# MARKALIN

# Leadership Of Virtual Teams

*Mark Kalin*

**Leadership means taking advantage of harsh times and challenges and making them work for you.** In business the most important thing are **people, employees.** *"A company is nothing more than a human project that brings people together around some brilliant dream that encourages them to show their talents, and benefit those to whom their work is intended."* Robin Sharma

# Teamwork & leadership

*"Great things in business are never done by one person;*
*they're done by a team of people."*

Steve Jobs

*"The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things."*

Ronald Reagan

**A team** represent a small group of people, who complement each other and are dedicated to a common vision, goals, and work together towards making a project a success (Katzenbach and Smith 1993).

**A virtual team** as a group of people, who use various advanced communication technologies, have a shared purpose and a vision, and work together on interdependent tasks across different time zones, space, and organizational boundaries, in order to achieve a common goal (Maznevski and Chudoba, 2000).

# Current situation: COVID-19 crisis

Organizations were forced overnight into perhaps the most significant social experiment of the future of work (remote work, social distancing, establishing structured work processes, a completely new way of "modus operandi").

The question shouldn't be: **When will this crisis be over?**

BUT **How am I/are WE going to grow from it? When the crisis is over, Do I come out better or bitter?**

## Biggest challenges of remote work for employees:

1. Lack of face-to-face supervision.
2. Lack of access to information.
3. Social isolation.
4. Distractions at home.
5. Lack of structured work processes.
6. Rapid digital transformation overnight.
7. Separated physically from their colleagues.
8. Many workers are doing tasks they never could have imaged a few weeks ago

## 4 important things leaders need to focus on:

- Think about how you can serve the people you lead. Become a "Servant" leader.
- Help employees discover their own personal purpose.
- Encourage employees to reflect on opportunities to recraft their jobs.
- Mood contagion matters.

## TRUE LEADER

**People don't want a perfect leader; they want an authentic leader!**

# Motivation

**If you want your teams to be engaged in their work, you have to make their work engaging. The most powerful way to do this is to give people the opportunity to experiment and solve problems on their own and be creative. This will empower, motivate and make employees more productive.**

## Three positive motivators that often lead to increased work performance:

- *Play* the motive that most boosts performance (play is when you are motivated by the work itself. You work because you enjoy it),
- **Purpose** is when the direct outcome of the work fits your identity. You work because you value the work's impact,
- *Potential* is when the outcome of the work benefits your identity. In other words, the work enhances your potential.

Hold a reflection huddle with your team once a week, where each person answers three questions directed at encouraging and motivation:

1. Play: What did I learn this week?
2. Purpose: What impact did I have this week?
3. Potential: What do I want to learn next week?

# Lessons learned

## Positive outcomes of this crisis:

- You have speed-up digitalization of certain processes,
- You have gained the knowledge and benefits of remote work,
- You have established more trust among the teams and co-workers,
- You have learned to navigate through crisis and learn and grow from it,
- You as leaders have seen how fast things can change and we need to constantly adapt.

1. Katzenbach, J. R., & Smith, D. K. (1993). The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization. Harvard Business School Press, pp. 1-291.

2. Maznevski, M. L., Chudoba, K. M. (September-October 2000). Bridging Space Over Time: Global Virtual Team Dynamics and Effectiveness. Organization Science, 11(5), pp. 473-492.