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## Leadership of flexible work

**The study by the Fraunhofer Institute for work organization and work management (Fraunhofer-Institut für Arbeitsorganisation und Arbeitswirtschaft IAO) in Stuttgart and the Bertelsmann Stiftung Gütersloh disprove the hypothesis that the middle management blocks the flexibilisation of work “like a paralysing layer“ because it fears for example a loss of control. In fact, the majority of the 2,384 executives questioned are convinced that temporally or spatially flexible forms of work are an important success factor in the competition for good employees.**

But executives questioned also named the downside of flexible working conditions: growing communication expenditure in planning, checking agreements, moderation and conflict management. Offering a platform for social relations and setting the pace for virtual work flows are new tasks for executives, too. Only 26 percent believe to meet already the expectations in terms of communicating the way it would be necessary under flexibilized working forms. Apparently, there is a lack of support, for example by means of training. The executives' efforts in terms of flexibilization are often hardly acknowledged and appreciated.

The majority of managers, of which forty were also questioned in more intensive interviews, notices clearly positive effects of flexibilized working conditions on the employees, e.g. rising motivation. But for a successful cooperation, the employees have to have to have the ability of self-organization. The generation of digital natives increasingly questions classic authority models, knowledge work takes place mainly via network communication on equal terms. Top-down oriented management principles will have less significance in the future.

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Source: The study was published 2015 as the book "The Flexible Executive: Strategies in an unlimited business world" ('Die flexible Führungskraft: Strategien in einer grenzenlosen Arbeitswelt') and except for the data also contains some recommended courses of action as well as practical examples from companies that already use constructive ways to handle flexibilized work.

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