HR future

TRUST AND COLLABORATION ARE NEEDED IN TODAY'S WORLD

ISOBEL RIMMER

In a post Covid workplace, trust is what will differentiate between good and great companies.

BE KIND TO YOUR MIND.

MENTAL HEALTH

IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS

PHYSICAL HEALTH

KNOW SOMEONE OR EMPLOYEES WHO NEED HELP DURING LOCKDOWN?

Contact the SA Federation for Mental Health: +27(11) 781 1852
or
The Department of Health (Mental Health Information Line): 0800 567 567

Keep your Workplace Safe!

Practice good hygiene

Stop hand shakes and use **non-contact greeting methods**

Clean hands at the door and schedule **regular hand washing** reminders

Disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tables, and desks regularly

Avoid touching your face and cover your coughs and sneezes

Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning

Limit meetings and non-essential travels

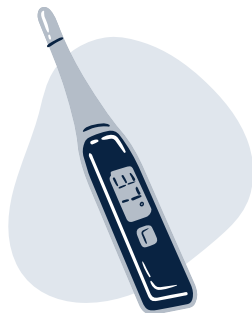Use **video conferencing** instead of face-to-face meetings

When video calls are not possible, hold your meetings in **well-ventilated rooms and spaces**

Suspend all non-essential travels and trips

Stay home if...

- You are **feeling sick**
- You have a **sick family member** at home

Take care of your emotional and mental well-being

Outbreaks are a stressful and anxious time for everyone. We're here to support you! Reach out to hr@reallygreatsite.com anytime.

Leaders need a new LEVEL OF SENSITIVITY

Now that people are returning to work after the lockdown, it's time for the real work to start for leaders at all levels in their organisations. Leaders would do well to avoid treating this start up like just any other start up – like the start of a working year after the annual Summer holidays.

People returning to work may look the same on the outside. They may dress the same and sound the same as they did when you last saw them, but they're certainly not the same people inside. Why? The experiences they have had over the past two months have changed their worlds, changed their perspectives and, in many cases, changed their priorities. They are no longer motivated by the things that motivated them in the pre-covid days.

So, if you think that it's back to business as usual and your team members must just get on with things ... there's going to be a big disconnect between you and your people – a disconnect that may never be mended and that could result in you losing good people you really need.

"But," you say, "no-one's going to be hiring for a while so my people won't be going anywhere. I can now push them as much as I like as they're all probably thankful to have a job."

You're probably right – in a way. There's a good chance they won't leave your company in the usual way by resigning to work somewhere else, but, and this is a big but, they could leave in a different way. Their hearts and minds will leave your team and your company, leaving just the body behind. Don't be fooled by the fact that their bodies remain. You may think you've got a full team back at work, but you haven't. While they're smart enough to do just enough to avoid being caught out about performance matters, if you're looking for someone to tackle those mountain peaks with you, it won't be them. You're on your own.

And you're left trying to rebuild your company, division or team with people who are disengaged, uncommitted and unproductive. I'm sure that's not what you want.

If you're ready to stare this challenge in the eye, you need to recognise that, like you and your family, your employees have had to deal with "stuff" while stuck at home. They've had to babysit their own children 24/7 – something they've not been used to. Those who have children at schools that provided online learning for their pupils will have experienced the strict regime of supporting their children during their Zoom and other online lessons, let alone trying to get their own work done while refereeing verbal and other skirmishes between frustrated siblings.

Of course, they've also had to handle their partners' frustrations as well. That frustration would have come in many different forms. It could have been the frustration of a partner who hates being cooped up in the house, who likes to get out and about and interact with people, but hasn't been allowed to. It could have been that the partner has been worried about the future of the business/company they work for and their financial security as employees. It could be that a partner who has been fortunate enough not to have to work and is used to doing her own thing during the day hasn't been able to do this.

Then what about your employees' worries about the wellbeing of parents, children, close friends? That's changed them too. People now have a new level of insecurity as they have witnessed everything they took for granted being shaken apart over the past two months – their social circle, their financial security, their freedom of movement and association ...

How should you handle them? You're going to have to work hard at building a trusting relationship and showing that you are prepared to work with them to get yourselves back on your feet again. Our Cover Story by Isobel Rimmer on page 8 highlights the importance of trust and collaboration in the days ahead. ■

Stay in touch!

Regularly clean high frequency surfaces

Provide adequate hand washing facilities

All staff to be screened & to wear a mask at all times

Frequently clean work surfaces & all equipment

RETURNING BACK TO WORK
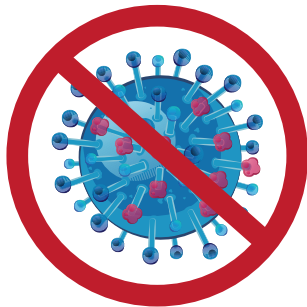
COVID-19

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PREPARING THE WORKPLACE FOR STAFF'S RETURN

TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS TO ENHANCE HYGIENE & HEALTH OF EMPLOYEES IN LIGHT OF COVID-19

KITCHENS & RESTROOMS

Deep clean all workspaces

Provide the right cleaning equipment

Undertake a risk assessment

Implement hygiene rules for staff kitchen & shared facilities

Re-arrange work stations

Provide clear communication & notices in these areas

+ 27 (0)11 801 4600   www.industroclean.co.za   info@industroclean.co.za

Temporary Office Layout Post-Covid 19

Assigned Stations   Unassigned Stations   Visitors + Employees

Temporary Office Layout Post-Covid 19

1. Relocate existing storage to enforce distancing.
2. Install screens where alterations to density or geometry are limited.
3. Remove chairs in congested areas or relocate to maintain 6ft separations.
4. Rearrange collaboration areas to maintain 6ft distance and indicate a 6ft separation with temporary markings if necessary.
5. Install cleaning stations at key points around the office.

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Isobel Rimmer
Founder
Masterclass Training

Trust and collaboration are needed in today's world

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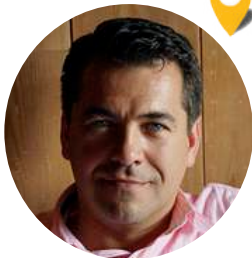
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TRUST AND COLLABORATION are needed in today's world

In a post Covid workplace, trust is what will differentiate between good and great companies.

Isobel Rimmer

How do we get better at anything? Some will tell you, 'Practice makes perfect'. But practice in itself, creates habits, and not always good ones. In the words of Monty Roberts – the original horse whisperer, "When your technique is good, practice is your greatest friend. When your technique is poor, practice is your greatest enemy."

To increase trust and collaboration in today's world we first have to be clear what trust is and what good collaboration looks and feels like.

Only then, as HR Practitioners, can we be ready to help our people become more trustworthy and better able to collaborate.

Research by Amy Cuddy and her team at Harvard Business School identified that how well we connect with others comes down to two things – how trustworthy and how competent we are. She says:

"When we form a first impression of another person it's not really a single impression. We're really forming two. We're judging how warm and trustworthy the person is, and that's trying to answer the question, 'What are this person's intentions toward me?' And we're also asking ourselves, 'How strong and competent is this person?' That's really about whether or not they're capable of enacting their intentions. Research shows that these two trait dimensions account for 80 to 90 percent of an overall first impression, and that holds true across cultures."

In addition to this, in business I would argue that it's also about whether we earn the right (through our competency and trustworthiness) to have further connections and the opportunity to collaborate. There can be no collaboration without a foundation of trust.

It takes time to build trust but no time at all to break it. Politicians who say one thing but do another fall quickly on their swords. A leader builds credibility through their behaviour, not their title. Frances Frei, also from Harvard, refers to three aspects that need to be present if we are to build trust: being authentic, having rigour in our logic and displaying empathy to others. If anyone starts to wobble, trust breaks down.

Trust is about being reliable – doing what we say we will do; being competent and credible and knowing our stuff. It's how we make others feel psychologically safe – Charles Green, author of The Trusted Advisor, refers to this as 'intimacy', as well as having other people's best interests at heart. This he describes as self-orientation. We are quick to pick up on high levels of self-orientation ('Let's not talk about you, let's talk about me!') and even quicker to feel uncomfortable.

In today's post Covid 19 world, we need greater levels of collaboration built on trust. Organisations and their leaders are having to challenge how they operate, how they do business and react at

speed and with scale. Agility, prototyping and failing fast are the new currencies. Collaboration is essential, be that formally through business alliances and structures, or through informal networks and communities. And working from home has magnified that – we are connecting with people we know and trust to collaborate and get things done. We've developed a sense of intimacy as we peak into their kitchens and bedrooms on video calls. And more importantly, we've worked out who we want around us in a crisis. And it's those we trust.

Defining collaboration

Being 'stoic' has become synonymous with being emotionless. But the original philosophy was that stoicism meant we minimise the negative emotions in life and maximise gratitude and joy. Stoicism encourages mindfulness and value-based living. Working collaboratively and finding ways to serve and support others means everyone wins – gratitude and joy all round.

I use the acronym STOIC to help people see what they can do at five different levels to collaborate well:

- Strategic;
- Tactical;
- Operational;
- Interpersonal; and
- Cultural.

Strategic

Good collaboration is strategically aligned, connecting the activity of collaboration to the vision and strategic aims or an organisation or group. If it's not aligned, what's the value? Indeed, what's the point?

Tactical

Everyone we collaborate with, whatever their business or organisation – commercial, not for profit, public sector – has metrics or KPIs (key performance indicators) or goals against which they have to deliver, be that weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually. We need to make sure that what we're collaborating on is relevant, measurable and delivers results.

Operational

Organisations need structures, processes, procedures and systems. They underpin how things get done. Good collaboration ensures every action or process is simple and easy, that way it can be a smooth, well-oiled way of working. The more we understand others' processes and work with them, the easier it is to collaborate.

Interpersonal

Collaboration is a result of people working together, not just relying on formal reporting lines. The more we genuinely have others' interests at heart, and the more we reach out to build strong interpersonal connections, the better. If we help our people to connect at every level in the hierarchy (regardless of seniority, rank or title), the more productive and collaborative it can be.

Cultural

It's often easier to connect with people who are like us. But great collaboration comes from bringing together diverse skills, knowledge and capabilities. As HR Practitioners we may talk about policies around diversity and inclusion but how grounded are they in day to day activities? We need to find ways to bring together diverse skills, knowledge and requirements to get results. We may have to adapt our approach personally but by doing so, cultural differences can be celebrated, and bridges built.

As we emerge from these unprecedented times, trust and collaboration will be what differentiates the great organisations from the merely good. Understanding the behaviours required to build trust and knowing how to help people develop their ability to collaborate we can rebuild – quickly and at scale – successful, collaborative ways of working.

This is about behaviours and competencies. It's where HR can truly make a difference.

And those trust-based collaborative relationships will drive growth and revenues. We owe it to everyone in our organisations to know what to do to build trust, understand what they need to do differently or do more of, in order to work collaboratively and to embrace it.

And, we need to do it now because the clock is ticking. ■

Isobel Rimmer is founder of training and development consultancy Masterclass Training and author of new book Natural Business Development: Unleash your people's potential to spot opportunities, develop new business and grow revenue.
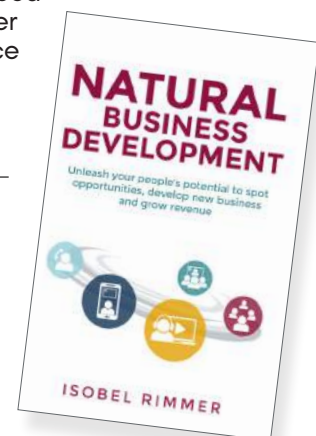
Executives must build
SOCIAL CAPITAL

Mostafa Sayyadi

PROFILE

Mostafa Sayyadi is a Senior Management Consultant and Former Leadership Team Member of San Diego-based The Change Leader Consulting Inc. He is an| Associate Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management, a Book Author and Business and Technology Journalist.

Mostafa Sayyadi outlines to Alan Hosking why social capital is the path to effective knowledge management and competitive advantage.

How can Executives create effective knowledge management?

Executives are aware that activities related to managing knowledge at the individual level and the practices associated with knowledge management at the organizational level are handled at different points on the organizational chart. In order to create a sustainable competitive advantage, executives need to focus on the interactions among the facets of knowledge to minimize the possible limitations of managing all facets of the business units and components on an organizational chart. By acquiring a new perspective of social capital, executives can create effective knowledge management. In other words, social capital is a strategic resource that needs to be managed to create a sustainable competitive advantage.

How can social capital create effective knowledge management?

Executives across the globe have found that knowledge management is critical to business success. Knowledge, in and of itself, is not enough to satisfy the vast array of changes in today's organization. Knowledge management is only a necessary precursor to effectively managing knowledge within the organization. One tool for Executives to improve organizational knowledge management and use it to lessen the gaps between success and possible failure is to become a social architect. Executives can do this by using what is known in the academic realm as social capital. Social capital, however, is different from human capital in that human capital focuses on individual behavior and knowledge while social capital emphasizes relationships and the assets created by these relationships. Executives aggregate human capital into social capital so as to provide further information and opportunities for all members, and subsequently contribute to organizational knowledge management through developing relationships with subordinates that link followers' individual interests to the organization's collective-interests.

Why is social capital so important?

