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REMOTE WORK IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: CHALLENGES FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

The transition to remote work has become a massive phenomenon in the software industry, opening up new opportunities and at the same time creating a number of challenges for the psychological well-being of professionals. The lack of a clear distinction between professional and personal spheres, increased cognitive load, social isolation, and lack of physical activity are just some of the problems faced by programmers, testers, DevOps engineers, and other IT professionals. The thesis discusses the main psychological risks of remote work, their consequences, and ways to overcome them to preserve the mental health of IT professionals.

In today's reality, remote work has become a standard in many software development companies. A large number of IT companies, such as Google, Microsoft, Amazon, and startups, have fully or partially switched to a remote work model. On the one hand, this gives specialists the opportunity to have a flexible schedule, save travel time, and enjoy working from home. On the other hand, such work is accompanied by a number of challenges that can negatively affect psychological well-being.

One of the main challenges is social isolation. Working in an office facilitates informal communication, exchange of experience, and quick resolution of work issues. In a remote format, these opportunities are significantly limited. For example, programmers at GitLab, a company that works entirely remotely, often report feeling lonely and lacking in face-to-face communication. The loss of informal meetings around the coffee machine, team discussions in the corridors, or at lunch can lead to a decrease in employee engagement and a deterioration in their psycho-emotional state. Another factor is the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life. The absence of a clear schedule means that employees are constantly in work mode, which leads to overwork and emotional exhaustion. For example, a study conducted by Buffer in 2022 showed that 27% of remote workers have difficulty disconnecting from work at the end of the day.

High cognitive load is another challenge faced by software development professionals. Constant concentration on complex technical tasks, large amounts of information to be processed, and the need to work with code can lead to "cognitive burnout". Lack of physical activity is another factor that affects psychological health. Remote work often means a sedentary lifestyle: employees can spend 8-10 hours in front of a screen without breaks for physical activity. This leads to posture problems, sleep disturbances, and decreased energy levels.

To prevent these challenges, there are effective strategies developed within the framework of the Kristina Maslach model. The main ones are:

- optimization of the workload - setting clear boundaries for the working day, limiting overtime, and taking rest breaks;

- support from colleagues and management - organizing regular online meetings, creating platforms for informal communication, such as Slack channels for discussions;

- professional development - participation in trainings, webinars, and exchange of experience helps to maintain motivation and avoid stagnation;

- dealing with stress - mindfulness practice, meditation, time management techniques (Pomodoro method, GTD) help reduce anxiety and improve concentration.

An important role in the study of the mental health of professionals is played by the work of I. Varnavska, who analyzes the factors of stress resistance and adaptability in professional activities, in particular in conditions of increased cognitive load. The author emphasizes the importance of building stress tolerance as one of the key factors in maintaining the psycho-emotional state of professionals working in the dynamic and rapidly changing conditions of the IT sector.

Thus, remote work in software has both advantages and significant psychological challenges. Implementing effective stress management strategies, optimizing workflow, and maintaining social connections will help IT professionals maintain mental health and high productivity.

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