



MANAGING TOMORROW'S WORKER

FINAL REPORT

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Undertaken by
Henley Management College

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Contents

CONTENTS.....	I
LIST OF FIGURES	IV
LIST OF TABLES	V
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	VI
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	VII
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 BACKGROUND	1
1.2 REPORT STRUCTURE	3
2.0 SETTING THE SCENE	5
2.1 WHAT IS FLEXIBLE WORKING?	5
2.2 WHY USE FLEXIBLE WORKING?	5
2.3 WHO IS APPLYING FLEXIBLE WORKING PRACTICES?	8
2.4 HOW MUCH FLEXIBLE WORKING IS THERE?	9
3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	10
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	10
3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY / DESIGN.....	11
3.3 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS	12
3.4 DATA COLLECTION, REDUCTION AND ANALYSIS.....	15
4.0 HR DIRECTOR FINDINGS.....	18
4.1 DEFINITION, UTILISATION AND DRIVERS FOR MOBILE/FLEXIBLE WORK	18
4.2 PERCEIVED ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES	19
4.3 MANAGEMENT PROCESSES AND TECHNOLOGY	21
4.4 MANAGEMENT COMPETENCES AND TRAINING	22
4.5 CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES	23
4.6 PREDICTIONS.....	25
4.7 CONCLUSIONS	26

5.0	TEAM MANAGERS AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES.....	28
5.1	THE NATURE AND TYPE OF MANAGEMENT ROLE	28
5.2	THE TEAMS	28
5.3	TEAM COMPOSITION/STRUCTURE	29
5.4	USE OF FLEXIBLE WORKING.....	30
5.5	WHERE IS FLEXIBLE WORK TAKING PLACE?	30
5.6	MANAGERS' EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING	31
5.7	MANAGEMENT TRAINING.....	32
5.8	THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING	32
5.8.1	MAIN ADVANTAGES OF USING FLEXIBLE WORKING	32
5.8.2	MAIN DISADVANTAGES OF USING FLEXIBLE WORKING	33
5.9	THE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	34
5.9.1	PRACTICE 1 – COMMUNICATION	35
5.9.2	PRACTICE 2 – TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT	36
5.9.3	PRACTICE 3 – REWARDS AND MOTIVATION	37
5.9.4	PRACTICE 4 – EMPOWERMENT, DELEGATION AND DECISION-MAKING	37
5.9.5	PRACTICE 5 – OBJECTIVE SETTING	39
5.9.6	PRACTICE 6 – SCHEDULING.....	39
5.9.7	PRACTICE 7 – MONITORING, CONTROL AND EVALUATING	40
5.9.8	PRACTICE 8 – LEADERSHIP	40
5.9.9	PRACTICE 9 – TEAM BUILDING	41
5.10	TOP THREE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES CRITICAL FOR MANAGING FLEXIBLE WORKERS.....	41
5.11	SUMMARY	42
6.0	TEAM MANAGERS' AND TEAM MEMBERS' FINDINGS ON MANAGEMENT COMPETENCES.....	44
6.1	INTRODUCTION.....	44
6.2	TEAM MANAGER AND TEAM MEMBER VIEWS ON COMPETENCES.....	44
6.2.1	COMPETENCE IMPORTANCE.....	44
6.2.2	COMPARING COMPETENCE DATA TO WORKING ARRANGEMENTS	45
6.3	TEAM MANAGER'S VIEWS	49
6.3.1	GENERAL.....	49

6.3.2	GENERAL ANALYSIS OF COMPETENCE DATA	51
6.4	TEAM MEMBER'S VIEWS.....	54
6.4.1	GENERAL.....	54
6.4.2	GENERAL ANALYSIS OF COMPETENCE DATA	56
6.5	COMPARING THE DATA	59
6.5.1	BACKGROUND DATA COMPARISONS	59
6.5.2	COMPETENCE DATA COMPARISONS	61
6.6	CONCLUSIONS	63
7.0	CASE STUDIES.....	65
8.0	DRAWING THE ANALYSIS TOGETHER.....	81
9.0	CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.....	84
10.0	RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER WORK.....	86
	REFERENCES	87
	APPENDIX 1 – ROUND TABLE BRIEF	A1.1
	APPENDIX 2 – DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS	A2.1
	APPENDIX 3 – COMPLETE COMPETENCE RANKING TABLES.....	A3.1

List of Figures

Figure 5.1	Ranking of Importance Of Management Practices
Figure 6.1	Comparison of Competence Rating With % Time Spent Working Away From Team / Manager
Figure 6.2	Comparison of Competence Ratings For Teams Working 0 - 10% and 91 – 100% Of Their Time Away From Their Manager
Figure 6.3	Comparison of Competence Ratings For Individuals Working 0 - 10% and 91 – 100% Of Their Time Away From Their Team / Manager
Figure 6.4	Proportion Of Team Managers' Time Spent Working Away From The Office And Corresponding Frequency Of Response
Figure 6.5	Working Location And Frequency Of Use By Team Managers
Figure 6.6	Proportion Of Team Managers' Time Spent Working Away From The Team And Corresponding Frequency Of Response
Figure 6.7	Proportion Of Team Members' Time Spent Working Away From The Office And Corresponding Frequency Of Response
Figure 6.8	Working Location And Frequency Of Use By Team Members
Figure 6.9	Proportion Of Team Members' Time Spent Working Away From The Team Manager And Corresponding Frequency Of Response
Figure 6.10	Comparison Of Use Of Alternative Working Locations
Figure 6.11	Comparison Of Team Manager And Team Member Perceptions Of How Much Time Is Spent Working Away From Each Other
Figure 6.12	Top 10 Competences – Comparison Between Team Managers and Team Members

List of Tables

Table 3.1	Research Methodology Summary
Table 5.1	Range Of Team Sizes Managed
Table 5.2	Team Existence In Present Form
Table 5.3	Years Experience as a Manager
Table 5.4	Types Of Management Training
Table 6.1	Top 10 Rankings of Competences – All Respondents
Table 6.2	Team Managers' Top 10 Competence Importance And Exhibition Ratings
Table 6.3	Team Managers' Bottom 10 Competence Importance And Exhibition Ratings
Table 6.4	Team Members' Top 10 Competence Importance And Exhibition Ratings
Table 6.5	Team Members' Bottom 10 Competence Importance And Exhibition Ratings
Table 6.6	Comparison Of Working Pattern Data

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Executive Summary

The Managing Tomorrow's Worker (MTW) project was sponsored by Microsoft and the Department for Work and Pensions and was carried out by the Future Work Forum at Henley Management College. This is the final report based on research work carried out between February 2004 and March 2005.

In view of the trend towards flexible and mobile working, managers in many organisations are now required to work in different ways and this has an impact on how they manage their people. The project set out to investigate the hypothesis that

“Managers of flexible workers manage in a different way than traditionally and they therefore have a different competence profile.”

The results in this report are based on face-to-face interviews with eleven HR directors, structured telephone interviews with 35 team managers and 109 questionnaires completed by managers and team members. The HR director interviews focussed on the strategic issues associated with flexible working whilst the manager interviews concentrated on the processes they use in managing their teams. The questionnaire was designed to identify the competences needed by managers of both co-located and remote workers.

Findings

Organisational Issues

The conclusions from this research show that HR directors agree with the underlying assumption that work is becoming more mobile and flexible and involves increasing levels of home working. However there was no consistent approach to this as a strategic issue and no common definition of flexible working. All respondents said they had been doing it informally for several years but the approach to formally recognising flexible working varied widely.

The key organisational advantages mentioned were retention of staff, improvement in work-life balance, higher productivity and reduction in commuting. There was more emphasis on the benefits for recruitment rather than the potential cost savings or increased productivity; as might be expected from an HR perspective. Lower stress was identified as a benefit even though flexibility could sometimes mean people working longer hours.

Team work and communications were identified as areas of disadvantage with managers having to work harder at co-ordination of resources. There was recognition that flexible working involves a culture shift from 'controlling' to 'trusting' management. Measuring outcomes rather than inputs is key to this change and good performance measurement systems are needed to support it.

Management Processes

The team manager interviews indicated that there was no significant difference in the management processes used for remote employees when compared with co-located teams. The same processes contribute to effective management whether the employees are static or mobile but it was agreed that managing remote employees is more challenging than having the team in the same office as the manager.

Communications came out consistently as the most important process and managers rely heavily on frequent face-to-face communications, even for training and development of team members. They also use telephone and e-mail extensively. They worry about a loss of control, the difficulty in building and maintaining a sense of team unity and technology problems interrupting communication. They view communications, trust and objective setting as critical for managing remote workers, both now and in the future.

Management Competences

The questionnaire asked managers and team members to rate 56 competences for importance and to rate the ability of the manager. There was a close relationship between the top 10 competences rated by managers and employees, with common agreement that communications, leadership and leading by example were the most important.

Analysis of the responses in relation to the amount of time spent working at a distance did not produce a significant difference between managing co-located or remote employees. In common with the management practices section there was a need for a higher level of competence to manage at a distance but the competences involved were the same as for face-to-face management.

Conclusions

This research supports the view that work will continue to become more remote and flexible and that good managers will adapt to this. However organisations will need to ensure that they have good management processes and competent managers in order to succeed in this new working environment where weak management is more likely to have a negative impact but perhaps be less likely to be detected.

The process and competences needed to manage remote teams are not radically different so whilst conventional training will help with the management of flexible workers there is a need to provide more focus on this topic to ensure an appropriate level of competence.

Communications is clearly both a critical process and an important competence and organisations should review how their managers are communicating with employees and identify areas for improvement. This is relevant to communication of hard facts such as business objectives and to the less tangible aspects of communications, such as social contact, which contribute towards good teamwork and a motivational environment.

1.0 Introduction

This report describes the work carried out on the Managing Tomorrow's Worker project sponsored by the Department for Work and Pensions and Microsoft UK through their Tomorrow's Work project.

1.1 Background

The office, whilst undertaking a more prominent role as business shifts from manufacturing to knowledge and ideas development, is undergoing major change. The advent of new technologies such as broadband, wireless communications and streaming video are enabling office workers to become more mobile. Social attitudes to work/life balance are changing and recent government legislation on flexible working means that employees no longer have to be confined to working in a fixed place during fixed times. The potential impact of this increasing flexibility and mobility is to make the physical office, the container in which information and knowledge is processed, a thing of the past. In early 2004 a project was set up called **The Office of the Future** whose original scope sought to look at how three strands: information technology, the management of real estate and the management of human resources, would impact on, and shape, the office of the future.

Real Estate

This strand sought to examine the emerging paradox of new technology, new worker aspirations, work / life balance, increasing commuter congestion and continued speculative real estate development. Because of the long lead time required to develop new office space it was assumed that this would be a critical business planning issue for organisations.

Technology	This strand sought to look at the growth in portable technology, broadband-based networks and wireless connectivity and the impact they had as 'enablers' to workers to be away from the office but continue being connected to the office. How would these developments shape the office in the future?
Human Resources	Increasing legislation, the development of new office technologies and changing worker expectations raise questions about how mobile and flexible workers should be managed, developed and rewarded.

An extensive review of literature around the three themes of information technology, real estate and human resources established that each presented a number of scenarios and challenges to the way the office of the future might evolve. However, the most consistent message which emerged centred on the ability of managers to manage a more mobile and flexible workforce. The technology exists to work from home or a hotel room, the design of office spaces increasingly takes into consideration the needs of hot-desking yet the take-up of mobile and flexible working is not as great as might be expected. Much of the constraint on this approach to working appears to be created by managers not necessarily having the right skills to manage a more mobile and flexible workforce. Based on this finding the project was refocused into looking into the skills and competences required to manage more mobile and flexible workers, and renamed **Managing Tomorrow's Worker**. The results of the literature review were used as the basis of a brief for a Round Table discussion in July 2004 (see Appendix 1).

1.2 Report Structure

This is the final report which brings together the research findings for the project completed in March 2004. The structure of the report is as follows:

Setting the Scene	This section draws together various government statistics and information from the Future Work Forum proceedings around the area of flexible working.
Research Methodology	This section describes the underlying research philosophy and principles and the research instruments developed and the pilot work carried out.
HR Director Findings	This section discusses the findings from the analysis of the HR director interviews.
Team Managers and Management Practices	This section discusses the findings from the analysis of the structured Team Manager telephone interviews focussing on management practices.
Team Managers' and Team Members' Findings on Management Practices	This section discusses the findings from the analysis of the Team Manager and Team Member questionnaire responses focussing on management competences.
Case Studies	The case studies section looks in depth at the interview responses of several of the participating companies and puts it into their organisational context.
Drawing the Analysis Together	This section brings together the analysis from interviews and questionnaires.
Conclusions and Implications	This section summarises the conclusions of the research.

Recommendations

This section identifies recommendations based on the research work.

2.0 Setting the Scene

2.1 What Is Flexible Working?

The term “Flexible Working” can be viewed as an all embracing label referring to a variety of flexible working practices - particularly in relation to practices around the dimensions of time, location, pattern of working and contractual status (see Section 3.1 for fuller definition).

Research presented to the Future Work Forum in 1994 (Future Work Forum, 1994) suggested two types of flexibility: traditional and newer forms. It could certainly be argued that the newer forms include home working, working from client offices or on-site, from an Internet café or managed offices, on the move or from hotels, compressed hours, freelancing or contracting. More traditional flexible working is commonly regarded as including part-time working, fieldwork, job-sharing and flexitime, all forms of work flexibility which have been with us for some time.

2.2 Why Use Flexible Working?

Recent studies indicate that there is now firm evidence that benefits from flexibility can be achieved (DTI, 2005). The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) reveal that employers who provide flexible working arrangements report a range of significant benefits in the areas of recruitment and retention, employee relations, productivity and even financial performance. Organisations presenting at the Forum¹ over the last decade or more would seem to concur with the DTIs' findings, reporting business advantages including:

- Improved attraction and retention of staff.
- Reduced absenteeism and increased employee loyalty.
- Increased employee motivation.
- Higher productivity.

¹ See abstracts of all Forum proceedings since 1992 at
<http://www.henleymc.ac.uk/henleymc03/reports03.nsf/viewdatepublic?OpenForm>

- Office space/infrastructure efficiencies
- Significant cost savings on real estate.
- Environmental benefits – for example less car journeys and therefore less pollution.
- Better client service.
- Reduced employee stress and improved work/life balance - flexible working giving employees the sense more choice and control over their working lives.²

A presentation at the Forum in 2003 (Future Work Forum, 2003) reported research suggesting that in companies operating a flexible working policy:

- 90% of flexible working led to an increase in morale and motivation.
- 85% indicated that the flexible working patterns met employees' changing needs.
- 82% specified that flexible working enhanced the image of the organisation as an employer of choice.

These business benefits were seen as the three main commercial drivers for flexible working. One interesting point to note is that the drivers for flexible working are themselves open for development; they are not necessarily constant or fixed. A particularly illustrative example of this is the US Governments' "Telework in the Federal Government" programme. The main thrust of this programme, involving many hundreds of thousands of Federal workers, was initially around environmental, employee quality of life and recruitment/retention goals. However in the last few years the scheme has additionally focused on aiding the governments' agenda regarding expanding job opportunities for the disabled and the governments' continuity of operations planning, in the event of either natural or man-made disasters (US Office of Personnel Management, 2003).

At the macro-level a number of factors appear to be contributing to the increased use of flexible working in the UK:

² Stress related sickness costs UK business £12bn year according to the DTI (DTI, 2003?).

Demographics and Social Change - as the labour market changes, the pool of talent available to employers changes with it. At the same time individuals have increasing expectations about the degree of choice and flexibility that will be available to them during their working lives both over the long term and during particular life stages. Flexible working can help employers meet the individuals' expectations and therefore attract the people needed from the changing labour market.

Competitive Advantage and Flexibility - new organisational structures and new linkages, often across company boundaries, time and distance have led to the adoption of more flexible working practices. Indeed flexibility is rapidly becoming essential as organisations work in an increasingly collaborative way and can be seen to be integrating in the supply chain, working in partnership with customers and using partnerships, mergers and collaborations more than in the past (Birchall and Lyons, 1995). Globalisation is driving the need for faster knowledge transfer and therefore e-collaboration. The continuing shift from manufacturing to service and knowledge work is a further driver, as service work often requires a more flexible approach to customer requirements, for example, working at customer locations, having longer trading hours or providing 24 hour call centres.

Legislation and Economic Policy - recent UK employment legislation, for example the Employment Act of 2002, have legislated for "family-friendly" policies such as parental leave and flexible working. At a European level the framework agreement on part-time employees and the working directive on agency staff, seem to signal that "non-standard work" has developed to the point where it warrants legislation to enshrine workers' rights (McOrmond, 2004). The Lisbon Reform Agenda which includes as a key element the "Adaptability Pillar", is designed to promote flexibility balanced with security facilitating adaptation of firms and workers to economic changes, support competitiveness, increased productivity and quality at work.³

³ European Commission for Employment and Social Affairs, "Employment in Europe 2003" European Employment Strategy - employment policy guidelines 1999, revised 2000 to modernise work organisation and to support adaptability in enterprises.

Technological Change can be seen as both a driver and enabler of increased flexible working. New information and communication technologies (ICT) allow employees to maintain contact with each other, the organisation, and with customers whilst not necessarily being in the same location at the same time. Essentially technology can free workers from dependence on location and time.

Organisational Structures – downsizing, the trend towards flatter management structures and outsourcing in recent years have led to greater dispersion both geographically and organisationally. There is often a need to operate collaboratively or within networks cutting across traditional organisational boundaries.

2.3 Who Is Applying Flexible Working Practices?

Official UK sources (Hibbett and Meager, 2003; Office for National Statistics, 2004a; DTI, 2005) describe the use of flexible working practices in the UK as appearing across most sectors and categories, i.e. from SMEs through to large organisations; Manufacturing, Hospitality, Retail, Communications, Finance, Business services; both the Public and Private sectors and in the Profit and Not-for-profit domains. In terms of job types again flexible work practices would appear to be widespread in relation to individuals, whether they are in junior, intermediate or senior roles. In general flexible working would appear more prevalent among managers and professionals in contrast to manual or lesser-skilled workers. Nevertheless flexible working is by no means the exclusive reserve of upper or middle management; there are many instances of call centre staff for example being home-based, with one successful case presented to the forum in 1999 (Future Work Forum, 1999). Geographically flexible working is used across all the UK's regions. Despite this application of flexible working across many dimensions it is clear that organisations are not necessarily using flexible work components in a formal fashion, with informal and ad-hoc usage very much in evidence.

2.4 How Much Flexible Working Is There?

Quantifying how much flexible working currently takes place is very much dependent on how one defines and characterises it. In spring 2003 a fifth of UK employees working full time and a quarter of those working part time had some type of flexible working arrangement (Office for National Statistics, 2004b).

Flexible working patterns have increased for both men and women in recent years. A Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) survey suggests that employers are approaching flexible working practices positively as “most employers are taking a positive approach to the flexible working regulations and accepting a high proportion of requests. Few employers report serious costs or difficulties in implementing the regulations.” (CIPD, 2004). In 2003 statistics (Hanhike and Gareis, 2004) which included self-employed home workers (i.e. “small office home office”) 17.3 % of all those in UK employment are working flexibly. This compares with an average of 13% across the EU15 (i.e. the original 15 European Union member states prior to the 2004 accession of the 10 new member states) and 24.6% in the USA. However despite speculation in recent years that there would be a migration of a large percentage of the workforce from the office to the home it seems thus far that workers spend much less time at home than originally predicted. According to the same report the home working figure for the EU15 in 2002 was 2.1% (2.4% in the UK) of the workforce as opposed to 2% in 1999, this based on those working at least one full working day at home per week. The number of those permanently working from home, under a contract of employment i.e. not self-employed, was so small as to be statistically insignificant. Much of the growth in flexible working in recent years appears to be that of mobile working, that is those working away from the main place of work, accounting for 4.7% of the UK workforce. The figures however do not include those doing unpaid work from home, e.g. people who may take work home to complete in their own time. In terms of the future it is considered that there is both more supply and demand for flexible working, that is to say more jobs than at present could feasibly be done “flexibly” and that the demand for flexible working among the labour force is high. Whatever the debate regarding definitions and the extent of flexible working it would seem fair to say that there is a general move towards variability and flexibility in the way work is organised.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Based on previous work carried out through the original Office of the Future (OOF) project, input from the research sponsors (through the initial round-table/client meetings) and the research teams' expertise around the management problem in question, this project is based on the assumption that work will continue to become more flexible and that managers will need to develop the processes and competences to accommodate this. It was therefore decided to begin with the hypothesis:

“Managers of flexible workers manage in a different way than traditionally and they therefore have a different competence profile.”

This provided a clear focus for the investigation and a framework for the development of the research instruments and the data analysis.

For the purposes of this investigation, the project team defined flexible working as methods of working which encompassed:

- **Mobile working** – employees who, whilst having a permanent base, moved from one location to another on a regular basis in order to carry out their work. Examples of this type of working includes sales people who regularly visit prospective and existing clients, and utility workers who are regularly out on the road repairing such things as telecommunications equipment.
- **Flexible working** – this includes the more conventional meanings of the term such as flexible working hours, being able to work part time, and occasionally from home. Many employees in a wide range of industries have access to this kind of working particularly ‘information workers’ who perform professional and administrative work which does not involve a direct face-to-face service.
- **Remote working** – employees who for all or some of the time work remotely from their manager. This category could include permanent home workers, those who work

for prolonged spells from client premises or those who work on company premises different from those of their manager. An example of this kind of working is those who manage pubs and restaurants as part of a chain – the pub manager perhaps lives on the premises but their manager works out of a company office centrally located.

3.2 Research Philosophy / Design

In order to test the hypothesis that managers of flexible workers manage in different ways and have different competences when compared to managers of conventional workers, it was decided to collect data in three ways to build up a complete picture.

In order to gain an informed perspective on the question, it was decided that HR directors would have an overview of the way that flexible working was being implemented in their organisation and would be able to put the management issues into a strategic context. Face-to-face interviews were chosen as the best method to gather this information and to identify the organisational challenges posed by the move towards flexible and remote working.

