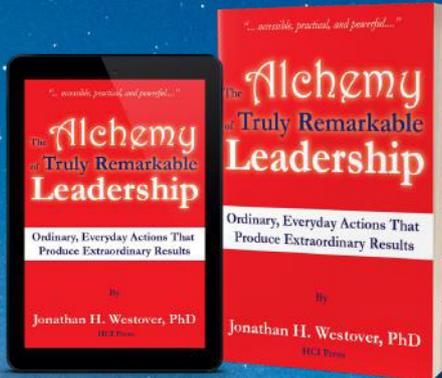


Human Capital Leadership

by Human Capital Innovations, LLC

Helping You Maximize Your Human Capital Potential



From "HR Technology" to "Work Technology", with Josh Bersin

The Alchemy of Truly Remarkable Leadership
By Jonathan H. Westover

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by Scott McCarthy



Josh Bersin

Global Tech Industry Analyst and Thought Leader

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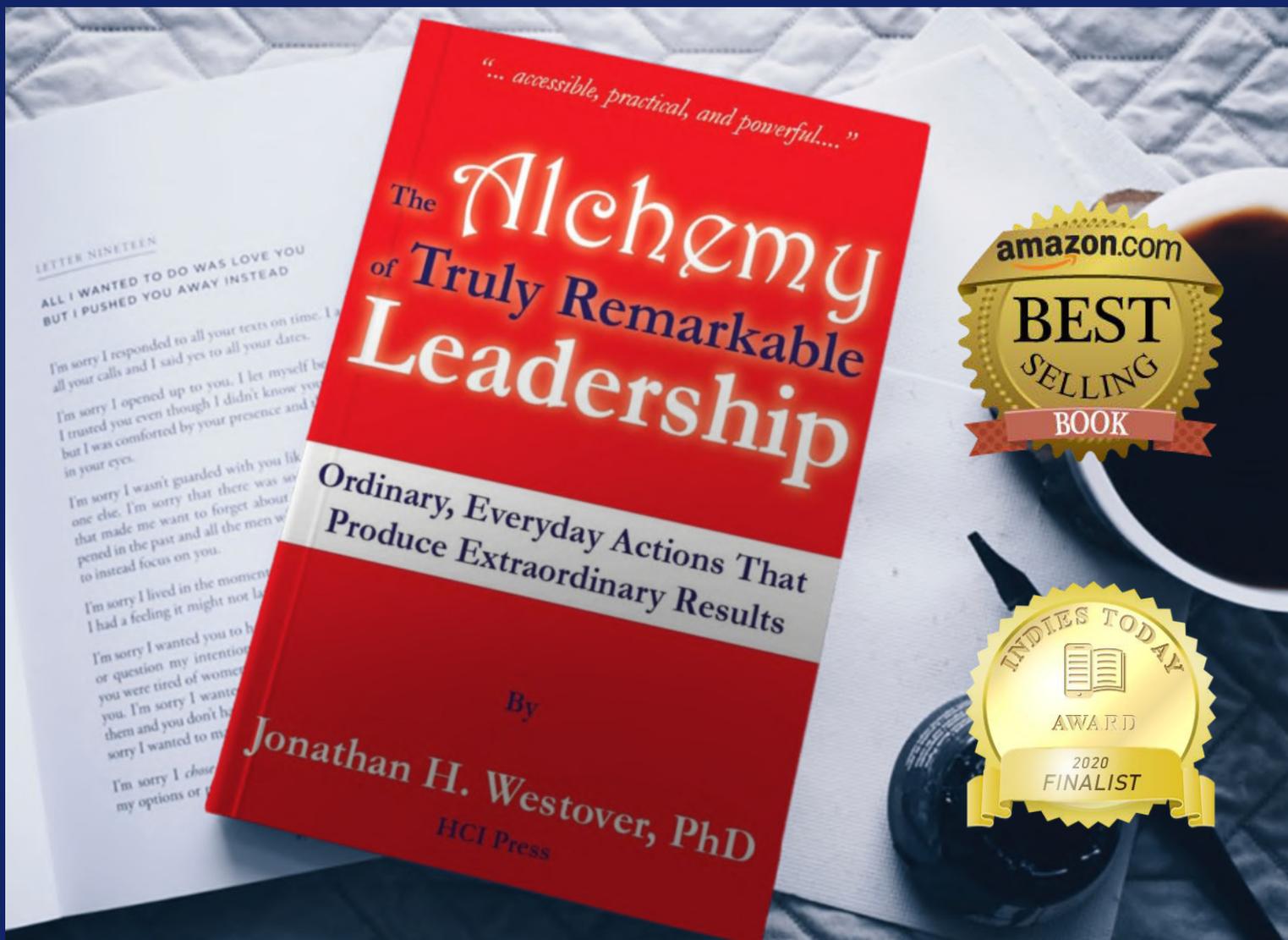
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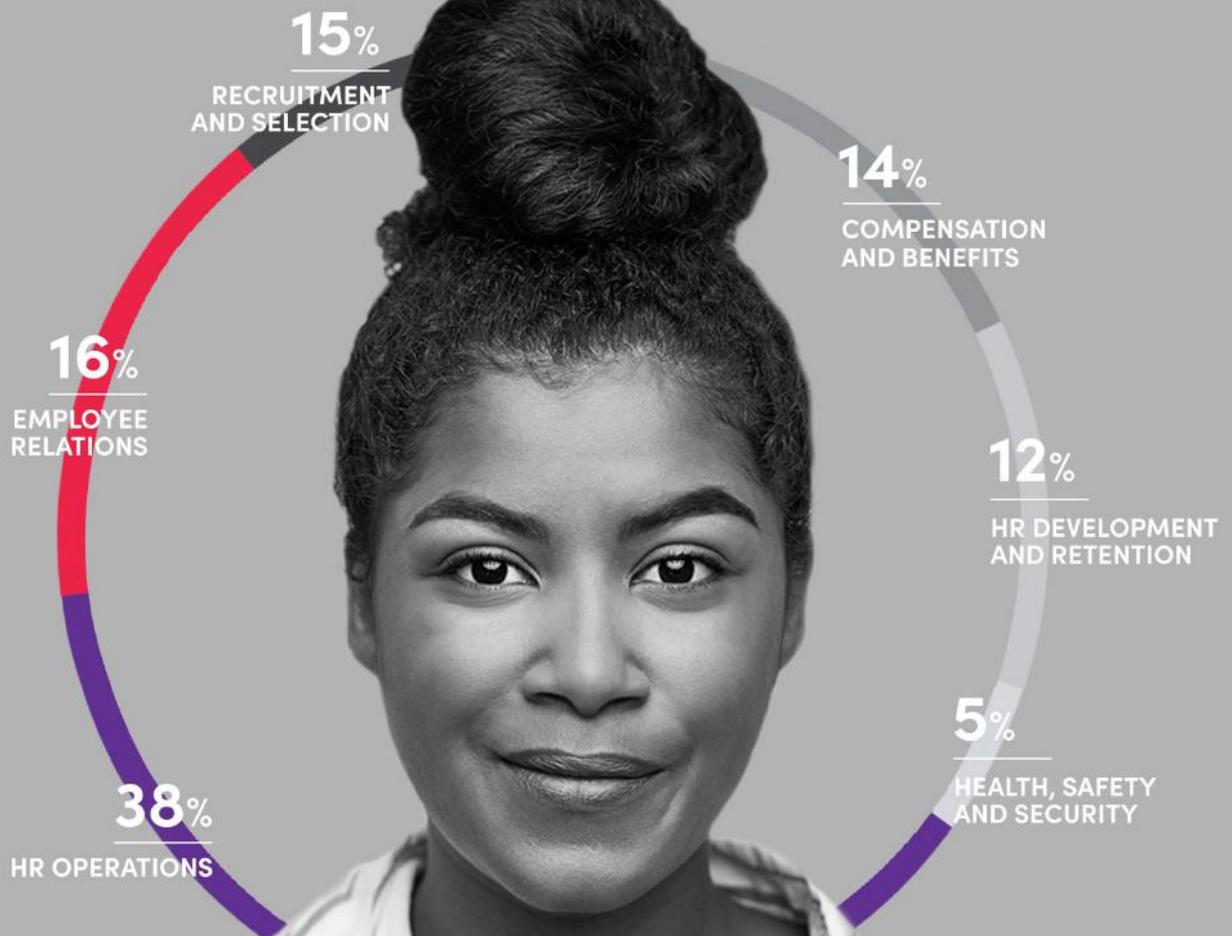


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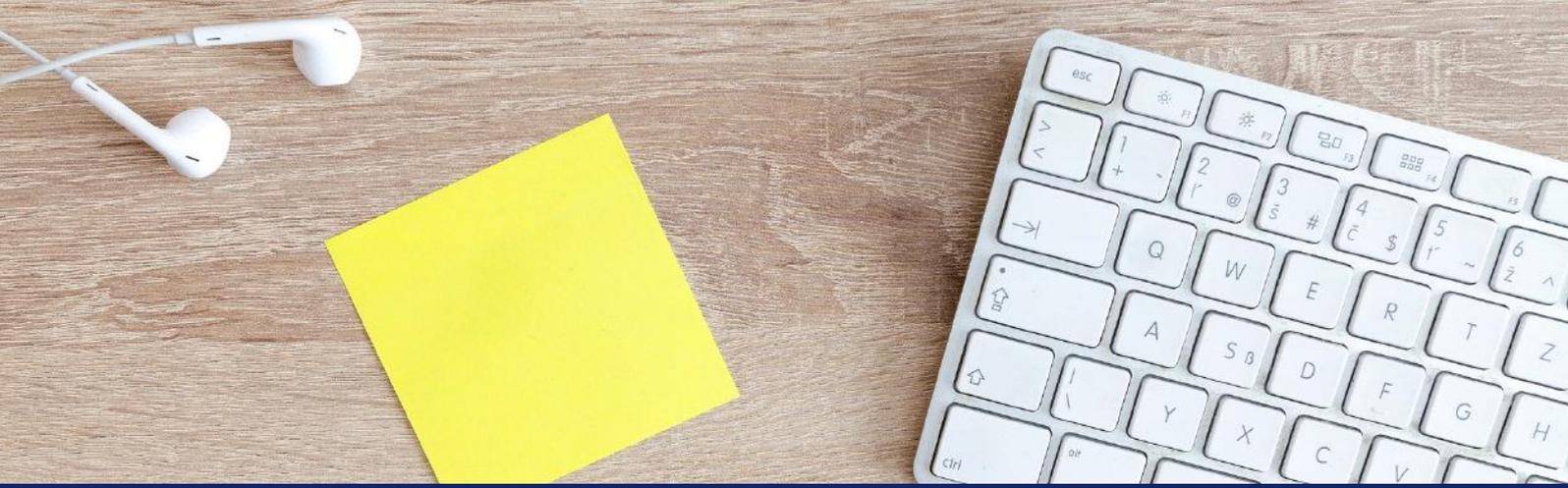
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By Jonathan H. Westover, PhD

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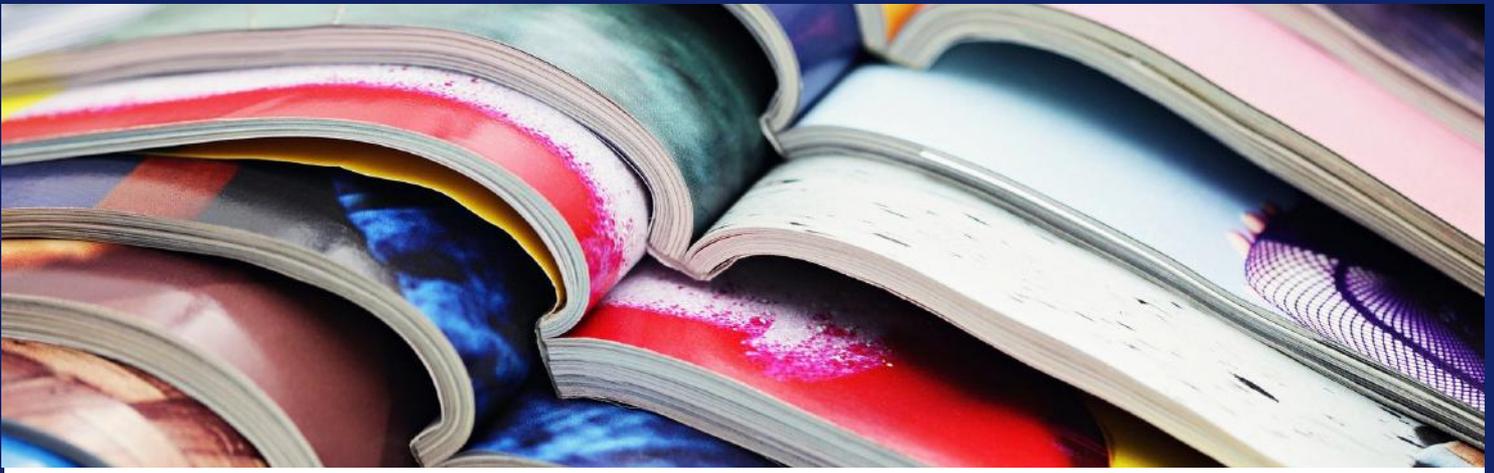
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From “HR Technology” to “Work Technology”, with Josh Bersin

Interview by Dr. Jonathan H. Westover on March 29, 2021

Jon: Josh Bersin, welcome to the Human Capital Innovations podcast.

Josh: Thank you, Jonathan, I'm happy to be here.

Jon: It is a real thrill and I'm feeling a little bit star struck as I have the opportunity to interview you today. I've done hundreds of interviews on this podcast and some with some very well-known and notable guests, but I think no one quite as notable or as just far-reaching as you. I think everyone listening knows, when they think of HR and tech and those sorts of topics, they think of Josh Bersin. So, it's a real pleasure to have the opportunity to talk with you today. We're going to be exploring your recent report that just came out a couple weeks ago on the HR technology market. The 2021 report addresses important sector trends, and you'll get us into all of that and talk about some of the key takeaways. Before we do that though, I wanted to share Josh's bio with everyone. Josh Bersin founded Bersin and Associates in 2001 to provide research and advisory services focused

on corporate learning. He expanded the company's coverage to encompass HR, talent management, talent acquisition, and leadership, and became a recognized expert in the talent market. Bersin sold the company to Deloitte in 2012 and was a partner in Bersin by Deloitte up until 2018. In 2019, Bersin founded the Josh Bersin academy, a professional development academy, which has become the home for HR. In 2020, he put together a team of analysts and advisors who are now working with him to support and guide HR organizations from around the world. Recently published research covers topics such as business resilience in the pandemic, HR technology market trends, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. He is frequently featured in publications such as Forbes Harvard Business Review, HR Executive, The Wall Street Journal, and CLO magazine. He's a popular blogger and has more than 800,000 followers on LinkedIn and I could go on and on and on with all of your accomplishments.

Josh: That's enough!

Jon: But I figure, I can see your face as I'm reading through that. I'm like hmm, I think you seem to be a very modest man and I appreciate your modesty and humility.

Josh: I'm just trying to help people. It's nice that it has been successful, but it's been mostly just the journey of trying to figure out how to make HR departments and organizations better.

Jon: Well, that's one of the things I love about you Josh, as I was saying pre-interview before we hit record. I've been following your work for a really long time and you've always just come across as incredibly down-to-earth and relatable and focused on what you just said. Focusing on helping organizations and people within those organizations be more successful and that's the same goal I have. I just really applaud all the work that you've done.

