



Alumni Live Webinar Series

Practical Tips for Imperfect Times

Full Transcript

Moderator

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Taylor: So a little bit of an intro, and it's so great to see we've got so many people joining us and the number does keep going up. So, to those who miss this intro, I can circle back to it at the end as well. This is the first of what will become a series of sessions. And for those of you who aren't super aware of the wider context of what The Dream Collective does, we're a global diversity & inclusion consultancy, and we have had a large amount of impact over recent years, you can see a little bit of that here. Obviously, we have empowered 5000 emerging female leaders, we've established an online network of 12,000, which you guys are now joining and embracing. We've provided over 2000 hours of leadership and development, strategic advisory, and established an elite network of 700 business leaders globally. The reason that we're stepping into, during this time of uncertainty, really investing in our network, is anyone who's participated in our program or even spoken to me or a member of the team about them, you really know that our focus is about enabling leaders, especially female leaders, to step into their leadership (even if

you're not the only one in charge) in times of uncertainty and embracing self-leadership, which is a really core pillar of our program. And I'm sure that that's going to come across a lot in the way that our panelists answer some of the really great questions that we are going to dig into.

There is a Q&A function on the program that we're using, so as we move through, I know there'll be a lot of follow-up questions that I do ask, and there will probably be some that you'd like us to dig into a bit more. So please, as we go, submit Q&A's, we'll come back to it at the end and unpack some of the more complicated topics that we didn't have a chance to dig into as we went through the questions.

So by way of introduction, I think most people on this call have come across me in one way or another, but my name is Taylor, I have the privilege of being a senior Client Lead for The Dream Collective. So what that means is I get to work with both large organizations in helping them advance their female leaders into leadership, as well as working with individuals who come through our Emerging Leaders Program. I would also love to introduce our panelists as well. We have such a fantastic selection of leaders joining us: we have Sinead, who is the director and founder of Lotus People, she joined us in 2018 for the program. We have Emily, who is a senior account manager for Google Australia, joined us in 2019. We have Mel-Kate from HOYTS Corporate Solutions, who joined us in 2019. And we have Lynn, who joined us in 2019 as well from CHEP.

What I would love to do is to get our wonderful panelists off the ground running, is I would love you to describe your current situation in three words. So what is your current situation in this climate? And Sinead, I'll get you to kick off with the three words that come to mind.

Sinead: Okay. So I think that probably the three words I would use would be uncertain, as I'm sure many would. I'm definitely optimistic, and I think there's a lot of opportunity out there.

Taylor: Great. Emily, do you want to go next?

Emily: Certainly. My first word would be frazzled, for a few reasons. I am a new mom, so I think that probably plays into it. I think I've heard the word unprecedented more in the

last few days than I have in my life, but that's for a reason. And the last one would also be progress.

Taylor: Great. Mel-Kate...

Mel-Kate: I think definitely one that resonates with me at the moment is positivity. It's really important to remain cool, calm and collected just to, obviously, envision that power on to your peers and other fellow colleagues or friends that might be going through similar circumstances. Development is definitely one that's really resonated with me closely because I'm using this time to focus on my ability and what I can bring back to our business in the near future when we are back at our regular trade, as a few other companies are in the same position. And I think the third one, as well, is about support, like, I'm here to offer support to quite a lot of people who may be going through uncharted waters at the moment. But I just want people to know that they have a voice, and as many people, we were born with two ears and one mouth for a reason, we just need to make sure we use it wisely and share that advice and support as we can.

Taylor: Thanks Mel-Kate. Now, I'll jump into our first question. I think, number one, all three of our panelists who just shared really spoke to the heart of what we see in our successful leaders, is honesty, so we're identifying that this is a challenging time, we are being vulnerable, sharing that we're frazzled, but also being optimistic, being progress-driven, and really looking at how we can find the opportunity in this – so, to Mel-Kate's point, focusing on development, and I think that's really fantastic. But the first question I'd love to ask is, how are you reassuring your teams and maintaining culture during this time? I'd love to kick off with Sinead. I know, being the director and founder of your organization, there's going to be a lot of focus on you, on how you lead the organization through this time. And I'd love to hear how you're doing this at the moment.

