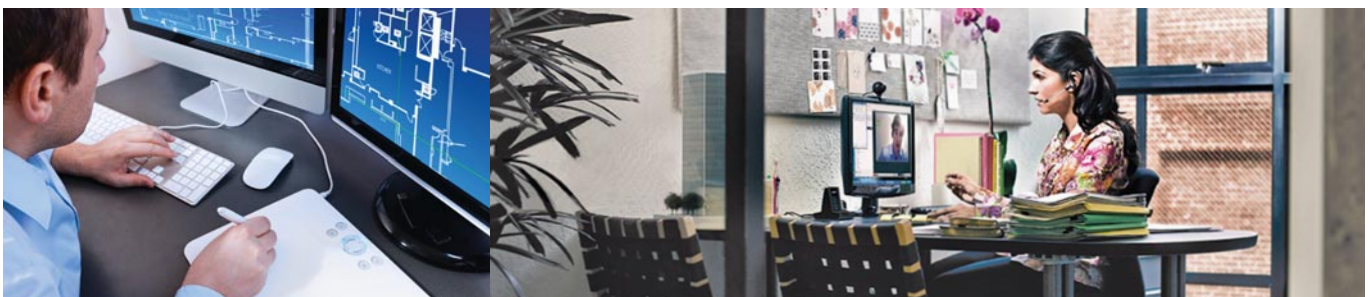
Established in 1894, Lewis & Hickey are an internationally-known, architectural practice comprising architects, designers, project, cost and safety managers, brand consultants, and 3D visualisers. They have offices located in London, Edinburgh, Guildford, Manchester, Nottingham and Prague.

In a business where architects, project managers and engineers are predominantly 'on the road' anywhere in the UK or abroad, clear and concise communications are vital to the day-to-day business process and success.

As a starting point, Lewis & Hickey implemented global, internet-based communications with Skype for Business, making it easier for staff and customers to communicate in a real-life office setting. Lewis & Hickey staff use different Skype features including conference calls, video calls, instant messaging and file transfer, and by switching their staff to Skype significantly reduced call costs, as well as removing the need for ISDN video conferencing.

For integration of communications, employees use Plantronics headsets that use multipoint technology allowing the headset to be shared between a mobile phone and PC. So a call can be taken from either at the touch of a button. So, with a Skype equipped laptop, they can now take full advantage of WiFi hot-spots to take and make calls, wherever they are located, with all the functionality they would depend on if they were in the office.

Source: Plantronics case study





Because of the complexities of the work involved, it is tempting to see Smart Working as being all about designing offices and setting up new IT. But this really misses the point. While these are key enablers, Smart Working is essentially about people and culture change. It is about bringing about change in the way people work, and empowering them to work in more flexible ways to deliver better services.

Change, however, is inevitably challenging and the new ways of working need to be managed well. It is partly about managing work in new ways, and partly about managing behaviours.

Managing Smart Working

Managing Smart Working involves moving away from managing by presence to managing by outcome. This involves different ways of keeping in contact with staff, of assessing workloads and monitoring and measuring performance.

For the team this will involve greater sharing of schedules with colleagues and managers, and updating about work-in-progress.

However, one should not exaggerate the changes involved. Many of the management skills required are the same, only

applied over distance. In addition, only in relatively few cases will people be spending most of the time in a different location from their manager and other team colleagues. Over time, however, the amount of working in geographically dispersed and virtual teams can be expected to increase, and management and teamworking skills need to evolve accordingly.

For teams it is important to develop protocols about communication and reporting, so as to work effectively and maintain team cohesion. When working in different locations and at different times, social relationships need to be maintained and appropriate online and offline mechanisms need to be developed, such as buddying and mentoring schemes for new recruits, bulletin boards, instant messaging and social networking.

New working patterns, trust and autonomy

In staff surveys we've carried out, the most favoured options for new working patterns are almost invariably these three:

- More flexible working hours – scrapping the core hours in flexi-time
- Working from home 1-2 days per week (but much less support for 3 or more days)
- Compressed working week.

One thing that these choices and opinions expressed in surveys show is that staff want more autonomy, and to be trusted more to make their own choices about how to organise their working lives.

For managers used to close supervision and managing by presence, this is a challenge. It involves a new kind of dialogue with staff, based on clarity of expectations and good communications – and much more trust.



It involves understanding that someone who is not in the office at the same time is not out of touch or out of control. Using the new technologies effectively, and new management techniques, managers can be more in touch with their team's work than ever before.

Teamwork protocols

It is important to have clear expectations about what is to be done and about communications within the team.