Executives need to know how social capital can be defined and used in organizations. Just as human resources is a huge component of

organizations, social capital is the resource that keeps the culture together and builds upon the foundations that help organizations prosper. Social capital focuses on developing relationships to create valuable resources. Executives may not be as interested in social capital as much as scholars are but there is a kernel worth looking at in this theoretical concept for Executives. For example, social capital enables Executives to improve organizational knowledge management and help close the gap between success and possible failure. Many Executives see knowledge management as an outcome of various factors such as leadership, interactions and communications, formal policies and rules, and a climate inspiring innovation and creativity within organizations. Organizational knowledge cannot merely be described as the sum of individual knowledge, but as a systematic combination of knowledge based on social interactions shared among organizational members. Thus, Executives need to see organizational knowledge as the knowledge that exists in the organization as a whole and use social capital to convert individual knowledge into a collective mind for their organization to close the performance gap and help the organization prosper. Therefore, firms need to consider a range of other factors such as social capital that is also reflective of their knowledge management effectiveness.

Can knowledge management create a sustainable competitive advantage?

Executives know that discontinuity exists at all levels of product and services and they do not want to find themselves caught off guard and become obsolete. To remain competitive, Executives realize that they have to quickly create and share new ideas and knowledge to be more responsive to market changes. Importantly, knowledge held by organizational members is the most strategic resource for competitive advantage, and also through the way it is managed by Executives. Executives can enhance knowledge accumulation which is associated with coaching and mentoring activities by sharing experiences gained by imitating, observing and practising. Executives can, in fact, help followers add meaningfulness to their work in ways that enhance a shared understanding among members to enhance engagement.

Next, organizational knowledge is articulated into formal language that represents official statements. Organizational knowledge is incorporated into formal language and subsequently becomes available to be shared within organizations. Executives have their internet technology departments to create

a combination which reshapes existing organizational knowledge to more systematic and complex forms by, for example, using internal databases. Organizing knowledge using databases and archives can make knowledge available throughout the organization –

organized knowledge can be disseminated and searched by others. Most importantly, organizational knowledge is internalized through learning by doing, which is more engaging.

It is important to note that executives have found that shared mental models and technical know-how become valuable assets. Organizational knowledge, which is reflected in moral and ethical standards and the degree of awareness about organizational visions and missions can in-turn be used in strategic decision making. Organizational knowledge can be, therefore, converted to create new knowledge that executives can view and implement immediately in managerial decision making, applying knowledge aimed at providing better decision-making and work related practices and creating new knowledge through innovation.

Finally, the knowledge within organizations needs to be reconfigured to meet environmental changes and new challenges. Learning in organizations is the ultimate outcome of knowledge reconfiguration by which organizational knowledge is created and acquired by connecting knowledge with other companies that want to share successes and failures. This leads to converting acquired knowledge into organizational processes and activities to improve processes that contribute success.

Executives can now see that a company's capability to manage organizational knowledge is the most crucial factor in a sustainable competitive advantage. This core-competitive advantage resides within and among people. A figure that illustrates how social capital can create effective knowledge management and competitive advantage for companies would look like this: ∎

CHANGE is not a constant

Get a better understanding of the varying speeds of change.

David Creelman

People have been talking about the shocking speed of change for at least 50 years. In fact, Alvin Toffler wrote a best-seller about change, Future Shock, back in 1970. We are talking about it even more now in light of the changes forced upon us by the COVID-19 pandemic. Perhaps after fifty years, we need a more nuanced way of talking about change. There is no longer any value left in simply saying that change is faster than ever.

Change isn't always fast

The first point to recognize is that change is not universal. Dr Henry Mintzberg, the author of Rebalancing Society, likes to point out that buttons were invented in the 13th century and they've hardly changed at all. Closer to home, we know technology is changing rapidly and yet it may well take us five years just to fully implement a new HRIS. We know that in business everything takes longer than we imagine it should. Hofstadter's Law is amusing but true, it states that things always take longer than you expect, even when you take into account Hofstadter's Law – so much for the rapid pace of change.

Mapping different rates of change

One approach to reconciling the seemingly rapid pace of change with the sometimes slow pace of change is articulated by The Long Now Foundation. They describe change in terms of "Pace Layers". That's a confusing term until you recognize that they mean "Pace of change" layers. The model explicitly points out that different things in our world change at different rates.

In his book The Clock of the Long Now, Stewart Brand lists the following layers from fast to slow:

- Fashion (very fast);
- Commerce;
- Infrastructure;
- Governance;
- Culture; and
- Nature (very slow).

By writing down the layers (usually in a diagram) it reminds us that, yes, some things do change very quickly (such as computer technology) and some things change very slowly (such as buttons). If you are thinking about things that happen in your organization, you don't have to use the list of layers Stewart Brand describes. It can be a useful exercise to think of what moves quickly and what moves slowly in your own organization.

Friction between the layers

Another insight from Brand is that there is friction where the layers meet. Thinking back to the HRIS example, while the technology changes fairly fast, the implementation is slow, and user adoption is slower still. The different paces of change create tension and anxiety, especially when we expect the slower pace layers to keep up with the fast ones. We mustn't think that, just because technology itself changes quickly, we can expect user behaviour or governance rules to change at the same pace.

We deal with change all the time as managers and so we should have a sophisticated understanding of change. The concept of pace layers helps elevate our understating of the dynamics of change. ■

David Creelman is CEO of Creelman Research, in Canada, www.creelmanresearch.com. He helps to elevate the analytics and business savvy of HRBPs, and is best known for his workshops on Agile Analytics, Evidence-base Management and the Future of Work. His new book with Peter Navin is The CMO of People.

REIMAGINE your workplace

COVID-19 is reshaping the modern office experience.

Peter Wilk
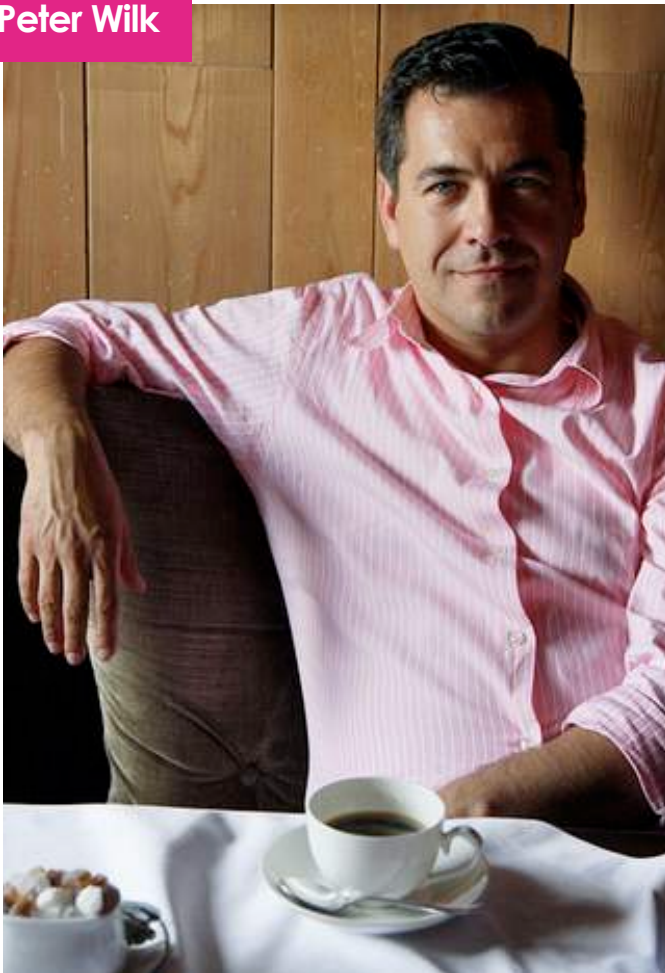
Architects, businesses, and real estate professionals are evaluating long-term impacts from the pandemic shutdown – and some have even begun exploring new concepts and designs for the post–recovery office

The American workplace has experienced more rapid, dramatic shifts in the past few weeks than it ever has before. But the real impact of Covid-19 on how millions of people work – and how they plug into a modern office – may only emerge in the coming months, say architects and real estate professionals who are not only navigating vast changes in their own businesses but also helping their forward-thinking clients plan for a post–pandemic world.

The wholesale move to remote working in response to the crisis has quickly changed habits, exposed weaknesses and opened new opportunities for the work environment, say experts at Montroy DeMarco Architecture (MDA), Urbahn Architects, and Denham Wolf Real Estate Services. And it is forcing these professionals to assess the long-term implications for critical variables such as space utilization, technology, leases, operating costs and corporate culture.

The immediate jolt has come from what is essentially a great remote working experiment – one that so far has worked, says Daniel Montroy, AIA, partner at MDA and its affiliated interior design firm Montroy Andersen DeMarco (MADGI). "I've joked that I don't know if we're coming back to the office," he says. "A lot of what businesses do is outdated, and it's led to thinking about what are the things you can do remotely, and how you might design an office that works best in that environment. If we do this for two more months, I think the landscape changes, and we're trying to imagine what it will look like in the short- and long-term."

This is brand new territory for a lot of businesses, and for many it is shaking up normal routines, says Paul G. Wolf, co-president at Denham Wolf. "For organizations that had not fully explored remote work, this pandemic forced the issue," he says. "We are all seeing first-hand the incompatibilities between remote work and our existing systems, operations and culture – and companies are accelerating their capacity to overcome them. For many organizations, remote work in some form will become a more practical option."

An important initial step has been to minimize the severity of these abrupt changes by maintaining normal interaction, says Rafael Stein, AIA, who is principal at Urbahn Architects. "We are very intentionally endeavoring to maintain our office culture as that goes to the heart of who we are, how we work and what we design for our clients and society at large," he says. "Our work is organized much the same way it always was, but we are having more scheduled communications."

But some organizations – even as they adjust on the fly – are already mapping out what their future space templates will be, usually mixing more remote working with redesigned offices that serve as a central hub for resources, culture and in-person collaboration, says Steven Andersen, partner at MADGI.

"An office space allows for collaboration,

head down work, creative work, and production work not always available in a work-from-home environment," he says. "We see flexibility in design and policies. More companies will adapt after realizing that working from home can succeed."

Space utilization redefined

The post-pandemic world may bring sweeping change to commercial real estate, spurred by new thinking around how work gets done and how space gets used. A prime spark for such ideas is a basic calculation: more remote working translating into less office space leased, Andersen says. "If they begin to stagger their work-from-home days amongst employees, they will be able to presumably cut down on the size of office space required. Alternatively, some companies might opt to maintain the current size of their office real estate but use it to provide fewer on-site employees with more 'elbow room'," he says.

Many new layouts may involve less density, creating more space between individual workspaces to acknowledge the need at times for greater social distancing, Andersen adds.

An uptick in remote work and a reorientation of office layouts will also catalyze the need for more flexible formats, including the transformation of private workspaces into ones that multiple employees can share. "When partially or fully remote staff members do come into the office, some of them will be using non-dedicated space for their work," Wolf notes.

The office also will become the main hub for in-person meetings and group interaction – requiring substantial space for conference rooms, conversation hubs, and flexible private areas of all sizes. "The physical workplace will become dedicated to team collaboration and creative work," Montroy says.

The new workplace will also retain a key role as repository for an organization's physical assets, such as documents, storage, equipment and technology infrastructure, Montroy adds. "It's not appropriate to expect we'll store that in someone's basement," he says.

Versatility and functionality

Offices may also step up amenities for employees as a way to foster better interaction when people are together, designing higher-end pantries with better food and beverage selections, as well as after-work event spaces, fitness studios, gaming rooms, and even music listening areas, Andersen says.

A key theme for such new designs will be efficiency in layout and resiliency in usage, Andersen says. Pantries and cafés may double as multi-function spaces for events and entertainment, and furniture may play similar roles, with coffee bars and counters also serving as workstations, he says. "In these designs, your drink bar counters may need charging infrastructure and ergonomic design," Andersen says. "Space functions will be interchangeable, with private

offices that not only can be shared by multiple employees but also be convertible into meeting rooms."

Office designs may also incorporate more features that elevate hygiene and employee safety, Montroy says. "Technology- and equipment-wise, offices will likely see more hands-free and easy to disinfect fixtures and materials, such as self-opening doors and non-porous surfaces," he predicts.

And offices will become even more essential as tools for brand and identity. "It will be the primary space for client visits and presentations, even if most of the work will be completed outside its walls," Andersen predicts.

MDA has incorporated some of that forward-thinking into a new design project for a client – a pre-built office suite for the owner/manager of a commercial building in Manhattan's Financial District. The design started in the first days of the pandemic shutdown, as MDA discussed with its client how offices might evolve in the future, Montroy says.

"They said, 'That's an interesting idea – show us what you mean,'" he explains. "In response, we are currently designing a pre-built office that would house 30 people and feature these new concepts. The suite will have a greater number of meeting and conference rooms with expanded video conferencing capabilities; a larger and more elaborate pantry that will double as a social and co-working space; and a flexible layout featuring wall systems that accommodate easy functional changes to most spaces. The design also features a reduced occupancy density, better technology, hands-free devices, cleanable surfaces and an increased air filtration."

Advanced technology

Workplaces reconfigured to accommodate remote working may also require communications technology upgrades. Offices may need conference rooms better equipped for advanced networking and video conferencing, as well as new digital interaction tools, Montroy says. "You may regularly need to host 50-person video calls," he says.

In some cases, that may mean owners add new amenities for use by multiple tenants. "Since not all tenants will require a large, high-tech meeting space every day, access to such shared space may be increasingly requested of landlords," Wolf explains.

Tech upgrades must also envision greater support for remote workers, Andersen says. "The majority of employees have been shown to work efficiently from home," he says. "To continue this trend, companies will have to develop new management procedures to track, complete, and assign tasks to individuals and teams. They will also need to invest in new software and Virtual Private Network (VPN) systems for faster and better quality data connections and to provide employees with access to shared documents."

