Connected and Sustainable Work

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by the Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group

Overview

After almost a century of modest changes, work models are now evolving at an accelerated pace. These are defined not only by where and how work gets done, but also by the impact of technology, a global economy, and demographic trends that could produce a talent shortage if current models remain unchanged. The situation is especially acute for organizations whose success depends on innovation.

Complicating matters further are the challenges presented by climate change—economic growth can no longer come at the expense of sustainability. Cities must become not only enablers of new work models, but also thought leaders and exemplars of innovation in this area.

Connected Urban Development Perspective

The extensive capabilities of information and communications technology (ICT), cultural shifts around work, and the sustainability imperative present immense opportunities for redefining work to meet the needs of communities, employers, and cities.

These opportunities are embodied in the concept of *Smart Work*—the *enablement* of work that optimizes usage of talent, delivers benefits across the stakeholder community (citizens, employers, governments), and respects the boundaries of *ecosystems of support*. In this context, enablement includes:

Tools and infrastructure to:

- Identify and engage talent
- Facilitate generation of a work product
- Process, validate, corroborate, publish, and update the work product
- Provide access to knowledge acquisition and exchange

Leadership and culture to:

- Establish trust among workers and leaders
- Foster collaboration and teamwork
- Empower talent to innovate
- Measure and reward results and work products in a quantifiable and visible manner
- Build openness and inclusion of diverse talent and ideas

Smart Work solutions must include the following *ecosystems of support*:

- **Natural resources** required to *generate* work products. These will drive consideration of elements such as space usage, energy consumption, carbon emissions, and waste generation.
- **Human resources** to *deliver* work products. This dimension will drive consideration of elements such as culture, diversity, human lifecycles, and generational priorities.

Adoption of Smart Work entails key *driving factors* and *implementation roles* for cities, employers, and workers:

- For **cities**, the *driving factors* include increasing competition for attracting talent and investment, which spurs economic growth and social welfare across all segments of the community. The *role* of the city as an active leader includes ensuring delivery of the infrastructure needed to support new work models (physical, technology, transportation, and so forth), as well as policies and incentives to support the business community in adopting these models. Cities also have the opportunity to play a leading role in embracing innovative work models, which then can be replicated by communities.
- For **employers**, *driving factors* include addressing the growing challenges of attracting and retaining talent, as well as meeting increasing demand for higher productivity and service levels. This productivity is highly impacted by the use of resources such as real estate, worker time, and service levels, and by the ability of the workforce to collaborate, communicate, and work efficiently. The *role* of employers in the implementation of Smart Work models goes beyond investment in physical infrastructure such as workspace and technology. They must shift their culture and leadership to support workers in diverse and flexible work models. This shift involves increased levels of trust, new and flexible metrics for work, new organizational models, and a fresh look at the role of management in effectively overseeing these new models.
- For **workers**, *driving factors* include the challenges of successfully integrating their work and personal lives. Workers assume an active *role* in Smart Work by embracing new disciplines of work, which involve increased effectiveness in self-management, the ability to collaborate effectively with peers in remote sites, and the capacity to build trusting relationships with leadership and peers in a more flexible and diverse environment.

Smart Work solutions encompass the following work models:

1. **Smart Work Center:** Focus on workspace infrastructure and leadership
2. **Global Collaboration Platform** (Next-generation Employee Experience): Focus on technology infrastructure and culture
3. **Connected Workplace:** Focus on workspace and technology infrastructure

Discussion Points

1. How broadly has work evolved as a result of these trends? Is this evolution global? How are knowledge workers different from labor workers? How do the effects of this issue differ between the public and private sectors?
2. What are the implications for how citizens wish to combine their work and personal priorities?
3. What are the critical change-management elements to consider as new work models are deployed?
4. How can a city drive deployment and adoption of new work models?
5. What are the implications of new work models for management? What are some of the key areas impacted? How do employers need to change their leadership and approach to talent?

Notes

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