



How to Create a Connected Employee Experience for Your Remote Team

With our Partners at



Presented by: **Michelle Coussens,
Plan B Consulting**

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Session Sections

- 1) Ways to embed employee opportunity in day-to-day work that promotes better productivity and retention**
- 2) How to simultaneously increase productivity while energizing and bonding employees to the organization and each other**
- 3) Ways to create and enhance employee connection**
- 4) Q & A**

Physical, social, and emotional challenges for today's workplace

- Employees, especially new ones, feel isolated and struggle to navigate their organizations
- Individuals see more opportunities to learn and grow on LinkedIn than inside their own organizations
- Work is more distributed and remote
- Changing work habits- dress code, no commutes, changes in work-life balance, etc.
- Shifting roles & responsibilities– all hands, on deck
- Technological advancements and enhancements
- Increased outsourcing & use of contingent workers
- More on-the-job medical screening
- Less “facetime” and more productivity needed



Implications of the increasingly remote workplace

- **Almost 9 million employees worked remotely in 2017.***
 - During and post-COVID19, there will continue to be more.
- **Fluidity between work and life**
- **Disproportionately more burdensome for some than others**
 - Those with dependents (kids, elder parents), for example
 - Those already considered outsiders or outliers
- **Employee productivity suffers**
 - Knowledge workers waste equivalent of 1 day per week playing internal detective**

Remote work challenges

- **Harder to gauge activity**
- **Less collaboration and lower innovation**
- **Temptation of distractions**
- **Lack of visibility with colleagues**
- **Difficult to validate work conditions**
- **Isolation (lonely worker syndrome)**

*SHRM via Outsourcing Insight.

**[McKinsey & Company](#)



Section 1: Ways to embed employee opportunity in day-to-day work that promotes better productivity and retention

- **Examine the employee experience**
- **Maximize productivity while avoiding burnout**
- **Gauge productivity and manage expectations**
- **Invoke flexibility while meeting business needs**
- **Align daily work incentives with individual workers**
- **Give timely feedback**

A better employee experience leads to...



