

Line Management

Reflections on the impact of COVID-19

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The Webinar will start at 2pm

The state of play

- Good line management is critical for well-functioning organisations
- We are often not clear about what we expect from line managers
- Promotion into line management often based on technical skills
- Preparation and support for the role often lacking
- Line managers play a number of roles
- Clear that effective communication is central to the role

The impact of effective line management – organisational outcomes

- Line management is associated with wide range of organisational outcomes*
 - E.g. strategy development and implementation, innovation, employee satisfaction, absenteeism

*The impact of Line/Middle Managers on Workplace Performance (2019) NHS Employers.

5 key line management factors impacting organisational outcomes

- Social cohesion
- Perceived supervisory support
- Team empowerment
- Psychological safety
- Group goals*

* The impact of Line/Middle Managers on Workplace Performance (2019) NHS Employers.

The impact of effective management

- 70% of cross-country variation in GDP is attributable to management practice*
 - Performance monitoring
 - Target setting
 - Identification and development of talent
- 70% excludes innovation, leadership and strategy

*Bloom, N, Van Reenen, J. (2007) 'Measuring and Explaining Management Practices Across Firms and Countries', Quarterly Journal of Economics

What is good line management?

- IES research* highlights 5 key things from a direct report perspective:
 - Build relationships and trust
 - Flatten hierarchy, open and free discussion
 - (Strategic) direction
 - Performance feedback
 - Developmental focus
- The knowledge-practice gap

* Robinson D, Hayday S (2009) The Engaging Manager

Few thoughts on the effect of Covid-19 on communication

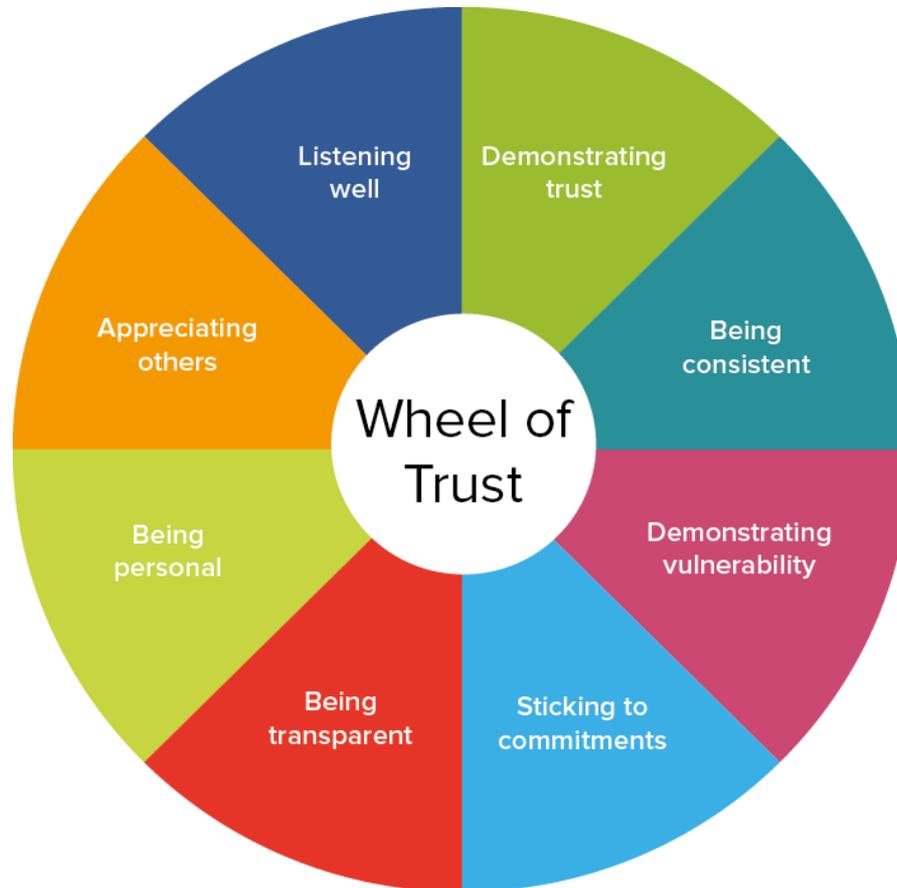
- Communication more difficult and different
- Burden of communication higher
- Greater likelihood of communication mishaps
- The importance of trust

What makes for an effective virtual manager?

