

Sarah Cirone:

Hi everyone and welcome to today's webinar, ***Re-Entry Without Burning Up: Getting the Workplace Back to Normal***, 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 one hour. If you have any questions please type them into the question area on your GoToWebinar control panel, and we'll answer as many as we can during today's session.

Sarah Cirone:

Today's webinar is sponsored by HRDQ-U Reproducible Training Library. The RTL as it is known consists of 84 half-day soft skills training courses, over 300 hours of high-quality learning content. Each course includes instructor-led classroom and self-study versions and a new virtual instructor-led version has been added for each course. The RTL, it's downloadable and customizable learning. Learn more at [www.hrdqstore.com/rtl](http://www.hrdqstore.com/rtl).

Sarah Cirone:

I'm excited to introduce our presenter today Wayne Turmel. Wayne is a writer, speaker and co-founder of the Remote Leadership Institute. 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 Leaders Guide To Painless & 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:

An honor, good heavens. Okay, well, lovely to be here. We're thrilled and just a couple of things for the audience, we're going to start with a poll. If you thought this was one of those put your phone on mute and go answer your email deals you're wrong. The second thing is that throughout the program, I would love it if you would ask questions as they occur to you. Use the question box. Sarah will moderate and get it. I would rather that we not just let me talk for 45 minutes and then hold it till the end. So get your questions in queue.

Wayne Turmel:

But we're going to start. It's going to be helpful to me to know where you are in your organization's journey right now. So where are you with returning to the workplace. Is nobody back yet? Some people are back. Some people are working from home but the goal is that everyone will return to the mothership. Some people are back, some will continue working from home in the future or everybody's already back. Just go ahead and on, we'll give you a few seconds to answer and get that in there. And then Sarah will share the results with us.

Wayne Turmel:

And again, the handout, this presentation is available as a handout. It's in your dashboard there. And we do want your questions in queue. Obviously, with this many people, we can't open the phone lines, but we do want to make sure that we're giving you what you want. So Sarah, what do we got here? Whoops. That's interesting.

Sarah Cirone:

There we go. I'm sharing those results. Can you see those Wayne?

Wayne Turmel:

Hang on, I need to open the poll. Wow. If we're looking at this, only 2% have everybody back, 8% are some are back, some are going to continue working. Basically, either nobody's back yet, or only a few people are back. So that is really really helpful information. I don't why this keeps kicking out of slideshow mode, but that's okay. Thank you. That's very helpful.

Wayne Turmel:

Here's what we're going to talk about today. And the goal is to make sure that we're relating this to us. So this is going to be helpful. We're going to talk about what are we hearing about people returning to the workplace. I think you may be comforted to know that you're sharing the common concerns that everybody has. Maybe there are things unique to your environment. It's not just getting people back to normal, but making sure that they're ready to go back to work.

Wayne Turmel:

I know that I'm using the word normal and that is probably not the right word to use. Because while nobody can state with 100% certainty what it's going to look like in a post-corona world, normal like it was four months ago is probably not the right answer.

Wayne Turmel:

We're going to look at three things for helping the team reform. Three things that we're going to need to take into account and build on. We're going to talk about some techniques for creating a single team, even when some people haven't returned to the workplace or haven't returned yet. And if you have been managing a totally co-located team or a totally remote team, odds are you're going to find yourself with some weird mutant hybrid of what your team looks like with some people working in the central location and some people working remotely. And then we're going to talk about something really important which is getting off to a good start, resetting priorities, goals, and objectives for the rest of the year.

Wayne Turmel:

That's a lot to cover in a very short period of time. So let's deal with the fact that... I have a couple of friends who work at NASA. Not surprisingly, they are way, way, way smarter than me. And they will tell you that the most difficult thing about a space launch is re-entry. Getting people up is way, way easier than getting them home safely. And that's what we're going to be dealing with.

Wayne Turmel:

We have launched people, some of us have been lucky enough to plan for it. Some of us have experienced working from home before. And most of us were just shot into space and made to make it work. I will tell you that I am amazed at how well overall, we've made it work. People have really talked to CEOs and senior leaders, and they are shocked at how well working from home has worked. And that's a double-edged sword.

Wayne Turmel:

Because if you've been able to make it work under bad circumstances, maybe we can make it work under better circumstances. And so not everybody is in a hurry to return. We're going to talk about that in a moment. But what are people concerned about? Actually, I would love if you could use the chat and then Sarah, feel free to share the results with me.