To find out more specifically what managers actually do differently when managing remote workers, it was decided that a structured interview process was appropriate. This was carried out over the telephone and the questions were aimed at identifying the processes used by managers when dealing with their employees. By comparing the responses from managers of flexible workers to the responses from those managing static workers, the difference in how they manage can be identified.

In order to identify the different competences used by managers when managing flexible workers a questionnaire was designed based on a standard set of competences. This was completed by the managers themselves and by employees working for them to help to validate the data. Respondents were asked to rate a list of competences for importance and for the ability of the manager. To establish the relative 'remoteness' of the manager/employee relationship they were asked for the amount of time they spend with their manager. This data provides an insight into the competence profile for remote management and the relative ability of managers against this profile.

This methodology is summarised in table 3.1 below:

Research focus	Target	Data Collection Method	Analysis process
Strategic Issues	HR Directors	Face to face interview	Transcript of interview analysed for common themes
Management Processes	Team Managers	Telephone structured interview	Interview data analysed for patterns of processes
Management Competences	Team Managers and Team Members	Questionnaire	Statistical analysis of results looking for correlations with remote work

Table 3.1 : Research Methodology Summary

3.3 The Research Instruments

A combination of qualitative, through interviewing and quantitative, through questionnaire, data collection strategies of inquiry were chosen. The research philosophy, methodology and design as described above led to the selection and design of in-depth interviews and questionnaires, as the most appropriate instruments. These were applied in the following manner:

HR Directors For HR directors a semi-structured in-depth face-to-face interview was developed. The interview centred around a loose framework of questions developed by the project team to look at some key strategic areas around the implementation of flexible working. The questions covered such issues as the advantages and disadvantages of flexible working, the drivers for change, the challenges for the organisation and its managers and strategies for dealing with those challenges.

Team Managers

For Team Managers two instruments were developed.

The first instrument was a structured in-depth interview, to be carried out over the telephone, and designed to investigate 9 management practices to identify if there were any differences in management processes between 'conventional' management and the management of more flexible workers. The 9 management practices were developed by the project team based on the activities, processes and responsibilities which managers are expected to do/have when managing a team. Managers are expected to lead, develop, motivate, empower and build their team whilst ensuring adequate communication. Managers also tend to be responsible for monitoring performance and influencing the reward of their team members. Asking questions around the importance, degree of utilisation and methods of implementation of the practice would help to gain an understanding of the approach and practice in the participant organisations.

The second instrument was a competence questionnaire based on the competence profiles developed by the Management Standards Centre (see <http://www.management-standards.org.uk>) and published in 2004. The first part of the questionnaire gathered background information on the manager, their own working profile and their degree of contact with their team members. The second part of the questionnaire listed the complete set of 56 competences to avoid any subjectivity about which competences should be used and which shouldn't. Each competence was presented with a corresponding definition so as to minimise any ambiguity around the meaning of the term. Respondents were asked to do two things:

- To rate the importance of each competence, from 1 to 10, to establish how important each competence was in undertaking

the role of team manager.

- To rate, from 1 to 10, how well they thought they exhibited each competence. This was used to identify how well managers performed and to see if there was a gap between importance and delivery.

Team Members

The same competence questionnaire instrument was developed for team members. The first part of the questionnaire gathered background information on the team member, their own working profile and their degree of contact with their team manager. In the second part, team members were asked to rate the importance of each competence, from 1 to 10, to establish how important they thought each competence was for a manager undertaking the role of team manager. Team members were also asked to rate their managers, from 1 to 10, on how well they felt their manager exhibited each competence. This data was used to compare with the self-assessment ratings from the managers and to give a more complete picture of their competences.

The full set of research instruments can be found in Appendix 2.

The degree of structure in the research instrument progressively increases on moving down the organisation, that is moving down from the HR director to team member level. This reflects the type of data gathering taking place, (e.g. profiling organisational policy, or uncovering management competency/practice). It additionally takes account of the quantity of expected research participants at each of the organisational levels. The round-table discussions were given a brief prepared by the research team in collaboration with the project sponsors – a copy of the brief can be found Appendix 1. In designing the instruments sound questionnaire design and analysis theory was applied. The development of the research instruments correlated with the need to uncover relevant aspects in line with the overall research question and specifically in the areas of; communication, training and development,

rewards and motivation, empowerment, delegation and decision making, objective setting, planning and organising, monitoring, control and evaluating, and finally team building.

Once developed, the research instruments were tested in two pilot organisations as follows:

Company P1	HR Director face to face interview
Company P2	HR Director face to face interview
	Team Manager structured telephone interview
	Team Members – management competence / skills questionnaire

Based on feedback from the pilot subjects, the research instruments were modified to accommodate the improvements suggested.

3.4 Data Collection, Reduction and Analysis

Data collected using each of the research instruments was analysed using the following approaches:

HR Directors : Semi- Structured Interview	11 interviews were carried out by one or two researchers, dependent upon availability. Interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the interviewee and the subsequent recordings transcribed. Transcriptions of each interview were produced, relevant data summarised into a spreadsheet and this was used as the basis for analysing responses and identifying common issues raised by HR directors and the strategic impact of mobile and flexible working.
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Team Manager :
Structured Interview

35 interviews were carried out, each by a single researcher, and recorded by completing a pro-forma as the interview progressed and annotating with additional comments made by the interviewee. Data from each interview transcript was entered into an Excel spreadsheet for subsequent analysis. Quantitative data was analysed on the basis of frequency of response to questions, whilst qualitative data was typically analysed by the frequency at which comments appeared.

Team Manager :
Questionnaire

27 team managers completed the competence questionnaire either online using Teleform or via e-mail using an MS Word file depending upon the manager's Internet access availability. Data collected was imported, or manually entered into an Excel spreadsheet for subsequent reduction and analysis. Data was also combined, to enable comparisons to be made, with data collected from team members, in an Excel spreadsheet. Collected data was analysed on the basis of frequency of response to particular questions, either using absolute numbers, percentages or averages across groups of respondents and the results plotted as graphs. Comparisons were also made with team member responses.

Team Member :
Questionnaire

82 team members completed the competence questionnaire either online using Teleform or via e-mail using an MS Word file depending upon the their Internet access availability. Data collected was imported, or manually entered into an Excel spreadsheet for subsequent reduction and analysis. Data was also combined, to enable comparisons to be made, with data collected from team managers, in an Excel spreadsheet. Collected data was analysed in the same way as that used for the team manager questionnaire responses. Comparisons were also made with team manager responses.

The overall questionnaire response rates and data set sizes were as follows:

- 30 teams across 13 companies;
- 27 team manager questionnaires completed (77.0% of those interviewed);
- 82 team member questionnaires completed (52.6% of those asked to complete it);
- 2 team managers have no team data;
- 3 teams have no team manager data;
- 5 teams, where the team manager was interviewed, provided no manager or team member questionnaire data.

All data collected was treated as confidential and not fed back to the organisations or managers within the organisations that took part.

4.0 HR Director Findings

This section looks at the analysis of the structured interviews with HR directors and the outputs from round table discussions.

4.1 Definition, utilisation and drivers for mobile/flexible work

Few of the organisations seem to formally define flexible working. Of those that did, one referred to whether the employment contract was for more than or less than 60% of time spent working at home. Another defined contractual home working as being when the organisation made an ongoing commitment to treat home as the place of work. In that particular case flexible working was seen as ad hoc permission to flex hours and location. Other organisations suggested that flexible working was “anything other than traditional 9-5” and some recognised different forms of flexible working e.g. job share, part time, flexible hours, compressed weeks. The most formally defined flexible working was within a major telecommunications organisation that has eight categories of flexible worker with associated employment contracts and these include home worker, nomadic and semi-nomadic workers.

Utilisation of flexible working seemed widespread with all organisations saying they had been doing it informally for several years or more, even if the introduction of a policy was relatively recent. However, because of the lack of consistent definitions, it is impossible to make comparisons between organisations. Examples given of the numbers of employees thought to be taking it up ranged from “around 40% of staff” to “everyone is flexible to a greater or lesser extent depending on their specific needs and role”. One organisation reported approximately 15% home based workers plus 20% mobile workers. However, despite these estimates of what seems like widespread implementation, where there were statistics for take up of specific arrangements the figures are much lower. In one organisation only 85 people, from an organisation of several thousands, had a home working contract and in another only 100 of 4500 had non-standard arrangements. Again the exception was the telecommunications organisation with 63,000 of 98,000 workers having one of their eight flexible working contracts, including 12,000 home workers. Flexible, mobile and home based

workers across all organisations included call centre staff, engineers, office workers, financial consultants and audit staff.

The strongest drivers seemed to be retention, encouraging returners and recruitment, cited by more than half those interviewed and this specifically included commitment to diversity for some. Comments included not being in a position to offer high pay so offering flexible working as a benefit. Customer service was a driver for several, enabling 24/7 or long day service delivery by using flexible working arrangements. It was also seen as a way of adapting staffing levels to accommodate peaks and troughs in customer demand, without the traditional overtime costs associated with standard hours working. Employee demand arising from greater expectations and being more aware of their rights and power in the labour market was a driver, with comments such as:

- “People in the labour market know that they can demand it [flexible working] if that’s what they’re looking for - they want to spend their leisure time doing what they want to do, not sitting in the car on the M4.”
- “People are just changing anyhow – they don’t see their employer as the be all and end all. They’re not as compliant as they used to be.”
- “My experience over the past seven or eight years is that people are much less willing to compromise their lifestyle to suit their employer.”

There was also recognition of the need to accommodate this demand stemming from a number of factors including government legislation on flexible working, desire to foster diversity and attention to the detrimental effect of stress on individuals and organisational productivity. Government legislation in its own right was not seen as a big driver.

4.2 Perceived advantages and disadvantages

Retention, work life balance, productivity, and reduction in commuting were all seen as advantages, as was the ability to recruit in a sellers market. Less than half of respondents recognised the financial benefits arising from space saving, including basing more people in a building and savings from delaying increases to office space. Additionally the provision of

standard workstations and furniture for 'hotdesking' for flexible workers resulted in reductions in the cost of internal moves and restructuring of groups. Other advantages were improved staff retention and higher productivity due to fewer distractions and perhaps longer hours, including comments such as:

- "I think the quality of work people do at home is probably better than you get in the office"
- "people actually probably are more productive and do work longer hours than they would do if they were here"

Less stress due to less commuting, resulting in a better work life balance for employees was also seen as a benefit although seems to be achieved despite working longer hours in some cases. Flexibility was also seen as a way to utilise resources more effectively over a longer day and contribute to customer service, having people there when the business demands it.

Disadvantages include communication problems, especially developing relationships and feeling part of team being more difficult to achieve. There was also the issue of knowledge transfer in that someone who was rarely in the central location would have limited opportunity to pass on their knowledge and experience to others. There was a feeling that managers of flexible workers generally have to work harder at managing. The greater need for co-ordination of resources was seen as a disadvantage, particularly if flexibility involved greater numbers of part time workers than would be required if everyone was full time. In one instance a new role of resource planner had been created at least partly to alleviate the problem of project managers not wanting part time people on their team, which had led to some under utilisation of part time workers. This can lead, not just to more co-ordination of work by managers, but also to more work for HR departments and, in cases where attendance times overlapped, to duplication of office equipment. There could also be increased risk to data protection and information security. One organisation had resisted putting in a formal home working policy to replace the current informal working, because such a move would mean that health and safety assessments, requiring considerable resources, would need to be undertaken. However, others used a self-assessment process to deal with health and safety issues. Technology needs to be robust because frustration and stress can result for people for whom the links and communications do not work effectively.

There was agreement that flexible working does not suit everyone and requires higher levels of self-motivation and initiative. It also depends on a significant level of trust and some managers found that difficult. Comments included “[there is] a natural tendency for a manager of a group of people to want to be able to see them doing their work. It's about trust”. On a practical level, impromptu meetings are difficult to organise when people are dispersed, especially if there is a culture of reluctance to contact employees at home. It can even be difficult to schedule team meetings at times that everyone can make, if people have different working patterns. There is also the possibility that flexible working can be divisive, with some people thinking it simply ‘an easy ride’ and resentment from those excluded from legal rights. Also, once employees have experienced a truly flexible mode of working, they are often reluctant to return to more conventional working arrangements.

4.3 Management processes and technology

Planning and resource allocation processes are more important when people work in a variety of ways, as are communication systems. Performance management and objective setting are essential and comments included “if you’re going to make it work, you’ve got to have some really good key performance measures and good systems that you can monitor those with”. One organisation suggested a greater need for career development processes and a clear understanding between the manager and the employee about who was responsible for driving it. There is a greater need to recognise, measure and reward output, to plan meetings both with the individual and for the team, and to communicate effectively on a regular basis. These processes generally require adequate and appropriate systems to manage complex interactions, including diary management for flexible and mobile people e.g. for identifying times when meetings can be held. Informal social events and team motivation activities were seen as important. However, in at least one case this was described as being no different than good management practice involving objective setting and structured targets. Indeed one organisation suggested that it was “false comfort” for a manager to rely on being located with their team in order to manage them effectively. Monitoring absence could be a problem area as absence can be difficult to define and identify when people are not usually present.

Technology, including laptops, mobile phones, ADSL/ISDN, and networks, were seen as an aid to communication and forming bonds with people, but not as a substitute for face to face meetings. Creative and cooperative activities were seen as more problematic, with comments such as, “virtual teams don’t provide the real interaction for ... thinking and sharing ideas and cross fertilisation.” The danger of using technology to check up on and control people was raised as a possibility, but none of the respondents currently use it in that way. There was lots of audio conferencing but only one organisation mentioned video conferencing. Blackberrys are becoming more common, although in one organisation only for directors. The importance of providing technical support to flexible and mobile workers was also seen to be key to success.

4.4 Management Competences and training

Understanding customer needs and being able to match resources through analytical planning and being more organised and structured were seen as important. Managers need to have the conceptual flexibility to understand the whole jigsaw. They also need to be able to make individual assessments of suitability of both employee and job rather than having rigid ‘one size fits all’ flexible working. However, none of the respondents seem to provide employees or managers with training specifically aimed at flexible working, although some provide information about legislation, health and safety, and one mentioned a guide covering effective use of email and phone messaging. In some organisations it was expected that HR would provide advice and guidance and in one instance coaching was specifically mentioned for managers who find it difficult.

Being a good people manager was seen as essential, with greater than ‘normal’ abilities in motivating, coaching, planning, team building and communicating, all at a distance as well as face to face. A structured approach to managing by outputs and being flexible, tolerant, open-minded and trusting were important. Because of the focus on outputs, a more consultative approach was appropriate. Managers need the ability to get to know their people, provide strong direction and create a team identity. They need to encourage inclusiveness for flexible workers and ensure that the rest of the team do not exclude them. They also need to develop

empathy with flexible workers who may feel different about the organisation and do not have the same social interaction.

With more outsourcing and work being undertaken by people on different kinds of contract, managers will need the ability to motivate and inspire staff who are not core employees. At the same time management will become more about resourcing than about discipline. Self-management becomes an important skill for both managers and employees when more people spend more time working remotely from their colleagues.

One respondent summed it up by saying that “people who manage on the basis of good structure and organisation will have less adjustment than those who manage by human interaction.”

4.5 Challenges and strategies

The need for individuals to ‘belong’, to have their own space and, particularly for the ambitious, the need to be seen and get involved in office politics, was a challenge for some. However, few had a clear strategy for addressing this issue, other than the importance of communication, information updates and competent managers. One organisation had a very strong face-to-face mandatory communication system involving the whole mobile team getting together once a month. Meeting dates were set 18 months ahead and being on holiday was the only acceptable reason for being absent. They also had a structured cascade of information from the board to the front line staff in less than 2 weeks. Another organisation overcame the issue of part time staff not always being available by setting up a communication link to their homes and expecting them to be flexible enough to be available for e-mail questions even though they were theoretically not working. The challenge for managers was articulated by one respondent as “how to coach, support and stroke staff at a distance”

Assessing whether an individual has the right skills, motivation, discipline and especially attitude to work to make a success of flexible working challenges personnel selection processes, HR professionals and line managers. Individuals need to be strong on taking

personal responsibility for doing what they should, and managers must ensure that flexible working individuals become, or remain, part of a team when they work differently.

Fairness and consistency in implementing flexible work were mentioned by some respondents and strategies for dealing with this included:

- The HR department setting ground rules but decisions being made independently by managers;
- Decisions being made by the HR director, at least in the early years of adoption;
- Standard application process including a business case, reviewed and decided by a committee.

Meeting health and safety requirements with limited resources was also seen as problematic, as was managing and meeting client expectations of physical presence or availability.

Monitoring performance was seen as a challenge for managers of flexible workers moving to measuring outcomes rather than input, along with getting the balance right between control and trust. However there was also the need to encourage employees to maintain an appropriate work life balance by encouraging them to switch off the technology as well as taking sufficient relaxation time.

Other strategies included managers developing consultant and networking skills, learning from their own and others' experiences and sharing ideas. One organisation also made more formal use of specific communication events to overcome some of the communication issues. At least one respondent saw moving to flexible working as a big culture shift from the employer/manager controlling everything, to recognition of mutual benefit in accommodation and compromise. This shift could only be achieved through an education process – showing how it works or could work, encouraging managers to talk to others already doing it, who would say “it's a challenge to manage but these are the positive benefits....”. In several organisations HR give guidance and advice, and also possibly highlight legal obligations to enforce.

In the one organisation with large numbers of flexible workers there was a concern about whether a natural limit would eventually be reached. They also faced the need to be continually flexible in adjusting available office space according to need and demand. In this situation the challenge was for managers to be able to adequately explain the exception when flexibility was not possible.

4.6 Predictions

There was general agreement with the underlying assumption of this research that work will become more mobile and more flexible and that will involve increasing levels of home working. This will be enabled by better technology more cheaply deployed and will be in parallel with employee expectations of having a say in how they work and where, including becoming less willing to physically move house because of changing job demands. This is likely to mean more compromise by employers, including accommodating those who do not want to work from home. Customer and employee expectations will be that any task or process can be undertaken anywhere and business infrastructure will increasingly be technology rather than buildings.

The organisations participating in this research are larger organisations, but the view was expressed that the many small and very small businesses in the UK will find it difficult to accommodate these increasing levels of flexible working. There is much less scope for a wide variety of working patterns when there are only a few employees to cover all the required tasks. Such organisations are perhaps therefore likely to take much longer than large organisations to accept it as the norm. There will also be an increasing demand for serviced offices to provide locations for both large and small organisations.

Despite predicting these changes generally, none of the respondents considered that their own organisations would change much. They had all been utilising flexible working to a greater or lesser extent for more than five years. However their current levels of take up varied between:

- Informal for less than half of 'relevant' staff;

- Informal for most but formally contracted for some;
- 'flexibility adopted by all to some extent'.

But whatever their current level, the respondents seemed to feel that it was right for them and was unlikely to change much in the foreseeable future.

There was also the possibility that the focus on outputs could result in much higher levels of freelancing and piecework, leading to a greater need for managers to motivate people with different kinds of work relationship with the organisation.

Some of the organisations in this research might consider that they have now been working flexibly for long enough for it to be permanently accepted and embedded in their culture. However the view was expressed that these new flexible ways of working are still the exception in most organisations and are driven by the labour market conditions. One comment was "I personally think it's been largely driven by the fact that good workers have been harder and harder to get there is virtually no unemployment and therefore you have to fight harder for the good people." This interviewee certainly felt that flexible working arrangements are not embedded sufficiently well into the way many organisations do things to survive a change in economic circumstances such as a plunge into recession, perhaps resulting in large numbers of unemployed people. Then, employers might revert to type (meaning that people who arrive and leave work at fixed times are easier to control) and employees would be less demanding because they would perceive themselves as having considerably less power.

4.7 Conclusions

There seems a perhaps surprising level of congruity in the answers from respondents, despite their different industry sectors, organisation size, and levels of adoption of mobile and flexible working. The outputs from the round table discussions also covered similar areas to the HR director interviews. Recruitment, retention, communication, and teamwork appeared consistently, along with the importance of trust, setting objectives and performance management. Customer service and effective use of people to meet customer needs was also

prevalent. It is arguable from the analysis of this data whether flexible working requires different competences in managers or simply the same ones as for managing co-located workers but enhanced or better deployed.

Although only one respondent described it as a big culture change, that is what it appears to be for many of the organisations contributing to this research. The extent to which this is recognised by both HR professionals and line managers may be a significant factor in the degree to which flexible and mobile working is successfully adopted. It is also interesting to speculate on what would happen in an economic downturn, given that recruitment and retention are important drivers for many organisations. Would flexible working survive or flourish, because it is recognised as providing both employee and business benefits, or would the cultural change challenge prove too big a hurdle without the labour market factors reinforcing it?

5.0 Team Managers and Management Practices

The outcomes from the HR director interviews and the outputs from the round table discussions provide some very interesting and useful perspectives on organisational approaches and strategies on the adoption of flexible working. As part of the research a further series of interviews was carried out, this time with managers of teams, to provide a line-management insight on the processes used for managing flexible working in various settings and contexts.

5.1 The Nature And Type Of Management Role

Most of the team managers interviewed are undertaking general management roles. Although their official jobs titles varied widely they typically described the position as one of “general manager”, “team leader”, “supervisor” or “line manager”. Most are managing what can be described as functional teams, departments or units within their organisations, involved in areas such as operations, sales, design, human resources, software services, pensions and technical engineering. Despite the functional orientation of the teams it is clear that the team managers’ responsibilities are generally broad, comprising activities which include both people and processes. Recruitment, team member support, health & safety, budget accountability and client management were just some of the areas for which many of them have responsibility. These individuals are very much involved in “hands-on day-to-day” management.

