



Nonprofit**HR**

WEBINAR TRANSCRIPT

Fostering & Promoting Work-Life Integration for Your Hybrid or Dynamic Workforce

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Fostering & Promoting Work-Life Integration for Your Hybrid or Dynamic Workforce

The traditional practice of working at the office from 9-to-5 has been permanently upended as more employees now split their time between working in the office and working remotely. The rise of the hybrid workforce has left both employers and employees striving to define what work-life balance looks like in this new reality.

Work-life integration is important for every employee at any time. When people are able to create work life integration, they tend to perform better and experience higher levels of engagement, employee satisfaction and well-being. In contrast, a lack of work/life integration increases their risk of burnout and underperformance. Studies show employees are working longer hours and experiencing higher levels of fatigue; however, employers are in a position to support their employees by ensuring they have access to the tools and resources they need.

You will leave this webinar with an understanding how to:

- Watch for signs of burnout
- Set clear boundaries between work and home
- Alleviate “in-office” bias by measuring performance based on outcomes rather than visibility in the office
- And more!

SPEAKER



Tamika S. Harold,
MJ-LEL, MBA-HCM,
MHRM
Manager, Business
Development*



Cynthia Orme, MBA
Former Senior
Consultant,
Outsourcing

**Formerly Consultant, Outsourcing*



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Fostering & Promoting Work-Life Integration for Your Hybrid or Dynamic Workforce

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Hello, everyone, and welcome to today's webinar. Thank you for joining us this afternoon for Fostering and Promoting Work-Life Integration for Your Hybrid or Dynamic Workforce.

My name is Atokatha Ashmond Brew and I am Managing Director of Marketing & Strategic Communication for Nonprofit HR. I will be your moderator for today. We have a lot of great content to cover, so let's get started. Before we jump in, I would like to go over a few items so you know how to participate in today's event.

You have joined the presentation listening using your computer's speaker system by default. If you would prefer to join over the telephone, just select telephone in the audio pane and the dial-in information will be displayed. You will have the opportunity to submit text questions to today's presenters by typing your questions into the questions pane on the control panel. You may send in your questions at any time during the presentation. We will collect these and address them during the Q&A session at the end of today's presentation as well.

Today's webinar is being recorded, and you will receive a follow-up email within the next few days with a link to view the recording and also, to see the slides. You will also receive SHRM recertification credits in that message as well.

And now, a little about Nonprofit HR.

We empower nonprofits to achieve their full potential through their people. Nonprofit HR is the country's leading and oldest firm focused exclusively on the talent management needs of the social sector, including nonprofits, associations, social enterprises and other mission-driven organizations.

We focus our consulting efforts on the following practice areas: Strategy & Advisory, HR Outsourcing, Total Rewards, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Search. Nonprofit HR also offers customized learning and development in addition to research and events, all with the objective of strengthening the people management capacity of the workforce. Since 2000, our staff of credentialed experts have advanced the impact of some of the world's most influential brands in the sector.

And now about today's presenters.

Cynthia Orme is a Senior Consultant for Outsourcing for Nonprofit HR, and she brings over 30 years experience in compensation and human resources management in the consulting, corporate and nonprofit arenas. Cynthia has worked as an independent HR consultant and also as a consultant with Mercer and Wilson Towers Watson. She has also led roles as Vice President of various areas of Global HR with GlaxoSmithKline. Cynthia works closely with organizations to ensure that people practices align with the organizational mission and strategic intent. She provides subject matter expert advice, insight and strategic direction across all HR disciplines.

Today, you will also hear from Tamika Harold.

Tamika Harold is a results-driven, partnership-focused professional who serves as a consultant for Nonprofit HR's Outsourcing practice. Tamika provides strategic human resources through partnership and operational support to teams she works with. Tamika's approach to delivering exceptional HR outcomes is a direct result of her extensive and diverse education and professional background. Combining her Bachelor of Social Work degree and work experience with her Master of Business Administration and Master of HR achievements, Tamika emulates strong excellence in performance and high empathy of person. Over her career, she has led teams to record-breaking results, such as increasing recruitment by 13% in less than three months, surpassing recruitment goals by 975% and retention goals by 98% of employees.

Again, you will have an opportunity to ask questions throughout today's event. We will be sending you the slides, access to the recording plus SHRM recertification credits after this event concludes.

And now without further ado, I turn it over to you Tamika.

Tamika Harold: Thank you, Atokatha. We appreciate that. Thank you so much. Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you so much for taking time out of what we are sure is a very busy season for you. Spending it with us, we don't take that for granted. So thank you very much.

Cynthia and I are very honored to spend this time with you today talking about a subject that seems to be very close, near and dear to all of us. As Atokatha very generously introduced and informed – thank you so much for the wonderful introductions – Cynthia and I are both consultants with the Outsourcing team.

Our team provides full-service HR support and guidance for our clients, based [on] their unique level of needs for all things human resources related for their organizations. We thoroughly enjoy working with our clients and serving their HR needs.

Part of our role as consultants, though, is to also have these kinds of conversations, where we get to share with many of our partners and stakeholders who have an interest in learning more about the work we do and the standards that impact the work that we set out to accomplish on a day-in, day-out basis. So, I'd be remiss if I did not mention, at the start of this, that I've had the honor of serving under Cynthia's guidance and ... [the] pleasure of presenting with her in this fashion. I will probably [be] enthralled with what she's sharing, as she's exceptional in her mentorship and colleague-ism of me and our other colleagues. She's very knowledgeable about our discussion topics today, so I can assure you that you are all in wonderful and highly capable hands.

So, we welcome your feedback, as well. As Atokatha mentioned, we expect and request that during our discussion today ... you ... give your feedback. We offer several opportunities for which you can do this. We ... ask you to put some of your thoughts and questions into the chat ... We also will have opportunities where we [will] take a couple of polls and get some feedback from you in that way ... We also [received] some questions in advance ... We're going to do our best to answer each and every one of them so that you all can walk away with the feedback that you expected of us and make sure that we are giving you what you need.

... If we can go ahead and jump on in and lean into our discussion topics for today, Cynthia and I always say to our clients that we want to be vessels for informing, educating and activating higher thought concepts by inspiring and motivating others towards maximum capacity ... Those are some of our primary goals as we are completing our HR consultancies, and we want to do the same for all of you today.

... As we discuss fostering and promoting work-life integration for your hybrid and dynamic workforce, we want to make sure to address some societal and workplace trends that shape how we've done work in the past and how we're doing it today. We will also chat about what we call the new work-life balance. We will discuss the differences between remote, hybrid and dynamic workplaces, [defining] what those mean for us. And then we will discuss, honestly, what you ... all came here for: How to make all of this work for you and your organizations. What are the ... nuts and bolts of ... navigating through these matters with a higher level of competency and efficiency?

So, let's dive in.

We can shift to our next.

Perfect, thank you.

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... We're all still feeling and reeling from the effects of COVID-19. This pandemic has touched each and every one of us. However, it is important to understand that office life has undergone a number of changes over the last hundreds of years. And so, we ask you to take a deep breath and realize that change has been — and will continue to be — a constant for us, and that none of us are managing all of this perfectly. Some of us are doing it well. Others have lots of opportunities for growth. And all of us will get through this.

... Our goal here today is not to diminish anyone who may feel like they [are just] behind the eight ball and not sure how to proceed in this new way of working. Our goal here is to walk away and allow for you to have the information and ... tools that you need to support your employees and your organization.

