

The Impacts of Bossware on Business Management: An Analysis of Benefits and Challenges

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Abstract: The novel coronavirus pneumonia has forced many people to work from home. In the home-based office scenario, ensuring work efficiency and results and staying on track with business progress is a big challenge for enterprise management. Therefore, increasingly, companies use bossware to monitor employees' working status at home through the software, hoping to urge employees to work efficiently, but the result could be better. This paper expounds on the current situation of companies using bossware in recent years and analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of using bossware in enterprise management from multiple perspectives. At the same time, it puts forward suggestions on how to rationalize the management of employees under special circumstances, hoping that bossware can play its due role.

Keywords: business management, bossware, benefits, challenges

1. Introduction

In 2020, the novel coronavirus pandemic swept the world. The outbreak and spread of the epidemic further highlighted the superiority of the digital economy and accelerated the process of industrial digitization [1, 2]. Chris Opher A. Pissarides, the winner of the 2010 Nobel Prize in Economics, said at the Economic Summit of the Third World Top Scientists Forum that the COVID-19 pandemic had amplified the digital characteristics of the economic production process and accelerated the global trend of digitalization. Rick Villars, vice president of international research at IDC, also said that despite the chaos caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the global economy is still moving toward a "digital mission". The digital transformation in enterprise management has promoted the rapid development of many new digital production modes based on the industrial Internet [3]. According to IIMedia Research, from January to February 2020, the scale of telecommuting enterprises exceeded 18 million, and the number of telecommuting employees exceeded 300 million. In the long run, the telecommuting mode will make enterprise management more flexible and resilient and accelerate enterprise digital application.

2. The situation of Companies Using Bosswarer

Since the pandemic started, Many companies have required employees to work remotely from home to protect their health, reduce the risk of infection, and maintain their everyday business operations. Many businesses use monitoring software to track employees' productivity from home [4]. The Wall

Street Journal reported a trend in April 2020. Many companies began to use monitoring management software to track employees' remote work during the epidemic. Employee monitoring software demand has more than doubled globally. The term "how to monitor employees working from home" increased by 1705% in online searches [5]. According to Gartner statistics, the number of large and medium-sized US companies using monitoring software has more than doubled since March 2020 compared to before the epidemic. As many as 60% of businesses use various types of monitoring software [6]. Awareness Technologies, which owns InterGuard, claimed to have grown its customer base by over 300% in just the first few weeks after the outbreak. Some of the biggest companies in the world use bossware. Hubstaff customers include Instacart, Groupon, and Ring. Time Doctor claims 83,000 users; and rings. Time Doctor claims 83,000 users; its customers include Allstate, Ericsson, Verizon, and Re/Max [7]. For example, in Florida, a social media company installed 2 software updates on employees' work on computers every 10 minutes. Take screenshots of desktops and track their time on various activities. The company then uses this information to determine productivity levels and identify employees breaking the rules [8].

3. The Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Bossware

3.1. The Benefits of Office Monitoring Software

Monitor employee work status and improve work efficiency. Working from home provides a different working environment than working in an office, and office efficiency is highly dependent on employees' awareness and self-discipline. Employee management becomes more complicated when they work from home. Managers used to be able to understand the working status of employees by walking around the office. However, now they can only use monitoring software to keep track of employees' working status and progress, saving employees time on entertainment, and socializing and encouraging employees to improve their output. A more reasonable and precise performance management system is required, combined with more advanced and reasonable technical supervision methods. Many businesses use office monitoring software to remotely control each employee's mouse and keyboard, remotely activate the camera, or directly communicate via text or voice and send files to each employee in batches. The computer has greatly improved work efficiency.

Monitor employees' mental states, which allows businesses to strengthen management. The mental conditions of workers can be monitored and analyzed with the use of supervisory software. For example, the software can listen to conversations about job hunting, leaving, or frequently visiting recruitment websites. One more illustration: In 2021, the "Wall Street Journal" stated that Microsoft would utilize its own Office365 service to collect the frequency of chats, emails, and meetings between employees and customers, as well as employee calendar schedules. These data are analyzed to determine employee productivity or management effectiveness. Every Microsoft employee will receive a personalized report in early 2022, complete with a table showing where everyone spends their time and suggestions on how to build better social networks.

3.2. Office Monitoring Software Disadvantages

Ethical and personal privacy violations. Most monitoring software installed by employers will take regular screenshots, and the software will not distinguish between what should and should not be collected. Consequently, private information, such as an employee's medical history, banking information, and personal social details, will be collected. Obviously, this is unethical and a violation of the employee's right to personal privacy regarding their employment. According to a BBC report, 60% of over 2,200 employees in the UK believed they were being monitored in some way. Without their knowledge, many employees' computers have been "implanted" with monitoring software that takes

screenshots of relevant work records and can even activate home computer cameras. Employees have multiple personalities. On the one hand, they must adhere to the unit's discipline.

