



Bryant University

HONORS THESIS

Effective Management in the Post-Pandemic Hybrid Workplace

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ABSTRACT

In 2020, the COVID 19 pandemic struck the world and called for a change in the way business is conducted. Companies are being forced to redesign their business models to accommodate the widespread push to digital platforms, also known as the digital transformation era. As a result, more companies are shifting their environments to utilize a blend of the increasingly popular remote work approach with the traditional in-office practice. This sudden rise in remote work and the numerous effects it has on employees has caused a need for change in the way managers conduct their business. A qualitative research study was conducted on remote and non-remote workers in organizations from all different industries, and this data is supported by the findings of readily available scholarly studies and articles. The results of the study concluded that managers in hybrid environments need to show greater levels of trust and emotional support to their remote employees, in addition to placing a heightened emphasis on communication practices and the use of goal-setting management styles. The conclusions reached can be used by managers in hybrid work settings to manage their remote and in-office employees more effectively.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of 2020, the world was blindsided by the COVID 19 pandemic. What started as a small viral outbreak in Wuhan, China, turned into a global pandemic that changed the way business will be conducted forever. As the pandemic worsened, organizations were forced to change their business structures to accommodate new policies and procedures imposed by national governments to protect the safety of their citizens. Unfortunately, this led to a tremendous number of layoffs and closures in all types of businesses, including but not limited to strong, well-established global companies. In the face of this crisis, the need for an alternative business structure was called upon, thus initializing what is known as the era of digital transformation.

Throughout the entirety of history, business practices have been conducted in person. Typically, managers are in the same office space as their employees, which allows them to surveil and lead their employees in a very timely and efficient manner. Effectively managing in an office setting requires a certain skill set, and after many years, these certain characteristics have been identified. However, since the COVID 19 pandemic, there has been a tremendous increase in the use of remote work practices. Instead of managers physically working in the same location as their subordinates and peers, they are performing their job from a remote location. New era technology allows them to communicate with their employees via video call, email, text messaging, etc. with ease. However, these new practices offer a new and very different set of challenges managers must face.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In-Person Management

As previously mentioned, the way business was conducted was different before the COVID 19 pandemic. Generally, an employee's average workday consisted of getting up, getting dressed, and going off to work. Whether it be an office, construction site, school, production facility, etc., companies typically conducted their business at the workplace. This trend dates back as far as back as business data was reported and has become one of the foundational

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cornerstones of the way business works. As time continued, people began to perfect the art of managing their employees. Since management is such a broad category, there is no one set of rules that applies to all managers. For example, a manager on a construction site might handle the management of his or her employees very differently than the manager of a bank would. However, the one thing they have in common is that they are both on-site while managing their employees. So, many people have sought after determining what skills and methods of management work the best in this face-to-face setting.

Throughout the decades, people have looked to answer this question in the realm of their time frame. There was one study that was conducted in 1979, for example, that set out to determine whether or not being a good manager was determined through the lens of masculinity and femininity. In the study, Gary N. Powell and D. Anthony Butterfield applied the Bern Sex-Role Inventory model to a study of 684 business students. The study “failed to support the hypothesis that a good manager would be seen as androgynous (possessing both masculine and feminine characteristics). Instead, the good manager was described in masculine terms” (Butterfield & Powell 2017). As a result of many similar studies conducted during this time, the manager’s position gained acknowledgment as a male position. For many decades, people viewed the role as a position of power that was associated with being effective in this position with masculine traits and mannerisms. By the ’90s, however, there had been a great change in the societal take on feminism. In fact, in 1995, a study proved that “although managers in general are rated high in masculine characteristics, good managers are rated high both in masculine and feminine characteristics” (Carmichael 1995). In only twenty years, society began to change its views on femininity, and as a result, the qualities of a good manager changed as well.

Outside of the lens of gender, there are a few key qualities that are believed to contribute to an effective manager. There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to managing employees in-office, but some of these qualities are believed to be universal among all effective in-office managers. Culture Amp claims that one of the qualities of an effective in-office manager is that they exercise “Fair treatment” with all of their employees (Culture Amp 2021). To make

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each employee feel valued and motivated, treating them all the same is the way to do such. When managers favor one employee over another or they treat a group of their staff unfairly compared to the rest, that is when they lose their ability to effectively lead them. In addition to this, another effective practice is to “Check in with everyone individually or at a team meeting to let them know how to best reach you during the day” (Risio 2021). Communication is believed to be one of the most important factors in effective management, and if a manager does not do that well, there are bound to be greater troubles down the road. Since one method of communication will not always be the best way to reach the manager, it is beneficial to set clear expectations as to what method should be used daily.

The one thing all of these studies have in common is that their results offer insight to managers who are working in the same place as their employees. These studies are based upon the assumption that the manager can physically overlook and check in on their employees. As technology developed with society, the way business is conducted changed as well.

Implementation of Remote Work Practices

In society, trends tend to stay the same unless there is a call for change. Society has broken down racial, general, and cultural barriers over the past few centuries to establish a new norm based on equality. Businesses have reflected these changes, and now women and other groups of people who were once discriminated against in the workforce are protected and offered an equal opportunity as everyone else. Similar trends have happened with the development of modern technology. Many companies that were not able to keep up with the power of the internet –take Blockbuster, for example- found themselves in deep trouble as the environment of business changed faster than their business models. Many managers became aware that to survive, an organization needed to change with the times- or better yet, prepare for it.

Therefore, in recent years, many organizations and managers began to shift the way they conducted their business to better suit the current environmental conditions. Improvements in communication technologies in the last couple of decades have allowed certain managers to

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conclude that some of their workers did not need to physically be in the office to perform their job. As a result, “Global Workplace Analytics says the remote workforce has increased by 140% since 2005” (DeCarlo 2019). More and more organizations saw the benefits of allowing specific employees the freedom to conduct their work outside of the office, and the movement gained support.

