

Digital transformation and the future of work: Processes, competences, and HRM challenges

Technology has been recently offering a paramount opportunity for work transformation enabled by the implementation of the last generation of innovation such as big data, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, far-reaching networking, and a renewed interest in humanoid robotics, that promotes an unprecedented improved human-machine interaction (Schneider, 2018). While such technologies triggered the current digitalization era, the Covid-19 crisis forced organizations around the world to fully exploit and leverage the potential of the digital transformation of work (in terms of teleworkability) so that a sea change to remote work and flexible schedules could come about almost overnight (Georgiadou & Antonacopoulou, 2021).

Three contingent factors that combined during the pandemic emergency, namely the existing possibilities of work digitization together with the unavoidable need to shift suddenly to remote work for as many workers as possible, and the long time span of the contagion risk, were crucial in disrupting the previous status quo and leading to an overall deep transformation of the work settings that will overcome the current difficulties and remain as an enduring legacy of the pandemic (Marsh, Vallejos, & Spence, 2022).. After a live experiment in remote work, both companies and employees are willing to carry on with the positive aspects they appreciated in the new working conditions. Just to mention some examples, on the one hand, companies appreciate savings related to the need of smaller premises, on the other, employees particularly enjoyed the flexibility of working away from office (Schell & Bischof, 2021).

To design the future of work, companies and their leaders need to reconsider three main elements: tasks and processes performed to deliver the organization's output; competences and talents that better fit the new working conditions, and the characteristics of the workplace defined as "a blend of physical, cultural and digital elements in the work environment that lead to fundamentally new and complex configurations of human and technology relationships at work that reshape the very nature of work practices (Marsh et al., 2022).

Being technology ready to support work digitization, the focal point to succeed in the shift to the new working model is paradoxically the ability to attract and develop talents for the new work settings and offering them a suitable employee experience. Therefore, managers and the HR department play a crucial role in engaging the most effective workforce (Caligiuri, De Cieri, Minbaeva, Verbeke, & Zimmermann, 2020; Kulik, 2022).

This track aims to contribute to theory and practice on designing work for the post pandemic world, on opportunities, challenges and drawbacks of managing employees in the future workplace, on the contribution of the HRM department in leading the shift to the new working model, and on the design of HRM practices that can support managing employees in a hybrid organizational setting and that fit the renewed workforce's needs and expectations. Technologies are useful tools that can extensively impact such activities. Therefore, this track welcomes papers that explore the effect of new technologies on pushing the digitization of work, on individual well-being and work-life balance, and on supporting the HR department effectiveness. We expect contributions that highlight how new technologies, in particular the Internet of Things and smart technologies, are changing the HR department activities and people management practices (e.g., social-recruiting, smart learning, people analytics) in order to provide firms with the useful

competencies to succeed in the post pandemic economy. Finally, we invite contributions who develop new theoretical perspectives to investigate the deep transformation that work is currently undergoing.

Track main topics

The track is open to conceptual and empirical contributions that apply a range of rigorous qualitative and quantitative empirical approaches. Questions of potential interest include, but are not limited to:

- What are useful trends and variables to consider in designing the post-pandemic working model?
- What are intended and unintended effects for both employees and the organizations of different options in blending hybrid, remote, and in-person work?
- Which theories may better contribute to the theoretical foundation of studies that can provide useful evidence to design the workplace of the future?
- How contingencies and institutional characteristics (e.g., industry, culture, strategy, organizational dimensions) drive choices about the most effective working model in the post-pandemic era?
- What are the opportunities that smart technologies can offer to the shift to the new working model?
- How does an effective leadership style look like to manage employees in a hybrid work setting?
- How can technology help to figure out ways to increase connectivity and sense of belongings in the virtual or hybrid workplace?
- How can technological innovation contribute to enhance work-and-life balance of employees working remotely?
- What are rationales to consider in designing effective HRM systems in the case of hybrid work setting?
- What kind of people management practices are effective in the renewed work setting?
- How can the HR department effectively support supervisors in managing the workforce in the workplace of the future?

