

# Overcoming Barriers to Virtual Leadership

## NCET Biz Cafe

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# Topics We'll Pursue

## We will identify strategies for:

- **Overcoming limiting beliefs about the “way work should be”**
- **Challenging negative assumptions about employees**
- **Creating results-focused environments by shifting from work activity to work output**
- **Fostering community in a remote environment**

# How We'll Engage

- **Zoom**
  - **Screen share and whiteboard**
  - **Chat**
- **Dialogue (remember to come off mute!)**
- **Self-Reflection and Notes**

# Virtual Tools



**CHAT:** Respond to questions/prompts in the chat box



**CHECK MARK:** Choose from a list of items on the screen



**RAISE HAND:** Raise hand to ask a question or make a comment

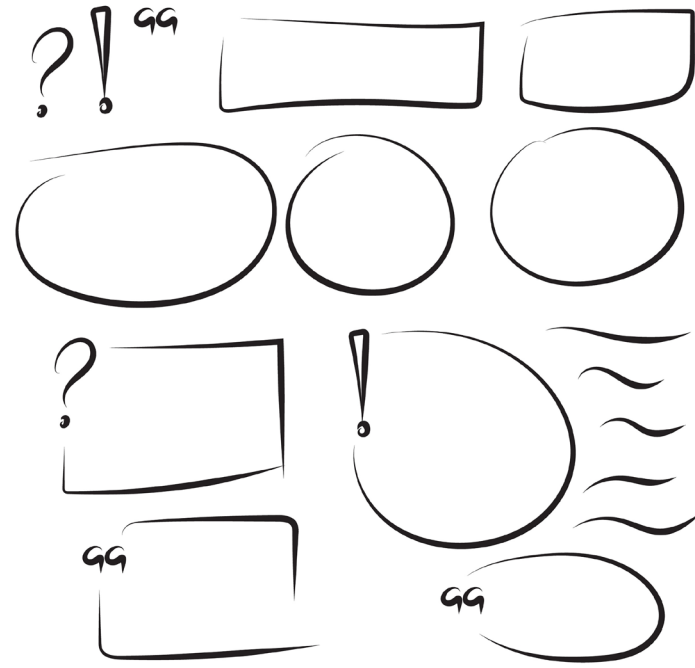


**VOICE:** Respond with voice over the headset or computer



**TEXT:** Type text on the screen





**In a few words, tell us why you are interested in being a better virtual leader.**

# What Do We Mean by Remote Workers?



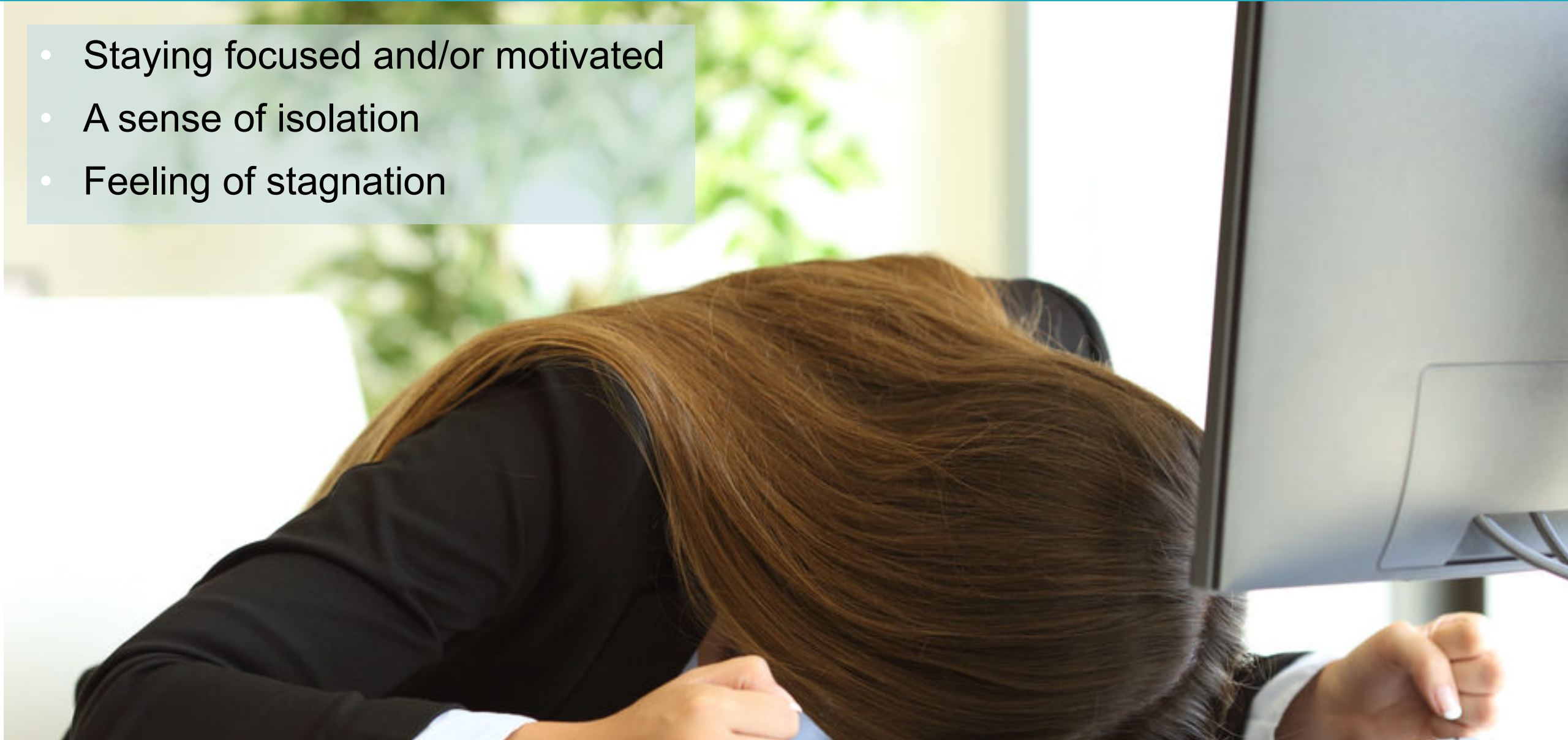
- Anyone who works from home (on occasion or full-time)
- Anyone who works beyond the office, such as someone traveling on the road
- Anyone who works on a team with people who are geographically dispersed



Which definitions apply to you?

# Three Barriers to Avoid or Overcome

- Staying focused and/or motivated
- A sense of isolation
- Feeling of stagnation



# The Reality of Working Remotely



Let's Brainstorm – what might it “sound” like?

<b>Demotivated (negative)</b>	<b>Motivated (positive)</b>
Is everyone working as hard as I am?	I love how productive I am when working from home.
I live at work. I'm living in my workspace...not working in my living space.	No commute! I have set up appropriately physical and emotional boundaries.
Well I can get to it tomorrow...it can wait	I'll go ahead and knock it out...I have more time now.