Sinead: Absolutely, Taylor. Look, it is a difficult time in Australia, and globally, to be a small business. So I have a small team of 13 and, definitely, there is a lot of uncertainty. I think, fundamentally, what we've realized over the last couple of weeks is the importance of communication, and from a leader's perspective and a business owner's perspective, just really ensuring that we are communicating down and we are communicating with our staff to make sure that we are creating a sense of community and ensuring that people are

banding together. Culture, for me, is so important and it's always been a focus. When I set the business up five years ago, I knew that I wanted to create a standout culture and we've since won awards for that. So it's something that I care a lot about, and I think we are looking at it differently now.

I think our fundamental identity as to who we are as a business is still there, but we're just having to look at different ways to maintain that culture. So we're doing things like, we do our morning meeting, obviously via Zoom now rather than in person. We do, at 3 o'clock every day, a one-minute dance-up, so we all jump on Zoom, put on a song really loudly and jump around the place and that gives us a bit of energy for the afternoon. And we are doing things like, at the beginning of every meeting, similar to how you started this; say one word on how you're feeling, or what was your high and low of yesterday or of the weekend. And I think without the ability to kind of read people as much as we are all working remotely, that allows us, as leaders, to get a pulse on how people are feeling and to get a real sense of how everyone is doing, which is definitely harder to do when you're remote.

Taylor: Amazing answer. And I think you answered many of my follow-up questions being, how are you doing that and how are you drawing out the sharing that I think you usually get naturally. And I know your team, having been around them before, that you guys take very good care of each other. I think your examples of, one word on how you're feeling, and the dance-up, and being honest about some of the struggles that maybe come with focusing and working from home, I think that's fantastic examples.

Mel-Kate, I know that you have a really big passion and focus on maintaining morale during these times. I'd love to know how you're doing this with your teams.

Mel-Kate: Thanks, Taylor. For me, two things really resonate and have been front of mind. We've been working from home, quite fortunately, our company, like in terms of the tech capabilities in allowing us to progress and continue our day to day from home to ensure the health and safety of our teams. But the first thing for me is about leading by example. It's near impossible to be bright 100% of the time, but stress and negativity are incredibly contagious. If the team are heading into a peak season involved with events, projects, or facing internal and external challenges, it's crucial to remain consistent and

deliver a good attitude every day. We really need to be diligent on minimizing complaints or feelings of frustration in front of our teams.

The second thing is, and I like to say it kind of really ties in nicely with the second point that I did want to discuss, was about confronting frustrations head on. It is such uncharted waters at the current time with a lot of businesses, a lot of families, facing hardship, and like you said, just generally, the general business world has just slowed down or come to a pause and such, but alongside reaching milestones and drawing closer to success, it's completely normal to experience moments of low team morale. Instead of waiting for the elephant to disintegrate from the room, use these moments of frustration to request feedback and work toward a solution. Take initiative to find out why your team's morale is down, why they are feeling frustrated, and how you can offer support to manage their expectations within a timely manner.

Taylor: I'm blown away by the comprehensive ways that you guys are addressing this, so thank you. Mel-Kate, I'd love to ask, I think you have an incredibly structured approach and it's very methodical, how are you going about balancing your leadership vulnerability with having really clear and certain systems for your teams, to get a bit of certainty in?

Mel-Kate: I think, at the moment, a massive guideline and, again, credit goes to my general manager for the ongoing support that she does bring from a national standpoint, is having the stability to knowing that we are a valued member of the HOYTS Group, but also too these little implications, we're at the moment leveraging our time, based on projects that we've had sitting there for months that weren't deemed as a high priority. Well, now we do have more ample time to start really resonating and working towards that. We're dividing and conquering, and we're trying to empower the teams as well to lead those projects. We want them to actively work together and find out how they can be using like Workplace by Facebook or Microsoft Teams to host their own internal meetings and working with other different areas of the business.

