WORKSHOP

Fit for the Future - Designing the New Way Of Working

"Thank you, this session was inspirational and timely.
I've left with a clear and optimistic sense that we're
going to transform our culture by the end of 2021"
CEO, FT 250 company

Objective

The objective of this session will be to have an energised discussion around how we work in the future.

We will ask what we mean when talk about contemporary ways of working and agree what we want it to feel like to work at this organisation now and in the near future (say, 2025). Participants will leave with a clear blueprint of the new ways of working.

2020 has brought a disruption to work that no firm had ever considered. Not only has every firm had to experiment with remote working but increasingly workers are saying they don't want to go back to the old routines.

But the road to remote work is beset with pitfalls. What are the considerations that leaders need to be taking to ensure that giving flexibility to their employees doesn't result in a collapse of their business? What does research tell us about communication in a remote-first world?

This half day workshop is designed for a remote audience of 6-20 attendees and is facilitated by workplace culture consultant Bruce Daisley.

The 3.5 hours will look as follows:

(1)	**Taking stock**	*1 hour*
(2)	**Checking in and context**	*30 mins*
(3)	**Assessing Possibilitiies**	*1 hour*
(4)	**Agreeing a vision**	*1 hour*

(1) Taking stock
Intro: Bruce Daisley to talk for 15-20 mins to set the scene.

What has happened in aggregate over the last 12 weeks. In some ways this isn't a fork in the road, it's an accelerant getting us to where we would have arrived eventually.

One of the interesting conundrums of the last 20 years is that we have had unprecedented innovations in technology and yet the productivity for office workers has remained static. It's largely because we've had new tools but we didn't change the way we were working. If you compare this to when the electric motor replaced the steam engine that soon led to a minaturisation of production and of processes. Systems changed. We're about to witness that with knowledge work.

These are changes that would eventually have happened. It has brought about 15 years' worth of change in 10 weeks. It is affecting all sectors of industry:

- One London council has already put one of its 3 buildings up for sale
- Major UK newspaper has said that their old business of bringing 1400 workers into the office is a thing of the past
- Barclays Bank are no longer going to expect workers to come into their HQ each day
- Morgan Stanley CEO said he has done a 180 on remote work
- Advertising legend Sir Martin Sorrell said he intends to reduce his £35m annual property bill and spend it on talent

A lot of us had anxiety before this disruption. Now our anxiety and concern is largely focussed on certain individuals rather than on the whole organisation.

Facilitated team discussion *30 mins*
Five minutes personal reflection then each team member to bring one good thing and one bad thing of this big experiment.
- One thing they are pleasantly surprised about
- One thing they are still worried about

20 mins (2 mins x 9 people) discussion on this.

Bruce sums up - this gives us the context of where we are. We would never have disrupted our business this much before so quickly. The crisis has been an accelerant. Now it gives us a context to ask a bigger question: *what do we want the company to be like to work at in five years' time?*

(2) Check in and context *30 mins*
Firstly we need to understand the context of good workplace culture. This stands on twin pillars of *Psychological Safety* and *Positive Affect.*

Psychological safety is a phrase coined by Harvard Professor Amy Edmondson to describe our ability to speak candidly to each other without fear of consequence. Positive Affect is the impact that our state of mind has on our decision making - when we're in a good frame of mind we tend to be more creative, more collaborative and there's better team cohesion.

Now seems to be a good moment to take a pause and check-in with the team. What a lot of leaders are experiencing right now is that they've pulled off something remarkable - they've led their teams, they've staged the most extraordinary transformation of the business through a crisis and we're all here to tell the story.

But at what cost? We can't lead our teams if we're burned out. We're achieved something exceptional. We should consider that as a provocation, as a stimulus for where we are right now. We need to think about how we can create something sustainable.

Bruce will talk for a little about the impact of burn out, managing energy and how we can think about these things more sustainably. These first two exercises set the context for part 3.

(3) Assessing Possibilities
Intro: Bruce Daisley to set the scene for 15 mins

We start the main body of the session by discussing what other firms have done to explore the opportunities of adopting a remote first way of working. Matt Mullenweg, the CEO of Automattic is one of the people who talks about the stages of remote work.

Stage 1	we do an occasional call/meeting from home (maybe we are expecting a delivery)
Stage 2	we switch to doing all of the things that we previously did from the office, but through our screens, remotely.
Stage 3	technology is changing some of the way we do things. This might be that a meeting is working through a collaborative Word/Google doc.
Stage 4	Work shifts to being 'asynchronous'. The focus is on getting the job done and not *how* the job is done. People can be working on the same project round the clock round the world. Hand overs become the super power
Stage 5	Workers can adapt the job to accommodate their lives (maybe child pick ups, daily cycling habit) while getting the job done in time shifted way

Bruce will discuss other companies like Basecamp, Buffer and InVision that have looked at different ways of adapting to these changes. Then we lay out a timeline (see attached slide 4) and ask everyone to pick where they think that the company will be in one year (presuming normalcy) and in 5 years.

Questions for group discussion:
- How has remote working affected our group dynamic?

- Is the way we're working optimal for the long-term?
- Where do we want to be on the remote continuum?
- What limits are there to us changing?
- Are there benefits/costs to us of these adaptations?
- What does a contemporary way of working look like to the group? Would our team want us to be more/less ambitious here?

(4) Agreeing a Plan/Deliverables

We bring the discussion together. What appetite is there for change?
What do we need to change going forwards?

Teams will leave the workshop with a clear understanding of where they are seeking to get to in the short, medium and long-term.

About Bruce Daisley

Bruce Daisley is one of the world's most influential voices on fixing work - published in Washington Post, Harvard Business Review, Wall Street Journal and The Guardian. He is a regular contributor to Wired magazine. His book, The Joy of Work, was the UK's top selling business hardback of 2019 and is an international bestseller - translated into 14 languages.

Previously he spent over a decade running Twitter and YouTube (the latter at Google) for Europe, leaving Twitter in January 2020 as its most senior Vice President outside of the US.

Bruce is behind the Apple Business Chart topping podcast Eat Sleep Work Repeat on workplace culture. He now consults with companies around the world on their organisational culture; regularly sharing the latest thinking of the evolution of work in his newsletter [Make Work Better](#).