

THE LAW FIRM OF THE FUTURE

**THE IMPACT OF COVID:
HOW SMART LAW FIRM
LEADERS ARE RESPONDING**

An MPF Webinar – January 12, 2022

by

Uri Gutfreund

Law Firm Group Leader, Risk Strategies Company

John Remsen, Jr.

President, TheRemsenGroup

MPF WEBINAR

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Smart Strategies for the Forward Thinking Law Firm

TheRemsenGroup.com

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

Uri Gutfreund

National Law Firm Practice Leader
Risk Strategies Company
New York, New York
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Uri Gutfreund is The National Law Firm Practice Leader at Risk Strategies Company, a top 25 national insurance brokerage and The Founder and Moderator of The Managing Partner Round Table™, a regional peer-to-peer professional development group. This unique program has quickly become a leading venue for thought leaders in the legal industry.

At Risk Strategies, Uri is responsible for the development and execution of all insurance and risk management services to the company's law firm clients. He oversees all law firm specialty areas including: Health, Professional Liability, Property and Casualty, Cyber and EPLI. His practice leadership combines 20 years personal experience with cutting edge innovation remaking law firm insurance programs using the latest technology, peer benchmarking, and real-time best practices to serve the company's law firm clients.

He has been a Registered Professional Liability Underwriter since 2001 and a frequent speaker and is a writer on law firm leadership, law firm business practices and insurance and risk management at national and regional conferences.

September 2020



BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

John Remsen, Jr. - President

John Remsen, Jr., is widely recognized as one of the country's leading authorities on law firm leadership, management, marketing and business development. Since 1997 TheRemsenGroup has consulted with more than 400 law firms and thousands of law firm leaders to help them develop and implement long-term strategic objectives to improve cohesiveness, profitability, and sustainability.

John is a frequent speaker and author on law-firm leadership and marketing topics. He has spoken at national and regional conferences of the American Bar Association, the Association of Legal Administrators, the Legal Marketing Association, and numerous state and local bar associations. His articles have appeared in dozens of highly respected legal publications, including the *ABA Journal*, *Law Practice Management*, *Law Practice Today*, *Law360*, *Legal Management*, *Marketing for Lawyers*, *Marketing the Law Firm*, *Managing Partner*, *National Law Review* and *New York Law Journal*.

Since 1988, John has been an active member of the Legal Marketing Association, and he has served as President of LMA's Southeastern Chapter, Executive Editor of *Strategies* (LMA's newsletter) and a member of LMA's national Board of Directors. He is also an active member of the Association of Legal Administrators and a popular speaker at ALA meetings and conferences.

In 2002, John created The Managing Partner Forum, a highly acclaimed conference series and community for managing partners and law firm leaders. More than 1,200 firm leaders from 900 law firms from 43 states have participated in 26 conferences. In addition, John distributes *The MPF Weekly*, an electronic newsletter to more than 10,500 firm leaders throughout the U.S., Canada and 28 other countries.

John's influence was underscored when he was inducted as a Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management in 2013, in recognition of his 25 years of demonstrated expertise in law firm leadership and management. Founded in 1994, the College honors those who "inspire excellence and innovation in law practice management." Membership is by invitation only and includes just 200 individuals.

And the College was not alone: in 2016, John was recognized by LawDragon as one of the "Top 100 Consultants and Strategists" to the legal profession; and in 2017, John was recognized as one of the world's top "leaders and influencers" in the business of law by the Association of International Law Firm Networks.

A native of West Palm Beach, Florida, John holds an MBA from The University of Virginia (1985) and a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Florida (1980). Prior to enrolling in graduate school, John was Executive Director of The Florida Council of 100, an organization comprised of Florida's top CEOs and other business leaders.

MPF Webinar Series: The Law Firm of the Future



The MPF Webinar Series: Building the Law Firm of the Future

The Impact of COVID on the Legal Profession: How Smart Law Firm Leaders Are Responding

An MPF Webinar with Uri Gutfreund and John Remsen, Jr.

January 12, 2022 – 2:00-3:00pm ET



Welcome



Uri Gutfreund

National Law Firm Practice Leader, Risk Strategies Company
Founder, MP Roundtable



John Remsen, Jr.

President and CEO, Managing Partner Forum
President, TheRemsenGroup



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MPF PROGRAMS IN 2022

- MPF Webinar Series – Third Wednesday @ 2pm ET
- The Virtual MPF Conferences – March 10 and December 8
- The MPF 2022 Leadership Conference – May 4-5 *
- The MPF 2022 Fall Symposium – October 6 *
- *The MPF Weekly* – Friday mornings
- MPF Website – www.ManagingPartnerForum.org
- MPF Listserv and Conference Calls



MPF Fall Symposium Passing the Torch: Guiding Your Law Firm through Succession

On-Demand Recording and Handout Materials



Ida Abbott
President
Ida Abbott Consulting



August Aquila
Chief Executive Officer
Aquila Global Advisors



Whitney Cunningham, Esq.
Managing Partner
Aspey Watkins & Diesel



Uri Gutfreund
Nat'l Law Firm Practice Leader
Risk Strategies Company



Tracy Kepler
Risk Control Consulting Director
CNA Insurance



Gary S. Lesser, Esq.
Managing Partner
Lesser, Lesser Landy & Smith



Eileen M. Letts, Esq.
Chief Administrative Partner
Zuber Lawler



Donald L. Mrozek, Esq.
Chairman Emeritus
Hinshaw & Culbertson



Morris Tabush
Founder & President
Tabush Group



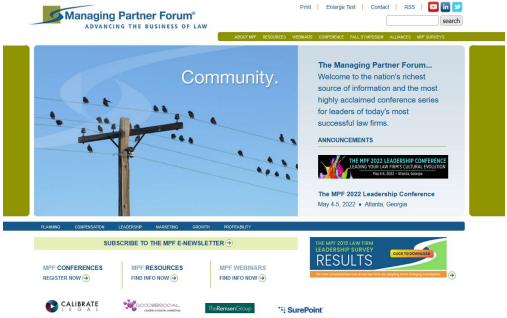
Raymond J. Werner, Esq.
Of Counsel
Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr

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THE MPF WEBINAR SERIES – COMPLETE ARCHIVE





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TODAY'S WEBINAR

- Registrant Survey Results – 125 law firm leaders
- Today's Topic – **The Impact of COVID on the Legal Profession: How Smart Law Firm Leaders Are Responding**
- Audience Polling Questions, Question Box
- Next MPF Webinar – February 16, 2022

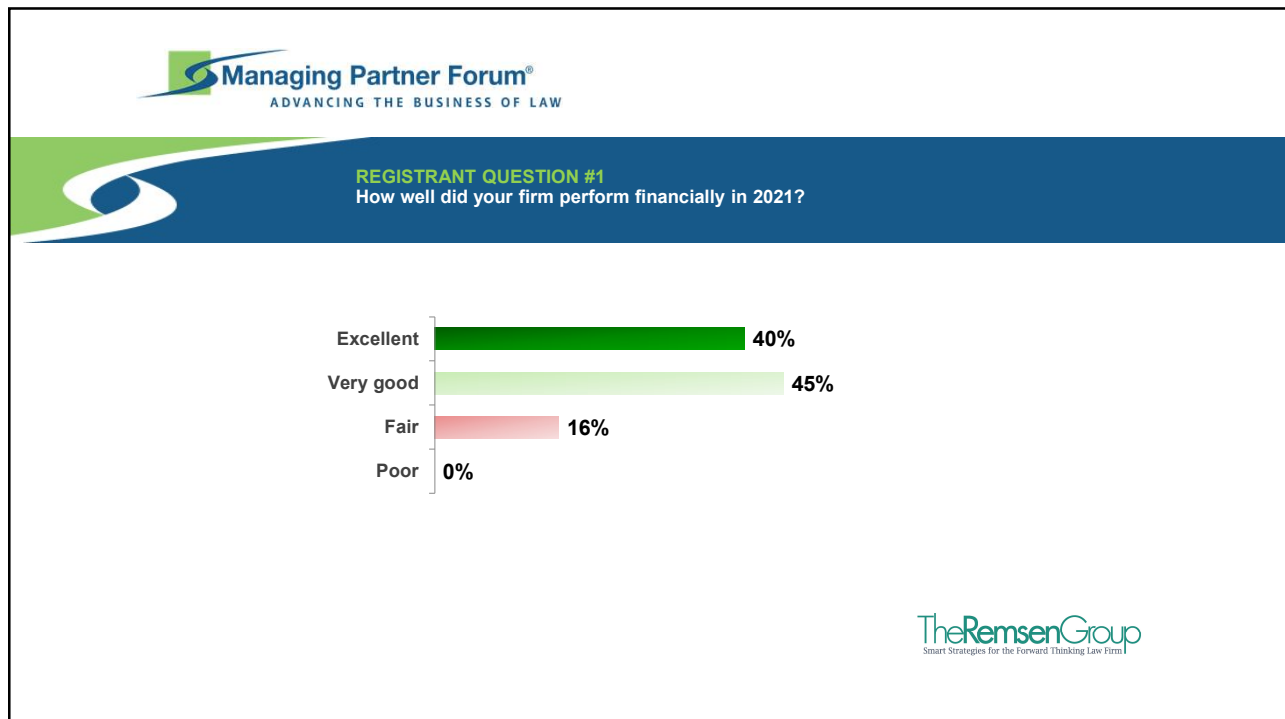
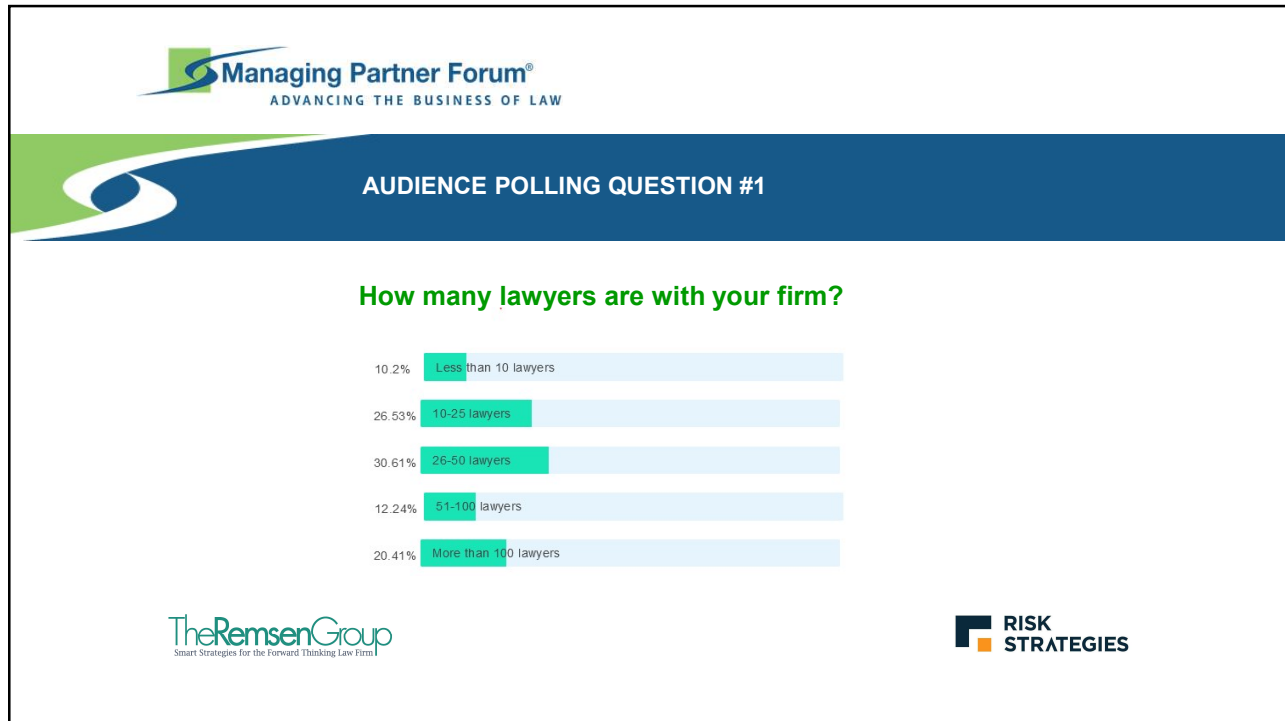