But, essentially, and to your point, Taylor, it's about empowering your team and building that trust with them. Because essentially, if your team works, the business will work. It's when there's a fault or a kink in the chain that you do start to see the team morale start to really dampen and it's hard to bring sometimes people up when they're feeling down. And

it just takes one person to drag the team down and vice versa. So it's really important that you do remain positive and kind of have that uplift and see the brighter things. And, essentially, at the end of the day, one thing that my family have always reiterated to me is, to get through a storm you need to learn how to dance in the rain. And I definitely think it's something that we can encompass during the current time and period that we're all going through together.

Taylor: I really love that takeaway. Great integration of a very poignant quote, I think, for this time. It's super aligned with the insights that we're gathering from the HR leaders that we're speaking to, is that need to balance authenticity with being that sort of white house in the storm and giving people some certainty to be guided on. Emily, I know that you personally were already going through a transition period. And, obviously, with all of the changes now in the marketplace, I'd love to understand maybe some of the challenges that you are facing, both specifically to you, and maybe other challenges that you're facing more broadly within the business.

Emily: Thanks, Taylor. For context, everyone, the specific example to me, more so than the businesses, is that I am transitioning back from maternity leave. I'm fortunate enough to have a really open dialogue with my team and my managers, and have started the transition earlier than expected, given the uncertain climate, but particularly as things have ramped up in the last – well, it escalates every day, but I think it kicked off quite significantly down in Victoria and other parts of the country on Friday – it's clear that despite me being back on the ground in May/June, it's likely that I'm probably going to be working from home. So, the challenge of that is, transitioning back into the business – I've also put my hand up for a new role, just to add to the uncertainty of the time – so I'm transitioning back into a new role, I'm a new mom, we don't have any family down in Victoria, so my husband's going to be taking on more of the primary care role. But we're all going to be in the house together for the indefinite future.

So that's more of a personal situation, but then again, our personal worlds and our professional worlds are now meshed together. So I'll still have a sales target to hit, I'll still have to build trust and rapport with new clients that I'll be working on, reestablish my relationships internally at Google, both in Sydney and in Melbourne, but also with my

teammates on the ground. I kind of saw this coming, so I said to the team that I'm happy to start transitioning as soon as possible to give myself a bit more of a ramp up period. Knowing full well that everyone else is going through challenges, there may be things that I can help out with now, given that I am still at home and I've got the support of my husband. So that's my personal example.

I think the challenge that the business is facing, as an example of what I've heard in the last couple of weeks is that, Google, we're blessed with having the technology that working from home or working remotely is not as much of a challenge as it could be for some other businesses that may not have the tech or infrastructure to do so. But the difference is now, obviously, everyone's working from home. You don't have those incidental and often really productive corridor conversations or chats. You don't have that social connection or that social interaction. Talking to the team, there is this inherent feeling of guilt – guilt that I'm not doing enough work because I'm being distracted by kids in the house or family members that are over, or just the fact that life in general at home can be distracting. Guilt that you're not spending enough time with the family because there is that blending of worlds. So I think there's this challenge of trying to do enough, but enough isn't enough for either side of the coin. And I think it comes down to trying to maintain that balance, whatever that is.

So, I think people are really concerned about potential burnout in this situation. You can just keep working and go like a college student – another hour... or another hour... or another hour. I think from the business perspective, just being really mindful of this, as we don't know how long we are going to be confined to remote working, how can we maintain that balance and create a sense of an open forum to discuss this with our managers and our peers to make sure that there is a feeling of sharing a lot of the responsibility.

Taylor: Great, thank you. I think you covered so many really important points and I think this is a great example of the sort of question that I'm sure the Q&A will dig a lot into. I'm already getting some questions coming through, so please do keep submitting them because we will come back to them. But I think you addressed burnout, the need to be flexible and look at what the business needs and adjust and be willing to maybe fill those

gaps and move around in your role quite a bit, as well as resilience, which I think, to your point, the combination and the melding of our personal and professional lives is huge at this time. And so that topic of resilience and flexibility is huge, and it's certainly something that we at The Dream Collective are looking to support our leaders in, so I think you really hit the nail on the head there.

The next question I'd like to ask, I'd love to direct towards Lynn. I remember from the first time we spoke early last year before you did the program, you're such a clearly empathetic leader, and I know you also have a team spread across Australia and Malaysia, I believe, as well. So I'd love to know, this is a time where embodying trust and certainty and compassion as a leader is so important. I'd love to know how you're doing that while maintaining productivity and accountability in your team.