Commitment To
The Organization



Job Satisfaction



Lower Absenteeism
And Clock-punching



Fewer Task-Masters
More Context-Builders



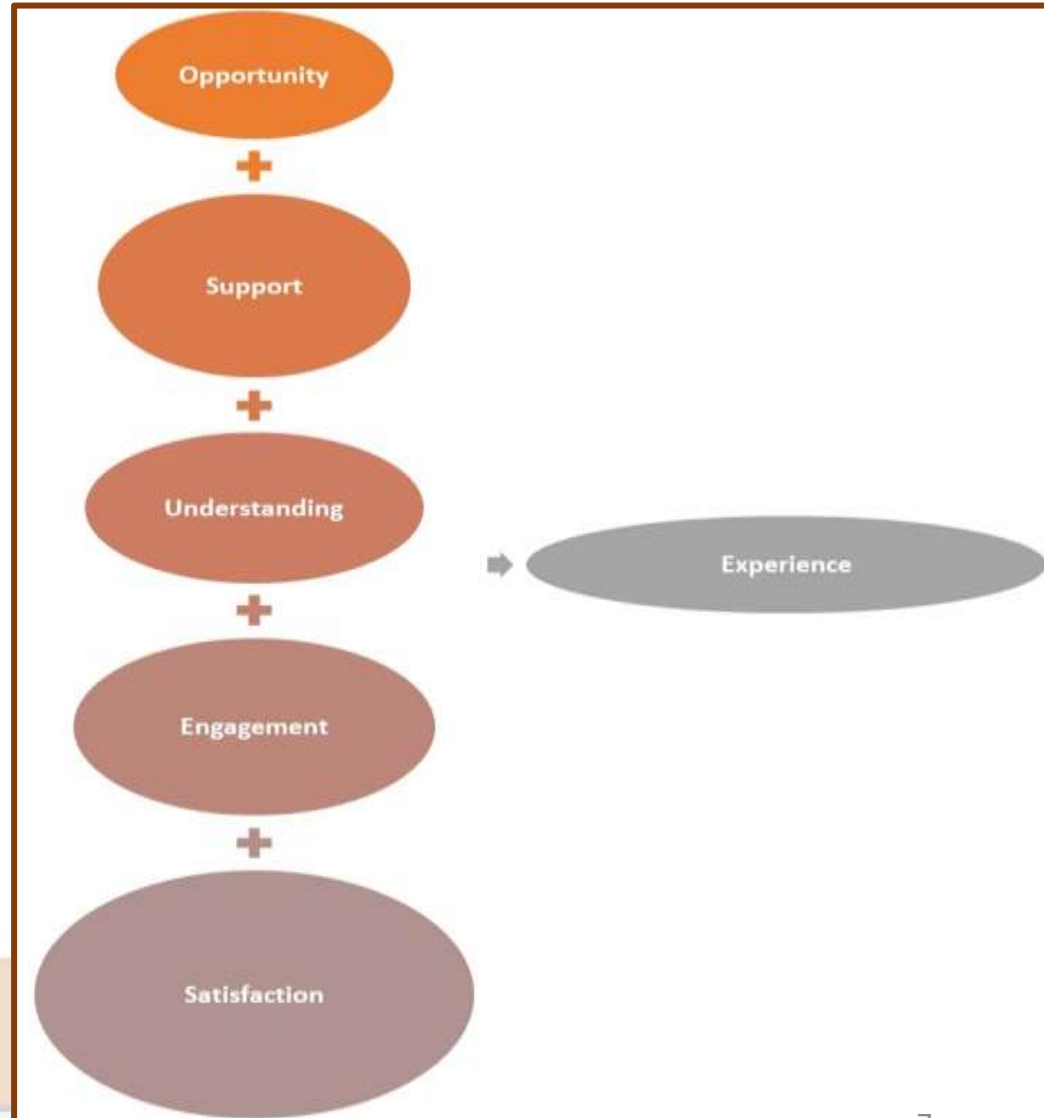
Better Communication
And Camaraderie

- What support do you provide and how do you provide it?
- How do you gauge employee experience and engagement?
- How do you analyze employees throughout their stages of employment?

How do you empower employees to make the connections they need internally?

Consider the employee experience

- **“When most people talk about having ‘meaning at work,’ they typically discuss**
