

Sarah Cirone:

Hi everyone and welcome to today's webinar, How Remarkable Leadership Applies in a Virtual World hosted by HRDQ-U and presented by Wayne Turmel. My name is Sarah and I will moderate today's webinar. The webinar will last around an hour. If you have any questions, just type them into the question area on your go to webinar control panel and we'll answer them as we can or after the session by email. Today's webinar is sponsored by HRDQ consulting. Are you looking for live interactive training classes delivered right to your learners wherever they are? HRDQ's virtual instructor led training classes allow your learners to keep the training, teamwork, and communication going, but from a distance. Real time interaction between instructors and classmates provides a powerful learning experience, the performance improvement and cultural shift you need. Learn more at www.hrdq.com/consulting. I'm excited to introduce our presenter today, Wayne Turmel. Wayne is a writer, speaker, and co-founder of The Remote Leadership Institute.

Sarah Cirone:

For 25 years, he's been obsessed with helping people communicate effectively to lead people, teams and projects. The last 12 years, he's focused on learning the skills necessary to survive and thrive in the complex world of remote work. Wayne is the author of 12 books including Meet Like You Mean It: A Leader's Guide To Painless And Productive Virtual Meetings and The Long-Distance Leader: Rules for Remarkable Remote Leadership, which he co-authored with Kevin Eikenberry. He has worked with clients and spoken at conferences around the world and Marshall Goldsmith has called him one of the most unique voices in leadership. It's an honor to have you speaking with us today, Wayne.

Wayne Turmel:

Well, thanks. I don't know how much of an honor it is, but welcome and welcome everybody in these crazy times. Nice to see everybody huddled together. A couple of things about our webinar today. One is that we really, really want you to get great information. The second thing is if you have questions, don't be shy. My fabulous co-host here will be checking the question box and we'll be taking them as we go, as well as at the end of the webinars. So we really want you to get the most out of our time together. The second thing is that everybody is stressed and there are things going on that we did not anticipate a week, two weeks, a month ago, and we hear so much from our clients right now. "You know, we were going to put a remote work plan in place. We were going to develop leaders."

Wayne Turmel:

We had a client who had this wonderful plan to have 60% of their workforce remote by June and then last week it was 100% remote right now. It's okay, wherever you are, whether you have a plan and you're working at and you're just looking to keep it going or you're kind of blindsided and you're scrambling, just breathe. We got this. Between HRDQ and us at The Remote Leadership Institute, we are working really, really hard to help people get through this. So take a deep breath and get a whole bunch of stuff out of the next hour or so we. You will get access to the presentation, frankly, just take really good notes.

Wayne Turmel:

So here's what we're going to cover in our time together. We're going to talk about the timeless leadership behaviors that don't change, it doesn't matter where you and your people are. And then we're going to look at three models frankly. We're going to look at one that answers the question, why does leading at a distance feel so difficult? Then we're going to look at a model for building trust, particularly in a remote environment, although it applies anyway, and a model for choosing the right technology for the right reasons to deliver the right messages in the right way. If you leave with those three models, you'll understand something really, really crucial.

Wayne Turmel:

Now, if you are in HR or talent development, you're going to identify and skills and competencies critical to remote work that you'll be able to compare to what you're already doing and maybe see areas where you can improve your efforts. You'll find gaps in your development and communication plans or confirmation that you're doing it right, which right now when everybody's losing their minds is not a bad thing. And you'll also be able to identify some next steps. Now, if on the other hand you are a manager you're going to learn the three models which are really designed to help you just stop, breathe, and take inventory of where you are and what should you be doing.

Wayne Turmel:

You're going to pick up tips and best practices and probably identify some areas that you and your team can discuss. We want you to take this back to your team and to take action. All right, so here is our first question, which is, and we're not doing a poll, I'm just going to ask you, and if you I feel obliged to put it in the question box he can, but we have Linux, Farmville, the Hubble Telescope and Genghis Khan. And I want you to think about what do these things have in common?

Wayne Turmel:

You might not think that Farmville and Genghis Kahn would have a lot in common, but in fact they do. And here it is, all of these things were immensely wildly, stupidly successful working remotely. Farmville was designed by designers all over the world. Linux is coders that don't even work together. The Hubble Telescope was fixed literally from earth when it was in outer space and if you think you've got it rough okay, Genghis Kahn ruled half the known world and never held a Zoom meeting. Shockingly enough, it can in fact be done. So we want you to keep that in mind with all the crazy going on. And there's stuff that nobody planned for, right? People working from home.