# The Reality of Working Remotely



## Let's Brainstorm

Isolated (negative)	Autonomous(positive)
It's really hard to focus.	I love being able to really focus on my work.
Hard to communicate with my team and coworkers.	Learning new ways to communicate...new tools, new apps, etc.
Am I the only one really working? Is everyone pulling their weight?	How great that we get to work in our own energy zones. We SEE who pulls the weight. There's no one looking over our shoulders.

# The Reality of Working Remotely



## Let's Brainstorm

<b>Stagnated (negative)</b>	<b>Growing (positive)</b>
How can I get visibility for my career?	I'm developing a great network!
I feel disconnected from growth and networking. I'll wait until I'm back in person to work or meet with that business.	I've been forced to use LinkedIn and other business networking tools more. Online, social media, etc.

# Challenges for Remote Leaders



- Ensuring performance standards are met
- Keeping direct reports (and yourself) focused and engaged
- Coaching and developing people virtually



# Limiting Beliefs for Remote Managers



- **Ensuring performance standards are met** – *“If I can’t see the work being done, how can I know it’s being done?”*
- **Keeping direct reports (and yourself) focused and engaged** – *“They’re probably spending more time on home-stuff vs. real work.”*
- **Coaching and developing people virtually**– *“It’s too hard to coach and develop people in a virtual environment.”*

**What other limiting beliefs have you heard or caught yourself thinking?**



# Critical Factors for Leading Virtual Team Members



Be attentive



Foster Community



Coach & Develop

# Factor 1 – Be Attentive



- Be present
- Pay attention to individual differences
- Request feedback
- Lead with purpose

# Multitasking: The Opposite of Being Present



I have thoughts. Lots of other thoughts. I am not paying attention....