Our workforces have always varied ... in look and culture, [often] based on regional, industry-wide or organizational norms. There have also been a number of widespread changes over time. These shifts include increased workforce diversity, widespread bans on ... things like smoking and changing trends regarding popular workplace layouts. Some other factors that have led to these changes over the years are influences that have been bubbling under the surface ... Events ... have forced those bubbled-up issues to ... rise to the top [with the] need to be addressed accordingly.

We've listed some of those here as a reference. Some of them being child labor, and gender and racial equality. Laws have been required as a result of each of those. Not to mention the formulation of union organizations, social and economic conditions such as war and community rioting, equity or inequity of food distribution within our country and racial injustice. Even social media has [impacted] how we now do our work.

Along with some even generational pressures, where now we're asking questions of how we want to work? Where [do] we want to work? How long [do] we want to work? When do we want to work? All of these trends — and I'm sure you can think of so many more — we've seen and experienced over the years as a slow burn, until we experienced COVID-19. Nothing slow burn about [the pandemic].

But on the contrary, COVID-19 and this world pandemic ... shook us like a burning inferno. It stopped us in our tracks. It has made us all rethink structures and norms that, quite frankly, we had no desire to focus our concentrated efforts upon. It's had us sitting still, many of us for the very first time in our professional lives ... rethinking and wondering, what's next?

... Not only do we contend with the factors that shift work trends, but we then must contend with how those work trends have shifted our actual workplace cultures, which is what we're going to chat about now.

Thank you.

So, over the years, office culture has changed quite a bit. Some of those shifts were actually reflected in workplace design trends. Corner offices were meant to convey symbols of hierarchy and prestige and elite status. The cubicle was intended to improve employees' lives and ... efficiency, but ultimately, quite frankly, [it] became a representation of corporate drudgery.

And, there was a focus during the fifties and the nineties – [throughout] the nineties – for independence and focused employees who were loyal to the organization. Employees would communicate via landlines and in person or hardcopy paper. We see the invention of email and the first computers in the seventies, and then the amazing invention of mobile devices and the Internet around the 1980s. So, we're starting to see that shift.

And then, there comes the biggest shift [to] popular open office layouts, which was introduced as more of an egalitarian, unrestricted democratic approach where comfort became the buzz word. Employees swapped out their big leather high-back chairs for beanbag chairs or yoga mats. Collaboration became the new way to communicate, and then fostered in a level where you're adding new social collaborations and ... efforts. Slowly the rise of technology resources emerge and are accessible to everyone and not just a few.

The concept grew that employees could then work together, but work from anywhere and all of this was a huge gateway for the idea of ... working remotely.

This, as we all know, has not come without some challenges. With the rise of shifting workplace cultures, employees are left to contend with some distracted employees ... who struggle to balance social collaboration and transition with individual effectiveness, productivity and output ... Even employees are more apt to leave if they are not offered what they truly desire in their workplace setting.

So, yes, we get it. Cubicles are depressing. Private offices are isolating. Open spaces are distracting. But the big changes to U.S. work culture haven't really all been about appearances.

Teamwork is ... in and hierarchy is out. Typewriters got the boot. And the advent of faster, user-friendly computers ... corporate jargon and ideas about job security have all gone through major influxes.

... Racial diversity within the workplace ... has increased over time, although many fields still have ... quite a ways to go. We're also now continuing with things like workplace sexual harassment, going from being something that was pervasive and widely accepted to something that is now [a] much less widely accepted phenomenon and being addressed, but there is still a long way to go in that area.

While office designs may have undergone quite a lot of change over the decades, the “Me Too” movements have highlighted some areas in which not enough progress has been made in the workplace. We have major corporations [that] are contending with harassment scandals. We see this running rampant in our country.

How do we deal with this? How do we deal with this whole new way of working? As for overall office culture, maintaining a strict office hierarchy is simply just no longer the fashionable way of running a company. That is [how] the world worked before ... It was one thing for an organization to say buzz words like collaboration, egalitarianism or teamwork — to put those things on your office walls and your website. Today, [running] that business based on those principles [is entirely different]. That's what we want to talk about today. How do we take that shift of how work used to be, how the culture of work used to be, and support our employees and our organizations with how work is today?

So the question then is, what do we do now?

Well, over the years, we've wanted balance ... We have all heard ... adopted and absorbed the term work-life balance. It emerged with a lot of enthusiasm. We were all very excited about it. We kind of want to talk about work-life balance and what that means.

And so, now ... let me shift ...

What does this image mean to you [diagram of a man on a work-life balance scale]?

When you look at this image and you think about work-life balance, our first thought, based on the ideals that we've been provided over the years, is that this is perfect. [I'm] the employee, I'm balancing my life, my personal life [and] my work life. It's perfect. This is what I want in my workplace setting. This is what I want from home, I want my balance. We see the balance of two significantly and very equally important weights of priority. It's important for the employee, the spouse, the parent, the friend [and] the colleague in the middle, to firmly and quietly keep steady so that each side can remain balanced. In theory, this is great, [it] makes perfect sense. Until it doesn't.

The challenge with the image in this picture is that, when does home or work ever look this easy? When does it ever look this steady? When do you ever feel this relaxed? When you're out of sync, what then happens to work? What then happens to [your] personal [life]? How does that impact and affect everybody else who's around you? How do we remain steady when nothing steady about our universe exists?

... Work-life balance involves having your work and your life, your personal life, co-exist, but each thrives separately. Employees maintain firm boundaries between home and office, allowing them to devote their full attention, each separately and ... at their given times.

By definition, work-life balance involves [minimizing] work-related stress and [establishing] a stable and sustainable way to work while maintaining health and general well-being. So what's wrong with that? What's the problem with that?

The challenge arises [when] there's really no magic formula for balancing work and life. Nor [should you allow] one surefire amount of time for one versus the other. Work-life balance means you're equally fulfilled by the division of your personal and work life. It also means one facet doesn't dominate the other, and when it comes time to switch gears, you feel energized and you're ready for what's next because you're balanced. This all sounds good to us. We've all enjoyed this for many, many years. What we'd like for you to do is think of this a little bit differently, which is ... what has landed us here today.

Let's expand our thinking for a moment for concepts that are a little new, exciting, and quite frankly, even a little scary, but potentially life-changing, we hope. [Instead] of asking ourselves, how ... we [can] obtain better work-life balance? ... Maybe the real question we need to [ask] ourselves is: How can I best function amongst everything going on around me? ... That requires a significant amount of my time, effort, resources, care and attention. Instead of doing everything within me to steady myself to block out all the noise on all ... sides, just so I can handle all the noise, what if I'm fully present for all of it?

That then leads us into our new work-life balance. What's the new way of doing work-life balance? Before we answer that question ... we want to hear from you. We want to hear how you're doing this and where you potentially may be struggling in these areas.

Do you feel you have a good plan for creating successful outcomes for both your personal and your professional life? For you and for your staff? What's the biggest challenge in your view?

[Please] answer that by putting some of your responses in the chat. While we capture your feedback on this poll, Cynthia and I would love to answer some of your questions presented in advance of today's talk.

One of those questions is: "How to promote consistency in work product for remote staff?"

Cynthia ... do you want me to chime in and take this one?

Cynthia Orme: Sure. Yeah, and I can take the other one that we talked about. Go ahead.