Lynn: Thanks, Taylor. So yes, as you alluded to, my team is spread out across Australia and into Malaysia. So working, I guess, remotely for my team is something that's already part and parcel of what I do. I have and still continue to hold regular one-on-ones with each individual team member. And as part of this weekly process, we review their top three priorities for the week ahead, the current project status, give an update on where they are at, and then we discuss any resources that they need or any noise that's coming their way. This really gives me a great snapshot of what's happening and allows me an opportunity to dig into detail when necessary.

So I think that this is really important to continue doing, but something that I'm adding to the mix is more casual daily check-ins with the team, just to ring up and say, "hello, how are you doing today?" Everyone's faced with changing priorities. I know that down in Victoria, they just called it, school's done for the term, and so I have a team member down there who now needs to take care of his sons a week early. So just being flexible and understanding the changing needs of each of my team members gives me a little perspective, and it helps us as a team to be able to support each other and back each other up. So that's how I'm checking in regularly and maintaining that accountability with my team, but also a level of compassion for what they have going on in their life.

Taylor: Yeah, absolutely. I couldn't agree more with you. Being led by Sara Liu, our Managing Director, we've had really great success doing very similar things, making sure

that we're staying in touch, staying across how everybody's doing and keeping our standard for excellence, but also having compassion and empathy and being across what's going on personally for everyone else as well, which has definitely helped.

Emily, I'd really love your insight on this point as well. I know that Google is well adjusted to working remotely, and I'd love to know what sort of accountability frameworks Google has used in the past and how they might be leveraging those at this time.

Emily: Great question, Taylor. As you mentioned, we have had the blessing of being able to work remotely. However, this is not BAU, and I think, first and foremost, as a lot of the other women have mentioned acknowledgement of the fact that it's not BAU and therefore, productivity and accountability have to adjust and scale accordingly. I think from a productivity standpoint, I guess the 'how' is having the tools to be able to flex and scale your work accordingly. So, making sure that your team can connect with each other when they need to, that they have the right working from home facilities to be able to set themselves up appropriately – whether that be going out and getting a new working from home setup, obviously maintaining social distancing and doing all the appropriate things – but helping them create an environment that's going to make them feel like they can be as productive as they can.

From an accountability perspective, I think we're all treated like adults in the sense that we are here to do a job and there is that trust that you will get the job done. But I think a lot of what we do is also part and parcel helping our clients, so it's about ensuring that we are maintaining clear and open but frequent communication on what's going on, both personally and professionally. I think having an Excel spreadsheet where people are updating tasks is one thing, but adding context to that, saying, "this project might be delayed because my internet cut out today", or, "can someone help me with this task because I can't get in touch with this client". So I think it's about maintaining that open and frequent communication, along with having the appropriate tools to be able to do your job wherever you can do it, but adjusting our expectations accordingly. So what we would define as being productive in the office is going to be very different to what is going to be productive at home or working remotely. And if you own that and your managers own that, and the broader team owns that, accountability should kind of take care of itself,

in that everyone is owning their own world and their own workload, and the flow-on effects should, in theory, be positive.

Taylor: Great. And you actually provided a really great segue for a question that was going to follow a little bit later. But I wanted each of you to share the tools that you are currently using to help foster that collaboration. I think your answers to previous questions as well alluded to this; not having bodies in the office, not having that interpersonal casual opportunity for conversation as much, collaboration can be something that suffers. I know The Dream Collective team, as well as a lot of HR leaders that we've spoken to have been finding creative and innovative ways and softwares and platforms and tools to use, to collaborate and to innovate in this time. So I'd love to hear a bit about what you each are doing and what you're finding the tools that are working. I think we will start with Lynn. I'd love to hear from you.

Lynn: So, yes, as Emily alluded to earlier, it's just not easy to have that casual watercooler/hallway chat so things are definitely more challenging in these times. So all of our meetings have now become Skype for Business meetings. So even when we have many people gathering, we have a Monday morning 10 @10, is what it's called, so our country GM has now changed it to an online Skype for Business platform where everyone just dials in. It's a quick 10-minutes update, but it allows the broader business to just get a quick snapshot of what's happening in the business. We're keeping those things going. So whilst it's not business as usual, we're trying to maintain, I guess, a level of normalcy and keep things ticking along as they usually would. All of our other team meetings are now Skype for Business setups.