Josh: Thank you



Jon: Thank you for joining me today. So, this new report just came out on March 16th. It followed up another big report that you had earlier in the year on diversity, equity, and inclusion. We can touch on that one a little bit too if you would like. But walk us through some of the highlights of what came out of this research and what's included in this report and then we can start to dig into some specifics.



Josh: Sure. This big study of the HR tech market is a never-ending project for me. It happens to get published once a year, but it's pretty much my life or at least part of my life, day to day, week to week. So, if you take a one-year snapshot of what's going on in the technology part of HR, there are just a couple of really big things that have been happening. One is of course remote work, hybrid work, and video, online, and AI and all the technologies. But the second is we don't really use HR technology to implement processes anymore, we use it to design things. Like a lot of the other internet technologies are becoming creator tools, like Spotify is a creator tool and Tik Tok is a creator tool, the HR tech companies are starting to build creator tools too because we have to create and design employee experiences and journeys that meet the needs of today which are different than they were a year ago. So, the markets adapted a lot. Then we have some pretty big players that weren't here a year ago, like Microsoft and others. So, it's a pretty dynamic part of the world, part of the market.



Jon: Yeah, and maybe we can speak to some of those new players really briefly. Now obviously Microsoft's been around for forever and I'm sure lots of people have utilized Microsoft Teams in this past year. If you're not using Teams or Zoom or one of these platforms, you're living in a cave somewhere I think. Describe a little bit how Microsoft has burst back on the scene with regards to HR tech.



Josh: Yeah, the Microsoft story is really interesting, the historical situation. I worked with Microsoft in the 1970s and 1980s. I was actually at IBM when the PC was launched so I've been involved and I've been following Microsoft since the world of DOS which most people don't even know what that is. Anyway, it's a massive company with 70 percent of corporations using Microsoft tools for word processing, email, messaging, document management, database, applications, and so forth. When I was at Deloitte I couldn't really work with Microsoft because Deloitte was the auditor of Microsoft. Right after I left, we spent a lot of time with Microsoft and the people we worked with there were both the HR department and people who worked on various learning tools. We had a few Chief Learning Officer groups come up with us to Microsoft and when Microsoft would show off some of their tools the CLOs would be like, "whoa, I didn't know you guys did that. You do this video thing? You do that transcription thing? You, gee, do we have those tools?"

The Microsoft sales rep would go, "Yeah, your IT department has licensed all that stuff." So, there was this awakening going on that wow a lot of these things Microsoft's been building are actually pretty good initially in the learning space and of course Microsoft acquired a technology in workplace analytics which is embedded into Microsoft 365. They were building and are building all sorts of indexing technology, they have a video service called Stream, and all these things were getting sold to IT and the HR people didn't even know about them to be honest. One of the things that happened, partly from our meetings with a lot of Microsoft product managers, is the product guys started to light up and say, "ooh, there's a bunch of people out here in this HR learning part of business that could potentially be customers of ours." And, they awakened to the point, to the fact that in fact, there's another big thing going in which companies are trying to build an integrated employee experience. Because of course Teams exploded in growth, it was wildly successful as a communication platform, and so all these product managers that had these different application areas

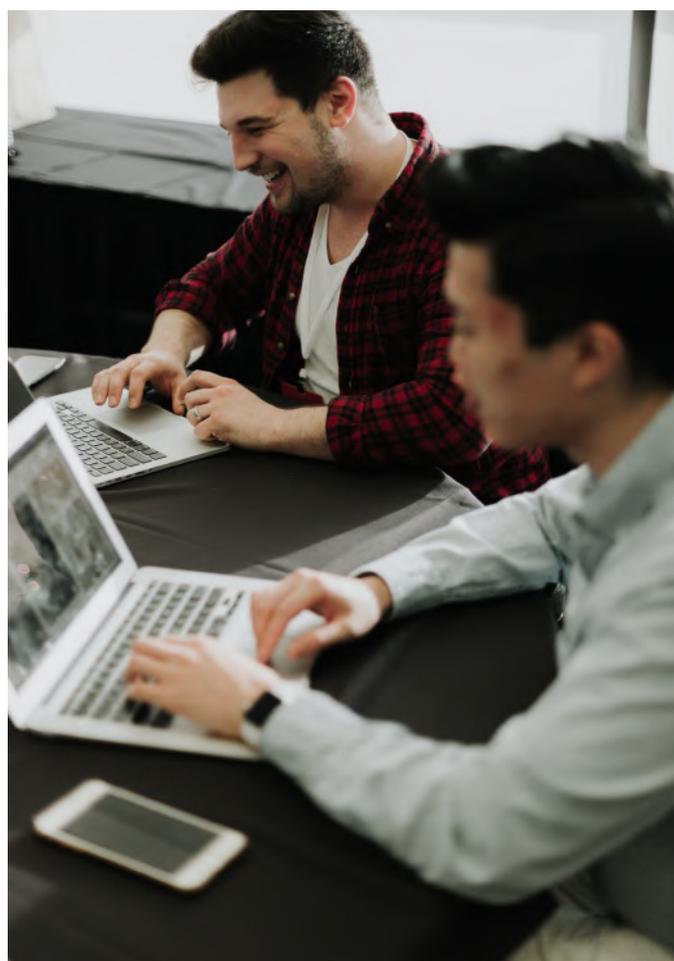


came together and created this thing called Viva. What Viva is and the way it's positioned is it is an employee experience platform. Now that is a name that I actually coined a couple years ago in a little bit of an earlier implementation and it is really a platform that is designed to integrate many, many of the employee apps that we have at work. It turns out, if you look at how many apps people have, the average large company has 120 employee applications. I'm sure a lot of them, there's more than that, but that's as many as Octa could find. So, we have a situation where we have a pandemic,



people are working at home, they're trying to be online, they're trying to be more collaborative, they're busy, they're overworked, they're getting too many interruptions. They have all these applications and, you know, why wouldn't you want something integrated all together. Along comes Microsoft and they have this suite of tools to do that. So, that's what Viva is. It's disruptive to the market for a whole bunch of reasons. There's a learning application in there that will potentially disrupt a lot of the learning vendors. There's an analytics application in there that's potentially a place to integrate a lot of well-being tools and productivity tools. They have a very advanced indexing technology that can help you find and search and locate experts using what's called the Microsoft graph which is all the content, documents, and exchange messages that you send. Then they have an app called connections, which is basically an

employee portal which is also another massive part of HR. So, they have, in one fell swoop, kind of ripped across these four big areas of HR technology and, because it's built on so much existing Microsoft technology, most big companies already have a lot of the underlying pieces they need to implement Viva. So, it's getting a huge amount of attention and it's a very very important technology for every HR department and I think Microsoft's going to be very successful with it.



Jon: Yeah, well that's super interesting. So, I'm a university professor and I do consulting on the side including things like this podcast. But at my university, as many universities, well pretty much all universities, have had to do over this past year, is we had to snap our fingers and go virtual almost overnight. To your point, we had all of these tools already existing, but nobody knew how to use them. We weren't actually utilizing them, not even remotely close to the extent that they're capable. It's taken us about a year to get

to the point where I feel like we're actually utilizing a lot of the tools that we have. Now we can even expand upon what we have with Viva and other accompanying tools that can enhance the experience that we have in the learning space for our students. The other piece that you just mentioned is really the disruptive piece. And, of course, my ears perk up when I think about HR and learning disruption as an HR professor teaching HR courses out in university because the entire academic world and higher ed is ripe for disruption. I think this is just one more piece that could really shake things up and it'll be super interesting to see how this plays out in the coming years.



Jon: That's one piece that's super interesting, I appreciate you highlighting that a little bit. So let's explore some of these other pieces from your report because they are many and varied. You mentioned briefly about the well-being component, the wellness component, that is part of what Viva can do. But, obviously Microsoft isn't the only vendor out there and there are other companies doing similar things. We also see a lot of movement in talent mobility in that space and the technologies that are coming online. I was just interviewing a gentleman from the UK that runs a talent mobility platform just last week and it was fascinating to hear about everything that that they're doing and how they're trying to streamline the process of working in a global labor market. What did your report have to say about some of those elements?



Josh: Well and universities will probably be big customers of this because these are not super expensive products. These are built on things that a lot of IT departments already have. So, unlike going out and buying Workday or something which is a big cost, a new big capital expense, I think a lot of these tools are just going to get turned on and then they'll just be new license fees to Microsoft. Yeah, I've been amazed, having known Microsoft technology for most of my career, how much of it is out there. That even IT departments don't use all of it, so this is a way to bring it all to light.

Josh: Sure, well let's talk about mobility first then well-being. Talent mobility is an interesting thing because it's been around for a long time and a lot of companies thrived on it. GE for example, or even IBM where I worked, people moved around a lot, but it was in a very deterministic way. Now, because the labor market is going to be very tight and companies are much more agile, people want to move more quickly, they want to work on projects that might be cross-functional or do part-time work in a developmental assignment. There's no



way to find all those things. And then, if you're a hiring manager, you're going to hire on the outside before you're going to hire on the inside because you don't know how to find people on the inside because there's no job market for people on the inside. So, we actually did a study and found that more than two-thirds of employees believe it's easier to find a job outside the company than it is inside the company. So, these new tools are what are called talent marketplace platforms and they open up job reqs inside and outside. They do a lot of other things. They allow you to decompose work into projects and assign/find people to work on different pieces. They have AI to recommend opportunities for you based on your experience and your interests. They allow you to find mentors in the company because they can treat a human person as a mentor just like a piece of digital learning. And then, they're also to some degree career and development platforms. So, if you want to advance your career in a particular direction, it's a place for the company to put this career path and developmental assignments in a more formal way. So,



there's really a massive market for this and I think the mobility tools are going to be the center of talent management to some degree over the next few years. Just about every company I talk to is looking at this or investing in it. The area of well-being is a totally different situation. There are thousands and thousands of companies and tools and apps and crazy ideas, blue light, red light, get more sleep, eat more this, drink more that. And then of course at work, we have the issue of stress/overwork. Perhaps you have a boss you don't get along with, a company that's pushing you too hard, maybe you feel underpaid. All of these things have totally piled up. Add the pandemic, add working at home, add your kids in the house, and worry about getting sick and



we're at sort of an all-time high level of stress. Funny thing about it is we're also at an all-time high level of employee engagement. So, what we have going on in the workplace is people are working very very hard, they like their jobs because their jobs in some ways are a refuge from the risk and uncertainty of the pandemic but they're also stressed out about it. So, companies are looking at a lot of new ideas to reduce that level of stress and make it easier on people. Now the Microsoft tool is basically a tool that allows you to find spare time and for managers to see if people are

overworked, there's AI based tools that will allow you to find a coach, it directs you towards videos or audios or podcasts to help you understand how to be healthier, there's financial fitness tools to help you learn how to balance your checkbook or take out a loan, companies are throwing in health benefits, fertility benefits, exercise, and yoga. My daughter teaches yoga online part-time for companies, lots of things like that. In fact, it's reached the point now where in the United States 32 percent of payroll is spent on these kinds of non-wage benefits to help people. I don't think that's too much, I think that's an indication that jobs are extremely important. People are doing more important things than ever. A lot of the routine work has been automated away so the jobs we're in are more complex and we need the company to support us in new and different ways. A lot of companies have Chief Health Officers, and these are people now that are taking responsibility for public health inside the company. It's really an issue inside the company, not just of health, but also of productivity. When I was at Deloitte, we had this interesting project

where the woman who was in charge of well-being was trying to figure out why the retention rate was particularly low and there were a lot of people burned out which happens in consulting firms. So, it turned out we found out there were 90 benefits in Deloitte for different people to take advantage of, many of which were available for certain particular situations that you might have. But after really studying the problem of burnout, what Deloitte discovered was it had nothing to do with any of those things. It was the fact that at that particular point in time, the way Deloitte served clients is you would get on a plane Sunday afternoon you would fly to the client Sunday night. You would be at the client Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Thursday night you'd come home, Friday to go in the office, and Saturday you'd get one day off. And people were exhausted. Actually, it wasn't that hard for Deloitte to figure out that the clients didn't really want you there for four days, you didn't really have to show up on Monday morning, you could leave on Monday. Maybe you didn't need to come at all, you could do it remotely. So, they implemented a new





flexible consulting policy, it had a cute name, I can't remember the name, and it had a huge impact on well-being. So, well-being is not just a bunch of fancy apps and benefits, it's also looking at the management team giving people time, focusing people on fewer things to do, making sure job design is clear so people aren't vague as to where they should be spending their time. And this is reaching all aspects of HR now, leadership, the benefits department, and it's a massive buying spree of people just buying stuff at this point. I think it's moving in the right direction. I mean the one thing I would say about it, just to add one more point, is my preference and my wish and I think some companies understand this is it is no longer viewed as a benefit but really viewed as like a COE, a center of excellence, where the company really studies the issues of productivity and turnover and well-being and burnout. Then makes very specific diagnostic solutions as opposed to just buying lots of benefits and piling them on and hoping that people feel better about their jobs. That's where I think this is all going.

Jon: Yeah, and that's consistent with my experience. I've seen organizations that have the buffet of benefits. They have a

zillion options and the vast majority of employees, they pick and choose a few things here or there, but largely many of those benefits don't really get fully utilized. And all of this is happening, the buffet is there all while you have some of the most basic elements like you were describing with that lead to burnout, with extensive travel, not having enough autonomy and flexibility around your schedule. Some of those basic things that go into job design and how we interact with each other that ultimately will usually have a much larger impact on the day-to-day employee experience of people on your team. So, while certainly these apps can be helpful, you know I get my weekly updates from Microsoft you know the automated email that said you know tells me how I'm spending time. You know that's interesting, it's cool, I appreciate it, I've made a few adjustments because of it and that's good. I'm not saying we shouldn't have those tools but they're a complement to the things that should be happening within your teams already. They just can't replace it or that's not going to be enough to get the most out of your people; to engage people, to attract and retain the best people if you're just throwing bells and whistles at them, right.

Josh: Well, you know, I don't know if you saw this survey that came out. I don't think it was meant to be released but a bunch of Goldman Sachs workers working 98 hours a week or something.

Jon: You know and that's honestly why I went into academia. I had planned following my master's degree, I had planned, I had worked, I had interned with some consulting firms, I had done some of that work, I was interviewing, I was planning on going that route. But after interviewing, I remember walking home one day from an interview and feeling dejected. Not because it didn't go well, but because it did go well, and they confirmed my biggest fear that I would be traveling non-stop and then I'd be working 80 plus hours a week. That just wasn't what I wanted for me and my family. I walked home, my wife and I had a conversation, we decided to go on and get a PhD and go the academic route.



Jon: Yeah absolutely. Something else, as you were talking about mobility it seems to me like there's a connection there and I suppose to wellness as well, I suppose there's a connection between all of this but the diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging space, right. We need to be thinking more creatively about how to fully create an inclusive and belonging culture within an organization and how we can leverage some of these technologies, this HR tech, to support those initiatives and those efforts. I think for example, with the mobility space, all geographic boundaries and barriers have now been removed during this year of pandemic right. Everyone's just used to doing virtual work which means I can literally hire anyone from anywhere to do what I need them to do for the company. That was the case before, but most companies they were still stuck in an old paradigm. So, the pandemic forced us to rethink and challenge our assumptions. So now there's time difference time zone difference, but as long as you can manage time zone difference you can literally work with cross-national teams remotely without constant travel and get the best people working for your organization. But it is complicated because you have employment law complexities around the world and all those types of things that organizations need to juggle and balance. But as I think about that, I think there's a tremendous opportunity for the DE&I space in our



Josh: It alters instead worrying about your PhD.

