

Chapter 28

Developing a Model for Information Society Competencies Required by Managers in the Information Society

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is an attempt to obtain insight into the information, communication and technological competencies that managers currently need in order to work effectively in the information society. This is obtained by creating a model for those Information Society competencies for managers. This model is based on the results of a literature review, done in combination with a case study via a survey conducted in a large non-profit organization in the Netherlands. What is found is that especially the competencies 'Having operational knowledge and insight into ICT', 'Finding and evaluating information on the Internet' and 'Participating in a learning organization' are important factors that influence Information Society competence. The model might have implications for the curricula in higher education, especially for management training. The model may as well be an argument towards the provision of suitable performance support for just-in-time-learning for managers.

INTRODUCTION

The information society is characterized by privatization, globalization and information and communication technology (ICT). As a consequence large amounts of information, international cooperation and networks have become part of the work envi-

ronment (Boonstra, 2005; Feather, 2004; Hargrove, 2001). A digital work environment can be seen as a work environment where ICT is regularly used. In such an environment, but especially where the Internet and mobile technologies are commonplace, information security risks are increased considerably (Siponen, 2001). Furthermore, continuing changes in organizations need to be managed effectively (Boonstra, 2005; Hargrove, 2001). Dealing effec-

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tively with information and communication using the technology, have become important issues in organizations, but at the same time this has proven to be very complex and managers often struggle to define their role in the new working situation (Beijen, Broos & Lucas, 2003). Literature shows that managers especially play a vital role in implementing ICT in the organization (Boonstra, 2005; Davenport & Prusak, 1997; Hargrove, 2001). Hence the focus of this paper is on how managers deal with the changed ways of working in the information society.

The purpose of this paper is twofold. Firstly, the main focus of this paper is to provide some insight into the information, communication and technological competencies which managers need in order to work and lead effectively in the information society, by providing a model for Information Society competencies for managers. Secondly, the implications of this model for management training and just-in-time-learning support are considered. Hence, in this paper some answers are given to the two questions:

- *What are the important Information Society competencies that managers need in order to work and lead effectively in the context of the information society*
and
- *What are the implications of the findings of this research for management training and the provision of just in time learning support?*

BACKGROUND

Changed Ways of Working in the Information Society

From literature it has become clear that organizations have to deal with a different way of working and employees have to deal with a changed work environment (Dhondt & Kraan, 2001; Davenport

& Prusak, 1997). Labour and labour relations in the information society have changed considerably since the introduction of the Internet and globalization (Boonstra, 2005; Dhondt & Kraan, 2001; Schoemaker, 2004; Steijn, 2002). One example is that the working relationship of employees has shifted from secure employment and permanent loyalty in a transactional relationship between the employer and employee in the industrial society to reduced job security and no permanent loyalty between the employer and employee in the information society. The emphasis is currently on flexibility in the organization regarding employment, as well as on employability of the employee who is in control of his/her own career. At the same time commitment is expected during the time of contract. Mobility is essential. Work is not necessarily dependent on location and time. Effective communication is an essential competency and in the context of the information society, this includes knowing how and when to use the tools of communication. Work has increased in complexity and tasks have been broadened. Innovation and creativity are essential in order to continue participating in the rapidly changing work environment.

It is therefore necessary to continue to learn beyond initial training and employment. An attitude of lifelong learning and flexibility has become essential, but learning how to learn is vital. Just-in-time-learning and access to information when needed is paramount (Rosenberg, 2006). It thus appears to be very important for organizations to become learning organizations in order to work effectively within the information society (Hargrove, 2001; Kessels & Keursten, 2001; Senge, 1990; Wenger, 2000). Furthermore, Competency management (Nobre, 2002), ICT-security awareness management (English, 2005; Siponen, 2001) as well as Innovation and Change management have become important strategies for organizations to survive (Belasen, 2000; de Jong & den Hartog, 2005; Tijdens & Steijn, 2005). In addition, in order to deal with the changed ways

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