

Tools for Knowledge Workers

The Shift to Knowledge Work

Characteristics	The Nature of Work and Working	
	<i>Industrial Era</i>	<i>Modern Times</i>
<i>Work-Base</i>	Materials	Information
<i>Locus of Interactions</i>	People <> Materials	People <> People
<i>Results & Feedback</i>	Direct & Immediate	Indirect & Delayed
<i>Behaviors of Interest</i>	Overt, Physical	Covert, Verbal
<i>Visibility of Working</i>	High	Low
<i>Workflow</i>	Linear	Non-Linear
<i>Working Activities</i>	Prefigured	Configured
<i>Working Conditions</i>	Highly Standardized	Highly Variable
<i>Focus of Control</i>	Worker	Work
<i>Locus of Control</i>	Management	Worker
<i>Control Principle</i>	Compliance	Contribution
<i>Role of the Worker</i>	Instrument	Agent
<i>Management Style</i>	Directive	Collaborative
<i>Management Task</i>	Supervising	Supporting
<i>Standards</i>	Fixed, External	Variable, Internal
<i>Knowledge</i>	Concentrated	Distributed

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The shift to knowledge work coupled with other changes in the world of work and working (e.g., globalization, automation, mechanization, off-shoring, outsourcing and ever-increasing complexity) has created an unquestionable need for a new practice of management, one that is more suited to modern times. The essence of the many shifts related to work and working that occurred in the last half of the last century is summarized in the table above. Reading through it gives an idea of the challenges management faces and it also hints at the nature of what is needed in the way of a new practice of management. For more about the shift to knowledge work, click [here](#).