Office Layout Pre-Covid 19

Assigned Stations
Unassigned Stations
Visitors + Employees

Assigned Stations
Unassigned Stations
Visitors + Employees

Temporary Office Layout Post-Covid 19

1. Relocate existing storage to enforce distancing.
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Facilitating Interaction

Today's vast remote working experiment has created new flows of information and conversation among employees. Organizations are learning in real time about the benefits and pitfalls of offices with heavy remote working usage.

"Just like Urbahn, other organizations are likely holding more meetings than back in the days of physically being in the office, when some communication took place informally and unscheduled. A successful switch to online meetings requires not only a technological response, but also training and sharing of knowledge about the most effective ways to conduct and participate in video meetings," Stein says.

Montroy sees benefits from expanding remote work and using technology for intra-company interactions. "Communication is now more frequent and in some ways better. Efficiency for 'head-down' work has increased. This experience of a virtual workplace has been in many ways positive and the lessons learned will create new opportunities for businesses and designers," he observes.

There are also snags and other issues to resolve, however, to make remote working more efficient and productive, Stein says. One area is ensuring that the technology at employees' homes is compatible and up to the required tasks, he says. "Troubleshooting the issues of 60 different people, each with their own hardware issues, internet issues, and technological sophistication, is very difficult because there are so many variables," he says. "Making sure we have the appropriate conference/chat/collaboration software, and that all the right people have them and know how to use them is important."

Another key issue is understanding how remote working affects meetings and other interaction, Stein explains. "Video conferences are inherently more strenuous than physical meetings because they must be much more structured, and often take more time than a physical meeting to cover the same content," he says. "Meetings need to be rigorously moderated, but that also means that it is harder to have the important and very human chatter that helps to break up the tension in a meeting, or sometimes in fact leads to important ideas that you might not have explored in a highly structured meeting."

For disciplines such as architecture that are very visual, it can also be frustrating to translate ideas remotely or to spontaneously sketch a new concept remotely, Stein says. "We are still working on technology and procedure workarounds," he adds.

Leases and costs

The post-pandemic era may also usher in new thinking about underused spaces, with tenants possibly seeking greater flexibility for subleasing or desk licensing, Wolf says. "The next time a tenant is faced with a lease expiration, the organization may have different priorities for their lease terms," he adds.

Real estate owners also must consider the possibility of reduced demand for square footage. "Companies may need less space as they reconfigure for efficiency and an office culture that accepts remote work on a larger scale," Andersen says. Owners may see that trend mitigated where businesses decide to give employees more room. "In some cases, companies might decide to reverse the long-running trend of densification in order to provide more distance between employees," Montroy adds.

More efficient office layouts also may mean fewer dedicated amenities for each tenant. "Many tenants already share restrooms, and they may become more interested in sharing pantries, meeting space, mail rooms, production space, and more," Wolf predicts. Given the nature of the pandemic, tenants may also increasingly ask for assurances around common area sanitization, air filtration, and other protections related to contagion.

Landlords also may find themselves negotiating more frequently with groups of tenants together as some organizations may explore full co-location with peer outfits. "Many such moves will be cost-driven," Wolf says. "Organizations are now facing even more pressure to reduce their occupancy costs as the pandemic has negatively impacted revenue generation for almost every industry."

Emphasizing corporate culture

Organizations forging workplace changes in the heat of this crisis must continue to mind their office ethos, Wolf asserts. "We believe that mission should always lead," he says. "When making changes to company policy, office layout, or otherwise, the primary drivers of decision need to be mission, culture and corporate values."

And organizations should remember there are tools to preserve culture in the interim, with Urbahn using methods such as daily email updates, random check-in calls with employees, group continuing education sessions, and virtual social events, Stein says. "When we all worked in the office together, we could just say 'hi' to someone, whether we worked with that person on a daily basis or not," he says. "We are trying to help maintain a sense of community.". ■

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How to lead and participate in a VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

These practical tips will help you lead a virtual meeting more effectively.

Ed Gillcrist

Mike Westman

t's time to dust off your virtual environment skills and, no, it's not just like riding a bike! Unfortunately, it's more like skiing after having skipped a couple of seasons. You get back on the slope way too confident before finding out the hard way just how much those muscles have atrophied. Operating in the virtual environment isn't as easy as it looks and beware of those who think it is! There are some real "gotcha" differences between being literally, versus virtually, in the same room.

Facilitating engagements of any kind is hard enough and not a natural skill for most. Rather than trying to relearn our bicycle riding skills, let's just focus on some of the major muscle movements (big needle movers) that any of us can deploy immediately when leading or participating in the virtual environment (VE).

Understanding the VE should include recognizing some of its advantages, challenges and basic things to consider when spending time there. Advantages range from being able to work from almost anywhere leading to a potentially improved work life balance. Having technical issues or being distracted by barking dogs and vacuums present typical challenges, but they pale in comparison to the lack of an entire dimension of communication simply because you can't see the expressions on the faces of your colleagues. It's important to remember that, when we operate virtually, listeners tend to have shorter attention spans, and we should recognize that big personalities tend to become bigger, and small ones smaller. Team bonding is difficult and, finally, it's way too easy to find yourself loitering around your work too long.

Since we spend the majority of virtual time in meetings, there are some critical things to

do before, during and after to make these engagements more effective.

Before

Preparation is key for both the leader and participants. First, determine the overarching purpose of the meeting, three to four key objectives that need to occur during the meeting to achieve that purpose, and the tasks required to successfully accomplish each objective. That and that alone should drive your agenda and determine the participants. Plan the logistics and determine the best medium to support the meeting, then get it out there to the participants so that they can come prepared to play their expected role.

During

Set up the venue well ahead of time, make sure it all works and that you know how to use it. Set the stage for participants by reminding them of the purpose and objectives. Remind them of some basic rules of engagement, and that you will be enforcing them through the meeting. If the first-time folks start going down a rat hole (which they will), remove all doubt by stopping the conversation and immediately getting them back on track. Since facilitating is hard enough under normal conditions, it's important to enlist someone to help capture information so the leader can stay focused on facilitating the crowd and keeping the train on the tracks. Participants need to come prepared, on time, stay engaged and in their lane throughout. Finally, always end with a quick review and validate any action steps.

After

More important than ever is to review, clarify and circulate action items for the entire team. Share the findings of the meeting with the necessary team members and be sure everyone is clear on their next steps. Because this is a new environment, it never hurts to call out what worked and what didn't to help establish a more effective battle rhythm with your meetings over time.

Tips and techniques

While these tips and techniques apply in any setting, they are particularly important virtually and they are all things that each of us can control. Establish and prepare the setting that allows you to focus and minimizes distractions. Effective listening or listening to understand what people are saying versus listening to respond is important. Effective questions: ask questions that elicit substantive and relevant responses. Using Media Effectively, most importantly, use the right media and technology, and secondly know how to use it. Engagement triggers involve using mechanisms that keep people engaged without making them feel like they are on the spot. This is particularly important since you can't see who is paying attention and who isn't.

Maintain balance and control by not letting anyone dominate or have others hide during the meeting, ensuring relevant input from appropriate participants, and participants staying engaged in their roles. Finally, maintaining tempo: it's hard enough to stay focused under normal conditions and the VE can be even more taxing. Keeping participants on track and on time will not only establish more effective engagements and meeting credibility, it will likely also reduce the number of meetings needed in the long run.

As a way of wrapping up, let's take a look at some dos and don'ts for everyone involved:

Leaders don't:

- invite unnecessary people to the meeting but do ID them based on meeting Purpose;
- play favorites but do give attention and floor time appropriately;
- give up control but do act as the only facilitator;
- run over the designated time but do start and end on time; and
- repeat but do rearticulate only those issues that are unclear.

Participants don't:

- assume what you can't see but do assume positive intent by the speaker;
- dominate or interrupt but do respect your colleagues time and input, share the crayons;
- "Hot Mic" or refuse to go on mute when you aren't participating in the conversation but do keep your mic and video on mute unless asked otherwise or you need to engage;
- don't ignore what they can read ahead of time but do come prepared; and
- multitask but do respect their colleagues. They are participating, you should too.

Don't let working in a virtual environment stop you from continuing critical development initiatives in your organization. For a more in depth look at these concepts as well as help deploying them, take a look at our short webinar, Leading in a Virtual Environment (LIVE) and its accompanying downloadable tools. (Live link available in the digital version of the May issue at www.hrfuture.net. For subscribers only.). ∎

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Only 13% of people are ENGAGED at work

Here's how you can create a purpose-driven team.

Kevin Green

We have known for decades that engaged employees are more productive. Research from PwC shows that employees that are most committed to their organisations put in 57% more effort and are 87% less likely to leave than employees who said they were disengaged.[1]

However, most organisations have been unable to radically change how their employees feel about their work. A study from Gallup in 2017 found that 87% of employees were not fully engaged at work[2]. This is staggering and shows that the vast majority of people at work are just going through the motions. Very few organisations are getting this right and so are not securing the best possible performance from their people.

The focus of those that get it right is the provision of a great employee experience (EX). The employee experience is the holistic perception of your people on how the organisation treats them on a day to day basis. An employee experience covers the whole employment relationship. Very much like a customer's experience needs to be thought of as an end to end process, it's the same with employees. We need to ensure we are good at meeting our people's needs whatever point on the employee lifecycle they are at. How do we treat our candidates prior to them joining us? How good are we at onboarding them? Are we effective at creating great team performance? Do we build on people's strengths? If they leave, do we ask for constructive feedback so that we can improve? The employee experience covers much more than HR driven activity such as policies, procedures and processes. It is holistic and includes everything from giving them the right IT equipment to empowering them to making a decision about how they do their work.

Employee engagement is the outcome measure of your employees' experience. By thinking about people in this way many businesses are reaping positive performance improvement.

Here are five ways to improve your team's experience and engagement:

1. Treat employees like customers

People at work don't want to be treated as a number. As with other areas of their life they want custom-made solutions to suit their

needs. They want a personalised approach from the organisation as it seeks to get the best from them. They also want consumer grade experiences at work. These expectations require businesses to think about their people from a design perspective, think about touch points and create better experiences.

2. It's more than the money

People used to think about their job in terms of how much they were paid and the benefits provided. It's now clear that people want flexibility, autonomy and learning opportunities as well as good pay and benefits. It's also become apparent that people are much more concerned about the organisation's integrity, ethics and behaviour. We have at least five generations in the workforce at present. Both Millennials and Generation Z want their demands to be met quickly. They shop around for jobs more than previous generations did, using much wider criteria when making decisions on where they work.

3. The workforce is more liquid but talent always matters

Businesses today engage many people that are not permanent 9–5 employees. Most organisations use part timers, freelancers, interims and contractors. Do you treat these non-employees as well as you treat your core people? Those that choose to work in this way are becoming more strategically critical to business performance. Flexible talent needs to have their experiences managed in a similar way to your permanent employees because their productivity is just as important in the quest to maximise organisational performance.

4. The tools for the Job

Your people expect to have the right tools and systems to be able to do their work effectively. They also expect great user-friendly self-service from your people systems be that to book leave or get the data they need. However, technology can also provide you with analytics about your people and enable you to predict issues before they arise. IBM recently said they could predict with 95% accuracy who will leave their job[3].

5. Managers who can coach

One of the most critical factors in a great employee experience is an employee's relationship with their manager. Can the manager inspire them? Provide opportunities to grow and develop? Can they coach and provide practical strength-based feedback? Managers who are good communicators and listeners are fundamental to your people's experience at work.

Measure engagement

The key for any leader is to get regular data on how engaged their people are. A yearly survey is not frequent enough to allow you to see trends and patterns and make interventions. The organisations that consistently get this right measure at least every three months and they also go down to the most granular level without compromising anonymity. This enables business leaders to identify where people are the least engaged and explore with local leaders what they need to do differently.

The future clearly belongs to the organisations who can design and then execute great employee experiences. A design thinking approach can help business take a more strategic and thoughtful approach to the development of their people strategy. The ongoing demand for more talent and the quest to improve performance in a more human centric way means that employee experience and engagement will grow in importance in the next decade.

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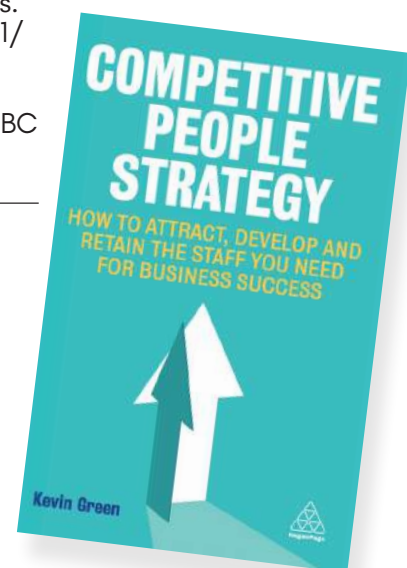
WORKING, TEACHING, PARENTS
deserve a medal

COVID-19 brings a whole new meaning to "working parent".

Robyn Woods

COVID-19. Coronavirus. Social distancing. Self-isolation ... Six weeks ago, these were obscure, unknown terms. With new information to digest daily, this new normal has presented us with an uncomfortable, uncertain state of living – at best. Circumstances are changing, sometimes hour to hour. And, as they do, we readjust our schedules, our daily routines, our expectations, our plans. We're facing major life disruptions, and with this comes many unanswered questions surrounding how we can best support our children and families while also juggling our own professional obligations at the same time.

I'm sure we've all read one or two parenting books in our lifetime – but I definitely don't remember there being a chapter on "How to parent during a pandemic while working full time and homeschooling your children."

So while there is no rule book for how to navigate this new normal, it is our responsibility as parents to embrace the changes happening in the world around us so we can continue to nurture and protect our families.