Wayne Turmel:

What are you hearing your people are concerned about? The number one thing not surprisingly, is they want to know what's changed? What's going to be different? Some of those changes are going to be physical. Are we getting temperature checks at the door? Are we separating the desks? Is there going to be this giant plexiglass maze? What's going to go on? What has actually changed?

Wayne Turmel:

How have my teammates been impacted? One of the things that we know about the last four months is that everybody has been impacted differently. In terms of the disease, some people haven't been impacted at all. And this is all a huge inconvenience and it's all Bill Gates's fault, and that's it. Others have lost family members. Some people, my wife and I are empty nesters, we got a new dog. That's been the big change in our life. Other people have been in the house with kids who are trying to finish their schooling and spouses who are working from home now.

Wayne Turmel:

So, everybody's experience of the last few months has been different. As we go back to the workplace, some people aren't with us anymore. Some people are going to leave voluntarily. Some people are leaving for health reasons. We don't even want to go to the ugly extreme of that. But there are going to be new roles and responsibilities. A lot of organizations have taken this opportunity to reorganize themselves. It's going to look different.

Wayne Turmel:

One thing that people are absolutely looking for is what's the company's plan? As I talked to people who have been working from home, one of the big things is they just know we got sent working home. Nobody really has a plan. I hope there's a plan. People are suffering chaos exhaustion. And how the organization brings people back in and helps them re-enter without burning up, is going to play a big role in things like engagement, and turnover.

Wayne Turmel:

Finally, now that we have those new changes, does that include me? Are you going to reduce in staff, and I've just gone for months of hell for nothing? Are there new opportunities? What is this going to mean for me? And we know that human beings are essentially self-centered, even the ones who care about their organization and care about their teammates and care about the world. They're still a what's

in it for me. And so if you can't answer that question for people other than "Well, you still get a paycheck." It's going to be a little bit stressful.

Sarah Cirone:

Wayne, we had some comments come through from the audience. People are saying they're concerned about public transportation and traveling. They're worried about health and safety. How are we going to be safe? How are they going to maintain distance? What are the new revisions when we do our work? Some people just don't want to return to work that they would love working from home permanently to be an option.

Wayne Turmel:

Ah, therein lies the issue. I love a good segue whoever wrote that, that's perfect. Because remember, I said, we're returning to normal, but it's probably not going to look like that. One of the surprises of the last four months is a lot of organizations who thought that they needed to be located all together that they needed to be geographically centered, that they needed an office space and all of these things were really surprised to find that a lot of jobs people didn't think they could do at home can, in fact, be done at home. And while most people want to return to whatever they were doing before, in general, the genie is out of the bottle in terms of remote work.

Wayne Turmel:

What I'm hearing a lot is I miss my co-workers, I miss going to work. It's important to me to have a place to go to work. But some days it would be nice to be able to stay home and finish that project. Or they're expecting snow tomorrow, maybe I'll just work from home. That is going to play a big part of this. So when we start asking people are you ready to go back to work? That's one of the questions. Ready to go? And everybody's like, "Man, I can't catch a bus. Because I don't know what the transportation deal is going to be like. My kids haven't gone back to school yet. I would love to go back..."

Wayne Turmel:

Most Americans will tell you that over 60% of their daily social interaction takes place through the workplace, dealing with co-workers, dealing with customers. We have learned that not everybody works well in isolation. There's a reason that solitary confinement is one of the worst things they can do to you in prison. So yeah, people are eager to go back to work, but we need to know what's going on at home. What are their concerns about returning to work?

Wayne Turmel:

I will tell you that there are people who will march through the door tomorrow, no mask, no nothing. "Well, that was all nonsense. Let's get back to work." And there are other people that are going to want to be masked up, wrap themselves in bubble wrap, and we'll go back to the office kicking and screaming. You can judge that, you can have your own opinions about that. But those concerns are going to be absolutely valid.

Wayne Turmel:

We just talked about what are their plans for future remote work? And what are their concerns about re-entry? It sounds like right now, the questions are primarily physical health-related, that kind of thing. Over time, I will give you a concern that's not on this list that I think some organizations are going to struggle with. And that's the interpersonal dynamic.

Wayne Turmel:

If you think about the last few months, not only in terms of COVID but in terms of everything that's going on in this country, unrest, polarization all those things. "I used to work with Larry and we don't really get along but he's an okay guy and we've done fine. But now I've been sitting at home reading Larry's Facebook posts for the last three months. And Larry has said some things that just infuriate me and make me crazy and have basically insulted me. And now I got to go back and be nice to Larry."