- Do you multitask while on conference calls?
- What is the impact when we are **not** present?
- What are some ways you practice being present?

# Individual Preferences



<b>Communicating</b>	Talk on the phone		Send emails
<b>Energy</b>	Morning	Mid-day	Afternoon
<b>Attention</b>	Work on lots of things at once		Focus on one thing at a time
<b>Scheduling</b>	Call me whenever		Plan ahead and calendar it
<b>I learn best</b>	Reading	Talking it out	Trying it
<b>Work-life integration</b>	Separate work and personal life		Merge work and personal life
<b>I like</b>	A messy desk		A neat desk
<b>I prefer to</b>	Check email as it comes in		Check email a few times each day



How could knowing these things (and sharing them with others) help?



# Requesting Feedback



**After conference calls, check in with team**

**Quarterly, ask your team members:**

- What do I do that makes your job easier?
- What do I do that makes your job more difficult?
- Where are my blindspots? What should I be aware of that I am not?

**Call your virtual team members on occasion, just to check in**

**Hold more frequent one-on-one meetings**



# One-on-One Meetings



Best practices in a virtual environment:

- Opt for greater frequency
- Shorter length
- The other person's topics or agenda



# Frequently Use Video



# Committing to It

What are you committed to doing to be more attentive toward your virtual team members?





# What Does “Leading with Purpose” Mean to You?



A Good Idea:

**PRACTICE THE**

**PAUSE**



# Be Intentional In Communication



How many of you have witnessed trust eroded because of a poorly worded email or IM? Or maybe because of an issue during a phone call or video conference?



# Two Steps for Being Intentional in Communication

1. Determine the goal/aim/purpose for the communication
2. Decide on the right channel for the communication



# What Is the Right Communication Channel?



	Instant Message	Email	Phone Call	Video Conference	Post to Group Site
Problem-solving with one or more people				✓	
Urgent questions and/or seeking quick guidance	✓		✓		
Discussing confidential and difficult topics			✓	✓	
Giving a status update		✓			✓
Demonstrating and explaining your work					✓ (ideally w/video)
Catching up and/or relationship building			✓	✓	
Social team-based discussions				✓	✓
Large-group decision-making				✓	

## Factor 2—Foster Community



What is the **impact** when team members feel isolated?

# Stretch Break



# Factor 2—Foster Community



## Foster Community

- Build trust
- Provide technology (and other) support
- Spend time connecting
- Celebrate success

# How to Build Trust Virtually



- Remove barriers for them
- Randomly reach out to stay connected
- Respond as quickly as possible
- Have a high say/do ratio
- Involve everyone when possible
- Appreciate (and respond to) individual strengths and differences
- Give your people support and protection





# What Tools Do Your Team Members Use?



Marco Polo



Microsoft Teams

## Something else



Adobe Connect



OneNote



GoToMeeting



Clubhouse





Be a good example.

# Best Practices for Staying Connected



What are some ways you are staying connected with your virtual team members right now?



What are some ways you're helping others on the team stay connected?