- More frequent and regular communication
- Excellent listening skills and the ability to spot underlying meaning and process messages
- Test out meaning by summarising and reflecting
- Clarity of communication and expectations
- Initiate and encourage actions that build and sustain trust*

*Smith A, Sinclair A (2003) What makes for an effective virtual manager. Roffey Park

Trust actions

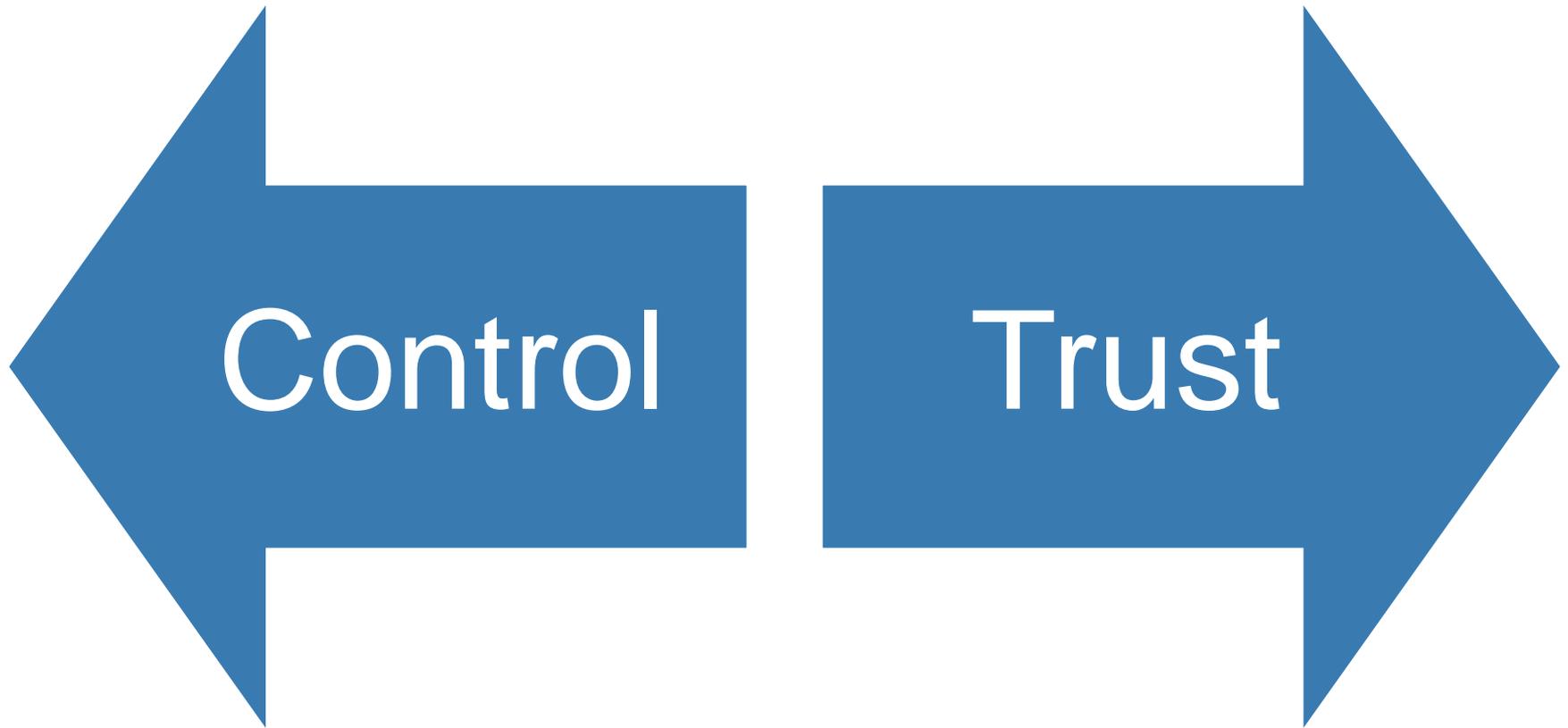


Is line management different now?