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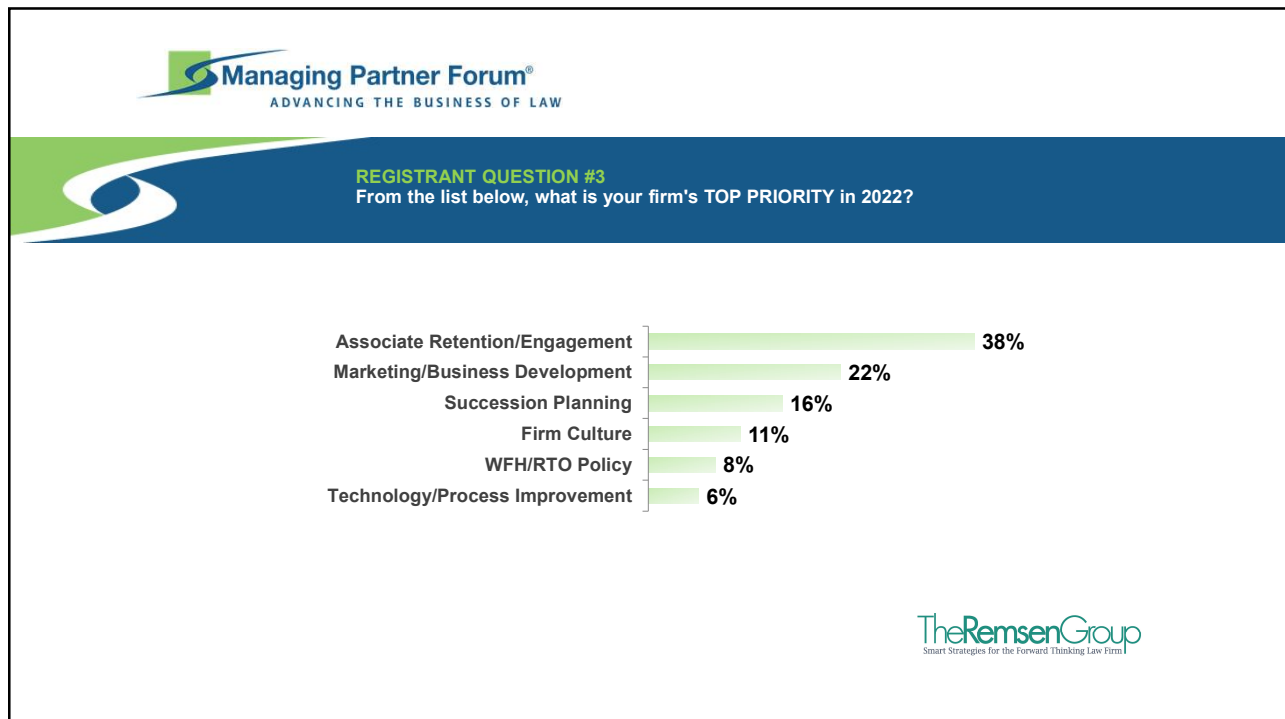
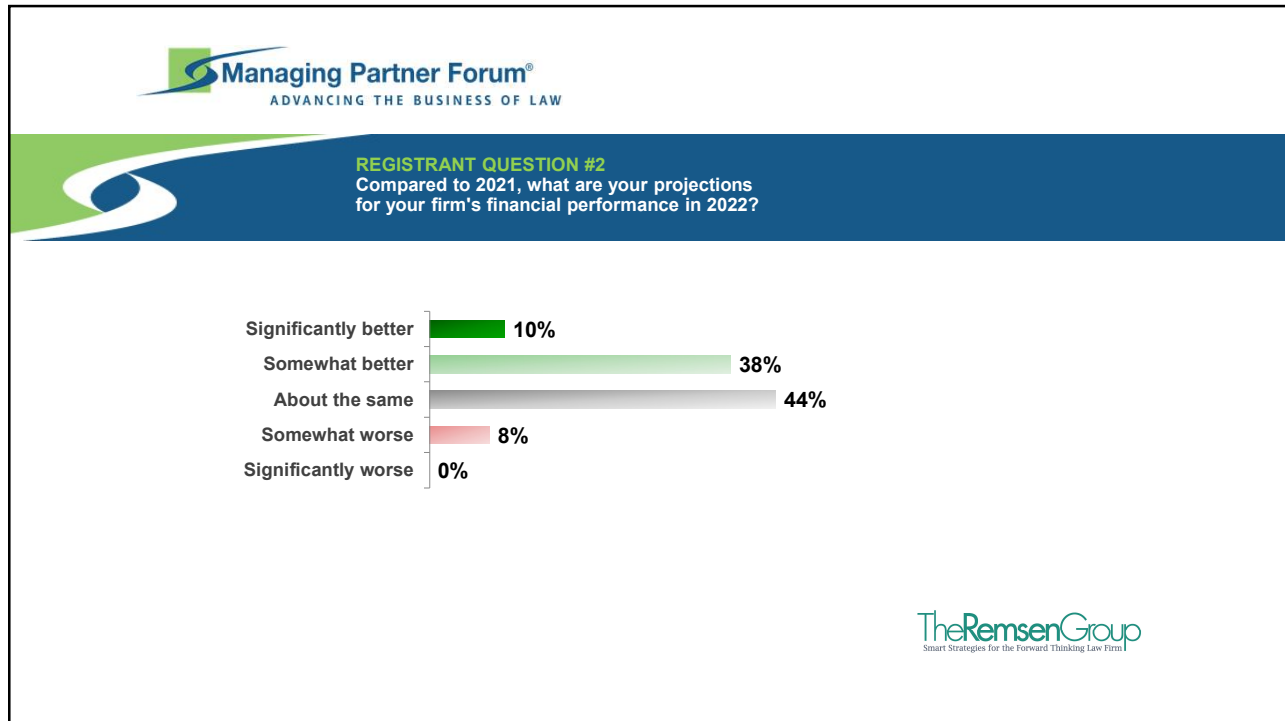


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"BEST OF" THE MPF WEBINAR SERIES

- Leadership in Times of Crisis – Larry Richard
- Firm Culture/Talent Retention – Terry Isner, John Harritty, Sharon Abrahams
- Trends in Compensation Systems – John Remsen, Uri Gutfreund
- Hybrid Workplace Model – Jon Pinney, Bob Young, Michael Hurley



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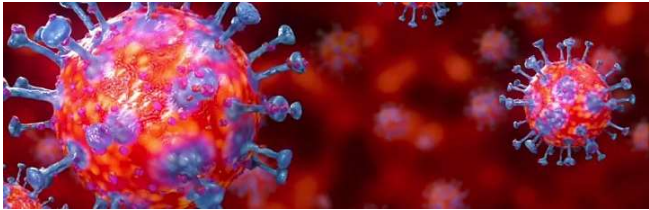
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Responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic

The Psychology of Leadership in Times of Crisis

An MPF Webinar with Dr. Larry Richard

April 1, 2020 – 2:00pm ET





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The MPF Webinar Series: The Law Firm of the Future Mitigating the Psychological Impacts of COVID at Your Law Firm