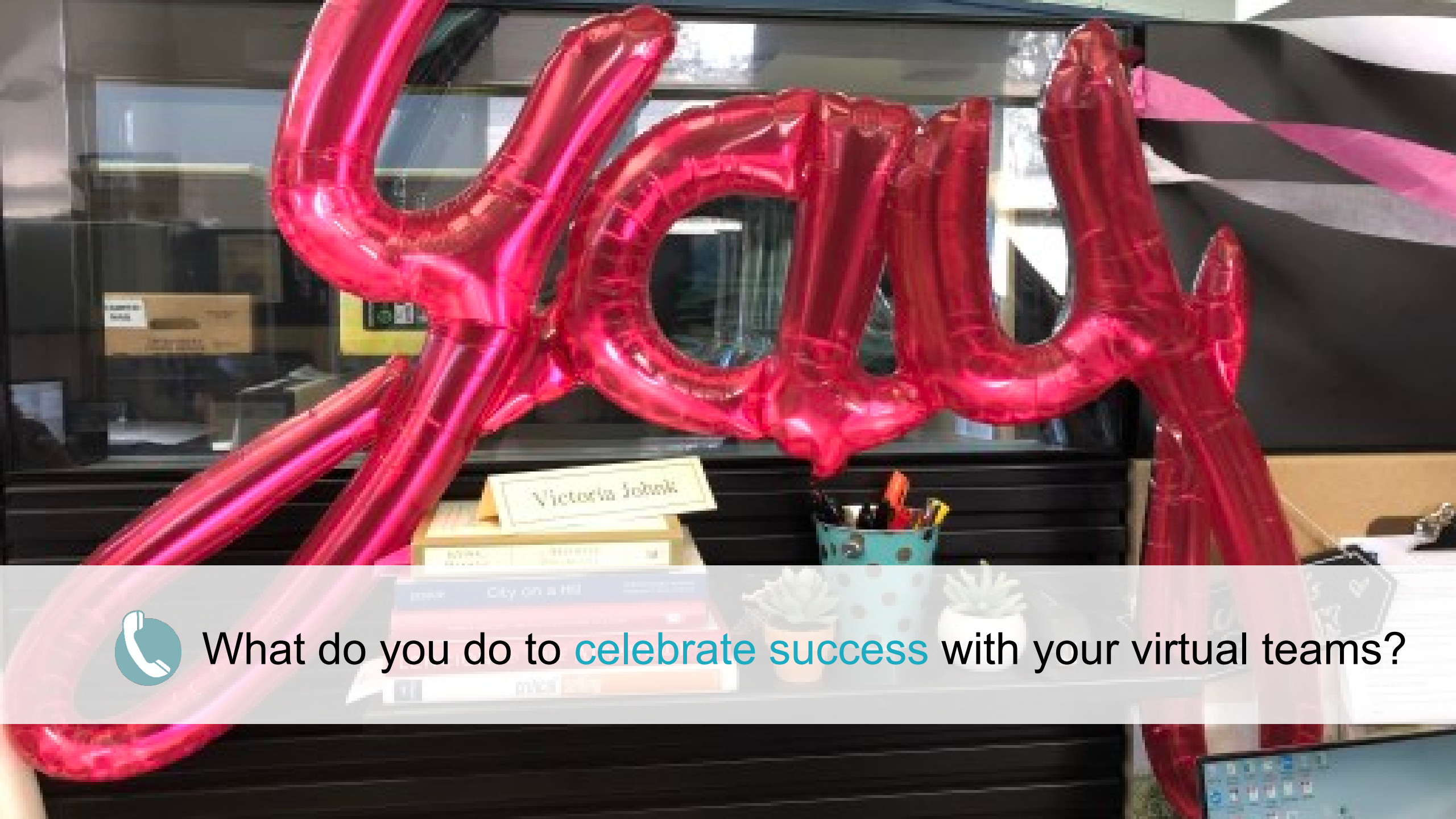


# Be Human



- Thank you notes
- Connect current and past co-workers to opportunities
- Mentor someone
- Ask someone to coffee
- Take or send them a meal





What do you do to **celebrate success** with your virtual teams?

# Celebrating Success with Your Virtual Teams



- Ask the team how they want to celebrate
- Share a physical experience (get creative!)
- Try new virtual team building activities
- Virtually volunteer as a team
- Try online gaming