Protocols should be established to cover:

- A requirement to let others know where and when you are working
- Clear reporting structures
- Sharing of calendars and schedules
- Rigorous use of electronic document management systems, to ensure work is easily accessible
- Being flexible about flexible working – to ensure that no individual is disadvantaged by the choices of others, e.g. in providing office cover or attending evening meetings
- Etiquette in online communications, and behaviour in virtual meetings
- Signposting availability for phone contact or online discussion
- Fairness in use of space when in the office.

Just as with desk-sharing, there needs to be a degree of enforcement, at least in the initial stages, to bring about the changes in work culture required. But to a large extent teams should be able to do this themselves, and monitor their own team members' adherence to the standards required.

Rethinking meetings

It is important also to rethink meetings. Routine sharing of information can be carried out through online processes: physical meetings should be reserved for important collaborative work involving activities such as training, brainstorming and decision-making.

The benefits of flexible working can be undermined by insisting on being present in person for routine meetings. Wherever possible, meetings should be held using audio, video or web conferencing. In reaching decisions about holding meetings, attention should always be given to the cumulative effects of meetings, and the need to reduce our need for office space and to reduce the need to travel.

Dealing with problems and issues

Before adopting flexible working practices, people are sometimes worried about issues such as:

- Being isolated
- Loss of personal space in the office
- Difficulties with time management
- Loss of team spirit or team effectiveness
- Dealing with technology and getting appropriate levels of support when working remotely
- Intrusion of work into home life
- 24/7 working
- Managing performance
- Loss of opportunities for career progression or training.



The evidence from implementations of flexible/Smart Working is that many more problems are anticipated than actually arise and that, once any initial problems are overcome, most people appreciate the greater flexibility and autonomy that Smart Working brings.

All the same, problems can occur. It is the responsibility of teams to look out for each other, and in particular for managers of dispersed teams to spot problems and resolve them before they become major issues. These may be teased out through regular conversations, or clues may be spotted in terms of performance.

If necessary, the manager and team member can agree an alternative work style. It is about finding the right work style for the individual, and about providing the appropriate support to overcome the particular problem.

Case study Virtual meetings

Mott MacDonald is a £1 billion global management, engineering and development consultancy, operating in sectors not always closely associated with working flexibly.

Mott MacDonald delivers leading edge solutions for public and private sector clients across 12 core business areas – transport, power, buildings, water, environment, health, education, industry and communications, international development, urban development and oil and gas. Operating in over 120 countries with dispersed project teams, face-to-face project meetings can become a challenge.

The company has adopted GoToMeeting from Citrix as it makes it easy for business professionals to meet and present information online to anyone, anywhere in the World. This allows employees to share any application on your computer in real time and attendees can join meetings in seconds.

Mott MacDonald has been using GoToMeeting since May 2007 and now regularly there are over 400 hours of remote meeting sessions every month producing savings well in excess of the expenditure. It is now also used with clients saving them time and money as well.

The key benefits are being able to:

- Organise presentations, business planning meetings, and staff meetings regardless of where participants are located.
- Provide online training or support.
- Collaborate in real time – between employees and with customers
- Reduce or eliminate unproductive travel time and costs
- Reducing paper by working collaboratively on electronic documents, available anywhere.

All organisations working in these areas – both public and private sector – can improve performance and make savings by making greater use of virtual tools and techniques.

Highly collaborative and dynamic teams

The aim in moving to Smart Working is to create the context in which teams can operate more dynamically, and have better physical and online spaces in which to interact. Though they may no longer sit at adjacent desks, the new technologies and team protocols should facilitate much more effective sharing of work, and enable team members to communicate more effectively than before. Smart Working will also support more effective cross-team working.

Getting the policies right

Existing contracts, policies and guidelines will almost certainly need reviewing in the context of Smart Working, for example:

- Contracts of employment may need to reflect more flexible working hours and locations
- Flexible working policies should address not only legal requirements but actively promote flexibility to address work-life balance and business performance issues
- Health and safety policies need to reflect the more diverse working environments
- Equality, diversity and inclusion policies can be stronger if people can work more flexibly
- Recruitment policies need to encourage managers to offer flexible work styles wherever practicable.

Case study Online learning at Cable & Wireless

International telecommunications provider Cable & Wireless has been using webinars for online training since 2009. Training programmes have included Management Matters, a monthly management programme covering such issues as performance reviews and how to lead change programmes, and Perfect Pitch, a weekly training session for the sales and commercial teams on how to position aspects of the company's product and service proposition.

"We were impressed with the scalability of the webinar solution," confirms Mike Booth, learning technologies manager, "as it was able to support up to 1,000 concurrent users, allowing us to greatly expand the range of training initiatives we could offer".

