

# Leading at a Distance

Practical lessons for Virtual success

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Remote work is here to stay. Now comes the hard work of making it sustainable and inclusive.

Virtual leadership will become increasingly important as remote work becomes even more prevalent in the future.

Derosa worked on ATT projects in the early 2000s when ATT started using virtual collaboration.

The pandemic got in a can do spirit ,  
individually and collectively, fueled by a once  
in a generation sense of shared humanity.

A year later after the pandemic, much of this  
novelty has washed away.

Prior to Covid 19, our survey of over 150 companies showed that virtual work was about 13 %, it was considered fully remote.

By April 2020, it was 60 %, and in August 2020 it was 80 %.

Looking ahead, HR leaders expect nearly half of their employees will continue to work from home even when things have stabilized.



The shift to virtual working has been universal.

Among men and women who have full time jobs, partners and children, women have been spending on an average 20 hours more per week than men on childcare, housework and caring for relatives.

CEOs and other function leaders report that they are more productive working remotely.

Reed Hastings of Netflix has called remote working ‘ a pure negative”

Jamie Dimon of JP Morgan Chase sees social as well as economic damage from longer stretches of wfh.

Connecting with people, walking around, chats in corridor is a big part of leadership.

Learning to lead virtually isn't the only priority, to succeed, leaders must understand how to thrive as individuals working at a distance.

# The big questions

- How to optimize the impact of virtual leadership
- How to help employees have the most positive experience
- How to hire, train, coach and promote on an ongoing basis
- How to shift business models
- How to think about return to office
- How to evolve corporate culture from a distance

We believe that the common perception that remote work will never be as effective as work in traditional face to face teams is FALSE.



Charles Handy wrote in a HBR article in 1995 “if there is an office of the future, it will be more like a clubhouse, a place for meeting, eating, and greeting with norms for activities and not for particular people.

No technology company saw its usage jump more dramatically than ZOOM, whose market cap rose tenfold to \$160 billion between January and October 2020.

The second reason for increase in virtual work is a combination of technology advances and globalization.

‘By 2025, 75 % of the workforce will be millennials, they don’t want to work from the workplace” Bill Mc Dermott CEO ServiceNow

# Challenges of wfh

Zoom / video burnout

Managing work and family life

Increased health risk

Increased economic stress

According to one study, US employees logged in 22 million extra hours working during the first months of the pandemic.

# Between August and October 2020, we did a survey which showed:

- Amongst individuals 52 % felt a net positive vs 19 % showing a net negative for wfh
  - For organizations net positive was 42 % and net negative was 21 %
  - Employee onboarding and personal connection were not negatively impacted by wfh
- productivity, work life balance, technology were most positively impacted.
- Virtual working has made detecting and dealing with conflict and developing/mentoring team members most challenging.

The world has become more authentic, you see people in their home environments, and people are bringing their true selves to work.



Our research showed that work life balance was a net positive at 58 % and the second highest rated dimension in terms of positivity of wfh.

In WFH, there is less separation between work and family and this leads to burnout. Having children at home can increase the stress levels, magnify the responsibilities.

Most people feel that Innovation has been negatively impacted by wfh

Top performing virtual teams show higher levels of trust amongst team members.

# Warning signs of low trust

- Team members in ME mode, not in WE mode
- Conversation is only business, nothing else shared
- Silos develop in subgroups
- Excessive oversight
- Conflicts are not resolved
- Play the blame game

# Examples of hi trust

- Transparency
- Relationship led
- Credibility of leader
- Reliability of team members
- Collaboration always

Characteristics of hi performance virtual teams falls into three parts:

Composition

Communication and Training

Leadership

# High performing Virtual teams

- Have fewer team members, less than 15
- Are not cross functional
- Have been working together for 2-3 years
- Role rotation for coordination of meetings between team members
- Spend time on team development online



# Things that hurt virtual team performance

- Lack of clear rules amongst team members
- A lack of engagement
- Lack of accountability, team members don't help others
- Micromanaging wrong details
- Conflict avoidance, not placing issues on the table

Virtual teams work with the RAMP model-  
relationships, Accountability, Motivation,  
Processes

Those that get accountability right follow through on commitments.

Encouraging teams to improve and learn new skills, development programs, training, coaching, all provide tools for them to become more effective and confident.

Virtual leaders need to make more of an effort to be proactive, to understand what's happening and be in constant touch.

Even if separated by a thousand miles, high performing virtual teams are committed both to the team and the individual success.

Video meetings do well when people adapt to the medium.

Active participation is important in virtual meetings. The key for leader is to listen closely and be patient with progress.



Everyone on the call must take responsibility for keeping the group on track in a virtual meeting, ensuring time is well managed and objectives are met.

Arrange for different people to lead different parts in a meeting.

# 5 types of disruptors in virtual meetings

- The Multitasker
- The noise bringer( doesn't mute background noise)
- The late comer and disorganized person who hasn't come prepared
- The Interrupter
- The checked out person

## 4 general onboarding recommendations in a virtual world

- Get off to a fast start
- Establish a foundation of strong relationships across the organization
- Explain the company culture and how it works
- Set clear expectations and connect work to the broader company goal.

Coaching can be more difficult in a virtual environment. However research shows that online coaching is as good as face to face coaching, only thing it takes more focused effort

When discussing performance, clear communication means being specific and focusing on the person's behavior.

People use verbal crutches which they are unaware of in virtual meetings.. 'as you know', 'I mean', 'actually speaking' ... etc.

Sometimes a challenging conversation is better done virtually.



A McKinsey survey confirms that remote work is likely to be more prevalent in industries such as technology, finance , insurance and professional services.

An article in Time magazine showed some disturbing numbers:  
885,000 women left the workforce in 2020 vs  
216,000 men.

A McKinsey travel report states that domestic and regional travel will come back first and not international travel.

# In a virtual world, everyone must behave like a leader

- Be proactive, not reactive, judge results, not hours
- Know yourself and stay organized
- Create your own CEO system, you need process
- Manage your environment
- Plan communication and feedback