I know, as I write this from home, with my nine-year-old hovering, that we have a lot to figure out. But I also know, for this reason, it's never been more important to equip ourselves with the proper tools and resources as we tackle these new challenges and work toward solutions together.

I am a co-parent to five amazing children. A wife. A social entrepreneur. The founder and CEO of a global quality of life company offering secure and effective digital healthcare delivery solutions. More than ever, in the last month, I've learned that the daily task of managing our children's remote learning and development, ensuring that they are happy and mentally healthy, often while working, requires flexibility, adaptability and connection. It also requires hope.

While our group of companies works in tandem to provide innovative technologies and clinical practice to improve the quality of life for families, our mission at The Uncomplicated Family (TUF) Group has always been to connect communities to inspire hope for the future.

Managing behaviour, school performance or overall wellbeing starts with connecting to our children's experience. Children at the moment are likely quite confused by the current circumstances and unsure of how they are

supposed to act. Kids do most of their work in school – where the structure, teaching style and physical environment are designed to foster learning. They've grown accustomed to these structured and supported learning environments – without them, they may feel lost, confused or disoriented.

More time at home means more time behind screens. The debate on 'screen time' has become increasingly pervasive for parents everywhere. But what if we viewed digital technology as part of the solution to our newfound challenges? When we consider the content and the context of use, increased screen time for kids has the opportunity to positively impact our children's health and wellness. Albeit a different learning environment, but digital tools that foster learning and development do exist.

The reality is that over half of the world's children play video games and/or engage in technology for more than an hour a day, and I am sure this number has seen a spike in recent weeks. Long before COVID-19 began its global journey of upending family life, we recognized the important role that technology played in offering the fun and digital experience that kids are seeking from video games while giving parents confidence that they are supporting their child's cognitive (that is, learning and brain) development.

The Uncomplicated Family Group recently launched the revolutionary Kids Digital Health platform – the world's only safe and therapeutic space for young kids and their caregivers to enjoy gaming content while improving their lives. Supported by extensive research and scientific evaluation, the portal offers safe and age-appropriate games and apps that help improve cognitive functions such as memory, attention, social skills and speech.

I think we can all agree that being a working parent is no easy feat as childcare and education responsibilities shift. We're wearing all the hats and need proper tools and resources to ensure we are supporting our children's learning, health, and overall well-being.

As parents, we should be supporting each other but also empowering each other to embrace digital technology and all that it has to offer our children. Choosing platforms that have been built for kids – that are effective, safe and secure, and ultimately improve quality of life for our children is important. If we take the time to do this as parents, we can have peace of mind that our kids are safe, having fun, and are mentally benefitting from engaging in these technologies. Then we can balance our work lives too.

Yes, the world is changing. And yes, the unknowns of tomorrow can be daunting. But what I know for sure is that digital solutions remain critical for our children's health and wellbeing – and better yet, they are available and accessible for parents around the world as we adjust to this new normal.

This gives me hope for the future. ■

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Your 2020 leadership superpower is

BUILDING TRUST

Leaders wanting their people to actually follow them have to build unassailable trust.

Jay Connolly

2 020 is not the year that any of us expected. Covid-19 has claimed a huge and growing number of lives right across the world, bringing loss and suffering to families globally. For those families, and everyone else, life has changed significantly with restrictions on movement, social distancing, schools closed and businesses in economic peril, to name a few. We will reach the other side of this pandemic, just as we have with others, but likely at new, and yet undefined, cost levels.

We look back now hearing the warnings from experts with different ears –– a pandemic of this nature was predicted (for example, see the 2006 Ted Talk by Dr Larry Brilliant, My Wish: Help Me Stop Pandemics, or Bill Gates from 2015, The Next Outbreak? We're Not Ready). Beyond finding a vaccine, the question is now: "How do we lead ourselves through the balance of 2020 and beyond?" This is not just a question for governments, but for everyone leading people.

At its core, this is a question of how to lead, and I believe there are two key elements. Of course, we want to follow leaders who have sound judgement and use their experience to take decisions that achieve successful outcomes. However, in these unprecedented times we need more from leaders – and those looking to you will need more. Without connection getting the right answer is not going to build the followership, support and, importantly, the trust that is needed for success. As someone leading those around you, teams or whole organisations, it is now critical that you bring sound judgement together with enhanced connection, and the resulting trust, so you can lead through a turbulent and challenging period with impact.

Connection has three core elements: understanding; reliability; and communication.

Understanding: the ability to really listen, hear what is unsaid, read the situation, drill down and capture the pulse of those around you. It requires spending time with people, and not just those typically around you as new ideas can come anyone and anywhere.

Enhance your understanding by:
- Asking more open questions, and keep going with follow up questions. It may need three or four questions to really get to some of the insights from people;
- Mapping out who you have spent time with, and then importantly ensure you proactively follow up with those you have not – to build a full understanding we need input from a

broad spectrum;

- Being present with people – it is obvious when you are not, and focusing on the next email or task is not going to enhance your leadership and build connection and trust.

Reliability: after saying it, do it. Be present and consistent in how you act; sudden changes in direction are unsettling, and people see what you don't do – you are more visible than you realize. So, trust is built by your reliable and constant leadership.

Enhance your reliability by:

- Tracking your progress on goals and plans that you articulate. Write them down and focus on actions so you can share and demonstrate progress;
- Being visible – even if that is through your digital presence. Your leadership is needed not just when things are going well; build a regular cadence of communication.
  - Communication: the key is to share your intent – bring people on the journey by communicating your rationale and plan, not just the action. You don't have all the answers, no single person does, so share vulnerability and include others.

Enhance your communication by:

- Telling the story and sharing your intent – that is far more compelling. It will build support, understanding and help people re-share with others why the necessary actions are important;
- Talk about what success will look like; paint that picture in your communication – engage people in the future;
- Your honesty builds trust and, honestly, you are not going to have all the answers all of the time. Say when you don't. You'll need plans on next steps, who to involve, but some uncertainty shows you are human.

We need to consciously take action to build all three of these core connection elements each day. These foundations to connection, and creating trust, take time and effort to develop.

Navigating out of the current pandemic, including the resulting economic impact and

> ## Beyond finding a vaccine, the question is now: "How do we lead ourselves through the balance of 2020 and beyond?" This is not just a question for governments, but for everyone leading people.

organizational challenges, will require us to build trust with those we lead in new ways. Are you going to follow directions or leadership, even when it seems like it is the right answer, if there is no connection; limited understanding, reliability or discussion of intent?

The coming months will be defined by those in leadership roles in organisations and teams who focus on the human elements. There is no playbook for the situation we are now living through, just as the post-war era economic models cannot predict what will happen over the balance of the year. There will be no quick solution, or resolution and return to 2019 life, and therefore how we lead, how we connect, engage and bring those around us on the journey, will be the differentiator in organisations.

If you plan to lead others from today forwards in our world that has changed, then the priority will be building trust and connection. Look at who you are spending time with to understand the challenges and opportunities; be consistent, not stubbornly sticking to a certain path, but reliable in your actions; and talk about your intent. Pause and reflect on your approach as you can enhance your leadership impact during this challenging period with these conscious, focused steps.

Your new superpower is building trust – go focus on it and use it. ∎

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Are **TRADE UNIONS** still relevant in the **DIGITAL AGE**?

To answer this question, we take a look at the state of Trade Unions in three countries.

Murad Salman Mirza

Trade unions have largely been portrayed as a negative influence in the Digital Age, especially, with the encroachment of AI-driven entities in the workplace that are leading to a diminishing need for conventional job performers. This has also created headaches for regulators and nationalization/ quota activists in terms of keeping pace with the evolving corporate landscape. The respective burden is also being felt by politicians who are increasingly feeling trapped between the 'appeasement imperative' to placate the apprehensions of the affected workforce and the 'economic imperative' to provide incentives for boosting business activities. Additionally, the short length of careers in a digital economy is significantly changing the 'psychological contract' as it shifts from being blindly based on 'solemn faith' to being watchfully propped up on 'validated trust'.

This article takes a peek into the historical reasons for the formation of Trade Unions in the nineteenth century and their persistence throughout the twentieth century within some of the key developed countries such as USA, Britain and Australia. Subsequently, it leads into arguments exploring the rationale for having their presence within the contemporary and future employment relations.

United States

In the US, the seeds of unionism were sown after the strengthening of trade routes between north and south, which brought increased competition and forced the merchant-capitalists to find ways of cutting costs. One of the impacts was division of labor, for example, a shoemaker no longer made the whole shoe. This prompted the journeymen, in reaction to the threat to their long- standing independence, good living conditions and status, to form the first Trade Unions as the economy moved from mercantile capitalism to incipient industrialism. These were originally organized in the 1790s and the labor movement was born in 1827. It can, therefore, be said that the labor movement, at first, in the US was in rebellion to the rising industrialism. However, this was followed by the workmen rallying behind socio-economic freedom platforms, for example, espousing the abolition of imprisonment for debt, universal free education, a mechanism lieu law (making wages the employer's first obligation in case of bankruptcy), the abolition of child labor, land reforms, and so forth.

One of the major factors in the persistence of Trade Unions during the early part of the twentieth century in the US was the support of the political government as President Franklin D Roosevelt embarked upon the 'new deal' that promised recovery from the 'great depression'. Another factor was the strong union leadership that rose from the platform of Congress for Industrial Organization (CIO) and American Federation for Labor (AFL) and were able to secure concessions from major industrial concerns. This was further supported by the 2nd World War that boosted industrial growth and built a strong economy reflecting low unemployment rates with wages that sustained good living standards and promoted ideals of the 'American Dream'.

One unfortunate factor that also contributed to the entrenchment of unions and became a major contributor to their negative image was the infiltration of the mobsters within their ranks during the earlier and middle part of the twentieth century, especially, in the Shipping and the Construction industries. Their 'strong arm' tactics were frequently displayed in the form of violent industrial actions and increased politicization of Trade Unions. This diluted their ideal goal of being a true representative of the

workers.

More recently, some Trade Unions have been able to stand their ground on the basis of patriotism, unity of their members and the financial muscle to prolong a strike. For example, United Auto Workers (UAW) reached a deal with General Motors (GM) after six weeks of stoppage (https://lnkd.in/fFrP9-p).

Britain

Trade Unions formally emerged in the nineteenth century in response to repressive conditions that dominated the industrial environment with almost no legal protection for the workers. This was generally characterized by the Master-Slave relationship and immortalized in books like 'Oliver Twist' by Charles Dickens.

The pioneers of the Trade Union movement were not the trade clubs of the town artisans, but the extensive combinations of the West of England woolen-workers and the midland framework knitters. These attempts to voice grievances at a collective level were met with fierce resistance by apprehensive employers and an unsympathetic government that saw trade unionists as rebels and revolutionists. However, things began to change in the latter half of the nineteenth century as leaders like Robert Applegarth (https://lnkd.in/fKPPhaU) rose to prominence in their endeavors to win a recognized social and political status for the Trade Unions. Another interesting factor that led to the geographical spread of Trade Unions was the growth of the railways throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, culminating in the formation of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE) in 1851.

The cause of Trade Unions in Britain was further bolstered by sympathetic legislation such as The Trade Union Act (1913). Trade Unions also benefited in the middle of the twentieth century from Harold Wilson's Labor government, such as through the Redundancy Payment Act (1965) and the Equal Pay Act (1970). However, the respective trend was reversed in the 1980s with claims of greater productivity based upon enhanced power of management through the combination of anti-union legislation, greater product-market competition, and higher unemployment. Consequently, the membership declined sharply throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Recently, the Conservative government passed a new Trade Union Act, which proposes stricter ballot thresholds for industrial action,

Successful strategies for projecting their relevance include the ability to anticipate significant changes in the workplace, articulating/formulating viable alternatives to resolving imbalances in employment relationships, meaningful participation in the organization/improvement of work, embodying flexibility to buffer against market uncertainties, etc.

further restraints on picketing and a requirement that union members' contributions to political funds would only be via an 'opt-in' (https://lnkd.in/fECHBdX).

Australia

It has been said that the history of the Australian people was a struggle between the organized rich and the organized poor. Trade Unions in Australia surfaced as early as the 1850s; however, their continuance was challenged by the gold discoveries which greatly disturbed the industrial conditions.

The mid nineteenth century period witnessed Trade Unions rallying around the principle object of an eight hour day. Their cause was greatly helped by favorable economic conditions that saw a combination of falling prices and rising wages. This was complemented by the realization of the benefits that could be derived from combined action which led to the formation of the South Australian Typographical Association and the Shipwrights.

Another interesting phenomenon that gave rise to Trade Unions in Australia was the perceived threat of Chinese workers dominating the labor market that ultimately led to regress legislation against such influx and more

Trade unions have largely been portrayed as a negative influence in the Digital Age, especially, with the encroachment of AI-driven entities in the workplace that are leading to a diminishing need for conventional job performers. This has also created headaches for regulators and nationalization/quota activists in terms of keeping pace with the evolving corporate landscape.

protection for the local workforce.

The cause of trade unionism was further boosted by the Compulsory Arbitration Act (1901) which was the first legislation that encouraged trade unionism and collective bargaining by providing that only organized bodies of employers or employees could approach the court.

Another key factor was the farsightedness of prominent statesmen and judiciary members like Mr Justice Higgins, famous for the 'Harvester Judgment', who gave several landmark rulings, in favor of conciliation with arbitration as the preferred option to resolve differences between the employers and the Trade Unions.