Internally, the company has recently introduced a series of monthly customer service webinars, entitled *Obsessional about our Customers* and these will be followed by other initiatives including support for the Cable & Wireless technical centre in Birmingham and staff personal development programmes.

In addition, webinars have been developed for the first time to include external customers so that they can be educated on the benefits and use of Cable & Wireless products and services.

Case study from Citrix Online





Environmental sustainability

Most organisations are now taking initiatives to make their office buildings more sustainable. These need to be complemented by the development of more sustainable working practices.

The biggest component of the carbon footprint of work for most organisations relates to travel, primarily in the commute journey.

The carbon cost of work in the UK

- Every year UK workers clock up 80 billion car miles commuting to work
- The typical carbon footprint of a workers in an office is around 1.5 tonnes of CO₂ per year
- Business travel accounts for around 70 trips per worker per year, with an average distance of around 20 miles. 69% is by car.
- Mobile workers using company cars clock up an average 6000 miles per year.

Source: Department for Transport and RAC Foundation

Greening the office and greening the home count for little if at the end of the day we are still building and running too many offices and forcing employees into unnecessary journeys.

Becoming a sustainable organisation is not just about engineering solutions and complying with new building standards. It involves changing behaviours and assumptions about how we work.

Having the UK working population travel billions of miles each year to spend time using computers and telephones – work that can be done from anywhere – is an intrinsically unsustainable thing to do.

The decisions we make on a daily basis about where we work, where we expect our colleagues to work, and the ways in which we communicate can increase or reduce our need for travel, our energy consumption and consumption of physical resources.

Saving carbon by eliminating journeys

A recent study by Oxford University's Transport Studies Unit evaluated the comparative impacts of teleworking versus office carbon impacts. This proposes a typical carbon cost of using a room for home-based telework as being 173kg CO₂ per year if one day per week, and 865kg per year if five days per week (costs of heating and lighting a room plus equipment energy use).

This is about half the carbon per person of working in a modern office and a quarter of the carbon cost of working in a poor-performing office. And there are further savings to be achieved in travel reduction. The following table shows miles, time and CO₂ saved per year by not driving to an office:

Average savings from avoiding commuting

Annual savings	1.5 days per week	5 days per week
Distance	1175 miles	3915 miles
CO ₂	365 kg	1187 kg
Time	61 hours	203 hours

Calculated on basis of 45 working weeks per year, and average UK commute distances.

Of course working from home is only one way of reducing travel. Working a compressed working week – doing all one's working hours for 5 days in 4 – has the same effect on the roads

as working from home one day per week, though there may be performance or customer service reasons why this is not possible.

Using online conferencing (audio, video, etc.) is already saving some organisations tens of thousands of business miles, saving costs and increasing productivity as well as playing a role in saving the planet.

Saving travel through virtual meetings

- Aviva UK calculated that the CO₂ cost of a full meeting of the executive committee is 6.4 tonnes. Telepresence is now replacing face-to-face meetings.

Source: CBI (2010) *Tackling Congestion, Driving Growth*

- At BT teleconferencing replaces 340,000 trips and 54,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year – 40kg of CO₂ for each call that replaces a physical meeting

Source: SUSTEL project

Taking a practical approach

The figures we are quoting here on organisational savings are based on measured studies, not wishful thinking.

Organisations can take a practical approach to target setting for travel reduction, both for business travel and for staff commuting. Targets can be of the form: 'We will reduce our travel for (specified kinds of) meetings by x% by this date', or 'we will reduce business travel in our department by x% per year over the next 5 years'.

Similar targets can also be set for reducing consumption of other resources, such as paper. Bringing in electronic processes and centralised printing should be accompanied by paper reduction targets. Such targets need to be reinforced through cultural change programmes.

Reducing waste in office space

Realising the environmental savings when people move to working smarter critically depends on reducing office requirements, as per the guidance in Section 5.

Unless this property rationalisation takes place, the risk is that by keeping unused space in the office plus working from home and in other places, energy use will actually increase. This could entirely erode the savings made from reducing the need to travel.

Savings can often be made by better office design and more modern choice of furniture. It is tempting to save costs and appear to be environmentally friendly by reusing existing furniture, cabling and fittings.

But this can often be false economy, leading also to a kind of falsely virtuous and drab greenwash in office redesign. Recycling sounds good. But the effect may be to constrain the options for both space saving and improving work efficiency. This is where the carbon return on investment needs to be considered alongside the financial returns.

Making smart offices more sustainable

Designing new offices or refurbishing existing ones also creates the opportunity to make the buildings work smarter, as well as their occupants.