- Yes and No
- Increased complexity but many central dilemmas remain the same, albeit heightened
- Managers may struggle most with homeworking*

*IES Working at Home Wellbeing Survey <https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/ies-working-home-wellbeing-survey>

Management dilemmas: The Control-trust dilemma



Management dilemmas: Keeping the business going and attending to staff needs



Meeting staff
needs
flexibly

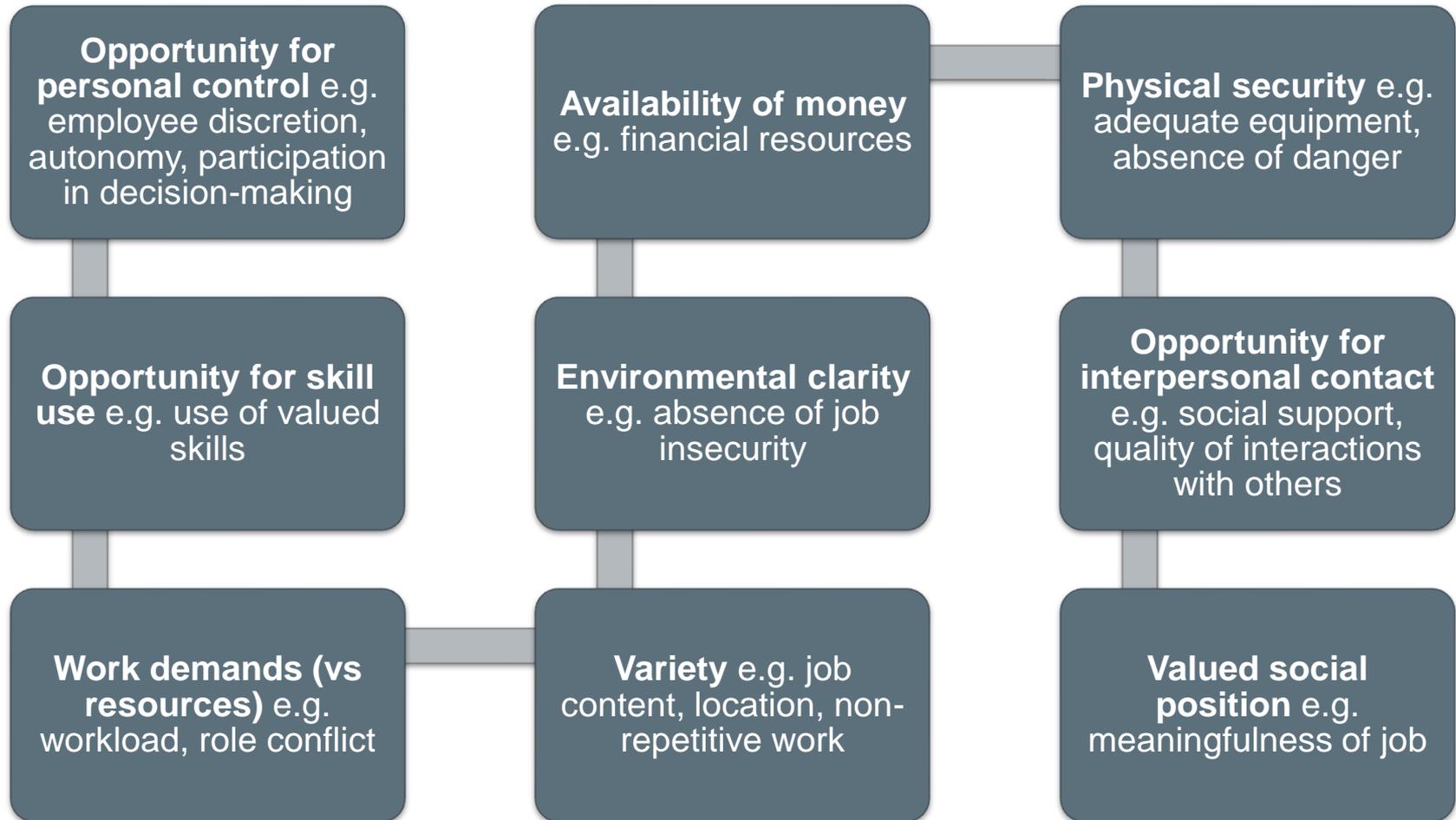


Keeping the
business
going

Management dilemmas: Effectiveness, efficiency and innovation



Determinants of employee well-being



Job Characteristics Model (what managers need to know)