Wayne Turmel:

I was sharing with Sarah earlier, Walmart, which is not a place you go to for cutting edge information about remote work has announced that there has been a huge boom in sales of shirts and tops. But that sales of pants and bottoms, I have stopped or dropped. And they think the reason is the number of webcam meetings people are on. You've got to be dressed in your big girl or your big boy clothes from the belly button up, and there's a lot of them getting done in pajama bottoms and yoga pants. So none of us expected what was going to happen, but there are these timeless evergreen principles that when we are not panicking and our brain is not freaking out, we make work.

Wayne Turmel:

So the first thing that we said we were going to do, is addressed the question of why does leading a team at a distance feel so weird? Right? And Kevin Eikenberry, if you've heard the term Remarkable

Leadership before, it's because he wrote that book 10, 12 years ago and he is my co-author on the Long Distance leader and the co-founder of The Remote Leadership Institute.

Wayne Turmel:

And we spent a lot of time in the last few years having this conversation, right? I mean, leadership itself is complicated and there's not enough people good at it, but at least we know what it looks like. When we get in the remote environment, why does it feel so awkward? And what we did was we came up with this model and if you read Long Distance Leader, you've seen it. And essentially the model says this, If you think about all the gears grinding together to make work happen and create outputs, the biggest gear by far is the leadership and management piece. And if you look at the leadership skills and what you need to lead people through a situation and how to manage the work. If you look at the discrete behaviors that managers have to exhibit, not a lot has changed.

Wayne Turmel:

Seriously, whether your people are in the room or not, you need to delegate, you need to coach, you need to set the vision, you need to manage performance. You need to motivate. Yup. You had to do those things when everybody was on the same platform. Here's how to think about it. What we do as leaders hasn't changed particularly. What's changed is how we do it, which is this second gear, which is that we are working not face to face and not in close physical proximity, but mediated and mitigated by tools and technology which fundamentally changed the way we operate.

Wayne Turmel:

We don't see each other. We don't get the visual cues. We don't have a lot of the nonverbal communication that goes on a regular basis when we all work together. And here's the thing, we are held together by technology. This is our lifeline and yet if we don't use the tools at our disposal well and effectively and use the right tool for the right job, we're in trouble. And I'll give you a simple statistic. 80% of people use 20% of the features of tools like Zoom and Slack and WebEx and whatever.

Wayne Turmel:

Well, think about what this means, especially to your leaders right now who've found themselves thrown in the deep end of it. You've got this job that's always been difficult and not easy, right? This idea of leading people and now we're being asked to do it in ways that we've never had to do it before, using tools that we may not be comfortable with, and by the way, these tools that we've got, we may not be using them very well. No wonder this feels so awkward and weird. And so if we ask, why does this feel so strange? It's because it is strange. It is completely unnatural. But as our boy Genghis Kahn has shown, it is in fact doable.

Wayne Turmel:

Who you see on the right there is Julius Caesar who is a perfect example of somebody who did great out in the field, far away from Rome. Did a great job leading remotely. It's when he went back to the home office, things went a little sideways. But the traditional leadership skills, the things you need the leaders in your organization, the things that if you're a leader you want to do setting the vision, managing performance, giving coaching and feedback, creating a culture, modeling the desired behaviors, getting results because it's not about activity, it's about results. Yup. All those things still apply. The same work needs to be done.

Wayne Turmel:

If I want people to succeed, if I want them to do good work, I need to make sure that the expectations are clear and success is measured and we know what success looks like and I get the information I need to do that. Communication is still a two way process. It's funny when we are all together and I want to make an announcement, and I stand up in the bullpen and I look at everybody's face, it's a two way process. I'm getting feedback. If I am managing by email, it's a one way process. We're not really communicating, we're transferring information, we're transferring data. But communication is a two way process. So as we think about how we communicate, we need to think not only how do we broadcast and transmit messages, but how do we receive quality, accurate input so that we're really communicating.

Wayne Turmel:

People want to be led, not managed. Micromanagement not only is really annoying and awful when you work remotely, it is impossible. You cannot micromanage people at a distance. It is going to annoy you both. The leadership things that we have to do still apply and that's all of them. So that hasn't changed. Okay Wayne, so what has? Well, we don't get the visual contact and as a result, we don't have the same frequency and impact of communication that we have when we see somebody pull into the parking lot or they pass our desk on the way to the coffee pot, or you look up from your desk and you see somebody across the room and go, "Oh, that's right. I need to talk to Alice about that." There's less incidental communication.