Tamika Harold: Promoting consistency ... is a great question in the work product for staff. As before, it was easier to manage that consistency when everyone was in the same space. But everyone knows that a healthy work environment is ... vital to remaining consistent at work.

We encourage you to do the same things that you did before your employees all went into a remote working environment: [create] a stress-free work environment, [set up] effective communication systems for them, [provide] non-stop training opportunities for your employees and [organize] meetings regularly. They don't need to be all the time, but they need to be consistent and ... regular. And then something else that's very important to us is that we want to [ensure] that your performance management structures are in place to ... hold accountability for employees [and] leaders who are responsible for managing those employees.

Another question is, "I welcome your ideas about considering a global workforce given the social, economic and cultural differences."

What a great question! I love that.

I will say, Cynthia, before you chime in, building trust and good communication are great ways of [ensuring] we [effectively support] our global business partners, but what more would you like to support regarding this question?

Cynthia Orme: ... Thanks Tamika. I think it's one of the troubles or opportunities in dealing with the global workforce – [managing] the cultural and socio-economic sides while we also manage the compliance side. [There is also] the need to understand statutory requirements in each country we operate [in] – how does the infrastructure work there? In particular for nonprofits, where many times we're right in the communities ... we have to be ever more sensitive to some of the requirements [and] constraints, even while we're trying to manage a workforce globally.

... It's always the hard stuff and the soft stuff simultaneously when we're managing these populations, and that's extra true when it comes to remote working and making sure folks are productive and engaged because there are so many aspects to manage. And we can get into this later in the session, if we have time, in terms of more specifics and some examples of how we're doing this with clients right now.

Tamika Harold: Right, love it. Love it. Thank you, Cynthia.

So, let's talk about what that new work-life balance looks like. We've talked about, work-life balance and what it is and some of the pitfalls of work-life balance. But if we can go ahead and progress to our next slide, Rose ... Thank you.

We'd love to just chat about the new work-life balance, what we're calling work-life integration. And work-life integration is different, obviously, from work-life balance, but both require boundaries between personal and professional lives and functioning in a way where they're both addressing the two very seemingly competing interests. But work-life integration doesn't look at it necessarily as a competing interest, but something to be integrated upon. There's a difference between work-life balance and work-life integration and it's one that many people are struggling with as they come out of our post-pandemic situations and mindsets.

We mentioned earlier that work-life balance is focused on keeping your work and your personal life very separate, but very balanced and equal, whereas work-life integration is centered on the belief that no distinction between the two actually exist and that they can coexist within harmony. We know ... that's a hard pill to swallow, but if you bear with us, we can give you ... more insight and tools on [integrating] this into your organizations.

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The things that drive the separate worlds of personal and work life just need an overhaul, given the nature of our new world. Clawing our way out of pandemic-era work-life balance is becoming really less and less achievable, the result of pushing ourselves to be balanced draws an outcome that typically leads to exhaustion. It's a continual tug of war between the personal and professional.

Work-life integration, however, involves ... blending ... personal and professional responsibilities. Rather than viewing work and personal as a separate entity, business professionals and very busy employees can find areas of compromise. This might look like completing household chores while on a conference call or bringing children into the offices when schools are closed.

The large advantage of work-life integration is flexibility. When an employee [can] properly coordinate their schedule and their responsibilities, they are more likely to experience satisfaction in all areas of their life.

... On the flip [side], [boundary violations] have been shown ... to occur when work and life overlap. With work-life balance, that's an issue. With work-life integration, not so much, as long as you have proper parameters and those boundaries set in place. For instance, you know you have a soccer game ... at 2 p.m., [which] is prime time for work.

It's important that your pre- and your post-[activities are] ... organized ... well, so that during the thing that is, quite frankly, most important to you – your family and your personal time – [it] is not interrupted by the work you need to do. So you're structuring your workday and your schedule to allow for the things [that's important to you] to happen during the time.

If this is all going to work, you've got to have strong technology that works well [with] ... policies and procedures that are clear and effective, to [ensure] that during the time where you are taking that break from work, where you're dealing with your soccer game, that the technology on the front end and the back end is set up so ... you can be successful and away without things falling apart into pieces. It can all integrate very well.

So, we have a ... better understanding of what work-life integration is versus what work-life balance is. We'd ... like to chat a ... bit about the workspaces [in which] you're doing these concepts ... and how that relates to the work that you guys are doing currently.

So, if I can pass the baton over to my colleague, Cynthia is going to talk to us a little bit about the differences in the definitions of hybrid and dynamic workforces.

Cynthia Orme: Thank you ... Tamika.

And I know we have some responses to the question we asked a little while ago, [a few of] which, hopefully, we'll have time in the end to cover ... so that everyone can hear that, which will be awesome. And ... [it is] ... a transition from what Tamika was saying to now getting more specific into frameworks and how ... to make things successful.

I know hot off the presses of our time last week ... at the SHRM conference as a firm, our CEO, Lisa Brown Alexander, was coining the phrase “life-work balance.” Even as Tamika was saying, even if we are not so good [at] balancing or even thinking about it that way, [think] about it in an [integrated] way, that life [comes] first. And ... as Tamika [referenced], that's what we learned in the pandemic, and when push came to shove, when none of us had a choice, life [had] to be first. And yet, we integrated work within that. So, how did that happen? And that's really what we've been all grappling with.

Now we want to move into a more “framework” and “helpful hints” part of the presentation, and that's what [we will] go through. Now, you're experiencing, just as we are, so many variations to the theme of remote working, hybrid working, telecommuting, working from home, working from coffeehouses, working from vacation homes and so forth.

I saw a joke the other day about somebody who was sitting in a lounge chair by a pool and ... all of a sudden, everybody on the conference call said, “Everybody turn on your cameras.” So they jokingly quickly said to their partner, “Hold up the towel behind me, so I look like I'm in a professional location while I continue this conference call.” We're all familiar with that humor and those memes about all the different ways that we work.

But ... it would be helpful to think about this in two categories of frameworks. And then within each of these, there are a number of variations, but again, we're going to put something forward ... for us to have in our minds and [with which] to manage.

So, the first category is hybrid workplace. This is where you have a set of decisions, a framework you manage and ... move into ... You manage it on an ongoing basis and we'll get into what those types are. But it's sort of a way of systematically working that you setup and you keep it going and you manage that. And, of course, you'd respond to the need for change, but essentially, you manage that way to do it.

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The other type is to acknowledge upfront [that] it's not a mistake; it's a [purposeful] way to manage your workforce ... — let it be dynamic. Let it be flexible ... responsive ... focused on productivity and safety and whatever that may need to look like in any given period of time. They're both good. It's really about, culturally and operationally, what makes sense for you, and that's the decision making that we all do as leaders.

So, before we get into more detail about these two frameworks, I'd like to ask another question of the group ... Please put your responses in the panel.

... How many of you are [currently looking] at making a new decision about a framework, and putting in a framework for remote working, hybrid working and so forth? Where are you in your decision making around putting something in?

We'd love to hear from you in the in the question pane. And, again, we'll review those responses at a later point [if] we have time. [While] you do that, I [wanted] to answer a question ... we received before the session as people were registering.

The question is, how do we foster synergy among a hybrid workforce when only certain positions are authorized for remote work?

And one of the things we'll get into in a few minutes is, on what basis would you authorize some positions versus others to work remotely, and what ... do [you do] when only some positions are authorized? But synergy is all about creating connections and having one plus one equals three.