Jon: There you go, yeah, well very good.

Josh: That's the point is that the technology is not the solution, it's a piece of it, but work design and management and culture have a huge amount to do with it.

initiatives within organizations to have a more diverse teams. Not only leverage the diversity, the difference around the table, but actually fully integrate them into the organization making them feel valued and connected and that their input actually gets utilized. It seems like we are better positioned for that now than we were a year ago or maybe ever.



Josh: Yeah maybe. I would say “yes, but.” Actually, our research did not find that, our research found that this remains a very heavily unsolved problem. It is getting better, but it's not a technology problem, it's a business culture problem and a business leadership problem. There's still stories every day, there's another story of a woman who's been harassed, somebody found out they were underpaid, somebody who didn't get promoted. Every model of leadership, every data set of leadership that you ever see shows more males as you go up the pyramid, more white males usually, Asians are left out, etc. So, what we've discovered in our research, we just did a big study of this, is that the companies that are ahead of the curve in DEI look at inclusion and diversity as a business strategy, not an HR problem. The head of DEI can't change it that much, he or she can do a lot, but even if you recruit a diverse slate of candidates but the culture of the company is not diverse, they won't stay.

Jon: That's right.



Josh: If you look at Target, you look at Unilever, you look at a lot of the companies that are pioneers and really excellent at DEI, they are inclusive by design. Their businesses are inclusive, they sell in an inclusive way, they reach customers in diverse locations, communities, and markets, they build products and services that are diverse. And they hire and take care of and manage people in a diverse way as opposed to, let's take our little single-minded company and do everything we can to make it look as diverse as it can possibly be, which tends to usually not work super well.

Jon: Yeah, can I just comment on that?

Josh: Yeah.

Jon: Absolutely right. I 100 percent agree with that. That diversity in and of itself doesn't mean much of anything for an organization, you have to be able to build in, at its core, the values and the





principles that guide the organization and how it functions, the policies, practices, procedures, and the leadership approach. Everything that builds into that culture is absolutely important so that's why we're searching for inclusive cultures of belonging within organizations. Unless you get there, then having difference around the table doesn't really mean much of anything other than perhaps a nice little PR spin that you can bring to it.

Josh: Yes, absolutely. I mean we found that from all of our research. And I think the other thing that's interesting from the research is there's a lot of companies hiring heads of DEI. I think that's a very difficult job if the top business leadership does not believe in this.

Jon: Absolutely.

Josh: So, it's an interesting trend in some degrees. It's a little bit of a fad right now to focus on this topic and to publish a bunch of metrics which definitely helps, but I think it comes down to thinking about the business in a different way. At target, the head of DEI there says basically this is a

business function, diversity and inclusion, it's not an HR function, it's a business function. They look at it across the whole supply chain, every part of the company, what they sell, who they sell it to, and of course the HR things. Technology doesn't make a huge difference, I mean you have to measure and do analytics, but it isn't. You know, you can remove some bias in recruiting with technology but it's more of a culture problem or a culture strategy than anything else.

Jon: Yeah, excellent. So maybe one more point from the report and then I know you're busy and will have to get on with your day. Your report talks about how people view their role in society, that's actually something I do a lot of research in myself and I've found consistently how important that is within the workplace, how people connect with their employers and with their jobs, how they find meaning and purpose. What specifically did your report find in relation to this?

Josh: Well, I mean my position and findings and thinking about this is that in the best companies, work is a

manifestation of your purpose in life. You love your job, you love your work, you feel affiliated with the company, the mission, the purpose, you feel like the company is doing things that you want to be a part of, you enjoy the people you're working with, and it's just this wonderful part of your life. You're engaged, you're in flow, you're learning things, and that all does come down to a sense of purpose. I think human beings generally work because we want to do something for others or... honestly making money is a piece of it, but if the only reason you're going to work is to make money you're probably not going to be happy no matter what job you have. So, when you find a job that you're good at and you really can contribute in your own personal way, you're going to be actually pretty jazzed about it regardless of how much money you make. We did a study on the pandemic, the response to the pandemic, and studied a bunch of companies that did respond and didn't respond. The companies that were the most responsive, reinvigorated and re-communicated their purpose and mission as an organization. "We are here to make the world healthier," "We are here to make people's lives better," "We are here to feed the nation," etc. Those kinds of higher-

level purposes give people energy and a sense of sustainability and resilience in difficult times. It's not just an ESG program and a website and something that looks nice in a brochure, it has to be part of the real company's mission. The other thing about having a sense of purpose, having run a few companies myself, it helps you during bad times. Then, when you're under competition or price pressure or there's a business disruption, it allows you to go back to your core and remind yourself what it is we do and why we're here. So, it's good for business, it's good for people, it's good for engagement, it's good for everything.

Jon: Yeah, well said. I think that's a good place to stop for today. Josh, it has been a real pleasure talking with you. This is a tremendous report, I encourage listeners to go out and track it down. I'll put a link in the show notes and please check it out. Before we close though, I wanted to give you, Josh, a moment where you could share with listeners how they can get connected with you, find out more about the Bersin Academy, anything else that you would like to share, and then give us the final word on the topic for today.

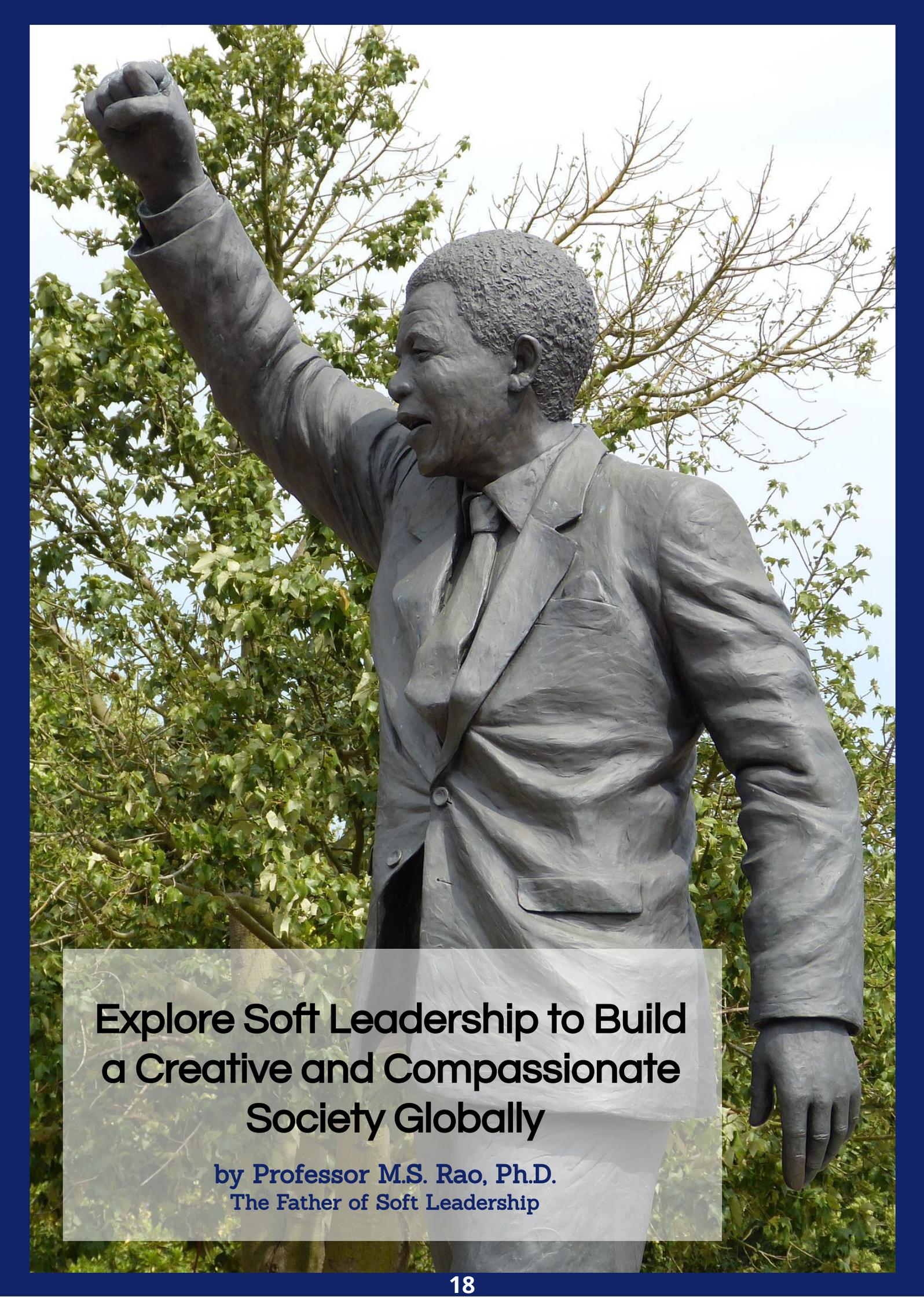


Josh: Well, I'm pretty easy to find. You can go to JoshBersin.com or you can go to bersinacademy.com. I'm also on Twitter and on LinkedIn. Final thought, I guess given where we are in almost the beginning of April, we're starting to come out of the pandemic, I think we have to sort of consider the fact that almost everybody in the world has been through a year of trauma. We're all as excited as ever about getting back to our whatever normal lives is. So, I think this is a period of time where it's okay to give people some time off, give them a sense of joy for a change. You're going to have an incredible economy ahead, there's no question in my mind the economy is going to boom for at least a year or two. Think about it as an opportunity to kind of reset your corporate culture in a really positive way. No, not everybody's out of the pandemic yet, we're not quite there, but I think we're entering the upswing now. I think in HR, we can really make that a positive experience for everyone.

Jon: Yeah, I think so and you know on a personal level. My wife and I just got vaccinated so we're super excited about that. We have a family trip, we've been just like everyone, we've been stuck. I'm in the corner of my bedroom right now, right,

and people have been working from home. We've been stuck at the house, my six children have been doing school from home, we are busy but we're getting away this weekend, we're going to a cabin by a lake and it's exciting. So, I feel like things are turning, like we're getting closer back to some semblance of normalcy and I'm excited for it. And I know employers are excited for it. It's like to your point, it's been a hard time for leaders and organizations and employees. For everybody it's been a challenging time, and I love your recommendation to just let people take the time that they need. So many people haven't been using up their paid time off because they didn't have anywhere to go. Go take a trip, take some time off, do a staycation, whatever, reset, get reinvigorated. I love all of that. It goes without saying, but every listener today should absolutely, if you're not already, go follow Josh on LinkedIn, go check out his website and Bersin Academy. So many tremendous resources there continually being put out. That's something I closely follow myself. Thank you again for joining me today, Josh. As always, I hope everyone can stay healthy and safe, that you can find meaning and purpose at work each and every day, and I hope you all have a great week.





Explore Soft Leadership to Build a Creative and Compassionate Society Globally

by Professor M.S. Rao, Ph.D.
The Father of Soft Leadership



**Let us become givers.
Let us become
responsible ancestors
and hand over a better
civilization to our next
generations.**

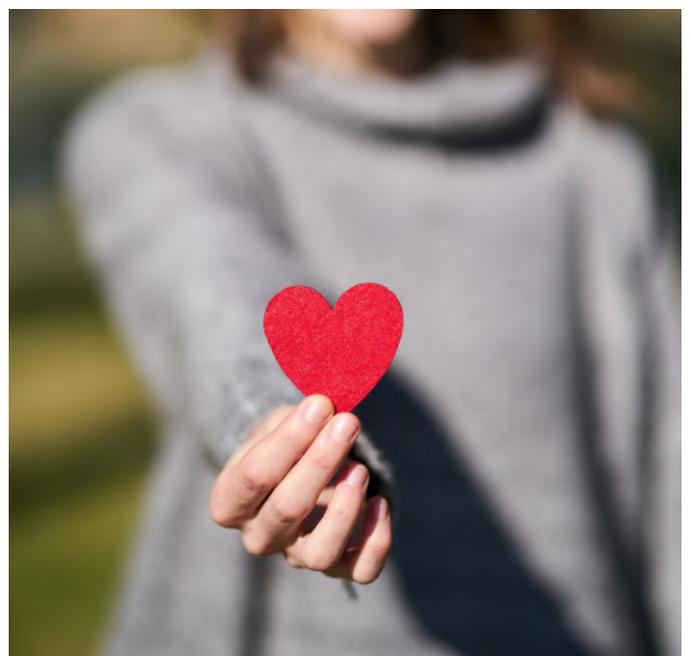
Coronavirus has opened our eyes. Climate change has opened our eyes. We must become more cautious and responsible. We must learn how to lead our lives with purpose and meaning. We must grow as global citizens. When you look at leaders such as Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela, they made an immense difference to the world.

A blueprint to build a creative and compassionate society

You must build a creative society step by step. You must create awareness through various platforms including social media. Craft a vision and execute it effectively. Work hard consistently to make a creative society a reality. Unite with others to build one global society that is creative and compassionate. A creative society leads to a better society and an ideal society. What goes around comes around.

Next to God is neighbor. Talk to your neighbors and take care of them. Care for your communities. Care for your local societies to build a global society that emphasizes ethics, etiquette, morality, spirituality, fraternity, and humanity. As charity begins at home, taking care of the global societies starts from taking care of your local communities. Emphasize need,

not greed. Avoid arguing with unworthy individuals who are part of the problem. It is pointless to argue with them. They might think that your actions are pointless and useless. When you are clear about your vision and mission, you must pursue it relentlessly to bring the desired change in the world. Here are some tips to build a better world. Make others feel important. Identify one hidden quality in a person, elevate and inspire. Become a volunteer. Participate in non-profits actively. Participate in local communities. Add value to them. Make a difference in their lives. Donate to charity. Bill Gates is actively involved in charity and is highlighting climate change. Warren Buffet is a great philanthropist. Invest your time, if you don't have money.



Unite people into one platform globally

When we think about service, we can unite globally. When we think about love we can unite globally. When we think about humanity we can unite globally. Mother Teresa is known as the mother of compassion. She united the world with her compassion and service. She served the leper in India. Dalai Lama united the world with love and humanity. Mahatma Gandhi inspired the world with his leadership emphasizing truth and non-violence. Nelson Mandela inspired the world with his leadership emphasizing justice and fairness. Martin Luther King Jr inspired the world emphasizing equality and integrity. We are looking forward to such inspiring leaders. In fact, such leaders are among us. We must identify and encourage them to build a better world.



Explore soft leadership to build an ideal world

Leadership comes with a lot of power. It starts with responsibility. Leaders must lead by example. They must take responsibility. They must think of the long-term, not the short-term. When leaders think short-term, they tend to look for survival and cut corners. So, leaders must think long-term to impact the world positively. They must explore soft leadership. When you look at leaders like Booker T. Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King,



Mother Teresa, Mikhail Gorbachev, Dalai Lama, and Aung San Sui Kyi, there is a common thread connecting all of them—soft leadership. They are all soft leaders who silently performed and led the people to accomplish their dreams.

Soft leadership is leading through soft skills and people skills. It blends soft skills, hard skills, and leadership. It emphasizes the significance of precious human resources. It helps in managing the emotions, egos, and feelings of the people successfully. It focuses on the personality, attitude, and behavior of the people, and calls for making others feel more important. It is an integrative, participative, relationship, and behavioral leadership model adopting tools such as persuasion, negotiation, recognition, appreciation, motivation, and collaboration to accomplish the tasks effectively.