The birth of Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), formed by revolutionaries and laborites in 1927, was also a key factor in providing a joint forum for addressing concerns from multiple industries. However, their

initiatives were frequently diluted by internal fragmentation and fierce resistance from the employer associations which successfully lobbied the government to protect their interests on several occasions. This was often countered by aggressive industrial actions and use of militant tactics by the 'Left' faction within ACTU. Things began to change in the seventies with the arrival of the 'New Right' who were more willing to experiment with Trade Union policy and organization, including the development of 'worker-participation' policies.

Additionally, the accord between the ACTU and the ALP, and the election of a Federal Labor Government in 1983 facilitated significant legislative changes, such as maternity leave, occupational superannuation and so forth. Subsequent governments have tried to create a balance between the rights accorded to employers and the protections provided to Trade Union members. This has resulted in Work Choices in 2005, the Fair Work Act in 2009 and Modern Awards in 2010. In 2014, new anti-bullying provisions gave extended powers for the Fair Work Commission to deal with bullying. However, both sides continue to have issues with the way legislation is formulated, promulgated, applied and adjudicated.

Moving forward

The resilience of trade unions to survive turbulent times is clearly evident from the aforementioned country-specific examples. They will always have a justification for their existence as long as there are repressed/exploited workforces yearning for a common forum to voice their legitimate rights. Following are some of the questions that can be explored to realize the viability of Trade Unions in the Digital Age:

1. Is collective bargaining more prudent and feasible for skilled labor than individual negotiations?
2. Can trade union leaders be one of the key drivers of organizational imperatives for staying competitive and relevant?
3. Can Trade Unions be an effective conduit for optimally partnering AI-driven

technology with suitably skilled humans?

4. Do Trade Unions have a credible voice in developing/improving products and services?

5. Do the labor laws/regulations provide balanced relief for the rights of key stakeholders?

6. Can unions be leveraged to institutionalize effective Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) initiatives?

7. Are Trade Union leaders open to teaming up with senior management in trying to minimize rightsizing/obsolescence through appropriate measures such as re-skilling, adjusting work schedules, revising/delaying financial/non-financial benefits/incentives, facilitating business development measures, boosting agile transformation initiatives, utilizing professional networks to secure alternative employment opportunities for excess workers, accommodating judicious severance packages, etc.?

8. Can multiple Trade Unions within an organization co-exist synergistically under a robust and binding operational framework?

Successful strategies for projecting their relevance include the ability to anticipate significant changes in the workplace, articulating/formulating viable alternatives to resolving imbalances in employment relationships, meaningful participation in the organization/improvement of work, embodying flexibility to buffer against market uncertainties, etc. Such progressive attributes will preclude the possibility of widespread vociferous and belligerent industrial actions by distraught Trade Unions/resentful workers within countries/organizations racing to embrace the benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI)/super-advanced robots/hybrid life-forms as they make a desperate stand against the elimination/obsolescence of their conventional livelihoods with no economic/social buffers. It will take profound foresight, empathetic accommodation and astute measures on both sides to enable a synergistic coexistence in the Digital Age. Are you willing to engage accordingly? ■

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4 Tips for ONBOARDING fully remote employees

Onboard your remote workers to be engaged and productive workers.

Much like a good employee training program, having an effective onboarding process in place is one of the best ways to increase retention and job satisfaction in a workforce. Properly bringing new employees into the fold can also enhance workplace performance, efficiency and productivity. Things can get a bit complicated when you factor remote workers into the mix, however.

The new normal

Thus far in the 21st-century, the workplace has remained in a perpetually dramatic state of flux. This has been due to things like shifting workplace expectations from new generations entering the workforce and ever-evolving technology, including the rise of remote work across industries. One of the repercussions of these changes has revolved around the difficulty to maintain high-quality onboarding standards.

This has never been more apparent than in the near-overnight shift to a 100% remote workforce caused by the COVID-19 shutdowns in early 2020. With everyone suddenly working off-site, HR Professionals and Managers were forced to adapt their onboarding efforts to facilitate a scattered professional workforce. To make matters worse – although quarantines and shelter-in-place orders will eventually be lifted when the COVID-19 scare is over, it's very likely that the workplace will find itself adapting to a "new normal" where remote work remains common.

That's not to say that successful remote workspaces haven't been possible in the past. The web automation app company Zapier, for instance, found impressive remote success through recruiting initiatives that focused on employees that possessed the following qualities:

- Able to work in the absence of a social workspace;
- Possessed proficient written communication skills;
- Had motivation and could get work done autonomously; and
- Highly-capable of working remotely.

While companies like Zapier have shown that successful remote work is possible, it is difficult to pull it off without structuring your onboarding efforts into an official, consistent process. Nearly one in four companies lack a formal onboarding process of this nature but, in an era where most employees remain permanently out of sight, it's become absolutely critical to have an official, company-approved onboarding process in place.

Tips for a fully remote onboarding process

With all of this in mind, here are some crucial tips to help HR departments create new, effective systems for onboarding employees, not just during the coronavirus crisis but into the foreseeable future.

1. Get established with your tools

One of the essential elements of a smooth onboarding process is having a well-established tool chest of online applications. There are many different categories of apps to consider:

- Workflow apps like Trello and Asana;
- Video, written, and verbal communication apps such as Gmail, Zoom, and Skype;
- Virtual workspace apps like Slack; and
- File-sharing apps such as Google Drive and Dropbox.

In addition, you're going to want to maintain standard expectations for the quality of the internet connection and hardware that remote employees use to connect with your team.

There is an endless variety of different app-based solutions for each of these needs. What's important is that each remote workspace selects the specific tools that meet its needs the best and then ensures that those tools are used by their entire workforce. This will create consistency in communication, ease of collaboration, and a simple-to-understand learning environment for your newest team members.

2. Create onboarding resources

Along with addressing the particular tools

your team will be using, take time to create guidelines and codes of conduct for your online operations, then present them as formal documentation in an easy-to-find location for employees who are being onboarded. While resources like these are good to have on hand at all times, they are particularly useful for new workers who are trying to learn about your company's culture, processes and brand.

3. Maintain strong leadership

Taking care of the specific functionality of your onboarding process is important, but a good fully remote onboarding process doesn't stop with the apps and resources. It also requires firm leadership. Without a strong hand at the tiller, a remote team can quickly come apart at the seams.

Remember, as a remote team leader, you're likely overseeing a disparate workforce with as many as five generations working together simultaneously in the same virtual space. You must create crystal clear guidelines that take into account the needs of everyone you're overseeing. Make an effort to practise active listening at all times in order to aid your new employees as they simultaneously adapt to a remote work environment and the specific requirements of your particular company's operations.

4. Always be improving

Finally, it's important to always be willing to accept feedback and improve your onboarding process. Workplace flexibility and remote work may be key trends in the future of the workplace, but they are anything from stable or predictable in nature.

As technology adapts, new generations enter the workforce, and customer expectations shift. It's important to be ready to tailor your onboarding process (and your entire remote operation, for that matter) as your situation changes in the future. Further, if your onboarding grows a little too out of your hands, you might consider bringing in some outside help – a Chief Learning Officer, for example, might be exactly what you need to uptrain and onboard new hires when you yourself are busy running the rest of the company, especially when it comes to handling the unique situation of training while working remotely.

Successfully onboarding fully remote employees

From codifying your onboarding tools and resources to providing strong leadership and a willingness to adapt, there are many ways to make a fully remote onboarding process go as smoothly as possible.

The ability to bring new employees in without the need to see them face-to-face isn't just a skill that will benefit in the short term. As the world moves away from the history-making events of the first wave of the coronavirus, the future workplace will likely remain increasingly remote-work-friendly. This will naturally give any company with a competent, effective remote onboarding process an edge over the competition in the years to come. ∎

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Top tips to
REDUCE STRESS in a REMOTE TEAM

There are a few simple things you can do to make a big difference to the stress your team members may be experiencing.

Workplace stress is something that we all experience from time to time in our daily routines. However, with the Coronavirus pandemic forcing many people to work from home, managing employee stress levels from a distance presents an entirely new challenge. With our working environments now separated, it has become much more difficult to recognise any clear signs or symptoms of stress from your employees.

From living alone to worrying about vulnerable family members, many employees will be struggling with their own battles. It's vital, therefore, that strong communication levels are maintained across your organisation so that people feel they are receiving adequate support from their employers.

While stress can affect people in different ways, there are some simple and effective ways you can help to reduce stress and make your employees feel heard and understood.

Chris Griffiths

Conduct daily video catch-ups

One of the biggest struggles many of us are currently facing is a significant reduction in our physical company – and this lack of social interaction can have a detrimental effect on our mental health. In our normal office environment, we're used catching up with colleagues over lunch or stopping for a five-minute natter by the coffee machine. These breaks in our day naturally help to lower our stress levels as we take this time to lift our heads away from any intense tasks. However, with these interactions now removed, the pressure from dealing with work alone from our homes can easily escalate our stress levels.

Try scheduling in a daily catch up with your team each morning. These don't have to take up much time, and they don't even have to be work-related. Use them as a chance to check in with each other and talk about what you did the night before. Maintaining these normal conversations with your team will help to reinforce that your colleagues are there to help

and support each other.

You could even encourage those across different departments to connect more often. Friendships naturally tend to form between colleagues across different areas of an organisation, so encourage people to set up after-work video calls with their close co-workers to keep their spirits up.

Schedule in one-to-ones

While some may keep their stress bottled up, it can arguably be easier for managers to identify when a member of their team is experiencing high levels of stress when they can physically see them in the office. This means that maintaining stronger levels of communication

with your teams is therefore vital to ensure that you stay aware of your employees' state of mind.

By scheduling in one-to-one catch-ups with individuals outside of your regular team meetings, you are giving your employees the opportunity to express any worries they may be unwilling to share with the larger team. Reaching out in this way will help your colleagues get any worries off their chest. It also helps to ensure that each member of your team feels valued and appreciated, by providing a window of communication for them to feel comfortable with sharing how they feel.

Encourage regular breaks and holidays

When people overwork, this can very quickly lead to a high rise in stress, which can ultimately result in people burning out and making themselves ill. Taking regular breaks throughout the day not only helps to ease stress, but also keeps people motivated and alert, so they can power through their tasks in shorter, but more powerful bursts. Encourage your employees to factor in breaks when setting their daily schedule. Even popping to the kitchen to make a coffee will help employees to step away from their screen and refresh their mind.

Encourage your employees to also continue using their annual leave. Taking holidays may fall behind on many people's to-do lists right now, and understandably so. When we think of taking holidays from work, this is usually to go away on a break or to visit family and friends. With this off the cards, many people may be neglecting their annual leave allowance. Remind your team about the importance of using their holidays to enjoy some rest – something that they may need now more than ever during this current crisis.

Maintain a consistent structure

While working from home, it can be easy to feel like your personal and professional lives are blurring into one. It's therefore important to ensure employees are establishing a consistent structure in their day. With our time spent commuting to the office now taken away from us, you may notice that employees are working longer hours than usual with this extra added time. While this can be great for extra productivity, it's important to ensure that

employees don't let their work seep too much into their personal time. Getting the rest they need in the evenings will give them the energy they need to approach the next working day at full steam.

Recognise the importance of praise

Keeping your team's motivation levels up goes hand-in-hand with helping them to manage their stress. Make sure to drop your colleagues regular messages and maintain a consistent flow of communication. A simple, "Thank you," to someone after completing a piece of work will go a long way in boosting your team's morale and give them the motivation to keep going.

Remind your team that it's okay to not feel at their maximum productivity levels right now. Many people are likely to be feeling anxious and it's important to remember that some employees may be struggling with isolation more than others. By providing continuous feedback and offering praise on a job well done, you will help your employees feel valued and that the work they are doing from a physical distance is not going unnoticed.

Stress affects us all in different ways, and with teams across the world adjusting to a new way of working together, ensure that your employees are considering their work–life balance and are not suffering from stress in silence. ■

Chris Griffiths is a productivity expert and the developer of ayoa.com - an intelligent digital workspace which allows teams to manage meetings, build plans, and action tasks - all in one app.

Engage your
REMOTE WORKERS
like this

This simple idea could make or break whether remote employees remain engaged.

Neil Gordon

You may remember the movie What Women Want, a romantic comedy starring Mel Gibson and Helen Hunt. In it, Gibson plays a misogynistic ad executive who develops the ability to hear what women think. Over the course of the film he develops a greater sensitivity to women's plight and of course this discovery leads to his getting together with his love interest played by Hunt.

About a half hour into the film, Gibson's character has just recently acquired his bizarre powers and suddenly learns that nearly all of the women at his company can't stand him. This is emphasized when he's berated by the thoughts of a junior staffer played by Sarah Paulson. Paulson is responsible for running inane errands for Gibson and her tirade (that

only he can hear) reveals that she's in therapy because he's not taking her seriously.

This movie is not only fictional but a fantasy. However, this specific scene actually reflects a situation that is worthy of the attention of managers struggling to better engage with their direct reports during this time of sudden remote working and communication.

With the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, employees who were recently a fully integrated part of a work environment are now isolated from co-workers and managing distractions that they never have had to manage before. They had a routine that has completely gone out the window and, if they have kids suffering from cabin fever, then they may want to be throwing themselves out the window as well.

This means that working remotely is putting

them under a great deal of strain. That, coupled with the larger economic uncertainty countries are now facing as well as the threat of COVID-19 itself, means that this is an emotionally significant time for them.

All of this amounts to a larger issue around employees feeling disconnected. And disconnected employees will become unproductive and even problematic employees over time.

How can managers resolve this disconnect so as to ensure that employees remain engaged in the months to come?

In her internal tirade, Paulson's character beseeches Gibson to give her "some real work to do". And though the fantastic way that Gibson learns of her frustration is playfully silly, it reflects a rather noteworthy reality that employees across the globe do indeed wish for a richer work opportunity and find that their managers fall short of their expectations.