So, as you'll see, as we talk in a few minutes [how] to make this work, most of it is about intentionality and describing what your intentions are to those who are on the receiving end. As you probably know, people are ... very comfortable with change or are more comfortable with change. They're more comfortable and operating in certain ways if they understand the "why" behind it. So, if you, for instance, [announce], "These are the kinds of positions that will be working remotely. Here's why." And if it's based on good reasons that rational people, and from an equity standpoint ... can understand, yes, this makes sense to me, then you can put in your regular ways of working to foster synergy that takes advantage of the IT systems at your disposal, of financial resources you might have.

So it starts with being purposeful and intentional, and then explaining it to people. Then you can have that as context and it's much easier to then put in meetings and other ways of working that promote synergy. So that's ... a quick answer for now.

And, again, we thank you for your responses to the question we posed, we will come back to those.

So now, let's get into more of the descriptions of the hybrid versus dynamic workspace ... Next slide, please.

... The [hybrid workplace] is the first thing we'd like to ... dig into. There are four types of hybrid workforce. There's hybrid at-will, which is [where] employees can choose which day they come into the office. Hybrid split-week: The company assigns specific days for on-site and remote work by team or function. So, for instance, project teams need to come in on Wednesdays, because that's the day we ask project teams to collaborate, solve problems together and so forth. There's hybrid manager scheduling, where managers choose which day their particular team comes into the office, much more of a team dynamic than the company deciding that. And then a hybrid mix, which is, we've got a number of these things going. Again, we all understand why we've made those decisions, we've communicated that to people and here's our hybrid model ... Those are the four types that typically would make up the overall framework for the hybrid workplace.

In a hybrid work model, this typically is very good for global workforces or even workforces [that] have employees in many different states. I'm sure many of you are experiencing what many of our clients, other clients or current clients are experiencing, which is, during the pandemic, some folks moved for personal reasons to other states. Employers are making various levels of accommodation for that. But you may have employees in five new states that you didn't have before. And assuming — this is the hard side of it, the compliance side of it — you've got to be compliant in every state around registering for payroll taxes and so forth.

Assuming that's done, then you may have more of a population that lends itself to setting up a hybrid model like this, where for different reasons at different times, you're asking folks to do different things.

Once you set this up, you understand what your exposure is. It can be a reduced exposure in terms of cost and so forth, because you may be capitalizing on the fact that folks are at home and they don't need to be in the office. However, be careful for the hidden cost of travel expense. When you've got people in Idaho [who] didn't used to be in Idaho, they've got to get to New York City now for meetings [and] you've got to cover that. So ... we're finding that is ... coming out of the woodwork as an expense for employers to think about, with a model such as this.

But it can give a competitive edge, because you can hire and manage talent in so many more places in so many different ways ... [You] actually manage things [around] the clock, in terms of productivity, and cover many different time zones. The key is not to set this up ... as completely as you need to, [where] it ends up being sort of a state of chaos. As you can tell by the way I'm describing this, [it] can easily become confusing to folks, etc. It requires a lot of simplicity, clarity of message, and ... really sustained communication as you describe it to people.

Also, don't forget real estate savings, although this is causing its own problems. You used to have 100 folks in an office in San Francisco, now there's only going to be 20 people in there at any one time ... How do you manage that real estate problem or opportunity? And, by the way, what if we all kind of change back, as patterns often do in the workplace, in two years and [suddenly], you have 80 people you want in that workplace? So, these are all things to plan for strategically, [as] we've planned for everything else as an organization. But now, these are new strategic issues for all of us to grapple with.

OK, so let's discuss this a little bit more in terms of hybrid. Next slide, please.

So, as I mentioned, there were maybe fewer people in the workplace at one time. The other aspect of this, which, as you'll see, we'll emphasize throughout, is ... keeping employees safe.

Many employees want to come into the office if they feel safe and ... that the organization cares about their safety and health and ... signals that. For instance, for those ... in the office, you could have a pile of masks around. You could have posted instructions for food delivery. You could have whole new ways to manage refrigerators in ... shared spaces. And with fewer people in the office, sometimes it's easier to set up these [operating modes], and then people get used to it, and you can build from there, in terms of more and more folks coming in.

We [already] mentioned the real estate cost aspects, [which] can provide more work options for employees. Tamika referred earlier to generations and social media. So many people are comfortable working in so many different ways now ... why not accommodate that in terms of productivity? And at least provide the opportunity for folks to be as productive or more productive? And there are ways to strategize and save money for the organization as well.

So that's really the overview of the hybrid workforce, hybrid framework. And now, we'll move into the dynamic workplace and describe that in a little more detail. So, next slide, please.

So dynamic workplace is ... a little more messy to use a common phrase there ... but this is one where you set up your workplace in a very intentional [way] to be reconfigured and for you to be agile and responsive to things that might impact how to have a productive workplace. So, it's meant to follow employee's needs. It's meant to respond to, for instance, [when] there is a COVID-related shutdown in a particular city. You can respond to that in your workplace with how you've set it up.

... You can have technology set up so that, for instance, if you had 10 people in an office in Philadelphia, now Philadelphia sees its COVID cases spiking. You want to be able to send people home again. They've got the technology to be able to just simply work at home at the drop of a hat.

You're purposeful, you're not reacting and saying, "Oh my goodness, what do we do about this? You've set [up] a dynamic workplace that allows for that ... anticipates that ... strategizes for that and allows people to be productive in response to those kinds of things.

... This is ... more well-suited to smaller environments, where you've got just a few people who need to be in [various] places at different times. You [won't] have hundreds of people moving and shaking in response to that [level of] sensitivity in where to work. But that doesn't preclude you from doing it for a larger organization, it would just be a bit harder to do.

Then the flexibility piece is huge with this, that you can be responsive. And maybe there are other things happening in your organization culturally where you want people to feel more empowered and ... have an adult-to-adult relationship in the workplace. And this kind of dynamic setup would lend itself to that as well. And you can look across how you're setting up your processes and systems to this. You can say, we're setting up dynamic ways of working. We're setting up lunch-and-learns, where people give feedback to leadership and we're responding to that.

So that it's part and parcel with setting a tone and culture of more flexibility and openness. And [it] can be a huge signal to your population that ... you mean business when you're doing that. And that's great.

The one advantage of setting up a dynamic workplace and allowing for systems to do that is that these kinds of things can be in place and actually adjust as the pandemic itself evolves and adjusts. And then whatever new challenges are to be facing us in three or four years, you can respond. If you set this up now, it almost doesn't matter what's happening environmentally. You'll be able to respond and do that going forward.

... Another example of this is I have one client that ... wherever they can, they ... subscribe to office space from donors.

So, in London, [the client works] with the Financial Times. A couple of board members are from the Financial Times. They ... set up a contract with the Financial Times to use their office space in a flexible way. They've got bandwidth for a certain number of [engagements] – one week, they'll say, "We need this amount," next week, they'll say, "We need this amount." Financial Times doesn't care, from their standpoint it's a small portion of their overall workspace. From my client's standpoint, [it] is a huge advantage that [they can] manage that.

... The other unintended consequence is [that] they've had to hire someone to manage a global workforce – global workplace management. Who would have ever thought that, right? That a nonprofit would have to have a person who is thinking about where [their] people work in Switzerland? Where do they work in London? And so forth. But they recognize it's truly as an investment because being able to make use of these kinds of spaces allows flexible productivity, productivity and it's a model we can use forever really, because it fluxes naturally by definition with the environment.

