



WORK & LIFE INTEGRATION



A TRACYLOCKE PERSPECTIVE
ON THE FUTURE OF WORK

INTEGRATION IS THE NEW HYBRIDIZATION

As we continue to contemplate what the future of work will look like, many companies are talking about adopting a physical-meets-virtual hybrid model that offers greater flexibility, making the most of Work-From-Anywhere technology. While this approach seems good on the surface, hybrid models often require a compromise. We strive to capture the best of both worlds, but we inevitably end up making trade-offs that really don't satisfy either. For example, we've all experienced how "Work From Home" can easily lead to "Living at the Office." Which is why we believe the future of work is not so much about hybridization, as it is about integration.

Over the last few years, integrated models have become even more prevalent in our industry. True integration

allows for people to influence each other throughout the process and intertwine their expertise in service to shared goals. We are able to integrate commerce and craft, imagination and execution, insights and creativity, instinct and data. Which is why we think it makes sense to bring that same approach to the future of work by integrating office and home, virtual and physical collaboration and, most importantly, work and life. While it's not complicated, it does require a bit of reframing of how we think and behave.

The following are a few of our integrated initiatives.

TAILORING A NEW TOOL

As thought leaders, we design tools to help us analyze data, uncover insights, fuel the creative process and measure success. Some of these tools are physical, some are digital, others are virtual. We use these tools when we need them, upgrade them when appropriate and continually innovate new ones. So we thought, why not view our company's physical office destinations the same way? We now look at each of our physical destinations as an integrated tool to be used by individuals and teams how and when they desire.

Talking with our people, we learned that our junior staff crave more physical training time with their managers and desire more communication about what is expected of them in their job, especially as it relates to on-boarding. Their managers have leaned into our physical destinations to give them a better experience through hands-on

training and shadowing. On the other hand, there have been self-proclaimed "micromanagers" who admitted that prior to the pandemic they would usually stand over someone's shoulder and comment on their work. Working virtually has taught these managers they can put trust in their employees and review the work more holistically to provide effective guidance and value where appropriate.

*Recent data from LinkedIn's Workforce Confidence Index shows **roughly half (47%) of U.S. professionals believe their companies will allow them to be — at least partially — remote after the coronavirus pandemic wanes.** That percentage is even higher among certain industries that see flex work as the future, including tech (73%), finance (67%) and media (59%).*

Many parents told us that, while working from home gives them greater flexibility, it also creates a lot of stress. Especially if their children are distance learning.

TAILORING A NEW TOOL

While most parents require the flexibility to work from home to help manage their kids' online learning, they also desire time in the office, to get their own work done. Being able to utilize our physical office space how they wish takes some pressure off parents. To further help parents integrate their two worlds, we host [PARENT FORUMS](#) where a Child Development Specialist gives parents tools and advice on how to cope with the pressures of work and home schooling.

While different people and teams utilize the office tool differently, everyone must follow strict safety guidelines. We also made it mandatory that all physical meetings are able to be accessed virtually to ensure a culture of inclusion and participation. In addition, we need to remember that the world we live in is highly unpredictable. So how much we use the destination tool increases and decreases as health restrictions increase and decrease.

There have been many articles written on the impact virtual work has on the culture of a company. There is no doubt that physical space can be a physical manifestation of the culture of a company. However, we have learned that true culture is not just about the words we put on our walls, but how we live those words through our behaviors and the actions we take. By designating our physical destination as a tool, we feel we are giving ourselves the freedom to behave in a way that is consistent with our culture.

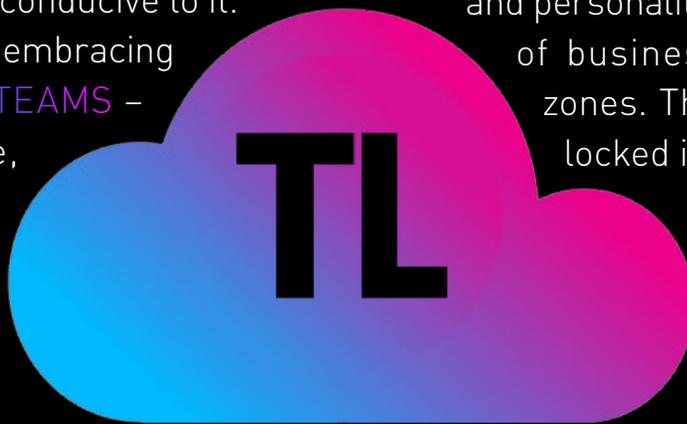
CLOUD TEAMS & BRAIN-STREAMING

While agencies around the world have adopted a lot of behaviors that have eliminated the need to be physically face-to-face, there are many who still believe that the “secret sauce” to creativity can only happen when people are in the same room bouncing ideas off each other. We believe it is possible to reproduce creative serendipity in a virtual world if you have a team structure and brainstorm methodology that is conducive to it.