Soft leadership is not a submissive leadership or a lame-duck leadership but an assertive leadership where soft leaders adopt pleasing and polite communication to execute the tasks effectively. It is a blend of courageous leadership, thought leadership, servant leadership, and inspirational leadership. Succinctly, soft leadership can be defined as the process of setting goals; influencing people through persuasion; building strong teams; negotiating them with a win-win attitude; respecting their failures; handholding them; motivating

them constantly; aligning their energies and efforts; recognizing and appreciating their contribution in accomplishing organizational goals and objectives with an emphasis on soft skills. It is based on the right mindset, skillset, and toolset.

Leadership depends on three aspects—how you communicate with others; how you make decisions; and how you take action. When you can execute these three activities effectively you become a successful leader. However, to evolve as a soft leader, you must communicate with an emphasis on soft skills; make decisions by blending your head, heart,

and gut; and take action keeping the ground realities and goals in your view without compromising task-orientation. There are 11 Cs that constitute soft leadership. They are character, charisma, conscience, conviction, courage, communication, compassion, commitment, consistency, consideration, and contribution. It is highly challenging for people to cultivate these 11 characteristics. However, if people possess more than 6 traits they get into the fold of soft leadership. Here is the diagram (Figure 1) connecting 11 C's that collectively constitute soft leadership.

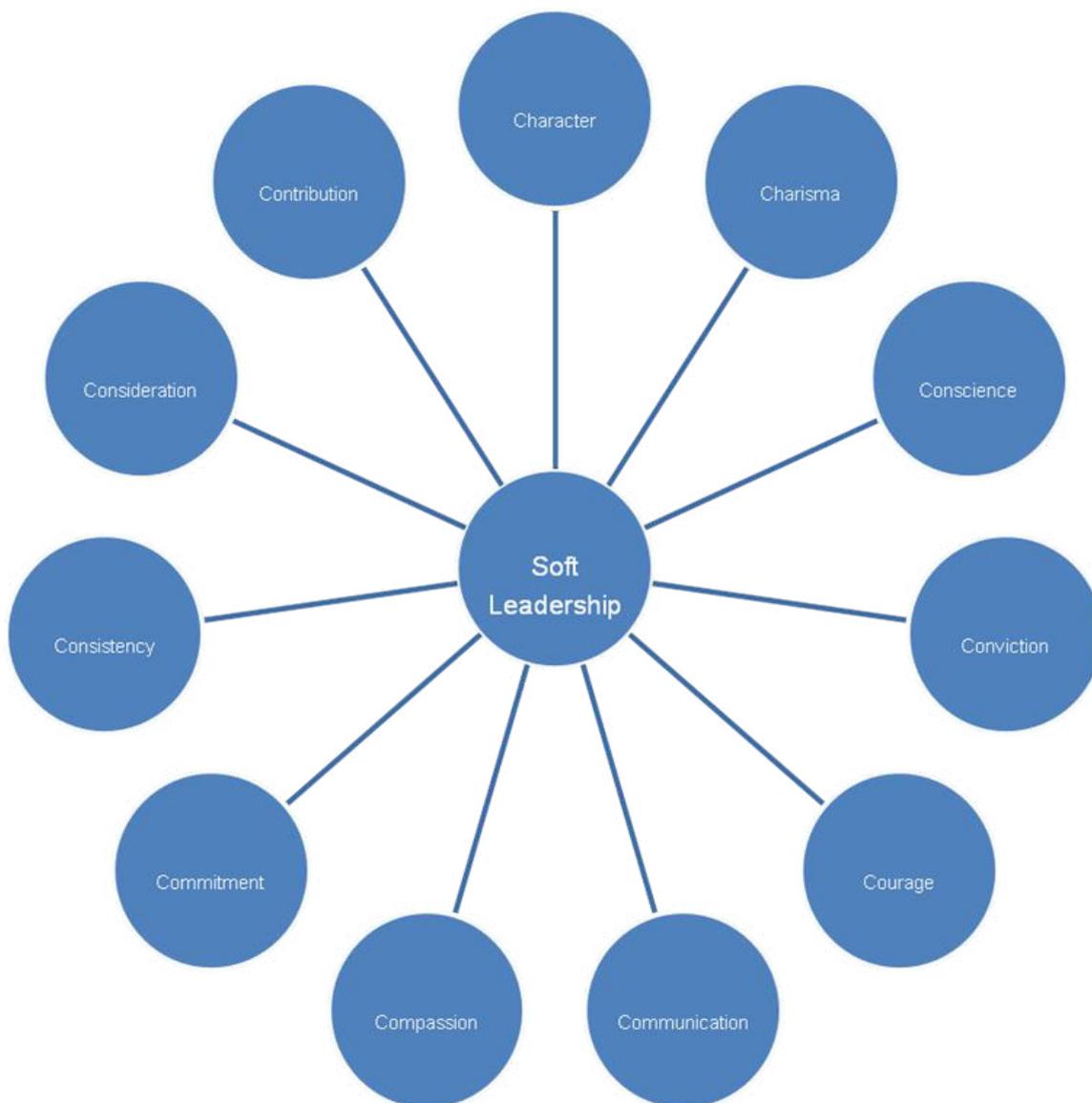


Figure 1: The 11Cs of Soft Leadership

Soft leadership helps organizations to achieve productivity and performance. It ensures organizational excellence and effectiveness. It helps nations to achieve peace and prosperity.



Together we can change the world

Currently, we are emphasizing 'profit over people.' We must shift our mindset to 'people over profit.' We must become responsible for future generations. We must live for future generations. They will appreciate our vision and contribution. We must become the foundation for future generations.

Create a better world with your actions, not opinions. The world is made better by your actions, not by your opinions. So, take action now. Be proactive. Be part of the solution, not the problem. Don't criticize. Don't complain. Don't condemn. Instead, be an individual of action and determination. Come out of your comfort zone. Overcome the victim mindset. Shift from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. Empathize with others. Be compassionate with others. Remember that too many little drops make a mighty ocean. When all people collaborate and contribute they bring change globally. Let us come together and work together to build a world as per our dreams where the future generations will be proud of us.

Let us unite to build a creative society and a compassionate world. Let us become givers. Let us become responsible ancestors and hand over a better civilization to our next generations. To conclude, act now. It is now or never. Be the change you wish to see in the world.

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Professor M.S. Rao, Ph.D. is the Father of "Soft Leadership" and the Founder of MSR Leadership Consultants, India. He is an International Leadership Guru with forty years of experience and the author of fifty books including the award-winning 'See the Light in You' URL: <https://www.amazon.com/See-Light-You-Spiritual-Mindfulness/dp/1949003132>. He is a C-Suite advisor and global keynote speaker. He brings a strategic eye and long-range vision given his multifaceted professional experience including military, teaching, training, research, consultancy, and philosophy. He is passionate about serving and making a difference in the lives of others. He is a regular contributor to Entrepreneur Magazine. He trains a new generation of leaders through leadership education and publications. His vision is to build one million students as global leaders by 2030 URL: http://professormsraovision2030.blogspot.com/2014/12/professor-m-s-raos-vision-2030-one_31.html. He has the vision to share his knowledge freely with one billion people globally. He advocates gender equality globally (#HeForShe). He was **ranked #1 Thought Leader and Influencer in Business Strategy globally by Thinkers360**. <https://www.thinkers360.com/top-50-global-thought-leaders-and-influencers-on-business-strategy-december-2020/>. He invests his time in authoring books and blogging on executive education, learning, and leadership. Most of his work is available free of charge on his four blogs including <http://professormsraovision2030.blogspot.com>. He is a prolific author and a dynamic, energetic, and inspirational leadership speaker. He can be reached at msrlctr@gmail.com.



LEADING IN A NEW ROLE

by Scott McCarthy

Many of us feel anxious and overwhelmed when we take over a new role. As a leader it can be intimidating becoming the head of a team when you are effectively the new person within the team. As a military officer, I change roles, therefore teams, every few years. Further to that, some of my team members change every year. To combat the anxiety and stress of establishing a new team, here are a couple of ideologies I have picked up over the years.

YOU DON'T KNOW SQUAT

So many leaders out there think that they have to have all the answers when they show up to their role. The reality is you don't know squat. Regardless, if you are new to your organization or not, this is a new role. Therefore, you need to take your time in adjusting to your new responsibilities, team dynamics, and routine. I normally take three months to fully sink into a new role until I even think about making changes. Why? Because I do not know why things are the way that they are, for the reasons behind it. It's imperative to have a full understanding of the history behind your organization, team, and culture before you start making changes. Therefore, this buffer period allows you to simply sit back and observe how your organization operates and ask the questions to better understand the history behind those "problem areas" which spark your interest.



Additionally, I always empower a veto holder. This person is someone who works very closely with me and is not shy to enter my office, close the door, and tell me to stop. The veto holder is empowered to stop me from making any changes during this “sinking in” period. This keys me out of the problem solving space and in the learning and analyzing space.



Servant leaders understand this point quite well. Coming from a place of serving your team members vice forcing them to serve you will enable you to incorporate yourself within the team.

New roles are always challenging yet exciting. Understanding how to properly navigate our first few months as leaders will enable us to ensure that we lead with confidence and conviction moving forward. Sometimes that means simply taking a moment or two and simply watching.

THE TEAM IS ALREADY ESTABLISHED

Often as leaders we get a little self-centered around ourselves and the way that we operate. However, when we enter a new team we need to know that the team is already established and that in fact we are the new comer to the team. The team already has its culture, dynamics, and even little traditions well ingrained into it. Therefore, as leaders it is imperative that we understand that if we show up and suddenly expect the team to change everything for us, then we are effectively destroying everything which that team has established before us. This places the team’s performance at risk and should be avoided at all costs.



Step BACK
so you can
step UP



The Harsh Truth About Micromanagers... and What to Do Instead

by Terry McDougall, MBA, PCC

Have you ever worked for a boss who checked up on your work progress, seemingly worried that that it wouldn't be good enough and will reflect badly on them? Your boss might have had the underlying belief that if they didn't watch their employees like a hawk, things wouldn't get done correctly.

If you've worked for a boss like that you know how demotivating it can be. Yet, many of us have a little bit of a "micromanager" tendency within us as well and it can be a hard habit to break. In reality, if you are micromanaging (even a little) it says much more about you than it does about your staff. There are several (not so flattering) facts that might be at play -- but don't despair. With understanding and a few changes, **you can overcome these 5 common obstacles:**

1. You have not promoted yourself. If you are caught up in the minutiae of what your staff is doing and how they are doing it rather than the impact your team is having, you are too caught up in their work and not doing your job as a leader. If this sounds like you, don't worry -- it can be fixed.

Give yourself a promotion to leader rather than hovering around as a worker bee.



Give yourself a promotion to leader rather than hovering around as a worker bee. Get clear on your own objectives and then be clear with your staff about how their work needs to support it. Paint them the big picture of what the team is working towards and how they fit into it, then step back and give them space to do their jobs.

Everyone likes to be part of something bigger and it's your job as a leader to provide that vision. When your team understands what's expected of them and they are given the freedom to deliver, you may be surprised at how fast they respond.



2. You have not trained your staff well enough. If your staff isn't performing, it may be because you haven't spent the time to train them. It's so common in today's workplace for workers to be thrown into their roles and expected to wing it. Even if that's the environment you experienced coming up the ranks, as a leader making a commitment to training can be the difference between a slowly failing team or a happy and high-performing team.

It's important to provide your employees with a chance to learn their roles and to become comfortable with what's expected in a safe environment where it's okay to make a mistake. Too often there's either no training at all or ineffective training. Make sure the proper way to perform tasks is documented and everyone is trained on the same procedures. But once that's done, let people do their jobs without looking over their shoulders constantly.



It's so common in today's workplace for workers to be thrown into their roles and expected to wing it.

To monitor the workflow and quality, schedule periodic check-ins and let your employees tell you how they're doing rather than the other way around. That promotes ownership and excellence.

3. You have not hired the right people. If you've trained your team and you find that you still have a hard time fully delegating then maybe it's because you know that they aren't up to the job. If that's what's really behind your failure to step back, then you need to decide if they need more training or if there's a poor fit between their skills/experience and the requirements for the role. If the fit is poor, do yourself and the employee(s) a big favor and move them into roles that are a better fit or, if needed, sever the relationship. Putting off decisive action only perpetuates the problem.



4. You don't trust your employees. If this is the case, ask yourself why? Has your staff shown any evidence of not being trustworthy? If so, why do you continue to employ them? If not, what is behind this lack of trust? Could it be fear on your part? People can usually sense when someone doesn't trust them and that can often be a self-fulfilling prophecy resulting in lower employer morale and motivation. You may be unconsciously causing a negative situation by bringing doubt into the relationship with your team.

People can usually sense when someone doesn't trust them and that can often be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

5. You're not very confident in yourself. Sometimes it's hard to deal with the pressure of a leadership role and rather than taking responsibility for the big picture and results, you can get caught up in the little stuff because those activities are more comfortable. The problem here is that those tasks are no longer your direct responsibility — those responsibilities rightfully belong to the people who report to you. Being a leader can be scary because very often you're facing new challenges. There can be feelings of discomfort and even insecurity.

However, that's no reason to regress and micromanage your employees. Take a deep breath and two giant steps back so you can get a clear view of what's really going on. If you need a confidence boost, go to your boss, mentor or coach for help instead of driving your staff crazy by stepping on their toes and hampering their productivity.

Take a deep breath and two giant steps backward so you can get a clear view of what's really going on.

Be brave and lead -- you'll feel better and your staff will be more productive!

Micromanaging is a sure way to drive good people out the door because you are, in effect, telling them that you don't believe in their capability to do a good job. At the same time, you are wasting your time on work that is below your pay grade and ignoring your true calling as a strategic leader. Step back so you can step up. Your staff will be happier and more productive and you will enjoy more confidence and success once you figure this out.



Terry McDougall,
MBA, PCC

Executive & Career
Coach | Author |
Speaker | Leadership
Consultant | Podcast
Host at Marketing
Mambo





HOW TO MAKE NEARLY EVERY CHANGE INITIATIVE LAST

by Bill Flynn

70% of all change initiatives fail. According to HBR article – [Cracking the Code of Change](#)

People do not hate change, they hate change foisted upon them.

The brutal fact is that if you want your company to grow, it is constantly changing. You, as a leader, are a key agent of change. Without a proven change process, you are rolling the dice.

Ari Weinzweig and his team at Zingerman's have crafted a proven process that has been instrumental in growing the company, from a tiny bakery in Ann Arbor, MI in the early 80s to a ~\$60M Community of Businesses. The process they developed, Bottom Line Change (BLC), accelerates growth, generates ideas and grows leaders. There are webinars to attend, classes to take and books you can read to get the full picture (link to the site at the end of article), but here are the highlights of the process:

BOTTOM LINE CHANGE (BLC) -> 5 STEPS

Premise: Any change relates to fixing a problem or creating an opportunity. Any and all team members are invited to initiate and participate in the change process. All change creates resistance. The way to affect change is to overcome resistance.



Their formula for change is:

Dissatisfaction x Vision x First Steps > Resistance

If any of the factors on the left of the equation are zero, you will not overcome the resistance and change will either not happen or will wither and die soon after implementation.



A way to overcome resistance is the following proven, 5-step process:

1. Write up a clear and compelling purpose for the change. Share this proposed change DRAFT with a few people (don't ask the senior team) who will be impacted to ask for feedback. This is a crisp, and persuasive pitch as to why the change is necessary and beneficial.