An MPF Webinar with Dr. Larry Richard

June 2, 2021 – 2:00-3:00pm ET



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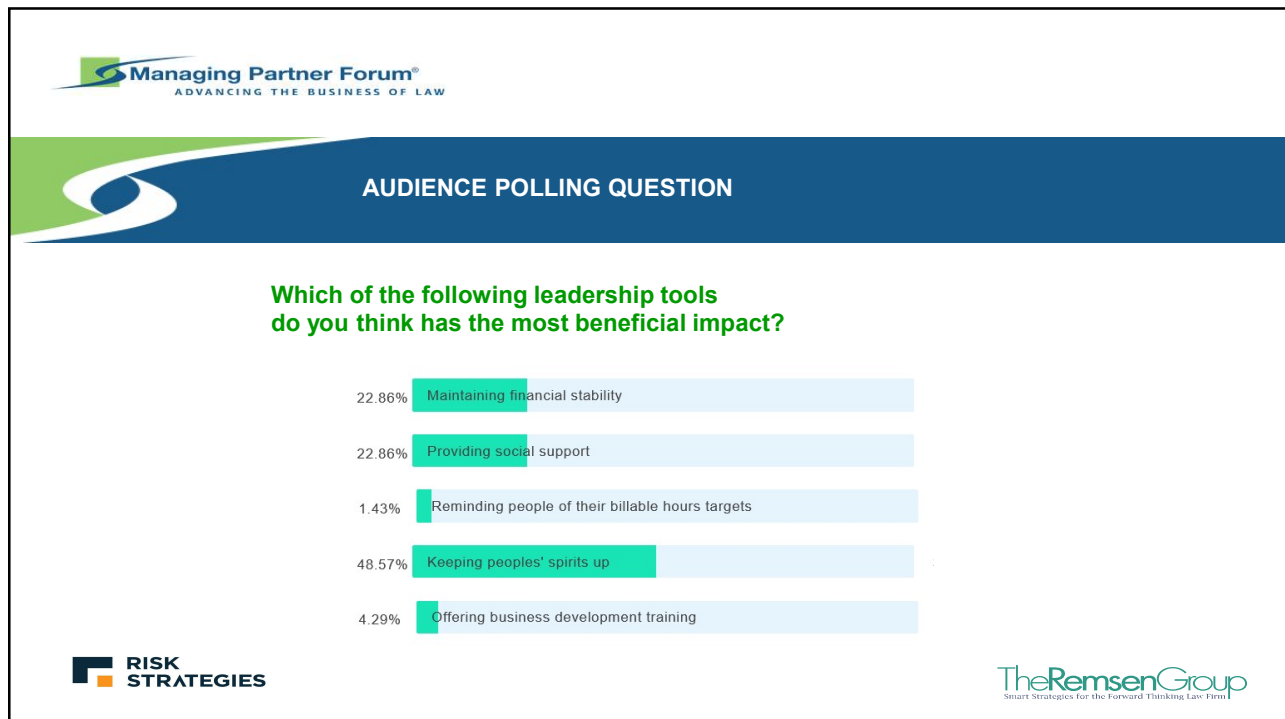
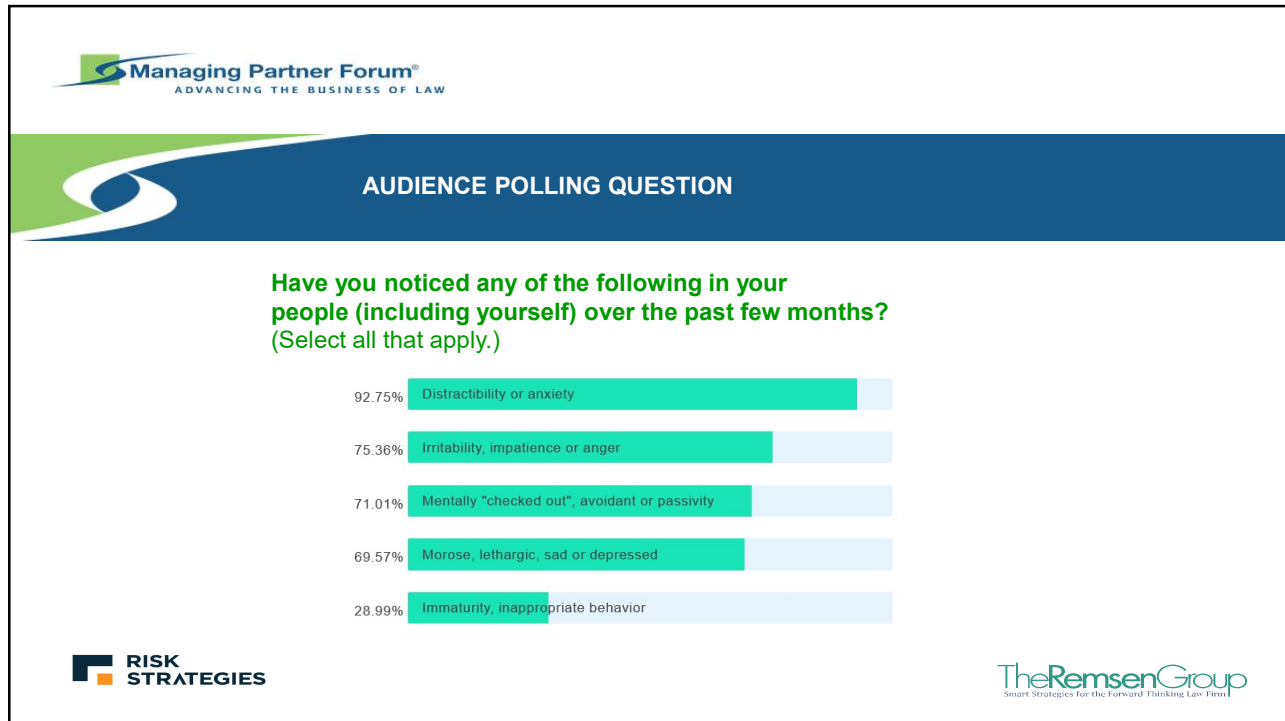


Larry Richard

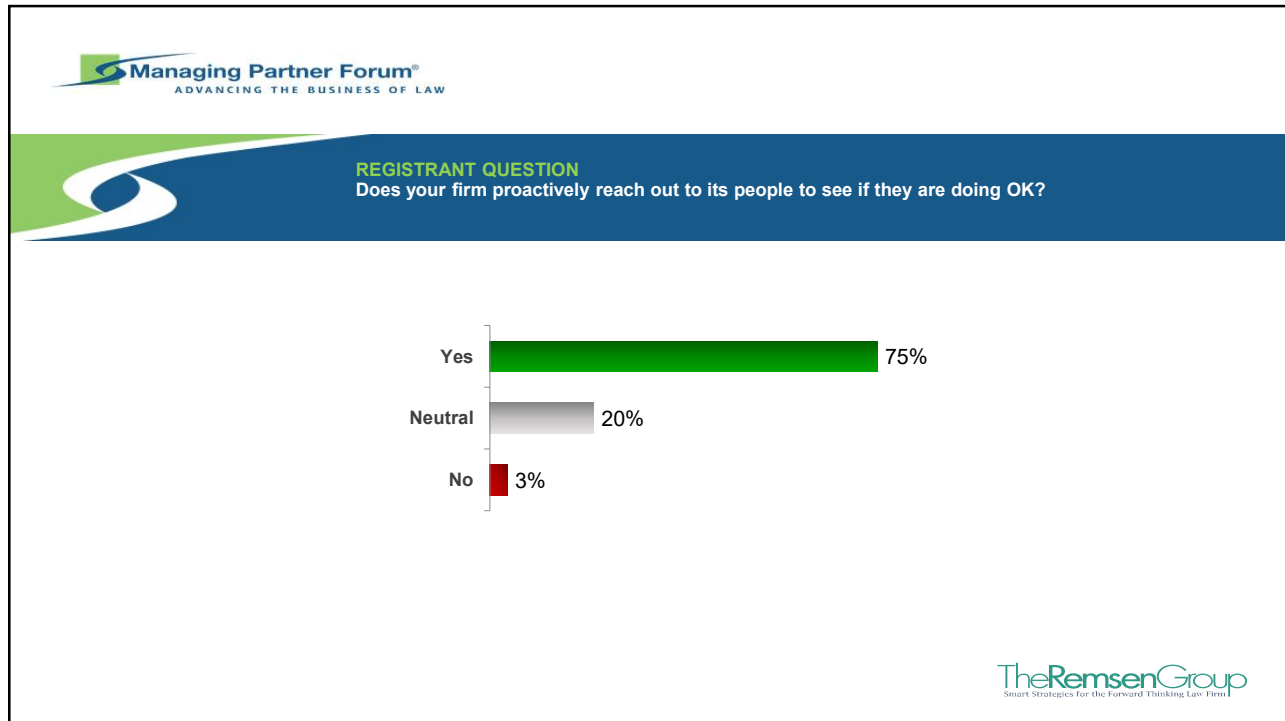
- Founder, LawyerBrain LLP
- Blog: "What Makes Lawyers Tick"
- Leading expert on the lawyer personality
- Altman Weil, Hildebrandt
- Author and Speaker:
 - American Bar Association
 - Association of Legal Administrators
 - MPF Annual Conference
 - Law Firm Networks
- Education:
 - PhD-Psychology – Temple University
 - JD – University of Pennsylvania

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GUIDANCE FOR LAW FIRM LEADERS

- Demonstrate Care for People, Clients and Community
- Stay Educated and Updated
- Think Strategically
- Communicate Clearly and Frequently
- Keep Open Communication Lines
- Stay Cool, Calm and Collected
- Refer to the Experts
- Maintain Credibility, Reliability and Intimacy

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MPF Webinar Series: The Law Firm of the Future



Responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic Law Firm Culture in a Post-Pandemic World

An MPF Webinar with Terry Isner and Leah Nelson

June 10, 2020 – 2:00pm ET

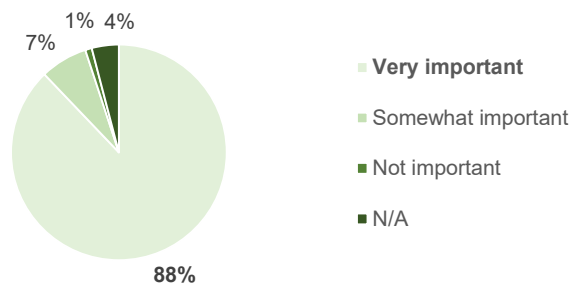


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REGISTRANT SURVEY QUESTION How Important is “Culture” to Your Law Firm?



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REGISTRANT SURVEY QUESTION
What One Word Best Describes Your Firm's Culture?

Word cloud results:

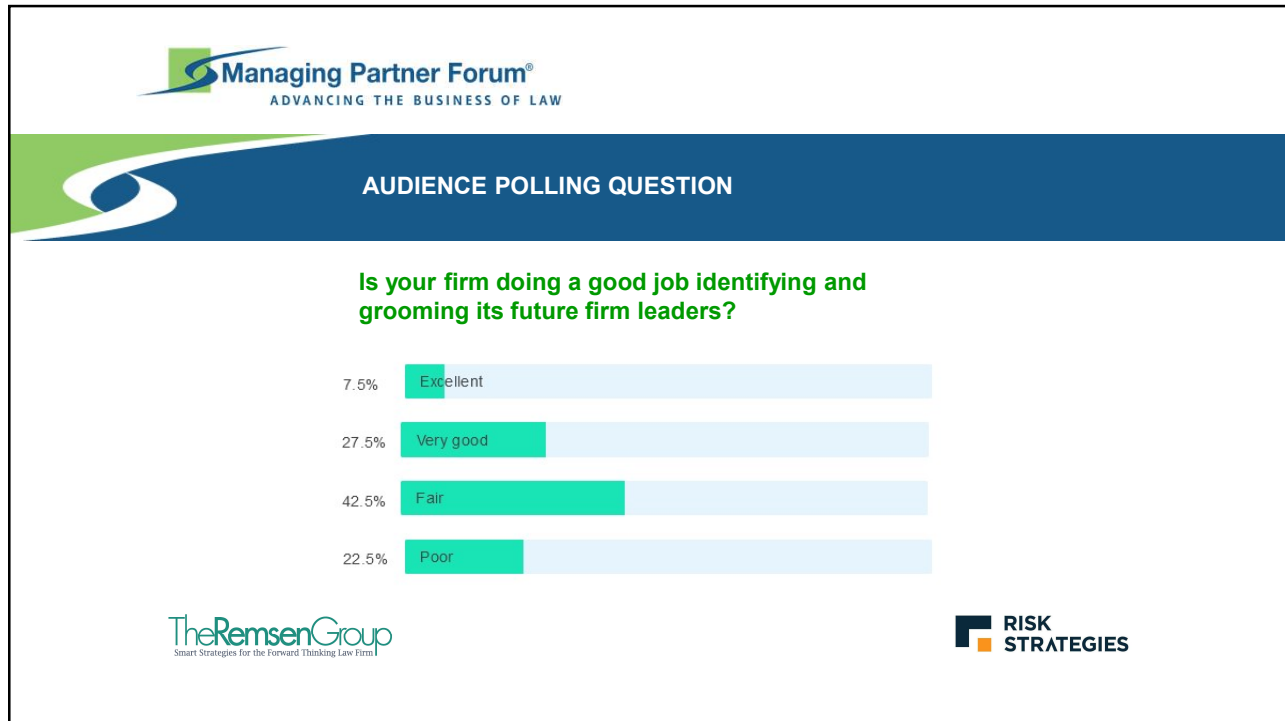
- collaborative
- collegial
- family
- inclusive
- supportive
- teamwork
- friendly
- flexible
- diverse
- empowering
- hardworking
- people
- respect
- disiplined
- congratulatory
- accommodating
- adaptable
- autonomous
- awesome
- compassionate
- congenial
- conservative
- entrepreneurial
- fun
- hostile
- institutional
- leader
- lifestyle
- loyal
- mature
- patriarchal
- performance
- positive
- professional
- progressive
- relaxed
- safely
- siloed
- southern
- struggling
- sure
- thoughtful
- trust
- unique
- vibrant

