

Let's engineer
the demise of
the lone worker



People are your most valuable assets

By David Walker, Propositions Manager, Enterprise Wearables, Fujitsu

shaping tomorrow with you

FUJITSU

Looking after your people builds reputational capital

Protecting people, their safety, privacy and wellbeing is a critical part of an organization's mission. All too often, it's seen as a function of Human Resources or an aspect of legal compliance. In fact, it's a critical element in any organization's standing in the marketplace and society. Organizations need to have a comprehensive and caring approach to wellbeing and compliance.

Fujitsu's David Walker argues that proving that people really are your most valuable asset has never been easier.



Your people are your organization's most valuable asset



We are all lone workers, sometimes



Don't act out of fear, be positive



The operating model



Your people are your organization's most valuable asset

That's a powerful statement. It's true. But it's also a cliché. It's easy to say in company reports but can only be proved by actions. Your reputation as an employer and a business depends not on what you say, but what you do to protect your people. Ask yourself – do you treat each worker as an individual with specific needs, and how you support them as they carry out their work?

And when some of that work is done alone the stakes are much higher. The problem is that many organizations don't have a comprehensive understanding of the various workplaces in which their colleagues may spend significant time working alone. Our customers have told us that, in some cases, it's difficult to know when a lone worker has been involved in an incident and they can't find out how long it took to send help.

At Fujitsu we believe that lone working – as a workstyle – is no longer necessary. Every worker has the right to go home to their family at the end of the day or their shift. And let's not forget, everyone also has the right to have a fulfilling career and then be fit enough to enjoy the retirement they've earned.

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It's important to understand that we can all be lone workers. The technician working out on a pylon, or the operative in a vast warehouse, or the tanker driver collecting milk from a farm are obvious examples. But, even if we work in an office for most of the working week, we become lone workers when we drive home feeling tired after a long day of meetings. We've all experienced that. We've all driven through our tiredness to get home or the next appointment. It's at moments like those that we become lone workers. And our employers have the same duty of care to protect us.

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At Fujitsu, we're working with our colleagues to find better ways to support them. The aim is to ensure that they never feel alone. We've recognized that more and more people across all sectors are either retiring early because of ill health or being moved to alternative roles to prevent their conditions worsening, for example bad backs, worn out knees and so on. For example, we're providing a Fujitsu solution to inform colleagues who need to lift heavy equipment as part of their job about their levels of exertion. They can be alerted when they're lifting too often or objects that are too heavy.

Our approach can be defined as protection and prevention. A good example is our non-invasive driver safety technology which monitors biorhythms. The solution can detect when a driver has entered a pre-drowsy state; it initiates a vibration alarm which encourages the driver to either find a safe place to stop and take a rest or ask their employer to organize a relief driver.

Our other wearables can also identify elements like early signs of heat stress, posture, trips and falls, as well as exertion. People are empowered to respond to the alerts the devices send, and they can also send emails to the health and safety team so that the event can be logged as an incident. Over time that stream of data can provide further insight into areas of incident topology that may not be obvious. The insights can then ensure more proactive health and safety interventions. It overcomes the tendency not to report every slip, trip or fall which is the result of, for instance, uneven flooring or mats, or people getting distracted because they are using their devices to text or talk while they're walking. We can provide advice as well as training to avoid what might seem like minor incidents, but which could lead to serious injuries in some cases.

Our aim is to provide intelligence to both the individual, and the organization. Intelligence about environments, practices, and events. Your vision should be circular: feedback builds better understanding which generates more action. You build knowledge and improve practice incrementally. That enables you to be as safe as possible today, whilst contributing to ever safer work practices tomorrow. The measurable benefits can be reduced absenteeism and staff retention, the intangible benefits include skill retention and colleagues that feels supported, cared for and valued, will deliver more productivity and better customer experiences.





The operating model

The way I describe how Fujitsu's technology fits in is by talking about an onion. It's the classic way of visualizing something that has lots of layers. Our technology is in the middle of the onion. The layers that build up around it are the changes in business processes. And those changes have been developed working with employees.

It's a model that's based on a commitment to the wellbeing of people. It proves that you know exactly what they do and how they do it. You've take the time and made the effort to find out, and then work out what needs to be done to make them safer.

So, let's end the concept of the 'lone worker' entirely. Let's engineer its demise. No worker should ever feel alone even if they are physically on their own. They should always be at the heart of a supportive web of care which uses the right technology, in the right way and at the right time.

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