A couple more points about the dynamic workspace ... Next slide, please.

... As Tamika pointed out earlier, we have used open-office layouts for a very long time. But they were originally intended to be the new way it is. And I remember – I'm old enough to know this – that when the open floor plans came out, everyone was so excited, thinking, "Who could ever not think this was the most wonderful thing in the world to be so close with everyone?" And we'll talk about a point [related to that] in a few minutes. But then – like anything else – as soon as that happened, everyone started saying, " ... wait a minute. The advantages of the old way of doing it were this, [that] and this."

So [because humans being humans] if we acknowledge that [we're] never going to find one place, one way of working, one way of spacing humans to work together, placing them in a big environment to work together [where] everyone feels great about [it]. It's a matter of liberally letting employees work wherever they're comfortable and productive. And having, frankly, the leadership, foresight ... openness and humility to be open to the employees providing the answers versus you being the one who provides the answers and just wanting everyone to agree.

We talked a little bit about the point of productivity with younger folks or people of different generations, people with different backgrounds, and people coming back from retirement to work with us. There are different definitions of productivity or different enablers of productivity for each of us. And this dynamic work, this dynamic workspace acknowledges that and does something with [it] to really encourage productivity. And then, I think we have one final point to describe the dynamic workspace around safety, so let's go to that next.

As we've alluded to throughout this presentation, like never before, health and safety are talked about in the in the workplace globally.

In the U.S., we've had the OSHA requirements for a very long time. We've had risk assessments and things. Now, as Tamika was describing, it's real, it's human, it's about our actual families, it's about our children, it's about our partners, it's about our parents. And it's not just like a regulation on a wall. And so, organizations need to make this come alive, and dynamic workspaces, and so do all types of the new workspaces, but dynamic workspaces allow us to be very fluid and reactive to what the safety messages and protocols need to be [at] any given moment. [It is] very visible for employees to see that and get confidence in the organization.

Not only with ... this workspace topic, but with confidence in the organization overall that [their] leaders care about [them]. I'm in a good organization, I want to stay here. I feel like I can be productive, it's not stressful to manage my life, [I have] my life-work integration here at this organization.

... Those are a couple of the frameworks ... we ... put forward for you to [consider] and manage. Now we'd like to move into how to make it work.

... There are a couple of very big contextual principles that we want to share with you before we get into, specifically, how to make it work [with] some ... [of] our top six tricks and tips.

... The helpful reminders, if we can go to the next slide, are ... these two key principles ... around the workspace and ways of working, but also ... in general. Good HR people and good leaders [practice intentional self-care], so they can stay resilient themselves and be in the best position to help others.

You know the old metaphor we've seen, where if you're on a plane, you make sure you have your oxygen mask first, and then you worry about your child ... parent or ... partner. It's the same thing in leadership. You cannot be a stressed-out leader who is not experiencing life-work integration and then expect your employees to feel great about their own sense of that.

And, by the way, your employees can see every little thing you do, much more than you realize, much more than we think about [daily] ... Show by example what good looks like in this area. Like you know you should be doing in every other area.

One of my clients has [a] very visible ... calendar because we know we can see everybody's calendars now ... We can see every little detail ... Right smack in the middle of the afternoon, [on their calendar] it says, "rest." And it's 45 minutes, right there, capital letters, for everyone to see. It's different from lunch. It's not lunch. It's called rest.

And it creates a good vibe. It's like, "OK, cool," and everybody's now got, "Where am I going to do my rest for 45 minutes?" But the person who started that was the most senior leader. It's just wonderful.

So, that's the number one ... principle to make all this work. The second is to be flexible.

Sometimes leaders think, "How did I get here? Well, I got here by knowing what I'm doing. I got here by making decisions and helping others come along." Sometimes you learn, you get a wisdom that's even different and better than hard and fast knowledge. The wisdom ... tells you to be flexible ... open [and] to learn from others.

One of the things [is that] I have kids in their twenties and it continues to amaze me how differently they feel about things than I feel, and ... I'm their mom — I could make assumptions. I've always been their mom. I've always guided them, but instead, oftentimes, I know I need to learn from them, and again, [there's] that concept of humility when we're in leadership positions. Don't make assumptions that because you want to work at home, everybody wants to work at home, or because you want to be in the office, everybody wants to be in [the] office. Or that, like many leaders in the financial industry are doing right now, "I know everybody should be back in the office five days a week. That's what's best." Don't be like that. Be open [and] really figure out what's best for your employees' productivity because that's [what will] help you meet your mission. Not you [have] all the answers.

So, if you keep nothing else ... from today's session other than these two main principles in your head to guide ... and manage yourself — which helps you manage others — then that's great. You've come a long way, and you'll be in a really good position.

Now, with these as contexts, we ... have six very specific tips to give you ... Next slide, please, and we will cover these.

... This really addresses many of the queries we got before the session ... around ... very specifically, how can I make this work – whatever model we have, whatever framework we have, whatever stage of evolution we're in.

So, the first is becoming mindful of signs of burnout.

Again, look to yourself. Just for examples, not for all the answers. But typically, if anyone is burnt out, psychologically speaking, "Oh, wow. That person hasn't answered me in a few days. They normally ... answer me within a 24-hour turnaround. Mhmm, what does that say about what might be going on for them?"

"Wow, they're making a lot of mistakes, they didn't catch that," or maybe they're answering me quickly in my emails, but it's not as comprehensive as it used to be. Maybe I see them – I mean, frankly – ... even holding back tears in a video call or in a group meeting. Or I see that I've asked them to turn on their camera and they simply don't.

... Be on the lookout for, be mindful of, signs of burnout. People show stress by being different to us ... Sometimes ... someone you know really well is sick and you say, "Well, I know." I know some of us have experienced people close to us who have had COVID, we've said, "Well, we know that they were coming out of it because they were themselves again." It's the same kind of concept here, when [you can tell] somebody's burnt out or ... experiencing stress when they're just not themselves.

When you first work with them or in your check-in conversations, [it's also a helpful hint to] ask folks: How will I know that you are experiencing stress? How will I know that you are becoming burnt out – what should I look for? It helps them to reflect and get to know themselves. Many people, though, these days have ready answers for that, because they're very mindful of it, so when all else fails, ask people. Just ask them, what should I be looking for?

The second piece is managing boundaries. Really create purposeful spaces. This is different than telling people which space to go into [and] when. It's simply creating the opportunity and the container for people to manage boundaries.

One example is when someone's in the office, more and more people are just overtly creating nap rooms or a space — ... evolving the old ... pool table area to something that is truly about rest and relaxation. Or talking for people — look, if you're home, I'm not going to bother you or, again, asking people, “How do I know that you're setting your boundaries? What are your boundaries? Tell me your boundaries.”

And sometimes you can, again, model this behavior by telling employees your own boundaries and being clear about that. So, that's number two. Again, you can see the theme here continues to be being intentional and communicative about what you're describing—what you're deciding—and managing that with your employees.

Number three is to avoid bias. A new kind of bias has emerged, to add to the others that we are managing around in [the] office or remotely.

Five years ago, it was anyone who was working at home was hardly working, right? So, now we say, “No, we know people can work hard everywhere. And in virtually any type of environment.” It's not the environment that encourages people to do well or not do well, be responsive or not be responsive, it's other things, so don't assume it. Again, ask, set up ways of environment management that match your employees and your culture and what they need. And don't be biased yourself, because of what you think is good.