And something that I use as a good collaborative tool with my overseas colleagues is Microsoft Teams. So we build everything up in a Microsoft Team, and we have a project going on and we can assign tasks through it, we keep our files there. And, again, we hold our meetings and we update the team site regularly. So that's a bit about the tools that we're using.

Taylor: Great. And Mel-Kate, I'd love to hear a high level of what the tools are and also, what would you use as the characteristics for what is a really great tool for teams to be using, and what should they be looking for? I think, from the conversations we've had,

there's a temptation to bring all of the tools in, all at once, and hope that that results in productivity. But it's quite clear that you need to bring an astute assessment as to which tools to integrate, and I'd love to hear your thoughts on that.

Mel-Kate: Thank you, Taylor. I think one really cool tool that was introduced by our HR department last year was Workplace by Facebook. So it's essentially very similarly aligned to how LinkedIn works, but Facebook with connections and whatnot. But for us, we have over 3500 employees across the board that vary between our support offices and directly at locations. Obviously, with some of the staff that are at the locations, they are younger, may not have access to a generic fixed email address, so by having this platform, it's a really centralized point of contact where we can deliver company updates. You also have the opportunity to directly speak with someone that might be at a location in New Zealand, or another site and whatnot. And again, it has the capabilities as well to host multiple users on like a screen conference call.

In all honesty, it's actually funny. It's kind of like we are going back to the original ways, back to the way that we used to do sales. When technology and emails came in, that was, I think, in the sales mentality, and correct me if I'm wrong, I know a few different companies explore different avenues, but email is the number one point of contact to give your deliverables on – what your career is, what you're after, and here's my contact details. Right now, I think it's really nice to see we're originating and going back to a phone call, a simple thing as calling up a client to see how they are, or ringing your team in the morning. It's just a nice, dignified way to have that chat and it just goes to show as well that you take that value, and it's more personal. Sometimes text messages and emails, and like we said, we've been utilizing Microsoft Teams as well, but the tone of it may not come across how you anticipated, so I feel like sometimes having a phone call and then maybe later on leveraging it with a team on Microsoft video conference call is just a really nice way to harness and manage expectations, and continue that one on one chat-ups, as well as collaborating with the team on a wider scale.

Taylor: Great, thank you for that. And what I'd love to do now is ask Sinead, to the earlier point, I think, obviously, there's a lot of pressure on you being the pinnacle leader in your

organization. I'd love to know, what's the biggest lesson you've learned over the last fortnight?

Sinead: Yeah, for sure. I think it has been tough, but I think the recruitment industry as a whole, with all of the uncertainty, our industry is kind of being put on pause in some respects. The biggest challenge, I think, has been that we are kind of dancing between having conversations with clients who are absolutely kind of everything's been put on hold and they're really struggling and their industries are just experiencing a lot of challenge and difficulty, and then we're having conversations with clients who are absolutely thriving and their demand is going through the roof. So we're kind of jumping between two different conversations with our actual client base.

But, I think, to answer your question, the biggest learning for me over the last couple of weeks has just been around resilience. I think we can do hard things and I think this has kind of thrown everyone, whether it's in their personal lives, whether it's work, whether it's to do with anything else that's going on, there's a lot of uncertainty and it is unprecedented. But I think, as humans, as individuals, we have the capacity to deal with a lot. And as leaders, I think someone mentioned earlier, it's that balancing act between being authentic and being genuine and communicative, but also, obviously maintaining that positivity. And sometimes, speaking very honestly, there have been small moments of going, "I don't know if I can be positive right now, this is really effing hard". But I think it is just owning that as well and kind of saying, "it's okay", holding space for the fact that sometimes it will be hard, and creating space for everyone to be resilient and to encourage positivity and optimism, but also acknowledging that it is also bloody hard at the moment, no matter what angle you're looking at it from.

