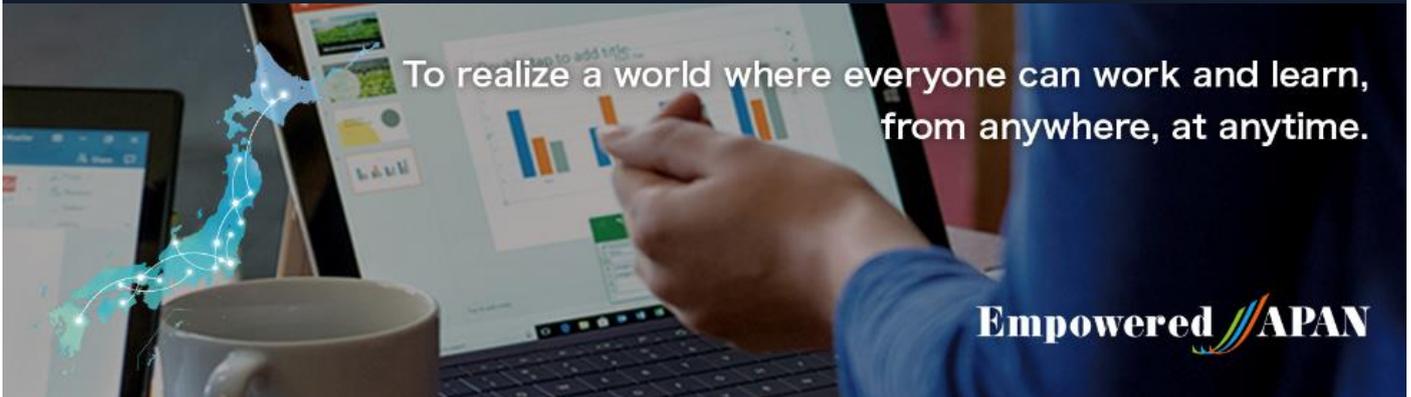


Empowered JAPAN Webinar Report



Empowered JAPAN Executive Steering Committee was established in 2018, "To realize a world where everyone can work and learn, from anywhere, at anytime." To promote the true value of workstyle innovation including telework, the committee has been coordinating symposiums in both Tokyo and regional cities. And in collaboration with various local governments, Microsoft, and partners, the committee has been serving as an advisor to provide telework training for both corporate and individuals. In response to the spread of infection of corona virus (COVID-19) and the government announcement on February 25, 2020, which included the request to citizens to telework, the steering committee made the decision to launch a series of free webinars starting from March 17, 2020, to provide practical information for individuals and organizations across the nation, to telework and/or practice online education.

Category : Mindset and Communication

Date : March, 17, 2020

Speaker : Motoaki Nishiwaki

Microsoft Japan Co., Ltd.
Evangelist and Executive Officer



"IT evangelist" introduced in the Nihon Keizai Shimbun newspaper. An evangelist who conveys and spreads the many products and services provided by Microsoft. Nishiwaki also holds lectures and writes. In addition to IT corporations, he gives presentations at a wide range of institutions including manufacturing companies, financial companies, government agencies, elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, and universities. From 2014, he has helped expand the Super Science High School (SSH) program operated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science in various regions. Furthermore, he conducts IT-related classes and presentation classes. For six years since 2014, Nishiwaki has been conducting presentation classes at the Junior and Senior High School at Komaba, University of Tsukuba. Also, for five years since 2015, he has been teaching presentation classes at Ritsumeikan Primary School. The contents of his classes have been made in to the book "Presentation Drills." In 2017, his classes were featured in "The AI Era: What Kind of Education is Needed Now?," a TV symposium broadcast on NHK Educational TV. Additionally, Nishiwaki has raised awareness towards the importance of "communication skills" by holding study sessions for teachers and events organized by various boards of education. From 2015, he has been a communication advisor to Shinya Yamanaka, Director of the Center for iPS Cell Research and Application, Kyoto University. His written works include "Evangelist Work Techniques," "How the 'Eyes' are Essential to Good Presentations," and "New Evangelist Training Course."

Mindset and Technology Needed for Telework

Nishiwaki is an "evangelist" who spreads Microsoft products and services to society. In addition to lectures and writing activities, he also provides presentation courses using IT at corporations and schools. Due to his work, Nishiwaki often travels to various places. "I have always teleworked," he says.

So, what kind of mindset should be taken and what kind of equipment (technology) should be prepared by corporations and individuals who will introduce telework? Let's begin by explaining the mindset.

"According to Wikipedia, telework is a form that uses ICT to work flexibly without being constrained by time or place," notes Nishiwaki. "The phrase 'without being constrained' is particularly important."