When offices are being used more intensively through higher average occupancy, building services may need to be upgraded. This is a chance to upgrade to more environmentally friendly products and services and improve natural lighting.

With offices perhaps being used by some staff over longer hours, intelligent building systems should be used to shut down unoccupied areas.

Desk-sharing means that staff who work early or late can base themselves in dedicated areas that remain up and running while the rest of the building shuts down.



Social sustainability

Working smarter can also bring benefits to society, by:

- Extending work opportunities into more remote areas and to disadvantaged groups
- Enabling people with disabilities or caring responsibilities to work in places or at times more suitable to them
- Indirectly supporting local communities and services by enabling people to work at or nearer to home
- Enabling people to dovetail volunteering activities with their work commitments.

Promoting these benefits

Organisations can take practical action to promote these benefits by making Smart Working central to their company travel plans and their Corporate Social Responsibility programmes.

Using Smart Working principles, managers and staff can help to reduce both their own and the organisation's environmental footprints. Teams can set targets, for example, to reduce the number of miles they travel both for business purposes and commuting, the number of routine meetings and the amount of paper generated.

Healthy working

Full-time employees spend almost half of their waking hours working, travelling to and from work or thinking about work. It therefore makes good business sense to take care of their health and fitness.

According to the recent report "Working for a Healthier Tomorrow" the annual economic costs in the UK of sickness absence and worklessness associated with working age ill-health are estimated to be over £100 billion. Around 175 million working days are lost each year, effectively adding around £650 to the annual employment cost of each employee.

On top of this, staff with poor health under-perform when they are at work and this is often compounded by employers providing unhealthy working environments.

Alongside other initiatives to promote a healthy workplace, employers should promote flexible working practices that can reduce absence and in particular reduce stress.

A significant proportion of absence from work is due to minor ailments that make the thought of commuting and sitting in an office with colleagues unbearable – being able to work on occasions from home can have a significant impact on 'sick leave'.

Many people struggle to get to work when their children, disabled or elderly relatives are ill and need their attention. The UK flexible working legislation aims to reduce discrimination against carers.

People are more productive and happier in offices that are tidy, clean and well cared for. Air quality and lighting can have a profound impact on mood and performance. In redesigning environments for smart working, the need to create healthy workplaces needs to be taken into account.

This can mean designing in areas for relaxation and recreation in offices. But it can also mean using local work centres that can encourage employees to walk or cycle when they need to access office facilities.

Impacts on health and happiness are factors that can be measured, and should be included in consultation before smart working and in evaluation after implementation.

Fact box USA

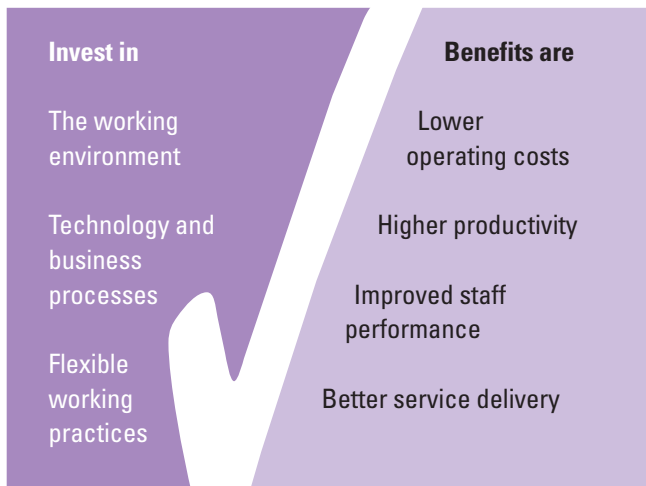
In the USA, it has been calculated that if the 40% of employees who could work from home did so for half the week, the country could:

- Reduce road travel by 91 billion miles/year
- Reduce greenhouse gases by 51 million tons/year – the equivalent of the entire New York state workforce off the roads
- Save 281 million barrels of oil a year (\$28 billion/year at \$100/barrel) – the equivalent of 46% of the country's Persian Gulf imports

Source: Telework Research Network (2010) *Workshifting Benefits: The Bottom Line*

9 The business case

The business case for Smart Working is relatively straightforward to represent:



In addition, non-financial benefits can include improved environmental and social sustainability and better employee health and wellbeing.

In summary, investing in a combination of new working environments, technology, business processes and more flexible working processes can deliver substantial business benefits.