However, whenever there is change, problems arise; and this situation is no different. Dr. Flores conducted a study in his article *Understanding The Challenges Of Remote Working And Its Impact To Workers* to show the challenges of remote work. It was reported that “Separating Work and Home Life was the most difficult part when working remotely. Developing Relationship with Work Colleagues was also found to be a difficulty, landing second on the list. Next to it was Having ones Performance Fairly Evaluated. Fourthly, Hearing about Developments and Opportunities within the Company, and Obtaining Guidance on how to Complete your Duties were also included as difficulties in remote working. Lastly, Receiving Feedback from Managers was also considered a difficulty by the respondents” (Flores 2019). Though some of these problems seem avoidable, they all can contribute to a decrease in the overall productivity and efficiency of an organization.

Other studies were conducted to try and pinpoint the skills and attributes that are necessary for a remote worker. The article *Remote work: Equipping business students for working reality* discusses a study in which the findings conclude the most essential skills for a successful remote worker are “Communication (100%) ... Self-directed/motivated (74%) ... Trustworthy (72%) ... Discipline (58%) ... Taking initiative/curious (55%) ... Adaptable/flexible (54%) ... High Self-efficacy (52%)”. They believe 4 main factors are “support, autonomy, accountability, and feedback Each [has] an influence on the intrinsic motivation of the remote workers, and on the work environment.” (Henriette, Feki, Boughzala 2016). Using this data, managers are better able to apply the right employees to remote practices. Managers can also use data like this to guide the way they act in the remote setting so that they can be the best suited to lead their organization to success.

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Remote Management as a Result of COVID

The abruptness of the COVID 19 pandemic has played a huge role in the utilization of remote work practices. Some organizations that had little to no remote work processes implemented were forced to go entirely remote. One study done by PR Newswire shows how quickly companies were able to adapt and change. The study was conducted in May 2020 on a sample of U.S full-time employees, and it shows “34% say their companies are not prepared to **work** from home, while a staggering 77% claim their companies haven't implemented **work**-from-home protocols” (PR Newswire 2020). More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the companies in the study had not yet made accommodations nearly 3 months after the start of the pandemic, which shows how difficult it can be to effectively transition to the remote business style.

These companies who were less prepared to make the transition saw greater challenges than their well-prepared peers. The article *Remote Work Revolution: Current Opportunities and Challenges for Organizations* uses evidence to prove that making the change is not easy, and it also might not be in the best interest of the organization. However, through analyzing the challenges and problems of remote work, employee motivation factors, etc., this article provides a clearer vision of the pros and cons of the shift to remote work. It concluded that “companies need to be both vigilant and thoughtful in how they approach, design, implement and fine-tune their remote work programs” (Popovici 2020). In other words, remote workers should be assigned on a case-to-case basis, and the implementation of this procedure should be reviewed frequently and adjusted frequently for it to be effective.

Another problem managers are facing as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic entails sustaining organizational culture. Since many workers are operating from remote locations and face-to-face contact is at a minimum, it has become increasingly difficult to establish and maintain organizational culture. An article written by J. Howard-Greenville discusses ways to promote and maintain a collective purpose, such as holding regular team meetings and virtual bonding events. Additionally, reinstating goals and values in memos contribute to the effectiveness of these methods.

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Although managers need to understand how the pandemic impacts their employees, it is just as important to understand how it is impacting them. The article *Remote Managers are Having Trust Issues* addresses the common theme that the crisis situation is testing the amount of trust managers have in their employees. In the study conducted, it was found that “About 40% of the 215 supervisors and managers in our study expressed low self confidence in their ability to manage workers remotely. Twenty-three percent of managers disagreed with the statement “I am confident I can manage a team of remote workers” and another 16% were unsure about this ability. Similar numbers reported lacking the confidence to influence remote workers to do their job well and coordinate a team of remote workers effectively” (Parker, Keller, Knight 2020). These problems are extremely detrimental to the relationship managers have with their employees and provide a platform for many future problems to arise. The lack of in-person meetings and interactions leads managers to fear whether or not their employees are getting done what they need to complete and understanding this concept can help prevent this from happening entirely.

Research Question

It is safe to say that the utilization of remote work practices is the next big trend to shift the way businesses operate. The COVID pandemic has left millions of organizations no choice but to make the change fast, and many managers are dealing with entirely new problems because of it. A remote manager needs to have a different skill set and use different techniques than a manager who operates in the office, and by analyzing what makes an effective remote manager, managers and businesses as a whole will be better suited to survive in the modern business world.

RQ1: Do the skills, qualities, and management styles used by effective managers of in-office practices translate to those using remote work practices?

METHODOLOGY

Through analyzing different management styles, behaviors, job tasks, demographics, levels of reporting, etc., a conclusion can be reached that will offer a framework for managers to be

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effective in hybrid environments. This study was proposed and approved by the Bryant University Institutional Review Board before the start of the study. The study was conducted using interviews that contain questions regarding work status since the start of the COVID pandemic (remote, in office, or a mix) as well as questions about the way their manager has led their employees and whether or not they feel it has been effective or not. By looking at business as a whole and through the lens of industry, greater conclusions can be drawn about what managers can do to oversee their employees more effectively and whether the practices used in traditional, in-office environments can translate to hybrid environments.