 - a) enjoyment of the tasks of work
 - b) alignment of personal values with the work, and
 - c) fulfillment from the outcomes of the work.
- **When researchers try to identify what is meaningful to people, they often focus on**
 - how important you say an activity is to you,
 - how much time you spend at it,
 - how committed you are,
 - how attached to it you are, and
 - whether you would do the work despite low compensation”*



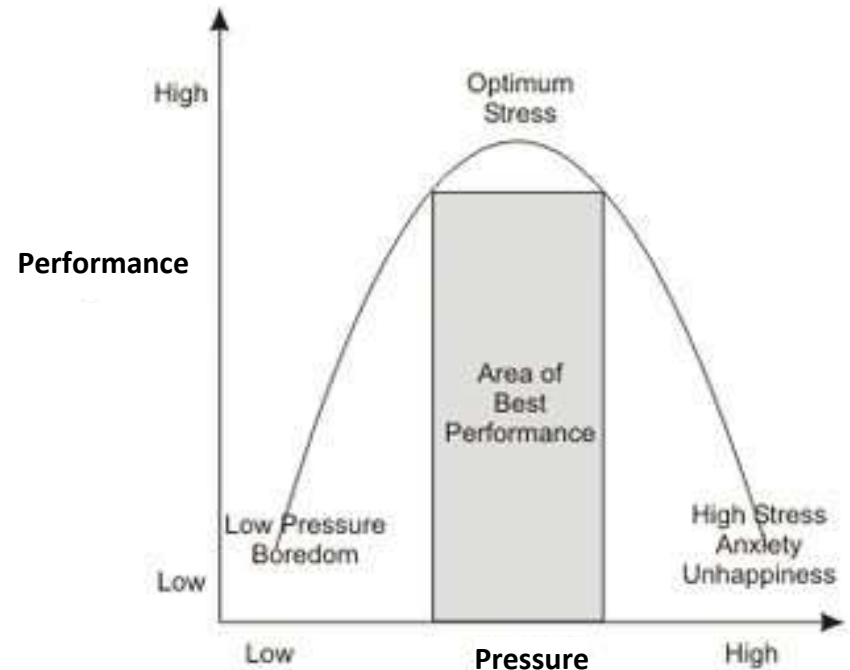
***High Performance Habits: How Extraordinary People Become That Way,**

by Brendon Burchard, 2017, Hay House, Inc.

