



## "Culture eats strategy for breakfast"

(Peter Drucker)

In April the *Insider* reported that the investment banking company JPMorgan Chase is reconfiguring its offices to about 60% of their former capacity. CEO Jamie Dimon's view is that there will be more hybrid work.

Yet, Dimon has spoken critically about remote work during the coronavirus pandemic, citing the need for a hybrid work model that's flexible, but still works for "the company and the clients." He's previously said simply letting everyone do "what they want" isn't an option, because it's inefficient. There are many articles about how Covid-19 will change the future of work in unprecedented ways. Already we are seeing early retirements and people resigning from long-standing corporate positions to find new jobs offering more flexibility. None of us will really know the true short-term impact until 12 months from now, when we are writing our year-in-review summaries.

## Many needs to address

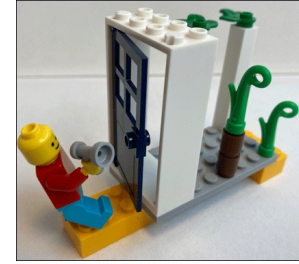
We are both hungry to return to the familiar and also uncomfortable about being with people other than family and members of our pod. Social skills are rusty. Even the extraverts we informally surveyed are feeling anxious about returning to the "new normal". Employee engagement has been in question for over ten years after a Gallop poll uncovered that fully 30% of employees do not feel engaged at work. Adding remote work to an already difficult situation may have increased the percentage of disengaged employees to as high as 50% or more.

In the *Spring 2021 edition of California Management Review* the topic is addressed: *The Future of Back to Work Requires a Hybrid Systems Thinking*. Jain and Brennan state that "the COVID-19 crisis and the reality of the new normal has unleashed an element of uncertainty that permeates much of our organizational and personal lives. Indeed, this uncertainty makes planning for the future extremely complex and challenging, calling for agile adaptations both on the part of employees and employers. The shift to working more from home will among other things call on leaders and managers to be more sensitive to the personal responsibilities of staff to their families and communities. The new culture will require hybrid organizing, hybrid leadership and hybrid communication".

## Making hybrid work

**BUT!** Whatever the strategy is for the hybridization, it will only work if it is solidly grounded in the organization's culture, the belief that leaders don't have all the answers and hearing all voices in the room will result in a more sustainable business for all. This means face-to-face, multi-sensory meetings, where all parties can consider all concerns and design the best

*path forward for everyone. In the words of Jain and Brennan, “participative and inclusive decision-making within organizations builds trust, provides multiple perspectives and makes decisions better and balanced.”*



*This is what you achieve with the **LEGO SERIOUS PLAY method** and its many problem-solving applications. This way you ease social discomfort, make sure everyone participates, and give people time to think before they respond while providing visual props to focus their comments. When people see and hear each other in new ways, this multi-sensual experience will be etched in their subconscious minds, renewing connections and forming new bonds. The team that laughs together stays together.*

*Sincerely,*

*R. Rasmussen*



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