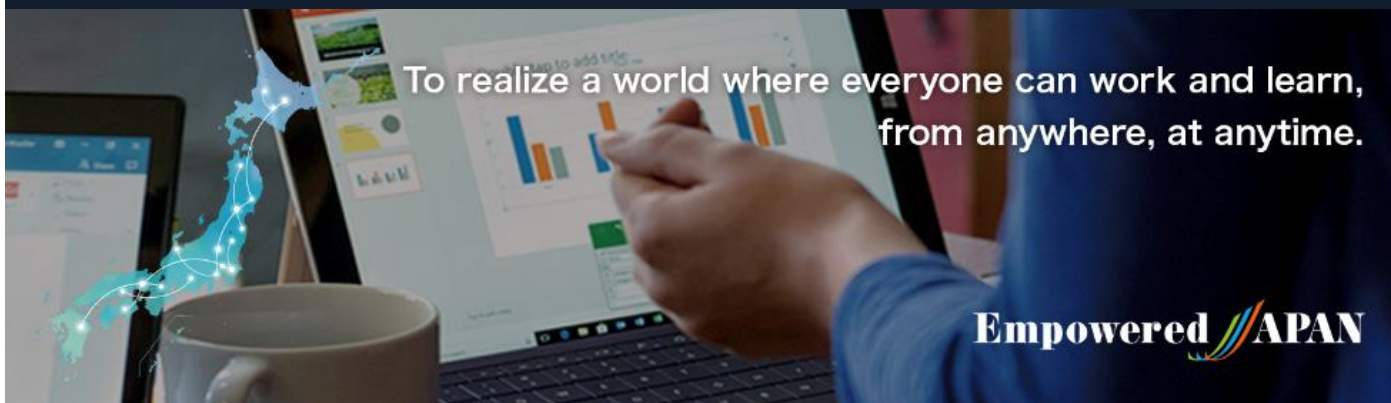


Empowered JAPAN Webinar Report



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 : Learning from case studies companies

Date : March, 30, 2020

Speaker : Anri Miyano

General Manager, Retail Business Division, E-Commerce Business Headquarters, HP Japan Inc.
Director, Women Impact Network Japan (official certified organization of HP)



At the E-Commerce Business Headquarters, develops the consumer market, and manages the sales and planning departments under her supervision. Furthermore, as an initiative for diversity and inclusion, founded "Women Impact Network Japan," an organization that is certified by HP and promotes the advancement of women. In order to expand the career formation options available to women, focuses on personal growth, the advancement of women, and related work-style reforms

Introduction of Know-how: Practical Example of Corporation Implementing Telework

While many workplaces are rapidly adopting telework, there are concerns and questions about the new workstyle, and they need to be resolved. Under the corporate culture to believe that creative work can be achieved in a proper environment, HP Japan Inc. has been reforming workstyles based on the "respect and trust" motto and adopted telework in 2007. The idea of using telework as a means for each and every employee of the company to achieve objectives and increase productivity will be key to promote a new workstyle in the future.



HP Japan has been working to improve productivity by introducing flextime in 1977, free address in 2001, and then telework with new systems and an environment. Ms. Miyano, who has established a group to promote the advancement of women called "Women Impact Network Japan" certified by HP and is a representative of the group, has been working to reform workstyle through telework. The reason why she started to telework was to "make time" to balance work and private life. When she started, she made four rules: never give up on achieving goals, distinguish between work and private hours, try anything, and not to be bounded by stereotypes.

Based on the premise that "the system called telework is just a method, and not an objective" (Ms. Miyano), she tried teleworking with these rules. As a result, she found key points to promote teleworking. Now, we will divide these key points into four categories: communication, control, condition and community, and look at her experience as an example.

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First, in terms of communication, for example, with remote meetings, it has advantages of improving the facilitator's skills and giving opportunities to those who were too shy to speak during in-person meetings to share their opinions. Also, for lack of communication due to telework, which many people are concerned, she prepared multiple communication tools and "chose the most suitable tool for each person at that time." (Ms. Miyano) As a result, it helped to build better relationships in some cases. For example, when she replaced a part of the communication tool, email that had become complicated, with groupware Teams' chat feature, communication became quicker and was simplified. Through the chat feature, management and employees started having more casual conversations, and it created a space to bring out new ideas.

Second, in terms of control, when Ms. Miyano analyzed how her time was spent for self-controlling, she found that a lot of time was spent on emailing and meetings, which was affecting the planning and analyzing tasks which were her core work. Then she allocated the morning hours for important work, and created an efficient timetable including time for emails and breaks. "Regarding time management, by challenging myself to finish tasks within a time limit, it helped me to finish work faster with no time to waste." (Ms. Miyano)

Also, it is necessary to reform awareness because when people telework, they often lose the boundary between work and private life, and work longer.

"Once a female manager at HQ in the U.S. said to me that I cannot balance between work and private life unless I value a plan with my husband as much as an appointment with a V.I.P. client. It was shocking and an eye-opener for me. Thanks to her, I value them equally now." (Ms. Miyano)

Third, in terms of condition, think about creating an environment where you can work comfortably. For example, Ms. Miyano connected three additional monitors to her PC at home. She uses each monitor for different purposes, i.e. one monitor for communication including emails and chats, another monitor for work using Excel and PowerPoint, etc., and it helped her concentrate on work.

Last, in terms of community, it is about management of the teleworking members. At HP Japan, work objectives are set through discussions with each employee, and Ms. Miyano subdivides the objectives and checks progress in a short cycle. For jobs in which employee's work progress cannot be expressed in numbers, she checks "what, when, how progress is made" and evaluates. According to her, it helps to understand what other members are doing, and eliminates the misunderstanding of evaluation criteria of both parties with mutual agreement.

"Meeting one-on-one is also important. Before commencing it, check the members' desired meeting frequency, strengths, and weaknesses first. In some cases, you can have a 10-minute daily meeting, and find any changes in the member's situation and motivate the member. I think it allows you to support the members efficiently." (Ms. Miyano)

From the examples that Ms. Miyano has been practicing at HP Japan, we can see that they have a foundation motto of "action rather than perfection." (Ms. Miyano) With all individuals having different life stages, even if any of the examples do not apply to you, as long as you try, the merits of telework will grow.

Even if you are not progressing perfectly, remind yourself that "trying new things and making errors means you are progressing" (Ms. Miyano), overcome obstacles one by one, and find a way to succeed.