To be a broken record here, be intentional about communication and collaboration. Sometimes we — this is one of those where we say how something should be, but we forget to put in operational parameters and protocols to make this happen ... manage it and show it's important. So, invest time in being inclusive and consistent in sharing information and making space for teamwork and team building. Work to build trust in everything you do.

We're not big fans of making fun of [virtual] meetings or making fun of Zoom. You know, we love it. We think it's great. Make the most of it. These ways of working have so many bells and whistles that, if you invest time in learning them ... not disparaging them, or not acting like they're not important [and] invest time in using them ... [you will benefit].

Again, another thing you can show by example to your folks in terms of, we invested money in this technology. Let's really optimize it or maximize it, and really be intentional.

... [For] instance, one of my clients, after every group staff meeting that's done electronically ... twice a week ... [sets] up a 15-minute check-in with somebody on the team right after ... to say, "How did that go for you? Was that good? What feedback do you have for me?" Not just about the meeting itself, but [also] about the content and substance. And each person knows when [it will] be their turn to have that one-on-one right after the team meeting, still using Zoom and so forth ... That, to me, is an example of building trust ... The leader is putting themselves out there showing [that they are trustful and trusting by having] ... good conversations. But they're also using that same technology to still connect one-on-one with folks and be natural with people in a video setting.

The fifth one is to promote and enable wellness and healthy lifestyles.

So many organizations are doubling or tripling their development/wellness pots of money — funding mechanisms. By the way, people are combining wellness and development more and more, just like they were combining development and performance management previously. Now it's really all part and parcel into employee engagement, employees being able to perform and wanting to perform in the organization. So, people are ... doubling their development/wellness budgets and [guiding] employees [on] how to use that time. Time to rest is just as valuable as [doing] online training for something. So, again, show by example: " ... Here's a training I did last week. Here's what I learned from it, why don't you guys do that as well." And, again, if you see organizations that are putting money into it, it speaks volumes, as it always does, with employees.

And the final one is to ensure training and technology are enablers ... not obstacles.

Again, don't make assumptions that because we put something out there or ... set up a way of doing something ... we read in an article about [what] 15 other companies are doing, don't assume any of it's good or ... works.

One of the things that's happened as a result of the pandemic — and as Tamika pointed out ... the pace of life and work is so fast now — ... that the old reliance on competitive data and getting competitive data to understand exactly what everyone else is doing has really gone by the wayside.

I was on a phone call with a client ... earlier today and they were saying, "We want ... our benefits packaging," which is so much more highlighted now than it used to be ... "To be better than the competition in the benefits we offer." Well, all six of my clients are saying [the] exact same thing right now, "We want to be better than the competition in the benefits we offer." So, which one is going to be the best? And how do we get the data to know? ... What is the best ... we need to be better than?

So everything is, to use that word again, dynamic and changing. It's not like we can pull a report from a shelf and say, "OK, now, where do we need to be?" So don't make any assumptions. Ask your folks what's going to work. Piloting things is so much more necessary and popular than it used to be. Create little pilots for ideas you have, which by the way is a great way to get energy going ... And always ask yourself a specific question, " ... OK, this is a really good idea, we piloted it, but what if it goes wrong? What could go wrong about it? And then, what will we do about that?" And just [always] have that as ... a contingency plan — a great development opportunity for teams to ... think about those kinds of things versus just always planning for assuming success or assuming no problems.

... Those six will be helpful ... in terms of specifics ... We've got frameworks ... context and specifics that [we hope] are helpful to you.

And I believe now, we're going to turn it back to Atokatha, our moderator, to walk us through ... a Q&A session where we'll answer questions and address some of the other things we've asked about earlier in the session. Is that right, Atokatha?

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Hi, Cynthia and Tamika, thank you so much for today's presentation and sharing so much information with our attendees. I wanted to circle back to [the] responses that came in from our attendees regarding your questions. Are you ready for those?

Cynthia Orme: Yes, great.

Tamika Harold: Yes, thank you.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: All right, so the first set of responses that came back in, one person said their biggest challenge was perceived disparity between employees who must be office-based and employees who can work successfully from home or anywhere.

Someone else said, "I've heard it referred to as work-life integration, especially in this remote hybrid environment, when there is a blurring of boundaries."

Another person said, "I do not have my work email set to my personal phone. When I am off, I am out of office. My out of office is set, I do not respond until I return."

And another person said, "Yes, I believe I have created successful ways to balance my personal and professional life. Yes. I believe the same for the staff. The biggest challenge, I think, is handling meeting fatigue."

Any thoughts on ... those comments regarding your first question?

Tamika Harold: Yeah, I would say I love the one about setting the out-of-office for your emails and having that blocked off.

And, what I would also recommend ... Cynthia, you alluded to this earlier, is having time blocked on your calendar. Where everyone can see that calendar invite, on your team at least, external partners cannot, but even communicating to ... the external partners that you meet with regularly, "These are my time blocks," and helping other people understand what those boundaries look like is good. You want to set [others] up for success in working with you, as you are giving out whatever the boundary is. It's important that you're very clear on that, that you're consistent with it and that you're clearly communicating that with someone, so that they can respond in a way that supports you. It allows for your boundary to remain in place.

So I love that ... you are pre-setting boundaries that support [integrating] your work and your personal [life] so it's wonderful.

Cynthia Orme: And I just have one comment to add to what Tamika said [about] the meeting fatigue. For what it's worth, we're finding that ... it's easier to set aside time, say Friday afternoons or all Fridays, many organizations are doing where, we just say, "[There are] limited meetings" ... it's hard to say there are no meetings. But you could say, "[There are] limited meetings." Again, show by example in leadership positions. That's an easier thing to do than to try and query the worthiness of every single meeting. Because that's ... more work for people to do. So, that's what [many] organizations are doing now.

Tamika Harold: Can I add to that, Cynthia? For meeting fatigue, [there are] a lot of back-to-back meetings. Here at Nonprofit HR, we're not immune to that either. We get it. [There are] [many] people to respond to and [many] people to communicate with. And so, you'll find yourself booking from 10 to 11, 11 to 12 and 1 to 2 and that's just ... counter-productive in a lot of ways. And so, we encourage ... you to even look at how you're structuring your meeting times if you want to block from 11 to 11:50, so you have that 10-minute window to take a breather. Even [going] and [taking] a moment to walk away and ... decompress from the meeting you just had so you can properly prepare for the next will eliminate a lot of that fatigue ... But again, it would require you to be very intentional on the front end of how you manage your own boundaries in working with people. You can get the same amount done in a 15-minute meeting as you can in a 60.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Thanks so much, Tamika and Cynthia. Here are our responses to the second question that we posted. And we've put the question on the screen just to refresh your memory.

“We just adopted a new remote work policy in February. It was written by a staff committee.”

Another person said, “We are one day ... a week and I'm thinking about expanding to two to three days in office.”

Another person said, “Looking at permanent hybrid has moved towards full remote workforce over the pandemic only to be told by new leadership everyone must be back in the office.”

Another person said, “We have re-organized into a completely remote organization except for a small finance office.”

“We are trying to update our policy to ... a hybrid work environment.”

And another person said, “Right now, we are open and allow folks to work 100% in the office, 100% remote and hybrid. We are planning periodic in-person all staff meetings. No conversation so far on returning folks to the office 100%.”