Sample / Participants

For this study, a sample of 8 participants was selected to be interviewed. These 8 participants were carefully selected in order to promote diversity regarding hierarchical rank within their respective companies as well as within the lens of industry as a whole. Below is a list of the candidates selected for the interviews as well as the position they held within their respective companies:

- Connor Trask- Assistant Branch Manager, Enterprise Rent-a-Car
- Sare' Arnold- Talent Acquisition Professional, Enterprise Holdings
- Ryan Kilcoyne- District Manager, ALDI
- David Burke- Senior Business Development Director, Coverys
- John Elcock- Assistant Project Manager, Tremont Construction
- Celina Watson- Executive Director, Kensington Assisted Living (White Plains)
- Jonathan Pinto- Head Golf Professional, Richter Park Golf Course
- Mark Sarkisian- President, RR Donnelley

Procedure

Each participant was reached out to via email to determine whether or not they would be willing to participate in the study. Upon agreement, Zoom meetings were scheduled according to each participant's availability, and a list of the questions was sent out in advance. At the beginning of each meeting, participants were asked permission for the interview to be recorded and their responses to be included in the results of the study. After granting

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permission, the participants were asked to respond to the following set of questions in as much depth as they felt necessary:

1. Describe what you do for work (duties) who you report to (title)?
 - a. How far removed is your direct supervisor?
2. What does your workplace environment look like today, compared to pre-pandemic? (all in office, all remote, etc.)
3. How often do you communicate with your direct supervisor? Immediate staff subordinates?
 - a. Is it strictly business?
4. How many people is your manager responsible for the oversight of?
5. How does your manager tell you what work it is that needs to be done? (Email, text, meetings)
6. Do you feel your manager treats their employees who work remotely vs in office differently? If so, how?
7. Are there any things you wish your manager would do differently regarding your direct supervision?
8. To your understanding, is your manager able to produce positive result? How's the company doing?
9. How would you describe your supervisor's management style?
10. Do you think your manager is effective in managing both remote and in-person employees?
11. Hypothetical: You're the CEO of a Fortune 500 company. If we went into lockdown again tomorrow, what would be the first thing you would do?
12. What has been your biggest takeaway from a managerial perspective from the pandemic?

Relevance

These questions aim to provide insight as to how each participant is currently being managed within their respective environments. By learning more about each individual's workplace and their interactions with their supervisors, there is a stronger foundation upon which

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conclusions can be drawn. Understanding the different factors that each manager is dealing with can allow for more accurate analyses of their responses which will, in turn, increase the credibility and applicability of the results.

RESULTS

In order to understand how to be an effective manager in a hybrid workplace, it is important to readdress the research question: Do the skills, qualities, and management styles used by effective managers of in-office practices translate to those using remote work practices? Without analyzing how managers of in-office practices operate, it is impossible to determine whether or not their skills translate to remote practices, and ultimate hybrid ones as well.

Among the participants who remained in office during the pandemic, Jonathan Pinto's operations had the least flexibility regarding the option to pursue remote capabilities. Since Pinto works at a golf course, the business model is entirely reliant on people physically showing up to the site and utilizing their services. However, when asked what he would do in the role of a CEO in a Fortune 500 company, Pinto immediately suggested: "Downsize in real-estate" (Pinto). He continues to acknowledge that his business is unique in the sense where the option to go remote is not something he sees happening in the foreseeable future, which can be true when looking at many different companies within the leisure industry. Similar to Pinto, John Elcock worked "completely in person unless there were Covid exposures" (Elcock). Elcock works for a small construction company in Boston, and since the pandemic, the "office hasn't really changed too much" (Elcock). He reports to the two partners who own the company, and he has direct face time with them daily, which is how expectations are communicated. Although many construction companies decided to adopt hybrid work practices, Tremont did not, and when asked what he wished was done differently regarding his supervision, he responded "I do wish I could work from home a little more, but at the same time, I am significantly more productive in the office" (Elcock).

On the other hand, Enterprise was able to take a different approach as a direct result of the size of the company. In Enterprise, some work the front lines putting people into rental

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vehicles and those who work in their corporate offices. To encapsulate this picture as a whole, Connor Trask and Sare' Arnold were both interviewed. Trask worked as an Assistant Branch Manager during the time of the interview and throughout the pandemic, and his workplace environment changed very little as a result of the pandemic, except he did mention "staffing has been very limited recently" (Trask). Although Trask had to remain on-site, other individuals in the company were given more freedom to conduct their operations from elsewhere, including his supervisor. His manager is responsible for the oversight of 5 other locations and 10 direct reporters and is headquartered out of the corporate office. This allows her to conduct some of her work from a remote setting, and when asked about what Trask wishes would be done differently regarding his supervision, he responded, "It would be nice to have more of an opportunity to touch base with her [face to face]" (Trask). Since his manager is "laid back" and "expects things to get done, does not hound anybody", he does not see her on a very frequent basis. Instead, she utilizes a goal-setting approach for Trask and sets marks and expects him to hit them by the end of the month.

Sare' Arnold also works for Enterprise but works entirely in their corporate division. In the last year, Arnold worked "Mostly in person, but there was quite a bit of remote sprinkled in there as well" (Arnold). Her manager worked in the same office location as her, and on days when they were both at the office, they would talk face to face frequently. As a result of the pandemic, Arnold's position went from zero remote ability at all to have a little more flexibility regarding the matter. Her manager primarily sends out important information and expectations via email and continued to elaborate that they took a hands-on approach to managing. Since her supervisor has both remote and in-office employees, Arnold agreed that this approach can be frustrating to the employee, but "I do feel like the follow-up piece is really important to keep everyone on the same page" (Arnold).

