

# Leading virtually

## Driving performance in a changing context

We all know the parameters of managing teams effectively changed dramatically as we began remote working last year. During this time we've worked with many leaders and teams and noticed the ones who 'got it right' have sought and achieved balance. While there is no text book for getting things right, we have gathered some useful insights and helpful pointers on ways to help strike the right balance this year. It's by no means an exhaustive list, but one that may be a helpful starting point.

### FOCUS ON OUTCOMES

#### *Meetings have goals*

Maintain focus on the desired outcome – what do you want to get out of the meeting? Is it building empathy? Making a decision? Brainstorming? Creating alignment? The outcome should help you decide the technology used and length of time. Don't use more time than you need, bake in short breaks – respect everyone's time.

### MIX IT UP

#### *Technology is a choice*

Use a mix of technology and platforms. Zoom fatigue is real so it should not be a default, make use of phones as well as other platforms. Stop staring at the screen, go for a walk, get a change of scene and perception. When working with a larger team encourage discussion/ debate / brainstorming in smaller groups (breakout rooms); time bound it – no wrong answers, just come up with ideas.

### YOU CONTROL THE TECHNOLOGY

#### *Technology is a tool*

Make sure the tech is working for you; not the other way round. Technology facilitates certain behaviours and hinders others – beware of people limiting their input and emotional input to the emoticons on offer! Don't default to 30 minute or one hour meetings – try 15, 45, 50 minutes instead. Make the tech work for you!

### DESIGN FOR CONNECTION

#### *Design is linked to outcomes*

Trust underpins effective teams. There is a need to focus on and design for empathy, identity, shared reality and trust. Initial reaction may have been 'all of this is made difficult in virtual environment' but now leaders should bring an element of vulnerability – this is an opportunity to connect on a human level. Ultimately this will lead to better business outcomes and, importantly, a more engaged and trusting team.

### MANAGE WORK SPACE

#### *Boundaries are personal*

In this virtual world of work, ground rules must accommodate personal differences to compensate for loss of the office. Some may be fine with the blurring of home and work boundaries while others may find this stressful. Let people draw their own boundaries, treat everyone as individuals, with legitimate viewpoints and feelings to create an acceptable level of comfort.