

Letting go of the foosball table: Why we need a new work world



What New Work really means: True integrity and employee satisfaction (Photo: iStock)

Times have changed: Nobody is interested in the 40-hour work week and overly long hours anymore. Yet how exactly should work be structured in the future in order to reconcile productivity, efficiency and satisfaction?

Digitisation has revolutionized today's working world. The term "New Work" is increasingly popping up – but for many people it is (still) nothing more than a buzzword that has little relevance to their own working environment.

Working from home is already a fixture of New Work. Even though the nature of work is obviously changing, companies all too often underestimate the far-reaching consequences that adhering to an outdated corporate culture and rigid structures can have on their success.

The term "New Work" was coined more than 30 years ago and addresses human liberty in a professional context. Frithjof Bergmann, an Austrian-American social philosopher and founder of the New Work movement, argues that the current job system will become obsolete and that many jobs will be lost in the future due to digitisation and automation. As a result, employees are faced more than ever with the question of how they want to shape their professional future, which is precisely where the New Work concept comes in.

From problem to solution

The central question that needs answering is: how can people bring their personality, ideas and wishes into the workplace in order to realise their full potential? Having a job that motivates you to get up for, that you enjoy putting all

your energy into, and that has projects that challenge and encourage each individual has thus far only been wishful thinking for most employees.

The reality is usually a different one: Dusty organisational structures and lengthy processes dominate everyday working life. Particularly in larger companies and groups that have not (yet) adapted their corporate culture, a high percentage of employees are unsatisfied with rigid communication hierarchies and inflexible processes. The image of the workplace that exists somewhere “out there” – which is becoming more and more digitized and self-determining – seems to be steadily diverging from the own workplace. Frequent sick leave, terminations or a toxic office rumour mill are not uncommon. That is a challenge to any company, considering that their strength is primarily driven by the know-how and commitment of their employees themselves.

What approach does the New Work concept offer? The goal is obvious: to improve employee motivation and satisfaction in the long term.



A harmonious, balanced team can work wonders. (Photo: iStock)

It's a long way to the new working world

When implementing the New Work idea, the first thing to consider is not to start with the employees themselves, but to question the compatibility of the company's overall orientation. To what extent do the employees stand behind the company's business model? Are they passionate about their work? Focus should be placed on the group of employees who are 100 percent committed and willing to embark on a whole new path together.

Then the internal structures should be scrutinized. The key is agile management instead of outdated structures and artificially maintained hierarchies. And what about the company's work models? Do they have a 40-hour workweek and take attendance? Through New Work, there has been greater demand for doing home office or even working remotely, with coworking spaces and innovation houses becoming increasingly important for the team.

In short, this means that not all colleagues will be sitting in the office for eight hours straight, five days a week and won't be working and communicating from there. The office and meeting rooms on site should therefore be adapted to this development and be modern and open.

You are how you meet

We have learned that working from home and remotely are becoming increasingly important in the context of New Work. That is why the concept of standardized meeting rooms no longer works the way it used to. We are in need of change.

Since the majority of meeting participants will no longer actually be at the office, it is important to be able to hold regular online meetings without any disruptions and problems. For efficient communication between employees on site and those working from home or remotely, a few points should be considered when redesigning the meeting rooms.

Apart from suitable furniture and a very good Wi-Fi connection, using devices and equipment such as TV screens and microphones ensures that know-how can be exchanged quickly and easily. The intelligent 65" or 84" NEC InfinityBoard [NEC InfinityBoard](#) is an ideal example. It combines whiteboard, presentation and video conferencing technology as well as advanced touch technology with modern collaboration methods. Applications such as [Skype for Business](#) can be used as a video conferencing system.

Smooth communication is the be-all and end-all

Ceiling microphones such as the [TeamConnect Ceiling 2](#) from Sennheiser are a great solution for ensuring good audio quality for the employees connecting to the video conferences. Thanks to its unique design, it can be integrated directly into the ceiling, adapts perfectly to the room and is not distracting. Because of the flexible beam, which automatically adapts to the position of whoever is speaking, the microphone gives the user absolute freedom of movement – regardless of the location in the room. The ceiling microphone thus also covers New Work's core aspect: A person's unrestricted freedom and growth potential at their workplace.

Are you interested in more audio-conferencing solutions to help you transform your work environment into the perfect New Work space? You'll find everything you need at Sennheiser.

[Take a look at the possibilities](#)