

Dear reader,

The digital revolution that we have witnessed in the past few decades, is now triggering a "working revolution". As modern communication technologies allow numerous knowledge workers to work independently from time and place, work is no longer a place we go to. It is something we do. A "New Way of Working" is on the rise, with promising effects on congestion and our need to travel. In this e-update, we will examine what this New Way is all about and look at examples and tips from some of the leading countries in Europe today. PS: as vivid example KpVV presents a "live webcast", details see bottom of the page

The mobile employee



The New Way of Working comes in many flavours. It comprises flexible working hours ("flexi time"), scheduling meetings outside peak hours, teleconferencing and videoconferencing, webcasts and webinars, compressed working hours (working your agreed hours over fewer days) and not in the least teleworking.

Teleworking or remote working is more than occasionally taking some reading material back home. It means working at home, on the road or any other location, while staying connected to the company's information and communication channels. It can involve working outside of the office all day or just until the morning peak is over. Research shows that improved work-life balance and retention of employees are the main reasons for companies to offer their employees the option of teleworking. But there are more benefits, like increased productivity, less absenteeism and reduced office and parking space.

Plenty has been said and written about the benefits of the New Way of Working. But how tackle it in practice? Act Travelwise, a British association for promoting sustainable travel choices, has recently published four **practical guides** for employers and employees with useful tips on working from home, conference calling, video conferencing and using your smartphone. More tips coming from business can be found on [ways2work](#), [Flexibility](#) and the [actnow flex project](#). Tips for local authorities are compiled in the [Making Smarter Choices Work](#) brochure (see p.37).

Telework and congestion: a difficult relationship



In the Netherlands, the number of teleworkers has tripled between 2003 and 2009 and comprises now about 19% of all employees. Congestion however has not been relieved. This is caused by an increase in home-to-work distances, probably because the New Way of Working makes it less inconvenient to live far from work. Promotion of teleworking should go hand in hand with other mobility management measures, such as the promotion of public transport commuting. With the right equipment, the employee can keep teleworking on the train. To give teleworking a new boost, the Dutch government has launched a new campaign: "The New Way of Working: Do it Yourself" ("[Het Nieuwe Werken Doe Je Zelf](#)" (NL)). First, the campaign gave information and stimulated people to experiment with teleworking. Now, it will stimulate companies to make structural changes (equipment, terms of employment) to incorporate teleworking in their organisational culture.

Trust and responsibility



Source: ChristianSarkar.com

The New Way of Working requires a great deal of trust from employers. Many fear for instance that teleworkers will be too much distracted by their personal affairs. However, a recent [French survey](#) (FR) indicates that 94% of teleworkers agrees that they manage to separate their professional lives from their personal lives very well.

A major forerunner is Semco, a Brazilian company. CEO Ricardo Semler has given his people an exceptional amount of flexibility and responsibility. They have total freedom to choose their own working hours, for instance work on Sunday and go see a movie on Monday afternoon. In this way, the week will start to feel like a "seven-day weekend". (More information: [YouTube video](#), [interview](#), [review of Semler's books](#)).

More and more, employees will be held accountable for the results they obtain, rather than for the time they spent in the office. This can cause a lot of pressure on employees as well. Not everyone will feel comfortable in the New Way of Working. On the other hand, not only companies and the nature of work changes. The people who work change too. Young talent entering the job market today, are part of Generation Y (people born between 1982-2000). They are the "digital natives" who are used to the fast and intuitive communication tools like instant messaging (chat), Skype, Facebook and Wikipedia. To attract and retain these people, companies should adapt their way of working to their people, in stead of making employees adapt to the company. The tremendous evolution that technology - and people with it - have made, is presented nicely in this [YouTube video](#).

