

What Is Distributed Work

Daddy, how's your day?

This job is killing me – too much traffic.

I could work from home and be more productive.

Today, the way work is done is undergoing a rapid change from traditional work to distributed work. And leaders, managers and workers face difficult challenges as well as enormous opportunities to improve performance and personal well-being.

Distributed Work Defined

We can define distributed work to be those types of activities that are independent of time and place.

Which means that one can do work without being confined within the typical business hours or within an office space or a factory.

Distributed work is also known as telework or telecommuting referring to workers who are working from home or working remotely from client sites or hotel rooms.

The growth of distributed work has been fueled by advancement in information technologies. And industry experts predict that in the next few years, rapid advances in technology will make it much easier and cheaper to

implement distributed work.

Popular Among Employees

Distributed work has gained popularity amongst employees since it supports their desire to



have flexibility and freedom. They can get more done and avoid the demands of travel and the unwanted disruptions at the office.

Helps Organizations Stay Competitive

On the other hand, organizations are finding out that distributed work helps cut costs of travel and office space. It also helps organizations retain good employees.

Furthermore, distributed work assists organizations to stay competitive. It speeds up decision-making since leaders, managers and workers can

respond to problems and opportunities without the limits of time zones or distances.

Transitions

Because distributed work is a new phenomena, there is very limited research published on the subject. However, current studies show that challenges revolve around the transition from traditional practices to practices that promote distributed work.

These transitions involve:

- a transition from leaders and managers who are controlling to leaders and managers who encourage self-leading workers;
- a transition from selective training to on-going and anytime-anywhere learning and knowledge sharing; and
- a transition from "censored communication flow" to unhindered free flow of information that is built on trust and collaboration.

Ask yourself these questions:

What is the single biggest challenge in your organization when implementing distributed work?

How do you go about fixing it?