



## Exemplary in energy

### Setting a good example

Technical implementation of measure no. 15:  
Encouragement of mobile-flexible forms of work

# Work smart



**In order to promote flexible forms of work, the Swiss Federal Railways (SBB), together with other Swiss employers, have launched the Work Smart initiative. One of the initiative's main activities is the publication of a charter. By signing it, SBB has committed to promoting flexible forms of work in its own company.**

In companies with flexible forms of work, people can work where they work best. This may be in the office, at home or when travelling. But it does not mean that employees spend five days a week away from their workplace. Most employees like to exchange opinions at the workplace with their colleagues. At SBB, flexible forms of work are explicitly an offer for employees and not an obligation.

#### **Why does SBB want flexible forms of work?**

Thanks to flexible work, SBB hopes to enhance its attractiveness as an employer and to have a more motivated and productive workforce. With the measure, SBB makes it easier to reconcile work and other facets of life. But above all, they would like the measure to ease the commuter flows in the rush hours. It would be a nice spin-off effect if the measure can also shorten journeys, reduce the number of physical workplaces and thus lower energy consumption. But SBB has not yet quantified the impact on energy consumption.

All employees at SBB have mobile devices

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## What is SBB's experience of this form of work?

All of SBB's 33,000 or so employees have been equipped with a tablet or a mobile phone and a laptop. Theoretically, its employees are always available everywhere via their mobile phones. There are only some very general rules on reachability at company level. The rules of conduct for electronic communication state that phone calls and text messages should be answered right away during working hours. However, SBB employees do not generally have to be reachable during their leisure time. More detailed arrangements are frequently made at the team level. For example, on the day of the team meeting many teams work entirely in the office. In order to draw a line in the home office between private and working life, some teams have agreed to officially adopt the chat program.

"Skype for Business" is an important working instrument for employees who have an office workplace. This computer program lists all SBB employees and it shows who is online. It is very easy to launch Skype conferences, in the same way as telephone conferences. Since Skype for Business and Office are interlinked, invitations to Skype conferences can, for example, be sent out directly from Outlook. Staff who don't have an Internet connection at the time, simply dial into the conference using their mobile phone. In this way, formal cooperation can be organized relatively easily,

even if employees work in very different locations. What is much more difficult is informal exchanges; a little chat in the corridor, a conversation during the coffee break or at lunch. For such purposes, the chat function in Skype for Business is used intensively at SBB.

A short question or an item of information can easily be communicated to a colleague via the chat. After the team meeting, some teams go to have lunch together for an informal discussion.

## Misuse or burnout?

At SBB, flexible forms of work and equipping personnel with modern ICT devices are concerns that have also been supported in recent years by the top management level. An important step in implementation was the relocation to Wankdorf, where people work with Desksharing. A prerequisite for mobile forms of work was the availability of mobile devices (mobile phone, laptop, tablet) for all employees.

When using flexible forms of work, line managers must manage their employees in a goal-oriented manner, since the time they spend in the office is not relevant. In the initial phase, flexible forms of work often make line managers afraid they will lose managerial control. The senior managers see SBB as still being in this phase. They say it is important here that the line managers build confidence in their employees. If individual employees don't inspire the necessary confidence, line managers can insist they work in the office. It may be useful for new employees initially to work as much as possible in the office so as to get to know their colleagues and to assimilate the corporate culture more quickly.

According to a company statement, Swisscom is already one step further in implementing flexible work: it is already a matter of course for most Group employees. It is all the more important to allow them to organize how they make use of the new technical possibilities on their own responsibility. Finally, it is of key importance to strike a good balance between work and private life. Senior managerial staff not only play an



Title page of the Work Smart guidelines for managerial staff

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exemplary role here, but should actively broach topics such as reachability, presence and workload with their employees.

At SBB, employees decide for themselves whether they will answer business phone calls or e-mails on their days off. They enter their working time in SAP (depending on the management level). A guideline indicates which points line managers and employees should pay attention to in flexible forms of work.

## How is flexible work regulated?

The rules at company level state that flexible work is a voluntary form of work. An internal directive defines Who, How and Where and contains all the rules and bases that have to be observed. Line managers and employees decide jointly whether to work flexibly. An oral agreement is sufficient. Employees who wish to have written confirmation that flexible working has been approved for them can download a model form from the intranet and have it signed by their line manager. But this model form is hardly used.

The SBB's goal is that all employees with a suitable job profile should be able to work flexibly if they so wish. To this end, employees are informed through the in-house magazine, managers' newsletters, Intranet and notices. Moreover, new managers are informed about Work Smart by means of training courses.

## Implement the measures yourself.

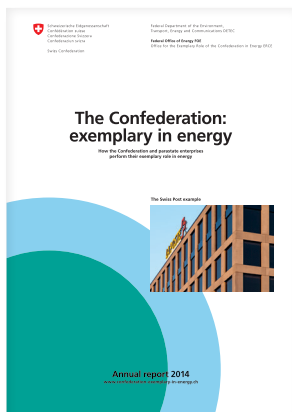
- Equip your employees with appropriate technical devices (e.g. mobile phones and laptops or tablets).
- Draw up and communicate guidelines and rules; in large companies, possibly at department or team level.
- Train your managerial staff in goal-oriented management.

## Further information

- Work Smart initiative [website](#)
- [Guidelines](#) of the Work Smart Initiative for managerial staff
- Skype Business [website](#)

## Contact person

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## Exemplary in energy

The annual reports form the core of the reporting by the Exemplary in energy initiative. They present the 39 joint measures and summarize the actors' actions plans, which also contain their specific measures. Furthermore they enable all the measures to be monitored. You will find the reports on [www.exemplary-in-energy.ch](http://www.exemplary-in-energy.ch).

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