The lead editor for the European Management Review Special Issue “*Re-imagining the Workplace of the Future*” (<https://euram.academy/euram?service=info&p=hq> EMR SpecialIssue 2), Prof. Andri Georgioudou, is part of the track chair team, so should you be interested in submitting your paper there, you will be able to get some feedback.

References

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Rita Bissola is Associate Professor of Organization Design and organizational Behavior at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan (Italy). She received her Ph.D. in Management Information Systems at LUISS Guido Carli, Rome and was visiting scholar at Karlsruhe University (Germany). Her current research interests focus on innovation and HRM challenges, individual and team creativity, and employee engagement specifically in the social enterprise domain. She wrote articles and contributions on e-HRM, the relationship between employees and the HR department, and on creativity that appeared in both international and national books and journals. She has recently co-edited a book on HRM 4.0. Rita has been serving as track chair in several EGOS colloquia (European conference on Organization Studies conference) and WOA (Italian conference of

Organization Studies). She teaches at both undergraduate and graduate levels and is one of the coordinator of the International Human Resource Management Master at Università Cattolica.

Tanya Bondarouk is Professor of Human Resource Management at the University of Twente (The Netherlands) and the chair of the department HRM. She leads the interdisciplinary research about HRM, Technology and Innovation. Her research projects cover topics related to an integration of Human Resource Management and social aspects of Information Technologies, such as digitalization of the workforce and HRM, implementation of digital HRM solutions, robotization and workforce management. In this field, she has edited numerous special issues in international journals and twelve scholarly books. Since 2006 she is involved in organizing International Academic Conferences on digital HRM.

Dr **Andri Georgiadou** is an Associate Professor in the Nottingham University Business School and is affiliated with the Equality Inclusion Diversity Centre in Cyprus. Dr. Georgiadou's research focuses on equality, diversity and inclusion at work from relational and interdisciplinary perspectives.

Andri is the recipient of the 2020 Global Equality & Diversity Award for Research; the 2019 Women in the Academy of International Business Emerging Scholar Award; the 2018 Fulbright Visiting Scholar Award; the 2016 European Management Review Best Reviewer Award, and the 2014 Graduate Scholar Award for Diversity in Organizations, Communities & Nations. Dr Georgiadou sits on the Editorial Board of the journal of International Studies of Management & Organization as the Review Editor and the editorial review board of Gender Work & Organization. Her work has led to publications in leading peer-reviewed journals, such as Human Resource Management Journal, Gender Work & Organization, and European Management Review among others, and several book chapters.

Andri is the Elected Representative-at-Large of the Management Education and Development Division of the Academy of Management (AOM) and the Deputy Chair and Vice Chair Events for Academy of International Business (AIB) Western Europe chapter. She has been invited as a Keynote Speaker at international conferences and workshops organised at renowned universities including the University of Southern California, the Rutgers University of New Jersey, and international business networks such as the Institute of Leadership & Management and the European Women's Management Development International Network. She served as the chairwoman/member of many organisational/ scientific committees at various international conferences.

Teresina Torre is Full Professor of Organization and Human Resource Management at the University of Genoa. Her research interests focus on innovation and HRM challenges, on human work and its evolution in relationship with new technologies and in digital context. She presented her research in national and international conferences (WOA, EURAM, EGOS, IFKAD and ICTO); she published contribution both in books and international journals. She is vicepresident of Assioa – Association of Italian Organization Studies Academics. She is co-editor of Impresa Progetto Electronic Journal of Management, member of the Scientific Committee of Management in Review, of Eurasian Journal of Business and Management and of Sviluppo&Organizzazione. She is member of the Scientific Boards of many conferences, where she serves also as conference chair. She teaches at both undergraduate and graduate levels. She is coordinator of the Master Degree in Management and president of the international MBA – University of Lima and Genoa.

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