Maximize productivity while avoiding burnout

Emotional and physiological manifestations due to uncertain or challenging circumstances

- Can have positive effects through driving momentum (*eustress*) or negative effects through excessive stress (*distress*)



† Inverted-U relationship between pressure and performance


Mechanisms to gauge productivity

- **Shift away from periodic formal assessments to more-frequent, informal ones**
- **Data-driven, just-in-time evaluation and correction**
- **Plan performance**
 - Communicate expectations clearly and show examples of what success looks like
- **Manage performance**
 - Monitor progress
 - Respond to any emerging training needs
- **Evaluate performance**
 - How closely have actions been adhering to the plans made?
 - What are the causes when deadlines are missed?
 - Are issues escalated and resolved in an effective, timely manner? If not, what is preventing resolution? What can be done to improve the situation?
 - What are some of the biggest challenges/unanticipated problems that have arisen?
 - Has management been fulfilling its obligations towards the employee's success?
- **What has been YOUR role in their performance and results?**



Assess, adjust, and reinforce expectations

- **Establish short-term expectations**
 - Batch tasks
 - Set micro-goals
 - Avoid “scope creep”
- **Remove bottlenecks**
 - Encourage transparency over silos
 - Empower employees to find and connect with one another
- **Make adjustments**
 - Ask questions of others to identify issues
 - Help the right employees help at the right time
- **Reinforce accountability and acknowledgement**
 - Evaluate both individual and team contributions
 - Satisfaction, motivation and development
- **Address all three aspects of performance:**
quality, quantity, and timeliness



**WE WILL CONTINUE
HAVING MEETINGS
UNTIL WE FIND OUT
WHY NO WORK
IS GETTING DONE**

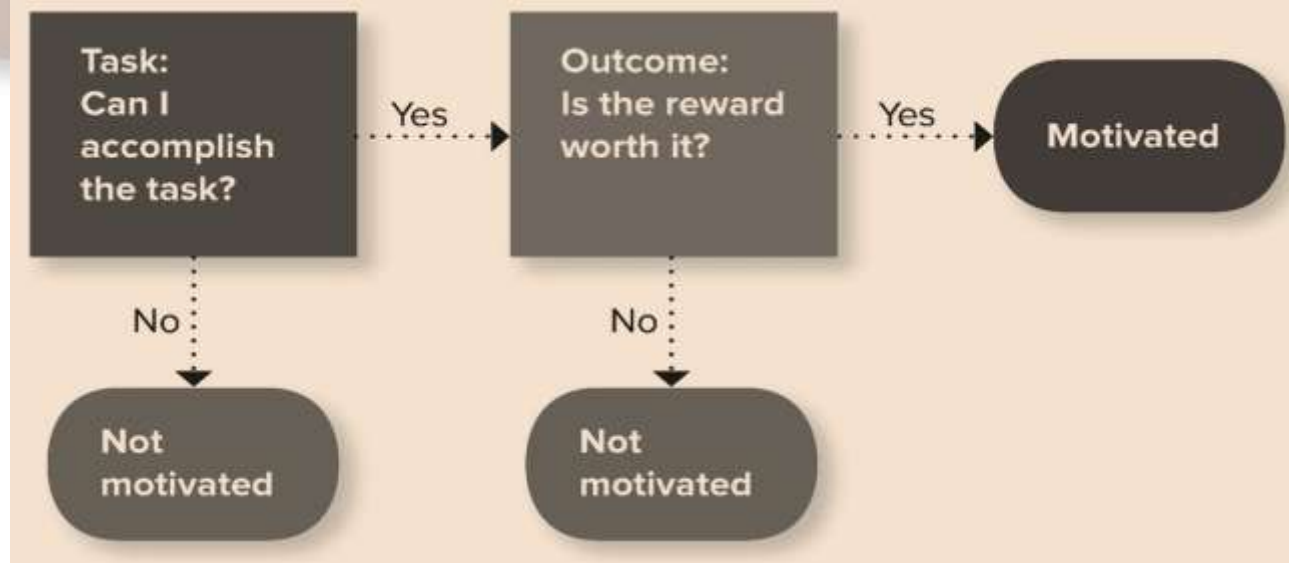
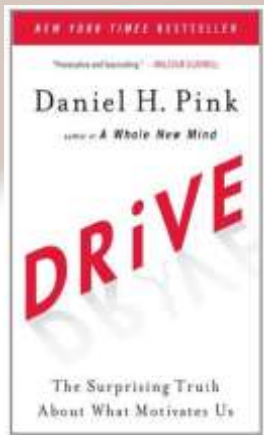
Invoke flexibility while meeting business needs