In 2015, the polling giant Gallup released a paper citing a number of best practices in management. It stated that, "Employees value communication from their manager not just about their roles and responsibilities, but also about what happens in their lives outside of work." It then goes on to say that, "... great managers don't just tell employees what's expected of them and leave it at that; instead, they frequently talk with employees about their responsibilities and progress." It also speaks to strengths, specifically saying that, "... building employees' strengths is a far more effective approach than a fixation on weaknesses."

We can put these various high-level observations together to come to a simple conclusion: the most important thing for employees right now is not only to be clear about their responsibilities, but to be given an open invitation to grow that responsibility during this uncertain time.

What might this look like? Engaging with an employee in the spirit of these insights can, of course, take many shapes, but one particularly powerful way is for a manager to invite an employee to come up with a few ideas as to how they can utilize their particular strengths during this time. If the manager happens to have context for the employees' strengths already then, of course, that's of great benefit, but it may even be more powerful for the manager to draw those strengths out.

A suggested framework for this dialogue is as follows:

1. Check in with their current state: Ask them how they're getting on in response to the disruption;
2. Address their issues: Either provide feedback on how they might resolve some of their top-of-mind problems or promise to follow up with solutions (and actually follow up);

3. Frame the opportunity: Present how their continued satisfaction is important to you and as such you'd like to look at this time as an opportunity to help them find their strengths and use newfound responsibility to help the team navigate this disruption;
4. Offer a couple of examples: Provide them with a couple of ways that they might be able to take on responsibilities based on their strengths; and
5. Ask for their ideas: Request that they present you with a few ideas in a week's time.

That last step, to ask for their ideas, is an important one to include as this process is meant to be more about the employee's self-discovery and ownership of their value than a fulfillment of the manager's expectations. That intrinsic appreciation of their own gifts will make them a far more engaged employee in the long-run, and that the manager has been a catalyst for that ownership means that they will become a great deal more invested in being of service.

That scene in What Women Want is based on Gibson's character having an ability that isn't physically possible, but it does highlight a noteworthy gap in the workplace interactions that happen in real life. Employees very much want to be seen and valued at the best of times but, because of the tension that surrounds how to best express that desire, they may very well only ever think about it.

That is, unless they're given an open invitation to do otherwise.

The greatest times of adversity are the most fertile times for growth. If managers use sheltering in place as an opportunity to foster that growth in their people, they won't just have more engaged employees. They'll have a team wholeheartedly committed to their employer's success. ∎

Neil Gordon helps people develop and improve their communication skills. He works with executives, entrepreneurs and thought leaders to help them get six-figure book advances, be seen on shows like Ellen and Dr Oz, and double their speaking fees. Prior to becoming a communications expert, Neil worked on the editorial staff of Penguin Random House where he worked with New York Times bestselling authors. He has ghostwritten and collaborated on books published by Penguin Random House, HarperCollins and Hay House, and has been published in multiple languages across the world. He has been featured on Forbes, Fortune, Inc., Entrepreneur, KTLA and NBC Palm Springs.

To succeed in IT,
KEEP AHEAD
of the
INNOVATION CURVE

Position yourself for success in a post coronavirus world.

Lerato Matabola

As the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) continues to reshape the workplace in dramatic ways, savvy employers are looking beyond what candidates can bring to an organisation in terms of skills and talent. Coupled with the radical effects of the coronavirus pandemic and a worldwide shift to digital, remote working models, the recruitment landscape – particularly within IT – is more focused on

Leaders will be very careful about choosing talent that reflects their own values and mission statement in a post–pandemic environment.

innovation and adaptability than ever before.

Indeed, in the destructive wake of Covid-19, employers will likely be placing more emphasis on the right culture fit – and the potential for individuals to innovate, adapt to fast changing conditions and problem-solve for the unexpected. On the other hand, employers have to demonstrate how they themselves innovate, evolve and embrace positivity … in order to attract top talent.

It's critical that every organisation and its leadership team lives by the values it espouses. As businesses look to reshape business models and their ways of working after the extended lockdown, their recruitment models will also change fundamentally – and leaders will be very careful about choosing talent that reflects their own values and mission statement in a post-pandemic environment.

Importantly, talented professionals within IT will differentiate themselves by having a clear purpose and vision – both for themselves and their communities – which naturally translates into higher engagement, commitment and resilience through turbulent times.

A CV that has all the right kinds of experience is one thing, but a personality match is equally important to consider during the recruitment process. Hirers consider a candidate's attitude, passion, purpose and servant leadership qualities. Also, does the individual have a clear 'why' behind what they do in terms of their work? At Basalt, we believe that coming to work shouldn't feel like a job … and if it does, then you are in the wrong place. This is the kind of thinking that is becoming increasingly popular in 2020.

Technology will drive economic recovery after Covid-19

There is no doubt that the coronavirus pandemic has shifted ways of working, and we are likely to see a continuation of these shifts as the world adjusts to its new economic reality. Already, experts are predicting that demand for expertise in the key areas of artificial intelligence, data analysis, Internet of Things, blockchain and augmented reality will rise fast – as technology fuels the economic recovery around the world.

Arguably, the need for these tech skills, coupled with a demonstrated history of innovation and adaptability, will put talented IT professionals in the driver's seat of a very different global business order.

Within IT, it will become imperative to be fluent and highly skilled within data literacy, various coding languages, critical thinking and creativity. Skills and knowledge are moving at a rapid rate within the industry. IT has a very short technology cycle which sees processes becoming outdated quickly. The pressure is now on for the industry to be upskilling and reskilling in order to meet clients' needs effectively and facilitate the change across other industries. Notably, according to the World Economic Forum, in just five years, 35 percent of the skills deemed essential today will change. This highlights the importance of being adaptable and forward-thinking … particularly in a post-pandemic world.

South Africa has top-quality skills and we see that in the rise of engineers getting opportunities overseas. Our issue is not how skilled our people are but rather how is

> ## According to the World Economic Forum, in just five years, 35 percent of the skills deemed essential today will change.

knowledge transfer happening between the skilled and the up and coming talent.

Other jobs that are in demand and still highly sought after in the technology space include: AI/Machine Learning, Data Science, Cyber Security and DevOps.

Indeed, the reality is that, in the rest of the world, there is more demand than there is supply – and the challenge is how organisations are working to bridge that gap.

South African IT engineers and tech professionals realise the importance of staying up to date with the latest tech, not just because their job requires them to, but because it's a passion point and an exciting space full of constant development. If an engineer or coder is not learning, they will become obsolete very quickly, and savvy tech professionals recognise that. We have an opportunity with Covid-19 to reinvent ourselves and with it comes the realisation that often adaptability is a sink or swim scenario. 2020 is about turning crisis into opportunity. ∎

Lerato Matabola is the HR and Talent Manager at Basalt Technology.

Create a great
EMPLOYEE and
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Empowering employees through digital transformation is key to delivering improved customer experience.

Diane Meyers

In the modern world, fuelled by digital transformation, customers are no longer passengers but drivers of their own experience when it comes to engaging with businesses, brands and organisations. Technology is becoming increasingly critical to enabling current and future customer experience capabilities for businesses. To create powerful connections between the business, its employees and customers, and succeed in the digitally-driven business environment, organisations need to optimise three things: the organisation, people and technology.

As digital transformation drives rapid business change, the 2020 NTT CX Benchmarking

Report finds that 49.7% of organisations see the need to evolve and be agile, with one in five saying they are proactive and growth-orientated. In addition, 48% acknowledge a need to optimise the workplace environment to meet the demands of an evolving workforce. This is imperative, as an engaged and empowered workforce is the key to driving and delivering improved customer experiences that offer customers the access to information, entertainment, and physical products on demand that they desire through highly consumable, immediate and personalised usage mechanisms. Essentially, you cannot expect to deliver a positive customer experience without delivering on an engaging employee experience.

According to the report, 37.2% of organizations confirm a proactive approach to employee engagement in customer experience, where employees actively 'live the brand' and the voice of the employee is recognized and measured.

When developing employee engagement strategies, it is important to consider the following factors:

The impact of digital transformation on skills needs

As technology continues to have an impact on all areas of the organisation, the lifespan of skills continues to lessen. This does not mean that automation is set to take over all human jobs, but rather that employees are having to constantly reskill and upskill in order to remain relevant and able to work alongside the latest technologies.

While automation and digital transformation have taken over many simple processes with defined beginning and end points, the organisation will continue to require the human workforce to deal with more complex interactions – which means adopting new skills, technologies and working practices to optimise operational capability. Organisations which are looking to remain ahead of the curve need to ensure they are implementing upskilling strategies and programmes for their staff.

The importance of delivering the "why" and not only the "how"

Employees not only need to understand how they are expected to work alongside and interact with the latest technology, they also need to understand the role of automation, recognising it as a valuable support rather than a threat.

Organisations need to ensure they are providing training and insights on the "why" of digital transformation, and not focusing solely on the "how". Employees who feel energized and empowered in this regard will be more likely to engage with the organisation and its goals, ultimately delivering improved customer experience.

The generational factor

The last few years have been unprecedented for businesses globally, as, for the first time in history, there are five generations present in the workplace. Each generation has its own set of needs when it comes to communication, technology and business processes, and organisations need to take this into account when implementing a digital transformation strategy in order to ensure all employees are working together successfully towards the same organisational goals.

In our own organisation, which has an average employee age of 29.8, we found that, while 62% of those aged 18 – 35 have asked for technology to help them work more effectively, only 33% of those aged 51 – 70 have done the same. Further, 64% of those aged 18 – 35 say they would like the organisation to use more technology, such as AI, in its practices and processes, while only 37% of those aged 51 – 70 felt the same. This means that organisations need to be flexible and purposeful in implementing digital transformation strategies, to ensure the needs of each generation are being met in terms of training and implementation.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic is a good example of where this can be experienced by a business, as more local businesses move into offering a work from home solution for their employees. While Millennials and Gen Zs will likely revel in this and be able to quickly get on board with using new platforms for communication and productivity, Baby Boomers and Traditionalists might be more resistant to the change. The organisation needs to have a flexible strategy in place that can assist in shifting attitudes toward technology.

Technology should be seen and utilised as a key enabler to align customer experience with business outcomes. It is important to remember that, besides prioritising flexibility in order to succeed in an ever-evolving digital market, businesses will need to ensure they are training and managing their workforce sufficiently to ensure they are just as agile and able to adapt.

A considered customer experience and employee experience culture and environment will set the scene for an optimised workforce where employee and customer satisfaction are the ultimate output, ensuring the organisation remains relevant in the digitally driven environment of tomorrow. ∎

Diane Meyers is Head of HR Digital Platforms at Merchants SA, www.merchantscx.com.

EMBRACE CREATIVITY
during uncertainty

Businesses must explore creative responses in the post COVID-19 era.

Dr Mark Bussin

Charlton Jordaan

Iya Prigogine is quoted as saying, "The future is uncertain ... but this uncertainty is at the very heart of human creativity". The chemist by profession is well respected in his field, having been recognised as a Nobel Prize winner within his discipline. He understood that humanity can achieve extraordinary things when placed in challenging circumstances. The proclivity of humanity to panic in uncertainty is indeed something that befalls all of us at some point. It is, however, indeed our mindset adjustment that helps us pull through, by looking at what occurs when we are faced with this uncertainty.

Creativity therefore springs into action almost screaming at every person, saying, "It's possible." We can certainly not escape the current repercussions that come with the

Novel Covid-19 that have impacted our globe and, closer to home, our very own country. It is estimated that close to 90% of all countries across the world experienced some form of lockdown. We surely have been called to respond differently in our ways of living and work.

The times we find ourselves in are undocumented and we are writing history every minute of the day. We have seen governments' respond and they are having to operate with what they have at hand and their response is geared towards prevention and placing controls around the impact we are experiencing or will experience. We have seen in these uncertain times creativity taking hold of humanity and many of us responding in solidarity to what we are tasked to do. As South Africans are

progressing into the risk adjusted phasing-out of the lockdown, we are steadily and cautiously moving into reintroducing normality and opening up the economy once again and, though full normality seems like a distant notion or thought, we will get there.

We need a collective effort and the great minds we have will need to pull together in this period as we face a mammoth challenge of economic and health pressures that have seen reaction from many businesses in trying to adapt to this new way of needing to do business. We have seen over the past couple of weeks and months business leaders come together and engage as never before. Many zoom meetings have been arranged, attended and participated in, from CEOs to CHROs to CFOs, you name it, they've been in attendance. There is a collective effort that we need all hands on deck to get our creative juices flowing. CEOs are concerned about how they will manage expectations and turn their ships in a direction that requires their people to pull in a direction that makes them sustainable whilst ensuring they all keep their focus on the goals placed before the organisations.

Job creation and job security are very topical issues and, whilst we have seen the USA record numbers in excess of 35 million applicants for unemployment benefits being claimed. The fears are that the unemployment rate will soon eclipse that of the Great Depression in the 1930s. Within South Africa, numbers were already sitting at 29.1% prior to COVID-19 and we anticipate a greater increase in unemployment post COVID-19. This has called government to respond by announcing the biggest spending plan ever, amounting to R500 Billion which represents 10% of the country's GDP. This plan will look to be geared to alleviate pressure in different clusters but also to create support for businesses as well.