Wayne Turmel:

Communication is very intentional. If I have somebody who works from home in Salt Lake City, and I want to say, "Good job." Or I have a question, I can't just reach out. I have to get on some kind of technology, whether it's the phone or Slack or whatever, and it takes typing and time and effort to reach out. As a result, there's a tendency not to communicate as often and yet technology is our lifeline. So if we're not using the right tool in the right way, at the right time, for the right message, we're handicapping ourselves.

Wayne Turmel:

I know that I once led a global training team, 20 some people scattered around the world. The big challenge for managers is out of sight, out of mind. We get so focused on what's in front of us that we forget to reach out. We tend to concentrate on our problem children. We tend to let people take the initiative in reaching out to us and it doesn't always work. One of the things that happens when you have some people working remotely and some in the office is that there are now new stressors between the in house and the remote team members. I call this the mom likes them best syndrome where, "Oh the people who work from home don't have to commute and they only have to be dressed from the belly button up and they get left alone to do their job. They've got it made." And the people who work remotely are like the people who work in the office get all the good assignments and they have the boss's ear and they get paid attention to in meetings while we can't even get a word in edgewise.

Wayne Turmel:

Those kinds of stressors are relatively new. For most of us managers, we have less chance to address challenges before they become fires because we don't know that there is a problem until it pops up on our radar screen. And unless our people are super proactive about reaching out and saying, "Hey, I have a question, or have you seen this yet?" You're only going to find out when the metrics draw your

attention. Ultimately, the big thing is we don't know what's happening out there. And I'm not talking about, well I don't know if they're working, we just don't know what they're working on. Are they working on the right things? Are they working smart? Are they running into objections or problems that we're not seeing? So that's what's changed.

Wayne Turmel:

Communicating remotely is hard because as human beings, we respond mostly to visual cues and we don't get them, right? And so we rely on listening, for example, if we're on the phone or we're on a web meeting like this, we're kind of listening but there are other things maybe we're putting the meeting on mute and answering our email or I'm talking to somebody but I'm driving or I'm sitting waiting for an airplane if we're ever allowed to get back on airplanes. When somebody is right in front of us, we tend to look them in the eye, we tend to give them our attention. They can see that we're listening. It's harder to do in a virtual environment. As I said, it lacks spontaneity, right? You can't just see somebody out of the corner of your eye and go, "Bob got to talk to you about this." It takes more work.

Wayne Turmel:

One of the big changes, and I have been geeking out about this for a really long time and nobody seems to care about me, but I think this is a huge deal. Since the invention of email 25, 30 years ago, whatever it is, more than 70% of business communication is now done in writing. That has never happened in the history of the human race. Think about written communication. It's fast, it's easy. We're going to talk about email in a little bit, but it's different. It's not two way. It's hard to judge tone. You don't know if the reader has read excepted plans to take action, is mad at you for sanding it. We don't know, so the communication, even though it's faster and clear and there's a paper trail and all of that, it's tough and there's less social reinforcement.

Wayne Turmel:

If I'm working in the office and I'm kind of slacking off, but everybody else is working, there's that message, right? If I'm having a bad day and somebody says, "Hey, you can do this or I have a question." And somebody comes to my rescue and that kind of motivates me. That social reinforcement is what helps keep teams together. But there's less of that in a remote environment. It's not that there's none, it's not that there can't be, it's that there often isn't. And so what there is of social reinforcement and team building happens less by accident and happens less organically and more on purpose. So when you are starting to stress, right? When you're starting to second guess yourself, here's the thing to go back to. What is the right management behavior to exhibit regardless of where I and my team are?

Wayne Turmel:

Here's a simple example. I need to give Bob feedback on something, and Bob's kind of not my favorite person and he usually pushes back and I've had a long day. So rather than get on the phone with Bob, I send him an email. I've given him the feedback, I've given him the information I want him to have, but was that the right management behavior? I'll give you an extreme example and I wish I was making this up. My wife was once fired on Yahoo Messenger. Obviously if you're working for somebody who will fire you by instant message, probably not a great loss, but still not a great way to manage your team. And there's a paradox that goes on when we work remotely. We need more trust than ever, right? We need to trust that when somebody says they understand, they actually understand. We need to trust that my message was understood. We need to trust that people will come to us when they have a question.