Of all of the interviews, David Burke had the most insight as to how his company was able to utilize remote practices on a large scale. Pre-pandemic, his team was considered to be remote but spent "approximately 50% of time traveling to clients" (Burke). So, when the pandemic hit, a lot of the infrastructure and remote practices that were needed for their business to

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survive were already in place. As a result of the pandemic, those who were located in office were sent to work remotely, primarily using Zoom and Microsoft Teams. One of the things that he noted during the transition to the remote environment was that “the team members that are a part of [his] division that worked in office space had a more difficult time communicating initially” (Burke) since they no longer could walk down the hall to ask a question. As a result of already being a hybrid employee, Burke’s experience led him to focus on the belief that the remote environment makes people feel isolated, and he, along with his managers, made the extra effort to address this topic. On top of their regularly scheduled work calls, Burke recalls that “every week we had a social outing at the end of the day” (Burke) on Zoom where they would celebrate birthdays, work anniversaries, host cooking classes, etc., accompanied by mandatory daily outdoor time. This was a great way for employees to get to know their managers on a more personal level, and for them to embrace the shift in workplace environments, Burke believes. As a result, he felt “productivity rose significantly throughout the pandemic” (Burke). When it came to his subordinates, Burke reported that he has weekly scheduled one-on-one calls, and daily he only speaks with anywhere between 1-6 members of his field staff.

Given the nature of the industry his business was in as well as his corporate structure, switching to a hybrid work environment was a great opportunity for Burke and his company. However, as it is proven, this is not always the case. Some companies are not able to make a full switch and must rather implement the strategy where applicable, which is something Ryan Kilcoyne touched upon during his interview. Kilcoyne worked in a “100% in-person role” throughout the pandemic, but given the distance between him and his supervisors, “remote communication has always been something that was needed” (Kilcoyne). Kilcoyne’s supervisor is responsible for the oversight of 7-8 direct leaders who are each responsible for their own districts, so she can’t be at all locations all of the time. To address the communication barrier this distance creates, Kilcoyne and his supervisor have a shared virtual notebook on Microsoft One Note, and it “keeps kind of a weekly log of what’s going on so that way when we come to that [weekly virtual] meeting on Monday we have stuff to talk about besides routine stuff” (Kilcoyne). Since his supervisor and everyone above is essentially

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remote, they must have some type of shared space in which they can keep track of their ideas to improve their communication processes. However, from what he is able to observe, it seems the remote employees in his company “are held to a little bit different of a standard regarding their dressing and also probably their personal relationships as well” (Kilcoyne). Similar to Trask, Kilcoyne wishes “there was a quicker, faster way to get support” (Kilcoyne) from his manager, and like Arnold’s manager, he highlights that “she is phenomenally good at the follow up” (Kilcoyne) after they have meetings or share emails.

Mark Sarkisian and Celina Watson also share similar boundaries in implementing the hybrid workstyle in their environments. Like Kilcoyne, Watson, and Sarkisian both report to supervisors who are far removed from the operations they oversee. As a result, hybrid communications and remote work is implemented from their supervisors up, but the “essential” nature of their operations do not allow them to do so from their positions down. Sarkisian’s supervisor is the regional group vice president, and her management style is “more of a collaborative role of support than it is a direct manager to a subordinate role” (Sarkisian). Their relationship is very formal, and he reports that they have occasional video calls and could very easily go a couple of weeks without hearing from her. However, this is in part because he “send updates every week”, and similar to Pinto’s relationship with his supervisors, “it’s understood that [he] knows what [he’s] doing” (Sarkisian). When there is important information to be discussed, it is usually done via a Zoom call. Regarding his in-office employees, Sarkisian claims “I talk to them multiple times a day, every day” (Sarkisian).

Watson’s supervisors are the partners who own the company, so their distance also calls for the need to utilize mostly virtual meetings and emails for communicating as well. Since the Kensington is an assisted living, it is a 24/7 business, and people need to be on-site at all times. Watson’s supervisors have crafted a culture where everyone “think of [themselves] as a part of a Kensington family”, and although they are removed, she can “get to know them as people and families” (Watson) on holiday events. When it comes to their management style, Watson describes her managers as “the type of leaders who inspect what they expect”, and “as

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long as you are doing what you should, they kind of leave you alone, but they still check and still make sure that we're healthy and if we need any support from them [...] they're always here for us" (Watson). Her supervisors are responsible for the seven direct reporters, and although they were not able to go fully hybrid since the pandemic, they now utilize Zoom calls to host meetings between family members and their loved ones. At her location, Watson has "a meeting at 9:30 every day, it's called stand-up" (Watson) with the heads of every department, and she communicates with the rest of her employees daily.

CONCLUSION

Since the start of the COVID 19 pandemic, the business world will never be the same. The pandemic was ultimately a catalyst to bring forth the digital transformation era and revolutionize the role technology plays in the workplace- however, no matter how that role changes, there will always be the need for leaders to encourage the drive towards success. Overall, the goal of this study was to answer the question: Do the skills, qualities, and management styles used by effective managers of in-office practices translate to those using remote work practices? After interviewing employees of companies of all different sizes and industries, a few conclusions can be reached, but a few key takeaways must be addressed in advance.

First, it is imperative to recognize that not every company will be able to adopt hybrid work practices. Some business models simply cannot function without having workers on site. Nonetheless, there will still be relationships within the company that will adopt a similar format as these hybrid companies, as certain roles within companies no longer need physical office space to be effective. So, the lessons that guide hybrid managers should still be recognized by anyone in the workplace who is dealing with a primarily remote / dislocated relationship with one of their coworkers or superiors.

Next, it is also crucial to acknowledge the fact that every workforce has a different cultural set of norms. There is no 'one size fits all' solution to being an effective manager no matter the situation, so workplaces- whether in office, remote, or hybrid- should all be handled

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according to the values they have, and factors such as corporate structure, size, behaviors, and attitudes should be taken into consideration.