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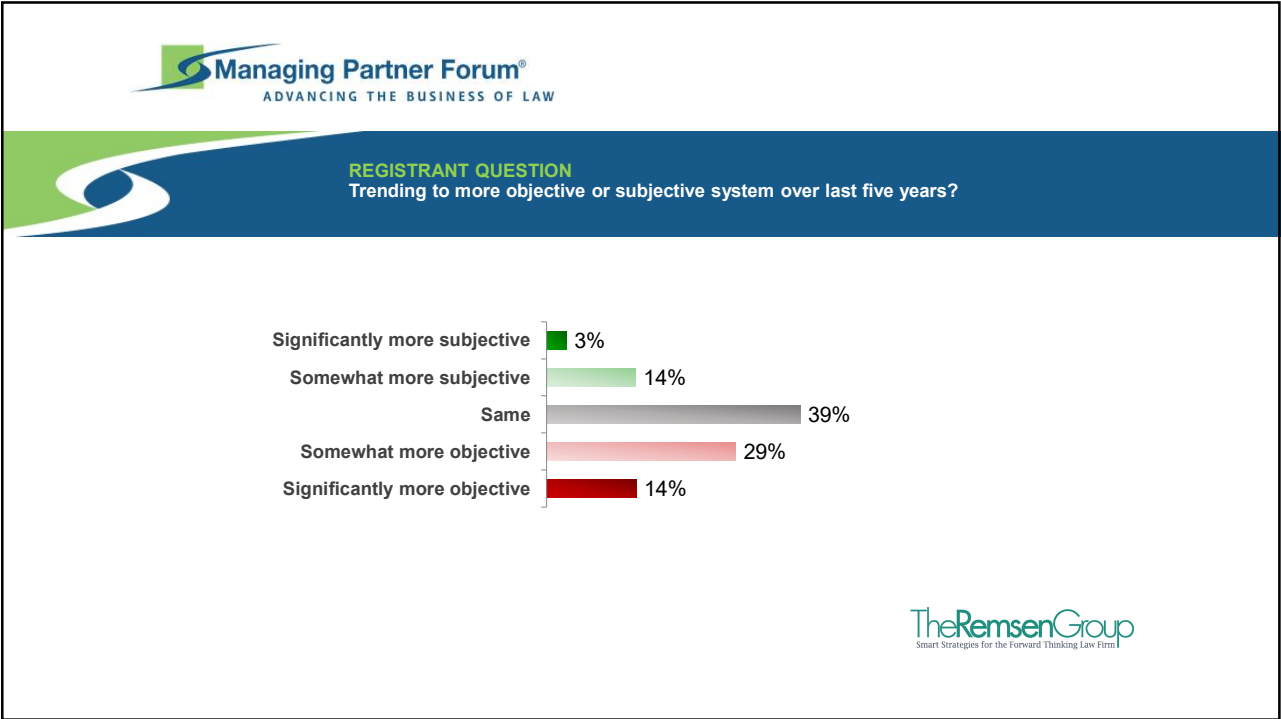
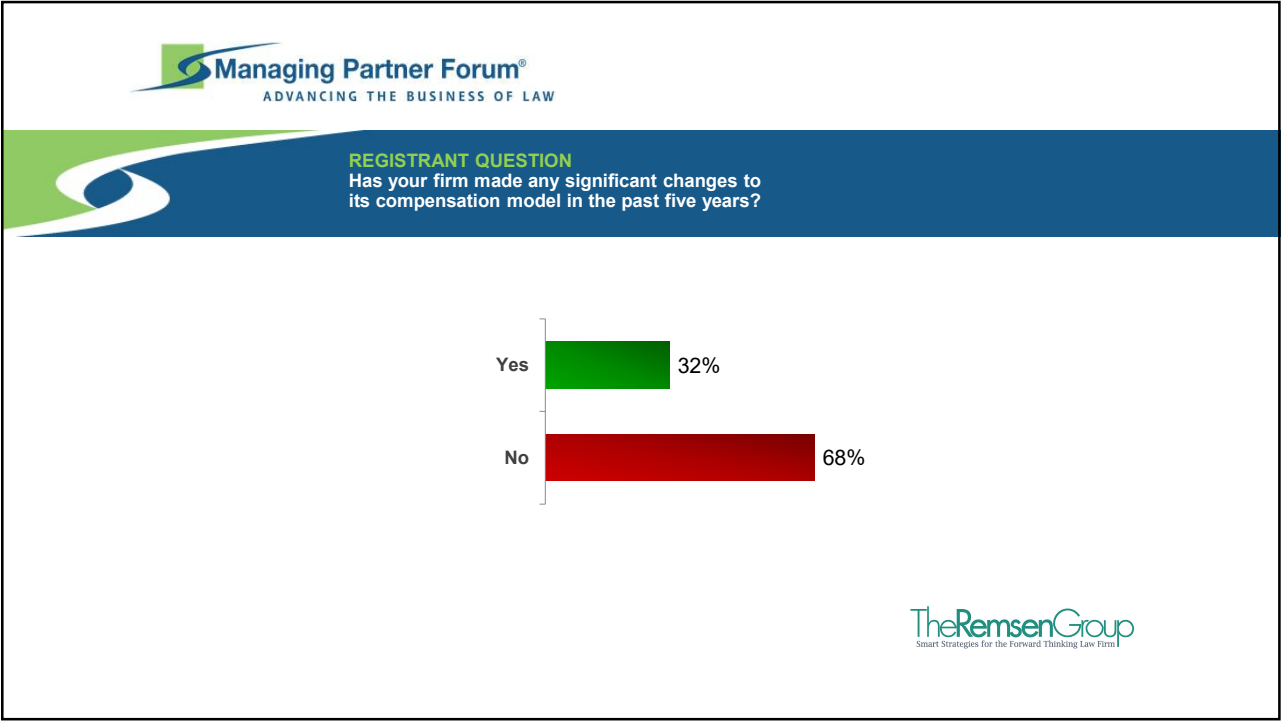
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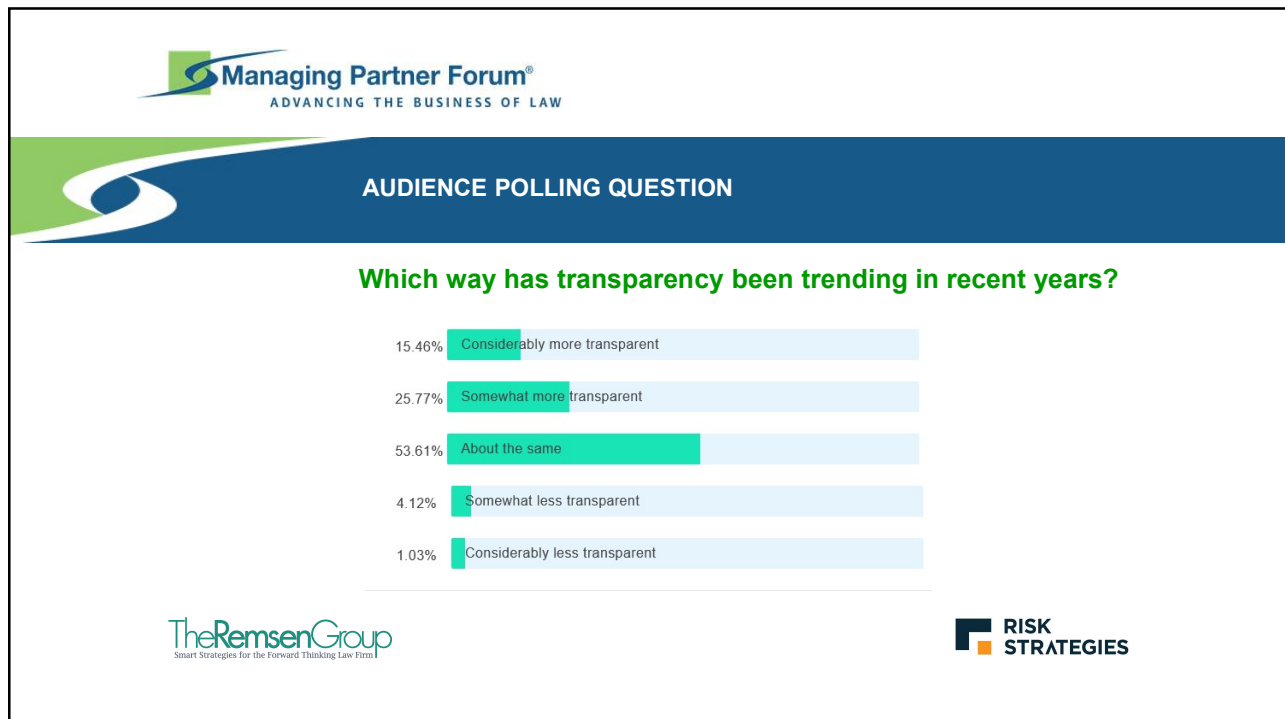
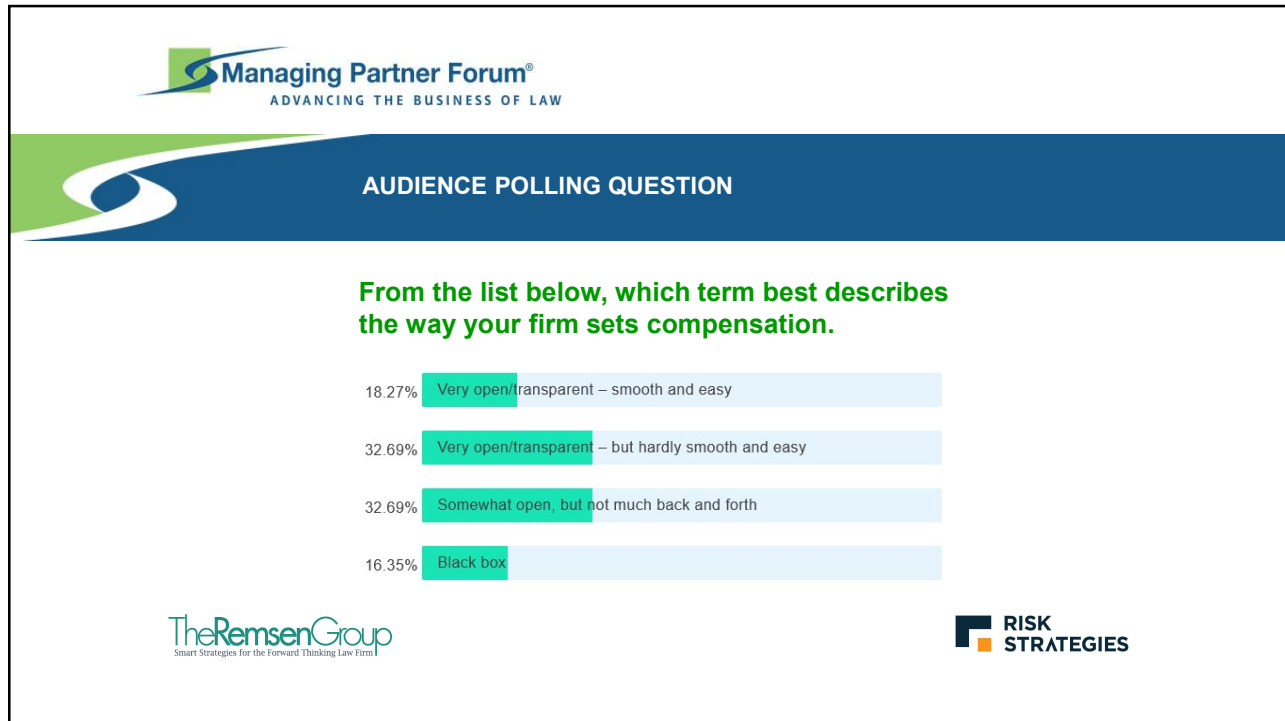
The MPF Webinar Series: Building the Law Firm of the Future
Trends in Law Firm Compensation Systems
An MPF Webinar with Uri Gutfreund and John Remsen, Jr.
September 1, 2021 – 2:00-3:00pm ET