With businesses gearing up to welcome their workers back over a period, we are definitely seeing a sign of relief but also pressure on how we are going to better respond to this in a more creative manner. Businesses are at risk of closing down and it impacts all sizes, with smaller businesses facing bigger strain. We have seen that some Executives have started taking responsive action from the call that was made by President Cyril Ramaphosa whereby leaders were encouraged to sacrifice a third of their salaries for the following three months. Executives in various sectors have sacrificed a third of their salaries, and others have opted to not have any increase awarded to their annual earnings for the current financial year. These interventions we have seen are in a bid to not further burden the existing staff cost pressures

that they are starting to face. But more creativity is needed to respond to this.

We have seen the IT company EOH recently engage with various stakeholders in its business and take creative, but bold, steps to preserve its business and ensure it avoids the unavoidable impact of the lockdown and the Covid-19 pandemic. They have communicated interventions that are definitely to be embraced by many others such as:

i. Executive salaries to be reduced by 25%;
ii. 20% reduction of salary for those earning R250 000 and more;
iii. Rent holidays to various vendors;
iv. Review of consultants' and third-party contractors' contracts;
v. Review of discretionary spend in travel, entertainment and events; and
vi. Review in work week to 4-day work week.

These are some of the creative measures the EOH leaders have intended to lead on and engage its workforce on, to avoid possible retrenchments but also to ensure the company retains as many employees as it possibly can. The interventions are great drivers for a direct response to the challenges businesses face today and will continue to face tomorrow.

A creative response to unusual times

It is clear it is no longer business as usual; it now calls for creative leadership responses to ease workers back to work and create certainty for employees, as leaders put in place tools and interventions that will complement businesses in terms of their performance. Leaders are to focus on two main areas that will better shape them to respond to the new way of easing workers into the workforce. Leaders are to focus on the return to work of employees under occupational health and safety standards that need revision and also to other interventions that will directly preserve economic stability.

To achieve a better agile focused organisation that is responsive to the current situation, leaders are looking to put in place a Human Capital Committee that is an interface to the Remuneration Committee and to Executive Management. The establishing of this committee would have to be primarily focused on occupational health and safety interventions and also employee/er economic interventions that will be a direct response to overall staff and business preservation. This committee should ideally be a team that has the CEO, CHRO and CFO of the business as its core members. All other business areas are to be

invited upon request.

With the committee's focus on how occupational health and safety policies are revisited to ensure that all related policies are to be tabled and approved to ensure the business is prepared for integrating employees back into the work environment but also ensuring the work environment is adequate enough to respond to the health requirements as instituted by the Department of health going forward. Some of the key interventions to be considered are:

1. Introduction of health offering partnering with one's medical aid provider;
2. Deployment of nurse (where possible);
3. Screening of employees where possible;
4. Review of work plan layout for social distancing – no use of lifts, reviewing of meeting attendance, maintaining working from home, revisiting of the open plan office and so forth;
5. Provision of face masks;
6. Communication of strategy designed for health policy changes in light of COVID-19 in response to winter approaching;
7. Review of work schedules to rotate employees in shift rosters;
8. Extending health protocols to family members; and
9. Revisit business continuity plans.

These are some of the focus areas the committee is to concentrate on that will enable a response that ensures that this committee ensures that it operationally executes as mandated preferably through its Remuneration Committee and reports back at its quarterly sittings. This will be enabling the Remuneration Committee deliverables under the occupational health and safety segment to be executed and implemented through this committee.

The other focus area that the committee must investigate is how will the business, from an employee/er economic intervention, aim to preserve job creation and security for the organisation? These interventions under this segment must, and ideally should, focus on how cost interventions are maintained and how business responds to the balancing act of overall organisation. This segment does require a broader consultative approach that will evoke employee participation. The core reality is that the organisation's revenue will decline against the targets that have been set and agreed. Thus, this segment plays a critical role that will reshape the organisation for studios or frugal cost interventions. This segment of focus will require extensive modelling and analysis that will need to test interventions that will be suitable to retain more people and at most create more job opportunity. Some of the key

interventions that would be needed and would come out of this segment are listed as follows:

1. Review of organisational structure of existing roles;
2. Vacancy management of all roles through a recruitment freeze;
3. Determine which roles are critical, revenue generating roles for new or existing businesses;
4. Augment revenue generating roles with support roles;
5. Review of existing Reward philosophies;
6. Redirecting existing spending to stronger medical aid programs internally;
7. Reduction in salary or sacrifice of salary for a period;
8. Reinvest savings into development programs (future ways of work);
9. Review of working hours policies (overtime, shift, weekend work);
10. Review all allowances to recalibrate them to the areas of employment that are relevant;
11. Review incentive programs that are more relevant in generating new programs and savings mechanisms;
12. Manage compliance to salary scales and adherence to it;
13. Review of bonus/retention programs entered in;
14. Review wage negotiation agreements;
15. Freeze of all salary reviews for the following 12 months;
16. Review of delegation of authority policies; and
17. Review of third-party consultant services.

Whilst the interventions are recommendations, they will aid the business to respond to the current situations, whilst noting a more collective approach is needed to ensure these interventions are cascaded and responded to with the urgency and frequency they need. Many Remuneration Committees are attracting attention now and are being expected to better provide guidance to the business. These interventions will assist organisations to start thinking broadly on how uncertain times are but that these opportunities are platforms for creativity, so let's embrace them and put the shoulder to the wheel. ∎

Dr Mark Bussin is the Executive Chairperson at 21st Century Pay Solutions Group, www.21century.co.za, a Professor at UJ, Professor Extraordinaire at NWU, Chairperson and Member of various boards and remuneration committees, and a former Commissioner in the Office of the Presidency. **Charlton Jordaan** is a Certified Chartered Reward Specialist.

How to use a mask?

Source: World Health Organization
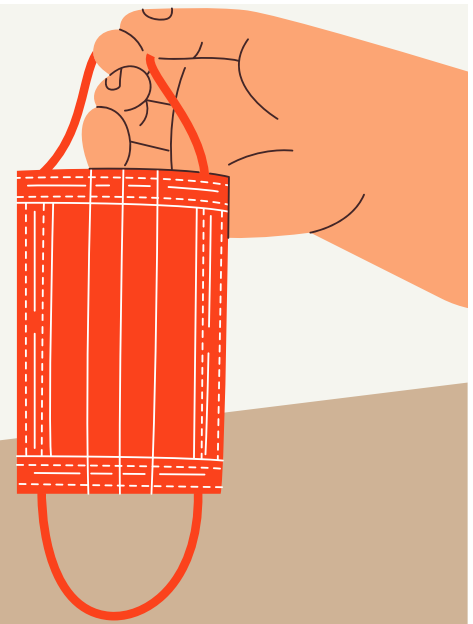
Before Putting on a Mask:

Clean hands with **alcohol-based hand ru**b or **soap and water**.

While Wearing a Mask:

1. **Cover your mouth and nose.** Make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask.

2. **Avoid touching the mask**. If you do, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

3. Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp. **Do not re-use single-use masks.**

To dispose of the mask:

1. Remove the mask from behind using the strings. **Do not touch the front of mask.**

2. Discard the mask **immediately** in a closed bin.

3. **Clean hands** with a**lcohol-based hand rub** or **soap and water**.

Stay of
ARBITRATION AWARDS pending review applications

On what basis did the Labour Court disagree regarding Section 145(7) and s145(8) of the LRA?

Dr Brian van Zyl

n South Africa, the Labour Court, in OR Tambo District Municipality v SAMWU obo Mzamane and 9 Others (2018) 29 SALLR 36 (LC), considered the following important issues:

(a) In Rustenburg Local Municipality v SA Local Government Bargaining Council and Others [2017] 11 BLLR 1161 (LC), it was held that, if security is provided in terms of s145(7) and s145(8) of the LRA in the prescribed amount, the suspension of the award automatically follows and the LC has no discretion in this regard. On what basis did the LC disagree with the above approach?

(b) In dealing with the above issue, how did the LC interpret its power residing in

s145(3) and s151(2) of the LRA, with reference to Windybrow Theatre v Maphela and Others (2016) 37 ILJ 2641 (LAC)?

Overview

Van Niekerk J disagreed with the well-known decision in Rustenburg Local Municipality in which the court held that the party could effectively 'purchase' a stay of an arbitration award by filing a bond of security. The present application was distinguishable from its predecessors as the applicant had filed a bond of security as contemplated by s145(7) and s145(8) of the LRA.

This application raises the crisp issue of whether the furnishing of security by

the applicant in terms of s145(7) had the consequence that the operation of the arbitration award was automatically suspended, and its enforcement stayed, pending the decision of the review court.

Pertinent facts of the case

The employer applied for the stay of an arbitration award, which application was refused on the basis of the delays accompanying the prosecution of the review application. It then sought leave to appeal that judgment, which was refused. Subsequently, the employer filed a bond of security and contended that the filing of this bond automatically stayed the enforcement of the arbitration award. The 10 dismissed employees refused to accept the position and the employer then brought another application to stay the enforcement.

Findings of the Labour Court

The applicant relied on Rustenburg Local Municipality, where the court held that, if security is provided in terms of s145(7) and s145(8), suspension of the award follows and any execution or enforcement is not competent for so long as the review application remains pending.

The introduction of these subsections by way of the 2014 amendments to the LRA did not disturb s145(3).

Rustenburg Local Municipality judgment (LC)

In Rustenburg Local Municipality, Snyman AJ reasoned that the design of the amended s145 was that a stay or suspension of execution or enforcement can either be 'purchased' by way of the payment of security or obtained by leave of court. The 'purchase' of suspension is effected by the furnishing of security.

That provision aside, it remains open to an applicant to seek a stay of enforcement in terms of s145(3), where the court has a discretion to grant a stay or suspension of execution of the award. However, where the party seeking a stay of enforcement has furnished security in the amounts contemplated by s145(8), the court is obliged to grant the stay. Snyman AJ interpreted the words 'Unless the Labour Court otherwise directs...' in s145(8) to mean that the court was empowered only to inquire into the nature and form of security furnished and whether it was sufficient to meet the required amounts.

While the Labour Court did not disagree with Snyman AJ's interpretation, it was unable to agree with his conclusion that the provisions of s145(7) and s145(8) entitled a party, seeking to review an arbitration award, to 'purchase' the automatic suspension of the award.

First reason

First, there is nothing in s145 to indicate that the furnishing of security in the specified amounts has the effect of an automatic stay. Even if the Labour Court accepted that the preamble to s145(8) was such that it empowered it to vary the specified amounts or give direction as to the nature of the security to be provided, s145(3) empowers the court unconditionally to stay the enforcement of an award pending the outcome of an application to review and set aside the award. The word 'may' is indicative of a discretion which is to be exercised judicially having regard to all of the relevant factors, including whether the applicant has furnished security in terms of s145(7) and s145(8).

Second reason

Secondly, s151 of the LRA provides that the Labour Court is a superior court that has the authority, inherent powers and standing, in relation to matters under its jurisdiction, equal to that of a division of the High Court.

In Windybrow Theatre, the LAC recently confirmed that matters incidental to the execution of orders fall within the inherent powers of the court. That power is unaffected by s145(7) and s145(8) and any payment of security by an applicant to a review application.

In short, the filing of a review application does not, in itself, suspend the operation of an arbitration award, and the furnishing of security ordinarily serves to suspend the enforcement of the award, but does not oust the power of the Labour Court, in an appropriate case, to order that the award should be enforced pending the outcome of the review application, notwithstanding the furnishing of security. That power resides in s145(3) and s151(2).
Discretion of LC not to grant the stay
Given then that the payment of security does not deprive the court of its discretion to refuse to stay the enforcement of an arbitration award, it remains to be determined whether the enforcement of the award ought to have been stayed.
In the Labour Court's view, it should not. The present case was one in which there had been an inordinate delay in prosecuting the review application, to the point that the furnishing of security had to yield to the interests of the first respondent's members to have the award issued in their favour satisfied.
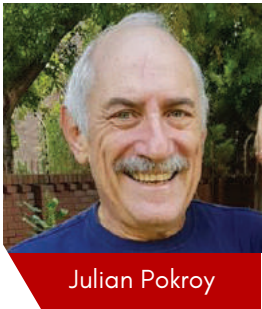
Order of the LC

The application was dismissed with costs. ■

Dr Brian van Zyl is the Presenter of the South African Labour Law Report Seminars, www.sallr.co.za.

BORDER CLOSURE and VISA DISRUPTION
because of the pandemic

The COVID 19 Pandemic has caused global disruption in the arena of travel.

Julian Pokroy

With travel being restricted due to borders being closed and airlines being prevented from routine passenger travel, save for repatriation and expatriation flights, there has been an almost non-existent flow of people across international borders, thereby almost totally suspending the need for visas for this purpose.

Even if a departing traveller were hypothetically able to leave, they still cannot do so if the borders and airspace of their intended destination country is closed.

One of the issues confronting South Africans trapped by lockdown in other countries was the inability to return to South Africa because of the closures of borders in their countries of presence. The Department of International Cooperation and Development "DIRCO" did not approach the dilemma with any sense of urgency and it was left to a civil society grouping on Facebook called "Home Away From Home" and Twitter under leadership of opposition Shadow Minister Darren Bergman and a large team of volunteers to lead the charge, with much success. Well done to this team.

A further complication in this scenario is the fact that, even up to the time of writing this article, most of the South African Embassies, High Commissions and Consular missions worldwide have only been rendering limited, if any, consular functions since the worldwide lockdown was implemented in those countries. What is certain is that no applications are being taken in for visas, except in the emergency categories, at any of the consular offices worldwide.

Whilst we fully comprehend that successful Visa applicants would in any event not be able to come into the country now on skills and investor visas, there appears to be no impediment to the applications being taken in, subject to social distancing and sanitisation being in process at the location of lodgement, with adjudication taking place and when a Visa is approved, for it to be conditional upon their ability to depart the home country and enter South Africa. At this stage it is not clear when that will be.

