

DISCUSSING NWoW MANAGERIAL ISSUES

A playful and intercultural perspective



WHO WE ARE

- › The Center for People and Buildings:
 - › Independent and interdisciplinary scientific knowledge center, started 2001, based on TU campus
 - › People – work – workplace
 - › Action research through many different cases (in the Netherlands - 80%- and abroad)
 - › E.g. most extensive database of workplace evaluation studies
 - › Shares knowledge through publications, tools, etc.
- › HR&D.:
 - › Independent consultant, started 2006 as a freelance, based in Paris
 - › Transformations of work
 - › Support to experimentations, training, research
 - › Working with a network of consultants, researchers and designers

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

- › The areas where we work and conduct research (mainly):
 - › The Netherlands
 - › Belgium (Dutch-speaking)

} *Area 1 (CfPB)*

 - › France
 - › Switzerland (French-speaking)

} *Area 2 (HR&D.)*
- › **In each area, countries with comparable “maturity” levels towards NWoW and close cultural characteristics**

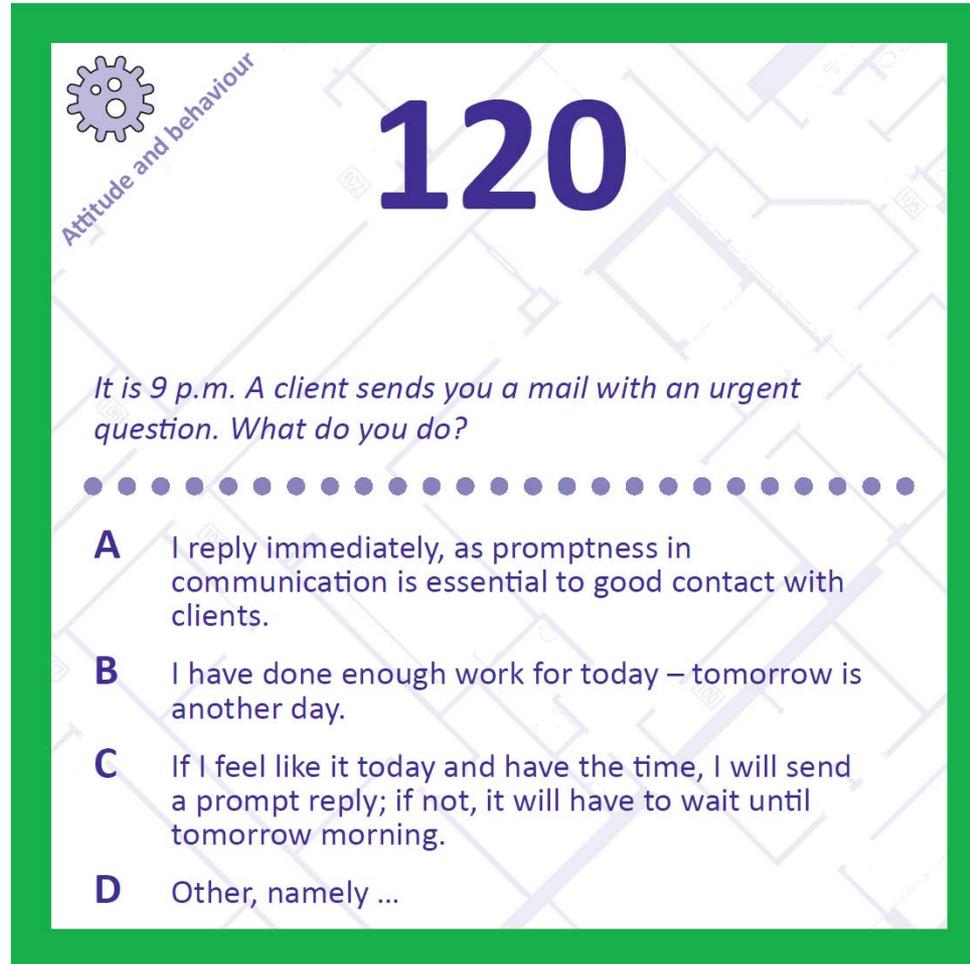
PLAYFUL PERSPECTIVE : THE WORKPLACE GAME[©]

- › Created in 2007 as a change management tool by the CfPB
- › Result of an observation: **workplace changes, behaviours often don't**
- › Aim of the game: **make behaviour in and around the work environment open for discussion**
- › A tool that enables both quantitative and qualitative data collection, being **adequate for research as well as to support change processes**
- › Continuously improved since 2007 to take into account work and workplace evolutions
- › Available in Dutch, English, French, German (*+ Finnish and Cantonese as prototypes versions!*)

THE WORKPLACE GAME[©]: HOW IT LOOKS LIKE



THE WORKPLACE GAME[©]: HOW IT LOOKS LIKE



 Attitude and behaviour

120

It is 9 p.m. A client sends you a mail with an urgent question. What do you do?