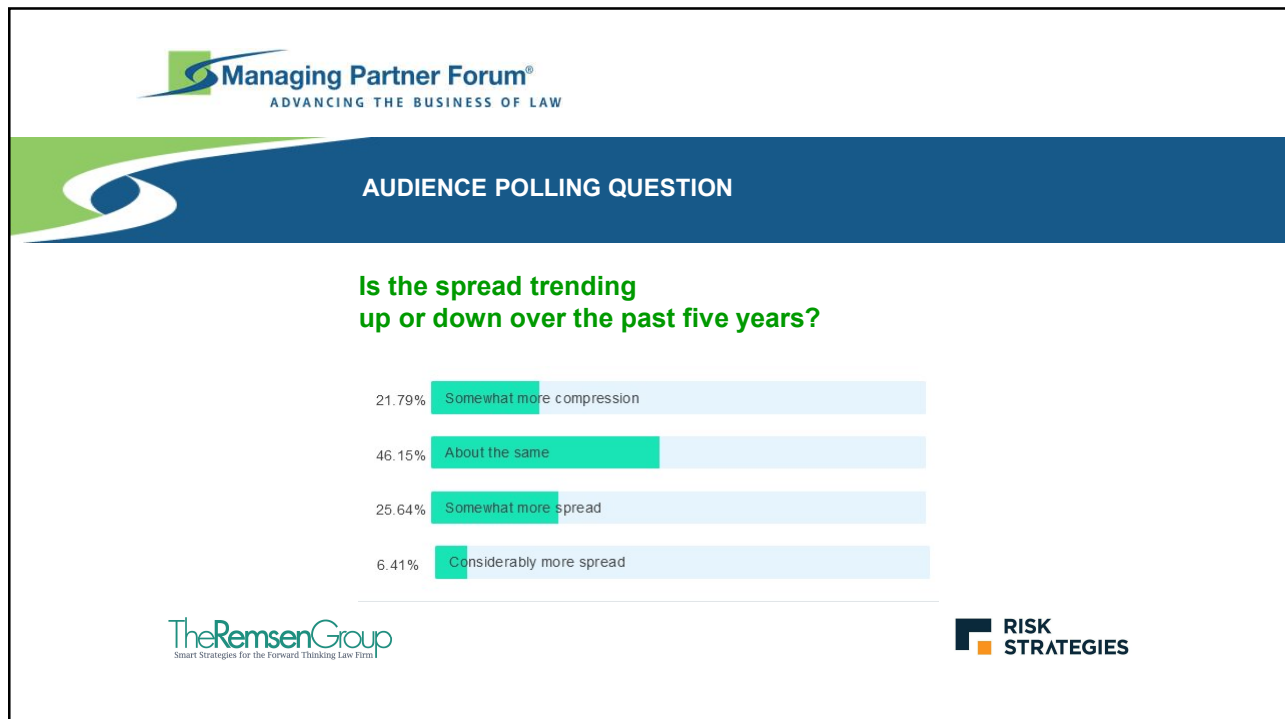
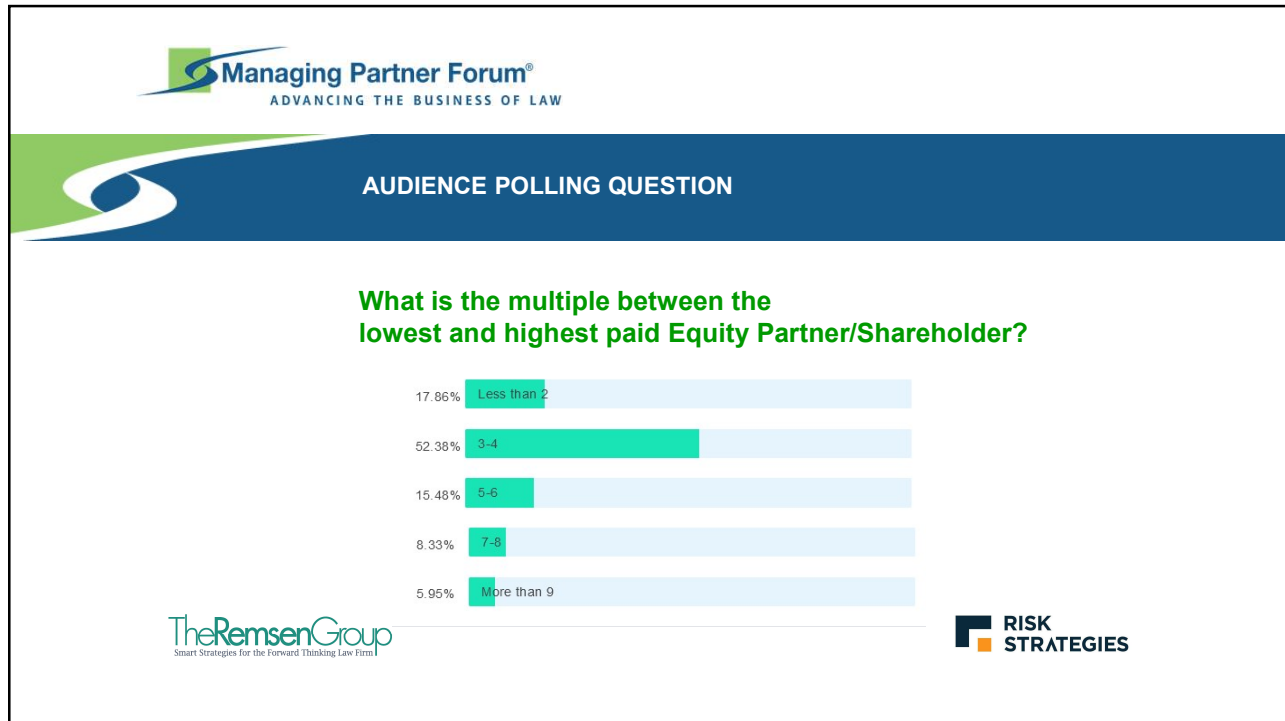


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MPF OBSERVATIONS

- Compensation Systems Vary Widely
- There is No Perfect System
- Plan Should Align with Culture and Strategic Goals
- Reward Sharing, Teamwork, Firm First Behavior
- Fairness and Transparency Are Important
- Plan Should Naturally Evolve over Time
- Take Good Care of Your Top Performers



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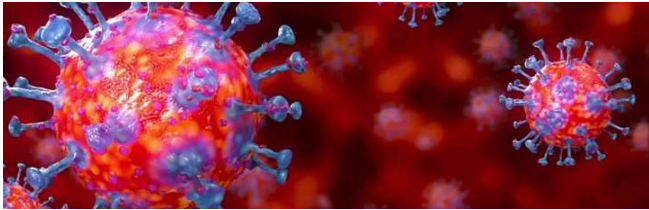


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Responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic
The Law Firm of the Future:
The Managing Partner's Perspective
An MPF Webinar with Jon Pinney and Bob Young
July 22, 2020 – 2:00pm ET





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Responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic
The Law Firm of the Future:
The Managing Partner's Perspective
An MPF Webinar with Jon Pinney and Bob Young



THE EVOLUTION ACCELERATION HAS BEGUN

- Law firm evolution acceleration caused by COVID-19
- ALSPs disruption will continue
- Technology investment will increase
- Advancing firms will dominate



THE TRADITIONAL LAW OFFICE IS DEAD

- 30% to 50% reduction in office space
- Hybrid remote workplace
- File-less, paperless and automated
- 100% cloud-based remote environment
- Centralized administrative services



NEW TECHNOLOGY-BASED PRACTICE GROUPS WILL DOMINATE

- Process & Project Management Services
- Legal Process Optimization
- Contracts Management
- Regulatory Risk & Compliance
- Intellectual Property Management



IMMEDIATE IMPLICATIONS

- Obsolescence is becoming apparent
- Cyber breach heightened risk
- Culture and morale challenges
- Training and mentoring struggles
- Ergonomics and home workplace issues rising
- Marketing and business development strategies have shifted



LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS

- Law firms will evolve into quasi-technology firms
- ALSPs and AFAs will see continued growth
- Non-lawyer headcount will rise
- Erosion of licensure jurisdictional boundaries

MPF Webinar Series: The Law Firm of the Future



The MPF Webinar Series: The Law Firm of the Future
Point/CounterPoint: Should We Bring Everybody Back to the Office or Rethink Our Workplace Model?