With South Africa moving down to level 3 of the lockdown, as at time of writing this article, it is clear that the limit of civic services being offered by the Department of Home Affairs from 1 June 2020 will be that of the registration of births, including late registration of births, registrations of deaths and there is talk of the registration of marriages. What is also significant is that the collection of identity cards, applied for before the lockdown, and any other travel document or certificate may also be collected from the office of lodgement.

What is however not clear at the moment is when the offices of Visa Facilitation Services will reopen and this will determine when Visa applications can be lodged in a country which predominantly refers to extensions of existing visas or changes in conditions of existing visas.

There is unsubstantiated information that the Department of Home Affairs at Head Office level will resume limited services, also in respect of services rendered under the Immigration Act, but this is speculative to say the least and, in any event, there is an extreme backlog which existed prior to the implementation of the lockdown that will probably retard the processing of new applications when their offices do open.

In a previous article in *HR Future*, I explained that any foreign national whose visas expired during the lockdown and was prevented from applying for an extension thereof, would be afforded the opportunity within 30 days of the end of the lockdown, to lodge the applications, even on an expired Visa, with no consequence or penalty to the holder thereof if the sole reason for the dilemma they find themselves in was indeed the lockdown.

Similarly, as also reported in a previous article, they are not supposed to be penalised if they were to leave the country on an expired Visa during that period, on the basis of an overstay precipitated by the lockdown. This means that they technically could not be prohibited or banned from coming back into the country for between one to five years on the basis of the prohibition. Whether this is happening in practice, as alluded to above, remains to be seen.

Any reopening of any Department of Home Affairs offices is obviously contingent upon adherence to social distancing and sanitisation measures being solidly in place.

When will "normality" come back into the visa sector given the fact that our system was already dysfunctional prior to the lockdown and there was an enormous backlog, especially in the adjudication process of permanent residence, specifically in respect of foreign national merit of South African citizens, which has been taking two to three years and sometimes even longer?

If you are looking to travel, then it is better to be safe than sorry and it is important rather to ask the questions then to face possible disappointment. ◼

Julian Pokroy is one of South Africa's leading immigration specialist attorneys, immigration.org.za, and currently heads the Law Society of South Africa's Immigration and Refugee Law Specialist Committee and the Immigration, Nationality and Refugee Law Committee of the Law Society of the Northern Provinces. He is a member of the South African Law Reform Commission Committee.

FRUSTRATION or FREEDOM? Your choice.

There is a simple – but not easy – way to handle the frustrations of "lockdown life".

Alan Hosking

National lockdowns across the globe have presented some interesting challenges to people. For the first time in 75 years, societies have had their freedom curtailed in the interests of reducing infection by the Covid-19 virus.

I use the word "interesting" in much the same way as it is used in the ancient Chinese proverb, "May you live in interesting times."

We've all had to learn to do things that we took for granted or that other people did for us. This includes, in no particular order, cooking food, cleaning the house, doing the washing, teaching the children, refereeing the children, disciplining the children, cutting one another's hair, doing touch ups on your partner's hair colour, doing your own nails, conducting virtual meetings with colleagues and clients, refereeing the children's skirmishes (again), doing the gardening, washing the car, and the list goes on ...

Many of these activities have resulted in people having blow-ups, bust-ups or meltdowns, having disagreements with family members, expressing frustration and/or anger, withdrawing and/or suffering from anxiety or depression.

If you've experienced any of these, relax, you're normal. All of the above is quite understandable when people are forced to spend abnormally and unnaturally long periods of time confined together. When it comes to having one's freedom curtailed and being forced to do things you don't really want to do, however, perspective is everything.

Perspective is about seeing things in certain ways, and the more constructive, positive and helpful our perspective, the better the chance of us making it through to the other side – wherever and whenever that may be. We all have perspectives on everything we do or don't do. The trick is to acquire and/or develop perspectives that are going to serve you, not destroy you.

A large part of the problem is caused by the stress we experience as a result of the circumstances we find ourselves in. I have many times explained two of the main causes of stress – firstly, feeling that you've lost control of your world and, secondly, having to do things you don't want to do. Well, both of these causes are very relevant right here and now.

What, then, can you do to reframe things in order to acquire a new perspective?

Reflect on this ... While your freedom of movement and association may have been curtailed by circumstances that were not of your making, there's one freedom no-one can ever curtail or take away from you, and that's your freedom of choice. While your mental faculties are functioning as they should, you have the freedom to choose how you wish to act, react or not act or react.

So start focusing on what choices you would like to make during this lockdown time. For a start, instead of viewing the chores or the children as a nuisance, you could choose to view them as opportunities to learn something new.

"Hold it!" you might be tempted to shout, "There's no way I want to learn something new regarding the chores I simply have to do."

Whoa ... did you notice what you just did? You just exercised your freedom of choice to view those chores in a certain way. And you have every right to do so. But did that choice make you feel better, encouraged, inspired or uplifted? I bet not.

If, however, you choose to find a good reason for doing the chore, you develop a new perspective. Say you decide that you want to do the chore because you know it will help your partner in some way, you suddenly find that the chore is not so distressing or frustrating any more.

As you work at exercising your freedom of choice in this new way, you'll be amazed at how it changes your own sense of wellbeing. I know this for a fact. I've practised this for many years – and it works. ∎

Alan Hosking is the Publisher of HR Future magazine, www.hrfuture.net. He helps leaders acquire new leadership skills to lead into the future, and is an age management and self-mastery coach to senior executives. Alan is the author of best seller What nobody tells a new father, available at hrfuture.net.
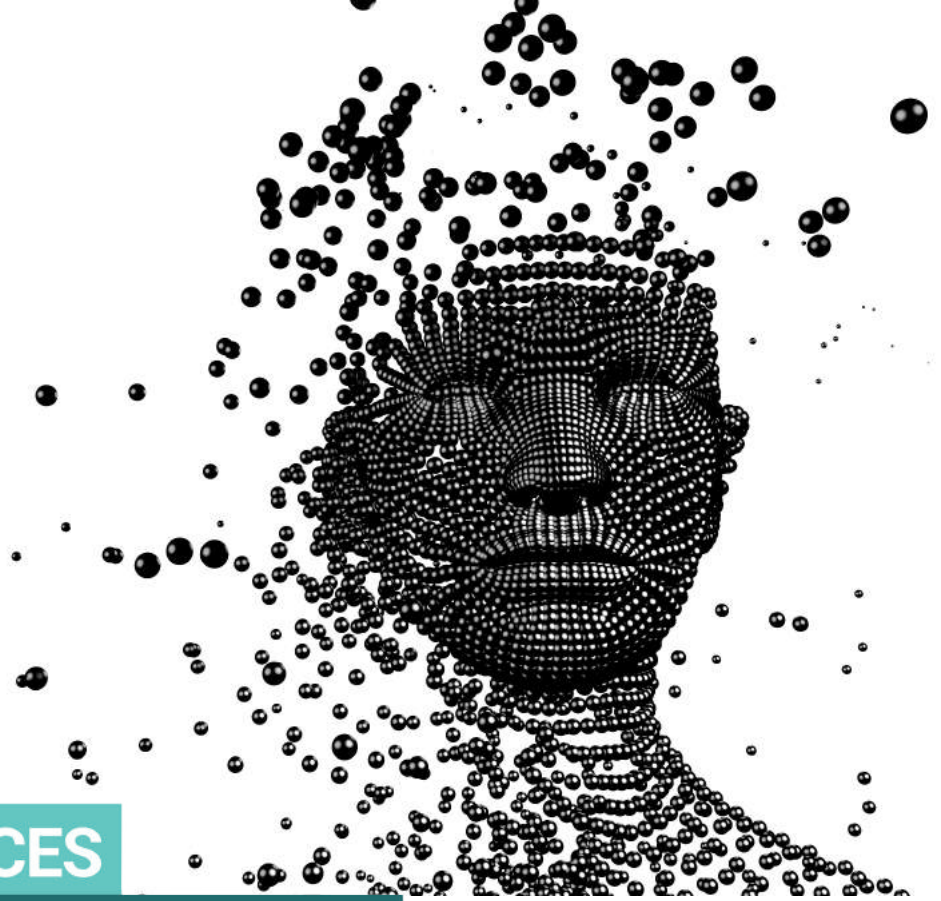
AI THAT ENHANCES
YOUR HUMAN EXPERTISE

Already have predictive analytic data set up? Great!

But what about all the Human Experts working for you, with years of knowledge, experience, insight and expert judgement? They're the ones who make the key decisions.

It's now possible to plug in all your data history/analytics/predictive analytics, and digitise your Human Expertise to make swift, real-time, accurate decisions 24/7/365.

Digitise Expertise

1. Identify your experts who make high volume/ high risk decisions.
2. Identify the key decisions they make.
3. Create "Virtual Experts" of your Human Experts.

Access Expertise

1. Make Virtual Experts available to all who rely on your Human Experts.
2. Have their expertise available 24/7/365.
3. Eliminate bottlenecks caused by human limitations.

Optimise Expertise

1. Scale up your Human Experts.
2. Increase productivity, customer satisfaction and profitability.
3. Set your Human Experts free to create REAL value for your company.

Did you know?

Your Human Experts will typically "break the rule"?
For example: They would know that a senior lady living in a retirement home might not have known she needed to FICA her account. The Human Expert would typically not have closed her account, as they would've looked at certain bits of info on the account and used their ethics/empathy to intuitively analyse the scenario and see what the problem is likely to be, and therefore not close the account. Whereas, the typical cold "system approach" would have been to close the account as it was flagged as "Not FICA'd". This is what could blow up on social media and create a PR nightmare as well as a major loss in clients for the company.

Get in touch: HR Future ■ kelsey@hrfuture.net ■ 011 782 3719

#StopTheSpread

Talking to your kids about the

Coronavirus

Don't be afraid to talk about the coronavirus.

Most children would have heard about the virus or seen people wearing masks. This is your opportunity to keep them informed and set the tone.

Be developmentally appropriate.

Try answering their questions instead of volunteering too much information as this might be overwhelming.

Let them talk about their worries.

Be open and invite them to discuss what they may have heard and how they feel.

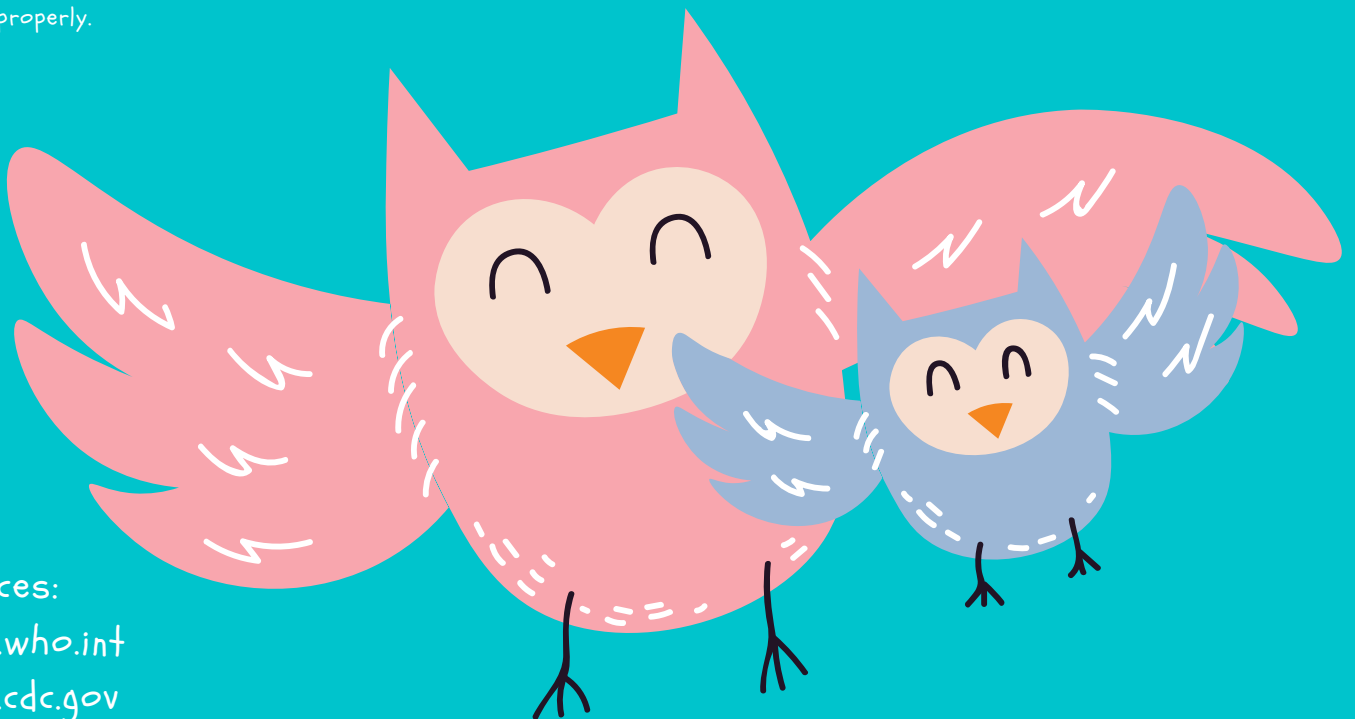## Focus on what they can do to keep safe.

Help your kids feel empowered by teaching them what they can do to keep safe. Show them how to wash their hands or how to sneeze properly.

Stick to Routine.

School might have been shut down so it's up to you to keep your kid's day structured. Create and stick to schedules for mealtime, study and play.

Manage your own anxiety.

When you notice yourself feeling anxious, take time to calm down before trying to have a conversation or answering your child's questions.