Wayne Turmel:

I think, I have nothing to back this up, but just from what I'm hearing from people that is going to be a thing. And we need to remember friction is natural, friction is normal. It's also the leading cause of burnout. Friction is the problem, is everybody on the same page? Is everybody pulling together for the same reasons? Are we of a mind about the mission of the company and what we do? And we've spent a lot of time with people working separately from each other. So this is going to be a very, very big deal.

Wayne Turmel:

If we don't address some of this friction... and again, let's get your questions in here. But if we don't address the friction and recognize that it's going to be there, there are going to be some unexpected challenges. Most of the people on this call are in HR in some form. I hope you're buckled up. I hope you got some sleep because it's going to get weird. Doesn't mean it can't be successful. That's the thing. You want to plan for it. You want to be prepared so that you can deal with the friction.

Sarah Cirone:

Wayne, we actually had a question come through. And the question is, are more team meetings work-related slash social check-ins a good idea?

Wayne Turmel:

Man, we are so going to get there. I promise we will. One of the things as with everything in technology, human beings have not invented anything that isn't both a tool and a weapon. We've gone through a huge technological leap in the last four months that nobody saw coming. For those of us who have been preaching, use your webcam and use virtual meetings rather than getting everybody all together. I seem a little bit like Nostradamus, but there was always resistance.

Wayne Turmel:

"Well, we don't want to use our webcams, people aren't dressed for work. They're working at the north end of the dining room table." Suddenly, we've gone from nobody wants to use their webcam to something that is a legit complaint called Zoom fatigue. Where in an effort to be connected, in an effort to keep everybody socialized, we've kind of swung the pendulum to the point where it's exhausting. People are just like, "I can't do this anymore." What we've learned is that being on camera and using tools like Zoom and GoToMeeting and whatever you're using, affect the body differently than we thought.

Wayne Turmel:

And so, yes, we've gone from nobody's using their webcam to I'm using it all the time. And we've done that in the interest of being connected and staying involved in socialization. And some people are going

to be happy not to be on five Zoom meetings a day. So all of that is a way of saying, here's what we need to do to help the team reformed.

Wayne Turmel:

The first thing is be aware that it's going to take time. If you have everybody's task lists, and they were working at home on Friday and Monday, they're in the office and you expect them to just pick up where they left off. It's not reasonable. And it's not reasonable for a lot of reasons. So just know that you're going to have to take some time for people to reacclimate.

Wayne Turmel:

One of the big things that we're going to have to do and this was a problem with remote teams before all of this, and it's going to be huge now, which is communicate with everyone equally. That doesn't mean communicate with everybody the same. But it means, for example, there's going to be a tendency, "Hey, everybody who's here, let's go to the conference room, let's have some bagels, let's have a meeting. I'll give you the update. And then all give the meeting, the people who work remotely will have a call for them."

Wayne Turmel:

The people that work remotely are going to feel slighted. There are some things we need the same information at the same time. If you're using your webcam with some people and only the phone with others, that's fine once in a while. But there is an unequal level of communication going on there. There's going to be a tendency to over communicate with the people who are in the office and go back to treating the people who are remote as separate. If you really want to form a team, you're going to have to be more mindful of that.

Wayne Turmel:

One of the reasons it's going to take a while is we're going to need to give people a chance to get reacquainted. A lot of these people while they've spoken to each other on meetings or through the course of their work, they haven't had a chance to socialize and get to know each other the way they did before all of this came down.

Wayne Turmel:

People will have lost family members to the disease. There are life changes that happened during this time. Some people will have been locked in with families. Others will have been completely isolated by themselves. How did you spend quarantine? How were you doing? Is going to be an important question. And just like teachers don't expect students to knuckle down the first day of school and crack the books. Because everybody's catching up. What did you do over the summer? That period of time is still going to be necessary. Give people a chance to be reacquainted.

Wayne Turmel:

And if you can do this in an organized way and build that time in with pizza lunches, and whatever else needs to happen to give people that chance to reconnect, you can ramp up the time it takes to get back to work. If you don't give people the structured time to do that, every phone call is going to take twice as long. People are going to spend a lot more time gossiping than they would normally. So, better to build that into your plan.

Wayne Turmel:

One of the things that is going to be really important, and on an individual manager level, those of you who manage teams, it's really, really critical that you be very clear and transparent. What's changed in what's going on? What hasn't changed? And what don't you know yet? Are people who used to be in the office going to be working from home? Has there been turnover? Are there changes to the way you're scheduling time so that some people are coming in earlier, and leaving earlier and some are coming later and staying later to reduce the number of bodies, those types of things? What regulations have changed?