Wayne Turmel:

So we need more trust, but trust is also more easily broken. So it can often feel that communication is like Sisyphus pushing the rock up the hill, and never quite getting there. It is a constant thing. So I promised you a model that we would take a look at and [inaudible 00:22:43].

Sarah Cirone:

Wayne, before you get into that, we did have a question come through from Cindy and she was asking, "Given that 70% of business communication is in writing, and some people really enjoy writing while others might only know writing from social media or text messaging or Facebook, et cetera, do you have any suggestions on bridging this gap? For example, are there any generational insights that you can share?"

Wayne Turmel:

Wow. Boy, that's probably another webinar for another day when we talk about written communication and email and all of that. But essentially there are a few things, one is that most of us have never received any training since we left school, whether that's college, high school, whatever it is. It's assumed that people know how to write. Managers need to coach their people on their written communication. And the problem of course, is that a lot of managers aren't real confident in their communication. So I think the first thing is we need to be willing to address, if people send emails that look like ransom notes. We need to talk to them about how that's being perceived by the reader especially communication outside the team to inside the organization or to customers, we need to know what that communication looks like and we need to be willing to coach some of that. And it also means that organizations need to provide learning and skill development around business writing.

Wayne Turmel:

And I will tell you, because I have this conversation all day long with people, I say, "Oh, we've got a course on email writing and it's one of those things that everybody complains about and nobody assigns budget to." So you need to ask, "How important is that in your organization?" So is it important? Are you going to give people some sort of help? It doesn't have to be a university course, but are you willing to give them some help and help them develop those skills if they're important enough and are the managers willing to step up and coach? And I will tell you that a lot of managers complain about their people's written communication and never have that conversation because it doesn't rise to the level of a fire.

Wayne Turmel:

I think that that's a big piece of it. There certainly are generational components. The use of slang and emojis and text speak. And most of that is not because people are ignorant or those darn kids have no respect. It's because they're trying to raise the emotional connection to the content. I was just kidding. "Hey, it's all right. It'll be okay. Give you a smile because you can't see me smile as I write this." So it's easy to write off a lot of that as the millennials, and it's not even millennials now it's Gen Z or whatever they are this week. It's easy to write that off as just, "They don't know how business is done. Those darn kids get off my lawn." But what we're seeing is a desire to make written communication, fill the gaps that other technology should be filling. And the reason is we're using email for everything and we shouldn't, and I'm going to get off my soapbox now if that's okay, Sarah.

Sarah Cirone:

Yes.

Wayne Turmel:

Okay.

Sarah Cirone:

Okay, thank you.

Wayne Turmel:

I'm sorry. As a writer, this is something that I get fairly geeked about. All right, we're talking about trust and this model that you're looking at, again, it's from one business leader, but the point is that there are three things necessary to build trust and it doesn't matter whether it's in a marriage, a friendship, everybody's on the same team, in the same place, or you're working remotely. All three of these things need to be in order. The thing is that two of the three are way more influenced when we work remotely. So the first thing is common purpose. Are people working together for the same reasons. Pick the cliché of your choice. They're pulling on the same end of the rope. They're rowing in the same direction, but the people know why they're there and what they're expected to do, and is everybody aligned.

Wayne Turmel:

One thing we find is that this isn't radically changed by whether people are co-located or not. Companies either do a good job of this or they don't. Where it starts to make a difference is that it is very difficult for me to trust somebody if I don't think they're competent to do the job. When we work remotely, how do we draw those conclusions? How do I know that somebody is competent? So let me give you an example. Bob, I've known for years, we've worked together. I've seen him in meetings. He never says much but he takes lots of notes and he's a really smart guy. So when he doesn't say anything on the conference calls, I don't really think too much about it.

Wayne Turmel:

The new kid, Trisha though, I don't know who she is, I don't know her work. She never says anything on conference calls so I don't know. And she just missed a deadline. So obviously Trisha doesn't know what she's doing and can't be trusted. Now is that fair? Probably not. But why do I have that feeling about Bob that I don't have about Trish? It's because I've got this database of stuff. I've got history, I've got evidence that Bob is good at his job. I don't have all that evidence when it comes to Trish, so it's more easily shaken. Same as true with motives. I send out a Slack message to the team asking a question. Alice answers my question right away. Obviously she's got my back. It takes Doug all day to get to me. Obviously Doug doesn't care if I live or die.