That said, there are a few commonalities that can be drawn from the different interviews to suggest what might make an effective hybrid manager. First, it is important that the manager does not treat in-office and remote employees the same. Concerning communication, remote employees are at a much greater disadvantage than those who are in the office. The study shows that communication with subordinates or supervisors who are remote tend to occur much less frequently than with those who are in the office. So, when communicating with remote employees, it might be advantageous to make the extra effort to connect on a personal level, since the water-cooler aspect of the in-office relationships is not there.

In addition, the results of the study suggest that managers in hybrid environments ought to create extra opportunities for their remote employees to communicate with them than their in-office employees. When managers and employees are in the same place, asking for support or advice might be more accessible and less intimidating than it would if they were remote. So, remote employees should have a different way to communicate their thoughts and questions with their managers than their primary mode of communication (i.e., collaborative virtual notebook). This might decrease the feeling of distance between the manager and the remote employee and make them feel more involved in their day-to-day lives.

Another thing managers in hybrid environments should do to be more effective is utilize a goal-setting management approach with their remote employees. By clearly setting goals and frequently yet not overwhelmingly checking on their status, the remote employee will have a clear idea as to what is expected of them and by when. In certain situations, this approach might be less effective with in-office employees because they tend to seek greater interaction as a result of the close distance to their manager, but in a remote setting, the study suggests this might be very effective.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

INTERVIEW NOTES

Connor Trask

- **Background**
 - Met when he was an assistant manager at Enterprise Randolph
 - Worked with Enterprise for 2 years
 - Currently a branch manager of Franklin branch
- **Remote or In Person in last year?**
 - In office
 - “Any office employee that does day to day rentals would have to be in person everyday”
- **How far removed is direct supervisor?**
 - Direct supervisor of managers in each of the 5 locations in the area works out of Bridgewater
- **How has environment changed since pre-pandemic?**
 - “Staffing has been very limited recently”
 - “Not that it is undoable, we are just used to having more staff”
- **How often do you communicate with your supervisor? Strictly business?**
 - Area manager holds biweekly meetings with staff
 - Very friendly environment
 - “We know each other on a personal level”
 - “We try to do like an area outing I’d say each month”
 - Friendly culture
- **How often do you communicate with subordinates? Strictly business?**
- **How many people is the manager responsible for oversight of?**
 - Between 30-50 total
 - Roughly 10 direct reports
- **How does the direct supervisor communicate expectations?**
 - Will hold formal meetings in person to go over goal setting
 - Occasional sporadic texts or emails to check-in
 - “In-person meetings and definitely email chains as well”
- **Any remote employee’s direct supervisor oversees?**
 - “A lot of our remote positions are corporate, take accounting for example”
- **Any things you wish your direct supervisor would do differently?**
 - “It would be nice to have more of an opportunity to touch base with her [face to face]”
 - Lack of timing to meet
- **Is the supervisor able to produce positive results?**
 - “Yes and no”
 - Struggle with customer service reports

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- Polarizing branches make it difficult for everyone to achieve perfect scores
- **Management style**
 - “Direct branch manager is very laid back, chill type of personality”
 - “Expects things to get done, does not hound anybody”
 - “Area manager has more so of a goal setting and expectation style”
 - Sets marks and expects them to get hit by end of month
- **Biggest takeaway from pandemic**
 - “How many new challenges you have to overcome”
 - Realize how much pressure the shot callers at corporate have to make
 - Lot of split decisions that carry a lot of weight
- **Fortune 500**
 - “Catch up on some sleep”
 - For enterprise
 - Help wherever possible
 - Look for work wherever you can find it

Sare’ Arnold

- **Background**
 - Enterprise Holdings
 - Started in company as management trainee
 - Now in recruiting
 - Role: hiring
 - Initial sourcing of candidates to taking them through interview process and onboarding
 - Responsibilities for college recruiting and employee referral program
- **Remote or In Person in last year?**
 - “Mostly in person, BUT there was quite a bit of remote sprinkled in there as well”
- **How far removed is the direct supervisor and who?**
 - The direct supervisor was regional VP until covid
 - Now report to the Group HR Manager
 - Same level as VP but specializes in HR
 - “Not at all removed, we have a lot of contact every day”
 - Lots of meetings, lot of phone calls
- **How has the environment changed since pre-pandemic?**
 - “Pre pandemic we had 0 flexibility to work from home”
 - “Post pandemic those of us who can do our jobs remotely [...] have a little bit more flexibility to work remotely”
 - “Now I do on about on average 1-2 days working at home, and the other days I’m in the field”
- **How often do you communicate with your supervisor? Strictly business?**
 - A ton of contact with regional VP
- **How often do you communicate with subordinates? Strictly business?**
 - HR coordinator does not technically report to her

Effective Management in the Post-Pandemic Hybrid Workplace

Honors Thesis for Logan Sarkisian

- Meet together for reporting once a month
- See him every day down the hall in office
- Lot of contact with 7 hiring managers
- “We almost always have some kind of business to discuss”
- Also have frequent casual conversations
- **How many people is the manager responsible for oversight of?**
 - Directly 4 people
 - 2 others below them
 - “Has a lot of autonomy over I’d say 12 people”
- **How does direct supervisor communicate expectations?**
 - “Usually email”
- **Are remote employees treated differently?**
 - Not really
 - Strongly prefers people to be in the office
- **Any remote employee’s direct supervisor oversees?**
- **Any things you wish your direct supervisor would do differently?**
 - Recently divided up recruiting responsibilities
 - A less broad scope of responsibility so that they can focus on more specific things
 - What she really wanted to change already happened
- **Is the supervisor able to produce positive results?**
 - “Despite the millions of challenges that come with running a business during a pandemic, I think we have done really really well”
 - Back to pre-pandemic numbers with vehicles on the road
 - Without pandemic and chip shortage, growth would’ve been phenomenal
- **Management style**
 - “More hands-on, asking for a lot of reporting, very very detail-oriented”
 - “If I don’t answer an email, I get another email about it”
 - Can be frustrating to the employee, but “I do kind of feel like the follow piece is really pretty important to keep everyone on the same page”
 - Dealing with remote and non-remote employees
- **Biggest takeaway from pandemic**
 - “Strong leadership and strong communication in the field”
- **Fortune 500**
 - Meet with all of the top management folks
 - “Figure out a very good communication plan for the field”