.....

- A** I reply immediately, as promptness in communication is essential to good contact with clients.
- B** I have done enough work for today – tomorrow is another day.
- C** If I feel like it today and have the time, I will send a prompt reply; if not, it will have to wait until tomorrow morning.
- D** Other, namely ...

THE EVOLUTIONS OF THE WORKPLACE GAME[©]

Requested evolutions of the game bring valuable insights of what is happening in the field of NWoW:

- › Mid-2012: first request for a translation in French (completed in early 2013)
→ marks the emergence of NWoW trend in France and Switzerland (*2018: about 80 French-speaking trained facilitators*)
- › End of 2013: launch of an updated version of the game, that includes workplaces outside of the office and some IT topics
→ marks the spread of remote and online working
- › **2017-2018: approx. 60 new questions developed to address NWoW-related managerial issues that can be observed in the different countries where the game is used**

A ONE-YEAR INTERCULTURAL CHALLENGE



Evi de Bruyne



Fien Thoolen



Dorieke den Hollander



Astrid Gerhardt



Sandra Brunia



Blandine Bréchnignac



Marc d'Ancona

Some examples of the recent
developments (and our discussions)

STATUS, SYMBOLS AND AUTHORITY

Question 145

The organisation has a flexible work environment. However, the top management kept its "regular" offices. What do you think about this?

A. *First proposal (from Dutch team members):* Managers always have to be visible and approachable for employees. So, it is good if you know where to find them

Final option: Top managers need such spaces to show who they are in the organisation.

B. Top managers have meetings all day. They need their own office to do their job efficiently.

C. Ridiculous: top managers have to set an example. If they don't work flexible, why should I?

D. Other, namely ...

MANAGERIAL ATTITUDE

“Sometimes at the beginning I’ve been approached in a more familiar way by far more junior people or by people far lower in the hierarchy. But I’m not the Emperor of Japan, I’m a manager. I noticed a change. Space made me more accessible.” (French company, 2017)

“Over the last year or last two years, we’ve been sharing a lot [with my collaborator]. I give him my opinion on the matters he deals with in full autonomy and the reverse is true. (...) I can’t remember of such situations before. We make decisions differently. (...) I think it reduced the hierarchical relationship. There used to be a distance with my staff.” (Swiss company, 2017)

MANAGERIAL ATTITUDE

Question 240

As a manager, what's your opinion about collective decision making?

- A. I think decision making should remain the manager's responsibility.
- B. I think moving to more collective decision making is a necessary step. In that respect, it's helpful for a manager to share workspaces with the team.
- C. Collective decision making is interesting to build commitment but it takes a lot of time. It should be restricted to specific topics.
- D. Other, namely ...

MANAGING DISTRIBUTED TEAMS

Question 207

Since your team members work part-time remotely you find it difficult to assess their workload. How do you do it?

- A. If I see them with dark circles under the eyes and yawning at the office, I think they're probably overloaded.
- B. I trust my staff to come and see me if they don't have enough work.
- C. I ask each of them for a detailed report of what they do on an hourly basis.
- D. Other, namely ...

GROWING AUTONOMY

Question 238

In the new work organisation employees will be given more autonomy. This means your control as a manager over your staff will diminish. How do you feel about this?

- A. No problem at all. I fully trust my team members and want to coach them to flourish even more.
- B. I have strong doubts. Some of my people need guidance. I think our team productivity is at risk.
- C. The idea is interesting, but then, what will my role as a manager be?
- D. Other, namely ...

BEYOND MANAGEMENT, GOVERNANCE (AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT) WITH A SPECIFIC FRENCH REQUEST

Question 215

You're responsible for the implementation of the new workplace concept within your company. During a meeting, the HR director asks you how you've involved employee representatives in the project. What's your reply?

- A. Employee representatives have delegated some of them to be part of the project team.
- B. Employee representatives are regularly informed; they were invited to join learning expeditions at the beginning of the project.
- C. What employee representatives?
- D. Other, namely ...

What would YOU reply?

Question 251

Your team is reluctant to use the new and expensive collaborative tool the company has recently implemented. As a manager, what do you do?

- A. I take radical measures: I no longer check documents that are not shared through this new tool.
- B. I hire an intern with good IT skills and give them the mission to help everybody to get on board.
- C. I ask the HR department to plan a training session for the whole team. Again.
- D. Other, namely ...



CENTER FOR
PEOPLE AND
BUILDINGS

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Information

Center for People and Buildings
Wim Pullen (w.r.pullen@tudelft.nl)
+31(0)15-2781271
www.cfpb.nl

HR&D.

Blandine Bréchnignac
+33 6 76 45 82 47
hr.d@sfr.fr