Wayne Turmel:

"Hey, we're down to one bathroom per floor," whatever it is, you need to be really explicit about what's changed and what hasn't. And if you don't know the answer yet, don't try to BS people. They're in no mood for it. And then, as a team, you need to review and confirm your goals. So we promised you three things that you really need to take into account. Are there questions in queue, Sarah, before I launch into this?

Sarah Cirone:

We had a question comes through from Laurie and Laurie says a big challenge for us is to allow working from home is the question of how hourly employees can properly report their time i.e. checking in and clocking out. Do you have any recommendations on how to successfully navigate that?

Wayne Turmel:

It's really tough with hourly because you can err on the both sides of this. One is we're going to monitor their keystrokes and their keyboard time, and we're going to be really draconian about monitoring this. And you can do that, you run the risk of alienating people or appearing to be micromanaging. They're also legitimate concerns about, are they on Facebook when they should be working? Or are they even in the office? I think that it all boils down to being very clear about what are the expectations and what are the metrics?

Wayne Turmel:

How are we going to measure when people do they need to log in at a certain time and log off at a certain time? Do they need to check in at certain periods? I think a lot of organizations even hourly ones are going to be a little more focused on results versus behavior. If you're got hourly folks now, you know that just because they checked in at nine o'clock and checked out at the appropriate time, doesn't mean that they were working the whole time they were there.

Wayne Turmel:

So you're going to have to be very clear. I would go to places like the Department of Labor, Federal Department of Labor, certain state boards are setting guidelines around this. And there are regulations that vary state to state, so check in there. But the big thing is going to be set the expectations and with those expectations is how are you going to monitor it?

Wayne Turmel:

The first thing you got to do is you check in with the team, has anyone circumstances changed? What's different? Have families smushed together? Have there been breaks? My daughter just broke up with

her boyfriend during all this because things needed to be more chaotic. Have people lost people? These are going to be important questions.

Wayne Turmel:

If people's circumstances have changed, how much do we share with the team? What are they willing to share? Hey, it's one thing to say, I'm not really crazy about everybody knowing my business. But if I'm missing deadlines, is it important that people know that I'm dealing with a house full of people, and I don't have space to myself? Or do we just assume that I'm an idiot and can't do my job?

Wayne Turmel:

If somebody's lost a family member or if people have been sick during all of this, is that something they're willing to share? I tend to err on the side of transparency. I think if Sharon is suffering, it's important as her teammates that we support her. And we want to respect her privacy. So those are conversations you're going to have to have with every single member of the team.

Wayne Turmel:

One of the things that's happened is people have learned a lot. A lot of people who didn't think working from home was even possible, have learned all kinds of tricks. People have learned technology things. "Hey, did you know on Zoom, you can do this," or "did you know?" " You know what I learned about sharing on Office 365?" Maybe the whole team can learn from that.

Wayne Turmel:

And what are the team members plans for that home and office balance, are we going to go back to being 100 percent remote, or 100% co-located? Some people are going to say "I dig this working from home thing. I don't ever want to go back to the office." Others are going to be, "A day or two a week would be really nice not to have to fight traffic." But what are their plans?

Wayne Turmel:

Because that's going to play a big role in re-setting goals and expectations. And the one thing I can tell you, and I feel bad about this because I know how hard you worked in October and November to create a year's goals and create plans. And guess what, they're not worth the powder it takes to blow them up right now. Everybody's goals have changed, the organization's goals have changed in terms of revenue and growth, and all of that stuff. So, it's going to be important that as a manager you sit down with each person and find out what's going on.

Wayne Turmel:

The first thing you want to do is go back to what was the plan? Hey, remember back in January, when the world was relatively sane, and we said, this was your development plan, these were the things you were going to work on. These were the goals you're going to hit. How are we doing? Are we relatively on track? Is that plan just a smoke in ruin? What's the deal? So let's go back and look at what we said we were going to do. Then what needs to change? Are there things?

Wayne Turmel:

We can't make up for the revenue that we've lost during this time. Those numbers aren't going to change for those months, how are we going to adjust for the rest of the year? And we need to agree to

the balance of the year not just the goals, but how we're going to measure it. And that's going to change if people's balance of working from home and in the office is going to change how you measure behavior, is going to change.

Wayne Turmel:

It's really important that you document the new agreement that this isn't just verbal because guess what? That original year plan was written down, it was set with HR, their compensation is probably tied to it. All of those things, we need to document the new agreement and how all of these changes are going to impact compensation is going to be a very, very difficult conversation for a lot of folks in HR.