A systematic approach

Successful implementation of Smart Working involves a systematic approach consisting of:

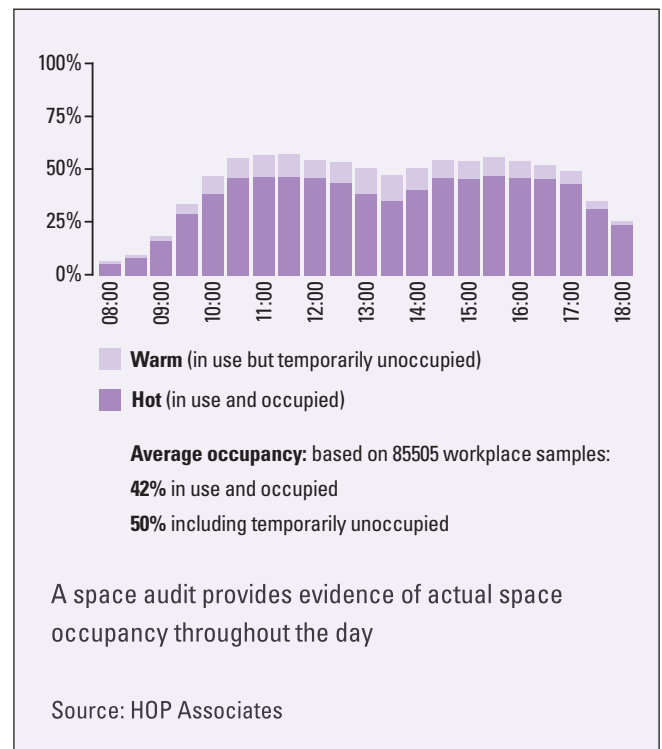
- Gathering evidence
- Consultation
- Analysing the work people do
- Calculation of costs and savings (business case)
- Establishing key metrics
- Planning and delivering the changes to IT, communications, premises, HR policies, etc.
- Training
- Evaluation.

Evidence gathering

Before planning major changes to how people work, it is essential to pull together accurate information about where

and when people work, how much space they use, the resources they use and the people they need to interact with.

The evidence needs to be gathered in a systematic way.



A **space audit**, ideally carried out over two weeks in a non-holiday period, will enable you find out actual space occupancy, how much time desks are 'claimed' but not actually occupied, meeting room occupancy, use of break-out spaces and kitchens, etc. It will also show peak demand.

It is best if the survey is carried out at frequent intervals throughout the day. Relying on just one or two observations during the day will probably inflate average occupancy and not record times of peak occupancy.

A **staff survey** (see also opposite), carried out over two or three weeks to maximise response rates, should be used to harvest additional practical information about work styles. This should include details about where and when people currently work, the amount of travel, their use of technologies and other resources, whether their work involves external interactions with the public and partners, or is primarily internally facing, and whether it is subject to peaks and troughs of demand. Workstyle

analysis will need to be based on a clear picture of who works where and why – information that can be surprisingly tricky to pin down in many large organisations.

A rigorous storage audit (see section 5) needs to be carried out.

A programme of **structured interviews** with senior management and stakeholders is important to identify key operational requirements, current styles of working, key issues and changes in strategy and/or headcount that may impact on changes to Smart Working. Managers may hold radically different views, and the process may also highlight the need for management training and awareness-raising.

For a fully integrated programme involving redesigning the office, there also needs to be an **assessment of the office layout and building services**, to see the scope for change, identify constraints and provide a basis for both modelling possible new work environments and identifying the costs of change.

Initial evidence gathering should include a **technology audit**, to identify what forms of smart working existing technology can support, and the investment that may be needed to support more extensive smart working.

To provide a baseline for future evaluation of the impacts of change, it is helpful to **gather data on absence, staff turnover and staff satisfaction**.

From this an accurate picture of current ways of working can be drawn, and a baseline established that will help in future evaluation of the impacts of the project.

Business savings: USA

Findings from the State of Telework in the US report (2011) show that businesses could:

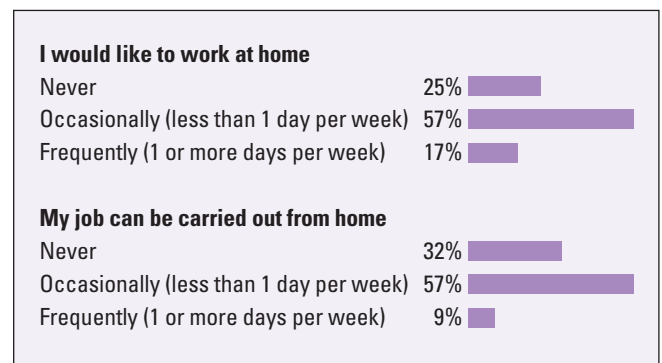
- Save \$13,000 for every employee who works an average two and a half days per week from home
- Save \$170 billion in property costs (on the basis of a 20% reduction)
- Save \$28 billion in absenteeism (25% reduction) and turnover (10% reduction)
- Increase productivity by over \$466 billion – 6 million person-years

Consultation

Consultation about workplace change has three main aims:

- Playing a part in the evidence gathering process (as above)
- Finding out staff and managers' requirements and aspirations for new working patterns
- Involving staff in the process of change, to motivate them and to ensure buy-in and success.

