



TO WORK SMART ENABLES EMPLOYEES TO WORK IN A FLEXIBLE WAY, ALLOWING THEM TO WORK FROM HOME OR FROM OTHER PLACES BESIDES THE OFFICE.

To work SMART

Publication date: January 2019

THE NETHERLANDS

The main challenge addressed by SMART is to enable the Dutch PES to keep up with changes taking place in the work environment. In the Netherlands working from home for a few hours per week is a common practice, but before the introduction of SMART this was not possible for Dutch PES staff using working files.

SMART makes the Dutch PES a more modern and attractive employer and contributes to the improvement of work-private life balance for its employees. On the other hand, managers need to learn how to trust the employees and find new ways to lead the team remotely.

Thanks to this practice, the Dutch PES has become a more flexible and agile organization that is employee-centered.

Name of the PES

Dutch PES (UWV WERKbedrijf)

Scope of measure

National

When was the practice implemented?

The first pilot took place from September to December 2014 (48 employees and 6 managers participated). The second pilot took place from May to October 2015 (318 employees and 14 managers participated);

The roll-out of SMART for the whole Dutch PES started in April 2018 and by July 2018 it was possible for every employee of Dutch PES to work 'place and time independent'.

What was the driver for introducing the practice? Was it internal or external?

Since the Dutch PES encourages a more modern way of digital working, communicating and collaborating with its clients, management also wants to facilitate employers working with the Dutch PES to work with a more modern approach themselves, reflecting the principle 'practice what you preach.'

The practice is part of a wider vision related to continuous development of professionalism/craftsmanship, leadership and personal development aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

The Dutch PES with its' own implementation team.

Which groups were targeted by the practice?

The staff of the Dutch PES: both employees and managers.

What were the practice's main objectives?

The main objectives of To work SMART include the following:

- ▶ To make the Dutch PES a modern and attractive employer;
- ▶ To increase the efficiency of the work of the Dutch PES;
- ▶ To encourage the development of employees' responsibility, involvement and independence.

What activities were carried out?

In order to put in place the possibility for Dutch PES staff to work remotely from places other than the office (for instance at home or while travelling between the home and the office), in a more flexible way, and up to a maximum of two half-days per week, the following activities were carried out:

- ▶ Organisation of two-hour kick-off meetings in all of the Dutch PES offices for all employees in the spring of 2018. During these kick-off meetings three films were shown: one on To work SMART in general, one on health and safety issues and one on security and privacy.
- ▶ New employees must undertake a compulsory 30-minute e-learning module about SMART working. This learning module was prepared by the human resources management department, in cooperation with the academic department and the business assets departments of the Dutch PES.

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A workshop for managers (called SMART Managing) was organised in several offices of the Dutch PES, covering subjects such as trust in employees, how to lead a team when not all employees are present at the office at the same time, and how to keep the employees involved and motivated. ▶ A card game called 'Smart-minded game' was created in order to raise awareness among staff about the possible risks and challenges of working SMART. The card game has four themes (i.e. working at a distance; setting limits and confidence; distraction and unforeseen situations; security and privacy). The card game was tested during the pilot project. Managers were given these cards after the kick-off meetings to use with their teams during the implementation of SMART and afterwards. ▶ 'Knowledge-sharing' activities were organised by managers and working with online platforms increased e.g. with Skype for Business and SharePoint. ▶ Laptops and smartphones were distributed to employees to facilitate flexible working. |
| <p>What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?</p> | <p>This new system requires a new kind of coordination: information is shared more often via digital tools such as SharePoint.</p> <p>All 5 100 employees received a smartphone. In March 2019 about 4 500 laptops will be distributed. Administrative assistants' desktop devices however will not be replaced by laptops. They can nevertheless work SMART on private devices with a special link to the Dutch PES company website.</p> |
| <p>What were the source(s) of funding?</p> | <p>Dutch PES budget</p> |
| <p>What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?</p> | <p>To work SMART opened up the possibility for 5 100 Dutch PES staff to work remotely. Not everyone has taken up the opportunity to work at home due, for example to, space restrictions, enough distance from work, etc.</p> <p>After the summer of 2018, the Dutch PES carried out a survey on SMART which was sent to all 5 100 employees. There were 2 100 responses received. The findings include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ about 50 % of the employees regularly work from home; ▶ 35 % work from home sometimes, and about 13 % never do so; ▶ 80 % say that they have a better work/private life balance; ▶ 67 % say that working from home increases their motivation; ▶ 59 % do not think that working from home is isolating. <p>In addition, employees reported that they have more job satisfaction, more freedom in planning their work, more flexibility in arranging their work day and work more independently. Also, more than 50 % of respondents think that a key downside of To work SMART is the reduction in the number of spontaneous meetings with colleagues.</p> <p>A second survey will be sent out to employees in Quarter 2, 2019.</p> |
| <p>What outcomes have been identified?</p> | <p>The work satisfaction of employees increased thanks to To work SMART. Every two years, the Dutch PES carries out an employee survey on the work experience. In 2016 the score for SMART working for the PES department was 5.2 on a scale of 10; in July and August 2018 the score was 7.8. Employees mentioned in the survey that as a result of SMART they are more productive because their work concentration has improved.</p> <p>The following observations were also made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ increased flexibility for employees; ▶ travel times (home to work) have fallen for staff; ▶ work/private life balance has improved; ▶ an increase in communication between employees and the managers; ▶ better communication with clients; ▶ better time-handling; ▶ a reduction in the use of paper due to increased use of laptops during meetings (but there is no data available on this yet); ▶ it facilitates an increase in focus by managers on employee output and performance as opposed to their presence in the office. |

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

The main lessons learnt are the following:

- ▶ Managers need to adapt, to learn how to trust the employees and to find new ways to lead the team remotely;
- ▶ Employees should be aware of the risks related to working SMART, such as data safety and privacy issues;
- ▶ Employees need to be aware that the parts of the day that they work at home are not fixed and they need to be flexible. Where necessary for the job, the manager can require an employee to come to the office e.g. if the employee needs to meet clients;
- ▶ Managers need to discuss SMART in work meetings and during human resource management (HRM) cycles in order to improve employees' performance.

The success factors include the following:

- ▶ A continuous communication flow among employees, and between employees and managers;
- ▶ The organisation of SMART Managing: a workshop for managers about SMART.



Contact details for further information

Name: Annemieke Buitink

Email: Annemieke.buitink@uwv.nl

Telephone: +316 211 200 93