Wayne Turmel:

We said we need to allow for updates and socialization. And this isn't just for the re-entry time, it's going forward. With everybody was in the office, there was a lot of socialization and gossip isn't always bad. A lot of news traveled internally and traveled more or less equally. Now your team is going to be restructured, it's going to look different. And it's going to be important that you maintain a one-team approach, and we're going to talk more about that in just a moment.

Wayne Turmel:

It is going to be natural that with the people who are co-located with you, if you are also as the manager in the office, they're going to be very demanding of your time. Some of them for good valid reasons, some of them out of sheer need for human contact. It is important to people that they have a good relationship with their manager. And some are going to overcompensate by being what you might feel is needy. And really, they're just trying to get back on a footing that they feel you know what they're doing, that you appreciate them, that you're working well together.

Wayne Turmel:

If you have not already done it, really simple things like birthdays and work anniversaries, and it's not just for the people in the office, make sure that everybody is up to date on those social activities that are basically an excuse to create contact. Why do we care that it's somebody's birthday? "Well, Bob likes to be recognized." But more than that you know what happens is Bob gets 20 messages that say, "Hey, happy birthday." It creates a reason for social connection.

Wayne Turmel:

One of the concrete things you can do if you haven't done it yet, is if you're using a channel like Microsoft Teams or Slack or Jabber or one of 700,000 different tools out there, create a channel just for non-work specific activities. We have what we call it the water cooler. People call it the happy hour room, people call it a lot of things. That's where they can have the "Hey, it's my kids. My kid won an award at school," conversations, or "Hey, did anybody see this funny video?"

Wayne Turmel:

I have a thing at work. I have a thing for otter videos. I think otters are really adorable, and I think they have the perfect life because they spend all day at the beach floating on their back eating seafood off their tummy. And I can't think of a better existence. So every once in a while, if I find a really short otter video, I'll post it to the Slack channel. And we get a laugh, and we move on with our lives.

Wayne Turmel:

Build time into your meetings, especially your virtual meetings. You will probably have fewer virtual meetings than you did before. And all the people said, "Yay." But don't go back to meeting time and virtual conversations being strictly transactional. We now understand the importance of connection. And as more people are going to be remote more often, we need to create those activities in those times for people to connect on a personal level.

Wayne Turmel:

Share good news with the team. One of the behaviors that virtual managers fall into and they do it out of the goodness of their heart is if Mary works in Denver, and she does a good job, I make a point of reaching out to Mary and saying, "Good job, Mary." Who else hears that? I need to make a habit of maybe sending out an email or a Slack message that said, "Hey, did everybody see what Mary did with that client?" Or bringing it up in meetings? Share good news. We need all the positive vibes we can get right now. It's going to be a very traumatic time. And while it's easy to think, this has got to be easier than the last four months, there is work to be done. Anything in the question box there, Sarah?

Sarah Cirone:

Yeah. We had a question come through from Anya. Anya says as a manager, how do you address your employees' emotional state if your agency doesn't supply any of that assistance?

Wayne Turmel:

Wow. I believe, and Kevin Eikenberry certainly believes this I don't think there's any such thing as a good manager-employee relationship that is strictly business. I think that we need to know our people and we need to know where they are. Some organizations have resources, there is employee assistance, there are some things. I think if there are resources in your organization, by all means, make sure people are aware of them.

Wayne Turmel:

I think as a manager, though, just being aware of some of those challenges, and being empathetic goes a long way. If I come down on you because you missed a deadline. And the reason you missed a deadline is because you're sharing bandwidth with four other people. And you couldn't get on the network. Am I really going to take you to the woodshed for that? And am I going to find a way to empathize and maybe find some workarounds and work with you to solve that problem?

Wayne Turmel:

I don't expect managers to be psychiatrists, and we're not all necessarily, people, people. Dealing with other people's stuff is hard. I remember I was working with a client, and they had a bunch of people who got promoted and immediately quit being managers and went back to their jobs. And when I asked the guy why, it was at a tech company, I asked the guy why and he said, "Because code does what you tell it to do the first time, and you don't have to ask how the kids are."

Wayne Turmel:

Dealing with people's stuff is an important job of the manager. Now, it doesn't mean that you allow it to become hugely disruptive. But understanding what's going on, being empathetic and helping people find ways to deal with it. Maybe the answer is, you know what, if you need to take time in the middle of the day to read your kids, but you're willing to put the time in after dinner, I'm good with that. As long as the report comes in on time, let's find a way to make this work.