A Smart Working staff survey should be used to find out staff preferences for different kinds of flexible working (see section 4 for the options). The results can be used to stimulate further discussion within departments and teams about the practicality and impacts of different work styles, how (if adopted) they need to be managed, and what kinds of new tools, processes and training might be needed.



People tend to resent change that is forced upon them, and quickly see through cosmetic consultation when key decisions have already been made. So staff should be enabled to play a key role in helping to design new ways of working and also new work environments.

Analysing the work people do

One obstacle to implementing Smart Working is making assumptions about how work has to be carried out. For example, some people might say "This role has to be based in the office", or "I always need my team close at hand".

Some jobs may be site-specific or time-specific. But it is important to analyse the various tasks involved in the job. When analysed, some tasks will prove to be more 'location-independent' than others.

It is also important to analyse what is tethering tasks unnecessarily to the office, and whether that can change in the context of Smart Working. For example, is it over-reliance on paper processes, an excessive 'meetings culture', traditional management styles, or lack of remote access technologies? If so, strategies can be developed to modernise the processes or cultures involved.



Calculation of costs and savings

Data will be needed about the costs of running the office on a per-workplace basis. If it can be shown that desk-sharing is a viable option, the potential savings can then be calculated.

The costs and environmental impacts of travel – both business travel and commute travel – should also be calculated.

Costings will also be needed for investment in new IT, any alterations to premises, and for training.

A cost/benefit analysis and a business plan can then be put together, looking at the potential savings and the investment required to achieve those savings through working smarter.

Establishing key metrics

Moving to Smart Working involves having a clear idea of the benefits that are to be achieved. Working from the evidence gathered, targets should be set for (as appropriate):

- Increased productivity
- Improved staff satisfaction
- Office space reduction
- Travel reduction – both business travel and commute travel
- Reduced absenteeism
- Improved staff retention
- Improved work-life balance.

Plantronics Changing Bricks, Bytes and Behaviours

Plantronics has recently implemented a comprehensive and integrated smart working programme for its staff in the UK. This has involved changes to 'bricks, bytes and behaviour' – that is, to buildings, technologies and the way people work.

Since 2005, Plantronics has reduced its property in the UK from three buildings to one, reducing floorspace from 42,000 square feet to 21,000. At its new HQ in Wootton Bassett, workers now have access to shared flexible spaces based around four kinds of work activity:

- Concentration – space to go for quiet work including 'monk's cells' and 'acoustic pods'
- Collaboration – meeting rooms and breakout areas; touchdown benches
- Communication – vibrant areas likely to have constant noise, e.g. contact centre and touch-down space for sales staff
- Contemplation – spaces designed for creativity, refuelling and relaxation.

Meeting rooms are equipped with audio and video conferencing kit and wireless interactive whiteboards. Identical hardware in each room ensures consistency and ease of use.

There is an enterprise wide unified communications solution. There are no desk phones – IP telephony means that laptops and headsets are used instead, so people can work in any setting.

Staff undergo a suitability assessment for remote working, with online training for working in virtual and distributed teams and for working with shared spaces in the office.

Managers are trained to become more adept at managing by output and in building high performing distributed teams.

Plantronics has made a significant investment in high quality facilities, technology and training to achieve this. In five years, though, they will achieve return on investment through real estate savings. Smart Working here is about developing an increasingly productive workforce and working environment, and cost savings into the bargain.



Planning and rolling out the changes

It is vital that the move to Smart Working has strong support from the top. Without strong messages coming down, individual managers may resist or introduce compromises that will in the end lead to the failure of the project. So the vision and the broad direction of the changes need to be clearly understood by everyone at the outset.

The changes will involve close liaison between the Property, Facilities, IT and HR functions, working with the management of the teams undergoing the transition. It will be necessary to form an inter-disciplinary project team to manage the project.

A project plan will need to be developed detailing the costs, timescale and risks.



