

## Monthly Topic

### Virtual work teams. Fashion or competitive advantage?

The organizational environment has become more dynamic in the last decades due to the internal and external competition, the different financial crisis and the development of new information technologies. The advancement in technologies has lead to changes in how to organize work that, if properly managed, may help organizations to be more efficient. The study of processes and results of these new ways of work organization, such as virtual teams, belongs to the WOP psychologist. Are we facing a new challenge or a new field of study and enterprise advising?

## WOP psychology contributions to HR Management

### Human Resources today

Work-life balance program: the compromise of the touristic resort Holiday World Peiró proposes a humanist model in order to allow organizational change  
Social networks are the new and most used tool to look for a job  
Telework and video conference could allow a small company to save up to 1200 Euros per year.

To face the crisis, take a step!

## New challenges in WOP-P: What do the professionals think about it?

### Interviewing Maria Mercedes Botero

In this publication we had interview M<sup>a</sup> Mercedes Botero Posada, a specialist psychologist on clinic psychology, Organizational Development and Human Processes as well as Magister on political and economical studies. M<sup>a</sup> Mercedes is teacher at Universidad del Norte (Barranquilla, Colombia) where she teaches Organizational Psychology and Economical and Consumer Psychology. Furthermore, She is Magister of Bioethics committee of Colombian School of Psychologist, and president of Consumer Psychology Division of the same school. She Coordinates the Consumer Psychology Group of Inter-american Society of Psychology as well as the Deans net of the Federation of Psychology Associations. By the same token, she is Director and founder of Inpsicon, company devoted to consumer psychology research ([www.inpsicon.com](http://www.inpsicon.com)) and se have different awards in the Psychology field.

## Master Wop-p news

### News on WOP-P Master

A new WOP-P year class professionals is in the labor market: Students of fourth Master WOP-P year class have been graduated

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## Virtual work teams. Fashion or competitive advantage?

Nowadays, organizations' structures need to be more flexible than ever before. The main reasons for this are their presence in global markets, the development of new information technologies and the impact of the world economic crisis.

Is in this context where virtual work teams emerge, offering a competitive advantage over conventional teams. This advantage is reflected in their capability to add the newest information technologies to the organizations. On the other hand it reduces time and space restrictions, creating new work spaces and ways to face new business demands.

Virtual teams are conceptualized as work teams that differ from the conventional ones in several aspects:

- a) Their interaction takes place mainly through computer mediated communication systems.
- b) Their members do not usually meet face to face and work in different locations and time frames
- c) The members of a virtual team easily change in order for the team to fulfill the requirements of upcoming tasks and projects.

Due to the spatial distance that physically separates the team and the computer mediated communication, there are several aspects that can influence the team performance, such as the roles assignment, the communication quality or other technological factors.

What to do for a virtual team to be successful?

First, the existence of initial training sessions in the form of face to face group meetings so the team members can get to know each other. Before beginning to work virtually, one or more meetings to work in key aspects (e.g. decision making) will make things easier and more productive for future virtual teamwork. Success obtained by these teams may depend on the quality of this initial training.

Second, clarification of roles and team processes to increase efficiency. Communication is one of the most important aspects for these kinds of teams since their member are based far way from each other: an adequate planning of the communication process is of paramount importance. On the other hand, leadership capable of making the most of the strengths derived from virtual work is necessary; however, always overcoming those difficulties that physical distance between the team members can lead to. The leader has not only to coordinate tasks, but also define processes and look after control and emotional aspects of the team. Training before the team starts to work, well-defined processes, well-established

communication channels and an adequate leadership are the keys for efficiency and success within virtual work teams.

Our challenge is now to know how new forms of work affect team performance, how technology influences team processes and results, and what possible strategies to optimize the performance of this type of work teams we can follow.

- Cohen, S. y Gibson, C. (2003). Virtual teams that work: Creating Conditions for Virtual Team Effectiveness. Jossey Bass.

- Kozlowski, S. W. J. y Bell, B. (2003). Work groups and teams in organizations. En Borman, W. C., Ilgen D. R. y R. J. Klimonski (2006), Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 333-375.

## Human resources today

In this section we carry out a review along different business and organizational management magazines of the most relevant HR topics nowadays. Our proposal is to share with you what companies (maybe like yours) are concerned about. This month...

### **Emotional Intelligence: positive emotions, happiness and life quality**

Research suggests that when happiness is higher, there is an increase in productivity and profitability. In order to achieve happiness it is recommended to work on affection, improving and developing the core socio-emotional competences. This will help to improve the quality of life and therefore happiness.

**Revista Aprende RH N° 30, By: Cesar Rodríguez Martín**  
<http://www.aprenderh.com/contenidos.asp?id=438>

### **Personal differences could negatively influence work climate**

The conflict between team members should be managed by the persons involved in the problem. If successfully managed, the conflict could even be beneficial. Conflict may force people to look for new approaches, promote creativity and improve conflict resolution.