Wayne Turmel:

Next time I have a question, am I going to go to Alice or am I going to go to Doug? Again, maybe Doug was busy. Maybe he was looking up the answer. Maybe Alice had nothing better to do and would rather answer my question than do her job, I don't know. All I know is I had a question, Alice answered it and Doug didn't. Alice's my buddy. Think about on your team, what are the challenges that you see that might be related to a lack of trust and have you think about this model, what's out of whack? Are people not aligned? Do people not understand how competent their teammates are? Do they not think that their teammates are motivated to help or working as hard as they are? If you're going to get work done, you need trust, right?

Wayne Turmel:

Social reciprocity is simply, if I do for you, I believe that you're going to do for me in equal or at least equal and maybe more amounts. And so I will go out of my way for a team member knowing that when the time comes, they'll go out of their way for me. If we don't have social reciprocity, if I keep helping Bob solve problems and he's just basically draining my energy over time, I'm just going to quit dealing with Bob, right? When we trust others, there's an enhanced image and impact. When we demonstrate trust people think more highly of us. It's a more pleasant work environment. When we trust each other, we're willing to be proactive. And I don't just mean proactive in terms of completing tasks. I'm talking about willing to give feedback, willing to say, "Hey, I know you said this on that meeting. Maybe we need to talk about that."

Wayne Turmel:

If I don't trust you, I'm probably not going to make that effort. And one thing we know Kevin and I are currently in the process of writing the sequel to *The Long-Distance Leader*. It's called *The Long Distance Teammate* and the one word, whether it's senior leaders, whether it's managers or whether it's individual teleworkers, the one word that comes up more than any other in our conversations is proactive. I'm not going to be proactive if I don't trust the motives of the people on my team. I'm not going to be proactive, if I don't think they're good enough to take action on what I'm telling them. Why bother? When we trust each other, we are seen as not just team members, but real teammates and not just as an individual contributor.

Wayne Turmel:

When other people trust us, we get better answers. People are willing to help us. When people trust us, we get opportunities for development. Those delegated tasks, which very often one of the big gripes that people who work remotely have is all the good assignments, all the chances for development go to the people in the office, right? But if you are a trusted, if you have demonstrated that you care, if you demonstrate all of that, you are more likely to get those opportunities for development, and even if they're not being offered, you're more willing to reach out and say, "Hey, I really like to do that." Right? When other people trust you, there's a positive perception and increased visibility and increased visibility leads to things like promotions and good performance reviews and all of those things that we want. And we are on the boss's radar.

Wayne Turmel:

So trust on remote teams, we need evidence. So as leaders we need to provide evidence. We also need to seek the evidence out. We can't just assume that we're going to know how good a job people are doing or who's a good teammate and who's not. We need to use both synchronous and asynchronous tools. We're going to talk about that in a moment for those unfamiliar with those terms and we really, really need to be proactive. So the question that I would ask you is, what are you doing in your organization, on your teams to provide evidence of purpose, competence, and motives, and to help the team provide evidence to each other? I hope when we get to Q&A that we have lots of questions about this because I'd love to go down the rabbit hole. I just have more stuff I need to talk about first.

Wayne Turmel:

All right, so that second gear that we were talking about, the tools and technology piece. What's wrong with communicating through technology? Well, the fact of the matter is that we have more tools than ever at our disposal. Genghis Kahn basically had fast horses, good arrows and yurts. That was the

technology that allowed them to run an empire, right? So we have the tools at our disposal that nobody in history has ever had, but a lot of it doesn't fit the way that we naturally are hardwired to communicate, which is in person in real time and visually getting all kinds of nonverbal cues that help us translate, communicate and understand each other.

Wayne Turmel:

The other thing about technology is that we don't get instant feedback, or at least we don't get enough feedback to really make sure that we understand what's said to us and that the message was understood when we send a message. And the problem with technology is we often default to the fastest or most convenient tool, email because it's fast and it's easy. And I get a question from Alice who's driving me crazy and she's asking a question that she should know the answer to. And so rather than say, "Maybe I need to talk to Alice and see if there's more there than I know." I just send her a snarky email and move on with my life. Right tool, right job, right way to use it. How do we do that?

Wayne Turmel:

Well, the problem, as I said is not a shortage of tools. I would submit that most organizations have enough technology right now, right this minute. If we stopped everything, we could be highly functional with what we have in our kits already, but we also go back to 80% of people use 20% of the features. If you've got Skype for business and you're not using webcams with each other, you're working with one hand tied behind your back. If you have WebEx and all you're doing is sharing screens and you're not using the whiteboard and encouraging people to chat and recording the meetings and all of those features, it's going to be harder to be effective and to build your team.