The office as a meeting place



Source: www.triplepundit.com - blogpost
Mrs. L.C. Latimer

If more employees are teleworking more often, it might no longer be necessary for them to have a fixed desk at the office. Several companies combine teleworking with flexible work spaces. Some systems require employees to reserve a work spot in advance (hotelling), other systems do not (hot desking). Apart from saving space, flexible workspaces have additional advantages, explains Ms. Leilani C. Latimer of Sabre Holdings in a blogpost entitled [How Flexible Workspaces Can Transform Your Company's Culture](#). ". not only did our employees adapt to the new "Flexspace" environment, they began working more closely with each other, breaking down many of the silos between projects and departments, created a more collaborative environment and ultimately strengthened our competitive position in the fast-evolving travel technology industry."

When part of the individual desks disappear, more space can be devoted to meeting rooms. The office becomes a place to fysically meet with other colleagues and not so much for performing individual tasks like writing reports. A nice example of flexible workspaces can be found in the new Dutch Microsoft office ([YouTube video](#)).

Staying virtually present



Copyright: www.teliris.com

Flexible and remote working should not hinder communication and information flows between colleagues. Large companies like the Dutch Rabobank ([Rabo Unplugged work paradigm](#)) and Microsoft (e.g. [Microsoft Belgium](#)) have invested a lot in unified communication technologies that allow seamless communication for their employees at any time and any place.

Tele- and videoconferencing equipment eliminates the need to travel to meetings. Not as good as real face-to-face contacts? Telepresence is taking videoconferencing to a whole new level. It refers to a set of technologies designed to create the impression of real presence (e.g. [CISCO's Telepresence commercial](#)). [On their website](#), developer CISCO allows companies to calculate just how much travel costs they can avoid by installing a TelePresence system. Today, the technology even exists to use [3D holographic projections](#) to create an almost perfect illusion of presence.

Home offices: an asset for local economy



Some companies save costs by outsourcing certain jobs, like call centres and customer services, to permanent homeworkers in stead of another company. This is called "home-sourcing" or "homeshoring". At online market places like [Pajamanation](#), they can also homesource little microjobs (translations, administration tasks, graphic design jobs.) to a network of self-employed home workers.

Modern communication technologies also make it easier for self-employed people to start up a business from their homes. the French department of Gers saw the potential of these talented entrepreneurs to fight rural depopulation and give a boost to the local economy. With the initial support of the European pilot project Soho Solo (2003-2005), Gers started to actively attract self-employed home-workers from all over Europe, with the agreeable climate and the peace and quiet of the area as their main selling points. The [Soho Solo](#) team and a network of 50 partner villages helps newcomers settle in the region and set up a business.

Smart work centres: an office on demand



Working at home obviously has advantages. But what if the kids are at home, making an awful lot of noise? Or if your living room is not the ideal setting for meeting a client? Or if you are in desperate need of social contact? Smart work centres and workhubs provide the solution: desks and meeting/collaboration space that you can hire for a short period of time, sometimes even by the hour. Some centres are open to employees of certain companies only, others are open to anyone. Many offer additional services, like catering, copying and printing services or child daycare. In the Netherlands, more than 100 [Smart Work Centres](#) have been built since 2008. In the UK, workhubs can be found through the [Workhubs Network](#) website. The Network recently wrote a [review of the carbon benefits of workhub use](#). It found that for the average workhub user, the commuting distance to the workhub is about the same as the national average for all employed people. But many of them used to travel twice as far to an office. Most users came by car alone, though still 12% lower than the national figure. One in five walked, twice the national percentage of 11%.

The first Dutch Smart Work Centre in Almere (www.qualitycentre.nl)

News from related projects



As the TRAVEL PLAN PLUS project comes to an end, a series of [TRAVEL PLAN PLUS publications](#) are now available, highlighting the key lessons learnt on the implementation of local travel plan networks. You can also subscribe to a [distance learning short course](#) on how to create and sustain a Local Travel Plan Network.

Upcoming events



- UITP conference "Urban Governance - getting people on board"
5-7 October 2011, Gothenburg, Sweden
<http://gothenburg.uitp-events-expo.org>
- Bicycle Capitals of the world: Sustainable mobility in Copenhagen and Amsterdam
Live webcast, 7 June 2011 from 15:00 to 15:45 Central European Summer Time
<http://www.kpvv.nl>

For more events, please visit the [EPOMM Calendar](#).



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