5.2 The Teams

The teams they manage perform jobs which for the most part can be classified as knowledge, production/operational or service type work. There were significant proportions of each type, however many teams overlapped all three of these classifications. Activities included for example, operating retail outlets, performing technical services, administration, consultation, finance services and human resource services. Therefore the task of many of the teams is ongoing/repetitive in nature although others are working on a project basis. Around a third of

the teams would seem to be interfacing with the end client, while the remaining teams are working for either an internal client in general business support e.g. HR services, or for an internal client who in turn is directly interfacing with the end customer, e.g. the regional managers of retail outlets.

The size of the teams managed by the interviewees were:

Range of Size of Team*	Number of Teams
1-10	14
11-35	21
35+	0

*Includes direct reports only.

Table 5.1 : Range of Team Sizes Managed

Commenting on whether the managers are managing “small” or “large” size teams is a somewhat subjective exercise. There has been much debate in management thinking around ideal team sizes, and what constitutes too large or even too small a team. For example a foreman on a building site might have a different view of a “large” team to that of say a marketing manager in a small business. It can very much depend on the context, business sector and so on. Nevertheless, as Table 5.1 shows, the research appears to point to the interviewees typically managing small or medium sized teams, with the largest team managed by any of the respondent managers consisting of 35 team members. However this hides to an extent a significant number, around a third of managers, who are managing both direct and indirect reports, implying that they are managing other managers. Indeed many of them have large numbers of indirect reports, e.g. one team manager had 7 direct and 1700 indirect reports, another 22 direct and 250 indirect reports.

5.3 Team Composition/Structure

The managers were asked the question “How long has the task/function/team been in existence in its’ present format?” It is probably not surprising that the function and/or task has been in existence in many of the organisations for a long time, in some cases 15 years or longer, for example those teams involved with document production or accounting.

Team Existence	Number of Teams
Less than 1 year	7
1-3 years	18
3 years+	8
Other*	2

*Teams which form for a project and disband once the project has finished.

Table 5.2 : Team existence in present format

Although not researched at the individual team member level, the impression given by managers' responses to this question implied that the membership of their teams was relatively unvarying, although with some changes over time as one would expect. Overall the team composition can be said to be relatively stable.

5.4 Use Of Flexible Working

Based on the classification/definition of flexible working used for this work (see Section 3.1) 31 of the 35 teams currently use flexible working methods. Of the 31 managers who are managing flexible workers, 25 of them completed the questionnaire question "What percentage of your time do you spend working away from your team?" Approximately a third of these spend up to 30% of their time working away from the team, just over a quarter spend 50%-75% away from the team, and another third are separated from the team 75%-100% of the time. It is clear from this data that managers spend a considerable amount of their time working remotely from the team. Only around 8% of the managers who responded are on a fixed hour working pattern. The majority work with some flexibility around core hours and a significant number have complete flexibility in terms of hours worked. A more detailed quantitative analysis of the use of flexible working is presented in Section 6.0.

5.5 Where Is Flexible Work Taking Place?

When not working from the company's main place of work (e.g. company office), the place most often stated by the interviewees as the location of flexible work was "home", followed

relatively closely by “mobile” locations (i.e. car, hotel, plane, train) with “client premises” a close third. A “serviced office” was used by only a small minority of the managers. In some of the teams managers were working flexibly less often than their team members, while in other teams the reverse was true. Nevertheless the responses indicate that overall there is a high occurrence of situations where managers and team members are working remotely from each other. Several working patterns emerge where the manager is working flexibly some or all of the time, some or all of the team are working flexibly some or all of the time, and as was noted in the previous section a high proportion of managers and team members are not working to fixed hours. Therefore it seems that instances when both manager and team members are remote from each other are the rule rather than the exception. One illustrative example was of a team manager who had one team member working 100% office-based with another team member working from home 50% of the time; however the manager himself was working 70% of the time in a mobile fashion, resulting in the manager and team being apart nearly all of the time. A more detailed quantitative analysis of the locations of flexible working is presented in Section 6.0.

5.6 Managers' Experience And Training

Managers were asked about length of experience as a manager and as a manager of flexible workers.

Length of Management Experience	Percentage of Managers Interviewed
Less than 2 years	Approx. 20%
2-10 years	Approx. 50%+
10+ years	Approx. 20%

Table 5.3: Years Experience As A Manager

As can be seen from the table above in general terms it could be argued that this is a group consisting of relatively experienced managers. In contrast, their experience of managing flexible workers ranged from only 3 months to up to 10 years; however the typical length of

time was 3 to 5 years, perhaps reflecting the increased use of flexible working in the last 5 years or so.

5.7 Management Training

As well as looking at manager's experience, they were also asked about what management training they had received.

Focus of Management Training	Percentage of Managers who have received it
Received mgmt. training*	97% (of all managers)
Received mgmt. training for managing flex working*	18.5% (of all managers who manage flexible workers**)

* Formal or informal training.

** Only managers of flexible workers where asked this question.

Table 5.4 : Types Of Management Training Received

As the table above illustrates there seems to be remarkably little training specifically designed for flexible working environments when one considers the extent to which flexible working is practised.

5.8 The Advantages and Disadvantages of Flexible Working

5.8.1 Main Advantages Of Using Flexible Working

When asked about the advantages of using flexible working, the most common responses were:

- Increased Productivity
- Cost Savings
- Increased employee satisfaction
- Improved client service

The primary advantages of flexible working cited by the team managers were increased productivity, cost savings, improved employee satisfaction and client service. They explained that productivity benefits are realised through better use of the team members' time, there are less interruptions and/or less absenteeism; for example home workers were less likely to be absent due to factors such as adverse weather conditions than those who are office-based. Direct cost savings were attributed to a reduced need for or more efficient use of company office space. One manager commented that the ability to use flexible workers in the form of contractors on an as-needed basis realised a cost saving in comparison to having workers on the payroll full time. A more indirect benefit was perceived by the interviewees; namely that the flexible worker appreciates the increased flexibility, empowerment, autonomy and an improved work/life balance which thus leads to a more satisfied, happier, motivated and committed employee, therefore implying an improved worker performance. However it is interesting to note that hardly any of the interviewees directly listed staff retention or recruitment factors as being main advantages, although one could argue that these are consequences of this increased employee satisfaction or would lead to an increased ability of the organisation to attract potential new recruits. Lastly the additional flexibility in employee work practices was stated as allowing better client relations with factors such as better "client coverage" i.e. worker availability-whether that is in terms of geography or time- increased effectiveness, better communications with client or the ability to be "closer to the customer".

5.8.2 Main Disadvantages Of Using Flexible Working

The most often cited disadvantages were those around perceived loss of management control, reliance on/problems of technology, loss of sense of team unity spirit and communication. Many managers felt that flexible workers are more difficult to control and monitor. They commented on a lack of awareness "it is difficult to know what they are doing" and "it is less easy to know if they are there", a certain mistrust, "sometimes not knowing what people are doing - making sure adding value/having a valuable input", "people can play the system", or managers just simply stated that flexible workers are more difficult to manage, "it is a lot easier to line manage if people are next to you". Perhaps the most telling statement, and arguably a truism, was "standard management control is more difficult when employees are working from outside the office". Communication issues were often cited, in particular

responses relating to the increased difficulty to meet the workers in person e.g. “less opportunity for face-to-face communications”, “you don't get face-to-face enough”, “you have to travel more to see them”. One manager explained that “one has to make a greater commitment to be able to meet them; it is more difficult to do ad-hoc things as one could in the office”. It was also mentioned that the manager loses to some extent the ability to have “informal chats” with the employee and gauge “how they are feeling”. Another disadvantage offered, was that of increased difficulty in maintaining or building team spirit/unity, and possible isolationist feelings amongst team members. Many managers consider the “reliance on IT” as a main disadvantage, in that when there are problems with technology the impact is greater than when managing workers in close proximity to the manager. It is interesting to note that in many ways each of the three other main disadvantages mentioned are in some way associated or related to communications. The manager's feeling of loss of control, problems with technology and difficulties around building or maintaining team morale/spirit are all potentially caused, compounded or influenced by communication dimensions vis a vis the team members' “remoteness”. Lastly, one isolated but nevertheless very interesting comment was that home working limits flexibility for the employer. The rationale being that only certain types of work can be done from home in comparison to at the office and therefore by definition the home workers have a narrower range of work they can do for the company. Thus the company loses some efficiency in scheduling as they cannot allocate tasks which emerge as priorities to home workers as easily as they can to office-based workers, if these task fall outside the range of those normally done by the home workers.

5.9 The Management Practices

In the next stage of the interview process, team managers were asked about nine management practices. They rated them in importance on a scale of 1 to 5 and the results (see Figure 5.1 below) showed that whilst all of the practices were seen to be important when managing their teams there was enough of a difference to be able to place them in an order of importance.

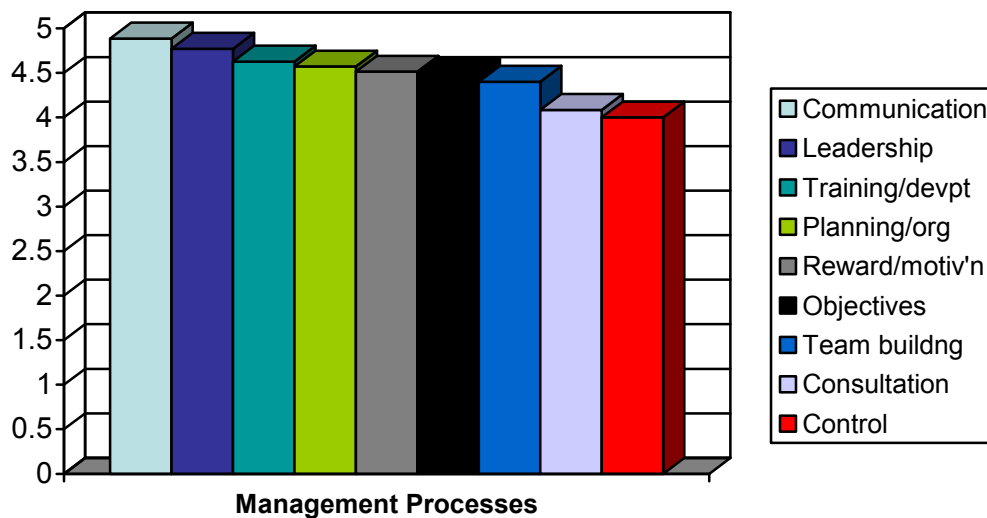


Figure 5.1 : Ranking of Importance of Management Practices

The following sections discuss the findings for each of these practices in turn.

5.9.1 Practice 1 – Communication

Team managers overwhelmingly rated communication as highly important when managing the team; almost 90% rated it as “very important”, including the 4 managers who do not use flexible workers. 83% of managers have face-to-face meetings individually with team members at least once a month, while a third of all managers meet individuals once a week or more often. In terms of face-to-face meetings with the team as a whole, managers split almost exactly 50/50 in terms of those who meet with the team at least “once or month or more”, and those who meet with them “once a month or less/almost never”. For example, one manager that spends 90% of his time away from the team still holds meetings with team members 1- 3 times per month and meets with the whole team around once a month.

In respect to the means of communication 100% of managers use telephone (including mobile) and face-to-face meetings, while 91% use email. Around 50% were using telephone conferencing and text messaging, with the lesser used means of communication being video conferencing and instant messaging, 17% each, while collaborative software/groupware (such as Lotus Notes) is used by just under 30% of managers. In summary, managers can be seen to

be using relatively “standard” means of communication; telephone, email and face-to-face. There is no apparent large-scale take-up of cutting edge technologies specifically designed for distance working, rather the application and extension of existing technologies, e.g email on the move using BlackBerry mobile devices.

When asked to nominate what they consider as the most effective means of communication a clear majority of managers, 57%, selected face-to-face meetings. E-mail 31% and telephone 20% were the only other two methods viewed by any managers as being most effective. Included in these percentages (and accounting for the total being greater than 100%) are those who stated that their view of the most effective means of communication is to an extent dependent on the purpose of the communication or type of information involved. This question generated a whole host of interesting responses from the interviewees such as:

- “depends on the type of message trying to get across, performance issues require face-to-face comms, information though can be sent via e-mail”
- “Consider face to face the most effective of all as it is better for long meetings in terms of sustaining the participants ability and interest in contributing when compared with audio or video conferencing”
- “Face to face - personal development, issues of a personal nature, complex pieces of work, otherwise telephone and e-mail”
- “e-mail, quick, efficient and does not have to be dealt with immediately.”
- “face to face better for knowledge transfer, particularly when issues need to be resolved.”
- “face-to-face for serious issues and in-depth things; phone for providing information”

5.9.2 Practice 2 – Training And Development

Nearly all managers (95%) rated the training and development of their staff as being highly important. The vast majority were using several methods including formal courses (both internal to the company and through external organisations), coaching directly by the manager and coaching by others. Over 55% were also using a variety of “other” methods, which included forms of electronic learning such as “virtual classroom”, “e-learning”, “online

material” and “CD-ROMs”. However the extent to which these organisations are using electronic means is quite limited. Nearly 70% of managers stated that face-to-face was the main method of training and development delivery with a further 20% stating that delivery was split evenly between the face-to-face and electronic methods. One organisation has a dedicated technical trainer who visits home workers frequently and is responsible for an element of their development, ensuring that they gain competency and keep up to date with the latest software being used by the company for their particular type of work.

5.9.3 Practice 3 – Rewards And Motivation

Reward and motivation is viewed as highly important by 95% of team managers. The most popular methods used are merit based pay increase/promotion and paid bonus schemes. Non-financial formal recognition schemes, e.g. “employee of the month” are used in approximately 40% of the teams. Just over half of the teams also had some other form of reward and motivation element, which was usually in the form of discretionary rewards (e.g. vouchers, meals, gifts) which were given or nominated by the manager when it was judged that the team member had performed exceptionally on a specific piece of work or project. All rewards and motivation methods used required some kind of objective setting and performance measurement in order to determine whether a reward was merited.

5.9.4 Practice 4 – Empowerment, Delegation and Decision-making

Team member consultation/involvement in the managers’ decision-making was viewed by 83% of managers as highly important. Just under a third of them have team members referring to them for a decision daily or more often, while a further 43% get referenced several times a week. Only 2 of the managers stated that the team members come to them for decisions “once or twice a month or less”. In general, regardless of the inevitable differences in type of task, business sector and company culture one can see a frequent interaction between the manager and team member in and around the managers’ decision making, which suggests extensive team member involvement. The extent of team member involvement/consultation with the manager did not appear to show any pattern of correlation with regard to the amount of time the manager spends away from team.

Another aspect of team member empowerment explored in the interview was the team members' degree of freedom to choose their working pattern. Most organisations (85%) are offering employees at least some limited form of flexibility in terms of being able to choose the hours they work. Often this was around "core hours" which is usually taken to mean the 9-5 type working day. Frequently interviewees commented on the need to work around core hours dictated by the requirement of the organisation to service the client in the clients' working day i.e. also 9-5. In several of the teams there appeared to be the ability for team members to agree amongst themselves some flexibility in hours e.g. "swap shifts with colleague". In one organisation flexibility regarding hours was linked to position (available for team leaders but not team members), in another linked to performance (provided the sales person is on target). One team manager expressed that the team members had "flexibility" in choosing the hours they worked explaining that although the team members are obliged to work the core business hours they have the choice to work late if they want. To paraphrase another team manager, "the team members are free to work from home whenever they want, for example if they need to be at home to accept a delivery, but if they are always asking to work at home then I need to know what is going on", implying that there is something wrong.

Just over half the team managers said that the team members could choose the days they work. However this again was very limited in nature, for example day-swapping with colleagues. One manager viewed the ability for the team members to choose when to take annual leave as flexible working options. Around two-thirds of managers indicated that their team members have flexibility in relation to choosing the place they work from. In many instances home working was available to some (but not all) of the team or available but only with approval/permission from their manager. In some cases team members could work from other company offices, and in others some teams' home working applied to those who were already mobile working but not to those who were currently office-based. In yet other instances it depended on the task at hand at the time, e.g. the need to be at the office or at client site. In at least one organisation the individual was encouraged to work from home for the execution of certain tasks that were perceived to be better completed without interruption. Most teams (60%) do not count the quantity of hours team members work. However it seems fair to say this is influenced strongly by the type of work/task, e.g. one accountancy and consultancy firm interviewed count the hours worked in order to accurately bill the client, while in another organisation sales team hours are not counted. Interestingly one organisation

that does monitor hours worked had a general benchmark that if team members consistently work above approximately 45 hours per week a query was raised with the individual team member in the context of the company's work/life balance objectives. Around 60% of teams do not reward/pay team members for overtime. However this did not always correlate with those companies who do not count the quantity of hours worked. This differential can be perhaps explained by certain companies not counting hours worked in general but nevertheless paying their employees for extra days worked e.g. Saturday, or as in one instance a team manager with a team consisting of several sales people (hours not counted, overtime not paid) and one administration person (hours counted and overtime paid).

5.9.5 Practice 5 – Objective Setting

This was seen by 91% of team managers as highly important. Typically objectives were set monthly or annually, although a wide variety was seen for example, quarterly, bi-annually, per project, layered objectives, different types, annual objectives adjusted monthly/quarterly etc. All but one of the team managers measured their team members' performance against these targets/goals. A number of methods were used to do this but typically it was through formal appraisal (often annual) and conducted in face-to-face settings. 60% of the team managers agree a level of reporting with the team members to monitor progress, 37% regularly check on how team members are progressing against agreed targets and objectives, while 28% leave the team to get on with the work as the team member will let them know when it is completed or if there are problems. The obvious overlap in the recorded percentages can be simply explained; some managers indicated that they use a combination of these three options or vary the approach depending on the team member/task in question, i.e. based on team members' experience, complexity of task etc.

5.9.6 Practice 6 – Scheduling

When asked, 100% of team managers rated scheduling as highly important. Over 55% of them leave the team members to set their own daily or week work schedule, with another 17% agreeing a project plan with the team member. In several teams the nature of the work is

rather production oriented so in effect when the work comes in it is already clear as to what schedule is needed, similar to a production line.

5.9.7 Practice 7 – Monitoring, Control and Evaluating

Although 77% of team managers felt this was highly important overall, only around 28% rated it the maximum importance on the interview scale. A sizeable minority, 20%, rated it “neither important nor unimportant”. This is further reflected in that only one manager said they monitor the team members’ work daily, the majority doing so weekly with sizeable percentages doing so monthly or some other timescale e.g. quarterly, at end of project, or using a combined approach dependent on the team members’ experience levels. In relation to how the teams’ work progress was monitored a number of different methods were used. Often some form of production or activity level monitoring was used, in some cases random or sample levels were measured. In other teams progress was measured against a project plan, in several teams a “review” meeting or communication took place either through face-to-face meetings, telephone, e-mail or through written report. In one organisation progress was monitored entirely through automated computer generated reports of the team members work progress.

5.9.8 Practice 8 – Leadership

Because Leadership is such a significant management research subject in its own right, the focus of the interview question about leadership was purely on how important Team Managers felt it to be. All team managers considered Leadership to be a highly important practice, within the context of this research, in managing their team.

5.9.9 Practice 9 – Team Building

Just under than 90% of the managers feel team building is highly important. This appears to be reflected in the interviews with around half of them facilitating and or encouraging team building activities several times per year, with a further 22% opting for more frequent activities of at least one per month. A similar pattern was recorded when asked in relation to encouraging/facilitating social interaction amongst the team. Of the 5 or so team managers who responded that they “never” encourage team building/social interaction activities only one stated that this was due to distance considerations. Others cited for example budgetary constraints or the preference to leave the team members to organise activities amongst themselves. Another of these managers took a somewhat different perspective stating that it was not a case of having to encourage or facilitate social interaction; to the contrary he exclaimed “I can’t stop them!” indicating that social interaction was rife in the team.

5.10 Top Three Management Practices Critical For Managing Flexible Workers

This question, as can be noted in Appendix 2, asked the respondents to choose the top three practices for managing flexible workers in their opinion, without options or guidance in terms of choosing from a list from multiple choice. However a clear majority (17) of managers chose “Communication” as their number one most important practice with a further 7 choosing “Trust”. “Objective Setting” was chosen to a lesser degree. In terms of the interviewees’ choice of the second most important practice a number of other management practices are selected such as “Motivation”, “team building/ building a sense of team”, however communication and objective setting are again frequently mentioned. Likewise feedback for the third most important management practice cited all the issues already listed but also tended to include reporting mechanisms, monitoring and control issues. Interestingly 90% believe their choice of top three critical practices will remain equally critical for managing flexible working practices in the future. Some of these managers explained their reasoning as a prediction that the human element of managing people will not change in the future in flexible environments and therefore the same practises will be just as important as they are today.

5.11 Summary

The managers interviewed operate in an environment where flexible working is used extensively. Teams, of all different sizes, are working in a flexible fashion and it is being used in a variety of knowledge, service and operational/production type tasks. The managers have broad responsibility, often managing large numbers, if indirect reports are included, are away from the team a lot of the time and appear to have to manage a complex environment, including their own flexible working. Relatively few managers who manage flexible workers have ever received management training specifically for this type of context. Managers and team members are often working from home, while mobile or on client premises and regularly changing between all three locations. They rely heavily on frequent face-to-face communications, even for training and development of team members, plus telephone and e-mail. Other means of communication such as video conferencing and collaborative software, often lauded for use in remote environments, are generally not used much.

All of the “typical” management practices such as communications, objective setting, training and development, rewards and motivation, empowerment, delegation and decision-making, objective setting, scheduling, monitoring, control and evaluation, leadership, and team building were viewed as highly important by the vast majority of managers. Perhaps the most striking thing is that there appears to be no pattern of difference, either in the attitude towards these practices or in their application, when comparing the managers who spend a lot of time away from their team with those who do not.

The application of flexible working arrangements is somewhat informal and unstructured. Although managers indicate that it is widely available to team members typically the degree of flexibility is often very limited, for example around core hours or to shift swapping, although admittedly often due to the need to match client working patterns. Flexibility seems to be granted to team members on a case-by-case basis and they usually have to ask permission and justify their request. Nevertheless managers believe that flexible working offers advantages such as better client service, higher productivity, improved employee satisfaction and cost savings. They generally feel it is harder to manage in this environment; they worry about a loss of control, the difficulty in building and maintaining a sense of team unity and technology problems interrupting communication. They view communications,

trust and objective setting as critical for managing remote workers, both now and in the future.