Wayne Turmel:

If we pretend that everybody is fine, and we move ahead as if everything is fine. We're going to get surprised and those surprises are not going to be pleasant. So find out where people are. And don't just ask, "Hey, how's it going?" It's a legit question. How are you doing? What are your concerns? What are you worried about? Is there anything I need to know? That's a huge question for managers. Because it's so wide open, you'll sometimes be surprised and a little shocked at what they will tell you.

Wayne Turmel:

But what do I need to know is a really, really powerful question. And from there, you can decide sometimes people just need to vent. Sometimes they need a shoulder, sometimes they need help. And if your organization has that help available, I think it's important. I think if there are things that are told in confidence, it's incumbent on us to preserve those confidences. Those are some of the things that I think we need to be really aware of.

Wayne Turmel:

The final really big piece of this is we were a team. Whether we were totally co-located team, or we were a hybrid team, and some people were remote and some people were here. But the goal is to be a team. As we go back, and as I'm looking at the poll results, some people are back, some are still working from home. We're going to find that if you were a hybrid before, you're going to be a real hybrid now. And if you were a totally co-located team before, odds are you're going to have people who aren't there physically for every meeting because people will now that they know they can work from home, they will occasionally take advantage of that.

Wayne Turmel:

You need to still be a team. There are some things you can do. Stay focused on the vision. Remind everybody what we're here. What is the charter of this project? What is the goal of this team? What is our company's mission? This is what we're doing and wherever you put your butt on any given work day that's what we need to focus on is the work. People are willing to surround not only a vision but then the people they work with, which is why socialization is so important.

Wayne Turmel:

Some things you can do, if your organization is not yet sharing calendars so that we know when people are in meetings when they aren't. Alice isn't in the office today. Is she working from home? Is she taking a day off? If I can look on her calendar and see oh, she's taking a personal day today, I'll go bug somebody else for that answer. That's going to be a different dynamic than there's nothing on Alice's calendar. I've been trying to reach her, and she's not talking to me. Obviously, she's slacking off. Share calendars.

Wayne Turmel:

Take time to keep each other updated on meetings. It doesn't mean that every meeting you have to go round robin, and everybody says every time what's going on in their world. But maybe a couple of people at a time and do it in rotation so that the meetings aren't sucking up a lot of bandwidth. And you're still getting that team communication.

Wayne Turmel:

Allow your teammates to coach and train each others. A great way to do that is what did I learn this week? If somebody learns the cool tip in Zoom or a new way to do something in Excel, are they sharing that with their teammates?

Wayne Turmel:

One unexpected consequence of having worked remotely and being thrown in the deep end to do it is that most people now know what it's like to be on a Zoom call or Microsoft Teams. I don't care what platform you've used. But just as an example of how radically things have changed, six months ago, Zoom was a niche player. And they weren't considered a threat to the big corporate companies. Four or five months later, Zoom is a verb. It's become like Kleenex. It's become the default go-to meeting platform.

Wayne Turmel:

Now that people are used to it, they've experienced it, they haven't had the option to opt out, we're going to see the need for fewer hybrid meetings. Those meetings where you had a bunch of people in the conference room and some people dialing in. If you really want to create a one team environment, where the team gets to know each other and everybody has an equal opportunity to participate and add value, you're going to have more team meetings even when people are in the building. The people at their desk are going to be joining the meetings rather than congregating in the conference room. And creating this unequal access. Probably fewer hybrid meetings is going to be the upshot.

Wayne Turmel:

One of the things that is going to be real important to establish connections as leaders is, as you are putting together new projects and things need to be done. This is your chance to be very mindful about how we connect those people. Maybe, make a point of each task has somebody who's co-located and somebody who's remote. It has one senior person and one new person.

Wayne Turmel:

We're going to have some turnover as a result of this. We're going to be hiring new people to replace other people. We're going to have a lot of ramp up time and onboarding that needs to go on. Being mindful about how we pair people is going to make a big difference.

Wayne Turmel:

And then finally, just as with the individuals, we need to sit down and say, "Okay, this was your personal development plan. How's that going for you?" We need to do that for the team and with the team. What did we say we were going to do at the beginning of this year and where are we against that? Is there no way on God's green earth we can hit those numbers? Or do we just need to go on a month by month from now on? Acknowledge that these things have changed, and it's not their fault unless it is. Odds are it's not 100% their fault.

Wayne Turmel:

Acknowledge that things have changed, be transparent. Things have changed in their life. Things have changed here. There are things we don't know. Right now, you can work from home part-time. That's great. Is it going to continue? I don't know. Do it as a discussion. If people walk through the door and are immediately met with this is what's changed. This is what we're going to do, get with the program. It's going to be really hard to get buy in and anything beyond begrudged compliance.

