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## Mechanism of professional adaptation of remote workers

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**Abstract:** The article discusses the issue of adaptation of teleworkers to the conditions of professional activity, which is relevant in modern labor policy. A range of problems that hinder adaptation and act as a trigger for the escalation of personal psychological problems are outlined: a symbiosis of business and household responsibilities in a home office, difficulties in organizing communications, etc. The internal and external "levers" of influence on the adaptation process of a remote worker are revealed. Particular attention is focused on institutions (educational organizations, government agencies to support vulnerable categories of the population and employment services, non-profit organizations and organizations in the business sector) that are able to accompany and optimize the adaptation mechanism for remote workers in organizational and methodological terms.

**Keywords:** management of professional adaptation, support for adaptation to professional activity, remote work, remote workers, freelancer, remote team

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### INTRODUCTION

Today, there is a tendency to expand the sectors of the economy that use the labor of remote workers. There was a growing trend in the number of telecommuters before the pandemic, but its conditions only exacerbated the situation. Thus, a survey of 229 HR leaders (Gartner HR Survey, 2020) showed that "nearly 50% of organizations reported 81% or more of their employees are working remotely during the coronavirus pandemic" [8]. What's more, many of today's telecommuters plan to work more remotely in the future [8].

Remote work is beneficial for many enterprises [2]. It allows you to save on rental costs, quickly find the right personnel, and from the point of view of the state, distance employment can solve the problem of a shortage of jobs in rural regions and promote the development of a number of regions. Employers today are changing their strategies taking into account globalization, technology development and adaptation of the legislation of different countries, taking into account the specifics of remote work.

Distance employment has a number of attractive features from the point of view of the employee himself: the ability to live in any country in the world and in any, even the most exotic region; less control by the management of the enterprise, the ability to vary the intensity of labor; telecommuting tends to correspond to flexible working hours [1, 4, 5].

Despite the many advantages that are noticeable from the point of view of all participants in labor relations, distance employment has serious problems. First of all, these are the problems of the remote employees themselves. We will highlight the following key issues here:

1) Problems of career growth and training. Although telecommuting does not completely eliminate career opportunities, it greatly complicates the planning of this process. Prospective companies often track talented employees. If employees work through digital platforms, then in case of successful work, they have a high professional rating and a large portfolio. However, the process of traditional career development with placement in the talent pool and planned training is, of course, a more transparent and predictable process.

2) Reputation minus. In Russian practice, there is a society's attitude towards employees who work remotely as intercepting temporary jobs, odd jobs, etc. [3].

3) Not all people can adapt to work outside the office. Often there is a decrease in the productivity of work, distraction to household chores, excessive rest.

4) Problems of remote communication in a new team. Communication problems are also observed in an organization that has a fairly close-knit team. Solving communication problems is often achieved through rallying events, informal face-to-face communication. In the remote format of communication, there will always be some technology between communicants, however, if a few years ago in many works the problem of reducing the openness of information exchange in a remote format was noted, now this problem has been largely eliminated. The pressure of the above problems for a long time on remote workers can lead to undesirable consequences. For example, teleworkers may experience excessive anxiety and a feeling of loss of control over the situation. To solve the problems that arise, to reduce the risks of psychological disorders, it is necessary to create conditions for the adaptation and work of this category of employees. A systematic solution to the problem involves the development of a mechanism for the professional adaptation of employees who work remotely. To concretize the adaptation measures for teleworkers, it is important to understand whether they are the same from the point of view of management theory. We are a statistical study of the adaptation of teleworkers. The sample consisted of 112 employees from various companies. The analysis of the results made it possible to classify teleworkers into groups based on a complex criterion, including: profession, income, education level, level of expectations from life [7].