6.0 Team Managers' and Team Members' Findings on Management Competences

6.1 Introduction

This section looks at the analysis of the management competence questionnaires completed by both team managers and members of their teams. The purpose of the competence questionnaire was to try and establish if there are any:

- Relationships between the amount of time a manager spends with members of the team and the management competences – their importance and degree to which they are exhibited;
- Differences in the top 10 competences expected of managers as perceived by the managers themselves and expected by the team;
- Gaps between the importance of a competence and the degree to which a manager exhibits that competence.

Each team manager that undertook a structured telephone interview was also asked to complete a competence questionnaire. Most team managers also provided access to a number of team members ranging from 2 to 10, but usually 5.

6.2 Team Manager and Team Member Views on Competences

6.2.1 Competence Importance

Using averages of all the competence data from all 109 completed questionnaires a ranking, in terms of importance, of the competences was identified. The full ranking of all 56 competences is shown in Appendix 3, the following table shows the top 10:

Competence	Importance for managers as seen by all respondents	Degree to which competence displayed by Team Manager	Gap (+ve means importance is greater than displayed)
Leadership	9.14	8.05	1.09
Communicating	9.04	7.83	1.21
Leading by example	8.98	7.96	1.02
Acting assertively	8.90	8.26	0.64
Team building	8.85	8.02	0.83
Building relationships	8.83	7.90	0.93
Valuing and supporting others	8.82	8.08	0.74
Decision-making	8.80	7.86	0.94
Coaching	8.76	7.77	0.99
Stress management	8.69	7.61	1.08

Table 6.1 : Top 10 Rankings of Competences – All Respondents

In the top 10, the importance rating ranges from 8.69 for stress management to 9.14 for leadership, a spread of 0.45. The corresponding figure for the spread of the degree to which the competence is exhibited by team managers is very similar at 0.44.

All the competences show a difference between their importance and the degree to which they are exhibited, the largest gaps are shown by the top three competences and the tenth one, stress management. The smallest gap was for acting assertively, the most directive of the competences listed. This ranking of competences was used in further analysis to test the research hypothesis.

6.2.2 Comparing Competence Data to Working Arrangements

To test the hypothesis it was appropriate to do a comparison between the working contact between managers and their team and the top 5 competences. Data from question 5 (“What percentage of your time do you spend working away from your team / manager?”) was consolidated into 5 larger groupings of 0 to 20%, 21 to 40%, 41 to 60%, 61 to 80% and 81 to 100%. This data was then plotted against the average competence rating for each of the top 5 competences – see Figure 6.1:

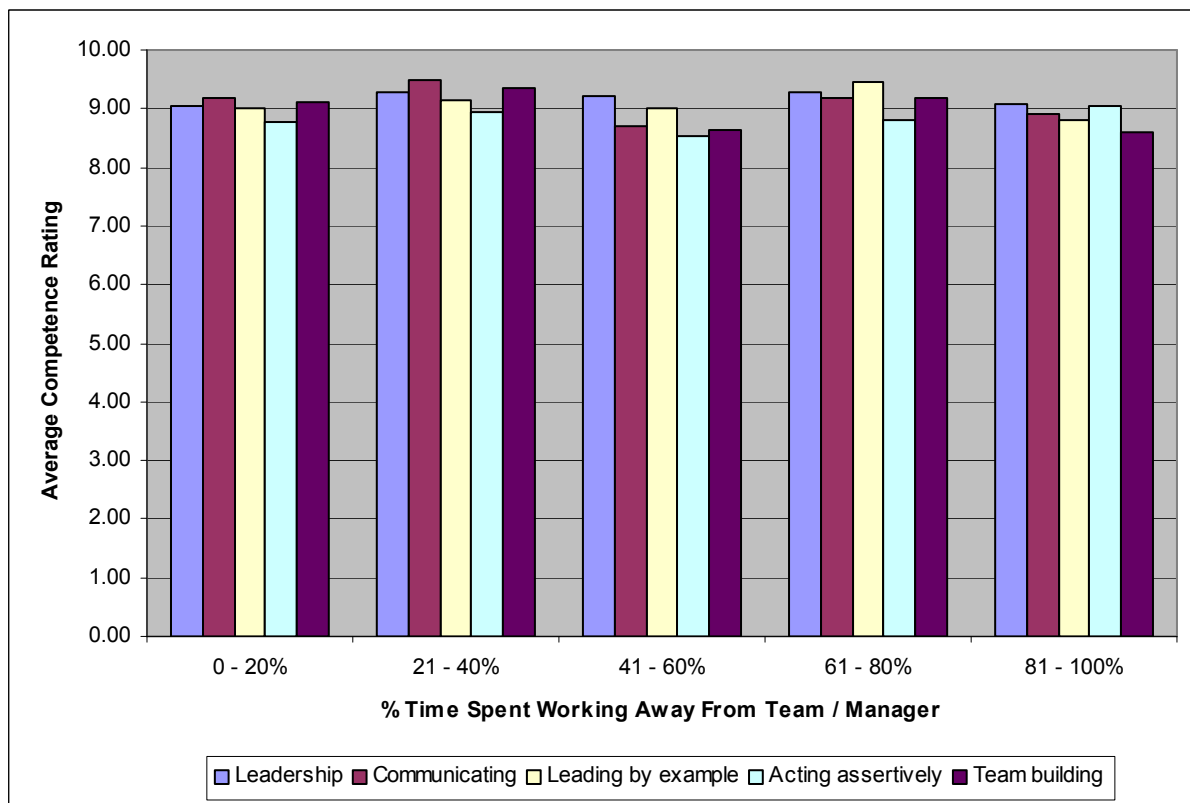


Figure 6.1 : Comparison of Competence Rating With % Time Spent Working Away from Team / Manager

From the graph it is clear that there is some small variation in the importance of individual competences depending on the degree to which the team manager and team member spend time working together. However there is no consistent variation across the competences and no consistent trends – the more time managers and team members spend away from each other there is no consistent clear increase or decrease in the importance of a competence. For example team building is equally important at 41 – 60% and 81 – 100% points, and 0 – 20% and 61 – 80% points.

Another approach to the analysis of the relationship between competence importance and degree of remote working was to take two extremes of team composition. One organisation provided a complete set of data for a team manager and team members (6 responses in total) who were co-located all the time and therefore spent 100% of their time working with their manager. Another provided a complete set of data where two-thirds of the team (4 of 6 responses) spent between 91 and 100% of their time working away from the manager. A

comparison of the ranking of the top 10 competences for these two polar groups is shown in Figure 6.2:

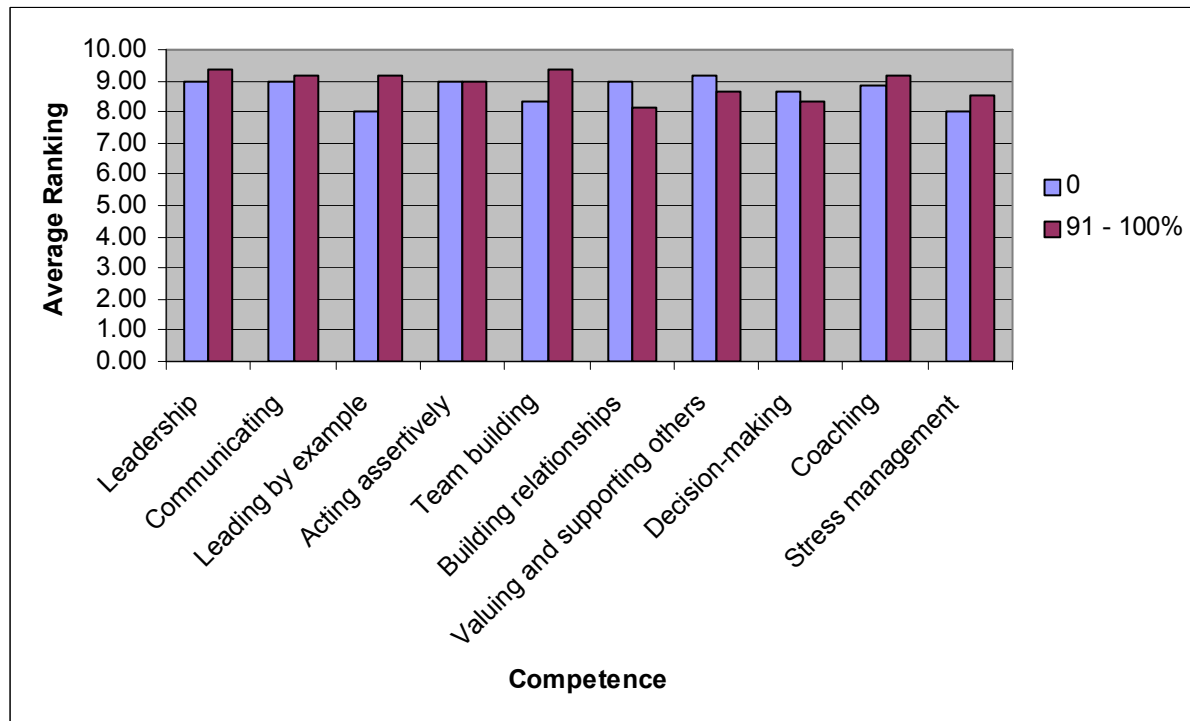


Figure 6.2 : Comparison Of Competence Ratings For Teams Working 0 – 10% and 91 – 100% Of Their Time Away From Their Manager

Some competences show a degree of variation such as leading by example (1.17), team building (1.00), valuing and supporting others (0.50), building relationships (0.83) and stress management (0.50). The remaining competences show little in the way of difference – figures are 0.34 or less. However there is little in the way of consistency – team building which might be expected to show a difference the more remote team members became, and does, but building relationships does not, in fact it shows the opposite effect. It is therefore perhaps difficult to draw a sensible conclusion about working relationships and competence importance from this data.

Using a larger sample from the respondents (a total of 55) a comparison between all those people who spend the minority of their time (0 – 10%) working away from their manager and those who spend the majority of their time (91 to 100%) working away from their managers and the impact on competence rating is shown in Figure 6.3 below:

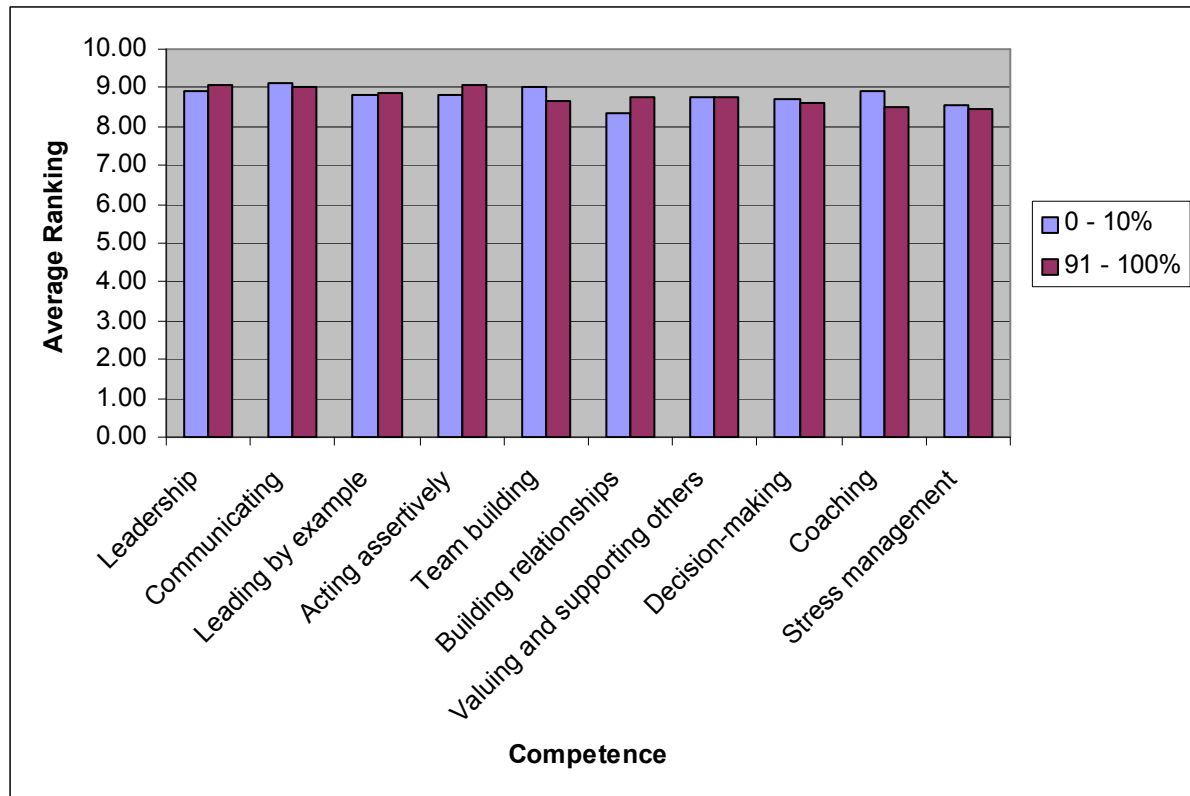


Figure 6.3 : Comparison Of Competence Ratings For Individuals Working 0 – 10% and 91 – 100% Of Their Time Away From Their Team / Manager

From Figure 6.3 there appears to be a considerable degree of consistency with many of the competences: for example leadership, communicating, leading by example, valuing and supporting others, decision making and stress management, being almost unaffected by the working relative remoteness of manager and team. The largest differences are associated with acting assertively, team building, building relationships, and coaching. The issue of consistency arises again – team building which might be expected to show a difference the more remote team members became, and does, but building relationships does not, in fact it shows the opposite effect.

The data at this stage appears to be inconclusive about the impact of the amount of time team members and managers spend working apart.

6.3 Team Manager's Views

6.3.1 General

From the analysis of the background section of the questionnaire, there are some specific team manager related findings:

- A third of team managers were female and two thirds male.
- All team managers worked full time.
- Five managers (19%) were completely office based and all five worked either fixed hours or flexibly around core time. None of these managers worked completely flexible hours.
- Nearly 60% of managers worked flexible hours around a core time. A further 30% worked completely flexible hours.

Managers were also asked whether they worked all of their time from a fixed location / office and if not, what percentage of their time was spent working from other locations. Five managers were completely office based whilst the remaining 22 managers spent varying amounts of their time working from other locations – this is shown in Figure 6.4 below:

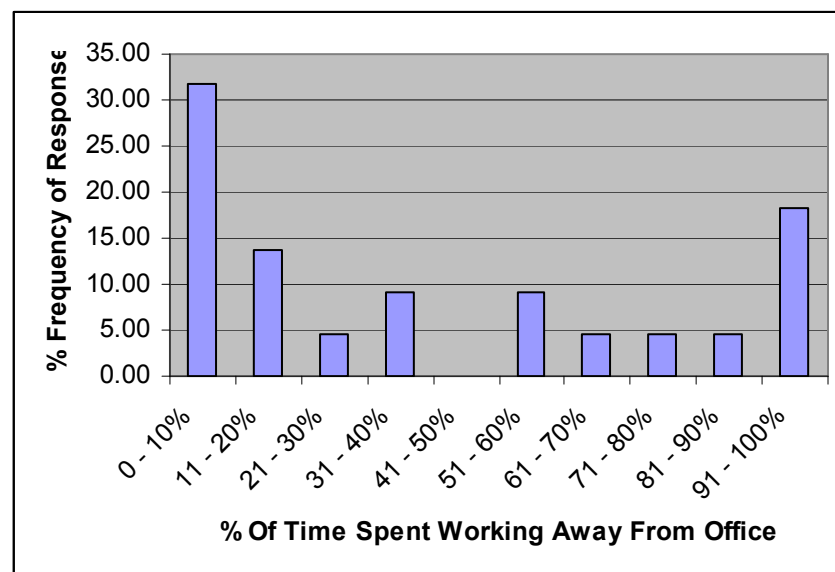


Figure 6.4 : Proportion Of Team Managers' Time Spent Working Away From The Office And Corresponding Frequency Of Response

A wide variety of locations were used as alternative working spaces, the most popular being working from home. The variety of locations and their relative popularity are shown in Figure 6.5 below:

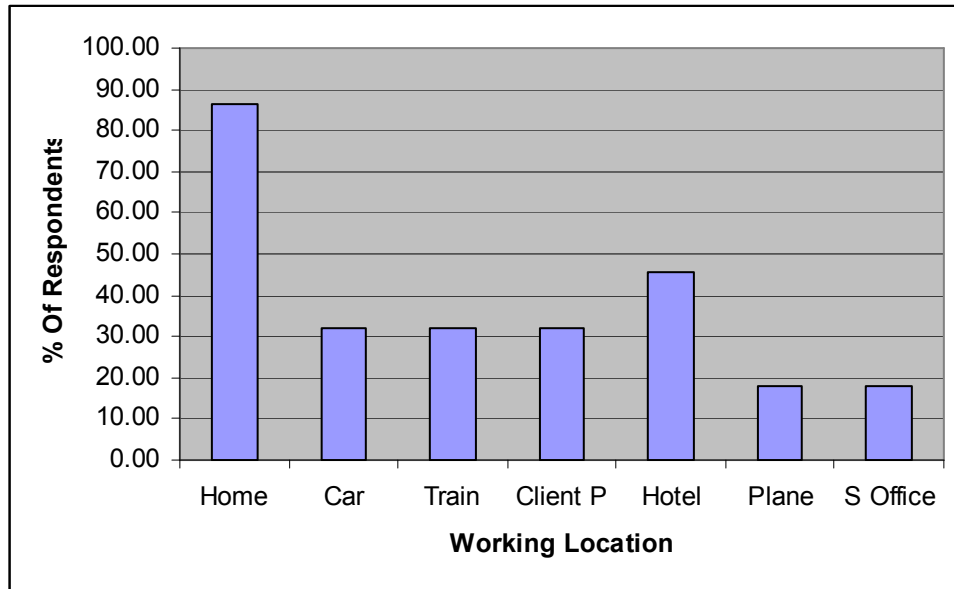


Figure 6.5 : Working Location And Frequency Of Use By Team Managers

When asked about the amount of time spent working away from the team, 59% of managers said they worked with their teams for at least 50% of the time. Whilst just over 10% of team managers spend between 91% or more of their time with their teams, some 15% stated that they spend less than 10% of their time with their team members. A more detailed breakdown is shown in Figure 6.6 below:

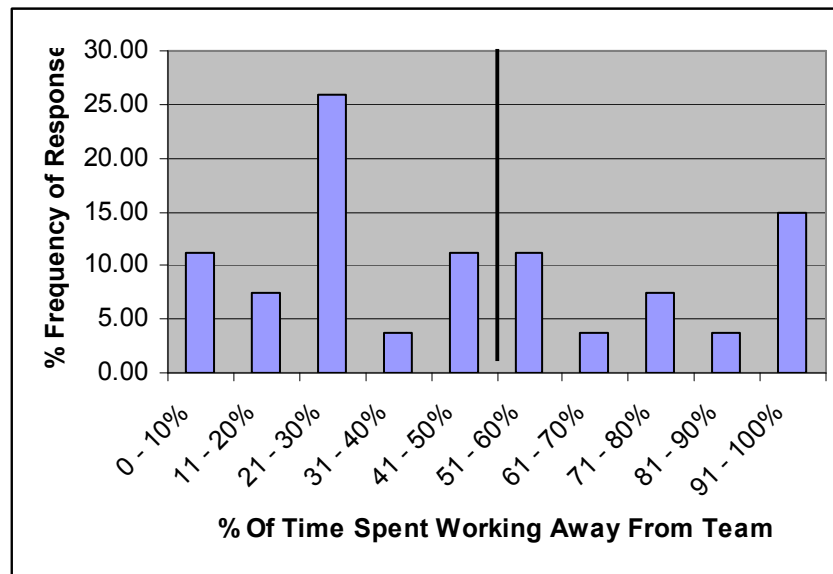


Figure 6.6 : Proportion Of Team Managers' Time Spent Working Away From The Team And Corresponding Frequency Of Response

6.3.2 General Analysis of Competence Data

Those managers who worked remotely from their team were asked to complete an optional activity – to identify the top three competences they considered necessary to be an effective remote manager. Of the limited response (17 in all) the most frequently occurring competence at 1st, 2nd and 3rd level was communication identified by 13 of the responses. Other competences were identified but to a lesser degree – for example the next highest score was motivation with a total of five responses. An issue which was raised at this point was trust – though not a competence it was mentioned six times.

To identify the team managers' top 10 competences, the average rating of importance for each of the 56 competences was calculated and the average scores then ranked. At the same time the average score for the degree to which the manager felt they exhibited each competence was calculated. The top 10 competences are outlined in Table 6.2 below:

Competence	Importance for managers as seen by Team Managers	Degree to which competence displayed	Gap (+ve means importance is greater than display)	Rank
Communicating	9.44	8.22	1.22	1=
Leadership	9.44	8.07	1.37	1=
Leading by example	9.15	7.93	1.22	3
Decision making	9.00	7.93	1.07	4=
Valuing and supporting others	9.00	8.22	0.78	4=
Acting assertively	8.96	8.00	0.96	6=
Building relationships	8.96	8.07	0.89	6=
Setting objectives	8.93	7.59	1.34	8
Prioritising	8.89	7.78	1.11	9
Balancing competing needs and interests / Instructing / Team building / Thinking with a customer focus	8.85	7.84 / 7.52 / 7.81 / 7.56	1.01 / 1.33 / 1.04 / 1.29	10=

Table 6.2 : Team Managers' Top Ten Competence Importance and Exhibition Ratings

Four competences tie for 10th place: balancing competing needs and interests; instructing; team building; and thinking with a customer focus. Whilst many of the top 10 are team and individual focused softer management skills, for example leading by example, valuing and supporting others, building relationships and team building, it is noticeable that there are a significant number of directive type skills – decision making, acting assertively, and instructing. This balance does not appear to vary with changing degrees of contact with the team.