- Focus on results, rather than schedules
- Partner with individuals to customize support and expectations, with remaining fair
- Empower team members to (Not
- Enhance benefits options, such as
 - Offer paternity leave
 - Extend paid family leave

Have patience with...

- Diluted attention spans
- Technological phobias
- Logistical issues and breakdowns
- Family, pet and other distractions

“Short-term accommodations will likely be offset by savings from increased employee retention, improved employment brand, and faster, smoother recruiting” – 4 Strategies to Keep Women Working During COVID

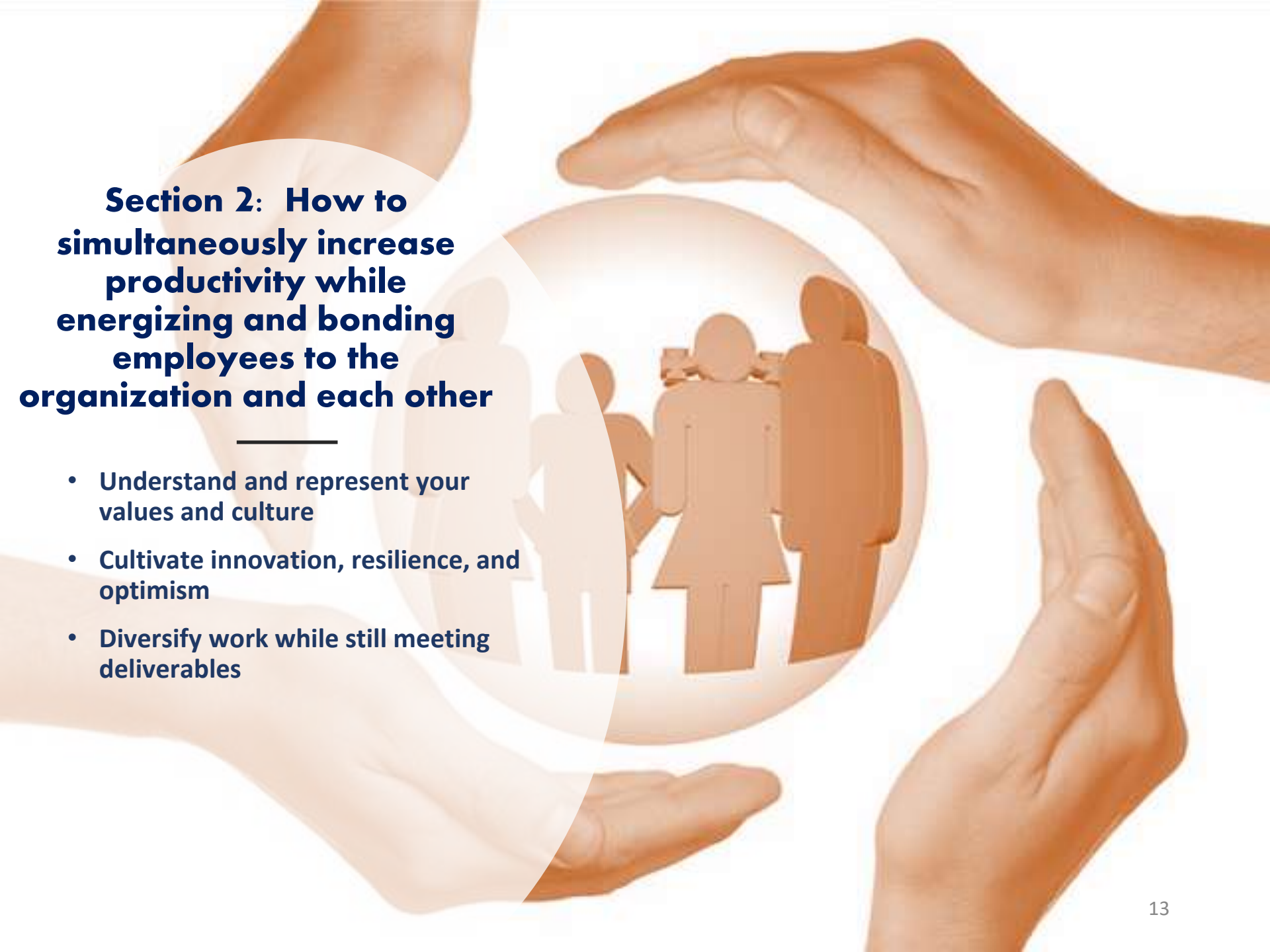


- **Dan Pink's insights**

- **Motivation 1.0**: Work to survive
 - “Have” to do
 - Stay in business
- **Motivation 2.0**: Seek reward; avoid punishment
 - “Could” do
 - Focus on profit maximization
- **Motivation 3.0**: Intrinsic motivators (values)
 - “Want” to do
 - Profit as a catalyst, not an objective

Align daily work incentives with individual workers

Diagram Source: *Understanding Business, Nickels, McHugh, and McHugh, McGraw Hill, 12th edition, 2018*

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Section 2: How to simultaneously increase productivity while energizing and bonding employees to the organization and each other

- **Understand and represent your values and culture**
- **Cultivate innovation, resilience, and optimism**
- **Diversify work while still meeting deliverables**

Understand and represent your values and culture

- **Create and maintain a conducive culture**
 - A system of shared norms, beliefs, values, and assumptions with shared meanings that connects people
 - The “personality” of the organization that sets it apart from other organizations.
 - **Provides a sense of identity to its members**
 - **Helps legitimize the management system of the organization**
 - **Clarifies and reinforces standards of behavior**
 - Culture is driven by beliefs, assumptions, values and interpersonal mores.
 - **Some values and beliefs are explicitly stated; others are embedded**
- **Do people there know, communicate, and live your organization’s mission, vision, values, and goals?**
- **Empower employees to strengthen communities of practice internally**
- **Institute and consciously accentuate artifacts**
 - Artifacts: Observable symbols and signs that maintain and transmit an organization’s culture to both insiders and outsiders

Cultivate innovation

- **Move from the status quo**
 - Shift from “that’s how we’ve always done it” to “that’s how we could do it better”
- **Curiosity→Creativity→Innovation**
 - One feeds the next
- **Idea incubators, skunk works, idea boards, etc.**
- **Idea champions**
- **Virtual brainstorming**
 - Speedstorming
- **Lateral thinking**
- **Immersion/simulations**
- **Building bench strength**
- **Tip/idea of the day**
- **Incentivize external event attendance (webinars, in person events)**
 - Share learning back with others



