



Article published on July 14th 2012 | [Management](#)

Watch a program like *Mad Men* and you will be struck by how different the workplace is now compared to the 1960s. Which raises an important question – what will the workplace look like 50 years from now? Developing short courses which can be seamlessly integrated into the New Workplace has been a goal at AIM Victoria & Tasmania for the past decade.

One thing for sure – it will be shaped by forces coming in from many directions and that’s happening right now. More people are telecommuting and there is a growing army out there of contract workers, many of whom were forced to reinvent themselves in the wake of downsizings. All these trends will challenge managers. What workplace trends should tomorrow’s managers watch out for?

Writing in *Entrepreneur*, Michelle Rafter identifies 10 forces changing the workplace. The first is mobile devices with employees using their own iPhones, iPads and other devices for work instead of company-issued computers or laptops. They can use these anywhere, anytime. The second is telecommuting. Another is companies reconfiguring floor plans. With fewer employees coming into the office, many are setting up more communal areas with fewer traditional, walled work spaces. Text messaging and social networks are replacing emails, there’s more web-based software in day to day operations and we are seeing reverse mentoring where younger people are helping older workers master software, social media and other modern workplace skills. Add to that the growing army of independent contractors. We are also seeing more co-working spaces opening up where home-based workers can hire a desk and Internet connection for a few hours. And last but not least are those corporate culture initiatives to attract and keep employees. Going green, socially responsible procurement, work-life balance initiatives are all part of that particular trend.

The Office of the Future website canvasses many of these trends but adds that employees will be working more hours over the next 10 to 15 years. Also, “emotional intelligence” will become more important in the workplace, something that all managers need to be aware of.

Certainly, the lines between work and home have been blurring and we can expect that to continue. John Challenger in “The Futurist” describes the landscape we are now seeing: “Offices are becoming homes, just as homes are becoming offices. Child care and eldercare centres in many offices today mean that workers’ families can always be close by. The only home-oriented things missing from the twenty-first-century workplace are churches and synagogues, though they may be the next additions to the office landscape as some businesses accept and even nurture spirituality in the workplace. Increasingly, we cannot get away from work even when we are not there. Since the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* debuted three decades ago, we have been wondering when computers would become human or superhuman. What sneaked up behind us was the opposite: Humans are becoming electronic. We’re turning into robots. We carry our cell phones, e-mail, PDAs, and laptops at our office” with us at all times. Our cell phones are ringing off the hook. Commuting to an office is no longer downtime – there are customers and clients to be called. On the morning or evening train there used to be a subtle taboo about talking on the cell phone, but that’s disappeared.

This will create a number of challenges for managers. Workers who are constantly telecommuting will be more detached from the company. As Challenger says, companies will have to create work spaces that encourage collaboration and teamwork while at the same time ensuring people maintain their identity within the office.

What workplace trends do you see ahead? How should managers deal with the changes? The Australian Institute of Management Victoria & Tasmania are looking for your ideas on change

management and the future office. <http://www.aimvic.com.au/>

Article Source:

<http://www.articleside.com/management-articles/the-changing-workplace.htm> - [Article Side](#)

[Danica Pasion](#) - About Author:

If you are looking for change management, we can help you out on this concern. Please go to a [website](#) for additional information.

Article Keywords:

Short Courses for Managers, Australian Institute of Management Victoria, Change Management

You can find more [free articles](#) on [Article Side](#). Sign up today and share your knowledge to the community! It is completely FREE!