The position of communicating as joint top of the list is borne out by the fact that the majority (some 76%) of those managers who completed the question – “...what are the top three competences you consider are necessary for you to be an effective remote manager?” – listed communication as one of their three answers.

It also appears from the data in the table that managers place a very high degree of importance on these competences – up to 9.44 on average. They also appear to be very critical of their performance with at least seven of the competences showing a performance gap of 1.0 or more.

The same analysis process was also carried out to find the bottom 10 competences in terms of importance. The bottom 10 competences are outlined below:

Competence	Importance for managers as seen by Team Managers	Degree to which competence displayed	Gap (+ve means importance is greater than display)	Rank
Empowering	7.81	8.41	-0.60	47
Information management	7.78	7.04	0.74	48=
Involving others	7.78	7.11	0.67	48=
Interviewing	7.74	6.89	0.85	50
Empathising	7.59	7.11	0.48	51
Reflecting	7.56	6.59	0.97	52
Forecasting	7.52	6.22	1.30	53
Scenario building	7.26	6.11	1.15	54
Building consensus	7.15	6.22	0.93	55
Benchmarking	6.85	5.63	1.22	56

Table 6.3 : Team Managers' Bottom Ten Competence Importance and Exhibition Ratings

There are two points of interest here. The first is that managers believe that they exhibit the empowering competence to a greater degree than they consider it importance. Secondly, there is closer match between importance and the degree to which the competence is exhibited than compared to the top 10 competences.

The range between the rating for top and bottom competences appears to be quite significant:

- For competence importance the range is from 6.85 (the 56th ranked competence – benchmarking) to 9.44 (joint 1st ranked competences – communicating and leadership) – a spread of 2.59.
- For the degree to which the competence is exhibited the range is from 5.63 (the benchmarking competence) to 8.22 (the communicating and valuing and supporting others competences) – a spread of 2.59 as well.

6.4 Team Member's Views

6.4.1 General

A total of 82 team members submitted completed responses to the questionnaire.

From the analysis of the background section of the questionnaire, there are some specific team member related findings:

- 40.2% of respondents were female and 59.8% male.
- 35.4% of team members were based 100% of their time in company offices. Only two of these individuals worked a completely flexible working pattern, the remainder worked either fixed hours or flexibly around core time – 16 and 11 individuals respectively.
- 29.3% of team members worked fixed hours, with 52.4% working flexible hours around a core time, and a further 18.3% working completely flexible hours.
- 93.6% of team members worked full time.

Team members were also asked whether they worked all of their time from a fixed location / office and if not, what percentage of their time was spent working from other locations. 29 team members were completely office based whilst the remaining 53 team members spent varying amounts of their time working from other locations. The largest proportion of respondents (25%) spent 10% or less of their time away from the office. The complete profile is shown in Figure 6.4 below:

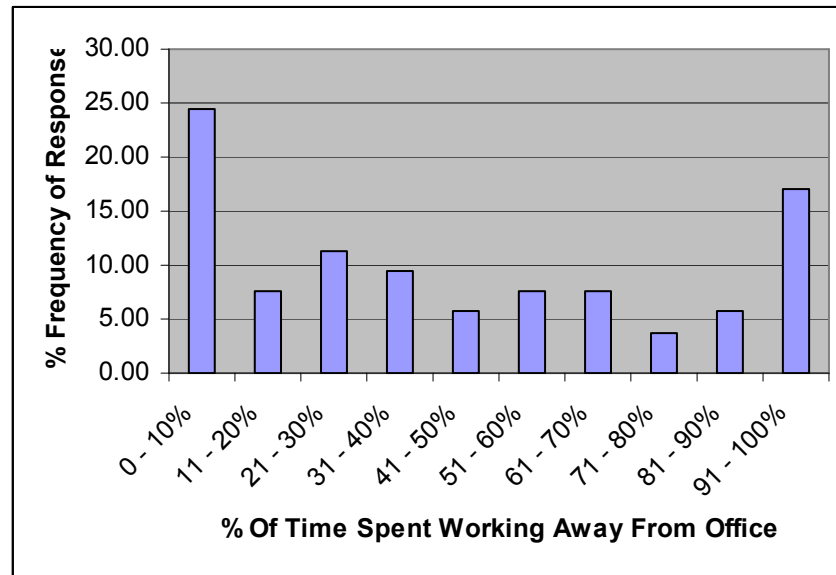


Figure 6.7 : Proportion Of Team Members' Time Spent Working Away From The Office And Corresponding Frequency Of Response

A wide variety of locations were used as alternative working spaces, the most popular being working from home. The variety of locations and their relative popularity are shown in Figure 6.8 below:

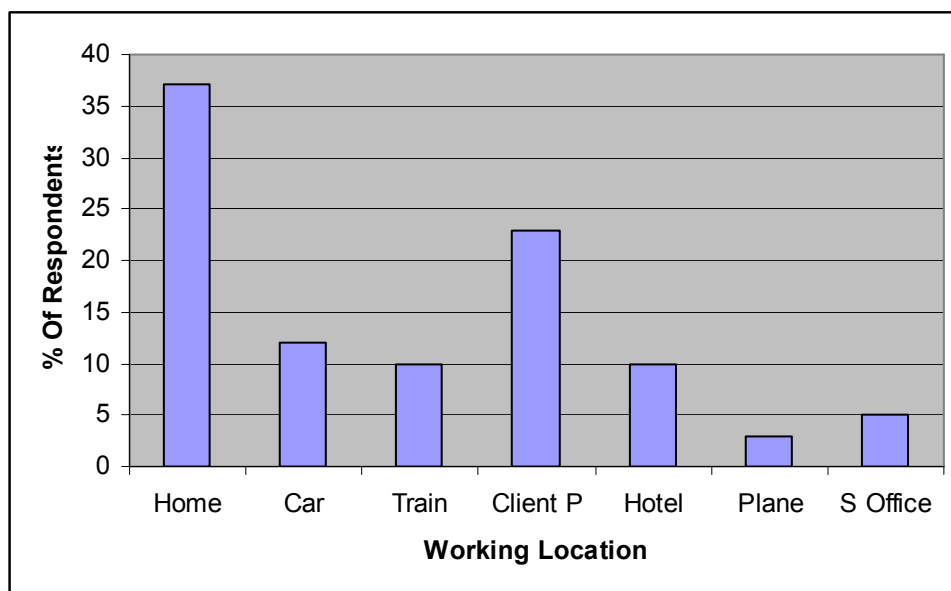


Figure 6.8 : Working Location And Frequency Of Use By Team Members

When asked about the amount of time spent working away from their managers, 40% of team members indicated that they worked away from their managers for over 90% of the time. A more detailed breakdown is shown in Figure 6.9 below:

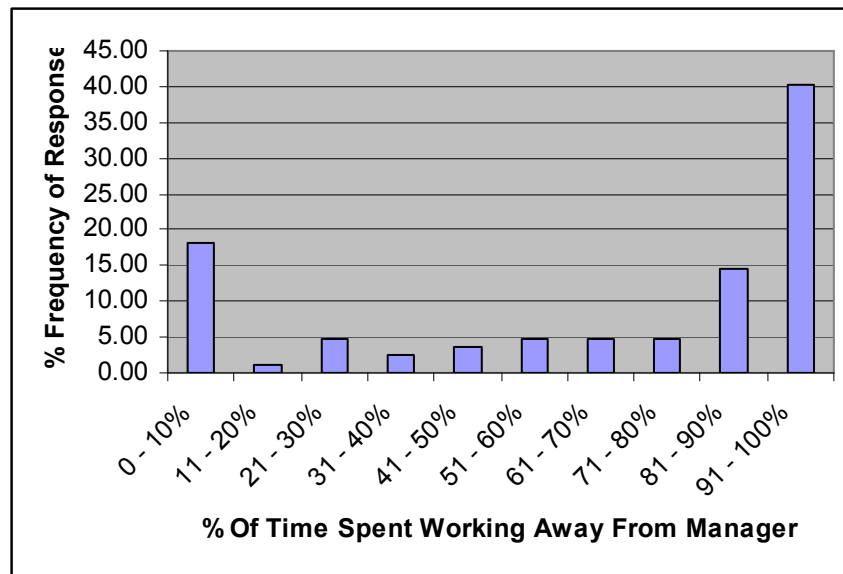


Figure 6.9 : Proportion Of Team Members' Time Spent Working Away From The Team Manager And Corresponding Frequency Of Response

Just over a quarter of all team members perceive they spend 50% or more of their time with their managers, and 40% consider they spend less than 10% of their time working with their team managers.

6.4.2 General Analysis of Competence Data

Those team members who worked remotely from their managers were asked to complete an optional activity – to identify the top three competences they considered necessary to be an effective remote worker. Of the limited response (45 in all) the most frequently occurring competence at 1st, 2nd and 3rd level was communication identified by 19 of the responses. Other competences were identified but to a lesser degree – for example the next highest score was motivation with a total of 13 responses. An issue which was raised at this point was trust – though not a competence it was mentioned seven times.

To identify the team members' top 10 competences, the average rating of importance each of the 56 competences was calculated and the average scores then ranked. At the same time the average score for the degree to which the team member felt their manager exhibited each competence was calculated. The top 10 competence are outlined in Table 6.4 below:

Competence	Importance for managers as seen by Team Members	Degree to which competence is displayed by Team Manager	Gap (+ve means importance is greater than displayed)	Rank
Leadership	9.04	8.04	1.00	1
Leading by example	8.93	7.98	0.95	2
Communicating	8.90	7.70	1.20	3
Acting assertively	8.88	8.34	0.54	4
Team building	8.85	8.09	0.76	5
Building relationships	8.78	7.84	0.94	6
Valuing and supporting others	8.76	8.04	0.72	7
Coaching	8.74	7.77	0.97	8
Decision making	8.73	7.84	0.89	9=
Motivating	8.73	7.44	1.29	

Table 6.4 : Team Members' Ranking of Top Ten Management Competences

Most of the top 10 are team and individual focused softer management skills, for example leading by example, team building, building relationships, valuing and supporting others, coaching, and motivating. There are only two directive type skills – acting assertively and decision making. The former has the smallest gap between importance and degree to which it is exhibited, whilst the latter has the fourth smallest gap. This balance does not appear to vary with changing degrees of contact with the team manager. It is also interesting to note that coaching and motivating competences do not appear in the managers' top 10 list.

The position of communicating with the top three of the list is borne out by the fact that the a significant number (some 42%) of those team members who completed the question – “...what are the top three competences you consider are necessary for you to be effective?” – listed communication as one of their three answers.

It also appears from the data in the table that team members place a relatively high degree of importance on these competences – up to 9.04 on average. However this score is some 4.5% less than the managers' highest score. Team members also appear to be less critical of their managers' performance with only three of the competences showing a performance gap of 1.0 or more.

In general terms there seems to be a closer match between team members' ranking of importance and their perception of their manager's ability to exhibit that competence – indeed the largest gap is 1.29 (motivating) with the gap in seven of the 10 top competences being less than 1.00. Applying the same analysis to the manager's results the largest gap is 1.37 (leadership) and only three of top ten competences have a gap of less than 1.00. This perhaps only indicates that managers are more critical of themselves than the people that work in their teams.

The same analysis process was also carried out to find the bottom 10 competences for team members in terms of importance. The bottom 10 competences are outlined below:

Competence	Importance for managers as seen by Team Members	Degree to which competence is displayed by Team Manager	Gap (+ve means Importance is greater than Displayed)	Rank
Thinking systematically	7.96	7.80	0.16	47
Empathising	7.89	7.11	0.78	48
Reviewing	7.82	7.27	0.55	49
Building consensus	7.78	7.37	0.41	50
Self assessment	7.76	6.84	0.92	51
Reflecting	7.73	7.29	0.44	52
Forecasting	7.41	7.11	0.30	53
Benchmarking	7.40	7.24	0.16	54
Questioning	7.38	7.44	-0.06	55
Scenario building	7.22	7.07	0.15	56

Table 6.5 : Team Members' Bottom Ten Competence Importance and Exhibition Ratings

There are several points of interest here. The first is that team members believe their managers exhibit the questioning competence to a greater degree than they consider it important. Secondly, there is closer match between importance and the degree to which the competence is exhibited than compared to the top 10 competences – no gap here is larger than 0.92 compared to 1.29. Thirdly, most of the competences are internal to the manager – that is they do not require the manager to involve or invite input from the team. Perhaps the most obvious exception to this is building consensus.

The range between the rating for top and bottom competences appears to be quite significant. For competence importance the range is from 7.22 (for scenario building) to 9.04 (for leadership) – a spread of 1.82. This spread is much smaller than that of the team managers suggesting a more evenly spread consideration of importance across the competences. For the degree to which the competence is exhibited the range is from 6.84 (for self assessment) to 8.34 (for acting assertively) – a spread of 0.97. This spread suggests that whilst there is a gap between the team members' requirement and the team managers' performance, the team members perceive the manager to meet the requirement more closely.

6.5 Comparing the Data

6.5.1 Background Data Comparisons

Looking at working patterns there seem to be some substantial differences between the two groups of respondents, with managers appearing to have the greatest opportunity to work completely flexibly – see Table 6.6 below.

Working Pattern	Team Manager	Team Member
Fixed hours	11.0%	29.0%
Flexible around core hours	59.0%	53.0%
Completely flexible	30.0%	18.0%

Table 6.6 : Comparison of Working Pattern Data

Comparing working locations for those team managers and team members who are not completely office based is shown in Figure 6.10 below:

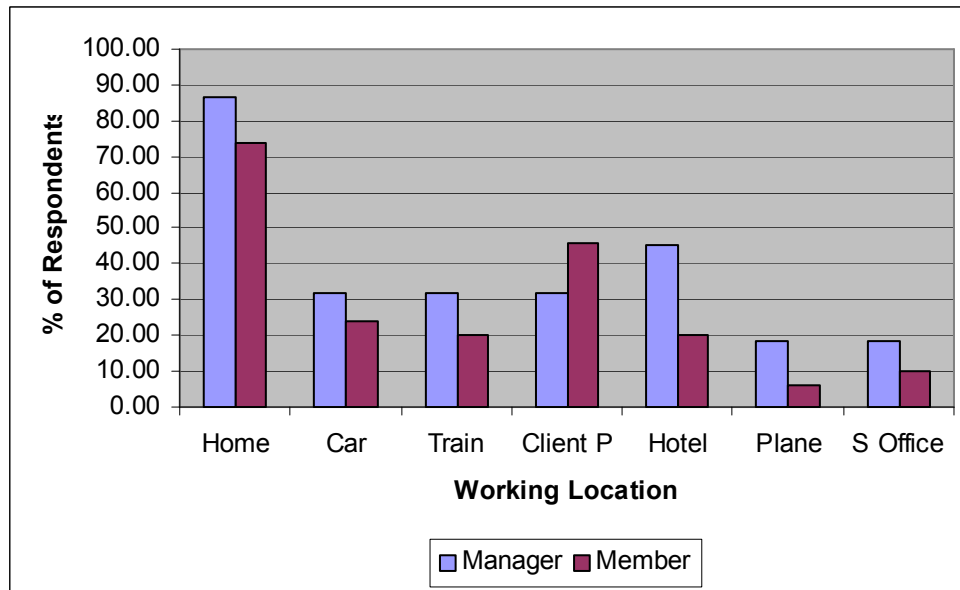


Figure 6.10 : Comparison Of Use Of Alternative Working Locations

This comparison shows two things. Firstly, that working from home is the dominant alternative working location with some 86% of managers and 74% of team members spending some of their working time at home. Secondly, that apart from client premises, significantly more managers work from each of the alternative locations than do team members. This is perhaps due to the team manager having greater flexibility. The indication that a higher percentage of team members work from client premises than do team managers is likely to be because of the more client facing nature of the team members role described by some team managers in their telephone interviews.

Comparing the type of working, that is whether full time or part time showed that all team managers worked full time, whereas 93.9% of team members work full time and 6.1% part time. No analysis was carried out to see if the differences were dependent upon the type of work or industry from which the respondents were drawn.

Comparing the amount of time, which managers consider they work away from their teams with the amount of time team members consider they work away from their managers, is shown in Figure 6.11 below:

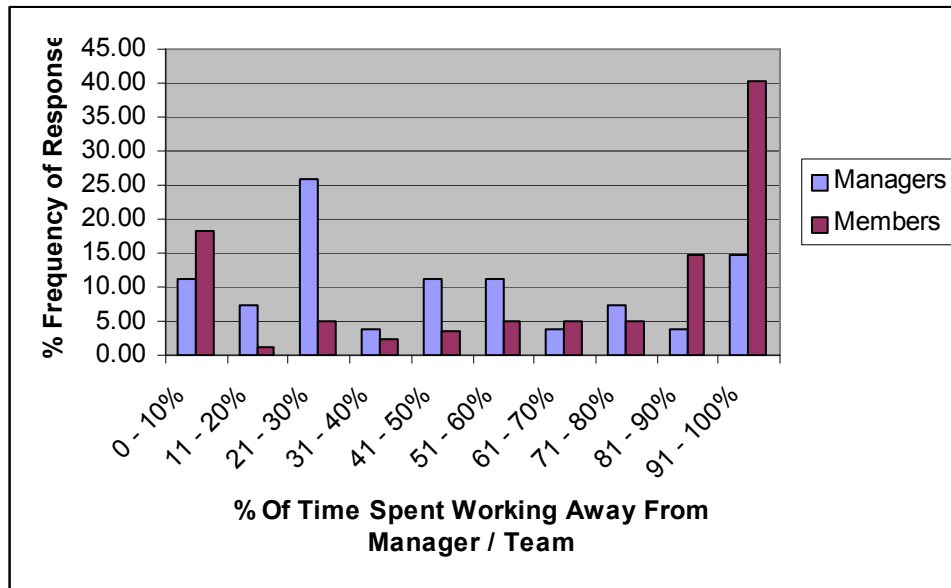


Figure 6.11 : Comparison of Team Manager and Team Member Perceptions Of How Much Time Is Spent Working Away From Each Other

There is clearly some difference in opinion here between team managers and team members in the way they perceive themselves to be away from each other. For example 40% of team members perceive that they spend between 91 and 100% of their time away from their managers whereas only 15% of managers believe that they spend the same amount of time away from their team.

6.5.2 Competence Data Comparisons

Comparing the team members' top 10 rankings of competence importance with those of the team managers highlights some differences in order of ranking and composition of the list – see Figure 6.12 below:

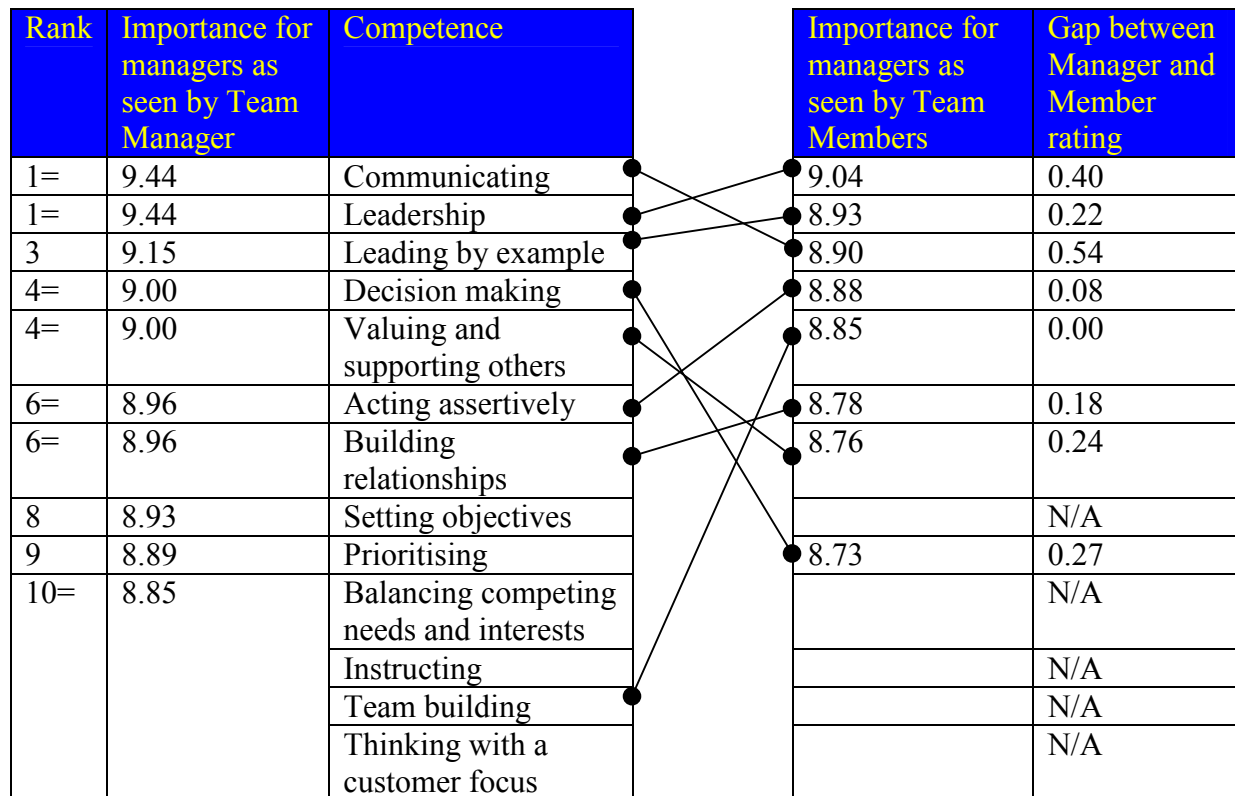


Figure 6.12 : Top 10 Competences – Comparison Between Team Managers and Team Members

Several messages emerge from Figure 6.12 which are worth noting:

- Both team managers and team members have 8 top ten competences in common in terms of their perceived importance.
- Most of the common top ten competences: communicating; leading by example; valuing and supporting others; building relationships and team building, were focused on softer management issues and were team or individual team member orientated.
- Competences which appeared in the team members' list but not the managers' top ten were coaching and motivating – 8 and 10 respectively. These are soft, supportive skills and like the rest of the team members' preferences encourage relationships with the manager and a contribution to the team and manager.
- Competences which appeared in the managers' list but not the members were complicated by the fact that four competences tied for 10th place in the ranking – creating a list of 13 top competences. Of these 13, setting objectives, prioritising, balancing competing needs and interests, instructing and thinking with a customer

focus did not appear in the team members' list. The first four of these can be described as hard skills focussing on objectives and 'directing' the team member what to do. The last one is a softer skill as it requires involvement from others in the managers behaviour.

