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*Vai al contenuto multimediale*

Maria Menshikova

**Changes in work organisation in the framework  
of digital transformation**





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*To my international family*



There is nothing permanent except  
change

Heraclitus





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## Introduction

In recent years the context of business operation has changed significantly. Today, scientific and business communities are speaking about the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Smart systems — homes, factories, farms, grids or cities, the rise of knowledge sharing, and an on-demand economy force managers of the traditional old economy to think about the adaptation of business to the new environment, taking into account emerging models of production, consumption and employment. The main objective of all the companies in this new digital age is to grasp new trends and take advantage of new opportunities in order to “make the transition to more efficient business, better working lives and a healthier planet” (MAITLAND & THOMPSON, 2011).

As noted by different authors (WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM, 2016), the vast range of drivers such as technological, social, economic, demographic, geopolitical and legal changes have certainly influenced the transformation of many enterprises and their corporate cultures. The economic situation has undergone significant changes: on the one hand, the Great Recession in the current global context has strongly drawn attention to the need to improve the competitiveness, productivity and innovation capacity of companies; on the other hand, the origin of the knowledge economy has impacted dramatically upon the change of the work's nature and the skills that the workers of the future must possess. Many researchers in the last few years have discussed the opportunities offered by information and communication technologies to companies, not only to their strategies, processes, structures and products, but also to their cultures (OUYE, 2011; EUROFOUND, 2015; WEF, 2016). The demographic structure and increased diversity of the current and future workforce are other elements to be considered for the development of policies related to human resource management (HRM) in modern companies. Some changes in public policy and law, such as financial regulation, immigration policy and

employee rights, are leading areas for the development of new organisational policy (SHRM, 2013).

All of the trends described above are considered environmental pressures to the organisational change and digital transformation of an organisation — the journey which must join every organisation so as to survive in the new business environment. According to recent research of ROLAND BERGER STRATEGY CONSULTANTS & BDI (2015), if Europe fails to embrace the digital transformation to its own advantage, the potential losses for the EU-17 countries will amount to 605 billion euros by 2025 — equivalent to the loss of well over 10% of the continent's industrial base.

A special role in this transformation is played by over-the-top (OTT) and telco companies. In the last decade several studies have highlighted that even though many industries depend on telecommunication services to attract, retain and create a favourable experience for their external and internal stakeholders, the industry's own efforts to transform the way in which it interacts with consumers so as to market, sell and support products and services lag behind those of other sectors. For this reason, it would be important to understand the peculiarities of the transformation process of a company operating in the telco industry.

In fact, changes in the external environment have affected not only the transformation of business models, methods of interaction with customers and their involvement in the production process, but also relationships between employers and employees, as well as the ways in which work is organised and performed.

According to IBM (2015), the traditional workplace will no longer exist in the future. The explosion of new technologies, the mass adoption of social channels, the ubiquity of mobile technology and connectivity, and the proliferation of devices are the key drivers of massive transformation in the world of work. The key drivers in this transformation are information and communication technologies (ICT), unified collaboration, and social web tools that impact largely not only on the business in general, but also on the models of labour organisation. Rethinking organisational models becomes indispensable to supporting the evolution of the entire organisation.

Another issue to be considered in this context is that of distinctive characteristics of the workforce of the future. According to a report of IBM (2014), by the year 2025, two thirds of the workforce will consist

of Millennials, a generation with a particular, more agile, digitally literate mindset and focused on using the latest social technology, as well as with new values, ideas and expectations with regard to work, such as flexibility, social collaboration, and communication.

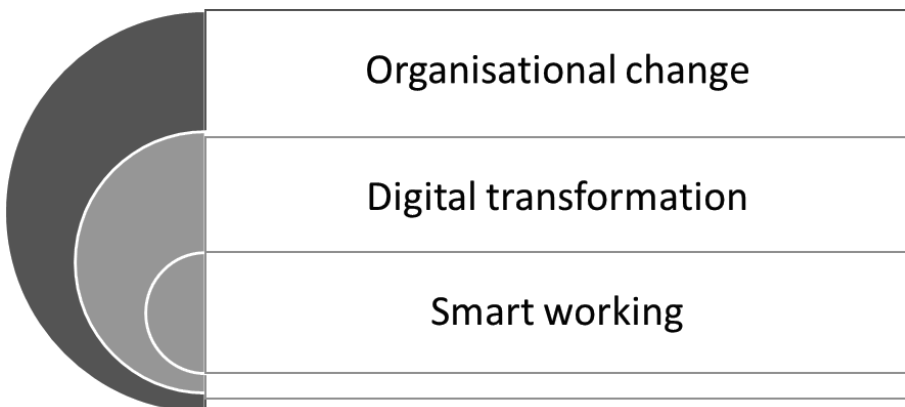
Based on recent researches conducted in this field, POLITECNICO DI MILANO (2012) argues that the traditional criteria for organisational design must be complemented by new principles of work organisation such as collaboration, autonomy and flexibility in the choice of space, time, and working tools, as well as talent development, responsibility, and innovation. These principles are the main prerequisites required for the adaptation of a new organisational paradigm — that of “smart” or “agile” working.

The main objectives of this study are as follows:

- a) to analyse the phenomenon of smart working, its principal characteristics, as well as benefits and barriers in respect of its implementation;
- b) to explore the role of smart working within the digital transformation process of the entire company.

The conceptual framework of the study has a “funnel” structure and can be described as follows (Figure 1).

Firstly, the concept of organisational change associated with the adaptation of the enterprise to the new business environment is discussed. Secondly, the digital transformation is described as part of a



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework of the study.

SOURCE: our elaboration.

general organisational change. Finally, smart working implementation is studied in order to understand its place within the digital transformation process of the organisation.

The book is organised as follows:

- a)* the first chapter describes the principal drivers of the organisational change and digital transformation, and explores the key changes in the world of work that impact significantly on the labour organisation and human resource management (HRM) of modern companies;
- b)* the second chapter presents a literature review on the digital transformation and analyses the main elements involved in this process within an organisation, with a particular focus on the telco industry;
- c)* the third chapter describes the smart working concept, analyses its main benefits, barriers and resistances at different levels, defines and studies in depth the levers of the smart working mix and their impact on the labour organisation and HRM practices, and describes the main factors to be considered for a successful implementation of smart working;
- d)* in the fourth chapter a case study is analysed with the purpose of exploring smart working implementation and its main characteristics through the example of the principal player in the telco industry in Italy (TIM), and of understanding the role of smart working practices within the digital transformation process of the entire company;
- e)* the book concludes with the final remarks, in which the main conclusions, limitations, further research directions, as well as theoretical and managerial implications are highlighted.