John Elcock

- **Background**
 - 2020 graduate
 - Assistant Project Manager Tremont Construction
 - 27 or so people in the company
- **Remote or In Person in last year**
 - “Completely in person unless there were Covid exposures”
- **How far removed is the direct supervisor and who?**

Effective Management in the Post-Pandemic Hybrid Workplace
Honors Thesis for Logan Sarkisian

- Direct facetime with 2 partners who own company everyday
- Senior project manager with frequent communication as well
- **How has environment changed since pre-pandemic?**
 - 2 sides of the business, those in office and those on site
 - In an office every day, work in cubicles
 - “Office hasn’t really changed too much”
 - Different seating layout to meet distancing requirements
- **How often do you communicate with your supervisor? Strictly business?**
 - “It’s all face to face”
 - Personal and business
- **How often do you communicate with subordinates? Strictly business?**
- **How many people is the manager responsible for oversight of?**
- **How does the direct supervisor communicate expectations?**
 - Face to face
- **Are remote employees treated differently?**
- **Any remote employee’s direct supervisor oversees?**
 - Everyone is in the office when they can be
- **Any things you wish your direct supervisor would do differently?**
 - “I do wish I could work from home a little more, but at the same time I am significantly more productive in the office”
 - Other friends and people do prefer to be in the office and have a place of work
- **Is the supervisor able to produce positive results?**
 - “Interior construction was hit very hard”
 - On hold for a while
 - “Have since turned it around are doing very well”
- **Management style**
 - “Gradually becomes more laissez faire”
 - Work under a magnifying glass to start
 - Learn how everything goes
 - Once you can prove your understanding, they let you go
- **Biggest takeaway from pandemic**
 - Have to be ready for everything
 - “...make sure you are doing everything you can to stay profitable”
- **Fortune 500**
 - “First thing is to make sure every employee is ok”
 - Once they are doing well, check the backlog to see what work is still in the pipeline
 - Continue with smaller jobs while money is tight, open back up to bigger ones with greater margins as the world rebounds

Ryan Kilcoyne

- **Background**
 - Graduated last year 2021
 - ALDI District Manger

Effective Management in the Post-Pandemic Hybrid Workplace

Honors Thesis for Logan Sarkisian

- “Hiring, firing, good and the bad”
- Direct leader of 5 store managers
- Personnel leader for over 100 associates
- **Remote or In Person in last year?**
 - “100% in person role”
- **How far removed is direct supervisor and who?**
 - Director of operations
 - Pretty much removed
- **How has environment changed since pre-pandemic?**
 - “Remote communication has always been something that was needed”
 - Already had remote communication policies implemented because of how many different locations one oversees at a time
 - “I’d say the business hasn’t changed as much as other businesses because of the business model but it’s definitely still changed, and you still feel that effect of a changing business from pre-covid to post covid”
- **How often do you communicate with your supervisor? Strictly business?**
 - “We meet once a week via Microsoft teams call”
 - Also, have a shared notebook on One Note
 - Shared and locked notebook
 - “Keeps kind of like a weekly log of what’s going on so that way when we come to that meeting on Monday, we have stuff to talk about besides the routine stuff”
 - Daily through email
 - No more getting coffee or going to lunch
 - Mostly business-oriented
 - See her in person once every 2 months at all district meetings
- **How often do you communicate with subordinates? Strictly business?**
 - Daily basis
 - Because of his rank, maintains authority
 - “The personal relationship is there, but it wouldn’t be the same as other jobs I’ve had where you’re in an office environment, you’re all colleagues”
 - Some personal but not too deep
 - Has to maintain an authoritative mindset
- **How many people is the manager responsible for oversight of?**
 - 7 -8 direct leaders
- **How does the direct supervisor communicate expectations?**
- **Are remote employees treated differently?**
 - Remote employees can just sit at home in the comfort of their own home
 - In-person, he gets up at 5 while the r
 - “They are held to a little bit different of a standard regarding their dressing and also probably their personal relationships as well”
- **Any remote employee’s direct supervisor oversees?**
 - Some remote people supervisor oversees
 - Have the option to be remote
 - None that he oversees

Effective Management in the Post-Pandemic Hybrid Workplace
Honors Thesis for Logan Sarkisian

- **Any things you wish your direct supervisor would do differently?**
 - Lot of responsibility without a lot of guidance
 - “I wish there was a quicker, faster way to get support” with daily tasks and questions
 - Being in different stores all of the time creates a list of things to do
- **Is the supervisor able to produce positive results?**
 - Yes
 - Since higher-level positions are only promoted from within, she has proved herself to get the promotion
- **Management style**
 - “It does change based off who you are working with”
 - Cannot have one style that fits all
 - Pretty lassie faire style
 - Can also see results through the reports that end up on her desk
 - “She is phenomenally good at the follow up after”
 - Not a thing she forgets about that he mentions
 - Something personal, she will remember
 - “Lassie faire but organized”
 - Follow up leadership style
- **Biggest takeaway from pandemic**
 - Business has always been black and white with what you can and cannot do
 - “The human side to business has really come out as a positive because of covid”
 - “Businesses are realizing that you don’t need to keep everyone locked up, in a building from 9-5 under a certain dress code to run a business”
 - Things do not need to be so black and white
 - People can be just as productive in remote forms as they can in the office (depending)
- **Fortune 500**
 - “Reach out to my staff and tell them ‘Don’t worry”
 - Reassure people of job security
 - Stress the importance of maintaining good health
 - “Having that human connection moment with the entire company”

