

Summary of the report “Viewpoints of working life researchers on the transformation of expert work”

This report examines key driving forces of working life and their impact on expert work, particularly from the perspectives of work productivity, well-being and the future. The report is based on interviews with Finland’s leading working life researchers and experts.

In the report, the future of expert work is particularly examined through three points where different driving forces intersect: increased competence requirements, changes to management styles and societal structures. The analysis was limited to these three aspects based on interviews with experts. Although each interviewee highlighted a slightly different combination of driving forces in working life, they all intersect with one another when it comes to these three nodes in the field of expert work.

Based on the interviews, fostering high-level competence and utilising that competence more comprehensively is critically important for Finland’s economic growth. Productivity challenges cannot be solved by increasing performance output, but rather by supporting the development of new skills and improving the quality and management of work. In terms of everyday expert work, this refers to the ability to manage workload stress, opportunities to learn and evolve, as well as structures that enable the potential of highly educated individuals to be fully utilised.

At the same time, the management of expert work must be restructured. Earlier styles of management based simply on the supervision of work performance are increasingly less suited to everyday expert work and the operating practices brought about by the transformation of working life. As the responsibility for work performance is increasingly transferred to the expert themselves, aspects of management shift more to setting and communicating a common direction, strengthening cooperation and interaction, and securing structures that will enable development. At the same time, expert communities should turn more attention to soft skills, as success is based on team contributions rather than individual performances.

Ultimately, the opportunities for individuals and employers to create new growth are limited, however, and must be supported by society as well. Based on the results of the report, the mobility of highly educated people within the labour market must be improved and a framework for the full exploitation of high-level competence must be developed in the workplace.

Development activities must, therefore, be formulated on three levels: the individual’s opportunities to develop their own competence, the responsibility of employers to build operating models that support learning, and the role of society in ensuring the mobility of competence and structures for continuous learning. When these levels come together successfully, the potential of highly educated people can be fully utilised, thereby building the foundation for Finland’s future growth, competitiveness and well-being.



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