Any thoughts on those points made?

Cynthia Orme: Well, it's interesting [that] the comment about new leadership coming in and making a different decision is so common. And, not for answering here and now ... it's a rhetorical question. Of course, it could have been the best decision ever, but was there a really good reason behind it, and was that [explained] to employees ... ? Or did it seem to be just capricious?

So it can be a real damage ... to a community and employee community. And the rest of it ... what we tried to do in this presentation — it sounded so organized, right? These are the frameworks. In reality, people are in the middle of making these decisions. And ... COVID itself is changing. Every week, there's a new [variation] — is it going up or down?

So, I guess I'm hearing the theme of change and people being in the middle of these decisions, and I'm hopeful that what we've said today will help encourage you all to go ahead and make a decision and talk about it and really influence that in your organizations because it's just so helpful to employees to have more certainty.

Tamika Harold: I love what you said there, Cynthia, about communication and how important it is that employees understand the “why.” Most employees will be OK with being on board with the decision that is made when the why is clearly communicated and it makes sense to how they do work.

If they understand that the functioning of the business can't run effectively without this particular decision, they're more apt to ... fall in line, follow through and come back with less angst ... challenges and complaints — [those] kinds of things.

We can't stress enough what effective communication does. And when you're pushing decisions down, especially decisions that are contrary to [those] that you've already promoted to your team members, it is extremely important [to] effectively [communicate] clearly what that “why” is and how it impacts your overall business.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Thanks so much to both of you. So, we have a question that's come in as we move through our official Q&A portion of today's event.

First question is, “How do you suggest managing senior leaders who do not want to adopt the hybrid dynamic model? They want to have their teams working at the office and that causes a lot of conflict.”

Tamika Harold: I think we've seen this, Cynthia, across several organizations where it's been working well before, and [many] people saw the shifting of the pandemic as something very temporary and, I always lean towards effective processes and policies.

... If you are making a business decision, such as ... returning to work ... going 100% remote or one of the dynamic/hybrid models, it's very important that there is an established policy that has been completed, finalized, rubber-stamped and then properly administered and trained to your staff members [so] that everybody clearly understands. This is an organizational decision, and ... if needed, your executives are having one-on-one conversations ... with your leaders because then this becomes a management conversation [instead of] anything else.

Managers are not ... what's the word I'm looking for ... immune to having performance conversations. And it's important that if they are not ... falling in line, excuse me, with your organizational practices, that these conversations are happening, so that ... they're not allowing for disruptive communications amongst your team members. So, it's very important that, if needed, you're having those one-on-one conversations with your leaders. So, again, you want to make sure that they understand how this makes sense to the business and their role and responsibility in ensuring that they are pushing the practice that the organization has established.

Cynthia Orme: ... There's just one thing to add to that. Sometimes, as we all know, we try our best to have great ... great conversations with leaders. We facilitate well [and] encourage leaders to reflect on reasons and so forth, but we still end up in a place ... we don't necessarily agree with. We might understand it, but we don't agree with it.

So, then it's the other equally important capability that we ... need to have, is to ... sometimes ... make the most of it, both in terms of encouraging ...the leaders who have made that decision to stand behind that and setting up ways for them to stand behind it ... Sometimes that is exactly what encourages the decision to evolve. So you make sure that they can speak openly, and they can explain it to folks, and you give them talking points, and they're like – I was working with one client, and they [said], “Oh, is that really what ... I've agreed to here?” I said, “Yes, that's what you agreed to. And so, therefore, that's what you should say at that all-hands meeting because you need to stand behind this.” And they [said], “Well, I can't do that.” And I said, “OK, well let's change the decision.”

So, keep it going. Keep the ... communication going because the decision could still go, but [in the] worst-case scenario, it's a decision you don't personally agree with, and you wonder how it's really going to work for the organization. You can help, though, by making sure people understand the parameters. As Tamika said, [ensure] the policies, procedures [and] everything is buttoned up. That's at least what we can do to [ensure] that we're making the best ... of a leader's decision.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Thank you, both. Here's another question and comment.

“I think the pandemic really affected people's social skills. I am struggling with employees not having the social soft skills to have hard conversations [to] provide critical feedback to each other when necessary. I don't think remote work has caused this problem but it's not helping. Wondering if you have any tips for helping employees step ... out of their comfort zones a little more.”

Tamika Harold: That's such a good question and I wonder if ... we drill down a little deeper and realize that it was way before the pandemic with social media and the ways of communicating, emojis speak a thousand words, that people have shifted how we communicate in our society. And so, I wonder if coupled with the pandemic, that just heightens everything that you're asking. So it's a ... very valid concern.

I know here at Nonprofit HR ... our leadership does such a phenomenal job helping us understand the culture ... helping us understand how our voice is important within our culture and how, if we have a need or concern, there is not just the freedom to speak up, but there's ... safety in doing that as well. There's a level of vulnerability on both sides of the table, where it's not just me showing 100% vulnerability to someone that I either need something from or someone who has an expectation of me.

Both parties [show] that layer of respect and vulnerability, and it's just ... a very open [communication culture]. And so, knowing that, as an employee, that that's the culture that is set and expected of me, it's easier for me to communicate ... that way. So then I'd ask, what your culture of communication looks like? If your employees understand that those hard conversations ... will happen, [you won't go] through professional life without them. And ... when they do happen, there is an open forum for which they can freely express themselves respectfully and still get ... a very positive outcome. So, I'd look at how your structures are set up culturally, and if they're not set up for that level of success, I'd have some hard conversations amongst your executive and leadership teams and see how we could shift that culture so that people ... feel that freedom.

On the flip of that, if you do have a very open [communication culture], and if you're like Nonprofit HR ... you foster that type of great communication culture, again, I'm just such a fan of going back to one-on-one discussions with people and asking them. Cynthia mentioned it earlier when she talked about burnout and how profound something as simple as asking a question ... and getting in their head a little bit [is].

It just ... does wonders, and so maybe even asking your employees: Why [is it] that these hard conversations are so hard for us? [Find] out if there is a way that we can support some communication. Is there a training we can go to? Is there a life professional coach that we can bring on board? And [there are] plenty of those coaches out [there]. I know quite a few who have their own businesses, and this is what they do — ... they come in and ... help employees [to] communicate effectively with their leaders and within their organizations. What tools and resources can you, as an employer [and] as a leader, provide to your employees to help foster better communication, knowing that you know that there's a rift — how [can we] fix that? So, I would recommend some of those, and just ... be aware of what your culture looks like.

Cynthia Orme: I have just one other comment to add to that, which is [that] sometimes, we think about the worst-case scenario or what ...the reality of something [is], even though it's not so pleasant. And to me, I compare it to some of what we say about our schools now. Where we've lost time, right? The pandemic has caused us to backtrack in terms of academics and students [with] comfort going to school and ... learning.

... It's the same thing in the workplace. We've lost some time, we need to rebuild. Maybe we [must] accept some of that, so it's not an action. It's something, it's more of an empathic mindset that informs some of the actions that Tamika has suggested. So, be OK if people ... need a little bit of retraining or reminding of some of these workplace ways of being.

Then, maybe if they're reminded, they'll come back faster, but maybe there's some time to be a little ... patient. And, by the way, telling people we're being patient, telling people we're starting where they are, goes a long way in ... making improvements because they feel heard, respected and trusted. And so, it becomes its own self-fulfilling prophecy if handled well.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Thank you, Cynthia and Tamika. Here's another question.

