Chapter 16
Leading Anywhere Workers:
A Scientific and Practical Framework

Christianne T. Varty
Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

Thomas A. O'Neill
University of Calgary, Canada

Laura A. Hambley
Work EvOHlution, Canada

ABSTRACT

As organizations continue to adopt anywhere working, it remains critical to address the leadership and management challenges of leading anywhere workers. Through interviews with experienced anywhere leaders from several different organizations, this chapter clarifies how leaders meet and overcome those challenges. Building on existing behaviorally-based models of leadership, the authors propose a hierarchical taxonomy of anywhere leadership effectiveness behaviors. The taxonomy is composed of four metacategories (Relationships, Flexibility, Productivity, Culture) and fourteen subcategories, which detail the behavioral capabilities necessary for anywhere leadership. In doing so, this chapter provides a common framework for understanding anywhere leadership, lays the foundation for the assessment and development of anywhere leaders, and is a starting point for further research.

INTRODUCTION

The globalization of work coupled with rapid technological advancements have contributed to the rise of anywhere working, also known as telework, mobile, agile, or distributed work. Increasingly, organizations also leverage diverse expertise across geographies by utilizing virtual teams – physically and temporally dispersed work teams that communicate primarily through electronic media (Minton-Eversole, 2012). These various arrangements mean that employees are no longer tied to the traditional office or assigned workstations, which brings benefits such as freedom from the restrictions of a nine-to-five workday and

reduced costs and time associated with commuting, travel, and relocation (Cascio & Shurygailo, 2003). However, this shift also raises complex challenges for organizations, particularly for the leadership and management of people (Biermeier-Hanson, Liu, & Dickson, 2015).

Leadership is a foundational cornerstone of an effective modern workforce, but recent research has indicated that traditional leadership is more difficult from a distance and the leadership challenges are more extensive (e.g., Hambley, O'Neill, & Kline, 2007a; Purvanova & Bono, 2009). Mainstream models of leadership were not designed with anywhere workers in mind and many of the key behaviors (e.g., motivating employees, setting a vision) may be driven by, or rely on, face-to-face contact (Avolio, Kahai, & Dodge, 2000). At the same time, research into the management capabilities necessary for anywhere work is lacking (Blount, 2015). Inefficiencies in typical uses of e-mail, videoconferencing, text messaging, and other communication media draw from an organization's bottom line due to mismanaged time, frustration, isolation, and turnover. Increasing reliance on these modes of communication requires managers find ways to effectively organize and direct employees, delegate tasks, and manage workflow.

The current chapter reports on recent research examining the behavioral capabilities necessary for effectively leading anywhere workers. Specifically, the authors develop and propose a taxonomy of leadership and management behaviors. Past research has distinguished between leadership behaviors (e.g., change processes such as developing a vision and empowering employees to support that vision) and management behaviors (e.g., behaviors focused on daily operations including planning, organizing, and coordinating others; Kotter, 1987; Lunenburg, 2011). Instead of focusing on this distinction, the current research uses the term *anywhere leadership* to refer to the range of leadership and management behaviors. In doing so, the authors do not aim to propose a new *type* of leadership but use this term to refer to capture the broad set of behaviors that fall under the umbrella term anywhere leadership. Moreover, the authors suggest that successfully leading anywhere workers will depend on the integration of leadership and management behaviors adapted to the anywhere working context. Accordingly, the terms leadership and anywhere leadership are used throughout the chapter.

The usefulness of this proposed taxonomy is threefold. First, a working taxonomy provides a common framework for understanding anywhere leadership. Second, the taxonomy is based on a large and diverse database of effectiveness behaviors, which practitioners and organizations can leverage to inform leadership development. Third, the taxonomy provides a starting point for the assessment and development of leaders in organizations. Overall, the objective of this chapter is to advance existing understanding of the behavioral capabilities necessary for leading the anywhere workforce and providing scholars, organizations, policy makers, and leaders with a framework and best practices.

BACKGROUND

As technology has developed and the employment of knowledge workers has grown, many employees have gained the ability to work anytime and from anywhere (Blount, 2015). This chapter uses the term anywhere work to describe this flexibility. Also known as teleworking or distributed work, anywhere workers can do their jobs away from the conventional office while communicating with colleagues and accessing organizational resources through computer-based technology (Nilles, 1994). The recent trend towards virtual teams dispersed across locations, time zones, and cultural boundaries (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002) constitutes another type of anywhere work. To manage the challenges of dispersion, team members must leverage electronic communication technologies to work collaboratively from anywhere. A final

Related Content

Measuring Business-IT Alignment in a Digitally Revolutionized Economy

Pablo Alfonso Gajardoand Ariel I. La Paz (2021). *Research Anthology on Digital Transformation, Organizational Change, and the Impact of Remote Work (pp. 886-907).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/measuring-business-it-alignment-in-a-digitally-revolutionized-economy/270329

Indonesia's Inclusive Economic Development Strategy

Tulus Tambunan (2022). *Handbook of Research on Big Data, Green Growth, and Technology Disruption in Asian Companies and Societies (pp. 82-108).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/indonesias-inclusive-economic-development-strategy/290701

A Study of Different 5G Reconfigurable Antennas for Communication: Futuristic Glimpse for 6G

Prem Nath Suman, Rakesh Kumar Chandanand Gajendra Kant Mishra (2023). *Handbook of Research on Technological Advances of Library and Information Science in Industry 5.0 (pp. 178-195).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/a-study-of-different-5g-reconfigurable-antennas-for-communication/316581

Cloud Computing-Based Personal Information Management: Perspectives of Online Faculty

Antonia Bernadette Donkor (2023). *Handbook of Research on Technological Advances of Library and Information Science in Industry 5.0 (pp. 21-39).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/cloud-computing-based-personal-information-management/316573

Skin Cancer Lesion Detection Using Improved CNN Techniques

Sourav Kumar, Garima Jaiswaland Keshav Sinha (2023). *Handbook of Research on Technological Advances of Library and Information Science in Industry 5.0 (pp. 355-377).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/skin-cancer-lesion-detection-using-improved-cnn-techniques/316589