

SPOTLIGHT

ON

ENGAGEMENT ♦ INNOVATION ♦ IMPACT



VOLUME 8 (3)

IS YOUR COMPANY READY FOR WORK AT HOME POLICIES?

“Thoughts from a Scholar-Parent on Shifting to Permanent Remote Work”

WFH is one thing as a scholar...it's another as a parent.

I graduated from college when I was 21 yrs old and learned most of my “adulting” from my work experiences. Work is where I learned about dealing with micro-aggressions that affected my stress levels. It is also where I learned not to judge a book by its cover, and befriended people I may never have cross paths with were it not for my job. It is where I learned to manage my time and my money, and where I learned to manage multiple personalities and interesting perspectives.

So when my daughters found out that they each would have permanent work from home assignments, this not only triggered my recollection of what my first job was like, but also my knowledge of the research around workplace environments. I want my daughters to work at places that have put a great deal of thought into their WFH policies before they assign a recent college graduate to permanently work from home.

Let me preface this statement by noting that I feel fortunate that my daughters were each able to get a job in a pandemic. As many of my students are still struggling to find work, I do not take this lightly. With that being said, I advise companies of the following:

You are not ready to shift to work from home policies if...

1) **You do not fundamentally trust your employees.** There are essentially two type of employers: those that believe their employees want to get the job done, and those who believe they do not. It is difficult to effectively surveil your employees if you do not trust them, and often the burden of



doing so is financially costly to the company and both logistically and emotionally costly to the employee. One survey noted that of the 140,000 jobs that were lost, all of them were by women. It is possible that the burden of earning trust working from home while meeting the demands of family dynamics forced women to make the difficult decision to leave the workforce.

2) **What else is lost in translation...time.** This is true especially if workplace trust has not been established. Can we really explain everything we need to in order to CYA? Can your employees discern what exchanges call for an email and what can be better served in a conversation? Do they feel empowered to make the decision?

3) **You underestimate the value of tacit knowledge.** Some things cannot be effectively translated if you do not even know what you do and do not know. As a Brooklynite neither of my parents drove, so it took me a long time to be comfortable on the road. You'd be surprised by what you miss when you do not grow up a constant passenger watching driving in action. Can you codify all of the information new employees need when you onboard them? If not, what are you doing so that your employees are not frustrated preparing new trainees for the tasks at hand?

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4) **Your DEI strategy is not tight.** Rev. Jennifer Bailey once said “relationships move at the speed of trust: social change moves at the speed of relationships.” How are sincere relationships forming in your new work from home environment? You may have done a good job assigning mentors to new employees, but what happens next? Are you clear about the metrics you are going to use to promote employees? Can your employees, especially employees from marginalized communities, form sincere relationships that can lead to advocacy and sponsorships for promotion?

5) **You do not know the value of the unpaid labor of some of your employees.** Research on turnover has shown that it is often the little things that keep people in their jobs. It can be that person who makes sure everyone’s birthday is celebrated, or that employee that takes the time to “school” newcomers of the reality of working at XYZ Inc. There are those individuals who speak out for the rights of employees and those who talk employees off the ledge when work is difficult or work-life is out of balance. All of this is done because the employee feels a connection to the company they find worth keeping intact. Companies receive both

cultural and financial benefits from these examples of unpaid labor. Have you thought strategically about how your company is benefiting and what you will do to keep these connections going?



Published by

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Adam Grant has asked us to Think Again in his new book, so as my family settles into the realities of permanently working from home, I may have to follow his advice, especially since I may have biases coming from the interchange between research and my previous experiences. This message is not to say that there is no value in working from home, nor that companies should not pursue these changes. What I am saying is that as a leader you have to be intentional as to how and why you chose a work from home policy. Be sure to ask yourself whether or not you are making long term decisions based on short term problems. Are you cleaving to the benefits of a changing work environment without examining the consequences? Everyone can hold their breath if they know they will breathe soon. The question is whether you have created a new workplace climate where people are working well when we do breathe again.

STUDENTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

On February 18, the **Accounting Society** hosted "**Transitioning from School to Work: The Accounting Field.**" The panel consisted of two SUNY Old Westbury alums - Kelly Fairbanks (a 2019 SOB 2019 Master’s graduate) and Donovan Tiney (a 2020 SOB Bachelor’s graduate). Both individuals have found recent success in the Accounting field and provided students with thorough explanations regarding the major differences between school and work. The panelists provided their expertise and advice for students entering the full-time professional environment.

When asked about the well-attended event, Accounting Society President, Antoinette Riehl said “I was very pleased by how well this event went. Our panelists were both OW alums and that made it extra special for the students, as well as the Professors that sat in. Their advice was greatly appreciated and I believe that all in attendance were able to take away an abundance of useful information from the event.”

A special thank you goes out to Kelly Fairbanks, Donovan Tiney, Antoinette Riehl and Accounting Society faculty advisors Prof. Marissa Hoffman and Prof. Bruce Marx.



Antoinette Riehl

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All SUNY staff and faculty are invited to the conference **"Business Disciplines Leaning into the Future: Tips, Tools and Practices for Incorporating Diversity, Equity and Inclusion into Business School Classes"**, Friday, April 30, 2021, 8:45 AM - 12:45 PM.



Dr. Teresa Miller



Dr. Caryn Beck-Dudley



Dr. Johan S. Roos

The conference will feature welcomes by SUNY Chief Diversity Officer Teresa Miller and AACSB International CEO Caryn Beck-Dudley and a keynote talk by Johan Roos, Dean of the Hult Business School titled, "From Rhetoric to Action in Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging. Breakout sessions will follow, led by SUNY Business faculty sharing successful strategies and content incorporating diversity, equity and inclusion. Participation discussion and Q&A will be included in each breakout session. The conference will close with a panel of students from underrepresented minority groups focused on their experiences in the classroom.

The panel is sponsored by SUNY Business School Deans and supported by **CPD**.

To see the agenda and register for the conference, go to <http://bit.ly/3jUVmSr>

SOB FACULTY MEETINGS

Faculty meetings are scheduled for 10:00am.

March 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



April 2021						
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	



May 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Tuesdays & Wednesdays
10a-12p
February 8th-May 19th 2021

VIRTUAL REFERENCE CHAT

For SOB Students & Faculty

Assistance with:
Getting started with your research
Best databases to use for your topic/project
Assistance with library resources/services

Link to chat:
<https://tinyurl.com/ydeg79y4>

Schedule a virtual appointment via Zoom:
<https://oldwestbury.libcal.com/appointments/chante>