

THE PATH FORWARD

BOLD MOVES FROM CHICAGO BUSINESS LEADERS

BE BOLD: YOUR TEAM IS LONGING FOR IT!

With a safe return to the workplace finally becoming a reality for the broad business community, Chicago leaders are planning bold action.

If real estate is your down payment on culture, then the spontaneous daily interactions are the sparks that ignite your company.

If you are like us, you have grown increasingly tired of the regurgitation of buzzwords being thrown around right now:

Productivity | Unprecedented | Virtual Collaboration

Innovation | Employee Engagement | Watercooler | Retention

These words are important, but if you lack the proper construct or application, they are rendered just that.... *words*. Right now, companies need bold leadership. Employees are craving it.



“Everybody’s going to do Zoom calls. And then one day, a young whippersnapper is going to say, ‘You know, I think I’ve got a better chance if I go sit in front of the guy.’ And so, he’s going to get on a plane. And he’s going to sit in front of the guy. And he’s going to get the deal.”

Sam Zell, a true Chicago real estate icon

SURVIVE OR THRIVE

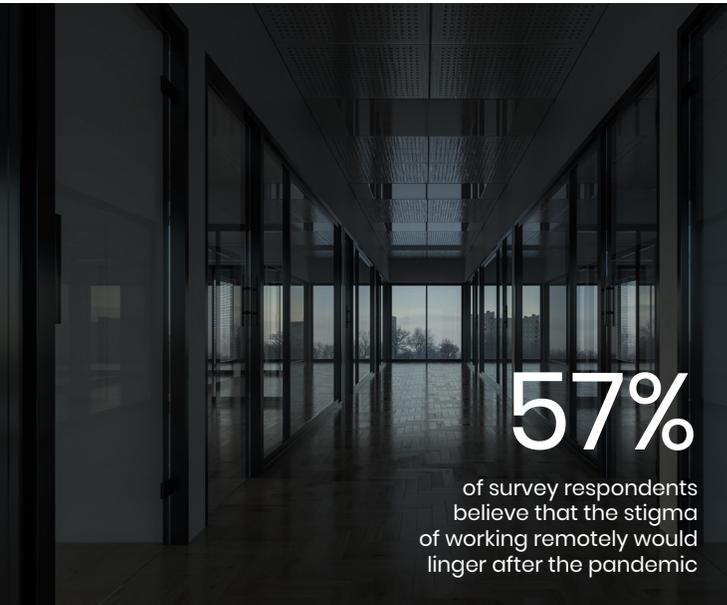
Business can survive remotely but to thrive, it will always require human interaction. Remember, in business you are either growing or dying as your competition is not stagnant. Leaders may be just as productive and successful working remotely, but this isn't about us, it's about our teams.

The physical office is not dead. We've recapped seven things we hear from clients and fellow business owners who are concerned about the state of their teams and are frustrated with the impact COVID has had on their culture.

BEWARE: THE TWO-TIERED TEAM

For companies that are already welcoming back a portion of their teams a new phenomenon is being created, the two-tiered team. While this may sound positive, it is anything but. Leaders are seeing a trend in the bifurcation of the team, where those who work from the office tend to work similar hours and those who work remotely is all over the board. Communication between the tiered teams is proving to be unmanageable. Communication is challenging under the best circumstances but with the stakes higher than ever this new structure is increasingly negative.





REMOTE WORKER ANXIETY

Think about what happens after an online meeting when some members of the team are in the conference room and others are remote. What happens at the conclusion of the meeting? The members who are physically present tend to continue discussions and even go so far as to make decisions and outline next steps. When working from home, people have expressed concerns that teammates saw them as unproductive, difficult to reach, or “checked out.” There is a lot of concern that when some people return to the office, expectations and processes will shift back to favoring those who are physically present.

VIRTUAL ON BOARDING DOESN'T WORK

Getting a new hire off on the right foot is one of the most critical aspects to successful growth. Over the last 6 months we have heard from countless leaders, asking us if we have seen any solutions to effectively onboard remotely. It should come as no surprise that we have not found a single one. The most successful solution we have come across is where the new hire physically works out of the mentor's home when possible. Not only is this scenario highly unrealistic in most instances, it creates an entire new set of problems and liabilities.



MENTORS MATTERS

If wisdom comes with age and experience how can we expect our younger and newer team members to watch, learn, listen, and grow without any physical interaction? If physically separated, how can a veteran overhear a conversation and offer unsolicited feedback? It simply is not plausible to expect to set up a call or Zoom meeting when issues arise. With the velocity of business today, opportunities are downloaded and discussed right there on the spot or sadly, they are neglected or forgotten altogether. Efficient growth comes from teams interacting on a daily basis, not over a prescribed computer screen.

REDEFINE YOUR SHARED MISSION

At its best, a Shared Mission inspires your employees to contribute on a daily basis and enables them to see the intrinsic value of what they contribute together. Remote work puts your mission in jeopardy of becoming a unilateral act. Shared Mission is much more than one person - it is a participatory endeavor around a big, shared goal that aligns interests between people in your organization and gives them purpose. That purpose is the fuel that drives your company forward. Without it, people lose focus, are uninspired, and ultimately, performance will suffer.



SPONTANEOUS SUPPORT

There is a magical moment shared between two team members when they are sitting waiting for a meeting to start. Or when passing in the kitchen and they strike up a conversation, sharing details about a new baby, the loss of a relative, or the struggle of raising a teenager. Now more than ever it seems quite apparent that we all could use a bit of support. The warmth of a personal conversation or positive reinforcement just does not create the sense of connection or have the same effect via an online interaction.

BE PREPARED & BE RESILIENT

By no means are we advocating that the office environment should or will go back to the exact way it was before. But like most things, it will evolve. We expect great things for our industry but most importantly for our fellow leaders and owners going forward. We have been forced to rethink almost everything, which has challenged us to grow. And we are better for it. The lessons have been costly and painful, but Chicago will move forward, and we will recover.

At Bespoke we are not looking to just provide solutions but to start with a conversation. If you are interested in talking with a fellow leader and business owner, please let us know.

Sources:

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