Taylor: Yeah, and I entirely echo what you said, and I know that it's definitely something that we have weaved through all of our programs, is that transparency and honesty is essential to leadership. People need to feel like there's not a wall between you and them as far as you're honestly communicating the situation. So that sense of realism is really important. But it sounds like you're doing a great job at remaining resilient. I'd love to know the practical execution of what that looks like. In those moments where it feels the hardest, what are you doing to help keep yourself on track?

Sinead: Look, I think support is key. I think in all of this, we've just seen people band together, we've seen communities come together. I've spoken to my neighbors more in the last week than I have in the last year. I also have, just last week, got off a plane from LA and straight into self-isolation. So I've probably been slightly ahead of the curve in terms of having been indoors on an isolation day. So that has been harder. I haven't been exposed to my team face to face. So I think in terms of leaning on others, that comes in many forms for me – friends, family, people through work, my shareholders, everyone – and I think that's essential. And I think allowing yourself in building resilience, you need to also feel the moments that are a bit panicky and the moments that are a bit scary. We have to be a lot of things to many people at the moment, and we want to offer support in any way we can. I think that's what I've seen across the community, is the people's ability to just band together and support each other. And I saw something recently that said, "kindness is contagious", which I just think is so important for the time that we're in and I think that's so accurate. So, yeah, I think a combination of relying on others, but also just finding that internal strength to go, "do you know what, of course, we can handle this". As I said before, we can do hard things.

Taylor: I'm glad that there's some 30 of us that can keep you company today while you're stuck in isolation. And I think you make some really good points. There's no need to pretend that we don't need support, and I think embracing that and owning it, to Emily's point earlier, owning what we need, owning the changes of the situation is how we're going to make progress.

So we will dive into Q&A soon. I want to round out with one last question that I'm going to put to each of the panelists, which is, in this very challenging time, what is your advice to other leaders right now? If you could boil it down into one nugget, what would that be? And I'll kick off with Emily.

Emily: Thanks, Taylor. I think my one nugget would be trust and empathy, together – those two words put together as one nugget. I think you can't have a blanket approach to solving team challenges, business challenges, client challenges in this situation, because it's just not going to work. I think, everyone's challenge from day to day getting work done, to helping clients solve challenges is going to be so different. I think Lynn spoke really

nicely about how she's checking in with her team one on one, and I think that is a way to build trust with your team. And then, if you can reiterate and do that back to your clients, that's going to help as well. Trust is built by meeting the needs and expectations of your audience. So if you're there to help meet those needs and expectations in that moment, through tailoring your approach and, again, I think it was Mel-Kate, using both your ears and one mouth, so doing more listening than talking. I think that what I've seen our leaders doing in the past two weeks is a lot of taking these approaches, and I think that's going to set us up to lay foundations to come back really positively and in a strong light once we pass this really awful, yucky time and that we're there together on the other side, and it will be nice and sunny for all by the time we get there.

Taylor: Love the positivity. I really do. Sinead, I'd love to know your nugget of advice for leaders at the moment.

Sinead: Sure. I think it's thinking outside of the box. I think we've seen, in the last two weeks, so many businesses; for restaurants, they've gone to take away, for gym classes, they've gone online. And I think, from my experience I've looked at, "okay, this is going to be an uncertain couple of months, what can I do?" and I actually told my team last night that as a sales and recruitment business, rather than doing individual commission kind of structures, we're going to pool all of the revenue and I'm going to share a profit share with the team for next quarter. So I think thinking outside of the box. I would never have just done not in normal circumstances, but where we're at now, as leaders, we need to be innovative, we need to figure out how we can support the teams, how we can support our clients, how we can support each other, and pivoting and looking at things from a different angle. Now is the time for innovation and to do things differently.

Taylor: Great. Lynn, what would yours be?

Lynn: So I think I would encourage leaders to lean into their vulnerable side and just have open conversations with team members. I think that this is a very hard situation for everyone, and some people will struggle more than others to just cope. So we really need to lean on each other during this difficult time and we will get through the situation together.

Taylor: Fantastic. And Mel-Kate?