An MPF Webinar with Michael Hurley and Jon Pinney

March 3, 2021 – 2:00-3:00pm ET



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The MPF Webinar Series: The Law Firm of the Future **Point/CounterPoint: Should We Bring Everybody Back to the Office or Rethink Our Workplace Model?**

An MPF Webinar with Michael Hurley and Jon Pinney



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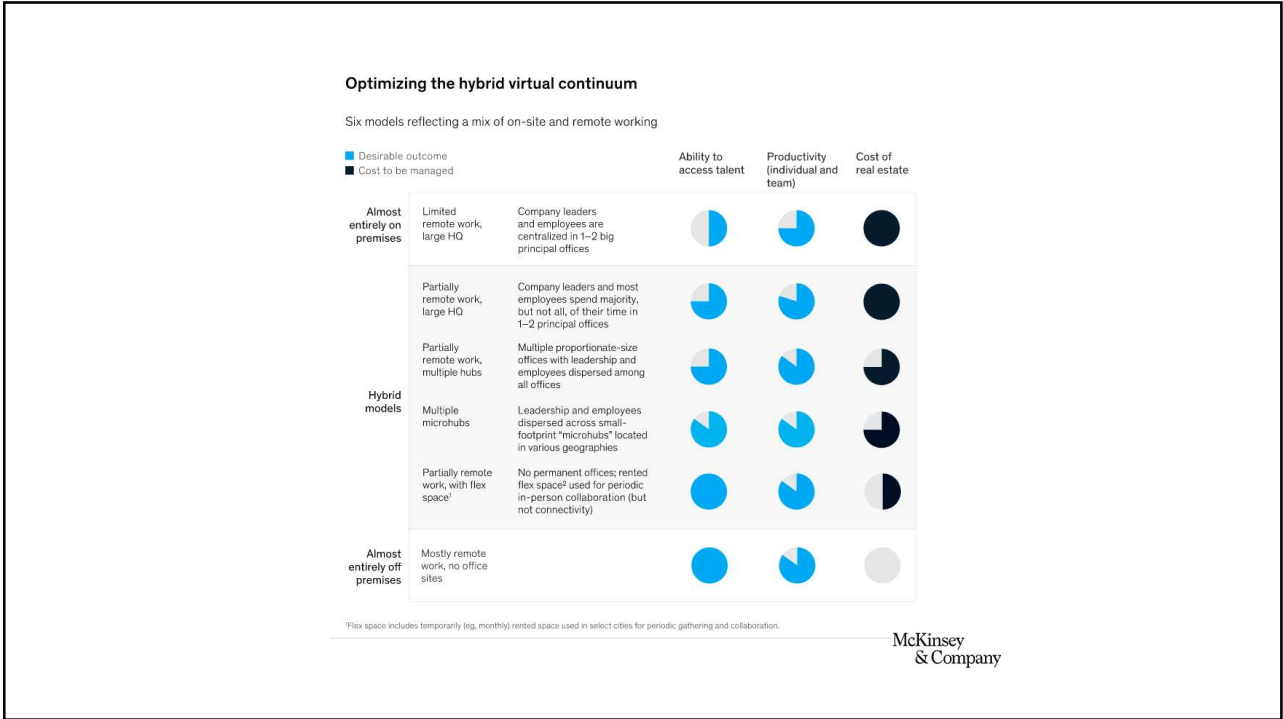
POINT:
LAW FIRMS
RUN BEST IN
PERSON

- Firm Culture
- “Office Buzz”
- New Hires/Onboarding
- Productivity
- Collaboration/Teamwork
- Mentoring/Training
- Marketing/Business Development
- Social Responsibility

