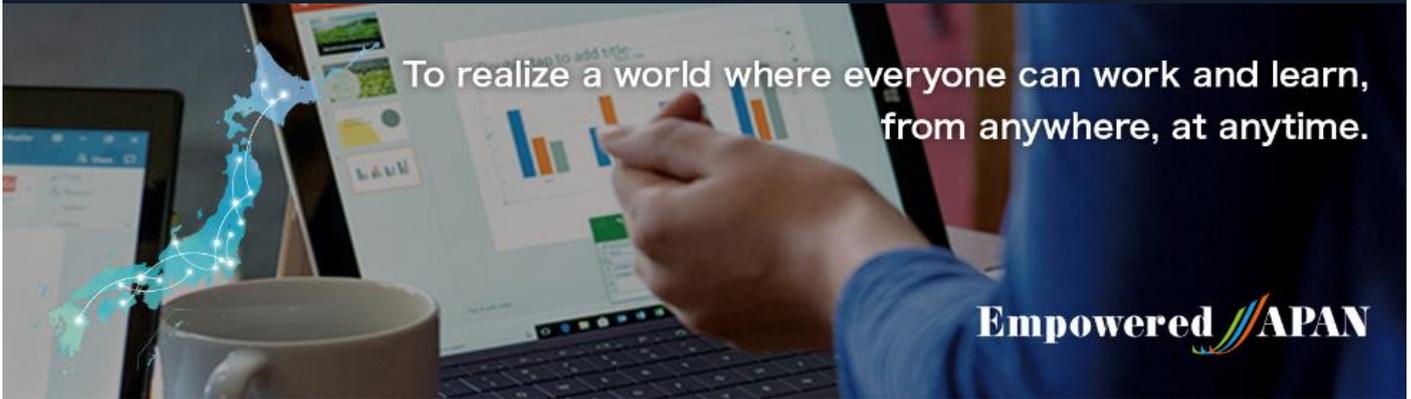


Empowered JAPAN Webinar Report



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 : April, 15, 2020

Speaker : Akashi Yamazaki

Human Resource Development
Consultant

Visiting Professor, Seikei University,
Faculty of Management
Visiting Researcher,
Japan Telework Association



Ms. Yamazaki has been in charge of projected-based sales training as the team leader of Solution Sales Development Team of Fuji Xerox. After leading the planning and execution of company-wide human development strategy as a group leader within human resource department, she became the project leader of company-wide reformation project to drive communication and workstyle innovation. Ms. Yamazaki then became a self-employed consultant to support the corporate reformation through communication and human resource development. Author of many related books such as "Workstyle Reformation Practical Guidebook for a Company Transformation (Nikkei BP)."

Time to change our workstyle!

Tips of work restructuring and employee training to maximize teleworking

In response to the government's request to work from home as a measure to stop the spread of COVID-19, many companies have introduced or expanded teleworking as an alternative. However, many companies have started teleworking with minimum rules and an ICT environment as a provisional measure, and as a result, there are many cases in which only partial employees have been remotely working, or teleworking is not practically utilized and is ineffective resulting in work delays. At this seminar, Ms. Yamazaki explained the points from the aspect of work style and the reformation of employees' awareness for companies that have provisionally started teleworking but have not been able to effectively utilize it, or given up on teleworking.

First of all, "teleworking (mainly working from home) is effective as a preventative measure for the spread of COVID-19, however, it is not perfect," said Ms. Yamazaki. "Manufacturing and service industries, which cannot be managed remotely, require other means to implement safety and continue business," he added. If a company cannot effectively utilize teleworking, it will lead to the decline of productivity as the current situation may last longer. In order to avoid this, reviewing work operations and educating employees to change their awareness are essential, he explained. From these two perspectives, let us take a look at how to review work operations and the minimum things we should do as an emergency response.

Ms. Yamazaki listed three items that companies should review: work operations, document and information management, and communication.