Diversify work while still meeting deliverables

- **Divide individual work time into four segments: due today, due this week, due this month, and future**
 - Many of us need to find better ways to decide whether to take on something new. Questions to help us decide:
 - "Is it aligned with the things that are most important to me?"
 - Will it take me closer toward or further away from what I value most in my life?"
 - Do I have the time and resources available to fulfill this commitment?"
 - What impact will this commitment have on my other commitments?"
 - What will I not be able to do because I'm doing this instead?" (p. 206).
 - ***Find Your Courage: 12 Acts for Becoming Fearless at Work and in Life*, by Margie Warrell, 2009, The McGraw-Hill Companies.**
- **"Two researchers at the University of California, Davis, Drs. Kimberly Elsbach and Andrew Hargadon, discovered that creativity and efficiency can be enhanced over the course of a workday when workers alternate between mindful and mindless activities. To relate it to physical exercise, the human mind is better suited for running sprints than marathons" (p. 102)***

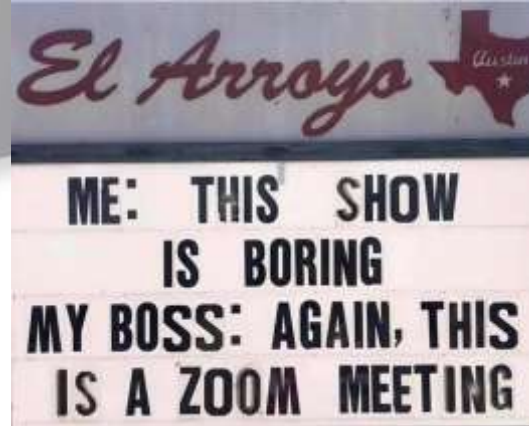
****Manage Your Day-to-Day: Build Your Routine, Find Your Focus, & Sharpen Your Creative Mind, edited by Jocelyn K. Gleib, 2013, Behance***

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Section 3: Ways to create and enhance employee connection

- **Establish (and role model) good online meeting prep and execution**
- **Create digital spaces that replace the old-fashioned watercooler and hallway conversations**
- **Incorporate digital tools and methods into organizational processes and communication**
- **Provide ways to cope**

Conducting meetings online



Meeting types:

- Standard check-ins
- Project-based
- Brainstorming
- Ad hoc, informal

- **14% of remote workers have 10+ meetings per week***
 - Keeps them connected, visible, and updated
- **Determine meeting logistics**
 - Virtual meetings can be done via audio or video.
 - **Prioritize video but offer a dial-in option.**
- **Format:** synchronous or asynchronous
- **Make it easy for people to know who they're meeting with**
- **Calendar invitations along with email overview**
 - How to access and use meeting platform and associated tools
 - Agenda & timeframe
 - Instructions on how to access the meeting/software requirements

*State of Remote Work 2019 Report

Create digital spaces that replace old fashioned watercooler and hallway conversations

- More and more work done in teams
- More virtual work, not only from home but any *time of day*
- Broken focus syndrome is prevalent.
 - Little time spent in strategic and critical thinking
- Move from a “people management” mindset to one of “people enablement”
 - Provide the tools to allow people to do more themselves
 - Move from routine task-completion to task-automation
 - “Scraping” of employees’ email, calendar, movement, interactions done without human effort

Technology can transform organizations and processes:

- Reduce cycle times, waste, and errors
- Streamline ordering, delivery, and communication
- Flatten reporting hierarchy, automate manual work, and allow for more virtual work and work site flexibility
- Heighten customer responsiveness, faster reaction to issues, and better access to data
- Facilitate access to new markets and distances
- Increase cross-departmental access and collaboration

Tools that can facilitate connection, enthusiasm, and ideas

- **Facilitate information access**
 - Digitize all company resources (processes, records, supplies)
 - Make use of cloud-based access and storage
- **Implement collaboration tools**
 - Sample types: people directory (internal LinkedIn), time-tracking, organizational, productivity-tracking, workflow systems, email/ mailing distribution lists, group calendars, video chats, mind-mapping and flow charts, project management, chat rooms, discussion boards, note-taking repositories, product design workflow and prototyping, AR and VR, and task-management tools.