Mel-Kate: Thank you. For me, I think it's positivity. It's important that you remain your upbeat self. And, like you said, in times when we are facing tough circumstances and uncharted waters about what's to come and how long this period is going to be prolonged for, it's really important that you, as a leader, and as well with your team still maintain your day to day contact. One thing that I've really been trying to encourage the guys to do is like in the morning, I know first thing at nine o'clock before our day starts, we'll collaborate, catch up, have a coffee in the kitchen, talk about what our day looks like, and then go from there in terms of meeting agenda and best practices. But I've definitely been still trying to strongly encourage the guys to get up, get dressed, have a shower (as crazy as that may sound), but to maintain your routine because, essentially, at the end of the day, this could be a four-week period, this could be a three-month period, this could be a six-month period. Nobody in the world has the authority or power to say this is what it's going to look like.

But it is uplifting to start to see in China where it originated from that they are starting to resume trade. I saw, in relation to the entertainment industry, about 540 cinemas have reopened in the past week and they're starting to open more and more places. So it is promising to see that whilst we are experiencing the pressure and whatnot at the moment, it's really powerful if we are to remain positive and empower our peers to take that on board. Even like people that sometimes you may think are so strong, just drop them a text or give them a call, just say, "hey, I understand this week might have been hard for you, I'm here, I'm happy to chat or let's have a virtual coffee online". And people appreciate that because you are honest, you are emotional, and you're taking three seconds out of your day just to reiterate to them that you do value them and you're thinking of them in the tough times ahead.

Taylor: Fantastic. As I said, at the beginning of the call, I've been nothing but impressed with how thorough you all are in your perspectives. It's really fantastic. We're now going to throw to a few of the Q&A's that I've seen coming in before we wrap up. So the first one would be, someone is asking, what are practical ways they can create a daily cadence for running a remote team. I know Sinead shared their one-minute dance-up that they do in the afternoons to keep the energy up. Given Google's experience with working remotely, Emily, I'd love to throw to you that question.

Emily: Yeah, thanks, Taylor. And thank you for the question. What I've seen the team do recently is something a little bit different in terms of the way that we're creating daily catchups. They are having a daily huddle, which is, essentially, as Mel-Kate mentioned, almost like a virtual coffee catch up, but there is an agenda to it. So there's an agenda in the sense that we don't want to just (I don't want to swear...) piss away half an hour on people trying to talk over the top of each other on how hard it is for them, or how they're having a great time, or whatever it is. There's an allocated period of time where people can say, "hey, how are we going?... any challenges at home?... want to talk?", but also having that open space to also talk about business. So what we found is when there isn't an agenda, it can be a little bit haphazard. When there is an agenda, it does allow that sense of community collaboration and continuing to catch up.

Alongside that, there are also group chats that we use – Google Hangouts, obviously, or Google Chats – that the direct teams and sub-teams are feeding into. Again, there is both personal and work chat going on within that, just to maintain that water cooler conversation kind of humor and banter, but also keeping a professional lens on it. And the teams are also then having their one on one check-ins with their managers and the more senior leaders as well. So there's, I guess three tiers to that, but the daily check-ins and the daily huddles are what's really come in in the last two weeks while everyone is working very remotely.

Taylor: Thank you for that. We have quite a specific question that's come in and, due to the specificity, I'm going to make sure we prioritize this one. So this person comes from an organization with 150 people and they have concerns around either increased siloing due to people working remotely and only communicating with maybe their immediate contacts, or the reinforcement of existing silos. The question is, number one, what staff collaboration tools are you using to keep people connected with each other on more of an organization-wide basis? And is anyone starting to implement these tools now or is it a bad idea to implement a new platform during a time of high anxiety? I think what I would love to do is check in with Lynn about this because I feel like you would have experience with your team in Malaysia and that collaboration piece.

Lynn: It would be, and it is a difficult time to try to not work in silos. It's quite easy to just stick with the work that's happening within the team. So it's a really great question. I'm finding that, like I alluded to earlier, we're keeping all of our existing project and team meetings happening, but now they're happening via Skype for Business. So everyone's still maintaining the type of contact that they would as if they're in the office, but now all through like a webinar format, much like we're doing right now. I'm finding that instead of leaning over the office wall and quickly collaborating with the obstructer or whomever, I'm picking up the phone to place a call. And it's not that they are always available, but nine times out of ten, those people get back to me. And we're also sharing more very direct project information over email, as a communication to all. It's too easy to fall into the trap of, "well, I'm doing something" but nobody else knows that you're actually acting on it. So it comes down to a broader communication to all. As for the latter question, whether or not it's a good idea to implement new platforms, I probably am not best placed to answer that part of the question. I guess that's about all I have for that, Taylor.