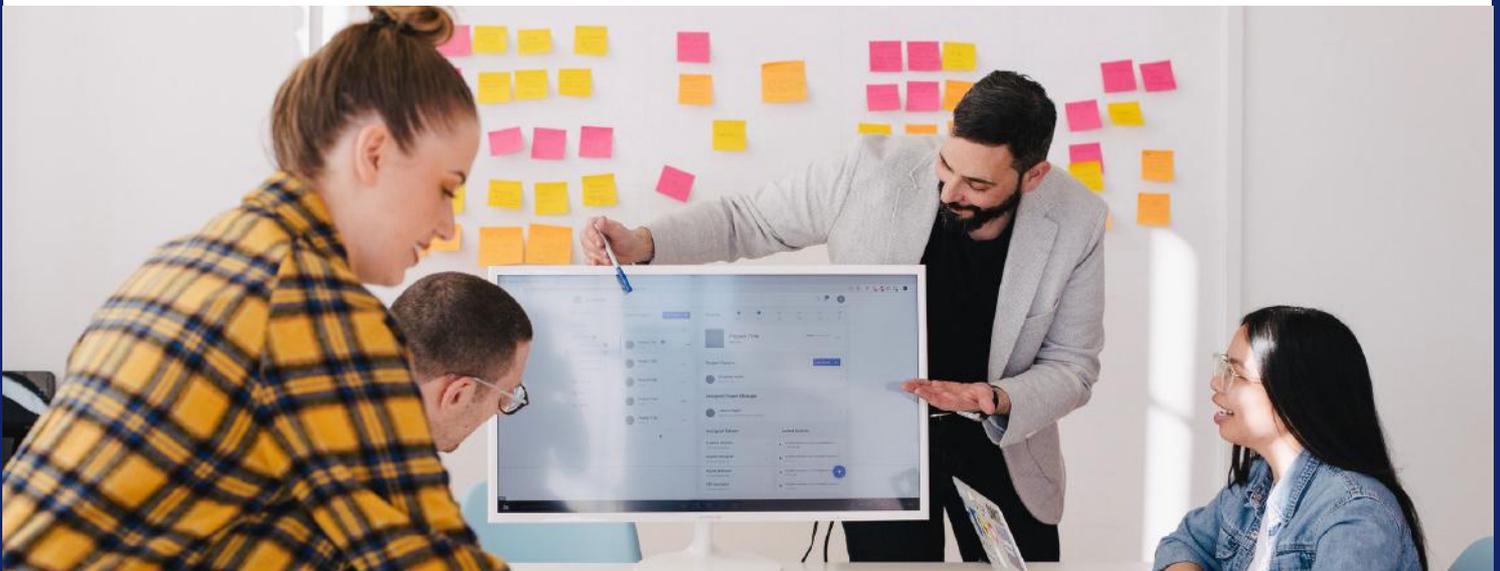


2. Write up a positive vision for the change and get leadership buy-in. To be effective, regardless of content, the vision must be:

1. Inspiring
2. Strategically sound
3. Documented
4. Well communicated

Share this positive vision DRAFT with a few people who will be impacted to ask for feedback. The Senior Leadership team must agree that the change aligns with the company strategy.

TIP: Line up your ACEs: ACE stands for Advisory Content Experts. These are people who might have valuable insights and contributions and who can help craft the vision early on in the change process. They are people who have some content expertise to contribute.



3. Engage a microcosm of people to manage the way you share the change. This microcosm will determine who needs to know of and be informed of the change as well as the best way to communicate the change.

Over the course of a couple of minutes or a couple of days, the champion will ask the same two questions of the microcosm:

1. Who needs to know about the impending change?
2. What's the best way to get them on board?

IMPORTANT: This group need not have expertise on the topic. You are looking for key individuals to build positive energy and inform all who will be affected by the change.

4. Ask those impacted (or a subset) to draw up an implementation plan. I think this is the most powerful step in the process as it has the greatest influence

on lasting change . Once this plan is written and approved, move to step 5 below.

5. Implement the change. The shorthand for this step is as follows:

- Plan
- Do
- Check
- Adjust
- Celebrate success - VERY IMPORTANT

About the Author



Bill Flynn

Bill has studied the science of success for thirty years. Bill embodies his core purpose - simplified servanthood - by spending each working moment to help create a compassionately productive society by enabling enlightened leaders to focus on the few things that truly matter to their teams and key stakeholders. Bill has worked for and advised hundreds of companies, including startups, where he has a long track record of success spanning multiple industries.



A man in a white long-sleeved shirt and glasses is sitting at a desk, celebrating success with his right fist raised. The desk has a laptop displaying a stock market chart, a smartphone, a magnifying glass, and some papers. A white desk lamp is also visible. The background shows a window with white curtains.

CELEBRATE SUCCESS



The Rise of Innovation in Food Services and Restaurant Industries

This interview was conducted by Sasha Laghonh with Keith Hoffert

Our guest being interviewed today is Keith Hoffert, Executive Chef & Entrepreneur.

For over 26 years Chef Hoffert has been dedicated to the arena of culinary arts through his trend setting applications and creativity. Chef Hoffert's recognized talents acquired through his degrees in culinary arts and social science puts him on an incredible platform as one of Tallahassee's young executive chefs. At the young age of 19 years old Chef Hoffert was a sought after chef, serving celebrities, athletes, governors and international dignitaries. Chef Hoffert then relocated to the panhandle to revitalize the culinary flame by becoming a renowned chef/owner of "Vintage Gourmet", His establishment, through wine, food & gourmet market set the par of 5 star cuisines in the panhandle. Today restaurateurs, foods to go market, specialty wine shops & catering facilities are succeeding on the plateau that Chef Hoffert created. Chef Hoffert's unique dining establishment landed him the opportunity to become a recognized

media chef throughout this northwest Florida coastline. Destination icons such as LuLu's owned by Lucy Buffet and Pat O' Brien's, one of New Orleans oldest dining & entertainment complex and many more consulted with Chef Hoffert to develop inspiring cuisine. Currently Chef Hoffert is climbing the media ladder through his public culinary education entertainment, television and radio appearances. All the while furthermore embedding him in his local community through fundraisers & community support services. Chef Hoffert continues to support and lead the culinary arena in northwest Florida. In 2015 Chef Hoffert entered into the world of entrepreneurship. Hoffert along with his partners launched 4 new businesses, EightFifty:Media Digital Marketing and Production Company, Pensacola Business Radio a online streaming radio station, Grubon TV network and his own brand FoodieLife. Finding a need to address the issues of Filming, Marketing and creating brand awareness has allowed Hoffert and crew some very successful endeavors. (Credit: Keith Hoffert)

Official Interview Below

According to one report The Food Service View, presented by Technomic, explores how the Covid-19 virus has challenged food vendors and restaurant owners since the global lock downs initiated in March 2020. The lock down restrictions for operating such service-oriented businesses have imposed constraints triggering business owners to explore creative avenues of driving sales. Countries like the Philippines, Spain and China have administered creative means of connecting with food patrons through implementing takeout options, delivery options and drive-in dining where meals can be enjoyed in dedicated parking spaces similar to a drive-in movie experience. New and improved formats of dispensing food services were born from a place of need and necessity all while practicing social distancing guidelines.



What new or refined formats of conducting business do you foresee unfolding in the United States food services and restaurant industry moving forward?

Keith: Well, I think the biggest trend we are seeing and the most obvious is the decrease of dining out and the increased need for solutions to still capture those sales. This brings in the need for new ways to get your product to a customer or



client that may not be able to visit your store. The Goodway group reports that 2/3 of U.S Adults have decreased how often they eat out due to Covid 19. So, when the pendulum swings so strongly in one direction it creates demand for innovation and design to capture the market on the side that has the increase in business i.e., delivery services, contact free and grab & go, marketing services & technology. However, it also creates an opportunity in the space where the pendulum has swung away from, meaning dine in style establishments have an opportunity to be innovative and try to capture sales now and when people start returning to dining in. Fast, Casual and Fine Dining restaurants have been shifting their business models to accommodate takeout and delivery. This creates a need for innovative ways to



create an experience with your business like never. For instance, how do you create the experience with your food in an environment you don't get to control. i.e., someone's own dining room? Now your name and the experience you deliver is more based on things like Food Safety, Customer Safety, Seamless ordering Processes and Accurate Delivery. That is how people will be deciding their next meals.



Are there any old formats of dispensing food services that will grow extinct due to the pandemic or natural evolution over the course of the next 5 years or 10?

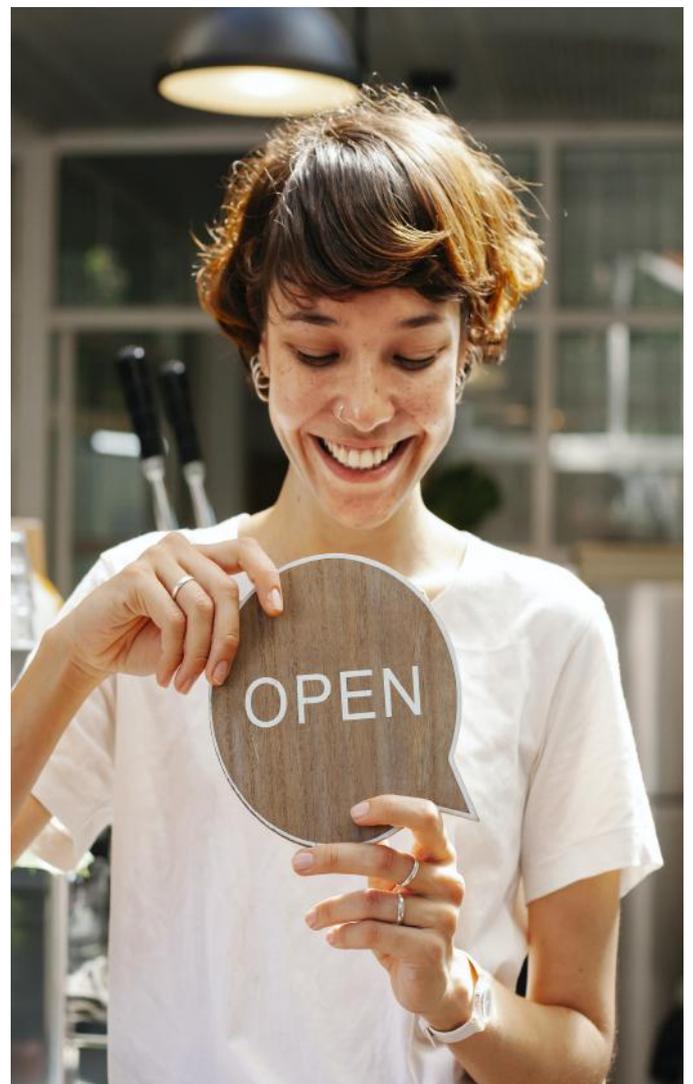
Keith: It seems to me that the most logical format to go would be Buffets! But we shall see I suppose.

The U.S. Labor of Statistics reported in August 2020 that the global pandemic has impacted the import and export price index of goods purchased by the food services and restaurant industry. This had a direct effect on basic food items such as meat, fish, dairy and eggs proving while the demand for certain items went up, the demand for secondary food ingredients dropped. Due to the demand shocks and stress projected upon global supply chains, price volatility increased which not only burdened end consumers but also store and restaurant owners.

This global reality presented changes in consumption patterns among various industries, businesses and households.

As a professional Chef and Entrepreneur, what observations have you noticed when it comes to restaurant owners budgeting for food items pre-pandemic?

Keith: Pre-pandemic I can tell you my paper and disposables budget was not as robust as it is now. We shifted our menu to be more carry out and to go friendly. This allowed us to shift purchasing dollars from food items to storage and delivery items. Things like no contact and customer safety became the priority just as much as great flavor and really good tasting food. Except now that food has to taste just as good 20 min from now when it arrives to the customer as it would have just arrived at the table.



How has the pandemic burdened food service professionals when planning their day-to-day business operations due to the supply chains not operating at optimal capacity in a timely fashion?

Keith: You must be flexible. I mean in this industry you already must be flexible and adaptable to change, or you just will not make it, but now, now you have to be like "bamboo in the wind" as Sun Zu would say. Those that can bend with the change do not break. Chefs and Operators have to be ready for that product or employee that can't or didn't show up today. You must start answering the "what if's" and be as best prepared as you can for everything to go "not as planned."

Due to situational demand and supply fluctuations of food worldwide, what advice do you have for small business owners in the United States trying to keep their food business afloat during moments of economic uncertainty?

Keith: The market wins - ALWAYS! What I mean by that is the market or the consumer demand is where your dollars are. If the market says we need safety, we need carry out or an easier way to order your food, then I suggest you tend to those demands. If your supplier says there is no bacon this week, then you have to find a way to change that breakfast croissant to taste just as good if not better without the bacon.

Where should these small business owners focus their attention if they want to survive the upcoming 12 months?

Keith: I think we can see the biggest focus should be on Customer Safety, Seamless Ordering, Carry Out & To Go, Employee Safety & Retention and Marketing the ways you are making life easier for your patrons.



What are some steps to avoid that can put a small business at risk for foreclosure?

Keith: You can not fall asleep at the wheel. You have to be more vigilante than ever. Everything from Food Safety & Sanitation, Customer & Employee Safety to maximizing every penny you spend in your budget. Be prepared to do things you never thought you would need to do. Be prepared to give a little more to create value. I also think one of the biggest things that owners & chefs should do is take a step back from working in your business and work on your business. What I mean is take a step back and see your business from the customer's point of view, go dine out or carry out from your own establishments and see what your experience is like for your patrons. Sometimes we get so caught up in our



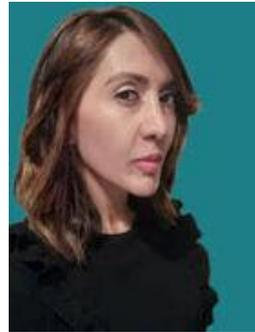
day to day we forget to test the waters with an outside point of view. Heck I send my friends to do secret diner all the time. The feedback they give me is priceless. You might even think about asking your regulars for some of their ideas or opinions. Remember the market will always win and they are the market.



Thank you for sharing your insights. Please share with readers how they can support your work.

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About the Host



Sasha Laghonn is the Founder of [Sasha Talks](#), a platform delivering counsel to businesses and individuals seeking performance enhancement strategies.





BEATING EMPLOYEE BURNOUT

by Michael Levitt

Employee Burnout occurs when employees are in a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress.

It occurs when employees feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands.

Signs of employee burnout include:



- Poor sleep habits, where employees seem groggy or overly tired on the Zoom calls.
- Lost Motivation, where employees no longer seem to have the drive to perform.
- Increased Mistakes & Poor Memory, where employees are making more mistakes than normal and they're forgetful.
- Decision-Making Struggles. Employees struggle to give clear responses to questions.
- Irritable. Employees are arguing more with co-workers, and management.

To rectify employee burnout, employers need to strongly encourage employees to use their vacation time. In a pandemic world, most people are reluctant to take vacation time, because they associate vacations and traveling somewhere. Staycations are helpful if proper boundaries around work are used.

Another step is to establish boundaries around working hours. Since the pandemic, many employees became full-time school teachers as well, due to lockdowns and in-class school being shifted to remote learning. Encouraging employees to shut down work by early evening is crucial to maintain wellbeing among your team.



Crucial steps to prevent employee burnout include:

- Encouraging employees to get proper sleep. Maintaining a no work hours policy, and encouraging employees to get 7-8 hours of restful sleep is critical for restful and healing sleep.
- Providing employees access to a dietitian or nutritionist will help employees eat healthier, which gives them the natural energy to perform and navigate stressful situations, without the sugary and highly caffeinated “pick-me-ups” that are often the go-to for employees.
- Encourage employees to get more active. Walking check-in calls instead of zoom calls will help employees get in some more activity, instead of being chained to their desk (or chair/couch if working remotely.)