On the other hand, they have the same rights to privacy and personal dignity as ordinary people. When employees work from home, the residence serves as a workplace and a private space. Employees' and other family members' privacy rights are violated if monitored, even during working hours. It is questioned whether it is acceptable to breach the boundaries and monitor employees at will because the residence should be kept from a transparent place where people can peer at will. Their right to privacy should not be taken away or violated arbitrarily.

The psychological needs of employees still need to be met. In June 2017, the New York Institute of Certified Public Accountants released employee productivity statistics based on a survey of 600 knowledge workers at large enterprises. Only 39% of their working hours are spent performing their primary job duties. According to 8 hours per day, there are only 3.1 hours to conduct business [9]. Employees who work from home are considered lazy and must be monitored by a monitoring system. This creates an even more stressful working environment than in the office, increasing their rebellious mentality and exacerbating the trust crisis. Simple and crude home monitoring has turned the employee's home into another "cage", which will not bring the efficiency that the company hopes for while also exposing the company's low management level. Ernst & Young released new data on employees leaving during the first phase of the Great Resignation in December 2021. Many employees report that their managers do not care about or trust them [10]. Employers should pay attention to their employees' psychological and social needs and work results. Employees must believe that their work is valuable and meaningful, that they have adequate social interaction with coworkers, and that they have adequate autonomy. To form a healthy relationship, companies must strengthen respect and trust, promote internal motivation in employees, and make them willing to work side by side with the company from the bottom of their hearts.

Employees employ some countermeasures to render supervision ineffective. Online retailers are selling "automated mouse click tools" that are very popular for home office monitoring software. This product allows users to pose as employees. "If your boss is a useless, micro-managing idiot who does not understand that people are not equal to being productive at the desk, this device is for you," says Amazon. If you are reading this, one of the commentators said, "Nobody likes you". In some ways, ineffective monitoring wastes resources that make no sense.

4. Suggestions

4.1. Disclosure of Software Rules

Monitoring content can only be used for internal management. Managers should inform employees in advance of the use of monitoring software, not secretly installed. Managers should let employees know the monitoring time limit and monitoring content and then strictly follow the rules. For example, inform them in the employee orientation manual and emphasize them during orientation. Managers who use monitoring software and monitor content only for internal management should do their best to communicate openly and transparently with employees, including what data the company collects and how it is used. For example, at Symphony, a financial-services messaging platform, managers can monitor employee conversations, but only to the extent necessary to keep records and comply with the law. Strict guidelines are in place to prevent any monitoring without good reason. Managers should also find ways to provide employees access to their data and the aggregated anonymous data collected from the relevant teams. The data should be used to benefit employees (for example, to send health advice or career development opportunities).

4.2. Understanding Employee Needs when Using Monitoring Software

In addition to paying attention to employees' work results, managers should also pay attention to their psychological and social needs. For example, in addition to work, workers must have a whole social and in-depth relationship with their colleagues. In addition to doing what they are asked to do, they need to know that their work is worthwhile and meaningful; In addition to being told the best way to do their job, they need to be given full autonomy. In particular, when employees have to work at home, they already have tremendous psychological pressure. Managers should not simply install monitoring software to monitor employees' working status and performance. Wise managers should select suitable employees from the source with stricter standards, stimulate their autonomy and sense of responsibility, and let employees know they are trusted. Only in this way can work efficiency be truly improved, and the enterprise obtain rich benefits.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to examine the current situation of companies using Bossware to monitor the work status of their employees during the epidemic and its pros and cons in business management. The epidemic has forced many people to work from home, and ensuring productivity and results without delaying business progress has become an important challenge for business management. For this reason, more and more companies are choosing to use Bossware to monitor the work status of their employees at home through software in the hope of supervising them to work efficiently, but the result is not satisfactory. This paper analyses the advantages and disadvantages of using Bossware in business management from several perspectives. It suggests how to manage employees appropriately in special situations, hoping that Bossware can play its proper role.

To sum up, although Bossware can monitor the working status of employees, it can also infringe on their privacy and easily cause employee resentment. At the same time, it must partially replace the trust and management of employees. Therefore, when using Bossware, companies should use it wisely, considering the needs of employees and the company's interests to achieve good management results.

Future research could explore several directions: firstly, to investigate how companies can use bossware while protecting employees' privacy and motivation. Secondly, the impact of bossware on employee psychological well-being, particularly in home office scenarios, could be explored in depth. Thirdly, further research could be conducted on how companies can conduct effective employee management and teamwork in special situations to maintain productivity and business progress. Finally, a technological perspective could be considered to explore new tools and technologies to meet the needs of businesses and employees better. These future research directions can help improve companies' management and employees' productivity in special situations while also contributing to sustainable business development.

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