Tips for virtual teams

- Develop trust and rapport first
- Clearly delineate roles and responsibilities
- Agree on rules of engagement
- Set protocol for raising issues
- Allow for (and embrace) individual eccentricities
- Consider intersecting work hours and availability



Ways to cope

Individually

- Exercise, diet, sleep, & lifestyle
- Meditation and mindfulness
- Sufficient rest periods and time off
- Invoke humor
- Take an online class (work or fun)
- Have weekly online meetups
- “Walk and work” outside
- Exercise “breaks” during the day
- Create work-life boundaries
 - **Power down devices during certain hours**
 - **Set “no work” hours**
- Structure your day, preplanning it the night before

Organizationally

- Strengthen people networks
- Open “office hour” online forums
- Facilitate access to online and on-ground learning opportunities both within and outside the organization
- Provide live feeds to general office meetings, announcements, and even webcams of common areas
- Provide EAP assistance

Section 4: Q & A

- Some questions for our sponsor
- Audience member questions



Scott Burns
Co-Founder and CEO
Structural

2 Problems with Work Today

- 1 Silos + distributed teams mean the right people don't connect at the right time

Knowledge workers waste equivalent of 1 day per week playing internal detective (McKinsey)

- 2 Opportunities for individuals to connect, contribute, learn, & grow are elusive

Employees 2X as likely to look externally for opportunities to contribute, connect, learn, & advance (Deloitte)

Real Consequences



Lost Productivity



Missed Deals & Opportunities



Slower Innovation

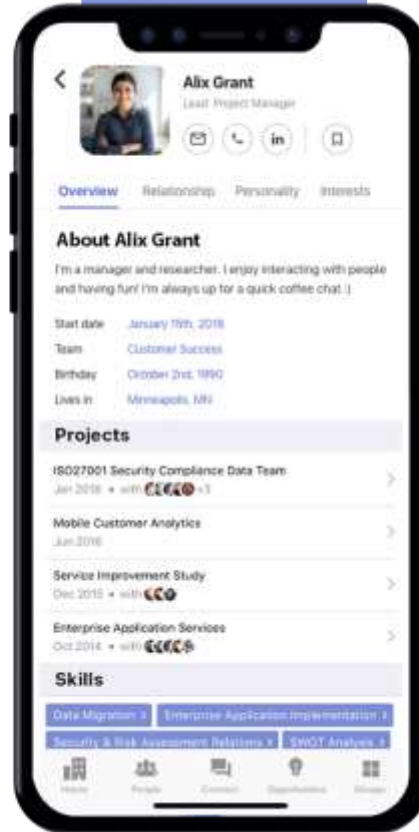


Unwanted Turnover

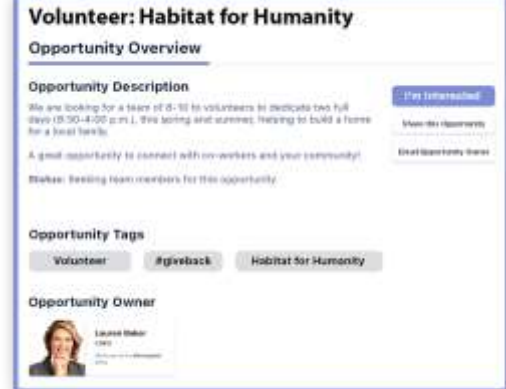
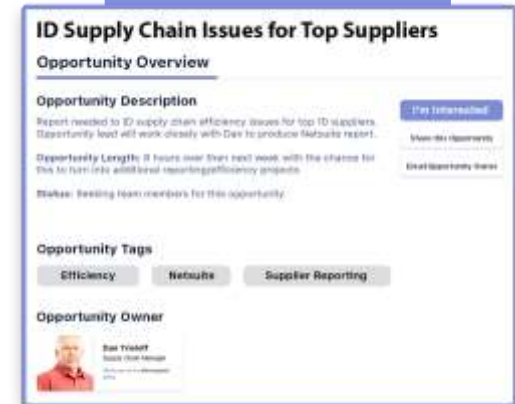


Mark Goble
COO
MERGE

“**Structural is a huge benefit to how we do our work.** It is ingrained in many parts of our business to where **we always check Structural to find the right people** and to match to opportunities in our fluid talent model.



Dynamic
People Directory



Internal Opportunity
Marketplace



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Thank You for Your Participation