6.6 Conclusions

Examination of the questionnaire data from the perspectives of a very co-located team and a very flexibly working team; from all respondents who work closely to their manager the majority of the time and those who work away from their manager for the majority of the time; and from all respondents by the varying amounts of time spent working away from each other, provided little in the way of evidence to support the hypothesis originally set out – that managing flexible workers requires a different competence profile to that required for managing more traditional working patterns.

There appears to be a high degree of commonality between the top ten competences identified by team managers and team members though the order of ranking is generally different between the two.

The main alternative working location for both team managers and members is the home. Managers dominate the usage of the other locations apart from client premises where significantly more team members work from this location than do managers.

There is some disparity in the team managers' perception of what percentage of time they spend away from their teams and team members' perception of what percentage of time their managers spend away from them.

Managers appear to rate the importance of competences more highly than team members do and also to be more critical of their exhibition of the competences, scoring lower performance values against each competence.

The existence of a gap between the importance of a competence and the degree to which it is exhibited by a manager suggests that perhaps a different approach to some aspects of management development may be appropriate, for example improving communication skills and team building techniques.

7.0 Case Studies

Four case studies are presented here which look in more detail at the organisational context and the analysis of the HR director interviews.

Case 1 – BT**Background**

BT has undergone a massive change over the last decade. The workforce has reduced from a quarter of a million down to 98,000 employees and a key component of this change has been the introduction of flexible working. Ten years ago it had just 400 teleworkers and it now has 63,000 people on some form of flexible working and over 12,000 employees working at home. The company works on the assumption that most jobs can be fulfilled through flexible working and the number of flexible workers is still increasing. It has not yet reached its natural limit and there are still parts of the company that have yet to move away from a fixed office-based culture.

One of the main drivers for this change has been the reduction of office space. Over £220 million has been saved in the last 10 years from real estate costs alone. Travel costs have been reduced by £9.7 million per annum and 1,800 person years of travel time is saved each year. Another benefit has been the retention of key skills and the ability to attract talent, reducing employee turnover.

Benefits

For employees, flexible working means the ability to choose a working style that suits their personal needs. *“I think people's expectations perhaps have shifted from the baby boomers and the more work-orientated cultures we had in the '70s and '80s. I think people want more leisure time, they want more holidays, they want more choice in terms of how they want to spend their working week”*. This contributes to better work/life balance and less stress which has resulted in a reduction in absenteeism. Research in BT shows that 70% of the teleworkers report an increase in their productivity and 65% reckon to save at least 6 hours per week in commuting time.

Management Issues

When flexible working was first introduced managers were concerned about the lack of face-to-face contact with employees and how they could keep track of them on a day-to-day basis. Now the technology is able to bridge that gap and make the job easier but managers still have to work harder to create a team environment. They must be able to build teams remotely using technology and team-building skills. They also need to learn to manage by output, setting clear objectives for each individual and measuring against a scorecard. Managers have a mixture of financial objectives and personal or behavioural objectives. This is underpinned by BT's culture which supports flexible working and regular appraisals. *"The types and frequency of appraisal depend on job type mainly, but there's a strong expectation of performance management assessment in every part of BT."*

Since there is an assumption that work can be performed flexibly, there is an onus on the line manager to explain why it would not be appropriate for a particular employee to work flexibly. There are eight different working styles to choose from, each of which has a different contract and packaged IT and telephony solution. Also there are tools to help managers and employees set up remote working effectively such as a web site and a catalogue of furniture that has to be used by people working at home.

Implementation

BT has put some good progressive HR policies in place to ensure that flexible working and home working are implemented successfully. They want to be sure that the home office is ergonomically sound and insist on a health and safety check for all home workers. *"So it's just part of our philosophy to make sure that we look after our people working from home in the same regard as someone who's working in an office."*

Managers have to have good communications skills both one-to-one and with the team. Although this is more difficult than with office based people, most employees have mobile phones and a growing proportion now have blackberries. Increasingly people have wireless enabled laptops and BT takes full advantage of the technology it sells to its corporate customers. There is a possibility that the technology can become intrusive and the onus is on

employees to let the company know what their preference is for working time. Managers need to respect this and need to trust that the employee will get the work done without close supervision. This is dependent on the maturity of the employment relationship and BT runs a management development programme internally that supports the flexible working culture. There is now relatively little resistance from management to this way of working as it has been running successfully for such a long time.

Conclusion

BT has been running a flexible working programme for so long that in most parts of the organisation it has become the norm. It has clear quantifiable data on the benefits and has the HR policies and support in place to help managers implement it effectively. Overall it is seen as a win-win for employer and employee and they also use themselves as an exemplar when selling to customers. *“I think initially certainly for an organisation, it is almost like an act of faith, to actually embark on a flexible working programme. But our experience has been that it more than pays off, very rapidly.”*

Case 2 – Microsoft UK

Company Background

Microsoft is the world's largest software company with an annual turnover of \$37 billion and over 50,000 employees. Its corporate mission is "To enable people and businesses throughout the world to realize their full potential" and this is reflected in the way it treats employees. The company has a reputation in the UK as a forward-thinking employer and has recently topped the poll in the Employer of the Year competition. So it is recognised by its employees and by the market as an attractive place to work and it has a fast-moving, dynamic atmosphere which particularly appeals to young employees. As would be expected there is widespread use of IT amongst all its employees whether they have a technical background or not.

The UK headquarters is in Reading but Microsoft also employs people around the country including 400 people working from the MSN offices in London. It has a young workforce but the average age has been increasing steadily and is now 34. This means that there is an increasing percentage of staff who have children and are faced with more demanding family lives than in the past. So the focus has moved from diversity and the role of female employees to flexible working and the impact of work/life balance on families. The company has been looking carefully at these issues for employees in London over the last 18 months which has shown that single people are also affected by the stresses of commuting.

Organisation Culture

The company culture is one that recognises individual contributions and rewards results whilst allowing people freedom in the way they work.

"To really get the sort of people we want to work here and then get the best out of them you must run a very individualised culture in terms of understanding people and their hopes, aspirations and dreams and also how they best work."

Although many employees may work long hours at Microsoft the company takes pride in caring for families and expects that any employee thinking of leaving may get pressure from

home to reconsider. This does not come about because of formal flexible working schemes it is simply that flexibility has become a way of life. Microsoft recognises that people have a choice in where they work and if they do not find the right atmosphere in the company they will go elsewhere.

Flexible Office

People at Microsoft expect to be able to work when and where they want to. However they also value the buzz associated with being in the office and want their own space when they are in. Consequently it has been difficult to get people to accept hot-desking and a recent survey showed that on an average day 60% of the space in the Reading office is not being used. Despite this, flexible working has allowed an extra 400 people to fit into the existing campus in Reading and delayed the construction of another building for two years so far. Each year's delay saves the company about £1million.

By providing a standard size of desk, regardless of position in the company, Microsoft has made its offices more flexible. Although this cuts across some of the 'fiefdoms' that managers like to create, it saves the £1 million a year the company used to spend moving furniture when it had specific desks for managers. Technology is also allowing people to work on the move even when they are in the building. Wi-fi enabled tablet PC's enable people to carry their office with them and hold meetings wherever they want. Hence the casual meeting area in the atrium is always busy and there is increasing pressure on the catering facilities to keep up with demand.

Use of Technology

Although many of the PC's have cameras, video communications has not taken off. Instead people are using instant text messaging as a way of 'chatting' informally. When you see that someone else is available you may send them a sort note in the same way you would have done when meeting them in the corridor. This is providing a lot of short snappy communications between people.

Managing Flexible Work

Whilst managers expect flexible working as part of the culture they find it more difficult to manage. They have to be much better organised and plan meetings for the whole year. Some technical people will only be coming in to the office once or twice a month and it is important that managers keep in touch with them. Live Meeting, which combines audio conferencing with shared information on PC screens, is being used increasingly across Europe to pull together virtual teams and there has been an increase in face-to-face kick off meetings at the beginning of the year.

“You find you work harder on the whole inspiration and consistent message thing than you would do than if they were not so mobile.”

People are now getting used to the output management culture and are becoming far more accountable for their results than they have ever been. When people first started working from home they would be logged in to the system all day because they still had a ‘presenteeism’ attitude to work. Now as long as they keep their Outlook calendar up to date managers are not worried about where and when people are working. In fact they can probably find someone more quickly now through the technology than they ever could if they were working somewhere in the building.

All managers must have a one-to-one meeting with each of their employees once a month. This is so they keep up to date on how people are doing against their commitments, to see how they are doing on a personal basis and make sure that their development plan is on track. This is a discipline that is taken seriously and employees provide feedback on this and other management practices in an annual survey.

Because managing remote employees is not as easy as chatting to them at their desk, there is a natural reluctance from some managers to allow people to work from home. Initially permission was granted centrally for home working so managers could not say ‘no’ but now it is delegated to them. They have to look at the business impact and have a good reason to say ‘no’. Managers have to trust their employees and review them twice a year, with one review about the business outputs for the year and the other on individual development needs.

Conclusion

Whilst technology has helped with the management of flexible working in Microsoft there is still a need to ensure it has a positive impact on people's lives. So there is a Personal Excellence education programme for all employees. *"That is around getting people to take control of their lives and take some responsibility for the decisions they are making, the job they are doing, and the way they are living their lives".* To stop the technology being intrusive into people's private lives they are reminded that it can always be turned off! So as well as being a good example of the effective use of office technology, Microsoft is also a good example of taking a responsible view about work-life balance. *"I think no matter how good the technology gets it is still a relationship world and what starts as an electronic relationship I think still needs to end up as a human-to-human one at some stage."*

Case 3 – Nationwide Building Society**Business Context**

The Nationwide is, within the UK, the largest mutual building society, the fourth largest mortgage lender and the eighth largest retail banking, saving and lending organisation by asset size. The Nationwide offers a wide variety of financial products ranging from mortgages to savings accounts, current and credit card accounts and insurance services. These products are delivered through a variety of channels including online and telephone banking and an extensive branch network across the UK. The head office of the society, based in Swindon, provides a variety of central business support resources including ICT, personnel, product development and research and development, property portfolio management and financial asset/resources management.

Working Patterns

The variety of products offered, the distribution channels used, and the support services required mean that the Society has to provide a staffing level over and above the normal nine to five conventional working hours. For example, to deliver the required levels of customer service expected by members branches are open at lunchtime (09:00 until 17:00 Monday to Friday) and Saturday mornings (09:00 until 12:00) and the online and telephone banking facilities are provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Similarly the management of financial assets requires 24 hour working because of the 24-hour nature of the world's financial markets. Many of Nationwide's activities therefore require an appropriate mode of flexible working – part time, flexible hours, shift working, and mobile working to cover these variable working pattern requirements. Because of the distributed nature of the working environment – for example the branch network – it is also necessary for some employees to work remotely from their managers. The Nationwide has a number of formally recognised home workers as well as mobile workers such as financial consultants who go out and visit customers.

The Strategic View

The Nationwide sees a number of advantages, at corporate level, to flexible working including a better and more efficient use of existing office space and better asset utilisation; the ability to meet customers at a time and location best suited to them, for example in their own home in the evening; and improved employee productivity through less stress related to commuting and levels of higher motivation. They also consider there are advantages at employee level as well, for example a better work / life balance – being able to structure working commitments around family, or other personal, commitments.

Though no specific disadvantages were described, there were several issues associated with using flexible working, in all its forms. People have to be suitable to work from home – they have to be self-motivated, be able to use their own initiative, and be able to accept the reduced social interaction. Those individuals who perhaps need a lot of ‘stroking’, coaching and support are not considered suitable. With these requirements in mind, some applications for home working are rejected. Some managers find it difficult to cope with team members they cannot see which leads to issues around trust and the ability of the manager to operate in a more structured and planned way to make the best use of communications with the team member. Whilst there is no formal mechanism for providing support for managers who are uncomfortable with managing home workers, it was suggested that a number of practical steps could be taken by managers including organising regular face-to-face meetings to engender a sense of belonging to the team and quantifying what they want individuals to deliver. There is a lack of immediacy when communicating with colleagues, as you cannot just pop next door. In a similar vein there can also be a sense of isolation. There is also a feeling of reluctance amongst some people in the office to contact those working at home because “you ... feel as if you’re intruding.”

Despite these views on advantages and disadvantages, no formal review or quantification of benefits has been carried out – though this is being reviewed.

Flexible Working Implementation

The Nationwide has developed several key policies and procedures for dealing with home working. There is a policy on home working which covers such issues as data protection and risk, health and safety (working environment and equipment), security and dealing with confidential waste. A current acknowledged omission from the policy is the softer side of managing the home worker. This acknowledgement includes the idea that training should be provided for both manager and worker. There is a mechanism by which people can ask for home working and their requests – both in terms of the individual's suitability ("*matching the personality and so on is quite important*") and the appropriateness of the role itself. The process includes identifying personal and business benefits, the management of relationships with the rest of the team and how the manager will monitor the home worker's work. There is a special contract for those working from home – this sometimes leads to difficulties if a home worker, through a change in job role, has to move back into the office. The Nationwide have developed health and safety assessments for home workers and ensure that the right equipment is provided and that they have the right working environment.

Flexible Working Drivers

In terms of drivers to move to flexible working, the Nationwide considers itself to be ahead of the legislative process and sees the impetus coming from the business and employees rather than legislators. As a business they have offered career breaks, the ability to buy extra holiday entitlement and working from home over the last ten years or so – well in advance of current legislation. The business has also reacted to labour market forces, for example a change in social attitudes – a reluctance by employees to move location to meet the needs of their employer because the needs of partners and children are seen as of greater importance.

Management Competences

When discussing management competences it is considered that managers need to be:

- Good people managers – for example the manager must be able to coach, motivate, and communicate over the telephone;

- Very structured – for example telephone calls should be planned in advance;
- Clear about the outputs of the job;
- Keep team members informed – a little bit more communication perhaps;
- Have a more consultative style of management.

Several additional management skills were also identified as being important. The first was the ability to exhibit greater flexibility, tolerance and open-mindedness about working patterns realising that flexible working means people work at a time that suites them – agreeing and measuring outputs rather than when work is carried out. The second was the ability to trust the flexible worker.

Employee and Manager Reactions to Flexible Working

Several interesting points emerged around employees and manager reaction to flexible working. A recent annual staff survey had shown that people working from home were less satisfied than those based in the office. Whilst the survey did not seek to explore the reasons why someone may be satisfied or dissatisfied, the reduced social aspects offered by home working were suggested as a possible. It was also suggested that office politics and the need for the ambitious to have their “*face seen around the place, you need to be hobnobbing with the right people have your ear to the ground...*” acted as a blocker to the take up of home working, particularly at more senior levels in the organisation. The informal things picked up in the restaurant or coffee area are missing if you are remote from the office. It was considered that employees do not receive sufficient informal feedback (outside the more conventional annual or bi-annual formal performance review) on their performance on a regular basis and that this is exacerbated when someone works from home. Another observation is that some managers can be too controlling of people working at home by monitoring connection periods to corporate systems. Conversely home workers feel that they have to be seen to be doing something and therefore send e-mails at times outside the conventional nine to five. Finally, technologies such as the Blackberry are being piloted in the organisation and this is enabling people to work at any time and place. However it is considered that that this kind of working by managers puts team members under pressure.

Conclusion

Nationwide has embraced the idea of flexible working to meet the needs of its customers, the expectations of its employees and the demands of the business. It has put in place processes by which suitability, appropriateness and acceptability for home working can be assessed. Policies have also been developed to ensure home workers' health and safety are addressed, and the business is not compromised in terms of data protection and information confidentiality.

Case 4 – Thames Water

Background

Thames Water has been providing people with water for over 400 years, initially within the public sector and now as a private sector operator. Since the year 2000 Thames Water has been part of the RWE Group and is the managing company for RWE's international water business operation. RWE is the third largest water utility company in the world and also operates in electricity, gas and environmental services. 2002 turnover was €2,850m, of which the UK regulated business accounted for 60%. The UK & Ireland region combines the regulated water and wastewater activities of Thames Water Utilities Limited, providing services to 15 million people, alongside commercial interests including water industry outsourcing, utility contracting, and infrastructure management. There are a wide variety of job types ranging from meter readers, customer service agents, plant and infrastructure maintenance personnel, professional engineers and project managers, research and development staff, and product sampling and testing laboratory personnel. The average monthly number of employees in 2000 was 12,074 across the whole of Thames Water's businesses.

Working Patterns

A range of working patterns have been around for a very long time, for example 24 hr call-out to fix burst mains or failed pumping stations. Flexible working has now spread in other directions particularly in the call centre and other customer service areas which before privatisation would probably have been restricted to the traditional nine to five hours. Flexible working arrangements include various shift patterns, part-time working, and weekend working but the organisation only recognises three work bases: office, field and occasional home working.

Call centre workers are offered a wide variety of working hours and flexible patterns and are supplemented with temporary staff during the two peak billing periods. Office workers also have varied contracts including part time and some grades can work compressed weeks.

Field workers include those who are based in their vans for much of the day. After a detailed risk assessment screens in vans were repositioned to avoid the potential back injury hazard of twisting to look at a screen. Field workers also include those involved in the practical aspects of highway working, laying pipes, digging up roads etc. They have to be flexible to fit in with traffic flows, peak congestion and overnight working.

No staff are categorised as home workers but many do work from home occasionally, perhaps to complete a report or any task requiring uninterrupted concentration.

Drivers

The work of the organisation is increasingly enhanced by 24/7 operations, both from the point of view of highway working and to provide the necessary customer service levels. Some outside and highway work can also be influenced by the seasons e.g. longer days and better weather in the summer make it more efficient to dig holes and replace mains at that time of year. This kind of thinking leads to a focus on developing appropriate working patterns.

Although the legislation on flexible working requests for parents has not been a main driver, things like part time and flexible working for women did create a backlash of resentment amongst the predominantly male workforce. That led to a policy of allowing anyone to ask for part time working and an expectation that the default response from managers would be 'yes' to such requests. This has also resulted in a change of attitude from one where women were feeling ashamed about working part time, to one where it is much more acceptable for all, *"we don't want this to be an issue about working parents or people who are carers – we want it to become the way that we work."*

People now expect a reasonable work / life balance and sparing them the difficulties of commuting into the office at peak times or driving to a depot simply to pick up tools or a van can reduce stress levels. Such expectations also have an effect on recruitment, particularly of graduates and professionals because *"people in the labour market know that they can demand [greater flexibility] they want to spend their leisure time doing what they want to do, not sitting in the car on the M4."*

Challenges

In order to make it work there must be effective performance management with really good key performance measures and systems that monitor those measures.

Communication is identified as a particular issue, especially in an organisation trying to align people with a new vision and get them to appreciate how their work fits into the whole process of meeting customer demands. That is difficult even when everyone is co-located and becomes a greater challenge for teams that are working in more mobile and/or flexible ways.

Ensuring that the organisation meets its duty of care responsibility to employees regardless of where and when they are working is a challenge, particularly if increasing numbers are working from home on a regular basis.

Equitable solutions can be difficult to identify and implement for professionals within a traditional culture of working unpaid hours above contracted hours. There are problems around the expectations of actual hours to be worked by part timers and these difficulties of perception are especially difficult to resolve when considering compressed weeks.

It can be more difficult for managers to make assessments based on the suitability of individuals, their job and the particular business drivers, rather than simply apply a one size fits all approach. Equipping managers with the necessary skills and tools to accomplish this is an ongoing challenge.

Summary

Thames Water is a large organisation that has been through considerable change over recent years. They are developing their services to be more customer focussed and are recognising that flexible working is a business led rather than an HR led project and that means having to *“readdress all the health and safety, communication, company culture issues as part of that implementation.”*

8.0 Drawing The Analysis Together

The participants in this research programme were drawn from 19 different organisations and from different levels in those organizations and yet the results show considerable agreement about the impact of flexible working on management processes and competences. There are some differences between the results of the HR director interviews, the team manager interviews and the competence questionnaire but these are relatively minor. The questions asked in the HR director interviews concentrated on organisational issues whereas the team manager questions were aimed at management processes. Hence the same issue may appear to have differing importance depending on the emphasis in the interview and the viewpoint of the interviewee.

For example, cost savings seem to feature more highly in the advantages from the team manager interviews than for the HR directors. Conversely hardly any line managers mentioned retention or recruitment whereas that was very high in the HR director responses.

Managers identified the loss of control as being a disadvantage of flexible working but, whilst HR directors also identified the problems of coordinating and scheduling, they did not place emphasis on control. They could see that some managers would have problems with trusting and empowering employees and indeed empowerment was in the bottom ten competences as rated by managers. This may be related to team managers' lack of trust of their teams or it may be attributable to empowerment being an overused word and managers seeing some of the other soft management skills as being more relevant or important.

Higher reliance on information technology was seen as a disadvantage by managers and also by HR directors but again the emphasis was different, with managers worrying about monitoring and HR directors concerned about good communications and developing relationships. Both were in agreement that teamwork might suffer if most communication for flexible working was conducted through technology. Teamwork also featured in the top 10 competences for managers and the team members.

Despite differences in emphasis between the HR directors and the team managers there were many areas of common agreement between them and also with the team members.

Communication, for example, was a major concern for HR directors. It was identified as the most important of the nine management processes by team managers. Communication was also the first item in the managers' unprompted list of top issues and came first in the competence questionnaire results.

There is a close relationship between the most important management processes (from the manager interviews) and the top competences (from the questionnaires).