1-4. テレワーク有効活用のための業務見直しポイント	
主業務の見直し 可視化、標準化、自動化排除など	「Aさんがいないとわからない」（無人化） 「ムリ・ムダ・ムラが多い」「手作業で非効率」 「出社しないとできない（という思い込み）」など という状態を減らし、テレワーク可能範囲を広げる
文書・情報管理の見直し 電子化による共有、適切なアクセス権 情報セキュリティ確保	「大事な資料が会社の机の引き出しやパソコンの デスクトップにある」「紙の文書が多い」 「情報共有・情報管理・情報セキュリティが不十分」 という状態をなくし、テレワークでも可能にする
コミュニケーションの見直し	「対面で行うことが必須（という思い込み）」 「会議が多く、大人数が交通費をかけて集合する」 「会議の質が低く、議論が不十分、結論が出ない」 という状態をなくし、テレワークでも可能にする

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First, to review work operations, break down tasks of a department into large, medium, and small categories, roughly visualize them, and then remove unnecessary tasks. After that, visualize the details of required tasks, standardize and optimize to eliminate overwork/wasteful/irregularity of tasks, and eliminate the reliance of employees (i.e. one cannot work without others). Also, there are some cases that are innovative in different ways from the original ways. Adopting telework after reviewing work operations is an effective way to do so.

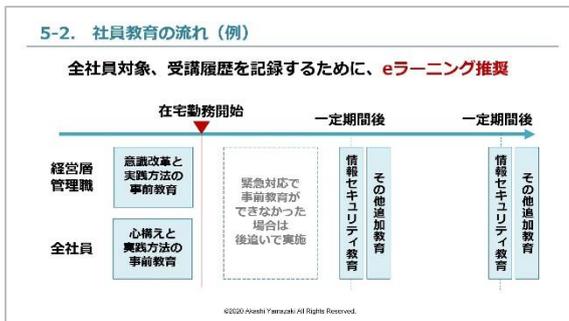
On the other hand, in the case of an emergency response like COVID-19, it is important to "stop finding reasons why you cannot do, and instead, start changing rules that can be done right now, and making an effort to increase tasks that can be done at home." (Ms. Yamazaki) Specifically, after roughly visualizing tasks, it is recommended to look for tasks that can be done at home, and obtain minimum required tools/preparation, educate employees for adopting telework. "When reviewing work operations, it works better if top management takes the lead, and lets the section and/or group managers conduct a review in small units." (Ms. Yamazaki)

Second, to review information management, declutter the office by eliminating unnecessary paper and electronic documents, and go paperless and paper stockless by digitalizing paper documents. After that, to maintain a management system, establish a document/information management system that thoroughly enforces a procedure to create, organize, save, and discard according to the life cycle of documents.

On the other hand, in the case of an emergency, "it is important to establish rules to organize individually, digitalize, eliminate the sealing system for internal documents, and the minimum document management, because it is difficult to organize all at once," said Ms. Yamazaki. To start the process, each employee should organize what they can, digitalize documents/information in order of importance and level of urgency, upload them to the server, and enable accessing from home. Also, eliminate the sealing system for internal documents as much as possible, and replace with electronic sealing or approval email. "For document information management, it is important to establish rules for naming documents, discarding information brought outside from the office, etc., and thoroughly follow the minimum operational rules for safe, efficient, and effective networking." (Ms. Yamazaki)

Third, to review communication, there are two points: "change the report/contact/consultation methods, and quantity/quality/method of meetings." (Ms. Yamazaki) In the case of emergency response, it is recommended to thoroughly follow the "report/contact/consultation" rules (i.e. reporting start and end of work at home), prepare an ICT environment (i.e. enable reading company notifications from the company website), and have a daily online meeting.

For a fundamental solution, Ms. Yamazaki advised to maintain communication, which can be neglected, by proactively approaching others, talk one-on-one, etc., and for improving meetings, he suggests to improve the efficiency of regular meetings, prepare and share meeting materials in advance, and advise the facilitator to encourage everyone to speak.



In addition to reviewing work operations, educating employees to change their awareness and behavior is essential. Ms. Yamazaki recommended providing training to all employees in order to fix the concept of teleworking throughout the company, and utilize e-learning service/system that can record training history. First, to educate management and supervisor personnel, focus on changing their way of thinking, for example, sharing objectives, respecting diversity, etc., and instruct practical methods to manage and facilitate meetings. Then, to educate general employees, it is effective to prepare their mind for independence and responsibility, and instruct practical methods for self-management, communications, securing information, etc.

Ms. Yamazaki also said, "it is important to follow-up and provide additional training after a certain period of time, and to re-enforce the rules annually, in order to establish employee education, and also, clarify a department in charge of educating employees and reviewing work operations" in order to habituate training.

Finally, Ms. Yamazaki said, "start with what you can according to your company's situation." Regardless of whether or not adopting telework, it seems important to continuously review work operations and train employees for improving productivity as Ms. Yamazaki said, "conduct fundamental reviews regardless of the emergency response."

