

From Near and Far: On the Role of Distance in Changing Professional Services

Call for papers for a Special Issue of the
The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science

Guest Editors:

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Rationale

Most professional services are provided within organizational frameworks that are experiencing substantial change, altering the relationships between service providers and clients. Traditionally professional services were delivered with close proximity between the service provider and the client, reflecting both the experiential nature of these services and the need to establish and maintain trust (Von Nordenflycht, 2010). Thus, auditors and consultants have performed much of their work on the clients' premises, doctors are trained to assess and treat their patients face-to-face, and lawyers generally meet their clients on-site and/or in court. However, several factors—including globalization, enabling technologies, and the Covid-19 pandemic—have enabled more and more professionals to work in different offices, cities, and even countries than their clients, as professional expertise is increasingly delivered at 'a distance', both in geographical and in institutional terms. These changes have profound implications for a range of individuals, organizations and institutions and are triggering wide changes to how professional services are organized, produced and consumed. In particular, these changes have the potential to impact knowledge, decision-making, planning, collaboration, regulation, the content of services, work processes, and ethical conduct – altering what is done and how – to name only a few implications.

This special issue is thus dedicated to understanding the implications of distance on professional services provided within and across organizations in a context of change—with particular attention to the implications for practice, relationships, knowledge, and interventions. Our special issue welcomes both empirical and conceptual studies that enhance our understanding on the changing role of distance in professional services, from a variety of perspectives and viewpoints.

We invite contributions that include (but are not limited to):

- **Onsite versus offsite versus hybrid work:** How can professional firms evaluate and implement various modes of working with their clients? How can professional organizations maintain a coherent culture and standards when working at a distance? (Adams, 2020; Li, 2019; Spicer, 2020)

- **Networks and Alliances:** What organizational alternatives may allow professional firms to reach distant clients? (Kumar & Nti, 2004; Salvoldi & Brock, 2019, 2023)
- **The Pandemic effect:** How has Covid-19 impacted the delivery of professional services? (Björkdahl & Kronblad, 2021; De Clercq & Pereira, 2021; Empson 2022)
- **Careers:** How does distance work impact on development of professionals at different stages of their careers? (Malhotra, Morris & Smets, 2010; Yao, 2022)
- **Technology and organizations:** Pathways to successful integration of new technology (Schwarz & Bouckennooghe, 2022).
- **Technology and professional work:** To what extent can new technological approaches enable professional work at a distance? (Armour & Sako, 2020; Pareliussen, et al., 2022)
- **Regulation:** Implications for professional organizations and services straddling multiple regulatory and normative frameworks as well as cultural contexts (Adams, 2022; Sabini & Paton, 2021)
- **Wrongdoing:** Does distance imply weaker oversight and more scope for deviance, thus begging ethical questions? (Bierman, et al., 2019; Bres, et al., 2019; Muzio et al, 2016)

Submission deadline: February 15, 2024.

Submissions process: To be considered for publication, papers must be electronically received by the Guest Editors by Feb 15, 2024, with a target publication date of December 2024 or early 2025. Enquiries about the special issue and questions about issue fit can be directed to the Guest editors: Tracey Adams (tladams@uwo.ca), John Amis (John.Amis@ed.ac.uk), David Brock (dmb@bgu.ac.il), and Daniel Muzio (daniel.muzio@york.ac.uk). Enquiries related to the online submission process should be directed to JABS (g.schwarz@unsw.edu.au).

Please submit papers through Manuscript Central and prepare manuscripts according to JABS guidelines: <https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/JAB>. All papers will go through a blind review following JABS's normal review process. Any papers accepted for publication, but not included in the Special Issue will be published in a regular issue at a later point in time.

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