Common questions from employees around preventing burnout include:

1. How can one create a work-life balance when working from home?

The key to harmonizing your work and living experience while working from home (WFH) is to establish boundaries when you are working, and when you don't. With laptops, smartphones, and constant connectivity, it's really easy to work whenever and wherever you want. This however takes away from your self-care and well-being time, because we often don't know how to shut off our work mode.



Key tips to create the work-life balance include

- Have a standard start and end to your workday. WFH gives us a lot of flexibility around working hours, but with many of us, homeschooling children and working with our spouses/partners in the home at the same time, distractions and other responsibilities creep into our day. Work with your employer on establishing the start or end of your workday, unless you're given autonomy on when you work and when you're off the clock (aka task-driven projects, not tied to a time clock.)
- Manage distractions/interruptions. Every time you are interrupted, it can take up to 30 minutes to get back your focus. If there's any way for you to isolate yourself in time blocks, you'll accomplish more work in less time. Turn off notifications on your smartphone, other than texting, the phone app itself, and any apps you use for work.



- Schedule breaks frequently. If you can work in 50-minute increments without interruptions, take a 10-minute stretch break. Go outside for a few minutes and get some fresh air.

- Get proper nutrition and exercise. Vitamin D deficiency is a huge issue with many of us, and if we are indoors all the time, we're not getting enough. Work with a nutritionist to find out the proper food and vitamin supplements you need for proper nutrition. Also, be sure to schedule exercise every day. Work with your health care provider to create an exercise plan that's safe and effective.



2. How can employees separate work from life when in quarantine?

Key ideas include:

- Have your work area separate from your life/home life areas. If you don't have a home office set up, at least section off a place where you can work, and avoid that area before and after your established working hours. Do not work in your bed, or where you rest/relax.



- As stated before, have a firm start and end to your workday. Shut off your laptop and focus on non-work activities.
- Create a list of things you enjoy doing in your free time, and start scheduling those every week. Even during a pandemic, there are things we can still do. Schedule them and don't skip those appointments!

3. What are the top 3 mistakes people make when working from home?

1. Not establishing boundaries around how many hours they work. Many people feel they need to demonstrate to their managers they're working hard from home, so they work more hours to "prove" they're working.
2. Not taking care of themselves via nutrition and self-care. We are working at least 20% more hours than before the pandemic, and that is taking a toll on our physical and mental health

3. Consuming too much (negative) news. Watching or reading too much of the news is taking an emotional toll on people, which is creating some poor sleep, poor nutrition, increased addictions, and overall creating future health issues.

About the Author



Michael Levitt is the founder & Chief Burnout Officer of The Breakfast Leadership Network, a San Diego and Toronto-based burnout media firm. He is a Certified NLP and CBT Therapist, and is one of the world's leading authorities in burnout recovery and prevention. He is also a Fortune 500 consultant, #1 bestselling author, and host of the Breakfast Leadership Show, a top 200 podcast on iTunes. He is a 2x Top 20 Global Thought Leader on Culture with Thinkers360. He is a former Healthcare executive, CIO, and CFO overseeing \$ 2 Billion budgets, so he's seen and done it all.



CARING

LISTENING

STRONG TEAMS



THREE LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS

by Pat Sullivan

I would like to share three insights on leadership that make for a quality leader.

CARING

The first insight is that the leader must care for the welfare of his people beyond the narrow confines of a workplace. John Maxwell articulated this very succinctly when he wrote, "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care."

I coached basketball for 34 years at the University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois. When the Medalist and Nike basketball clinics would come to Chicago, our players would serve as demonstrators for the coaches.

One Saturday they had to demonstrate for Coach Bob Knight when he was coaching at Indiana University. Knowing

that Coach Knight had the reputation of being tough on players, I am sure our guys had to be nervous.

When they entered the gym, their nervousness had to increase because 800 coaches were in attendance. The first drill Coach gave our players was a disaster! They could not have demonstrated it more poorly. The coaches laughed.

Knight went to the middle of the bleachers and said to the coaches, "These kids probably left campus at 6am to help me teach you. If I hear any more laughing, I'm going to pick 10 of you. You're going to come down here and demonstrate, the players are going to sit in the front row of the bleachers, and laugh at you!

You never heard 800 people get so quiet

so quickly. Coach Knight showed he cared about our athletes and they became excited about working with him for the rest of the clinic.

At another clinic, Coach Gregg Popovich of the San Antonio Spurs showed he cared. During a drill he taught, one of our players turned his ankle badly. Two weeks after the clinic I received a call from Coach Popovich, whom I had never met prior to the clinic.



He asked how the player who got hurt was doing. Then he requested his name and cell so he could call him. When he called, our player thought it was a crank call! Famous NBA coaches don't call players from a University they never heard of! That just does not happen.

Coach then took it to another level. He invited our players to the United Center when they played the Chicago Bulls as his guests. After the game, he met us and shook hands with every player.



Another legendary coach cared. Amos Alonzo Stagg was the football coach at the University of Chicago when they were members of the Big Ten Conference. His degree from Yale University was in Divinity.

He studied to be a member of the clergy but he felt he could better minister to America's youth from a football field than a pulpit.

Daniel Goleman had this perspective on caring. "While cut-throat cultures may succeed in the short term, caring creates long-term success."

LISTENING

The second criteria for being a quality leader is something I have observed in the best leaders I have worked with. Every one of them had developed the ability to listen.

Famous people have addressed the power of listening.

"Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you would have rather talked." Mark Twain.

"One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what others have to say." Bryant H. McGill.

"The word 'listen' contains the same

letters as the word 'silent.'" Alfred Brandel.

And finally, from Frank Tyger a quote we might think about, "Your ears will never get you in trouble."

I was directing a basketball clinic in New York and went to dinner with John Wooden, the iconic basketball coach at UCLA, and a high school coach. Coach Wooden has two records that I don't believe will ever be matched: his teams won 7 NCAA championships in a row and 10 in the last 12 years he coached! He has been referred to as the best team coach in the history of American sport.



Had you been with us at that dinner and if you thought speaking was the key to intelligence, you would have thought the high school coach was John Wooden and Coach Wooden the high school coach. Coach Wooden did most of the listening while the high school did most of the talking.

My daughter, Colleen, is a Chicago lawyer who practices Hedge Fund law. When negotiating contracts, listening is vital to her because often there is a lot of money involved in the transactions. So, everyday she opens her computer she sees, "I won't learn anything today by talking; but I will learn today by listening."

Will Rogers summed up listening when he wrote, "Never miss a good chance to shut up."



STRONG TEAMS

The third characteristic I have seen in great leaders is they build strong teams and work closely with them. They do not try to lead alone.

For its 75th anniversary, Forbes Magazine dedicated the entire magazine to the most important thing leaders do – decision-making. They interviewed leaders from the military, business, educational, and political worlds.

I thought the most insightful comment in the entire magazine was only three words, "I don't know." James Collins, author of Good to Great, said that the best decisions made in American boardrooms in the last 25 years, began with the leader, regardless of the business, saying, "I don't know."





I have worked with leaders who “knew.” In fact, they knew everything! When I say I worked “with” them that is a misnomer. Nobody could work with them because they already had ALL the answers. They never got nor wanted the wisdom of their teams.

I also worked with leaders who, when difficult situations arose, called in their principal people and began by saying, “I don’t know where we should go with this, but let’s put our heads together and find the best solution.” I found these leaders to be the strongest and most secure workers I ever worked with.

Jerry West and Oscar Robertson are two NBA Hall of Famers. They both played 14 years in the NBA but they both played on only 1 championship team. However, Bill Russell of the Boston Celtics played for 13 years and in 11 of those years Boston won the NBA championship.

You must have talented players to win, but talent alone will not win. It is only talent that is willing to play together as a team that wins. The Celtics had talent and they were totally committed to team play. That is why in the 13 years Russell played there, they made only 2 trades.

Russell had a great insight to team play. He said when the Celtics entered a building for practices or games, they left

their individual egos at the door. But what they did bring in was their TEAM EGO. They genuinely took pride in their team success, not individual accolades.

Vince Lombardi, the outstanding Green Bay Packers coach, summed up what a strong team means to a leader when he said, “Individual commitment to a group cause is what makes a team, a business, a church, or a country work.”

FINAL THOUGHT

The best leaders I have known do these three things:

- They care about their people.
- They show respect by listening.
- They value a strong team.



The Things We Think and Do Not Say: The Future of Our Business

by Colby Jubenville

Remember the famous line from the blockbuster Hollywood movie Jerry Maguire? "Show me the money!" It's an iconic line even people who aren't movie buffs know.

But it's not the best line in the movie.

Jerry Maguire is the story of a sports agent and his "crisis of conscience" with his evolving perspectives on both life and business. As the movie begins, Jerry is sitting at his laptop late at night. He's feverishly writing a mission statement for the business he's primed to lead. Enraptured with the work, he describes his state of mind as "feeling like my father's son again," which to him means remembering the simple pleasures that attracted him to the job in the first place. He recalls the wisdom of his first boss, who told him "the key to this business is personal relationships." Fueled by ideals like honesty and a client's best interests, Jerry experiences nothing short of a midnight epiphany where he attests he "lost the ability to bullshit," and became "the me I'd always wanted to be."



When he finishes writing, Maguire takes his document to the copy shop and prints 110 copies – one for each member of his firm. It's what he titles this opus that might be the best line in the film –or at least the one with the most instructional value for business leaders. Jerry calls it "The Things We Think and Do Not Say: The Future of Our Business."

Does that line ring a bell when you think about the way your own business functions? Or trigger a sort of sixth sense that what is being thought but isn't being said is having a potentially dire impact on your operations?

What Jerry Maguire is describing is essentially workplace dysfunction, and if its present in your business then it's eroding your bottom line.

In the movie, Jerry eventually steps out on his own to run a truly vulnerable, transparent business (and life) absent the thinking/saying dysfunction.





Business leaders must achieve that same resolve. And yes, there are specific processes or exercises you can learn and employ to build up real relationships with employees. Those, in turn, will lead to greater meaning, success, and profits.

By learning to be vulnerable and transparent as leaders, we might even reach the point where our businesses are so successful that we can shamelessly blurt out “show me the money!” ourselves. Your employees might be thinking thoughts such as: “the boss really doesn’t know what he’s doing right now;” or, “this project is running off the rails and the boss doesn’t even realize it;” or, “there is a sea change in this industry rising in the distance and we are so head-down focused on day-to-day operations that we don’t even see it coming.”

Wouldn’t you like to know that these are the thoughts of your employees? They are grinding it out in your business 40



hours a week, they have the education and experience required to have a legitimate take on your business, and, most importantly, they are an extra set of eyes with fresh perspectives different from yours eyeballing your business on a daily basis.

How can you get access to this gold mine of thinking and perspective? And why don’t you already have it naturally?

Well, chances are you haven’t done the hard work of developing the camaraderie with your employees that leads to the kind of loyalty and faith in you that might allow them to say something. And on top of that, you have probably insulated yourself in your ivory tower where no one who works for you really feels they have the channel or safety net required to tell you what you really need to hear. And they’ve probably never heard you utter the words “what do you think?”



Your perception is that to do otherwise would not be very “boss-like.” After all, aren’t you supposed to know everything about this business? Aren’t you supposed to be the expert on matters? What would you need input or advice from mere operational staff? And wouldn’t asking for it make you look like you don’t really know what you’re doing?

None of those reflections are true. You're still a leader even if you 'don't know what you don't know.' You're not a fraud just because you believe two minds are better than one. And guess what? The fact that you haven't thought of everything isn't going to come as a surprise to the people who work for you. They are well aware (possibly even painfully aware) of your shortcomings.

Stop feeling like you have to be a know-it-all! Accept input! Seek it! Ironically, this is the path to real authority in your business!

Now your employees say, 'hey, my leader needs me, wants my thoughts on matters, values my opinion, and now I align even more with him or her because they don't think they are the only one with some intelligence on these matters.'

Jerry Maguire did it. You can to.

About the Author



Colby Jubenville

Speaker | Author | Educator | Coach

Offering tangible take-aways that can be implemented in your life and business NOW!





HOME SWEET HOME FOR ALL

by Sabrina Osso

Chaos-Abuse-Violence-Dysfunction...a residential reality nightmare for way too many people, and children in these circumstances suffer the most. It's not Home Sweet Home but Home Hell Home. 15,000,000 million kids witness violence in their own homes each and every year. 1 out of 3 women will be beaten or raped in her lifetime. 1 in 3 young people will be in an abusive relationship. 1 out of 7 men is abused. On any given day, as many as 20,000 people are seeking refuge at an emergency shelter. Approx. 324,000 pregnant women go into the emergency room not for pregnant related issues but for abuse-related injuries. 80% of all runaways come from violent homes. Even more alarmingly, these statistics are just the ones that are documented.

The victim is told, "Leave, Just Leave". There are many reasons why leaving is not an option; from money to children to shelters being full to the abuser finds her/him. Furthermore, the legal system makes horrible matters even worse, in that, it does what is in the worst interest of the abused child versus what is in the best interest of the abused child. From

the attorneys, to the mediators, to the so-called child protective service agencies, to the teachers and principals of schools, to ultimately, the incompetent, unqualified judges that make very poor decisions while holding the balance of an abused child's life in his/her hands.

What we have been doing has not been working and will never work. What is the solution to this epidemic of violence that existed pre-Covid, increased dramatically





in real estate, namely, better residency for all. Safety / Nonviolence must become a required standard condition of residency. Whether you live in a townhouse, a co-op, a condo, a single family home, a multi-family dwelling, a 2 family home, a villa, a mansion, a mobile home; whether you rent or own, whether you have a mortgage or not, it shouldn't matter. Whether you are going through violence or not, one never knows when an episode can occur. Abuse should not be a part of anyone's residency, ever. Furthermore, just because you are a parent, it doesn't give you the right to abuse your child, and if you do, the consequences must be automatic loss of property rights and rights to your child(ren). These consequences, taken from a business standpoint, act as a deterrent for anyone that abuses. He/She will not be able to get away with as many, if any, abusive acts within the residence. Furthermore, these consequences make for better residency all around. Thirdly, the paid services must be implemented at the start of residency so that a preventative approach is taken versus doing something when he/she beats another within the same household. When this

during Covid, and certainly will remain post-Covid? Firstly, the eradication of violence/abuse must be treated as a paid service so that it actually gets resolved versus treating this epidemic as a charity/non-profit. So long as violence/abuse is treated as a charity/non-profit, the problem will never be resolved; it will always be treated as a back-burner issue and it keeps the problem in place. Victims do not need pity, they do not need handouts. What they need are solutions; they need resolution. Secondly, the solution resides



occurs, police are called, one is scrambling to go to a shelter and/or scrambling to use the legal services that for the most part fail child victims and embolden abusive parents. At that point, it is too late. A preventative approach is most favorable and beneficial for all concerned when it comes to residency. Finally, a holistic approach is needed, one that combines education, mental health, and technology, focusing on safety and prevention versus waiting for an episode of violence/abuse/chaos/dysfunction to occur. This holistic approach needs to be introduced, implemented, and practiced in places of residence, schools/universities, and workplaces with the main focus in places of residence. If we make homes safe, then all other institutions will become safe as well.