Wayne Turmel:

And just as with the individual, get and confirm agreement and document the agreement and refer to those agreements naturally. I know people who go back to the company vision every time there's a meeting, we do it. When we have a meeting, Kevin starts every monthly meeting with "Hey, this is why we're here. And this is how we're doing against that mission." And while I don't know that you need to go to that extreme, it's going to be important that you keep people aligned and focused.

Wayne Turmel:

So questions, what do you got? I'm going to let Sarah do that. I'm going to let all of you know and there are so many people on this call. I can't believe it. The Long-Distance Leader is a book about leading remote teams. Meet Like You Mean It is exactly what it says. I'm giving away one copy of each. You can connect with me on LinkedIn or drop me an email. It's on the screen. I will draw for one of each book. I'm not giving away 500 and something copies but we will do that. That being said, hey, Sarah, what do we got?

Sarah Cirone:

Any questions that you have, please type them into the question area. We have about 10 minutes or so to get to those questions today. And we had a question come in earlier from Kim and Kim says, "Do you have guidelines for your Slack time?"

Wayne Turmel:

Boy, that's a pretty open-ended question. I'm not quite sure what we mean about Slack time. Certainly we have expectations around response time. One of the expectations which seldom gets mentioned, but can be a huge source of friction on a team is, are you using your status updates effectively? In other words, if you're in a meeting, but your Slack notification says you're available, and I'm messaging you and you're not answering me, that gets really annoying after a while.

Wayne Turmel:

If I stepped away to grab lunch, this happened to me the other day. Somebody was trying to reach me. And I was only gone for half an hour, but they're used to me being right there and responding and they were like, "Where are you?" "I went downstairs to get lunch. I always get lunch," but normally I set my status notice. So people remember. I'm on the West Coast, they forget that three o'clock in the afternoon for them is lunchtime for me.

Wayne Turmel:

So little things like that matter. I think that you can reduce the Slack time and the amount of interruptions if you get really granular about creating specific channels for specific dialogues so that there are fewer general messages. Because odds are, if it's a general message, there's a good chance it's not going to apply to you. Whereas if it's the people on the marketing team or the people on this project, I know messages in there need to be responded to before kind of all-hands calls. I'm not sure if that's what you mean by time or not. Feel free to fill in my ignorance, Kim.

Sarah Cirone:

We had another question come through from Joyce and Joyce says, "How do you advise first-time remote managers to develop trust?"

Wayne Turmel:

Oh, Good heavens. Boy, this is a whole other webinar for another time, which is something to think about Sarah. Trust is evidence-based. And by that, I mean, and we have a lovely graphic that we use in our work to demonstrate this, but it's one thing to have faith, right? I'm a good guy. I believe that Bob will do his work. But over time, what do I know about Bob that tells me I can trust him?

Wayne Turmel:

When we work together, we see evidence of alignment, we see evidence of competence that somebody is good at their job. We see evidence of how hard they work every day. We can see them toiling away. We can see that in meetings, even if they don't say anything, they take lots of notes and they pay attention. And when they do ask a question, it's really valid.

Wayne Turmel:

If I'm working with Bob, and I'm on the other side of the country and I've never met him, and he never says anything on calls. And I have no idea if he's any good at his job or not. It's going to be really hard for me to have a high level of trust there. If I'm an employee, and my manager gives me a bunch of vague assurances, and says, "Come to me anytime with questions," and it takes them forever to get back to me, do I really trust that they have my back?

Wayne Turmel:

So it's about evidence. When you're working remotely, it's important that we give evidence of people's alignment, competence and motives. Give people a chance to work together, create asynchronous tools like chat groups, where I can ask a question and somebody else can answer me. And then the person who answered me I'm going to go "Boy, that person is pretty smart," or "That person obviously cares enough to answer." Give people a chance to see how smart their teammates are. That's the shortest answer I can give you on that one.

Sarah Cirone:

Great. And we had a question come from Lloyd. And this is a future question. He says, "As the leading go-to SME slash expert on this topic, what do you envision the new workplace will look like in the US by 2030?"

Wayne Turmel:

If I knew that, I would not be talking to you people right now. I would be placing very large bets. I think that there are some huge, huge changes coming to the workplace. Some voluntary, some not, some good, some not. I think that I would not want to be in commercial real estate right now. I think that downtown's are going to change dramatically. The ability to work remotely is going to radically change the way cities operate. That's going to create some problems, socially and otherwise.