CASSIN

COUNTERPOINT:
HYBRID IS
THE FUTURE



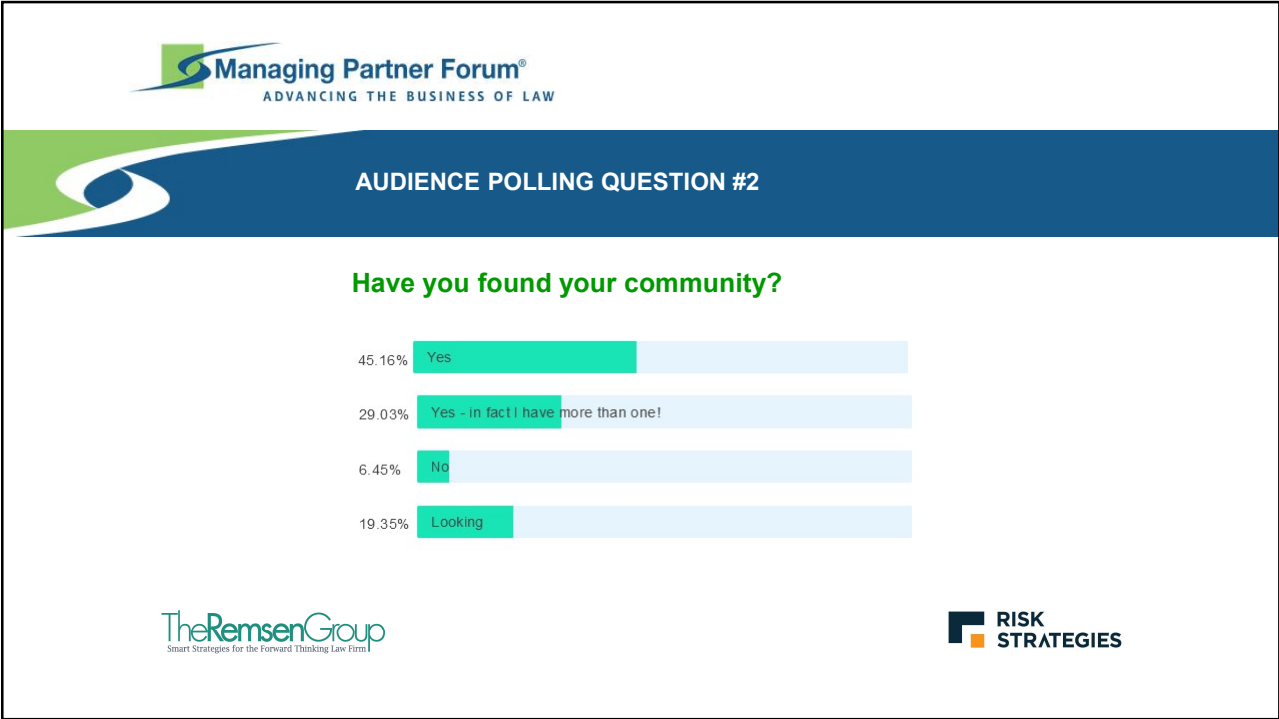


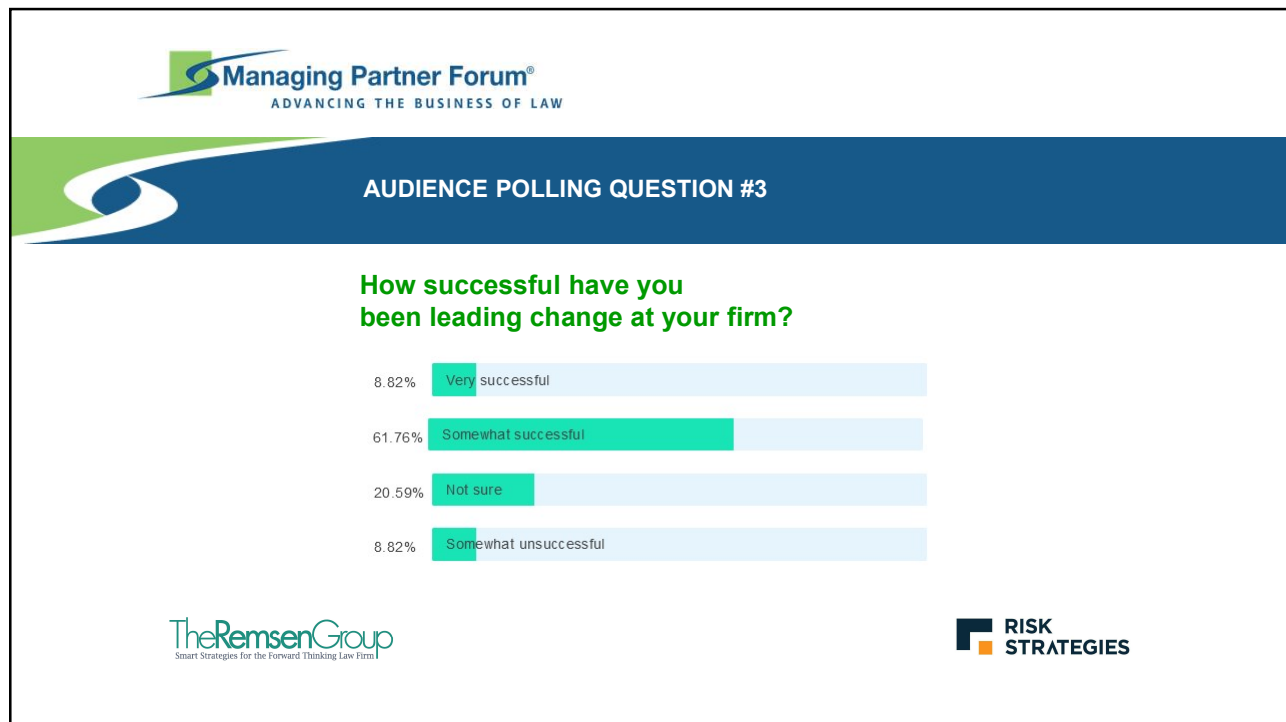


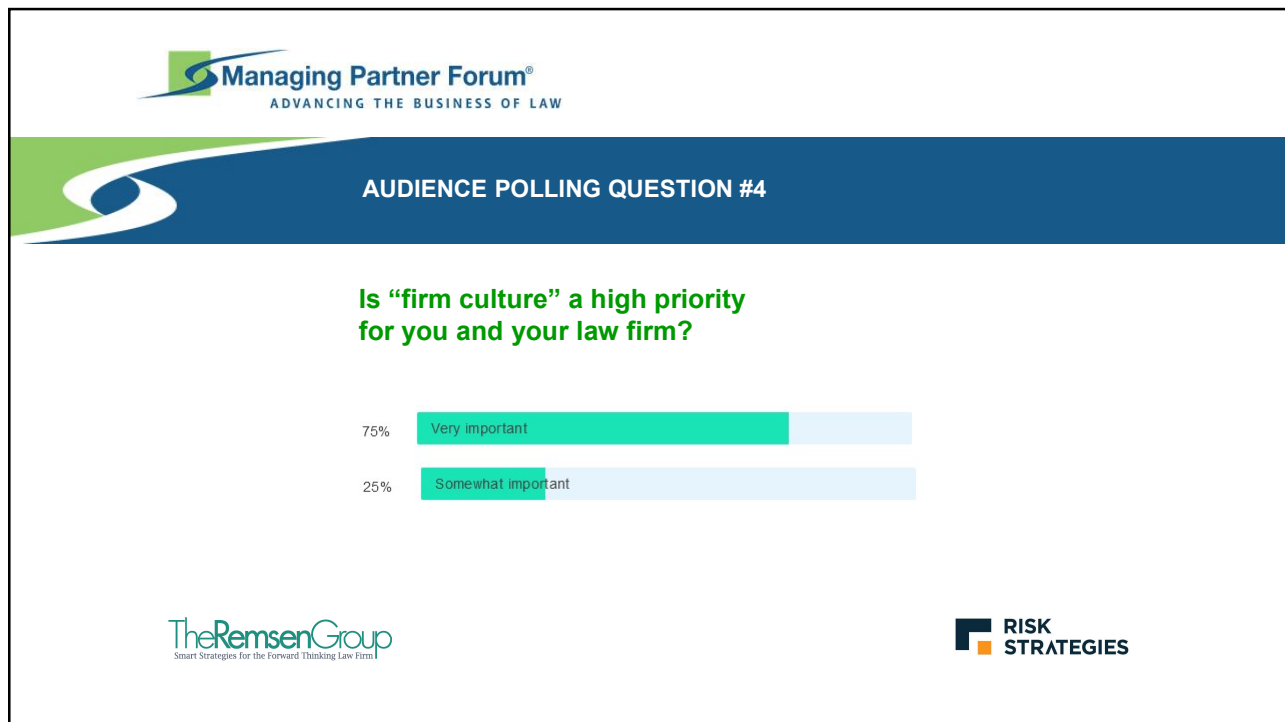
WHAT SMART LAW FIRM LEADERS ARE DOING

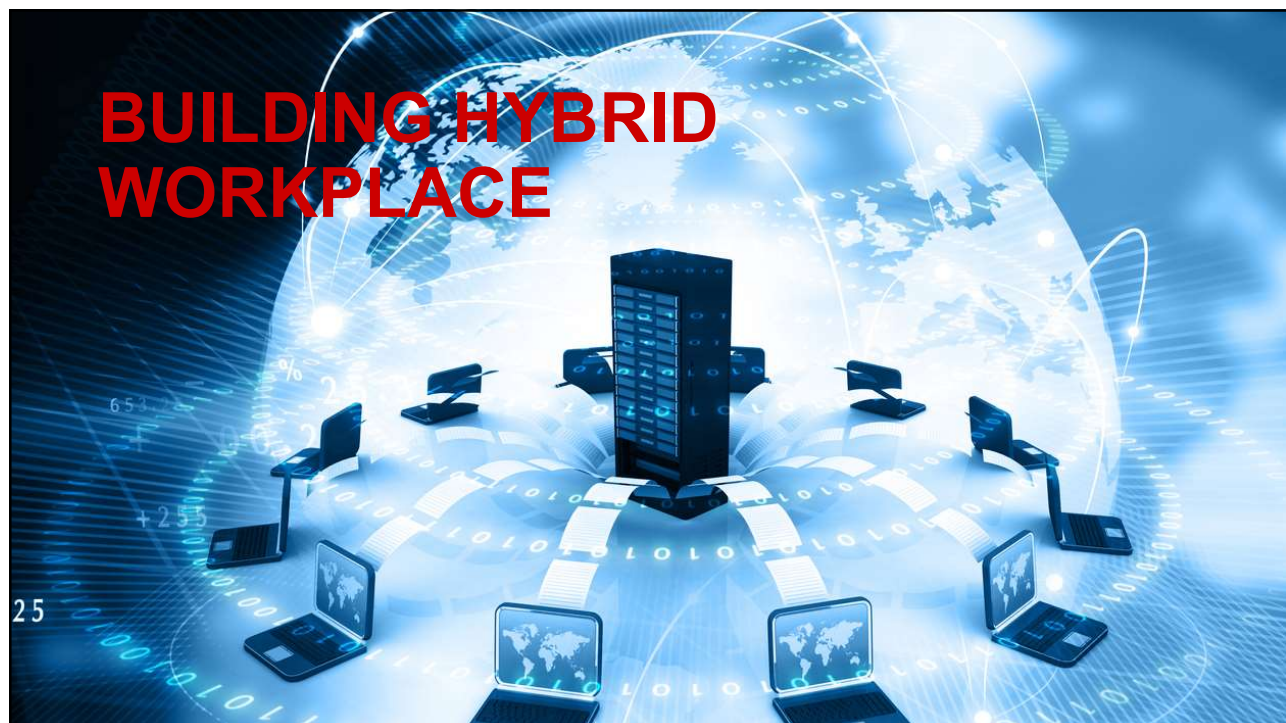
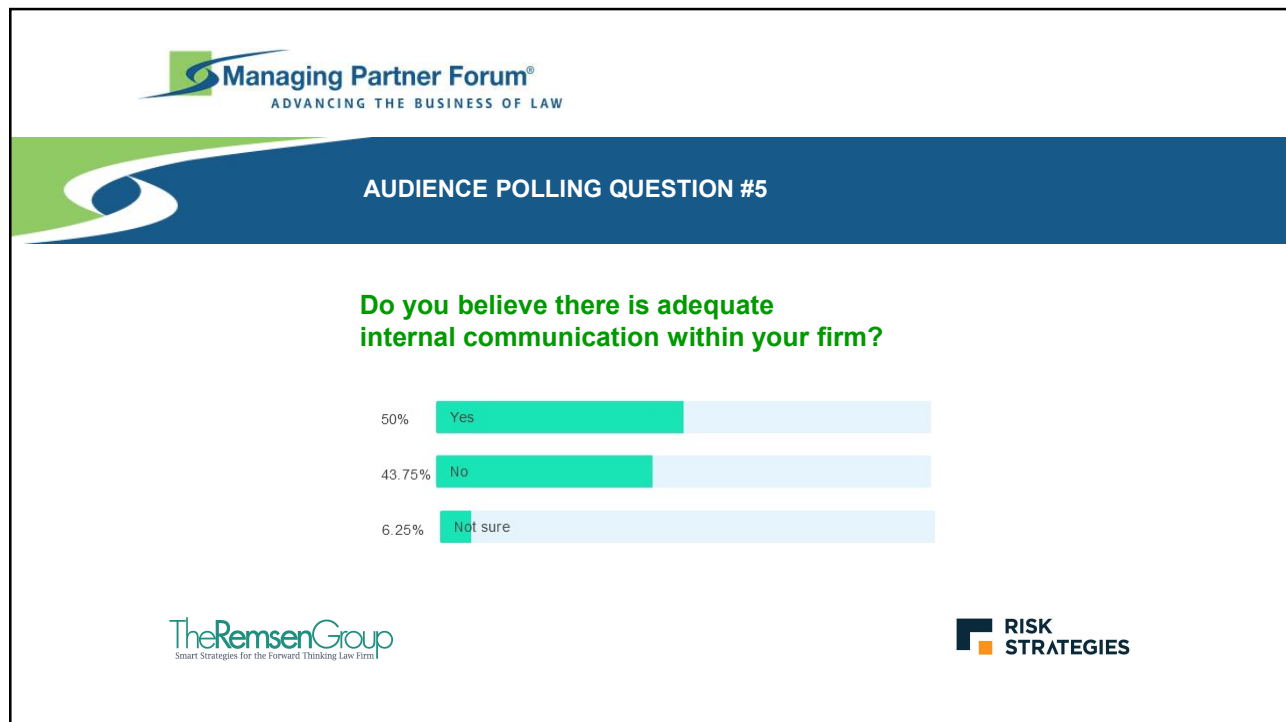
- Looking for Answers and Finding Communities
- Pivoting Forward, Leading Change
- Obsessing about Firm Culture
- Communicating Like Crazy
- Tuning into their People – Flex Workplace, Great Resignation
- Getting Serious about Chronic Underperformance and Toxic Behavior