We managed to systematize external and internal "levers" of influence on the adaptation process of workers employed at remote work. External "levers" are quite diverse and can be attributed to the environment, objects and adaptation processes. Environmental factors are the circumstances of the external macro-environment and micro-environment (family, personal life), they can be spontaneous and planned. Among the objects of the adaptation mechanism are: digital platforms; educational organizations; non-profit public organizations that support socially vulnerable groups of the population; state bodies for social protection and employment of the population; enterprises employers. Digital platforms today are the key to various contracting processes, including those of a labor nature. In our case «these are platforms that facilitate the selling of labor to perform a task or service for monetary compensation» [6]. There are a significant number of digital platforms for teleworkers today. The platforms are both quite universal and specialized in nature, focused on highly skilled labor and low-skilled. A remote worker in his activity is forced to spend time not only on the work itself under the contract, but also on finding this job. The digital platform significantly reduces the time spent searching for a job, but does not speed up the completion of the job itself. The option of contracting through a digital platform in telecommuting is gaining ground. For example, 8% of Americans surveyed indicated that they used digital platforms to make money [9]. As the reasons for using such platforms, they indicate: the possibility of effective use of free time; flexible use of time; limited classical employment; replenishment of seasonal downturns in financial income. For jobs subject to seasonal fluctuations, situations of either redundant orders or forced downtime are characteristic. The employee should be able to distribute incoming cash flows over time and control costs in order to rationalize financial results. Educational organizations are actively involved in the adaptation of teleworkers. A number of universities, organizations of secondary vocational education have developed programs, courses that are focused on supporting online work, developing digital skills. The Voronezh branch of the Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration offered the regional government several programs for free training of the population in network marketing, network administration and other programs important for teleworkers. The university teaches financial literacy, which is especially relevant for freelancers, since the peculiarity of work "on projects" or "on orders" is instability, including payment. Educational institutions can provide organizational and methodological support to students wishing to combine training with part-time work to achieve financial independence. Social welfare institutions for vulnerable groups and employment centers are also interested in ensuring that their contingent can realize creative labor ambitions. For people with disabilities, mothers of many children, employment in the form of remote work may be the best option, requiring them minimal adaptation efforts in comparison with the conditions and schedule of office work [2]. For people with disabilities, mothers of many children, employment in the form of remote work may be the best option, requiring them minimal adaptation efforts in comparison with the conditions and schedule of office work. Most of these businesses are socially responsible companies. The management of these organizations appoints a responsible person in the enterprise who is involved in the development of a strategy for managing remote teams, including the professional adaptation of team members. Such activity presupposes the formation of an adaptation program, which should include: training sessions to improve the effectiveness of remote interaction; organization of informal distance communication; personal

remote consultations. Internal "levers" of influence on adaptation are important elements of the adaptation mechanism. Internal "levers" are the resources of the most remote worker, which he himself possesses and can develop. The strongest internal "leverage" is self-motivation for remote work, which is due to the direct benefits of the free process of working and living anywhere in the world. Of course, sometimes the motivation for teleworking can be external, for example, caring for a seriously ill relative. In this case, it is a forced transition to remote work. Of course, the presence of strong motivation significantly speeds up the adaptation process. In this case, the telecommuting worker concentrates his efforts on finding new approaches to his work, improves working conditions, and studies the possibilities of professional development and professional growth. Finally, if he works through a digital platform, then he strives to increase his rating, form a good portfolio of works.

An important internal "lever" of influence on the process of adaptation to work in a remote form is professional development and the formation of professional identity. Career development is less predictable, it is more determined by the strategy of the employee himself, who expects to build a professional reputation no longer within the framework of any specific organization, but in the remote work market. In the event that the main supplier of work is a digital platform, then an employee rating is formed here, in the design nature of work - a portfolio of works; if an employee works directly with companies employers, then a positive image and weak ties with individual leaders of these companies are formed here. The employee independently makes efforts to activate this "leverage", improves qualifications, communicates remotely in professional communities, participates in professional competitions, etc. A very valuable asset of a teleworker, in our opinion, is a comprehensive knowledge of the legal regulation of telecommuting, financial literacy and time management. Deep knowledge in this area and their application in practice will allow remote workers to avoid most of the difficulties and problems typical for remote work. Effective adaptation of telecommuting employees is possible only under conditions of balanced development of all elements of the adaptation mechanism: object, environmental, process and project. One of the key problems in the development of the adaptation mechanism is that objects develop inconsistently. A complex combination of external and internal "levers" should lead to an increase in the effectiveness of the employee's adaptation to remote work. The emergence of contradictions in external and internal "levers" can lead to the rejection of promising work, a decrease in labor efforts, the transition to an uninteresting, low-paid job within walking distance.

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