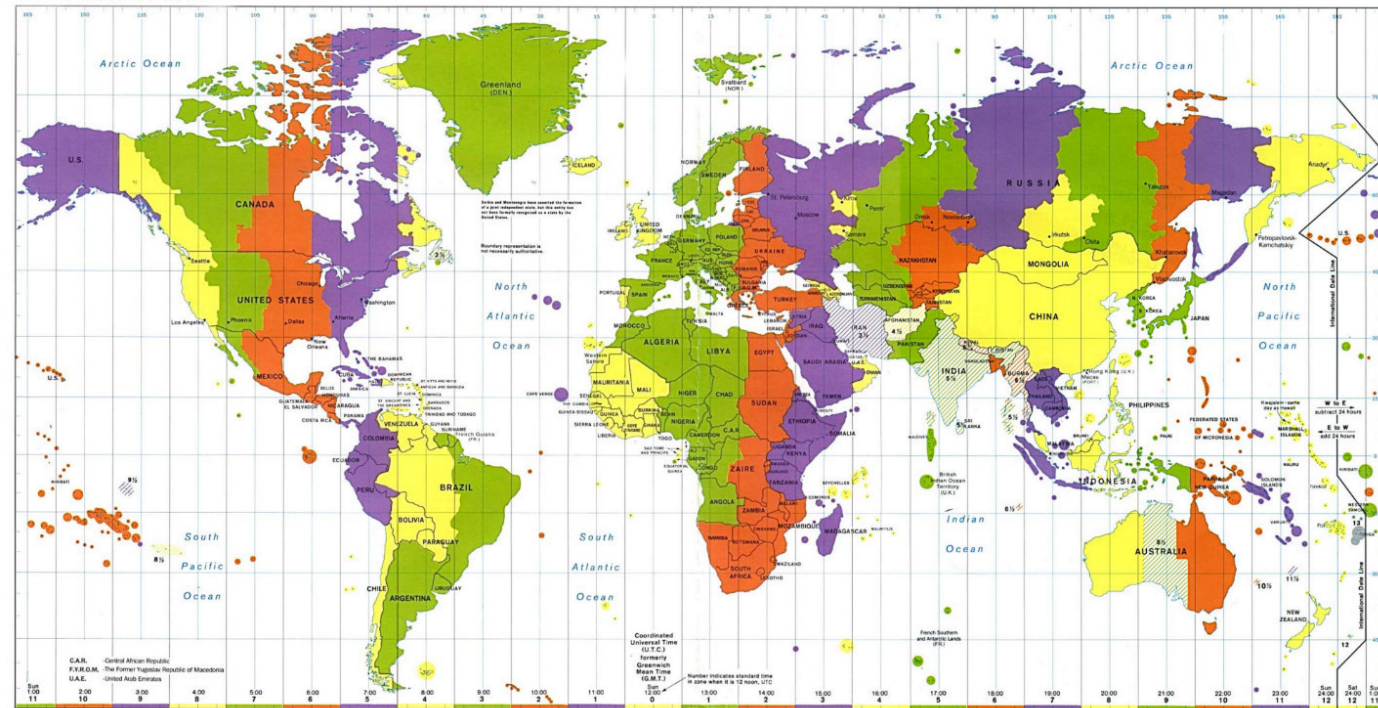


# Working across Time Zones



What are the challenges?

What are your best practices for working across time zones?



# Best Practices—Working across Time Zones



- **Use a Global Meeting Planner application** to find the best meeting time for all + keep calendars up to date
- **Plan well:** Agree on expectations and standards regarding communication, responsibilities, handoffs, tracking, documentation, tools, etc.
- **Be precise** about date, time, and time zone in all communications
- **Be considerate** of people's timezone and take turns regarding the meeting times
- **Document the work** for people who cannot attend meetings; record meetings as appropriate

# Factor 3 - Coach and Develop



## Coach & Develop

- Focus on output
- Encourage self-reliance
- Facilitate networking
- Assist with career development



# Measuring Output, Not Activity

- What's the difference between focusing on *activity* vs. focusing on *output*?
- How do your strategies of evaluating progress change in a virtual environment (vs. a physical one)?



Great virtual leaders have learned to shift their **focus** from work activity to work **output**.

# Virtual Leadership Missteps



- Constant monitoring and/or evaluating behaviors
- Micromanaging
- Delegating too much





# Facilitate Networking



# Ways to Develop Your Team



Which ones are you doing?

Give them a stretch assignment

Match up mentors and mentees on specific topics to encourage sharing.

Assign people to cross-functional projects.

Host group brainstorming sessions.

Facilitate networking for team members.

Share an online portal where team members share ideas and work.

Invite your team to sit in on meetings and calls with you; if they're able, have them facilitate a meeting for you.

# Factor 3: Coach & Develop



Assist with career development.

If you don't have career development discussions with your team members, someone else will!

Don't risk losing great talent.





What is one thing you will focus on **this week** to improve your effectiveness as a virtual leader?



# Three Barriers to Avoid or Overcome

- Staying focused and/or motivated
- A sense of isolation
- Feeling of stagnation





# Critical Factors for Leading Virtual Team Members



Be attentive



Foster Community



Coach & Develop



# Thank You!



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