Wayne Turmel:

So how do we choose the right tool for the right job? This is the third model that I promised I would share with you, and it's not my research. Very, very smart woman in Europe named Bettina Bucco who came up with the concept of richness versus scope. Here's what it means in a nutshell. Face to face communication is incredibly rich. We're getting verbal, nonverbal, vocal, body language, eye contact, facial expressions. It's probably less formal. So it's in real time. We're not afraid to ask questions. We can check for understanding. It's also completely impractical, right? If you've got people scattered across the country or even across the county and let's face it, you don't need face to face communication for there's donuts in the break room, right? You don't need to go to every cubicle and tell them that. What you need is something with scope and that's where email comes in, for example, high scope low in richness.

Wayne Turmel:

What do we mean by scope? Well, a hundred people can get the same message at the same time, delivered the exact same way. There's a record so we can go back and look at it and confirm. We can share that information with others. It's a fabulous tool and anybody who's ever spent three days apologizing for an email, it took 30 seconds to write, understands that it lacks richness. Tone is easily misunderstood. We think we've been clear, but there's no way to immediately check for understanding. We don't know if anybody's going to take action sometimes for hours, days, weeks, months afterwards. So all the tools at our disposal are a balance of richness versus scope. Web meetings, if you are sharing your screen and using the audio and that's all you're doing, they can be much richer than that.

Wayne Turmel:

A really good rich web meeting has a visual component. You're sharing visuals, you're hopefully on webcam, you're making it interactive. This while we're making it richer by using the webcam, and showing you a lot of visuals has what, 300 plus people on the line right now, it's by definition not going to be interactive. We're taking questions as we go and we'll take a lot of questions in a minute. But if this was a seven person project team where everybody's mic was open and everybody was sharing in the chat was going and people were talking, it would be a much richer, more valuable experience.

Wayne Turmel:

So think about the tools at your disposal and when you go back to work, take a look at this matrix and ask yourself which tools do you and your team use? Well, which tools do you and your team maybe not use, this should say not use, as well as you could or should and are you balancing richness versus scope and as the leader, if we go back to, "I need to think like a leader first." Am I choosing the right tool for the right job and then how well am I modeling that use. If I refuse to use my webcam, why should I be surprised that my people won't. If I keep attaching attachments to emails instead of using SharePoint or the Google Drive, guess what? Your team isn't going to use SharePoint. Number one factor in whether a team uses a tool is whether the leader uses it themselves and uses it consistently.

Wayne Turmel:

All right, we are going to take questions and hopefully we've got a bunch of them. I just want for those of you who know Kevin Eikenberry and are familiar with our work, we actually have a special webpage set up right now that is full of work from home tips and things that you can do and articles and not all of it is ours. We're sharing the best information we've got absolutely free. So take advantage of that. I am going to just say I thought I had a question and answer slide and I don't. So Sarah, we got about 15 minutes. What do we get?

Sarah Cirone:

Yes, we got a question come in from Charlie and he asks he says, "This is a strange period of time where a lot more people are getting exposed to remote management work. What are your hopes and fears for the longterm ramifications?"

Wayne Turmel:

Wow. Hopes and fears. I think that certainly longterm more people are going to be taking advantage of remote work and if they're not allowed to take advantage of it, they will seek it. And the proof that I offer is during Hurricane Harvey in Houston, I had a client, big insurance company, and they were like, "We will never allow people to work from home. Our culture and stuff. They have to be here." And then their offices flooded out and people had to work from home. And as soon as the officers were ready, they said, "Okay, the mother ship is fine. Come on back." And they got a lot of resistance.

Wayne Turmel:

Some people found they didn't feel like fighting Houston traffic anymore. Other people found that, "I got a lot more done when I worked from home. Can I at least work from home a couple of days a week?" And their whole plan was, "No, we are going to be all together." And people started self-selecting. They started lobbying for the right to work from home. Some of them changed jobs because they were suddenly being asked to go back to the office and they went, "You know, I don't think so."