“Our staff works from home four days a week [and] as the leader, I want people in the office more because of community building and supporting people around vicarious trauma. We serve victims of violence, but people really do not want to come back.”

Cynthia Orme: Well, this one hits close to home, actually. So, I am aware that there are — despite everything we're talking about here around ways for it to work — many places where people, employees, and employees of every level, are just ... checked out. Doing what they have to do, what they feel they have to do, and for reasons related to hardships ... and trauma in life.

... I can ... almost picture that organization that the person may be in as they describe that. People are just kind of dispersed and not really engaged ... or talking with each other. There's probably low energy when they do talk to each other. People ... want to get off the meeting. They maybe don't follow up a lot with questions. [There's] a lot of silence in meetings. I can just ... almost feel it.

... Because there's no solution that's like, “Oh, well, here's what you do in that situation.” I think, in the right way, you should ask that group of people what would help. I imagine they still work at that organization because they care about that population, they want to help that population, so re-orient them to that reason they joined or the reason the organization exists.

... Again, start over, with like, “Wow, we're all at this place, how do we get back to that place? How do we help you feel energized being here?” And, maybe you'll end up [at needing] to be in the office two more days a week ... but you're starting with them, in terms of ... helping you understand what would work.

That's just one suggestion, it's a very hard situation.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: And here's another question.

“What are your thoughts on offering staff a set of days to use for hybrid? My executive director wants to offer 15 days for the whole year for staff to use.”

Tamika Harold: I'm always going to learn toward what works best for the operations of your unique organization.

You may have the type of organization where 15 days a year is very generous, or you may have the type of organization where 15 [days] is a drop in the bucket ... We need to ... understand what that looks like. But these practices [and] dynamics of which option to select ... has to first make sense for your business model ... the people that you're serving and the products that you're producing. So that's number one ... if it makes sense for the business, it makes sense for the business.

If there are ways where you can improve upon that or if it's just someone who doesn't like the idea and they are just giving in [saying], “I'm going to acquiesce and just give you something,” you've got to be very careful of that ... Your employees, if they know that that's just a drop-in-the-bucket solution, you are now creating a potential domino effect.

We are still in a [new world] where hiring is challenging ... and finding dynamic, top talent in less than six months is a huge challenge for [many] organizations. So, you don't want to put your current employees who are doing well, and ... functioning well in their remote environment [in a different workplace structure.] ... If you have the capacity as an organization to allow for them to continue to [work remotely] — you've taken surveys ... polled people and [had] conversations with your people and that's what they want and need — and if it doesn't disrupt your business, I think you need to ... [have] those conversations and making those considerations.

It's hard not really knowing the structure of the organization we're talking about when we're answering some of these questions, but that's ... really some of the considerations we're hoping everyone is thinking about. And, [Cynthia said it earlier], we're not just [at a point] where, because this is how you think and this is what you want ... that's what's best for your organization.

Cynthia Orme: I will say just one other comment on that from a very practical standpoint ... As Tamika said, we don't know anything about the organization, but expressing it like that, like you can have 15 days to work at home ... almost begs the question: I guess working from home is ... like a vacation day then? It doesn't imply that it's part and parcel with work and that the same work can happen in very different places. It's setting it up as ... a special day, which to me [is] a slippery slope toward people not knowing quite how to conceive of that and perhaps misusing that or it could create confusion.

Tamika Harold: That's a great point, and for work-life integration to ... work, it's very important that it's part of your culture. And when people [are] hired, [it's important] that they understand that this isn't really an option. This is how we do work.

Cynthia Orme: It's how we do work, right.

Tamika Harold: [Such a] very good point, Cynthia.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Thank you, both. We have time for two more quick questions. Here's one that I think is somewhat of a follow-up to what you were just mentioning.

... "Is it wise to have dynamic work vary by department or business unit?"

Tamika Harold: I sound like a broken record ...

Because I'm dealing with this with a couple of my clients now and the employees can't stand it, but some departments cannot function with a 100% remote environment. [Based on how the business is structured,] they cannot, but some departments *can* do that ... We've looked at it every way, and I'm going to let you answer this one, Cynthia, because I think ... even I could probably learn something to take back to my clients on this one.

Cynthia Orme: ...I'm going to go hang on the first part of the question ... "Is it wise to ... have dynamic work vary by department or business unit?" ... As Tamika already alluded to ... we don't know if it's wise to make this decision or that decision because it's based on your organization at every level and from every dimension.

But it is wise to think about it ... beyond some sense of the “should’s” ... a concept or an article that we read. Use your brain, use your strategic thinking that you use for every other decision, and say, “You know, what makes sense for us?” It's wise to think about what makes sense ... be open to the possibilities and then maybe map them out. Do a pros and cons list for the various ideas. Pilot something, test something, do a ... two-question survey. Really get into it a little bit, so that you're not making assumptions about what is wise and what is best. It's wise to ... do that hard work, which has been obviously a theme of what we've said today.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Thanks so much, Cynthia and Tamika. Here's our final question.

“What is etiquette for someone working out on camera while having a virtual meeting? Any insights on how to help employees understand what could be distracting or meaningful?”

Cynthia Orme: Do you know, Atokatha, is that percentage of time on camera? Or is that background stuff or everything?

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Just working out on camera, so being in meetings and ... people are working out. Some people are on treadmills during calls and people are outdoors during meetings, so I think it's in that same vein.

Cynthia Orme: ... First of all, kudos to those people who can do that. I think it's about contracting, we haven't used that were too much in this session, but [it] has been implied in so much of what we've said – contracting beforehand what is acceptable, [and] what's not acceptable in our group as we work together ... I could even see having fun [where we are] doing some version of exercise together while we talk or it's OK to be in whatever environment you need to. It can be casual or formal ... I can see it working, but it needs to be contracted upfront versus taking people by surprise.

I don't know, Tamika, do have other comments on that one?

Tamika Harold: I recently said to one of our senior consultants, who, I respect everything that flows out of her mouth: “You have to allow people to be their best selves and as long as, they're still functioning within a layer of professionalism ... cut some people some slack.”

I think, we've got a few people who like to walk on the treadmill while they're working and ... they still participate high within the meeting, they still contribute at a high level. As long as the person is providing what is needed, even [when] some of it can be distracting. I've sat in a conversation where someone was in their car and their leg was up and they're just kind of like leaning and, is it distracting? A little bit, but we're all professionals, and I can push through a little bit of that. That's an hour of my day that I'm seeing in this meeting, where someone has a leg propped up in their car. And, we're going to push through and get through the meeting.

If it's something where this is happening on a regular basis, you may want to go through with your employees on some of your expected workplace etiquette when you're on calls. But nothing too restrictive, because it then shifts the dynamic of the functionality of being able to work from home in a remote space [or] in a comfortable setting that works best for you.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Thank you so much, Tamika. And also, Cynthia. That's all the time we have for Q&A today and on this webinar. We so appreciate you joining us and we hope you found it valuable.

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If you'd like more information about available services to support your organization, feel free to reach out to us at info@nonprofithr.com or visit us online at nonprofithr.com. Again, thank you very much to Cynthia Orme and Tamika Harold for bringing such valuable information to our community of listeners and viewers. We appreciate you tuning in, and we wish you a great rest of the afternoon.