Model elements

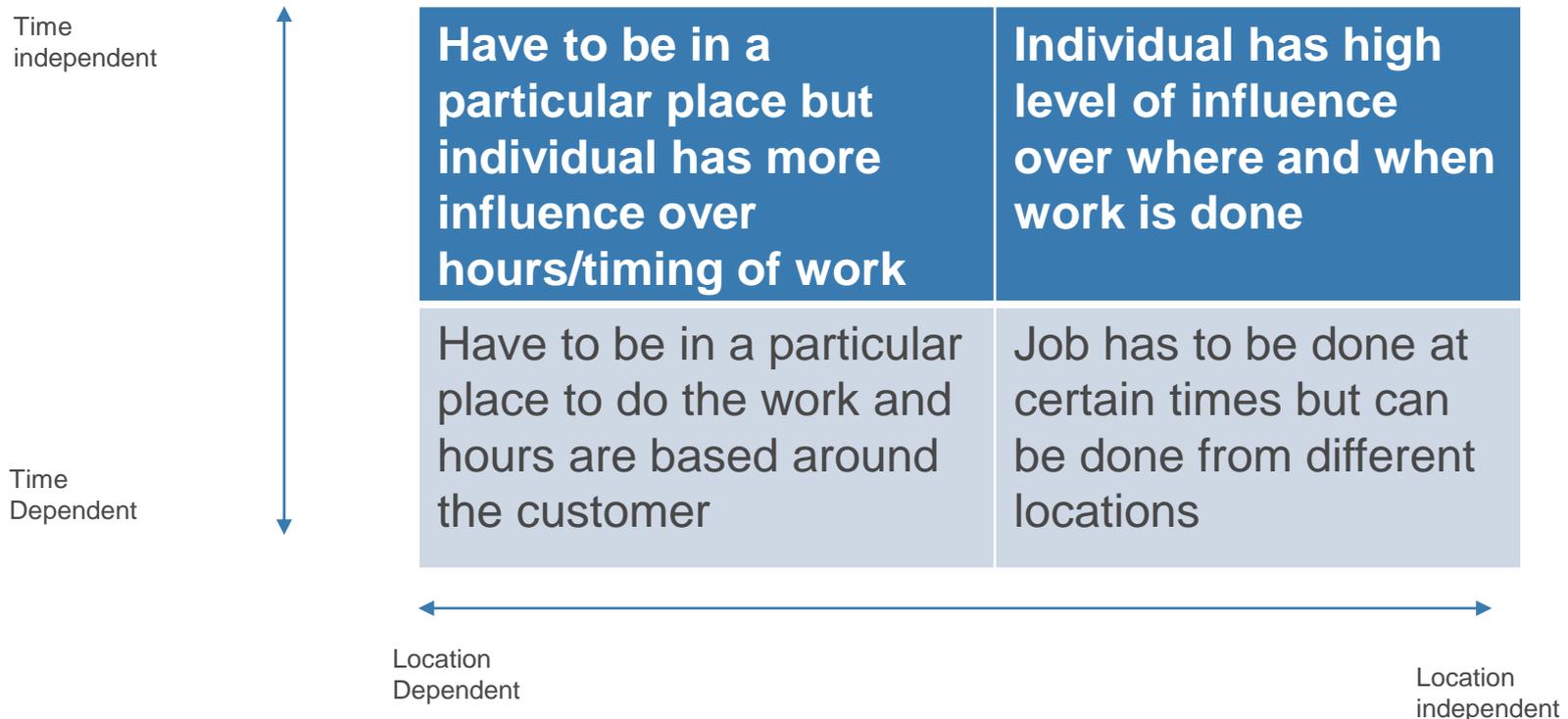
- **Skill variety** e.g. using a variety of skills, not too few, not too many
- **Task Identity** e.g. being able to identify with the work as a whole either as an individual or a group
- **Task significance** e.g. being able to identify with a bigger purpose
- **Autonomy** e.g. freedom in deciding how work is done
- **Task feedback** e.g. from other people/task itself

Practical implications

- Varying work to enable skill variety/understanding talents
- Assigning work to groups to make a whole task
- Delegate tasks to lowest possible level
- Connect people to outcomes

And facilitate social connection!

Designing new models of work: Mapping time/location dependency



*Jones, Bevan et al (2007) 'Transforming work: reviewing the case for change and new ways of working'

What can line managers do to support mental health?

Individual e.g. establishing clear boundaries between work and leisure time; prioritising self-care; clarity about work priorities

Group e.g. maintaining social and informal contact; offering help; provision of feedback

Leader e.g. ensuring necessary equipment; exploring work adjustments where needed; supporting positive relationships within the team; being available but not intrusive; agreeing what information is communicated to colleagues about an individual's situation

Organisation* e.g. facilitating access to health and wellbeing support; establishing a culture where mental and physical health prioritised; provision of flexible working practices

Looking to the (near) future

- Equipping managers to manage virtually
- Helping managers (re)design jobs/work for well-being and flexibility
- Supporting managers to spot and support staff with (mental) health issues
- Facilitating safe and healthy return to work
- Final thought: line managers are people first!

Thank you

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