Taylor: Thank you, Lynn. Do any of our panelists have a burning answer to that part of the question that Lynn wanted to throw to one of you guys? Emily, I presume you might have a bit of insight on that.

Emily: Yeah, I think it's really challenging, and with technology, it can be anxiety inducing as it is. I, embarrassingly despite working for Google, get quite anxious – I was anxious with the Zoom call, to be honest, because we don't use Zoom. Again, I'm not really well placed to answer yes or no. I think probably, if we look at the list of things to be prioritizing, if there's platforms that you can use that can suffice, for now, to reduce that anxiety, absolutely. I think that the ability to be able to share documents – we, again, based on the company that I work for, we operate out of Google Drive and G-Suite and all those documents are shared access, where people can edit live and in real time, which, again, still allows this sense of collaboration and productivity whilst using tools that we are fairly confident in using.

I guess with 150 staff, and trying to stop people from operating in silos is going to be hard, but offering as many points of connection with the broader team as possible. We, both from a global and regional and local perspective, we're getting updates from our leaders

almost daily via either recorded Q&A's, recorded webinars, or these types of Zoom conversations where people can come in and out. So if it is something that's fairly low touch that you could look to introduce, whereby identifying people who potentially have high anxiety around it and working through that, that may be an interim solution for the time being.

Taylor: Great, thank you. And I think the insight that we can share from a Dream Collective perspective is, often the clients and the companies we work with, the point that we have to educate them on is, you can have the best tools and the best policy and some of the best infrastructure, but if your culture doesn't support what you're trying to achieve, then you're going to be hitting roadblocks again and again. So I would encourage almost a refocus on the culture and what cultural elements are creating that situation. And then it's easier to identify the tools that are best placed to support that process.

So, in the interest of ending near our intended time, I want to give a quick summary of my key takeaways. This has been recorded, and you will receive a link to that recording for you to review or share with people in your teams or in your community. But my biggest takeaway is, number one, the need for leaders to be consistent is pinnacle, and I think we also need to really balance that with the benefit of showing vulnerability and being compassionate. And I think that's really come through in all of the panelists' answers. Be that certain leader and also be authentic as you do that.

Number two, getting creative. One of my favorite parts of this call is the afternoon dance-up which I'm going to see if we as The Dream Collective can undertake from here on. Whether that is or isn't the right thing for your organization, whether you're an HR leader or team leader or anything, I think you can find a creative way that matches your culture, and that is going to help you feel like yourself and feel like part of that culture that you signed up to be a part of, which I think is great.

And my third point is that, clearly, all the panelists are being optimistic and realistic at the same time. And I think that's a really powerful line for a leader to be able to walk, especially in this time.

So you will be receiving an email as we end this webinar, which will include the recording of the webinar, as well as a Google form that we would really encourage you to fill out for

a few reasons. Number one, the core intention of running these webinars is to really invest in our community and support the advancement of female leaders, especially during this time as it's more important than ever. We do not want to lose progress that we've gained over recent years. So please share the challenges you're having, share your feedback. It'll equip us to better serve you over the coming months as we are making this a regular occurrence and want to make sure that we're hitting the nail on the head with the topics that we address. And so I encourage you to fill that out. And with that being said, I look forward to having you join us at future webinars. I know myself and the team, we're thrilled to have you all here for now. And so on that, I will close this out with thanking our wonderful panelists. You brought so much value and we're so appreciative of your time. I know that's from me and every person on this call. So thank you so much.

Sinead: Thanks Taylor, great initiative, really appreciate it.

Taylor: Thank you, thank you so much.

Lynn: Thanks, Taylor.

Emily: Thanks, Tay.

Taylor: Thank you. So with that, I'll let our lovely panelists sign off, and to everyone recommend a high level of productivity for the day. Have a lovely day, everyone.