

John Niland

Smartworking... Really?



Digital tools are increasingly hailed as a “solution” to promote gender equality, to empower women in the workforce. If you doubt me, see [this](#) article in EU Parliament magazine. In summary, it said: *“We should take advantage of the technologies that are available to us in order to achieve so-called ‘smartworking’ – this means being able to work anywhere there is a computer and an internet connection, without having to face hours of traffic to travel to and from the office on a daily basis, therefore having full control over how we organise our days.”*

So far, so good. But if we examine what “smartworking” has entailed in practice over the past 20 years: it means **constant connectivity** i.e. never being switched off. Many people probably had better lives struggling with their daily commute than they now have with bosses / clients who expect them to check their email before they go to bed. Far from giving “full control over how we organise our days”, it’s actually created the opposite: a generation that is always thinking about work.

Technology was supposed to bring freedom, it’s actually created a modern form of indentured slavery.

As someone who has been an advocate for all of this (consciously driven by a “better world at work” since 2005), I’m far from happy with how things are turning out. Younger professionals in particular are often subjected to a “this is what it takes”

attitude i.e. “take it, or we will find someone who can”.

Sure, technology can be a **part** of real smart-working. If professionals also master the art of disconnecting — effectively putting up little boundaries throughout the day — then technology can help. The “disconnect” does not have to be a long one: 15 minutes is often sufficient to recharge our batteries and restore energy.

It’s the age-old question: can you disappoint another to be true to yourself? That’s about self-esteem, not technology. Once a professional has sufficient self-esteem to set boundaries, then technology can indeed be a part of the solution, as opposed to being yet another part of the problem.

© Copyright, John Niland

About the Author

John Niland is best-known as a conference speaker on doing higher value work and creating more opportunity via better conversations. His passion is energising people: boosting growth through higher energy levels, that in turn leads to better dialogue and business growth.

Since 2000, John has been coaching others to achieve success, with a particular passion for supporting professionals “who wish to contribute rather than just to win, and hence do higher value work via better conversations with clients and colleagues”.

In parallel, John is one of the co-founders of the European Forum of Independent Professionals, following twelve years of coaching >550 professionals to create more value in their work. Author of *The Courage to Ask* (together with Kate Daly), *Hidden Value* and *100 Tips to Find Time*.

Co-ordinates

Tel:

Belgium (0032) 32 2 201 1121

London: +44 (0) 845 644 3407

Email: john@vco-global.com

Web:

<http://www.johnniland.com/about/>



Important Notice

© Copyright 2015, Bizezia Limited, All Rights Reserved

This article appeared in Better Business Focus, published by Bizezia Limited ("the publisher"). It is protected by copyright law and reproduction in whole or in part without the publisher's written permission is strictly prohibited. The publisher may be contacted at info@bizezia.com (+44 (0)1444 884220).

The article is published without responsibility by the publisher or any contributing author for any loss howsoever occurring as a consequence of any action which you take, or action which you choose not to take, as a result of this article or any view expressed herein.

Whilst it is believed that the information contained in this publication is correct at the time of publication, it is not a substitute for obtaining specific professional advice and no representation or warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to its accuracy or completeness. Any hyperlinks in the article were correct at the time this article was published but may have changed since then. Likewise, later technology may supersede any which are specified in the article.

The information is relevant primarily within the United Kingdom but may have application in other locations.

These disclaimers and exclusions are governed by and construed in accordance with English Law.

Publication issued on 1 June 2015