Nishiwaki uses the term 3F (Fixed) to describe the conventional work style, and 3A (Any+) to describe the new work style. In other words, in the future, people will be able to work anywhere and at anytime, even when their work styles are currently determined by time, place, and devices. Furthermore, the device is not limited to company computers.

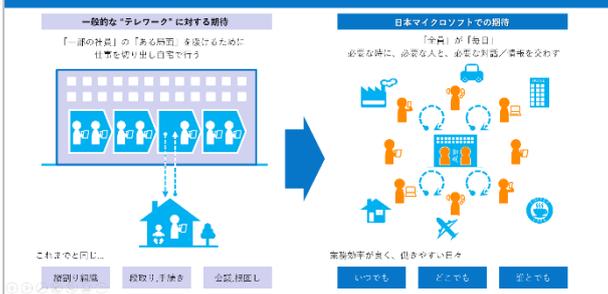
"I don't have to commute, I wear whatever I want, and I can work wherever my production is high," says Nishiwaki. "I like places where music is played, so I often work at cafes and the like."



Telework allows you to work efficiently and value your personal lifestyle. Nishiwaki emphasizes that the most important thing is not to view telework as a special and extraordinary style of work.

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"There's no way for telework to be effective if it is viewed as being only for people who are involved in childcare or nursing care, or only as a special measure to combat COVID-19," says Nishiwaki. "Instead, it is necessary to reform the corporate culture and consciousness. At Microsoft, everyone works on a remote basis."

In the future, if it is possible to work anywhere (including at home), online sales trips and online meetings will become normal. "In such cases, rather than focusing only on conversation and presentation materials, it is important to share reactions and feelings," explains Nishiwaki.

"For example, send other people messages like 'Looks great! Thanks for your hard work. Why don't you take the rest of the day off?'" Also, during video meetings, it's important to almost

overexaggerate your reactions. For example, make big gestures and nod vigorously.

Since participants are physically separated during telework, it is easy to feel a sense of isolation. Telework will succeed if we can share our emotions and cultivate a sense of unity in the team."

We are already accustomed to using LINE, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram in our private lives. These SNS apps are fun because we can send Likes to each other, visualize our empathy, and share our emotions virtually. Nishiwaki says that the same ideas should be applied in order to make teleworking effective and sustainable.

"At first, some people may feel reluctant to use the emoji heart mark," says Nishiwaki. "But you can get used to anything over time. The important thing is to keep displaying positive reactions."

Next, Nishiwaki introduced the necessary equipment and gave tips for telework. Broadly speaking, three main tools are necessary for telework: a communication tool for email and chat, an information sharing tool for uploading created materials, and a video conferencing tool for face-to-face conversations on the screen.

While noting that he is biased from his position as a Microsoft employee, Nishiwaki recommends Teams, which contains all of the three tools. Although platforms offered by other companies have their respective advantages, it is preferable to avoid the complexity of switching accounts, etc., during usage for work.

"It's important to try out the platform first," explains Nishiwaki. Get used to being online and sharing your reactions with others."

Most people are not familiar with video conferencing. One tip given by Nishiwaki is the importance of meeting organizers taking responsibility to lead the start and end of the meetings.

"At the beginning of a meeting, the organizer should announce the names of participants, how many minutes the meeting will run, and the purpose of the meeting," says Nishiwaki. "It's also a good idea to mention other details such as 'since this meeting is being recorded, we will not take minute.' At the end, the organizer should briefly summarize the decisions made at the meeting, confirm the next schedule, and thank the participants."

It is unacceptable for the productivity of a meeting to decrease due to an unclear purpose. In order to foster a sense of unity through informal communication, it is advisable to undertake voluntary activities such as having drinks or lunch together remotely.

While the ability to use any device for work is a feature of telework, Nishiwaki recommends that you have a headset for video conferencing. This is because you can easily reach controls for muting, etc., in order to avoid picking up sounds in the surrounding environment.

Finally, Nishiwaki discussed telework and evaluation systems. The Partial Amendment of the Industrial Safety and Health Act requires an "objective assessment of working hours." Office365 has a function to assess and analyze the usage status, but Nishiwaki explained a more interesting way of monitoring. He recommends creating a thread for everyone participating in Teams. Then, by writing "Good morning!" when starting work and "I'm done working for today!" when finishing, the thread can be used as a time card.

"I also reporting your start time by doing things such as posting a picture of your dog and saying 'I just got back from walking my dog. Now I'm starting work!'" explains Nishiwaki. "Since telework makes work a part of our daily lives, we should keep our communication casual."

In a traditional work style, there is a clear divide between work time and private life. However, as noted by Nishiwaki, telework make work a part of our daily lives." Instead of being bound by useless constraints and obligations, it is necessary to shift to a system that evaluates people who work efficiently with a focus on results.