**Capital Humano, N° 256, By: Wolters Kluwer Spain**

[http://capitalhumano.wke.es/noticias\\_base/las-diferencias-personales-pueden-influir-negativamente-en-el-clima-laboral](http://capitalhumano.wke.es/noticias_base/las-diferencias-personales-pueden-influir-negativamente-en-el-clima-laboral)

### **Continuous working days increases motivation and helps energy savings**

Continuous working days is a new method in Spain where the work day starts a couple of hours after dawn, between 7 and 8am, and finishes after midday without a lunch break. According to the results of a study carried out by Monster.es, this type of work day cheers up the employees since they will be able to enjoy the free afternoon. "The workers will face their work day in a better mood, which will be reflected in their performance and results"

**Los Recursos Humanos, July 2011**

<http://www.losrecursoshumanos.com/contenidos/8101-la-jornada-intensiva-de-trabajo-conlleva-un-aumento-de-la-motivacion.html>

### **50% of workers changed their work schedule because of family issues**

47,3% of salary earners enjoyed a flexi-time at work or at least were able to change their working hours - in the beginning or in the end of the working day and at least by one hour - by family issues, as opposed to the 19,3% who was rarely able to change it, and the 27,5% that could ever not. This data have been obtained from the family-

work balance study of 2010 on behalf of the Active Population Survey (EPA), which reports to the National Institute of Statistics (INE)

**RRRHH Digital, July 2011**

<http://www.rrhhdigital.com/ampliada.php?sec=205&id=78081>

**OPAL helps in the labor insertion of young people under 30.**

The University of Valencia has presented the results of the Global Occupation Plan of OPAL (Professional insertion and employment counseling observatory) for the 2010-2011 course. In this program, 60 young people - under 30 years - have participated, being at least a third of them long-term unemployed. 55 of them joined the labor market with different types of labor contracts.

**RH Media, July 2011**

[http://www.rhmedia.es/noticias/opal\\_facilita\\_la\\_insercion\\_laboral\\_de\\_jovenes\\_menores\\_d-id0337.html](http://www.rhmedia.es/noticias/opal_facilita_la_insercion_laboral_de_jovenes_menores_d-id0337.html)

## Interviewing

### María Mercedes Botero

This time we have interviewed M<sup>a</sup> Mercedes Botero Posada, a psychologist specialized in Clinical Psychology, Organizational Development and Human Processes and Master in Political and Economic studies. M<sup>a</sup> Mercedes is a works in the Universidad del Norte (Barranquilla, Colombia), where teaches within the Organizational Psychology and the Economic and Consumer Psychology areas. She is Magister of the Bioethics Committee and President of the Consumer Psychology Division of the Colombian School of Psychologists. M<sup>a</sup> Mercedes coordinates the Consumer Psychology Group of the Interamerican Society of Psychology and the Deans Network of the Federation of Psychologists' Associations. She is also the director and founder of Inpsicon, company created for Consumer Psychology research ([www.inpsicon.com](http://www.inpsicon.com)), which has received several awards in the area of Psychology. In this number we have had the opportunity to interview this person who successfully combines the academic and professional fields. M<sup>a</sup> Mercedes shared with us her opinion about the future of the Organizational and HR psychology and the main challenges that WOP psychologists will face.

Among other aspects, M<sup>a</sup> Mercedes Botero suggest a trend towards the administrative decentralization, the organization of work based on new technologies, and the companies' market orientation. Botero is confident that, in no much time, multidisciplinary work and unity within Psychology will be common topics to gain advancement in the applied practice.

In relation to the value that WOP psychologists can add to organizations, the teacher mentions our solid training in organizational behavior. Counting with strong models and theories of human behavior within organizations makes the difference between WOP psychologist and other professionals. But on the other side, there are some aspects that psychologists lack of. Botero highlights that psychologists are not specific about their proposals and do not deal with economic issues. During the interview, Botero made an interesting summary of WOP psychologists' strengths and limitations, a valuable effort of reflection and critical analysis.

Finally, we asked her about how the training for a WOP psychologist should be in order to face the nowadays organizational environments and the growing multiculturalism. In relation to the first question, she pointed out the specialization in higher education and practical training in organizations. About the second question, M<sup>a</sup> Mercedes highlighted the importance of multiculturalism management in a global environment.

In an environment where multiculturalism is present, where HR processes are being outsourced, and where the organization of work is determined by new technologies, is where the WOP psychologist counts with models and theories to understand human behavior in organizations. But this psychologist may need to be more specific about his/her proposals and to understand the economic language of organizations. Are the specialization in higher education and the increase of students' practical training in organizations a possible solution? This is the view of M<sup>a</sup> Mercedes Botero and this is how we shared it with her.

## News on WOP-P Master

The Master on Work, Organization and Personnel Psychology (WOP-P) starts a new consolidated course as a one of the european masters with highest quality in their field. To guarantee that quality, WOP-P Masters keeps updating himself, introducing new changes in this new edition in which new students have the opportunity to study the full program on English and perform study exchanges in one of the American Universities that have been included in the consortium. Until today, the consortium was composed by the University of Valencia in Spain (coordinator), the University of Barcelona (Spain), the University of Bologna (Italy), the University of Coimbra (Portugal) and the University of Paris Descartes (France). In this new 2011-2012 we incorporate two new universities, the University of Guelph in Ontario (Canada) and the University of Brasilia (Brasil). Continious updating and quality are two core competences of the master, which is proved from updating himself year after year.

## A new WOP-P year class professionals is in the labor market: Students of fourth Master WOP-P year class have been graduated

Last month twelve students of the fourth year class of master WOP-P (course 2009-2011) in Valencia celebrate their graduation after finished the two years of the master. Some of them will be devoted mainly to research in WOP-P, while others will apply their knowledge to work in companies, but all of them will work with the research-practitioner model. During this two years of intensive formation both theoretical as practical based on the EuroPsy competence model, these students have shown a great motivation to the learning. This year class is outstanding by participate in the Psychological Iberamerican 2010 Congress in Oviedo, the EAWOP 2011 congress in Maastrich, the Winter School 2011 attendance in Gandia, as well as the development with enthusiasm and energy the "newsWOPP" project, which will be responsibility of the fifth year class of Master WOP-P in October. The students leave much and good in their backs, but what they really carry is even more, apart from the academic and practical training, this master had put together twelve professionals that nowadays are friends. From today each one of these WOP-P professionals will decide which will be his path in the labor market: another WOP-P year class is now in the professional world and arrives with strength...