

# New Ways of working and leadership: a Configurational Approach

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## Theme 19: Working flexibly in flexible work spaces

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### **The impact of New Ways of Working on the relationship between leadership approaches and individual and team performance**

Recent developments in information and communication technologies have played a significant role in challenging and reshaping the way people professionally work and interact. Many organizations have explored and experimented with new, more flexible work arrangements for their employees, complementing, supporting or even replacing traditional, yet ever relevant, work practices. These flexible work arrangements are also known as New Ways of Working (NWW). Characteristic of these NWW is that employees can conduct their work regardless of time and place, supported by information and communication technology. In addition, employees have more autonomy in deciding when to work instead of having fixed work schedules as is common in traditional 9 to 5 jobs. In addition, at the office, many employees have no fixed workspaces, instead they have different options for where to work, depending on the activity at hand ('activity-based working').

Since NWW increase the autonomy and flexibility of individual employees, the role of managers is likely to shift from direct supervision to more trust-based ways of leadership and performance-based objectives. We might assume that NWW require different ways of managing and even different leadership styles. Shared-leadership and self-leadership appear to be appropriate ways of controlling flexible work arrangements, although no studies have investigated the role and effectiveness of these ways of more horizontal leadership in a context of NWW. Despite the increased adoption and popularity of NWW, there is a lack of knowledge on the (new) role of leadership and its impact on individual and team performance. More specifically, there is a gap in our insights in the appropriateness of the integration of vertical and horizontal leadership in a context of NWW. It is unclear under which conditions horizontal and/or vertical leadership impacts individual and team performance most positively. This literature study aims to shed light on these new and important issues which are linked to the NWW-concept. Specifically, the study explores the (possible) moderating effects of specific NWW characteristics on the relationships between leadership and performance by reviewing the extant literature in the field of leadership, performance and NWW. Based on this, propositions will be developed concerning the effectiveness of horizontal and vertical leadership in the context of NWW. The paper concludes with suggestions for a research design to test these propositions.