Jonathan Pinto

- **Background**
 - Head golf pro and operations at Richter Park
 - 5 years education
 - 7 years’ work experience
 - 4th year as head of operations
- **Remote or In Person in last year?**
 - In-office
- **How far removed is the direct supervisor and who?**
 - Report to a board appointed by the mayor
 - 9-person board

Effective Management in the Post-Pandemic Hybrid Workplace

Honors Thesis for Logan Sarkisian

- “As removed as it gets”
- Report to them monthly
- “I will communicate with them usually 98% of the time via email” with phone calls here and there
- **How has environment changed since pre-pandemic?**
 - Weather has been good and covid has accelerated financial growth
- **How often do you communicate with your supervisor? Strictly business?**
 - Once a month in a meeting, and strictly business
 - “As social as it gets with them is playing golf with them”
 - “a lot more of the time it is all business talk”
 - Try to keep personal life out of business
- **How often do you communicate with subordinates? Strictly business?**
 - 43 subordinates
 - 4 members of the direct management team
 - “More personal level” but nothing crazy
 - Daily basis
- **How many people is your manager responsible for oversight of?**
 - Oversees head of operations and superintendent
 - “Essentially there’s 2 of us”
- **How does the direct supervisor communicate expectations?**
 - “Usually, it comes up at the monthly board meeting”
 - If more pressing, then a phone call or email
- **Are remote employees treated differently?**
- **Any remote employee’s direct supervisor oversees?**
 - No remote except for purchasing products
 - Direct to customer relationship
- **Any things you wish your direct supervisor would do differently?**
 - “No, because none of them are professionals in the business”
 - They trust his ability to do his job
- **Is the supervisor able to produce positive results?**
 - Yes, more rounds sold last year than in previous last 5 years
 - “30% more business than in the past”
 - Not a reflection of them, but a reflection of himself
- **Management style**
 - Hands off, check-in give the updates
 - Only communicate if needed
- **Biggest takeaway from pandemic**
 - Cleanliness and staying proactive to meet new demands
- **Fortune 500**
 - “Downsize in real-estate”
 - A lot of companies have succeeded with remote and no longer need the space they have
 - Same production out of teams if they are remote than in person
 - “Making sure we get supplies and orders in ASAP”

Dave Burke

- **Background**
 - Insurance industry
 - Senior Business Development Director
 - Work with agents and brokers to develop new business opportunities for the company
- **Remote or In Person in last year?**
 - Including prior to the pandemic, considered to be remote
 - “My team is also considered remote”
- **How far removed is the direct supervisor and who?**
 - Report to senior vice president of business development and marketing
 - “I am a direct report to the senior vice president”
- **How has the environment changed since pre-pandemic?**
 - Prior to the pandemic “approximately 50% of time traveling to clients”
 - “In my industry, face to face is key”
 - Primarily remote working from Zoom and Microsoft Teams since the pandemic
 - Able to travel again during summer in-between
 - “Driven by company leadership but that’s also driven by clients”
 - External clients work from home as well
 - Used Zoom prior to the pandemic but only internally, now use it externally
 - Clients were not as technologically advanced as they were
 - “The industry was not ready, and we were”
 - “Develop short term goals to connect with clients”
 - Focus shifted to reaching out to different departments to figure out how to get through it all
 - “Every week we had a social outing at the end of the day” on zoom
 - Had virtual games
 - Celebrated birthdays and work anniversaries
 - Take time out of the day to get outside
- **How often do you communicate with your supervisor? Strictly business?**
 - “We connect on a weekly basis”
 - “Designated weekly calls to check in”
 - Also, check-in on project-based zoom calls
- **How often do you communicate with subordinates? Strictly business?**
 - Weekly 1-1 calls
 - Discuss project issues and initiatives
 - Daily basis, anywhere between 1-6 field staff
 - “Scheduled calls with individual business developers weekly”
 - They can call or schedule Zoom whenever needed
- **How many people is the manager responsible for oversight of?**
 - 4 divisions that the senior VP is responsible for
 - 50 total employees
 - 6 direct reports

Effective Management in the Post-Pandemic Hybrid Workplace

Honors Thesis for Logan Sarkisian

- **How does the direct supervisor communicate expectations?**
 - “Prior to pandemic it was all phone calls”
 - “95% of connections are done on Zoom or Microsoft Teams, 5% on a phone call”
- **Are remote employees treated differently?**
 - “The team members that are a part of my division that worked in office space had a more difficult time communicating initially” (adjusting to pandemic)
 - They had the ability to knock on doors down the hall for communications
 - Field people were used to the remote aspect but in-office workers were not
 - Little more leniency
- **Any remote employee’s direct supervisor oversees?**
- **Any things you wish your direct supervisor would do differently?**
 - Remote environment makes people feel isolated
 - Incorporate more mental health safety practices sooner
 - Take time in the day to appreciate employees via zoom
 - regardless of if it is remote employees, those employees who were in the office faced the strongest isolation so make sure they are mentally stable and connected to others
- **Is the supervisor able to produce positive results?**
 - “Productivity rose significantly throughout the pandemic”
 - Less water cooler talk = stronger focus on work
 - Hours spend traveling, chatting, etc. were used for working
- **Management style**
 - Hands-off
 - Checks in on employee’s health
 - Involved in the daily lives of employees on a personal level
- **Biggest takeaway from pandemic**
 - “Need to care for your employees more than before”
- **Fortune 500**
 - “Open and honest communication”
 - “Significant flexibility in work schedules”
 - Make sure everyone is doing alright
 - Establish connective points between coworkers