Wayne Turmel:

If the people from the suburbs can all work remotely, but the people who work in the city, their job is to support the city and their work is contingent on their being in physical proximity to the city. That's a long term problem. There are plenty of states right now who are looking at remote work as the savior of small towns. If we think about for the last 70 years what's happened.

Wayne Turmel:

I grew up in a small town. There either isn't jobs here or I go away to college, I get my education. There aren't any jobs in the town I grew up in, so I wind up going somewhere else. And that, of course, has social significance. It has cultural significance. It has all kinds of things. But now, oh, I can go away to college. But I can go, and I can live where my family is. Or I can go and I can take care of my aging parents. And the grandkids can see their grandparents all the time so that we can work together. I think that that's going to make a big difference.

Wayne Turmel:

I think the last four months have shown there are a lot of things that can be done separately, perhaps than we did before. That does not mean that remote work is going to be a utopia. And it does not mean as my hairdresser or my barber told me the other day, until people can mail me their head, I need to be here. So the mix of jobs and careers is going to be very different.

Wayne Turmel:

Sometime I will sit down with a beverage and we can talk about what I think this looks like. But I think that developing remote communication skills is going to be absolutely fundamental. I think, as a society, we need to get over the fact that 60% of our social relationships come through work because we are going to have an awful lot of people who spend their lives isolated, if that's the case, and isolation is not good for a society.

Wayne Turmel:

Because I'm essentially an optimist, shocking as that is to sound, I think that we can make adjustments in incredibly positive ways if we're really focused. I think remote work raises issues of both opportunities and challenges with equal access and equal opportunity. I don't need to live in a specific area in order to do a job. In some ways that's going to help some of the challenges the country is going through right now, in other ways, it could potentially make them worse.

Wayne Turmel:

I don't know. Does any of that help? If I was that smart, but I really believe that the ability to work remotely and integrate communication technology into the way we work is going to be absolutely fundamental.

Sarah Cirone:

Great, and I think we have time for one more question before we wrap up here, and that question comes from Joseph. Joseph says, "How do you address a team that appears to have shut down during a WebEx or Skype style meeting?"

Wayne Turmel:

Joseph, that's a tough question. I think there's something you can do in the moment. And there's a lot of work to be done outside of the moment. And I don't think enough leaders spend time thinking about the meeting culture. Why did people shut down? Did they shut down because the meeting was all one way? And if you're not asking for my opinion, why should I give it? Are they just exhausted?

Wayne Turmel:

If you give an entire presentation like this, one of the reasons that we've taken questions throughout is because I know from years of experience if I talk for 45 minutes, and then ask for questions, we won't get very many. Partly because people are exhausted, and they can't be bothered. And partly because they know "Oh, good, we're at the end. And if we don't ask any questions, we get to leave."

Wayne Turmel:

So why are they tuned out? You can determine a little bit of that, you can say, "Hey, do we need a break? I'm sensing something's going on. What's happening?" I mean, you can take the bull by the horns and do that. But once the meeting is over, it's important that you go to those people and say, "Hey, what happened? What did I miss? What's going on? Why aren't you participating in those meetings? You had a lot to say when it was just you and I, but you didn't say anything in the meeting, what happened?"

Wayne Turmel:

We don't follow up on bad meetings, which means we perpetrate more bad meetings. Nothing is a better barometer of your company's culture than meetings. If they are lifeless, non-engaged, grudgingly attended events, there's something going on. And if you ignore it and just say, "Well, these people just won't get with the program," you're going to continue to have problems.

Wayne Turmel:

So, I think during the meeting, it's okay to check in, it's okay to see what's going on. Check is there something going on that I don't know. After the meeting, have those conversations. When we teach virtual meeting skills, which we do, check it out. One of the things we have is a feedback form that we encourage people to give to their team. Say, "Hey, how was the meeting? What works well, what doesn't?" Because if you're not constantly working on improving them, they're going to be whatever they are.

Sarah Cirone:

Great. And that will bring us to the end of today's session, Wayne.

Wayne Turmel:

Good heavens. That was pretty good.

Sarah Cirone:

Thank you very much. This was a wonderful session. And thank you to our sponsor the Reproducible Training Library from HRDQ-U, providers of downloadable and customizable courseware. Now with a new virtual instructor-led version. You can learn more at [www.hrdqstore.com/rtl](http://www.hrdqstore.com/rtl). Again, a big thank you to Wayne for joining us today.

Wayne Turmel:

My absolute pleasure as always, and thank you, everybody, for taking time out of your day. I really hope you found this valuable.

Sarah Cirone:

Thank you all for participating in today's webinar. Happy training.