Which is why we are embracing the idea of **CLOUD TEAMS** – small, super-agile, borderless teams of specialized talent who work together through an integrated model of synchronous and asynchronous communication.

Using a combination of Microsoft Teams, online whiteboards and portal-share, we have implemented an “always-on” platform that powers free-flowing collaboration fueled by thoughtful preparation

and informal interactions. We call it **BRAIN-STREAMING**. The integration of asynchronous and synchronous communication allows for more inclusivity and iteration, empowering different personality types and communication styles. While traditional brainstorming plays to the strengths of extroverts (and egomaniacs), brain-streaming is more inclusive, designed to optimize people’s diversities and personalities across multiple pieces of businesses and multiple time zones. The best part: by not being locked into a particular place and time, people are free to brain-stream whenever and wherever they are most comfortable – even if it’s in the shower.



SHHH...IT'S QUIET TIME

When the pandemic first started, 10-minute conversations between two and three people that used to happen in the hallway now took the form of hour-long Zoom meetings with 20 people. Those hour-long meetings multiplied over time, leaving no time to do actual work.

Actually, actual work happened during gym time, home-schooling time and me time. Now couple that with the pressure to be on 24/7 in today's world, and we knew we had to find a way to protect the physical and mental health of employees while also getting the work done. So we took a lesson from Kindergarten teachers and implemented a mental wellness initiative that we call **QUIET TIME**.

We block everyone's calendar once a week from 12-2 p.m., strongly encouraging them not to schedule meetings, make internal business calls or send internal emails. During this time, employees feel like they have the time (and permission) to unplug

from distractions and focus on matters of importance to them, whether it is catching up on projects, helping their kids with home-schooling, working out or whatever. Our first survey showed that **95%** of the people who responded viewed Quiet Time as a positive initiative they wanted to keep or expand. Of the respondents, **38%** used the time to focus on a particular project, **30%** used it to better organize and **24%** used the time for family responsibilities.

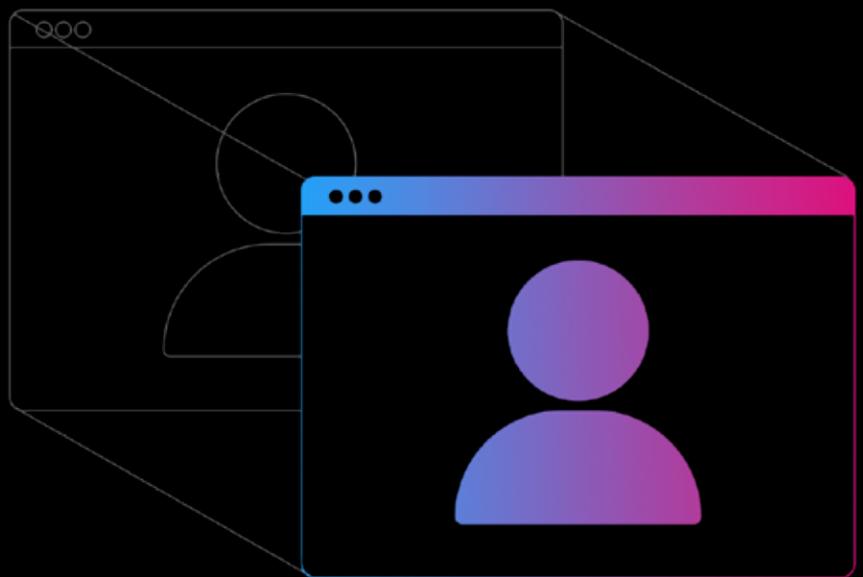


SHHHHHHH!

REDEFINING RELATIONSHIPS

The pandemic has brought to light many truths about the modern work environment that we've been considering moving forward. For one, the wise old business adage of "there is nothing more powerful than a handshake" has lost a lot of its cachet. It has become clear that we do not need to spend thousands of dollars to fly halfway across the world for a two-hour meeting (and yes, a handshake) to make an authentic connection with clients. The "relationship" is still as important as it ever was (even more so), but how we form and foster that relationship is being reframed every day. For instance, since the pandemic started, we have integrated more frequent and informal meetings with our clients, which has actually made relationships stronger. We may not be physically shaking hands with our clients, but we are inviting them into our homes, and we are being invited into theirs.

We are meeting their families and pets (sometimes accidentally), seeing pieces of their lives, sharing virtual happy hours and, in doing so, are taking down the walls of formality that have always existed. In the future, we believe there will be less priority put on physical meetings, but there will be more priority put on meaningful relationship-building occasions during the workweek. Most importantly, now people can spend the time they would have spent traveling making a meaningful connection with their families.



INTEGRATING

WORK & LIFE

No one really knows what the future holds. Companies ultimately have to do what is right for their business, their people and their culture. We believe getting the most out of work and life doesn't have to be a balancing act. By allowing people to influence each other throughout the process and integrate their work and life in service to shared goals, we have the opportunity to provide the creative, intellectual and cultural connections people crave from their company as well as the flexibility and respect they expect for their personal lives.