Top 3 management processes	Top 3 competences as rated by managers	Top 3 competences as rated by team members
Communication	Communication	Leadership
Leadership	Leadership	Leading by example
Training and development	Leading by example	Communication

The emphasis on communication is common through all levels of this study and there is agreement on the importance of training and development. 'Leadership', however, was mentioned by only one of the HR directors.

There was common agreement that managers have to work harder when managing flexible workers with team managers saying they find flexible workers "more difficult to manage". Despite flexible working needing better management, less than 20% of the managers had received any training specifically related to managing flexible workers. However, one of the conclusions from this research is that there does not seem to be a distinctive new competence profile needed by managers of flexible workers. Therefore more general management training will also contribute to effective management of remote workers.

HR directors described performance management and objective setting as essential to good remote management and this was mentioned by team managers in their unprompted choice of the most critical processes for managing remote work. They also ranked it in their top 10 competences. Another area of agreement was the importance of trust between managers and employees. This was raised by HR directors and managers and supported by an emphasis on

'building relationships' and 'valuing and supporting others' from both the managers' and team members' competence questionnaires.

9.0 Conclusions and Implications

The research set out to prove or disprove the following hypothesis:

“Managers of flexible workers manage in a different way than traditionally and they therefore have a different competence profile.”

The data collected from HR directors supported the view that managers are facing new challenges with work becoming more flexible and remote. They felt that it was harder to manage at a distance and consequently managers would have to be better at communicating, managing by outputs and trusting employees to manage their own time. However they did not identify this as a fundamentally different way of managing. Good management practices were needed in the office as well as when managing remotely but poor management was more likely to be exposed when flexible working was introduced. Being a good people manager was seen as essential, with greater than ‘normal’ abilities in motivating, coaching, planning, team building and communicating, all at a distance as well as face-to-face. So, whilst HR directors could identify a change in the priorities for managers the data from their interviews did not show that flexible working requires radically different competences in managers. They are arguably the same ones as for managing co-located workers but enhanced or better deployed.

The telephone interviews with team managers gave some useful insight into the importance of various processes when managing remote employees. They view communications, trust and objective setting as critical for managing remote workers, both now and in the future. Being able to trust employees, delegate tasks to them so that outputs can be measured and still keep good personal contact is clearly a challenge. They are worried about loss of control of remote employees but they do not consider control to be one of the most important management processes. So there is again a close relationship between good management practices for co-located workers and the additional challenges set by remote management. Whilst the research sample included some managers with all remote employees and some with none the majority had a mixture in their teams. The conclusion from this interview data is that the processes

used by team managers do not vary significantly in relation to the remoteness of the employee.

The questionnaire on competences showed a strong alignment between the views of managers and team members. This data also supported the conclusions from the interviews of HR directors and team managers, putting communications as a clear number one on the list. Communications was also listed as a key competence for the employees themselves. Despite this, there is not much evidence to show that IT is being used creatively to enhance communications. There is some use of mobile technology for e-mail but little use of instant messaging, computer conferencing or video conferencing.

The implication of these results is that although management processes are not radically different when dealing with flexible or remote employees they present more of a challenge and managers need a higher level of competence in key areas such as communications. There is very little management training aimed specifically to support flexible working and organisations are relying on existing development processes.

There was common agreement that work will continue to become more remote and flexible and that good managers will adapt to this. However organisations will need to ensure that they have good management processes and competent managers to succeed in this new working environment where weak management is more likely to have a negative impact but perhaps be less likely to be detected.

10.0 Recommendations and Further Work

This research shows that managing remote and flexible work presents challenges to organisations that can be met by good managers. The quality of management training, development and coaching is therefore critical in any organisation implementing flexible working. The relative importance of management processes and competences contained in this report can be used to help to structure management development activities which support new working practices.

Communications is clearly a critical process and competence and organisations should review how their managers are communicating with employees and identify areas for improvement. This is relevant to communications of hard facts such as business objectives and to the less tangible aspects of communications which contribute towards good teamwork and a motivational environment.

Technology can also play a key role in the communications process and organisations should review how they support remote working with applications that meet employees' needs. It is noticeable from the case studies that the IT and telecommunications companies included in this research were more advanced in their implementation of flexible working and gaining significant benefits from it.

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Appendix 1 – Round Table Brief

Briefing for Round Table discussion on Managing Tomorrow's Work on 26th July 2004

Prepared by Peter Thomson,
Director Future Work Forum, Henley Management College (14/7/04)

Background

As part of the Future Work Forum's and Henley Management College's ongoing research into how the world of work will develop in the future, a project sponsored by the Department for Work and Pensions and Microsoft (UK) (through its Tomorrow's Work project) was set up to research into the Office of the Future. Our study of research findings over the last three months has investigated the influencing factors behind implementation of the Office of the Future. This review covered the three key areas of Real Estate, Information Technology and Organisation/Human Resources and assessed the relative impact they have on organisational performance. We have concentrated on Information Work and looked for evidence of improved productivity and major changes in business processes and working practices.

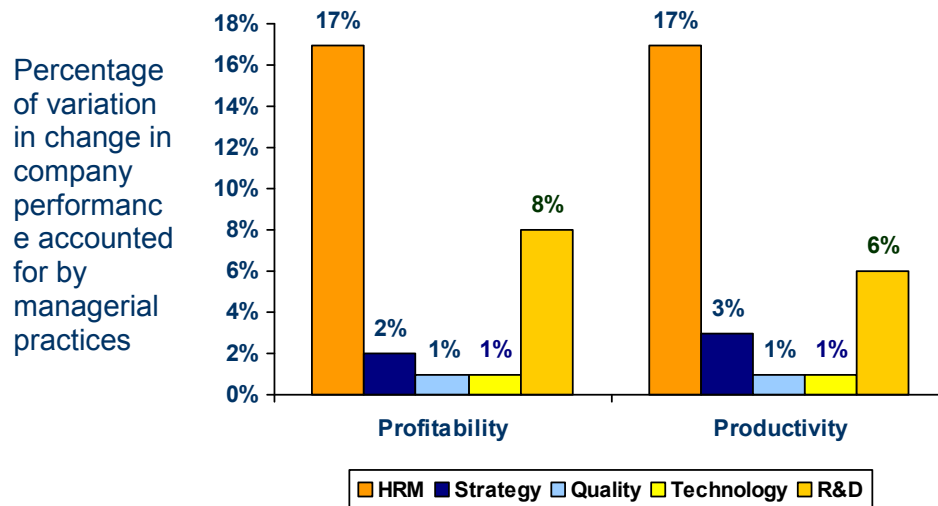
A clear conclusion has emerged from this work. ***Whilst Real Estate and IT are necessary enablers of the Office of The Future the key factors which ensure its success relate to Organisational Change and the way managers handle the Human Resource issues.***

This is reflected in an OECD report 'Knowledge, Work Organisation And Economic Growth' which states that: *"organisational change, understood as the implementation of new work practices such as team-work, flatter management structures and job rotation, tends to be associated with higher productivity growth. Interestingly, productivity gains of firms that combine new technology with organisational change are considerable, whereas there does not appear to be much economic benefit in implementing new technology alone. In other words, work needs to be re-organised to use ICT effectively."*

This is illustrated by the figure below:



Research conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) over the last few years provides further support to the conclusion. This has provided a broad set of results, but the key statistic is that 17% of variation in change in company performance is accounted for by Human Resource Management practices, whereas IT accounted for only 1%. (see figure below).



It is therefore critical to the success of the Office of the Future that we understand how to make the organisational and people changes in the most effective way. These are the factors that are most likely to make the difference between success and failure in implementing new information work practices. Consequently we have narrowed down the field of research to look at new working practices from three distinct perspectives.

1 Organisational Issues

Through a process of interviews with HR directors we will establish the key issues for their organisations in implementing new work practices. This is also a focus for the Round Table discussion.

2 Management Processes

Using a structured interview process we will identify the changes in management processes/practices necessary to support flexible and remote working. This will enable us to compare conventional managers with those managing new work practices.

3 Management Competences

A questionnaire, based on a set of national management standards, will be used to find out the competences needed by managers of new work practices. By then comparing competence requirements for more conventional and new working practices, it will show the skills required for organisations to be able to implement flexible/remote working and help them to identify ways of developing managers ready for the Office of the Future.

Management of Tomorrows Workers

The assumption we are making in this project is that the world of information work is continuing to become more mobile. This is a clear consequence of the advancements in IT that have been made over the last few years. Laptop computers are becoming as powerful as their desktop equivalents and the price differential has been significantly eroded. Broadband

and WiFi have enabled connectivity for people working remotely that mirrors the service they get at their desk.

We are also assuming that there will be an increasing social expectation that work can be flexed to fit in with home life. Information workers will expect to have more control over when and where they perform their jobs and not blindly accept the hours or locations dictated by their employers. There is also now legislation giving parents of young children the right to request flexible working and the assumption is that this is likely to be extended to a wider range of employees.

It is also reasonable to assume that organisations will continue to be under pressure to improve profits, save cost and improve levels of service. This will translate into a drive for increased productivity whilst improving the quality of product supplied to customers. The trend towards outsourcing and lean organisations will continue and business processes will be streamlined to improve effectiveness.

Against this background managers will be required to get the best return from their human resources whilst meeting the personal aims of the people they manage. To attract and retain the best people they will need to provide a stimulating work environment that recognises the need for a balance between home and work demands. This is likely to put pressure on managers to introduce flexible and mobile forms of work in order to improve business performance not just for social reasons.

There are now some good examples of new working practices which show that people who work flexibly are more productive than their desk-bound counterparts. They are also more loyal, less likely to leave and will probably take less time off work through sickness. It is also easier to recruit people if you can offer a wide range of working patterns. So it would therefore seem obvious that organisations should be adopting new work practices for their employees. Yet they are not.

This leads us to the discussion questions for the Round Table:

1. *Why does there still seem to be a fundamental reluctance to change working patterns?*
Is this simply resistance to change or is it because there are perceived disadvantages to implementing flexible or mobile working which outweigh the advantages.?
2. *Could it be that managers find it more difficult to cope with remote employees and they are therefore reluctant to make the change until they are forced to do so?* Or maybe organisations are worried about issues such as health and safety, security and insurance, all of which become more complicated with remote or home workers. Is organisational culture standing in the way of change, particularly where there is a strong emphasis on face-to-face communications?
3. *Is the problem that managers simply do not have the ability to manage remote employees?* Evidence which has been gathered by the Future Work Forum at Henley Management College points towards management competence as a key factor in implementing new work practices. Good managers find it relatively easy whilst inexperienced or poor managers are more likely to find it threatening.

4. *Do managers have an outdated view of their role?* Many managers see their role as controlling employees and keeping them working hard. They assume that without close management employees will slack off and reduce productivity. Some managers however take the view that their role is to create a motivational environment and empower their employees. These managers are able to delegate responsibility to employees and allow them to manage their own working patterns.
5. *Is the problem a fundamental lack of trust between managers and their people?* Managers have to be prepared to let go of control and trust that employees respond positively to the freedom and responsibility they are given. Instead of controlling the time and place that work gets done, managers can set targets for their employees and leave them to decide when and where they do the work. This however requires managers to measure and reward people on the output of their job not the effort put in. Much of current long-hours work culture rewards the person that works hard over the person that works efficiently and remote workers are not seen to be working long hours even if they are.
6. *Is there a problem with maintaining teamwork whilst introducing remote/mobile working?* Although many organisations have introduced the idea of 'virtual teams' there is still a strong need for people to get together in groups to work collaboratively. Work is a social activity and people get pleasure from contact with colleagues. Instead of relying on people working collaboratively because they are physically close together, managers need to introduce planned activities to reinforce teamwork. They also need to make use of a variety of communications channels in order to keep in touch with remote employees.

So it is clear that new working practices are both an opportunity and a threat for managers. In the Round Table meeting we will be discussing why some organisations embrace the change with open arms whilst others fight against it. We will list the key challenges and opportunities for organisations presented by Tomorrow's Work and identify the issues that arise from them. This will then be used as input into the next stage of research into the management of tomorrow's workers.

The purpose of this round table session is to:

1. Discuss each of the six questions identified above;
2. List issues around the degree to which organisations embrace the changes in working patterns;
3. Prioritise the list of issues.

Output from the session will be incorporated into a set of proceedings for the day. These will be provided for each delegate and provide valuable information to feed into the ongoing project looking at managing tomorrow's worker.

Appendix 2 – Data Collection Instruments

HR DIRECTOR INTERVIEW FRAMEWORK

Interviewee

Title

Company

Interviewers

Date

Location

Recording Y / N Filename : IC_

Question 1

The first question is do you have any general definitions for what you consider as flexible and mobile working? [Do you have some examples of each?]

Question 2

How would you define flexible/mobile working in the context of you organisation? [If any different from your general definitions]

Question 3

In general terms what do consider are the advantages of flexible and mobile working?
[Do you have some examples of each?]

Question 4

In general terms what do consider are the disadvantages of flexible and mobile working?
[Do you have some examples of each?]

Question 5

To what extent is flexible/mobile working utilised in your organisation?

Question 6

How long has the company been using flexible/mobile working?

Question 7

What were/are the main reasons and/or drivers for implementing flexible/mobile working in your organization?

[EU and national government legislation?]

[Work / life balance?]

[Staff drivers eg demand it, needed to attract right talent]

Question 8

What do you think are the trends with mobile working, both in your organisation and in general?

Question 9

What do you see as the challenges faced by your organisation regarding mobile working, both now and in the future?

Question 10

Do you have any strategies in place to deal with these challenges?

Question 11A

Do you perceive that managers have any difficulties in coping with the introduction of flexible/mobile working?

Question 11B

If so, what strategies do you have in place to deal with them?
[Training?]

Question 12

What competences do you think managers need to manage mobile or flexible employees?

Question 13

What management processes do you think need to be in place to manage mobile or flexible employees?

Question 14

What kinds of technology do you use to facilitate mobile and flexible working?

Any other comments / questions:

TEAM MANAGER STRUCTURED TELEPHONE INTERVIEW FRAMEWORK**MTW – Team Manager Interview**

Interviewee Name	
Ref No	
Job Title	
Company	
Date	
Interviewee	

Q1. Profile

1A	What is your role? e.g. manager/ project manager, team leader etc	
1B	How many people do you manage?	
1C	What is the nature of their tasks and function (briefly explain)?	
1D	How long has the task/function/team been in existence in its' present format?	
1E	Are any of the people you currently manage considered to be mobile workers eg from home, other offices etc	

Q2. Your Experience

2A	How long have you been a manager (of mobile workers)?	
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Q3. Training

3A	Have you had any management training, formal or otherwise?	
3B	<div style="background-color: yellow;">[NB - for managers of mobile workers only]</div> Have you had any management training, formal or otherwise specifically related to the management of flexible/mobile workers?	

Q4. Advantages/Disadvantages (Managers of mobile workers only)

4A	What do you consider to be the main advantages in using mobile workers?	
4B	What do you consider to be the main disadvantages in using mobile workers?	

Q5. Communication

When managing your team how do you rate the importance of communication?	Not at all important		Neither important nor unimportant		Very important
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

5.A How often, on average, do you have face-to-face meetings with your team individually?

1	4 times a month or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	1-3 times per month	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Once a month or less	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Almost never	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5.B How often, on average, do you have face-to-face meetings with your team?

1	4 times a month or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	1-3 times per month	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Once a month or less	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Almost never	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5.C Which of the following means of communication do you use when communicating with the (mobile) team?

1	Telephone (including mobile)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Telephone conferencing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Video Conferencing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Email	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Groupware/collaborative software e.g. Lotus Notes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	Instant messaging e.g. Yahoo Messenger	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	Text messaging	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	Face-to-face	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5.D Which of these do you consider to be the most effective means of communicating with your team members?

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Q6. Training & Development

When managing your team how important do you consider their training & development?	Not at all important		Neither important nor unimportant		Very important
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Q6.A Which of the following methods do you use for training & development?

1	Formal courses (internal i.e. company)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Formal courses (externally i.e. other organisations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Coaching by you	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Coaching by others	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q6.B How are the methods of training & development you have identified delivered?

1	Mostly face-to-face	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Mostly computer based/distance learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Approximately 50% f2f and 50% computer based/distance learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q7. Rewards & Motivation

When managing your team how do you rate the importance of Rewards and Motivation?	Not at all important		Neither important nor unimportant		Very important
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Q.7A Which reward & motivation schemes do you use?

1	Formal recognition scheme (non-financial) e.g. employee of the month	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	A paid bonus scheme	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Merit based pay increase/promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q 7B How do you assess your team members to determine whether a reward is merited?

1	Achievement of set objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Feedback from other managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Feedback from other team members	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Feedback from other teams	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Feedback from customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q8. Empowerment, Delegation and Decision making

When managing your team how do you rate the importance of team member consultation/ involvement to your decision-making?	Not at all important		Neither important nor unimportant		Very important
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Q8.A How often does your team refer to you to make a decision?

1	Daily or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Several times a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Several times a month	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Once or twice a month	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Less than once a month	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q8. B Indicate which of the following statements are applicable to your team?

1	Team members can choose the hours they work	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Team members can choose the days they work	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Team members can choose the place they work from	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	We count the quantity of hours team members work	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Team members get paid/rewarded for overtime	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q9. Objective Setting

When managing your team how do you rate the importance of objective setting?	Not at all important		Neither important nor unimportant		Very important
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Q9.A How often do you set your team members targets/goals?

1	Daily	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Annually	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q9 B

Are your team members measured on their performance against these targets / goals?	YES	NO	
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	
If YES, how is this done? (Brief explanation)			

Q9 C Which of the following statements reflects most closely your typical approach when managing the team?

1	I regularly check on how team members are progressing against agreed targets and objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	I leave my team to get on with the work they are targeted to do as they will tell me when they have completed the work or if there are any problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	I agree with my team members a level of reporting to monitor objective/target progress	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q10. Planning & Organizing (Scheduling)

When managing your team how do you rate the importance of planning & organizing?	Not at all important		Neither important nor unimportant		Very important
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Q.10A Which of the following statements is most true?

1	I set the daily /weekly work schedule for team members	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Team members set their own daily/weekly work schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Team members and I agree a project plan which includes a daily/weekly work schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q11. Monitoring, Control and Evaluating

When managing your team how do you rate the importance of Monitoring, Control and Evaluating?	Not at all important		Neither important nor unimportant		Very important
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Q11.A How often do you monitor your team member's work?

1	Daily	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q11 B How do you monitor your team's work progress?

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Q12. Leading

When managing your team how do you rate the importance of leadership?	Not at all important		Neither important nor unimportant		Very important
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Q13. Team Building

When managing your team how do you rate the importance of team building?	Not at all important		Neither important nor unimportant		Very important
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Q13.A How often do you facilitate/encourage informal and/or formal team building activities?

1	At least once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	At least once per month	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Several times per year	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Once per year	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q13.B How often do you facilitate/encourage informal and/or formal social interaction amongst the team?

1	At least once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	At least once per month	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Several times per year	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Once per year	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q14

What do you think are the top three management practices that are critical for managing remote / workers?	
1	
2	
3	

Do you think that this will change in the future?	YES	NO	
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	
If YES, in what way? (Brief explanation)			

TEAM MANAGER MANAGEMENT COMPETENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

MANAGING TOMORROW'S WORKERS

TEAM MANAGER

COMPETENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

1A	Your Name		
1B	Your Organisation	1C	How many people work for your organization (the whole company)
1D	What gender are you? Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/>		
1E	Participant Number – from covering e-mail		

2A	Is all your work company office based? YES/NO				
2B	If NO , what percentage of your time is spent working elsewhere?				
	0 to 10% <input type="checkbox"/>	21 to 30% <input type="checkbox"/>	41 to 50% <input type="checkbox"/>	61 to 70% <input type="checkbox"/>	81 to 90% <input type="checkbox"/>
	11 to 20% <input type="checkbox"/>	31 to 40% <input type="checkbox"/>	51 to 60% <input type="checkbox"/>	71 to 80% <input type="checkbox"/>	91 to 100% <input type="checkbox"/>
2C	If NO , in which of these locations do you work (please tick all that apply)?				
	Home <input type="checkbox"/>	Car <input type="checkbox"/>			
	Client premises <input type="checkbox"/>	Hotels <input type="checkbox"/>			
	Serviced office <input type="checkbox"/>	Train <input type="checkbox"/>			
		Plane <input type="checkbox"/>			

3A	Please tick the statement that most accurately reflects your working pattern:	
	Fixed hours, e.g. 9am –5.30pm	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Flexible around core hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Completely flexible i.e. arrive/start and leave/finish anytime	<input type="checkbox"/>

4A	Do you work full time? YES/NO
4B	If NO , how many hours a week do you work?

5A	What percentage of your time do you spend working away from your team?			
	0 to 10% []	31 to 40% []	61 to 70% []	81 to 90% []
	11 to 20% []	41 to 50% []	71 to 80% []	91 to 100% []
	21 to 30% []	51 to 60% []		

The rest of this questionnaire is based on a standard set of management competences and we would like you to do two things:

1. In column A, for each of the competences, please give them a score between 1 and 10, according to how important you believe they are for managers, where **10** is **very important** and **1** is **not at all important**.
2. In column B, for each of the competences please give yourself a score between 1 and 10, for how well, as a manager, you display this competence, where **10** is **highly competent** and **1** is **not at all competent**.

		A	B
Competence	Competence Definition	Score out of 10 for importance	Your score out of 10
Acting assertively	Confident and direct in dealing with others.		
Analysing	Gathers relevant information, considers a range of factors, understands complexities and sees relationships.		
Assessing	Weighs up the value of factors, actions and/or outcomes.		
Balancing competing needs and interests	Strives to understand a range of viewpoints and takes actions objectively. Shows interest in and understanding of others' needs and concerns.		
Benchmarking	Uses external reference points and develops criteria for measurement.		
Building consensus	Makes every effort to gain widespread agreement and develop collective opinions.		
Building relationships	Initiates and develops positive and productive working relationships with a wide variety of individuals and groups based on trust.		
Coaching	Promotes learning and development, enhancing current performance and facilitating career development.		
Communicating	Ensures a smooth flow of information is exchanged between self and others through clear, confident speaking and well-structured writing, and listens effectively.		
Consulting	Takes into account the views of others and encourages the open expression of ideas.		

