

# HR Management in Pandemic Era

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DIPARTIMENTO  
DI MANAGEMENT



SAPIENZA  
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# AGENDA

- 1) Where were we before the pandemic spread?
- 2) What are we focused on today, in time of pandemic?
- 3) What we need to do to recover our society and the economy?
- 4) What risk are we willing to take?
- 5) An Italian case: Ferrari's response to pandemic and to reopening





The pervasiveness of digital technologies and their impact on labour market, work organization, and HR management

Put the digitization in a historical evolutionary path:

- Economic: Globalization; financialization; hyper competition, de-localization, liberalisation and privatisation
- Social: Migration, inequalities, diversities recognition, social pollution
- Cultural: Convergence in life-styles; consumerism mind-set
- Geo-political: Local wars; striving for global political power
- Environmental: Evolution of sensibility around environmental and climate change issues)

Issues:

- Work organization and its impact on individual well-being and social pollution
- Impact of digital technologies on employment and new employment forms
- Big Data and data-driven HR management
- Hiring and retaining talents in a digitized environment
- Blockchain and certification of competencies
- Smart working and digital workplaces
- Enterprise social networks
- Occupational welfare and digital platforms
- E-learning environments
- Inter-generational divide, equity and inclusion, employer and employee reputation etc.





Digital Technologies (DT) were deeply modifying the way employees respond to different stimuli and signals: A new digital workforce was taking place

DT are influencing:

- Cognitive processes
  - Perception (to what stimuli/signals do people pay attention and how people receive stimuli)
  - Elaboration
  - Interpretation
- Mindset Structure
  - Attitude
  - Motivation
  - Emotion
  - Intention
  - Preference
  - Stereotype
- Responses
  - Behavior
  - Interaction
  - Learning
  - Communication





Strong impact on the nature of work and the workforce:

- multi-cultural
- multi-gendered
- multi-generational membership
- multi-skilled
- multi-contracts

This results in a blended and segmented workforce: Individuals and segments that differ in their expectations of work, and that require different HR practices (segmentation of HR practices is needed, as people-listening and people care activities take place)

Impact on performance (productivity, absenteeism, turnover, citizenship, innovation ...), individual satisfaction (well-being, work-life balance), organizational climate (need to care about employees' potential responses to new stimuli)

Every work arrangement and / or modification must be accompanied by appropriate internal communication, to avoid withdrawal behaviors (e.g. disengagement) and low job performance

Leaders' attentiveness is required to what employees' needs are, to identifying their level of stress and burnout





## What are we focused on today, in time of pandemic?

Digital technologies were paving the way to a new way of work organization and to a new kind of employee, who resembled a superhuman being endowed with augmented reality gears, sensed wereables, artificial intelligence, relying on big data and so on

A resurgence of socio-technical theory was the main direction addressing our research, and sociomateriality represented a new interesting perspective to describe this new reality

Now, a small, invisible particle threatens the world, demonstrating the superiority of nature over human beings. This unknown enemy is able to stop the world, keeping each of us closed in our houses, remembering us that everything combines with everything

So, we discover that priority is not the digital revolution, but Health and Safety

This gives us a great opportunity to rethink to sustainability, involving individuals, families communities and society, institutions and organizations, and environment related issues

If we want to recover we need to think systemically, by using the socio-technical systems theory, and by adding a new word, sustainable: socio-technical sustainable systems, to remember that socio-technical arrangements are not sufficient if they aren't combined with making individuals, society, communities, institutions, and the environment reciprocal resilient (remembering that everything combines with everything)





Governments around the world strive to reopen national economies as soon as possible. But, which are the conditions for this reopening, to gradually return to a normal state? I think we should make a three-order questions:

- 1) How well we know the Sars CoV-2 virus? The way it manifests, circulates, diffuses, acts, and, consequently, how this virus must be tackled and fought? Maybe we should combine contagion tests with blood antibody tests. Is this enough? Not sure.
- 2) Which activities and protection systems must governments and employers put in place to ensure health security? How much do these measures cost? Which resources nations and companies have to safely ensure a gradual return to normality? And, not least, how much time does it take to national states and companies to put measure in place? Have activities' interdependencies been carefully assessed in order to avoid a new outbreak? Have risks been assessed? And, what is the tolerable and acceptable risk?
- 3) Which plans must be set in case of resurgence of the spread? How should we be equipped? Do we have enough structures to quarantine workers affected? Which tools (digital) do we need? Do we have a vaccine? And what about digital apps to trace contacts? What are we willing to sacrifice our privacy in order to protect ourselves and others? What is the role of governments and the companies?





## What risk are we willing to take?

We need a risk assessment model for restart working

For example, INAIL, the Italian public institute for policies on workers health and insurance) set a model based on three kinds of variables in assessing the risk of contagion:

- 1) Exposition (the probability to enter in contact with potential sources of contagion while working (i.e., health sector, management of special waste, research labs, etc.)
- 2) Proximity (intrinsic features of work that not allow a minimum social distancing, i.e., specific tasks in assembly lines, for part or the entire working time)
- 3) Aggregation (typology of work that puts in contact a worker with other people external to the organization, i.e. customers in restaurants and hotels, education, suppliers, travellers on public transports, etc.)

These risks have different intensity related to areas in which activities are located, ways of organizing work, and specific measures taken by public as well as private actors in order to prevent a contagion resurgence.





Ferrari represents an Italian excellence in dealing with the pandemic and responding to it

<https://www.raiplay.it/video/2020/04/Report---Dio-Patria-Famiglia-Spa-850ab2dc-3f12-4aba-8d37-fd3547f30c69.html>

But Ferrari is a medium-size company (near 4,300 employees), with very high-skilled and high-compensated workforce, a very strong brand image, located in a small town (Maranello, near Modena, with 18,000 people)

Ferrari has not the disadvantages of operating in a large city, nor those related to large companies, but was able to invest a lot money on people over time

Will Ferrari reopening policy represent a best practice?

We must rethink to overall HR Management by putting at the very center the issue of employee wellbeing, as well as communities and environment's well-being





**Thank you very much for  
your attention**