When one puts his/her key in the lock of his/her place of residence, it should feel like home and not hell; it should feel like one's sanctuary and not a war zone. Residency without safety is bad residency and bad for business. Safer residency makes for better residency and, therefore, better business. Home Sweet Home For All. It has been long overdue.



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**HOME SWEET HOME
FOR ALL. IT HAS BEEN
LONG OVERDUE.**



Taking the Fear Out of Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs)

by Jessica Miller-Merrell

PIP fear is real, and it doesn't just affect employees who receive one. When it becomes necessary to document poor performance, the performance improvement plan is a tool for both manager and employee to agree on a path in which the employee's performance must improve. Employees tend to see PIPs as "I'm going to get fired." The job of the hiring manager isn't just to outline how your employee can improve, it's also essential to help team members understand that the PIP isn't a setback; it's actually an opportunity.

The Performance Improvement Plan: What Is It?

Performance Improvement Plans, which many people refer to as PIPs, is a tool that managers use to give employees with performance challenges or deficiencies an opportunity to improve their performance by pointing out weaknesses

in particular areas and offering a plan to help them become better and more productive in their work.

Employees and HR view PIPs differently. PIPs help our employees achieve their organizational goals by assisting them in taking remedial action to improve their performance. Nevertheless, employees are still terrified of PIPs. Many employees see the tool as a company's way of "getting rid" of them, as a last step documented process that will lead to termination. Transparency around how your company decides when a PIP is necessary, what a PIP means, and how they will be conducted can help employees trust the process and see it as an opportunity to improve and be better in what they do. Instead of viewing it as a disciplinary tool, let them see it as an opening to achieve the organization's growth by becoming the best fit.

How HR Can Better Support Both Managers and Employees With PIPs

It is our role in HR to facilitate the PIP implementation process. During the PIP meeting, managers must sit down with employees to review goals, areas in which an employee is falling short, and a strong action plan for how to help them succeed. New managers may find giving feedback somewhat awkward, so HR can help by training managers on best practices for creating a PIP and carrying out the PIP meeting.

Training for managers for performance improvement plans could include:

1. Have a solid reason for the PIP.
2. Consider likely problems that might arise during the conversation and how to solve each.
3. Stick to facts.
4. Discuss the plans involved and the way forward using actionable tasks, such as training or mentorship.

Our role in HR is to advise and support our managers on how to write PIPs, hold the PIP meeting, and follow up on the PIP, all while maintaining a professional level of distance and reassuring team members that a PIP is not the last stop before termination. Keep in mind: It isn't personal.



The Basics of Creating the PIP Document and Meeting

For PIPs to be effective, they have to achieve their intended goal. At the most basic level, we should include the following while writing PIPs; confidential notice, performance gaps, previous discussions, improvement plan, resources, progress update, timelines for improvement consequences and expectations, employee and manager's signature, and conclusion.

Here are a few tips to consider when conducting PIPs:

1. Let the employee have input in the PIP.

The employee is, in effect, taking ownership of their improvement plan and should be allowed the opportunity for questions and feedback. For example, a manager may outline a 6-week process to train on new software to help the employee's productivity, but the employee may have an obstacle - like too much work to complete in a day - that prevents him or her from attending the training. The manager's role here is to help the employee adjust their workload so they can be trained.



2. Set clear goals with an employee.

The steps involved in addressing employees performance recovery need to be written clearly. Involve employees in writing the PIP and the steps to improve, and make sure they are achievable and within their reach.

3. Provide necessary support to the employee.

Throughout the process, our employees should feel that we have their back as they strive to achieve the PIP objectives that we have set with them.

4. Schedule regular check-in meetings (daily or weekly depending on the urgency of the issue).

Keep in mind that the PIP primary goal is corrective and a manager or HR has to walk with the employee throughout this journey. We must do regular check-ins so that our employees involved in PIPs feel encouraged, as this will help them achieve their improvement goals.

RESOURCES

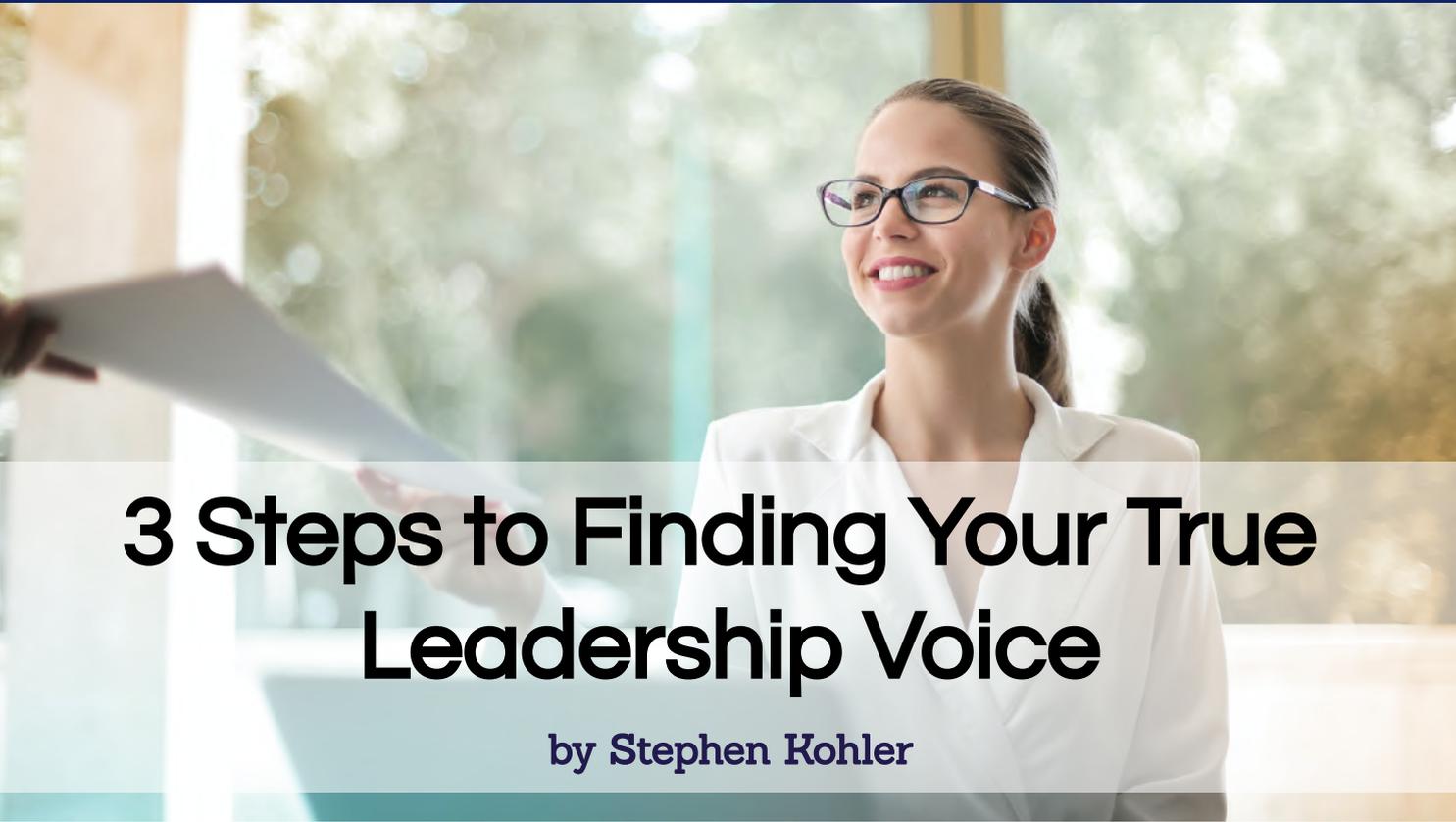
[PIP templates for managers](#)
[More PIP templates for managers](#)
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jessica Miller-Merrell is the Founder of Workology, a workplace resource for HR, recruiting professionals and business leaders. The site was listed twice as a top 75 career resource by Forbes Magazine. Jessica is the president and CEO of Xceptional HR, a human capital strategy and consulting agency, and a published author of Tweet This! and her new book Digitizing Talent: Creative Strategies for the Digital Recruiting Age will be available in early 2020. Jessica is listed by Forbes as a top 50 social media power user. Because of vast industry expertise and knowledge, Jessica's professional opinions and expertise are sought after and sourced by publications and media including: the Economist, Forbes, CIO Magazine, CBS, Entrepreneur Magazine, and SHRM's HR Magazine.





3 Steps to Finding Your True Leadership Voice

by Stephen Kohler

Tips on How to Find your Authentic Voice and Utilize it to its Fullest

“Get rid of it,” he said. “Get rid of what?” I replied. “All of that which is not truly yours,” he replied.

My vocal coach and I were in our first lesson together and he astutely recognized that what he was hearing from me was not my true voice, but rather what I thought a singer “should” sound like. “I want to hear the real you – not some facsimile of someone you’re trying to imitate,” he continued. I smiled and thanked him for identifying an underlying issue to which so many of us can relate, not just in singing, but as individuals and leaders.

How many of us spend countless hours trying to be someone or something that we really aren’t? We’ve all done it – pursuing a job (or even career) that wasn’t a fit, a relationship we knew wasn’t supportive or even living in an environment that wasn’t healthy. We spend so much time doing it – not operating in our “true voice” – that we forget that we’re doing it. Here’s a quick test you can try at home: ask a family member to observe you briefly in a work capacity (think Zoom call – many of us are working from home, after-all). Afterwards, ask them how your “work self” is compared to the “real you” at home. Most of us would undoubtedly receive feedback that we’re not operating as ourselves, but rather some facsimile. I’ve done this test myself and the feedback I receive is both hilarious and spot-on in terms of my ongoing journey toward authenticity.

Why does this happen, you ask? Well, as social creatures, we’ve been trained our whole lives to behave in ways that we



believe will keep us from getting kicked out of our Tribe Today, that would equate to a job, family, relationship, etc. The problem with this line of reasoning is that it's often filled with faulty assumptions. Will your boss really fire you if you're honest about that project issue? (P.S. If s/he/they do, consider it a gift as you shouldn't be working anyplace that doesn't value candor.) The other problem with this pattern is that being someone other than our true selves doesn't serve anyone. It certainly doesn't serve us – often leading to constant stress and anxiety – and it doesn't help anyone else. After all, how can we put our best foot forward if our hearts aren't really in it?

Leading with your own authentic voice is critical to success and happiness in every aspect of life. **Below are three tips to help you find your true voice and utilize it to its fullest.**



Find Your Natural Register

In vocal training, one of the first things students are asked to do is find their register, which is the range of tones that come naturally such as baritone, tenor, alto or soprano. From a leadership perspective, we can do this by identifying our natural characteristics or strengths. Do you tend to be more extroverted or introverted? Each is highly effective in

their own ways. Do you prefer being an individual contributor or love the challenge of leading a large team? Both roles are vital. Do you excel in more structured environments or thrive in chaos? Each exists naturally in different organizations.

In the same way that a vocal choir needs ensemble members to support all registers (from bass to soprano tessitura), so too does an organization. Metaphorically, if you're truly a tenor, don't try to be an alto. Instead lean into your natural strengths and work to hone the skill set that comes along with them.



Practice for Consistency and Confidence

Once you've found your authentic voice, it's important to practice it. This may sound odd – having to practice your own authentic voice – but, it's not something people are accustomed to. By practicing enough so that you can use your authentic voice confidently in any setting, you're ultimately allowing your authentic voice to become a true defining feature. The same can be applied to leadership. The point of finding your authentic leadership voice is for you to be able to lead confidently in any context – whether

it's a one-on-one meeting with a direct report or presenting on stage to an audience of 1,000 potential customers. An authentic leader tends to be more consistent and trusted, building up a reputation that makes them respected and successful.



Don't be Afraid to Grow your Authentic Voice

Just because you found your authentic voice doesn't mean it can't change and evolve over time. Instead, lean into that development without fear of mistakes. Miles Davis famously said, "Do not fear mistakes. There are none." This wisdom encourages us to constantly stretch ourselves and try new things. If we're not dropping a few notes here and there, then we're not really growing as leaders.

The most progressive teams and organizations dedicate time and resources to do exactly this – experiment and create the next innovation. The British-Australian pop group, The Bee Gees, stumbled on what became their signature sound – the use of falsetto vocals – by accident. Another great example is 3M's famous Post It Note – a brilliant accident – and arguably what they are most known for today. Consider ways that you can continue to be intentional about growing your voice – both figuratively and literally.

To find our own voice, we must often (as Yoda famously said), "Unlearn what we have learned." Once we do, however, we'll no doubt notice the resonance.

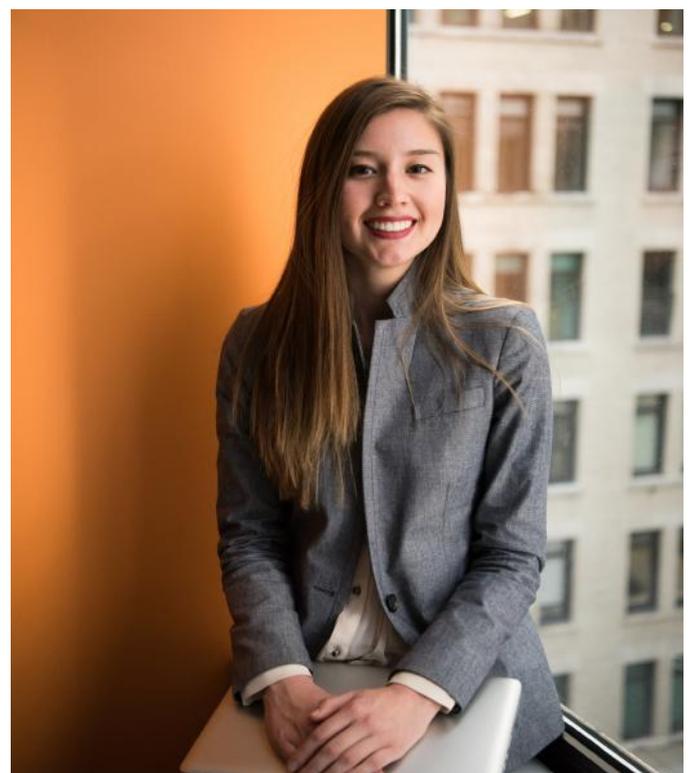
About the Author



Stephen Kohler, Audira's Founder & CEO, brings passion for people along with 25 years of extensive corporate experience within organizations ranging from startup to Fortune 100, across multiple industries.

His credentials include an MBA from University of Chicago's Booth School of Business, a BA in Philosophy from Northwestern University, and is a certified Professional Coach (PCC, CPCC) and Balanced Scorecard Professional (BSP).

His passions include spending time with his wife, two children and two dogs. He is a life-long musician, avid BBQ enthusiast and loves traveling the world.



"How we BELIEVE we
are PERCEIVED, shapes
WHO we BECOME."



Personal Brand Leadership is In Your Own DNA

by Suzanne Tulien

Clarifying Your Leadership Brand to Align Your Business & Life

You may be experiencing an impulse to evolve yourself, to realize the full potential of your expertise and make your greatest contribution to your profession, family and relationships. You may yearn for deeper experiences of trust, accomplishment and feel a longing to come more fully alive. You may even intuitively sense that you have a unique purpose and a critical role to play in shaping the future of our world and your own life. ...And, I bet, you're right.



If you are like me, over the past two years or so, I have been feeling this urge to develop myself more from the inside out. I am more curious, thoughtful, and contemplative than ever before. I want to have a greater impact on what I do everyday, who I meet and spend time with, and make a real difference in the time I spend here on earth.

