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Remote Work

Description

This module aims to present best practices to promote effectiveness and efficiency in a hybrid workspace. Participants will be introduced to different digital tools and learn how to adapt them to their work in order to enhance their productivity. Through a myth-busting quiz, they will also learn the dos and don'ts of remote work and how virtual communication differs from face-to-face communication. At the end of the module, participants will be challenged to complete the task of organising a digital meeting in order to apply the methodologies and digital tools presented, with the final goal of being aware of the benefits of organising a digital office that allows them to work in a hybrid workplace.

Learning Units

LU1: Best practices of remote working

LU2: Digital tools for a digital office

LU3: Effective virtual communication

Learning Objectives

Knowledge

Categorise the key elements for organising a remote work environment

Identify digital tools for communication and collaboration

Explain the key factors of an effective virtual communication

Skills

Describe strategies to create effective digital touch points

Choose the appropriate collaboration technology and tools for own needs

Engage effectively in online meetings, discussions, classed, etc

Attitudes

Comply with best practices that promote effective and efficient

Adapt to the raid shifts of the digitalisation processes

Improve work productivity and efficiency through the use of digital tools

Best Practices of Remote Working

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Remote work is about trust and results, not control and face time.

Susan Hauser, Microsoft Corporate Vice President

Benefits of Remote Working

- Increased flexibility: With remote work, employees have the ability to work from anywhere with an internet connection. This allows them to have more control over their schedule and work environment, which can lead to increased productivity and work-life balance

- Cost savings: Companies can save on overhead costs such as office space and utilities by having employees work remotely. Employees may also save on commuting costs and other expenses related to working in an office

- Increased productivity: Some studies have shown that remote workers are more productive than their in-office counterparts. This may be due to factors such as fewer distractions, the ability to create a personalized work environment, and the freedom to work at times when they are most productive.

- Environmental benefits: Remote work can also have a positive impact on the environment, as it reduces the need for commuting and the associated carbon emissions.
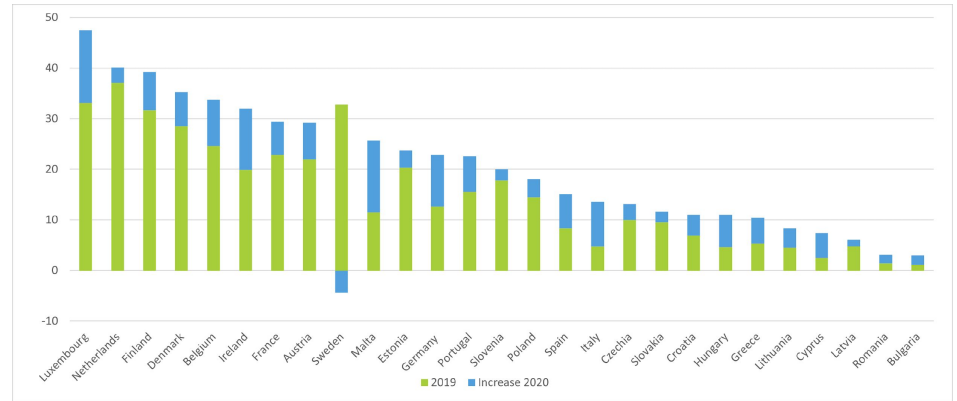
Challenges of Remote Working

- Communication: It can be more difficult to communicate and collaborate with team members when working remotely. This may require the use of different communication tools, such as video conferencing or project management software.

- Isolation: Some people may find that they miss the social interaction and support of a traditional office environment. It is important for remote workers to make an effort to stay connected with their colleagues and seek out opportunities for socialization.

- Technology issues: Remote work relies on having a reliable internet connection and computer, as well as access to the necessary software and tools. Technical issues can disrupt work and can be frustrating for employees.

- Time management: It can be more challenging to manage time effectively when working remotely, as there may be more distractions and it can be harder to separate work from personal life.
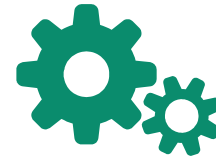
Remote Working

According to a 2019 survey by Eurofound, a European Union agency, 37% of workers in the EU28 countries worked remotely at least one day a week, while 15% worked remotely on a full-time basis.

This represents a significant increase from previous years, and it is likely that the trend has continued due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced many companies to adopt remote work policies.

Pros and Cons of Remote Work

Reflection

- Take some time to think and write down your thoughts and experiences on the following prompts:.
- What are some of the benefits you have experienced while working remotely?
- What are some of the challenges you have faced while working remotely?
- How have you overcome or managed these challenges?

Action

- How can you apply what you have learned to future remote work experiences?
- What are some specific actions you can take to improve your remote work experience?
- How will you implement these actions in your daily routine?

Digital Tools for a Digital Office

Digital Tools

Digital tools can improve efficiency and productivity in the workplace by automating repetitive tasks, facilitating collaboration and communication, streamlining processes, and allowing for real-time data analysis and decision-making. Adopting digital tools provides access to relevant data, sharing information, and communicating more efficiently with colleagues, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders. This can also improve the ability to make data-driven decisions and increase the speed of communication and access to information. Below is a list of indicative tools to start designing your remote office

Document Management

- **Simple Scan**: A mobile app that allows users to quickly scan documents and save them as PDFs.
- **DocuSign**: An app that enables users to digitally sign and send documents for signature. ilovepdf.com: A web-based application that allows users to edit, convert, and compress PDFs.

Customer Relationship Management

- **Pipedrive**: A CRM tool that helps users to manage their sales pipeline.
- **Hubspot CRM**: A free CRM platform that allows businesses to organize, track, and grow their customer relationships.

