

for example, to secure a mortgage. The Taylor Review points out that employers could choose to be fairer to their labour force:

While there is undoubtedly an important role for flexibility in the labour market, we believe that too many employers and businesses are relying on zero hours, short-hours or agency contracts, when they could be more forward thinking in their scheduling. We want to incentivise employers to provide certainty of hours and income as far as possible, and to think carefully about how much flexibility they can reasonably expect from their workers. (Taylor, 2017)

- **Pressurized work environments.**

Psychological contract theories (Rousseau 1995, Guest and Conway, 1997) suggest that when one party in this unwritten contract (e.g. employers) reneges on what the other party (e.g. employees) expects, the psychological contract between them is damaged and loss of trust is to be expected.

Being treated fairly is the basis of healthy psychological contracts. Yet the media are abuzz with stories of the human consequences of poor management and unfair practice in the 'culture of new capitalism' (Sennett, 2006), such as job intensification, changing employment contracts, insecurity, perceptions of loss of autonomy, in-work poverty, punishment of whistle-blowers and non-disclosure agreements to silence criticism. This narrative is driven by the assumption that all employers care about is productivity, and in some cases, such reports are well-founded (Graeber, 2018). And in a world that is more connected than ever before, it seems that individuals are increasingly feeling isolated and desire human interaction. Not surprisingly mental health issues in the workplace have risen to the forefront of media attention, echoing the growing focus on mental health issues affecting young people due to the social media pressures to achieve, look and be perfect.

In many contexts there are shrinking offerings for employees, with limited resources for continuous development, ongoing reorganizations in the quest for flexibility and growing demands – for more speed, efficiency, accountability and value for money (Aon, 2018a; 2018b). Mobile technology has enabled greater flexibility – and people can work from anywhere – but in 'always on' cultures they are also expected to do so. Moreover, the use of internet technology and email has also led to work intensification, increased workloads and shorter lead times. While some of these changes may benefit individuals, others may be detrimental to employees' health and personal lives.

These demands create pressurized work environments with limited real flexibility, where only the successful 'swim' rather than 'sink' and can lead to 'corrosion of character' for individuals (Sennett, 1998). Far from meaningful work,

many employees experience only the negative aspects of work, as described by Studs Terkel in *Working* (1972):

a search ... for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying.

Academic studies show that information overload at the individual level leads to distraction, confusion and poor decision-making (Carr, 2010; Kahneman, 2011). Short-term gains for the organization may undermine future gains and the health and well-being of employees because:

Persistence of stress can result in physical and mental exhaustion, impair employees' job satisfaction and performance, and affect the productivity and health of the organization. Regardless of the sector, the costs of poor mental health in the workplace are enormous. Stress and mental health stigma at work remain a reality in Europe. Investing in mental health promotion and prevention in the workplace has positive impacts in the short and long term for workers, employers and society. (The workforce view in Europe 2019, ADP)

Thus, unitarist thinking in the digital era may prove unsound. For while the ability to innovate has become a cornerstone in business strategy (Freeman and Soete, 1997), innovation cannot be 'forced' out of people. Of course it should be in the interests of employers to improve working conditions to ameliorate worker well-being and mitigate stress, because not only does it build positive employer reputations, but also produces productivity gains. Failure to tackle such issues suggests a cynical view of how the needs of organizations and employees can be productively balanced.

- **Ethical use of technology?**

Ever more powerful technologies surround us and will, very soon, potentially change social norms about what is ethically acceptable. For despite its business advantages, for the pessimists, a future world of work dominated by technology also has a shadow side, representing a mass of threats, including potentially widespread unemployment, cyber-crime and loss of personal privacy.

Workers in precarious occupations may find themselves treated as mere cogs in a machine, eminently replaceable. For people carrying out repetitive routine tasks in today's growth industries, such as packing, modern Pavlovian methods may be required to inspire motivation. In one home delivery company's warehouse, the company is seeking to improve efficiency and performance by 'gamifying' its packing workers: 'The games are displayed on small screens