		A	B
Competence	Competence Definition	Score out of 10 for importance	Your score out of 10
Contingency planning	Weighs likelihood of future events and formulates appropriate plans to deal with such eventualities.		
Decision-making	Makes timely and sound decisions; Takes decisive and effective action after exploring the options and considering the short and long-term implications.		
Delegating	Allocates tasks to others clearly and fully, monitoring progress regularly and giving timely support where necessary.		
Demonstrating	Shows others by reasoning, evidence and/or own behaviour.		
Empathising	Shows imaginative understanding of others' feelings.		
Empowering	Gives power or authority to others, trusting them to make their own decisions.		
Evaluating	Reaches sound judgements after careful and systematic comparison between relevant facts.		
Forecasting	Using wide range of information predicts or calculates in advance.		
Influencing and persuading	Presents key issues in a persuasive and balanced manner, getting others to willingly change their minds and resolving deadlocked situations.		
Information management	Receives, collates, stores, retrieves, sifts and transmits information in a timely and effective manner.		
Innovating	Generates and champions new ideas and initiatives; initiates new or modified approaches and creative ideas; seizes opportunities presented by wider change processes.		
Inspiring	Has a stimulating and beneficial effect, arouses others to action.		
Instructing	Furnishes others with appropriate information and communicates actions clearly.		
Interviewing	Conducts structured interviews, keeping an open mind and giving the interviewee every opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge/ability/opinions.		
Involving others	Includes a variety of others in decisions, thought processes and ideas.		
Leadership	Takes initiative; anticipates problems, and suggests solutions; steps forward to address		

		A	B
Competence	Competence Definition	Score out of 10 for importance	Your score out of 10
	difficult issues; takes ownership and inspires confidence in others.		
Leading by example	Demonstrates role model behaviours, acting in a responsible and professional manner and working to the highest standards motivating others to maximise their performance.		
Learning	Takes responsibility for continuous personal development and absorbs new ideas openly.		
Managing conflict	Confronts conflict in a constructive and conciliatory manner.		
Mentoring	Provides sound advice to more junior staff members.		
Monitoring	Checks the quality or performance of activities on a regular basis.		
Motivating	Encourages others to maximise their performance by providing both tangible and intangible incentives, demonstrates enthusiasm and leadership.		
Negotiating	Comes to sound agreements with others based on constructive exchange of views and compromise, achieving the best solution for all.		
Networking	Uses formal channels, informal networks and works within organisational politics to accomplish goals. Understands, supports, and utilises a personal network of colleagues.		
Obtaining feedback	Seeks out information and opinions on own and team's activities and performance.		
Planning	Develops plans that are effective in meeting goals. Accurately assesses resource needs and co-ordinates resources in order to meet goals.		
Presenting information	Conveys information clearly and accurately to a wide range of recipients.		
Prioritising	Regularly reviews relative importance and urgency of activities and decisions.		
Problem solving	Identifies sound and effective solutions to a variety of different problems.		
Providing feedback	Gives information and opinion on the activities and performance of others in a constructive and sensitive manner.		
Questioning	Elicits information through a range of open and closed questioning techniques.		

		A	B
Competence	Competence Definition	Score out of 10 for importance	Your score out of 10
Reflecting	Regularly thinks or meditates on past actions to facilitate improvement and learning.		
Reporting	Presents coherent, well structured information in a format appropriate to the intended audience.		
Reviewing	Re-examines performance of self and others to form critical conclusions.		
Risk management	Assesses risks objectively and manages working practices, and the workplace in a way that minimises unnecessary risk to customers, self & staff.		
Scenario Building	Formulates alternative sequences of events and outcomes to illuminate future options and contingency planning.		
Self-assessment	Understands and regularly reviews own performance, emotions and 'triggers' and how they impact self and others. Monitors own strengths and limitations.		
Setting objectives	Focuses on producing results that are in alignment with the organisation's business plans; describes targets and outcomes clearly and defines measurable goals.		
Stress management	Demonstrates resilience and level headedness, maintaining effective performance in pressurised conditions and minimising unhealthy pressure on subordinates.		
Team building	Shows commitment to team objectives; values each person's contribution; provides support to colleagues, encourages participation and involvement; contributes effort to the team's work.		
Thinking creatively	Combines differing perspectives and approaches in imaginative ways. Does not simply follow precedent but has original ideas and novel solutions to problems.		
Thinking strategically	Develops a clear longer-term vision which is aligned with future demands, strategic direction and external influences.		
Thinking systematically	Draws logical and accurate conclusions, tracing cause and effect through sometimes complex information.		
Thinking with a focus on customers	Anticipates and identifies customer needs; exceeds customer expectations; responds with urgency to customer issues; continually		

		A	B
Competence	Competence Definition	Score out of 10 for importance	Your score out of 10
	searches for ways to increase customer satisfaction.		
Time management	Effectively manages own workload, prioritising effectively and consistently meeting deadlines.		
Valuing and supporting others	Promotes respect for all people, recognises differing needs and expectations and challenges all oppressive practice.		

If you work remotely from your team what are the top three competences you consider are necessary for YOU to be an effective remote manager.

1	
2	
3	

TEAM MEMBER MANAGEMENT COMPETENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

MANAGING TOMORROW'S WORKERS

TEAM MEMBER

COMPETENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

1A	Your Name		
1B	Your Organisation	1C	How many people work for your organization (the whole company)
1D	What gender are you? Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/>		
1E	Participant Number – from covering e-mail		

2A	Is all your work company office based? YES/NO				
2B	If NO , what percentage of your time is spent working elsewhere?				
	0 to 10% <input type="checkbox"/>	21 to 30% <input type="checkbox"/>	41 to 50% <input type="checkbox"/>	61 to 70% <input type="checkbox"/>	81 to 90% <input type="checkbox"/>
	11 to 20% <input type="checkbox"/>	31 to 40% <input type="checkbox"/>	51 to 60% <input type="checkbox"/>	71 to 80% <input type="checkbox"/>	91 to 100% <input type="checkbox"/>
2C	If NO , in which of these locations do you work (please tick all that apply)?				
	Home <input type="checkbox"/>	Car <input type="checkbox"/>			
	Client premises <input type="checkbox"/>	Hotels <input type="checkbox"/>			
	Serviced office <input type="checkbox"/>	Train <input type="checkbox"/>			
		Plane <input type="checkbox"/>			

3A	Please tick the statement that most accurately reflects your working pattern:	
	Fixed hours, e.g. 9am –5.30pm	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Flexible around core hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Completely flexible i.e. arrive/start and leave/finish anytime	<input type="checkbox"/>

4A	Do you work full time? YES/NO
4B	If NO , how many hours a week do you work?

5A	What percentage of your time do you spend working away from your manager?			
	0 to 10% []	31 to 40% []	61 to 70% []	81 to 90% []
	11 to 20% []	41 to 50% []	71 to 80% []	91 to 100% []
	21 to 30% []	51 to 60% []		

The rest of this questionnaire is based on a standard set of management competences and we would like you to do two things:

3. In column A, for each of the competences, please give them a score between 1 and 10, according to how important you believe they are for managers, where **10** is **very important** and **1** is **not at all important**.
4. In column B for each of the competences, please give your manager a score between 1 and 10 for how well your manager displays this competence, where **10** is **highly competent** and **1** is **not at all competent**.

		A	B
Competence	Competence Definition	Score out of 10 for importance	Your manager's score out of 10
Acting assertively	Confident and direct in dealing with others.		
Analysing	Gathers relevant information, considers a range of factors, understands complexities and sees relationships.		
Assessing	Weights up the value of factors, actions and/or outcomes.		
Balancing competing needs and interests	Strives to understand a range of viewpoints and takes actions objectively. Shows interest in and understanding of others' needs and concerns.		
Benchmarking	Uses external reference points and develops criteria for measurement.		
Building consensus	Makes every effort to gain widespread agreement and develop collective opinions.		
Building relationships	Initiates and develops positive and productive working relationships with a wide variety of individuals and groups based on trust.		
Coaching	Promotes learning and development, enhancing current performance and facilitating career development.		
Communicating	Ensures a smooth flow of information is exchanged between self and others through clear, confident speaking and well-structured writing, and listens effectively.		
Consulting	Takes into account the views of others and encourages the open expression of ideas.		

		A	B
Competence	Competence Definition	Score out of 10 for importance	Your manager's score out of 10
Contingency planning	Weighs likelihood of future events and formulates appropriate plans to deal with such eventualities.		
Decision-making	Makes timely and sound decisions; Takes decisive and effective action after exploring the options and considering the short and long-term implications.		
Delegating	Allocates tasks to others clearly and fully, monitoring progress regularly and giving timely support where necessary.		
Demonstrating	Shows others by reasoning, evidence and/or own behaviour.		
Empathising	Shows imaginative understanding of others' feelings.		
Empowering	Gives power or authority to others, trusting them to make their own decisions.		
Evaluating	Reaches sound judgements after careful and systematic comparison between relevant facts.		
Forecasting	Using wide range of information predicts or calculates in advance.		
Influencing and persuading	Presents key issues in a persuasive and balanced manner, getting others to willingly change their minds and resolving deadlocked situations.		
Information management	Receives, collates, stores, retrieves, sifts and transmits information in a timely and effective manner.		
Innovating	Generates and champions new ideas and initiatives; initiates new or modified approaches and creative ideas; seizes opportunities presented by wider change processes.		
Inspiring	Has a stimulating and beneficial effect, arouses others to action.		
Instructing	Furnishes others with appropriate information and communicates actions clearly.		
Interviewing	Conducts structured interviews, keeping an open mind and giving the interviewee every opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge/ability/opinions.		
Involving others	Includes a variety of others in decisions, thought processes and ideas.		
Leadership	Takes initiative; anticipates problems and		

		A	B
Competence	Competence Definition	Score out of 10 for importance	Your manager's score out of 10
	suggests solutions; steps forward to address difficult issues; takes ownership and inspires confidence in others.		
Leading by example	Demonstrates role model behaviours, acting in a responsible and professional manner and working to the highest standards motivating others to maximise their performance.		
Learning	Takes responsibility for continuous personal development and absorbs new ideas openly.		
Managing conflict	Confronts conflict in a constructive and conciliatory manner.		
Mentoring	Provides sound advice to more junior staff members.		
Monitoring	Checks the quality or performance of activities on a regular basis.		
Motivating	Encourages others to maximise their performance by providing both tangible and intangible incentives, demonstrates enthusiasm and leadership.		
Negotiating	Comes to sound agreements with others based on constructive exchange of views and compromise, achieving the best solution for all.		
Networking	Uses formal channels, informal networks and works within organisational politics to accomplish goals. Understands, supports, and utilises a personal network of colleagues.		
Obtaining feedback	Seeks out information and opinions on own and team's activities and performance.		
Planning	Develops plans that are effective in meeting goals. Accurately assesses resource needs and co-ordinates resources in order to meet goals.		
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Problem solving	Identifies sound and effective solutions to a variety of different problems.		
Providing feedback	Gives information and opinion on the activities and performance of others in a constructive and sensitive manner.		
Questioning	Elicits information through a range of open and closed questioning techniques.		

		A	B
Competence	Competence Definition	Score out of 10 for importance	Your manager's score out of 10
Reflecting	Regularly thinks or meditates on past actions to facilitate improvement and learning.		
Reporting	Presents coherent, well structured information in a format appropriate to the intended audience.		
Reviewing	Re-examines performance of self and others to form critical conclusions.		
Risk management	Assesses risks objectively and manages working practices, and the workplace in a way that minimises unnecessary risk to customers, self & staff.		
Scenario Building	Formulates alternative sequences of events and outcomes to illuminate future options and contingency planning.		
Self-assessment	Understands and regularly reviews own performance, emotions and 'triggers' and how they impact self and others. Monitors own strengths and limitations.		
Setting objectives	Focuses on producing results that are in alignment with the organisation's business plans; describes targets and outcomes clearly and defines measurable goals.		
Stress management	Demonstrates resilience and level headedness, maintaining effective performance in pressurised conditions and minimising unhealthy pressure on subordinates.		
Team building	Shows commitment to team objectives; values each person's contribution; provides support to colleagues, encourages participation and involvement; contributes effort to the team's work.		
Thinking creatively	Combines differing perspectives and approaches in imaginative ways. Does not simply follow precedent but has original ideas and novel solutions to problems.		
Thinking strategically	Develops a clear longer-term vision which is aligned with future demands, strategic direction and external influences.		
Thinking systematically	Draws logical and accurate conclusions, tracing cause and effect through sometimes complex information.		
Thinking with a focus on customers	Anticipates and identifies customer needs; exceeds customer expectations; responds with urgency to customer issues; continually		

		A	B
Competence	Competence Definition	Score out of 10 for importance	Your manager's score out of 10
	searches for ways to increase customer satisfaction.		
Time management	Effectively manages own workload, prioritising effectively and consistently meeting deadlines.		
Valuing and supporting others	Promotes respect for all people, recognises differing needs and expectations and challenges all oppressive practice.		

If you work remotely from your manager what are the top three competences you consider are necessary for YOU to be effective.

1	
2	
3	

Appendix 3 – Complete Competence Ranking Tables

Competence Rankings For All Questionnaire Respondents

All Rank	Competence	Importance to All	Degree to Which Exhibited by Team Manager	Team Manager Gap
1	Leadership	9.14	8.05	1.09
2	Communicating	9.04	7.83	1.21
3	Leading by example	8.98	7.96	1.02
4	Acting assertively	8.90	8.26	0.64
5	Team building	8.85	8.02	0.83
6	Building relationships	8.83	7.90	0.93
7	Valuing and supporting others	8.82	8.08	0.73
8	Decision-making	8.80	7.86	0.94
9	Coaching	8.76	7.77	0.99
10	Stress management	8.69	7.61	1.07
11	Motivating	8.68	7.46	1.22
12	Instructing	8.66	7.53	1.13
13	Delegating	8.64	7.61	1.03
14	Balancing competing needs and interests	8.62	7.50	1.13
15	Setting objectives	8.61	7.98	0.63
16	Thinking with a focus on customers	8.59	7.99	0.60
17	Analysing	8.57	7.79	0.78
18	Time management	8.54	8.04	0.50
19=	Prioritising	8.52	7.51	1.01
19=	Managing conflict	8.52	7.31	1.21
21	Inspiring	8.49	7.41	1.07
22	Consulting	8.47	7.72	0.75
23	Planning	8.46	7.50	0.95
24	Assessing	8.42	7.80	0.62
25=	Mentoring	8.39	7.86	0.53
25=	Providing feedback	8.39	7.69	0.71

25=	Problem solving	8.39	7.73	0.65
28	Presenting information	8.38	7.73	0.64
29	Thinking strategically	8.37	7.63	0.73
30	Influencing and persuading	8.33	7.74	0.59
31	Risk management	8.26	7.48	0.78
32	Learning	8.24	7.59	0.65
33	Demonstrating	8.18	7.35	0.83
34=	Empowering	8.17	8.59	-0.41
34=	Monitoring	8.17	7.31	0.86
34=	Negotiating	8.17	7.40	0.76
37=	Reporting	8.16	7.70	0.46
37=	Evaluating	8.16	7.51	0.64
39	Obtaining feedback	8.14	7.18	0.95
40	Contingency planning	8.13	7.32	0.81
41	Thinking creatively	8.09	7.65	0.44
42	Involving others	8.06	7.45	0.61
43=	Innovating	7.99	7.47	0.52
43=	Networking	7.99	7.82	0.17
43=	Interviewing	7.99	7.49	0.50
46=	Information management	7.94	7.25	0.70
46=	Thinking systematically	7.94	7.57	0.37
48	Reviewing	7.85	7.21	0.64
49	Empathising	7.82	7.11	0.71
50	Self-assessment	7.81	6.82	0.99
51	Reflecting	7.69	7.12	0.57
52	Building consensus	7.62	7.08	0.54
53	Questioning	7.50	7.39	0.12
54	Forecasting	7.44	6.89	0.55
55	Benchmarking	7.27	6.84	0.42
56	Scenario Building	7.23	6.83	0.39

Competence Rankings For Team Manager Questionnaire Respondents

Rank	Competence	Importance to Team Member	Degree to Which Exhibited by Team Manager	Team Manager Gap
1=	Leadership	9.44	8.07	1.37
1=	Communicating	9.44	8.22	1.22
3	Leading by example	9.15	7.93	1.22
4=	Valuing and supporting others	9.00	8.22	0.78
4=	Decision-making	9.00	7.93	1.07
6=	Acting assertively	8.96	8.00	0.96
6=	Building relationships	8.96	8.07	0.89
8	Setting objectives	8.93	7.59	1.33
9	Prioritising	8.89	7.78	1.11
10=	Team building	8.85	7.81	1.04
10=	Instructing	8.85	7.52	1.33
10=	Balancing competing needs and interests	8.85	7.74	1.11
10=	Thinking with a focus on customers	8.85	7.56	1.30
14	Coaching	8.81	7.78	1.04
15	Time management	8.74	7.81	0.93
16	Delegating	8.70	7.37	1.33
17	Stress management	8.63	7.41	1.22
18=	Analysing	8.59	7.81	0.78
18=	Planning	8.59	7.07	1.52
20	Providing feedback	8.56	7.70	0.85
21	Motivating	8.52	7.52	1.00
22=	Consulting	8.48	7.85	0.63
22=	Assessing	8.48	7.74	0.74
24=	Problem solving	8.48	7.59	0.89
24=	Thinking strategically	8.48	7.15	1.33
26=	Inspiring	8.44	7.26	1.19
26=	Influencing and persuading	8.44	7.56	0.89
28=	Managing conflict	8.41	7.41	1.00
28=	Learning	8.41	7.22	1.19

30=	Presenting information	8.37	7.67	0.70
30=	Demonstrating	8.37	7.44	0.93
32	Monitoring	8.33	7.00	1.33
33	Mentoring	8.30	7.81	0.48
34	Evaluating	8.19	7.26	0.93
35=	Risk management	8.15	7.04	1.11
35=	Reporting	8.15	7.63	0.52
35=	Thinking creatively	8.15	7.22	0.93
38	Contingency planning	8.11	6.81	1.30
39=	Obtaining feedback	8.04	6.70	1.33
39=	Networking	8.04	7.52	0.52
41=	Innovating	7.96	7.00	0.96
41=	Reviewing	7.96	7.04	0.93
41=	Self-assessment	7.96	6.74	1.22
44=	Negotiating	7.89	7.30	0.59
44=	Questioning	7.89	7.22	0.67
46	Thinking systematically	7.85	6.85	1.00
47	Empowering	7.81	8.41	-0.59
48=	Involving others	7.78	7.11	0.67
48=	Information management	7.78	7.04	0.74
50	Interviewing	7.74	6.89	0.85
51	Empathising	7.59	7.11	0.48
52	Reflecting	7.56	6.59	0.96
53	Forecasting	7.52	6.22	1.30
54	Scenario Building	7.26	6.11	1.15
55	Building consensus	7.15	6.22	0.93
56	Benchmarking	6.85	5.63	1.22

Competence Rankings For Team Member Questionnaire Respondents

Rank	Competence	Importance to All	Degree to Which Exhibited by Team Manager	Team Manager Gap
1	Leadership	9.04	8.04	1.00
2	Leading by example	8.93	7.98	0.95
3	Communicating	8.90	7.70	1.21
4	Acting assertively	8.88	8.34	0.54
5	Team building	8.85	8.09	0.77
6	Building relationships	8.78	7.84	0.94
7	Valuing and supporting others	8.76	8.04	0.72
8	Coaching	8.74	7.77	0.98
9=	Decision-making	8.73	7.84	0.89
9=	Motivating	8.73	7.44	1.29
11	Stress management	8.71	7.68	1.02
12	Delegating	8.62	7.70	0.93
13	Instructing	8.60	7.54	1.06
14=	Analysing	8.56	7.78	0.78
14=	Managing conflict	8.56	7.27	1.28
16	Balancing competing needs and interests	8.55	7.41	1.13
17	Setting objectives	8.51	8.11	0.40
18=	Thinking with a focus on customers	8.50	8.15	0.35
18=	Inspiring	8.50	7.46	1.04
20	Time management	8.48	8.11	0.37
21	Consulting	8.46	7.67	0.79
22	Mentoring	8.43	7.88	0.55
23	Planning	8.41	7.65	0.77

24=	Prioritising	8.40	7.43	0.98
24=	Assessing	8.40	7.82	0.59
26	Presenting information	8.38	7.76	0.62
27	Problem solving	8.35	7.78	0.57
28	Providing feedback	8.34	7.68	0.66
29	Thinking strategically	8.33	7.79	0.54
30=	Influencing and persuading	8.29	7.80	0.49
30=	Risk management	8.29	7.62	0.67
30=	Empowering	8.29	8.65	-0.35
33	Negotiating	8.26	7.44	0.82
34	Learning	8.18	7.71	0.48
35	Obtaining feedback	8.17	7.34	0.83
36=	Reporting	8.16	7.72	0.44
36=	Involving others	8.16	7.56	0.60
38	Evaluating	8.15	7.60	0.55
39	Contingency planning	8.13	7.49	0.65
40=	Demonstrating	8.12	7.32	0.80
40=	Monitoring	8.12	7.41	0.71
42	Interviewing	8.08	7.69	0.39
43	Thinking creatively	8.07	7.79	0.28
44=	Innovating	8.00	7.62	0.38
44=	Information management	8.00	7.32	0.68
46	Networking	7.98	7.93	0.05
47	Thinking systematically	7.96	7.80	0.16
48	Empathising	7.89	7.11	0.78
49	Reviewing	7.82	7.27	0.55

50	Building consensus	7.78	7.37	0.41
51	Self-assessment	7.76	6.84	0.91
52	Reflecting	7.73	7.29	0.44
53	Forecasting	7.41	7.11	0.30
54	Benchmarking	7.40	7.24	0.16
55	Questioning	7.38	7.44	-0.06
56	Scenario Building	7.22	7.07	0.15