Digital Tools

Time Management

- **Toggl Track**: A time tracking app that helps users to track the time spent on various tasks and projects.
- **Todoist**: A task management app that allows users to create and manage to-do lists and projects.

Project and Task Management

- **Trello**: A visual project management tool that allows users to organize tasks and projects using boards and cards.
- **monday.com**: A project management tool that allows teams to collaborate and manage their work in a customizable and visual way.

Collaboration and File Sharing

- **Google Drive**: A cloud-based file storage and collaboration platform.
- **WeTransfer**: A file-sharing service that allows users to send large files easily.
- **Dropbox**: A cloud-based file storage and collaboration platform that allows users to store, share, and access their files from anywhere.
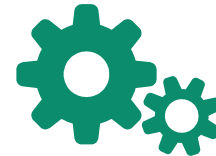
Digital Tools

Accounting

- **Xero**: An online accounting software that allows users to manage invoicing, expenses, and bank transactions.

- **FreshBooks**: An online invoicing, time tracking and expense management tool.

Communication Tools

- **Slack**: A team communication tool that allows users to send messages, files, and make voice and video calls.

- **Zoom**: A video conferencing tool that allows users to hold virtual meetings, webinars and video calls.

- **Google Meet**: A video conferencing tool that allows users to join or schedule meetings, and collaborate in real-time. Instant message apps: Apps that allow users to send and receive real-time text-based messages, such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and iMessage.

- **Business email**: Email services that are designed for professional and business use, such as Microsoft Outlook, Gmail for Business, and Yahoo Mail Pro.

My Personal Toolkit

Reflection

- What digital tools do you currently use in your remote work?

- What are the most challenging aspects of using these tools?

- Are there any digital tools you have researched that you think could improve your remote work experience?

- Are there any areas where you feel you lack knowledge or skills when it comes to digital tools, and how do you plan to improve on them?

Action

- Identify one or two digital tools that they researched and evaluated during the activity that they think could improve their remote work experience.

- Develop a plan for implementing these new tools in their daily work process. This could include setting up training sessions for colleagues, creating a checklist for integration, or mapping out a plan for adoption.

- Identify areas where they lack knowledge or skills when it comes to digital tools, and research and find resources (such as tutorials, webinars, or training programs) to improve them.

Virtual Communication

Virtual communication refers to the use of technology to facilitate communication and collaboration between individuals or groups who are not in the same physical location. This can include things like email, instant messaging, video conferencing, and project management tools.

Virtual communication has become increasingly important in recent years, as more and more companies have adopted remote work policies, and as the need for global collaboration has grown. Effective virtual communication can help to improve productivity, increase collaboration and creativity, and foster a sense of community among remote workers. It's important to understand the different types of virtual communication tools available and to develop strategies for using them effectively to ensure effective communication and collaboration.

Techniques of Virtual Communication

- Explain the purpose of the communication and what you require (information, approval, information).

- Establish precise schedules and deadlines.

- Your communication style should be appropriate for the message's medium and aim.

- Use various communication methods to express your message as suited to the situation.

- Have any supporting materials ready and readily available to share if the need arises.

- Help by highlighting the crucial parts where attention should be paid in circumstances of vast volumes of information

- To become more communicative, use body language.

- Locate a quiet, distraction-free space with high-quality acoustics.

- Make sure the camera is at a comfortable viewing height.

- Turn off the mic when you're not going to use it to talk.

- It's crucial to have adequate lighting. Try to stay away from bright lights or windows.

- Keep your phone safe by placing it on a stand if you're using a mobile connection.

- To avoid unexpected events, use virtual backgrounds or filters.

Avoid Technical Issues

- Try logging in for a trial period regardless of whether you have prior experience with online meetings.

- Check that the microphone, camera, and screen sharing are all operational.

- Make sure you've already downloaded the necessary application.

- Close any background programmes that are causing your connection to become overloaded.

- Turn off the cameras and ask the individuals you're chatting with to do the same if you're connecting from a slow network.

- Connect with a cable if you're attending a crucial meeting or giving a presentation; your connection will be more stable.

- To avoid echo problems, use headphones.

- If connecting from a mobile device, ensure you're carrying a fully charged battery or charger.
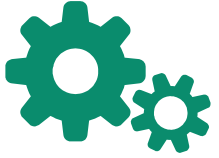
Virtual Me

Reflection

- What virtual meeting tools do you currently use?
- What are the most challenging aspects of using these tools during meetings?
- What are some best practices you have learned for conducting virtual meetings?
- Are there any areas where you feel you lack knowledge or skills when it comes to virtual meetings, and how do you plan to improve on them?

Action

- Develop a plan for ensuring effective communication and participation during virtual meetings. This could include setting ground rules, creating an agenda, or using tools to encourage participation and engagement.
- Identify areas where they lack knowledge or skills when it comes to virtual meetings, and research and find resources (such as tutorials, webinars, or training programs) to improve them.

> *Remote work is not a one-size-fits-all solution, but it can be a powerful tool for creating more diverse and inclusive workplaces.*
> **Leah Busque, CEO and founder of TaskRabbit**

To learn more about this module:

Working from Home When Your Kids Are Out of School

https://remote.co/working-from-home-when-kids-out-of-school/

Why working from home is good for business

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6fIseKzzHo

32 Remote Work Tools for Happy and Productive Employees

https://www.proofhub.com/articles/remote-work-tools-for-team

How to make work-life balance work

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GgrKjsLrZg

The ultimate guide to digital meetings

https://slack.com/blog/collaboration/ultimate-guide-digital-meetings

Virtual Meetings Guide: Tips, Ideas & Tools

https://www.cvent.com/en/blog/events/virtual-meetings