Wayne Turmel:

So that's one of the things every time there is an event like this. 9/11 when all of a sudden nobody could fly was a sea change. Natural disasters like Katrina and Harvey and earthquakes make a difference. Snowstorms in Chicago, I lived in Chicago for almost 20 years. People realized they didn't need to risk their lives so they could be there for the Tuesday status meeting. So I think some of it is that there's going to be an exponential growth in people working from home at least part time. Now, short term, there are a lot of people freaking out and people who suddenly find themselves working from home and they weren't prepared for it, there's really two things I think you're going to need to watch for. One is that Americans in particular have nearly half of our social interactions take place at work. We make friends at work, we hang with the people we work with, we rely on them for our social contact and there's a lot of people that are going to be missing that.

Wayne Turmel:

That's why webcams are so important because people need to feel still connected to their teams. Here's the thing about webcams though that I think it's the second thing I want to draw your attention to. A lot of people are worried, "Well what if my kid runs into the room or what if the dog barks or what if I'm in my ACDC T-shirt and my bunny slippers and I don't look office ready." And you know what? Unless you've got a customer on the line, unless you're working with the CEO, if you're just talking to the people you always work with, that's okay. You know what happens when the kid runs into the room during a conference call, everybody goes, "Hi Casey, how are you?" And you shoe the kid out of the room and it continues. More than ever, we need to know that we are human we need to know that we are connected to the people we work with and knowing their circumstances, knowing that they don't have an office to themselves and they're working from the north end of the dining room table is critical information.

Wayne Turmel:

If we're going to lead and encourage them. If we assume they've got this lovely home office set up and then we're upset because they're not being productive. If we don't understand why they don't have their head in the game and they've got a sick parent right now, working from home is going to be a terrible experience. It doesn't have to isolate us the way we think it will and I think that's something Charlie, that we really need to be thinking about and I'm spending a lot of time talking about it right now.

Sarah Cirone:

That was great. Ariana asks if you have any specific recommendations for teams that are navigating significant time differences, eight plus hours.

Wayne Turmel:

Yeah. You know, time zones are a bear and what you need is a good mix of synchronous and asynchronous tools. One thing that I'm seeing a lot of people start to use and I'm using it more myself, is using video to record messages. So rather than just leave a voicemail, you're actually getting on Skype, hitting record, getting a message, and then sending the file to the person. We need to take advantage of tools like Slack or Microsoft Teams that have channels so that we get away from using email for everything. And the channels in those tools allow us to be real specific about, "You know what? I care about this project. I care about this, I don't care about this. I don't need to check that right now." Makes it easier to parcel out the information. The other thing about those tools is when you're working asynchronously, information becomes super transactional.

Wayne Turmel:

Every communication is about work and there's no personal connection at all. One of the things that we've found is at Kevin Eikenberry Group, we've got a Slack channel called Water Cooler, and that's where we're putting stupid memes that we find and jokes that we come across and articles that are amusing and aren't necessarily work related, but people might care about. That's where we talk about, "Hey, our kid did this, or my football team got whooped." Or those kinds of conversations, which allows people who aren't in the same time zone as you to still participate and feel like part of the team.

Wayne Turmel:

So I think there obviously needs to be an increase in asynchronous communication. The other thing is if you do need these synchronous communication, occasionally the manager or the rest of the team needs to take one for the team. If the person in... Well, I live in Las Vegas, I'm on West Coast Time, I can't tell you how many times I've got an important call at 6:00 in the morning. Over time, that starts to grate on you. I'm not as young as I used to be. I don't mind doing that for customers, but if Kevin insisted on having nine o'clock Eastern team calls all the time, after a while, I'm going to get awful tired of that. So occasionally he puts one at the end of the day, Eastern Time, which makes easy for me and the folks out West and we really appreciate that. Makes a difference. And the people in the East say, "Well I was going to..." "Yeah, I know. Sucks to be you. Get on the call." It shares the pain a little bit. So those are a couple of things that strike me as things we can do right now.

Sarah Cirone:

That's great. Dina says, Our department just launched Microsoft Teams and it's working great. What technology do you prefer to bridge communication gaps?"

Wayne Turmel:

Yeah, it's funny we get asked this question a lot as you can imagine. And my answer is, I don't care if you're using carrier pigeons and cursive as long as you're using it well and mindfully. Remember 80% of people use 20% of the features. So I honestly don't care Microsoft teams Slack, Yammer, there's a bunch of tools out there, as long as you're maximizing them. What you need are certain functions. You need a webcam and instant messaging and file transfer and all of that stuff that can be done in a workflow. So that you aren't using... and I know people that are using WebEx for meetings and communication, but they're using Microsoft Teams for chat and their using Zoom for one-on-one calls and I just go, "Why are you doing that? Have a process, have a set of processes and tools that work together that don't require multiple logins and people don't have to have 18 passwords to get their work done.