The following is a simple 'timeline' for implementing Smart Working:

1. Agree the vision
2. Establish senior team to drive the change project forward
3. Gather the evidence – desk occupancy, workstyles, travel, productivity, staff preferences, technology use, customer locations and needs (etc)
4. Consult staff
5. Prepare the business case
6. Identify and address any health and safety and equal opportunity and diversity issues
7. Set targets and priorities
8. Plan any changes needed to the office space, working with the property and facilities team
9. Plan any changes to technology, working with IT team
10. Run awareness raising and training sessions with managers and teams, working with the HR team
11. Develop any specific local protocols for Smart Working
12. Roll out the changes
13. Continue culture change processes and training
14. Evaluate
15. Modify in the light of evaluation findings.

The importance of top level support and enthusiasm

In this Handbook we have stressed the importance of consultation and getting staff buy-in and enthusiasm. Implementations that are purely top-down and ignore staff aspirations and the importance of culture change will run into trouble.

However, consultations through the Smart Work Network show that one of the biggest barriers to success is lack of engagement at the top level.



The Smart Working programme needs to have clear and dynamic support at CEO level. Without this projects can often die the death of a thousand compromises as programme managers struggle against powerful interests who may resist or seek to divert projects into their own pet schemes.

The vision has to be clearly endorsed and communicated. The message is 'This will be done. We'll consult on and adapt the detail, but the vision and principles are not in question'. This empowers the programme managers to move ahead confidently.

There are also several well-known implementations where director-level staff row back on their own working practices – e.g. reintroducing personal offices for themselves or not allowing flexible work for staff working closely with them. 'Do as I say, not as I do' is a message that will undermine the success of Smart Working.

In the USA A lead from the top

President Obama calls himself the US 'teleworker-in-chief', and supported calls for much greater flexibility in the workplace. In 2010 he signed the Telework Enhancement Act, which requires all Federal Government Agencies to:

- Establish telework policies
- Decide the eligibility of all employees in agencies to telework
- Notify all employees of their eligibility
- Set up interactive telework training programmes
- Appoint a senior official to be a Telework Managing Officer
- Set annual targets for increasing the uptake of telework
- Report on telework progress, in terms of
- Numbers of people who telework and how frequently
- Measure impacts on: emergency readiness, energy use, recruitment and retention, performance, productivity, and employee attitudes.

And the President recognises flexibility as an important issue for all businesses. In a speech in 2010 he said:

"Workplace flexibility is an issue that affects the well-being of our families and the success of our businesses. It affects the strength of our economy – whether we'll create the workplaces and jobs of the future we need to compete in today's global economy".

Can't do it all at once?

We strongly advocate a strategic and comprehensive approach to change. But we recognise that not all organisations are in a position to do this.

In circumstances where there is limited scope for investment in new IT or refurbishment of premises, it should be remembered that much can be achieved in moving towards new ways of working using existing technologies more effectively and placing more of an initial emphasis on cultural change.

But it also needs to be remembered that under-utilised space, or unnecessary travel, constitute major ongoing costs. Savings not achieved can have a negative impact on the ability to deliver front-line activities. The same goes for underachieving on the productivity front by not moving to more effective working practices.

Training and awareness-raising

Smart Working may fail to realise the full range of benefits if managers and staff are not properly prepared for working in new ways and for playing their part in developing a Smart Working culture.

Training and awareness-raising for managers should include:

- Understanding the benefits of new ways of working
- Understanding the flexible working options available
- Understanding the linkages between new technologies and the possibilities for new working practices
- Understanding how to involve and motivate staff to implement Smart Working
- How to manage a dispersed workforce
- How to manage by results rather than presence
- New approaches to empowerment and trust
- Performance issues
- Equality and diversity issues
- Dealing with communication issues
- Understanding the pitfalls and issues that may arise, and how to deal with these.

Training and awareness-raising for teams should include:

- Being clear about the type of workplace culture that it is hoped to develop
- Understanding the benefits and goals
- Understanding roles and responsibilities
- Developing skills and understanding in working more flexibly:
 - working with less direct supervision
 - communicating with colleagues and partners
 - time management
 - monitoring and reporting arrangements
 - health and safety in new working environments
- Working in a 'non-territorial' environment – sharing space and resources
- Working with Smart Working technologies and understanding the processes for having issues resolved.



Evaluation

To understand whether Smart Working has achieved the benefits anticipated, an evaluation study should be carried out around 9-12 months after implementation.

It is vital that baseline metrics have been established (as above) in order for the evaluation to be robust. The achievements can then be evaluated against this baseline. Where necessary, further changes can be made where expected targets are not met, or where further consultation and feedback show that there are particular difficulties or issues.

Smart Working will also continue to evolve, and involves openness to future change. So the evaluation process has to take account of new possibilities for increasing flexibility and agility. It should take account of new technological possibilities and the changing context of the market in which the company operates.