It's not just about my business anymore, I think it's time to get conscious, strategic & deliberate; step up your game, and become your own unique PERSONAL BRAND PRESENCE and live your LEADERSHIP potential, now.

So, ask yourself 'ARE YOU A LEADER or a FOLLOWER?'

If you are reading this, then, I know you already understand how important personal brand leadership can be in your efforts to live your full potential in business and your life.

I believe leadership is a two-dimensional skill. The internal work, and the external work. This article will focus on the internal work.

All too often I find emerging leaders seeking elements outside of themselves in order to gain leverage on their leadership skills, and resistant to doing the deep work of clarifying who they are first, so that they can better lead themselves; a critical 'missing piece' of consistent, sustainable leadership.

"How we BELIEVE we are PERCEIVED, shapes WHO we BECOME."

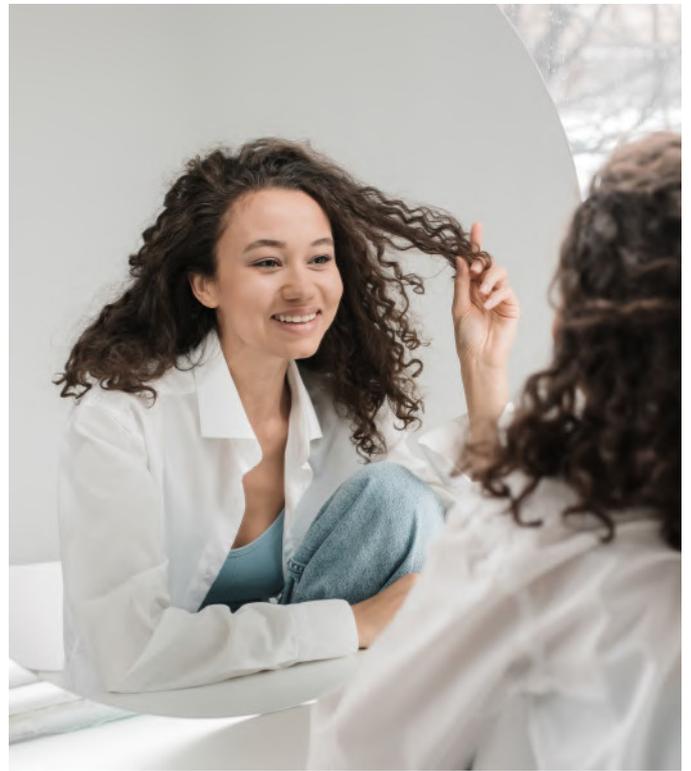
This is a powerful statement and includes how we believe our own perceptions of ourselves. Our own self-talk, negative and positive, is a huge contributing factor in our way of being and ability to lead ourselves first.

Clarity enables right action.



How would your life change if you were fully self-actualized in your business and personal life? Self-actualization equates to clarity, a clarity that becomes the foundational platform for discerning action into your next level of living.

So, where do you get that kind of clarity? One thing I do know for sure, it doesn't come from your external environment, like a new certification, or learning a new skill, but rather from a place deep inside you, a place where your truth and authenticity lives.....it's in your DNA (Dimensional Nucleic Assets™).



Your unique **Personal Brand Presence** lives through your leadership style and is a beautifully complex make-up of critical attributes that play a supportive role in the definition of your overall way of being, actions, behaviors, and world-view. You have gifts embedded in these attributes that are waiting to be leveraged and maximized in order for you to live your full potential and leave your legacy in the experiences of others.





The internal exploration starts this process and begins with:

1. You have a set of **core VALUES** that ring true for you, you just have to uncover and literally name and define them. These are your guiding principles that help you stay the course true to who you are and help right things when you go off track. Identifying just four key core values and then defining them help to crystalize how you are living in that value to perpetuate the life you believe in, fuels your energy, and is fully nourishing to your way of being.

2. **Recognize that YOU have a certain STYLE that is specific to YOU.** When we are able to identify, name and define that style through a collection of attributes, it helps to create a powerful container that is highly focused and can provide direction and answers to daily questions while showing up more

consciously through these attributes in your actions and behaviors. It will answer the questions "I am the leader who..."

3. **Your Leadership distinction is unique!** Each of us has a collection of distinctive differentiators that collectively create a blueprint of memorability in the minds of our audiences. It is our responsibility (and our purpose) to acknowledge and leverage those distinctions and maximize them to create the construct to enable our gifts to be seen and shared with our audiences. Distinctions can include; years of experience or awards, all the way to the more personal distinctions like your talents, such as speaking two languages, or playing a musical instrument, to your hobbies. Flushing these out begins to shape what collectively makes you who you are and begins the process of becoming what you want to be known for.

4. Defining your Standards of Living! In order for us to transform into our fullest potential, we must deliberately and strategically design our way of being to allow for our unique DNA to be leveraged through your leadership. This is where we consciously plan how we can be more of who we are authentically through every facet of our lives; in our work, communities, families, friendships, and our overall well-being.

Again, you can see how true sustainable leadership really begins at the internal level. These areas I just listed are the focus of and ingredients to clarifying and igniting your Personal Leadership Brand Presence. I know you know deep inside there is something bigger, brighter, and bolder within your “why” and purpose to being here on this earth. Is it time to discover it, become it, and fully live it?

What’s at stake now, if you don’t?



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3 Concepts of Improv to Transform Leadership

by Will Dennis

The very ideas and principles that have made stars out of the likes of Tina Fey, Steve Carell, John Belushi and countless others can also transform the way you lead, inspire and empower your team.

The first rule of improv is that there are no rules of improv. That's not just coyness but rather reinforcement of the concept that what allows for improv to be so successful is that there are no constraints placed on creation. Instead of rules, then, there are concepts, ideas, tenets, guiding principles, mantras. Regardless of what we call them, they are game changers for any organizational leader.



1- Yes, and

The "golden rule" of improv is the phrase, "Yes, and..."

In those two words exist the limitless ideas and possibilities that can revolutionize anyone's career, relationships, philosophy, life, etc. The phrase refers to the compound idea of acceptance and contribution. In improv, everything begins with an initial offer, suggestion or gift. From there, if one is willing to accept that gift and build upon it by contributing their own gift - instead of negating or dismissing out of fear or threat - there is no limit on the possibilities.

Our world is one of "no." Or, in the best case scenario, "yes, but" which is, in fact, just a "no" disguised as a "yes;" a trojan horse, if you will. There is truth to the adage that when there is a "but" in a sentence, anything that came before it is meaningless and goes unheard. Many leaders have perfected the art of "yes, but." It has become a manipulation tactic. Let the team think they are being affirmed while one person's idea is being forced upon the group.

“Yes, and” takes overwhelming acceptance, trust and humility. It requires leaders to not only be okay with, but to encourage the notion that they are not always the smartest in the room and that their ideas are not always the best. In fact, even the best idea in the room is not the best, it is merely the beginning of the best.

When a team member knows that their ideas - all their ideas - will be initially accepted, they are more likely to willingly offer them. When their ideas are then built upon, they begin to recognize their individual value in the context of a team. Confidence rises, investment rises, commitment rises, loyalty rises and all of a sudden, people like their jobs.



2- Mistakes are Fumbles which are Opportunities

Okay, this is where the BS alarms start going off. There are mistakes... everyday. This is a fact and depending on the line of work, those mistakes can be the difference between a promotion and dusting off a resume.

This tenet of improv isn't suggesting that mistakes don't exist but rather that the response to a "mistake" can change everything. It can be an opportunity... for personal ownership, for a new deal, for a stronger relationship, for honesty, for empathy, for almost anything.



This is why mistake is not the best word. So, replace it with fumble. Think about it, when there's a fumble on a football field, no one ignores it or runs the other way. Everyone pounces on it. Why? Because it is an opportunity. It represents possibility and potential.

This is certainly more difficult to see in life than in improv. At a show, something goes drastically wrong and the performers turn it into gold; usually, within minutes if not seconds. With life and work, it's about the long game. It's about mindset and perspective and the fumbles may not transform into opportunities for months, maybe years.

Still, creating an environment where fumbles are embraced encourages risk-taking. Risk-taking increases innovation. Innovation increases productivity. Productivity increases performance. Performance increases company-wide success. Go ahead... fumble!

3- Listen, then respond

What a novel idea. It seems so simple and obvious but how often does the opposite take place: React then listen. Many leaders fall into the trap of deciding what someone is saying before an idea or statement is finished. This makes sense. It comes from efficiency and experience. The better someone gets at what they do, the more convinced they are of their own abilities to predict.

From the other perspective, though, people dawdle, especially in situations where they are afraid of rejection (see “yes, and”) or punishment (see “fumbles”). Where there is a realistic, inherent fear of failure and retribution, people rarely speak concisely and directly. As such, leaders are often left responding to a team member’s “filler” instead of what they are actually trying to communicate. This leaves everyone at a loss.

Listening fully, presently and carefully requires patience. For many, it is counter-intuitive. It can, though, become a difference maker in creating psychological safety and can ultimately save significant time in the long run.

Improv is not a magic pill that will change your workplace culture overnight. It is a philosophy that - with buy-in from the top down - can transform the way your team works, over time. Human beings are cautious by nature. Once a team sees that these ideas are being adopted and lived by all members of an organization, it is then that real culture change can start to take place.

Leaders reading this who are skeptical

(which is likely most of you), try a small exercise/experiment:

Group your team into pairs and tell them they will have three challenges and 60 seconds for each.

- Challenge 1: As a pair, develop a new app for an iphone or android. Take turns by going back and forth with ideas, but start every idea (other than the first) with the word “no.”

- Challenge 2: As a pair, come up with an idea for a new summer blockbuster move. Take turns by going back and forth with ideas, but start every idea (other than the first) with the phrase “yes, but.”

- Challenge 3: As a pair, design a new rollercoaster for an amusement park. Take turns by going back and forth with ideas, but start every idea (other than the first) with the phrase “yes, and.”

Chances are, you’ll end up with some wildly creative roller coasters and a series of apps and movies that are incomplete and merely a collection of “first ideas.” Go ahead, give it a shot.



Gravitas - How to Elevate Your Authentic Brand Leadership

by Jon Michail



Gravitas: In a world full of competition and uncertainty the thing that you can depend on is your personal brand leadership. Gravitas is your door-opener to your authentic authority, collaboration and new possibilities.

So you want to build your personal brand and stand out in a world where it seems to be that the person with the loudest voice gets heard. What gives a brand a loud voice? Money for advertising, hiring experts, and creating hundreds of pieces of content a week?

Sure, every brand needs at least a small amount of capital to get it off the ground, but it's a myth that you need the wealth of Elon Musk or the market valuation of Apple to make big things happen, and social media is not the be-all-end-all of personal branding.

If you're looking to elevate your brand and stand out as a leader in your industry then I would assume it's fair to say you're either a new brand or you've been struggling to break through a 'glass' ceiling for a while or you are somewhat successful but not truly recognised.

But what you really need to be doing is looking down instead of up.

First Principles

This holistic concept has come into the limelight recently because of the First Principles Method that surprise, surprise Elon Musk also uses: "First principle thinking is the idea that everything you do is underpinned by a foundational belief, or first principles. Instead of blindly following directions or sticking to a process, a first principle thinker will constantly ask 'What's best for the company?' "Does this approach fit with my personal values?" and, "Couldn't we do it this other way instead?"

This concept is actually an ancient mental strategy created by Aristotle who defined a first principle as "the first basis from which a thing is known".

When you relate the first principles to yourself and your business you can see that to truly discover these you need to first look inwards, rather than outwards.

First Principles and Gravitas

At first glance, gravitas appears to be a gift bestowed upon a lucky few who were destined to lead others and turn anything they touch into gold. But why does gravitas matter for leaders?

I describe Gravitas as building your internal and external confidence all underpinned by courage and integrity. This approach is an excellent way to build trust and 'authentic' credibility in all you do. And according to Forbes "70% of senior executives...say that gravitas was the core characteristic of executive presence."



It's possible that many people who were born into affluent families may have had more opportunities to subconsciously cultivate their gravitas, but if you consider yourself to be from more humble beginnings there is nothing standing in your way of creating your own magnetic gravitas apart from the belief that you cannot. And this brings us to the first of our first principles.

Courage

When you are the leader of your brand you need courage in buckets. You are top dog, head honcho, and the one where all the fingers get pointed (and you can't point back at anyone else).



That means you'll be the one in charge of making key decisions in pressure situations, you'll have the deciding vote on which direction to take your personal brand, (and business brand) and your choices will lead to consequences for more than just yourself.

When it comes to courage, the former Chair & CEO of Medtronic, Bill George claims that "courage is the quality that distinguishes great leaders from excellent managers" and after having studied over 200 CEOs of major companies Harvard Business School reports that "the defining characteristic of the best ones is courage to make bold moves that transform their businesses."

Have you been taking the easy option or completely neglecting big decisions whilst wasting time on less significant problems? Taking the reins and making the tough decisions, even if you aren't 100% sure of yourself, is what great leaders do. The respect from everyone around you will increase when you do, increasing your gravitas and your brand.



Be Indifferent to What People Think of You

This is a tricky first principle to hurdle for some people, especially those with high emotional intelligence. It is human nature that no one wants to be seen in a bad light by anyone else, but it's also a fact that you cannot please everyone.

This juxtaposition leaves a lot of people torn when they know their opinion or a decision or will upset someone whichever option is chosen. This mental stress can paralyze people and scare them away from the bold decisions that could make all the difference in their brand.

Having the courage to make a decision is one thing, but having the courage to believe in yourself enough to know that you are making the right decision whilst also knowing someone else won't like it is a totally different thing.



One approach that will help with this is zooming out and taking a look at your reactions from a bigger perspective of balance. This means that you don't let the negative stuff pull you down but you also don't let compliments put your head in the clouds. Learning how to cut this and other noise from your daily life is essential for your holistic health and sanity.

If you can stay even keel with your emotions when making decisions you are not only going to make better decisions more quickly, but also gain an air of authority around those you work with.

Intentional Action

Being in tune with your true self is the most important first principle to grasp and work on because it affects everything else you do as a leader.

Do the right thing, be your word, be your promise, who you are and how you interact with people will get the best results from everyone. Being an authentic leader elevates your gravitas, in a world full of fakes, people gravitate towards authenticity.

When your actions are uninhibited by worrying about how people will react to what you do or say because of your self-belief and story, your actions become intentional and purposeful, dynamic and begin to propel your brand forward.

Taking a hard look at these first principles will do much more for your gravitas and your brand than any flashy Instagram post could dream of doing.



Jon Michail is the founder and Group CEO of Image Group International an international acclaimed personal brand / image advisor and author. His real-world approach to

business and life, has transformed thousands of people in their business, career and personal endeavours. Clients include leaders yearning for 'what's next' to Forbes 500, BRW Top 100 and the Who's Who of luxury, sports, entertainment, arts, lifestyle, politics and business.

He is a regular commentator in international media including Forbes, ABC, CNN, NBC, Harvard Business Review, Entrepreneur, Success, The Financial Review, and Vogue.

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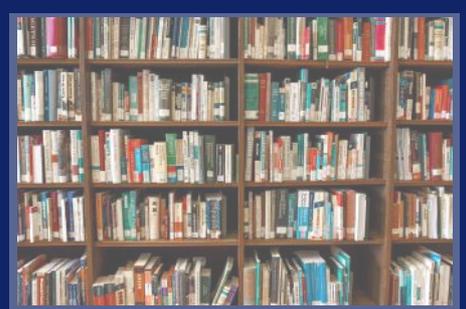
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