Wayne Turmel:

What you need is if you're using Microsoft Teams, make sure that you're using the webcams, make sure that you've got it connected to SharePoint so people can share files so it works. If you're working in Slack, make sure that they have access to the shared drives through Slack. Make sure that they have the Zoom application in there. So if I'm Slacking with someone and they have a question I go, "You know what? Let's just talk about this." Click, one click of a button and we're in a video call. That's going to make your team work. I don't [inaudible 00:52:34] are you using Outlook, are you using Gmail? Doesn't matter. The point is, are you using it well and does the team understand the workflow and how this works so each tool doesn't feel like something separate and extra or people are going to default to what's easier, which is usually email.

Sarah Cirone:

Great. We have another really good question that came in from Andrea and she asks, "When or if we return to normal work, how do you suggest teams embed the new learnings from remote working for a longterm benefit versus just returning to the way things were?"

Wayne Turmel:

Wow. If I understand the question, it's... You know a lot of organizations are... Oh now all of a sudden everything's about remote work, right? But when, however long it is from now we go back to the real world, we forget that ever happened. I don't think that's going to happen. I think that for leaders particularly, there is no such thing as I'm only going to spend my career managing in person. If you think about project management, for example, 90% of projects according to PMI have at least one key team member who works somewhere from everybody else. If you think about anything above first line manager, you've probably got one or two people on your team who works somewhere else. They're in another office, they're in another geography. They work from home a few days a week. This is now part of the norm and I know that it sounds self-serving and wheezily to say that there are organizations like remote leadership Institute who teach this stuff, but our attitude is this is a core competency now this should be an end to your leadership development plan.

Wayne Turmel:

People need to build this in. I not to sound like I'm bragging, I got asked to help Southern New Hampshire University put together their virtual MBA and a big piece of that now is working with remote teams and remote communication even though it's a standard MBA. It's not about working remotely. It's part of the MBA program, but it's an important piece. So I think short-term, yes, you need to help people function with this. I think one term, it needs to be an hand to what we're already doing for our leadership development. I hope that helps.

Sarah Cirone:

And I think we have time for one more question because I know you have another slide to get to before we wrap things up today. Carol would like to know if you could provide examples of when it's best to pick up the phone and instead of relying on written communications and how leaders set the tone in this regard.

Wayne Turmel:

I mean obviously there needs to be a point at which this email thread isn't getting it done. I heard somebody, and I don't know who to give it credit to. It's not me said that every team needs an ELMO, which is an acronym for Enough Let's move on. And basically your whole team, this isn't just the leaders, your whole team should be able to recognize this isn't getting the communication done. Let's get on a meeting. Anybody, you should be able to call a meeting. Anybody should be able to call an audible to a conversation and say, "You know what? We need to get on the phone and talk or we need to get on our webcams and talk about this." But the leaders especially need to be monitoring the communication and if the emails are bouncing back and forth, bouncing back and forth, you need to step up and say, "Hey, you need to go talk to Alice and solve this because. This is just going round and round."

Wayne Turmel:

And I think when we think more about what are the tools at our disposal and we get more comfortable doing that, when we step away from the fire and think about richness versus scope, it's easier to say,

"You know, this is a webcam conversation. This isn't something we can do on email. We should have a web meeting about this." And we can do it with the push of a button. I think it's going to start to make more sense. You mentioned an extra slide, no actually it's something from HRDQ that we want to share with you. If somebody is interested in getting a free copy of Long Distance Leader or Meet Like You Mean It. If you draw me one name of each. So one copy of long distance leader, one copy of Meet Like You Mean It. If you drop me an email or connect with me on LinkedIn, I'll put your name in the drawing and you know, Monday morning we will choose a winner. But the really important thing is Sarah, I'll bet you that there's more stuff from HRDQ that they want to hear about.

Sarah Cirone:

Yes, thank you so much, Wayne this was an amazing presentation that you had today. This webinar was sponsored by HRDQ consulting, a team of highly experienced consultants who can pull your teams together online from remote locations. You can learn more at www.hrdq.com/consulting. Again, I want to give a big thank you to Wayne for joining us today

Wayne Turmel:

Well, thank you.

Sarah Cirone:

And I would like to, and I would like to thank you all for participating in today's webinar. Have a good day all.