11 Moving forward into a Smarter world



The approach put forward in this Handbook is to take an integrated approach to developing and managing Smart Working.

This means having a whole-organisation approach to change, with endorsement and energy from the top of the organisation so that no one is left in doubt that change is going to come. It means having an agreed and coherent vision, a programme underpinned by well-understood Smart Working principles and a clear understanding of the Smart Working culture that the programme will in time develop.

Taking the programme forward should be an involving process, with staff at all levels helping to shape the nature of the solution, based on the vision and the principles.

The programme also has to be based on robust evidence. Understanding where, when and how people work forms the basis of understanding and defining the scope for change, and understanding constraints and challenges. The evidence gathered also forms the baseline for measuring progress and success.

Rolling out the changes depends on having the key functions of People, Property and Technology having a shared understanding of the change project and of the benefits it is intended to achieve. And they need to have an understanding of how the

interactions between the different elements of the project interact. This shared mindset is key to the success of projects.

The focus has always to be on delivering benefits across the triple bottom line. This means:

- Measurable business benefits – improved service delivery, increased productivity, reduced costs, reduced absence, improved staff retention, greater organisational agility
- Improved environmental performance – travel reduction, reduced resource consumption, better environmental performance of (fewer) buildings
- Improved social performance – better work-life balance for staff, greater choice, autonomy and motivation, improved staff satisfaction, widening the recruitment pool for staff and increasing diversity.

Understanding how these benefits link to particular measures in a Smart Working change programme is important for success. A good communication programme is vital for keeping people up-to-date with progress and for ensuring the necessary dialogue with all parties.

We hope this Smart Work Handbook provides you with the summary guidance you need to start out on your journey to implementing a successful Smart Working programme and reaping the benefits.

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Smart Work Network

The Smart Work Network was launched in Autumn 2007 to bring together practitioners of flexible working from large organisations across the UK. Members are people working in private, public and voluntary sector organisations to roll out substantial programmes of flexible work.

Currently there are over 200 members, from 160 subscribing organisations.

Further details at www.smart-work.net

Evolve

Technology is reshaping the workplace as we know it, forcing us to reassess how we use physical spaces alongside a new, virtual world of online collaboration. Evolve is a lively and insightful website from Plantronics covering everything to do with the evolution of working practices and the workplace related to the changes in technology.

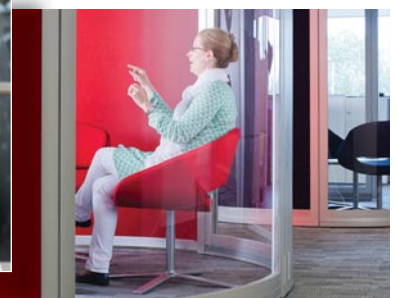
Further details at www.smarterworkingevolution.com



Workshifting.com

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HOP's Workplace Manager toolkit (www.workplace-manager.com) builds an evidence base for innovation and change, with tools that measure and benchmark occupancy, utilisation and storage and engage with managers and employees in culture change. HOP works with leading employers in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors in the UK and around the world, as well as with property, technology and HR service organisations.

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Peoplespace is a market-leading firm of management consultants, workplace strategists and designers, established in 2002, specifically to support an integrated approach to workspace remodelling and Smart Working accommodation projects.

We use the words 'Smart Working' to give a collective name to the benefits, the working culture and the efficiency gains that result from the fully integrated collaboration between workspace design, flexible working, property strategy and technology initiatives.

Peoplespace apply their Smart Working approach to innovation and challenging projects in both the private and public sectors in the UK and overseas, in order to maximise potential benefits and reduce costs for customers.

For further information see www.peoplespace.co.uk

plantronics Unified Communications, and the virtual teamwork practices it promotes, is undoubtedly the cornerstone of Smarter Working for businesses today. With 90 percent of enterprise employees working off-site some of the time, more people than ever are collaborating through audio and web conferencing. 81 percent of professionals rank phone calls as critical to their success and productivity. So while people are spending ever greater amounts of time away from the office, Voice Intelligibility and the human connection continues to play a critical role for dispersed working. Unified Telephony solutions facilitate the need to juggle desk, mobile and internet calls from wherever you are working, as well as the need to work and move around ergonomically. As the market leaders in unified and mobile headsets, Plantronics is the partner of choice when considering smarter working.

For further information see www.plantronics.com



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Andy has been supported in writing this by Bob Crichton of HOP Associates.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks go to Halbyn Rich of Peoplespace, Charles Blane of Mott MacDonald, Clare Kemp of Citrix Online and Carly Read of Plantronics for their input and advice.

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