Celina Watson

- **Background**
 - Executive director Kensington Assisted Living
 - Roughly 100 seniors living there
 - “CEO” of the property
 - Oversees all operations and departments within the location
- **Remote or In Person in last year?**
 - Both
 - “When the pandemic hit, we created a schedule where all the leaders did some remote some in site”
 - 24/7 business so people do need to be there

Effective Management in the Post-Pandemic Hybrid Workplace
Honors Thesis for Logan Sarkisian

- **How far removed is the direct supervisor and who?**
 - Partners own company
 - 7 different assisted living locations
 - Mainly 2 key partners
 -
- **How has the environment changed since pre-pandemic?**
 - Now utilize zoom calls
 - Use Microsoft Teams a lot
 - Have family visits and meetings on Zoom and Teams
- **How often do you communicate with your supervisor? Strictly business?**
 - Mostly virtual meetings
 - Not very frequently
 - “Only on standing meetings that are in place on a monthly basis of which there about 3 or 4, otherwise we call or email when there’s a need”
 - Hands-off
 - “We think of ourselves as being a part of a Kensington family”
 - They know her directors directly
 - “Get to know them as people and families” in holiday events
- **How often do you communicate with subordinates? Strictly business?**
 - Every single day
 - “We have a meeting at 9:30 every day, it’s called stand-up”
 - Text each other when home
- **How many people is the manager responsible for oversight of?**
 - I have “anywhere from 10-12 direct reports from each department”
 - Partners have 7,000 employee’s total
 - Executive directors of each location report to partners (7)
- **How does the direct supervisor communicate expectations?**
 - Mostly via zoom or email
- **Are remote employees treated differently?**
 - Employees are urged to not be remote and be in site
- **Any remote employee’s direct supervisor oversees?**
 - Not really
- **Any things you wish your direct supervisor would do differently?**
 - Not really
- **Is the supervisor able to produce positive results?**
 - For the most part
 - “Used to have high functioning, hit the ball out of the park results”
 - The pandemic caused a lot of additional expenses
 - Still trying to get reimbursements from the state
 - Made a lot of money but not exactly how they were used to doing it
- **Management style**
 - Both hands-off and hands-on
 - “They are the type of leaders that inspect what they expect”
 - They pay attention to the details that matter
 - Use financials to really analyze how things are going

Effective Management in the Post-Pandemic Hybrid Workplace

Honors Thesis for Logan Sarkisian

- “As long as you are doing what you should, they kind of leave you alone, but they still check and still make sure that we’re healthy and if we need any support from them [...] they’re always here for us”
- “Collaborative relationship”
- “We work together to figure it out”
- **Biggest takeaway from pandemic**
 - Now they have unannounced surveys from infectious control
 - Make sure that new requirements are met
 - Constantly monitor the guidelines established
- **Fortune 500**
 - “The key there is frequent communications”
 - Make sure the customers can communicate with their loved ones and be in constant communication with the customers and staff

Mark Sarkisian

- **Background**
 - President of CT location for a commercial printing company
 - Oversee the facility
 - “Responsible for procedures, morale, everything inside the plant”
- **Remote or In Person in last year?**
 - In-person
- **How far removed is the direct supervisor and who?**
 - Regional group vice president
 - Completely removed
 - “Video calls occasionally”
 - Once in a while seen in person
- **How has the environment changed since pre-pandemic?**
 - Considered an essential business
 - “Did not have to go remote as a result of the pandemic”
 - “Had some other employees from other divisions of the company [...] they were allowed to work from home]
- **How often do you communicate with your supervisor? Strictly business?**
 - “Mostly business, with pleasantries”
 - Short quick conversations
 - Only reach out to give important information
 - Once in a while a group meeting over Zoom
 - Could go couple of weeks without talking to her
 - “I send updates every week”
- **How often do you communicate with subordinates? Strictly business?**
 - They have been coming in-office
 - “I talk to the multiple times a day every day”
 - “Most of my interaction with them [is] pleasantries”
 - Been there for a while so not super serious about communication
 - Sometimes if too relaxed, has to be more serious

Effective Management in the Post-Pandemic Hybrid Workplace
Honors Thesis for Logan Sarkisian

- Not strictly business but mostly business
- **How many people is the manager responsible for oversight of?**
 - “6 or 7 other facilities”
- **How does the direct supervisor communicate expectations?**
 - Use a video call if there’s a groupwide mandate
- **Are remote employees treated differently?**
- **Any remote employee’s direct supervisor oversees?**
 - The regional group oversees those who went remote
- **Any things you wish your direct supervisor would do differently?**
 - I like how it is now
- **Is the supervisor able to produce positive results?**
 - More of a support role than a supervisory role
 - “It’s understood that we know what we’re doing”
- **Management style**
 - “More of a collaborative role of support than it is a direct manager to a subordinate role”
 - “It’s hands-off unless there’s a problem that she feels needs more attention than is being given”
- **Biggest takeaway from pandemic**
 - “We can get more done with less people than we had”
 - Stuck together through layoffs and found “people did more when they were challenged to do more and when they knew they were in a group where everyone was working hard”
- **Fortune 500**
 - “You need to get a group of people on board that are staying very close to what’s happening with the situation”
 - Create a task team to communicate to employees what is going on
 - Develop a plan on how to get through it, whether or not it’s perfect

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