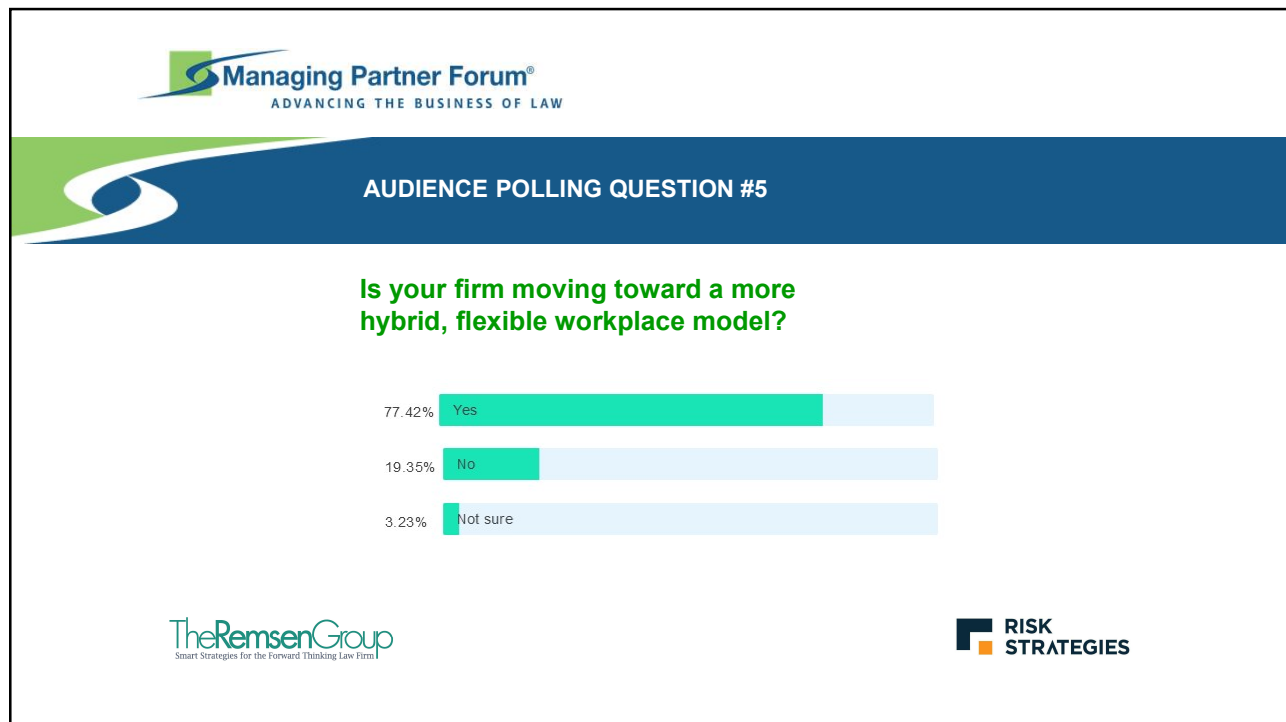




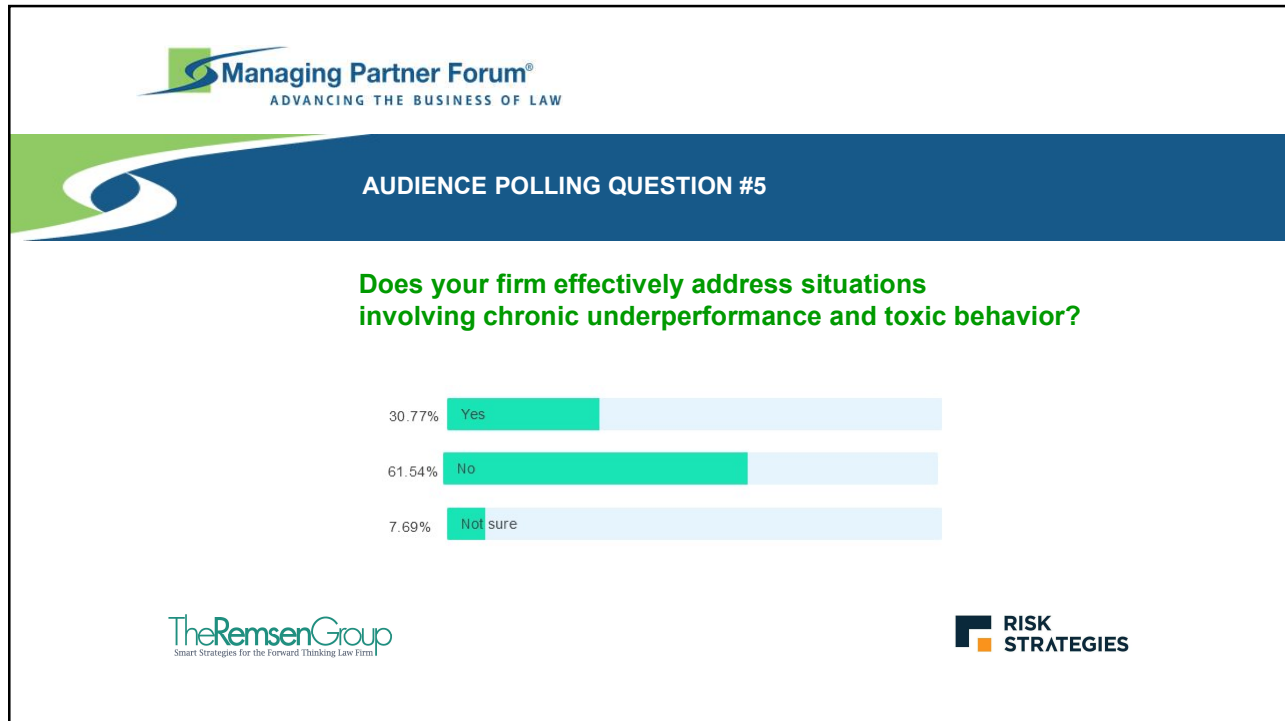








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The Impact of COVID on the Legal Profession: How Smart Law Firm Leaders Are Responding

An MPF Webinar with Uri Gutfreund and John Remsen, Jr.

January 12, 2022 – 2:00-3:00pm ET



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**RISK
STRATEGIES**

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CRISIS LEADERSHIP

by

Dr. Larry Richard

Founder, LawyerBrain LLC

FEATURED ARTICLE

POWERED BY

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The Psychology of Crisis Leadership

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Law firm leaders¹ are intensely focused on responding to the CoronaVirus crisis. However, despite their best efforts, many leaders are telling me that their people are experiencing high levels of stress, anxiety, fear, and emotional overload. That's not surprising, given the pace and magnitude of the changes affecting us all.

This crisis definitely has psychological consequences—specifically, it has upended our basic needs for predictability, control and human connection, and has thereby generated enormous stress while reducing our sense of well-being.

In this article, I'll explain why and how the crisis disrupts these needs. I'll then explain what you as a leader can do to help restore that well-being and ensure that your decisions and actions land in the best possible way.

The Crisis Disrupts

Any crisis creates disruption, but the disruption is usually limited to one realm or another. The CoronaVirus crisis has disrupted almost every aspect of our lives all at once, and it's done so fairly suddenly. We're all feeling potential threats to our health, our finances, and our relationships.

While you can't control the course of the virus and the global consequences it causes, many of you are already taking wise remedial steps to respond to the disruption, such as insuring

¹ For purposes of brevity and clarity, I've addressed leaders in law firms only, but this article actually applies equally to leaders of corporate law departments.

social distancing, providing tech resources for working remotely, ensuring continuity of service to clients, increasing communication, and making sure that your people are ok.

But taking the right steps is only part of effective leadership. It's equally essential to pay attention to *how* you communicate and execute those steps. Your mindset, your pace, your empathy—all of these have an impact on how effective your leadership actions will be, and on how receptive your people will be. Your style and tone influence whether your people will experience predictability, control and connection, or just the opposite.

Let's take a look at the three needs I've mentioned:

Predictability: In a crisis, people hunger for predictability. We need to know what to expect. Uncertainty is not all bad--our brains rely on it as a signal that a threat is imminent. But escalating uncertainty can trigger anxiety (which is basically fear about an unknown future). When anxiety is elevated, our ability to problem-solve and think rationally declines, our capacity to connect with others is inhibited, and our immune response is weakened. One antidote is to focus our attention on the things that remain predictable in order to provide at least some stability. Here are three examples of how to do that:

Create small pockets of predictability. Establish a regular, periodic briefing time, for example, so that people have a *regular* expectation that they'll be updated about critical information at the same time each day, each week, etc. I recommend doing this even if there's nothing new to report. Steps like this can create a pocket of predictability.

Also, insure that messaging to your people from different leaders is consistent. Nothing kills predictability like mixed messages.

Remind your people of those things that remain stable and predictable. Remind people regularly about resources that remain available and operational. When our attention is only focused on the uncertainty, it feeds fear; but if you can also re-direct peoples' attention to things that remain unchanged, it can be reassuring.

Be a role model by managing your own fears. Role-modeling is a powerful tool, particularly in a crisis. In times of uncertainty, people look to their leaders for cues about how to react. Leaders need to remain calm, focused and authentic. Let people know what steps you are taking. Before you speak, ask yourself if others will receive your demeanor as reassuring or as alarming. Even bad news can be conveyed in a way that reassures people that you're on top of it. Your steadiness and emotional honesty can be one of the most important ways you have to restore a sense of calm and predictability among your people.

Control: In general, most people want autonomy, that is, to feel like we exert some *control*, that we have at least some significant input into our lives as they unfold. We want choices. My research shows that we lawyers have an even greater need for this than the general public.

The crisis has disrupted our autonomy already in a number of ways—for example, federal, state and local governments have all issued warnings to maintain social distance, and even to self-quarantine. They've made a number of other recommendations that limit our freedom in the name of protecting everyone's health.

But at the same time, luckily, the crisis offers new opportunities for autonomy—if we capitalize on them. For example, many of us are working from home with the added autonomy that this brings.

Try to be sensitive to the need that your lawyers have for some subjective sense of choice and control. Focus on what *can* be controlled more than on what can't be controlled.

Another step you can take: give your people binary choices whenever you make a decision, instead of just imposing a decision on them.

For example, “Let’s set up a call for next week—Do you want to call me? Or do you want me to initiate the call?” It may seem like a relatively trivial choice, but to a brain in high alert mode, lots of simple choices like this one can be calming and serve to restore a sense of control.

Even better, actively encourage your people to innovate as they work from home. Empower them to invent new ways of working in light of all the disruptive changes. One of the strengths of the U.S. culture is our penchant for taking hierarchy with a grain of salt when common sense tells us that improvising is better. Giving your lawyers permission to channel their inner MacGuyver can beef up their psychological sense of control just when it’s needed most.

Connection: More and more emerging research underlines the importance of relationships. They build psychological resilience. They strengthen our immune system—a nice feature when trying to fight off a virus. They increase both personal happiness and work satisfaction. Good relationships have even been shown to prolong life.

The mandate to practice “social distancing” ironically imposes barriers to connection at a time when it would do us the most good.

What can you as a leader do? Convene videoconferences with your lawyers frequently. We often assume that the main benefit of videoconferencing is the efficiency of disseminating information or discussing issues, but they also serve a very important social purpose. Convene them more often than you think is logically necessary.

Also, encourage your lawyers to keep in touch with each other, especially via visual media like Skype or Zoom or even Instagram and other static social media. And encourage them to check in with friends, loved ones, and isolated or vulnerable members of their social circle. [Isolation](#) can produce sadness and lower immune response. According to [Harvard Business Review](#), the legal profession is already the loneliest profession.

Another aspect of social connection is the need we all have to be part of something larger than ourselves. In a crisis like this, there's an opportunity to tap into our innate need to feel connected to all others. One potential silver lining to the crisis is that because it's a threat to the entire planet, people are more inclined to unite around the sentiment that "we're all in this together." In fact, it's dawning on many of us that we are truly linked to all others in very concrete ways. When I seclude myself in my home, I'm not just avoiding my own exposure to the virus—I'm also actively taking a step to protect others in my community from possible infection. Ironically, isolation is itself a community-minded act.

In Summary:

Here, in one spot, are the actionable suggestions I've mentioned which derive from the principles I've outlined. I've also added some additional do's and don'ts that derive from the same principles:

Set up a *regular* time to communicate with your people, to inform them, to keep them up to date about developments and about steps that you're taking. It's reassuring to know that there's a particular time every day or every week when they'll hear from you.

Overcommunicate. In a time of uncertainty, communication is reassuring, lowers anxiety, and builds community.

Communicate by Skype or Zoom if you can. Video is the most emotionally connected medium, and in a time of crisis, you need to foster connection. If video is impractical, do your updates and check-ins via telephone conference call. Only as a last resort use email—it's less personal, less connected, and invites one-way communication and less give-and-take.

Encourage your people to reach out to loved ones, friends, clients, and others in their communities just to check in and see how people are doing. When people work remotely, it can be isolating. Reaching out is good for your lawyers and good for those they call.

This is not the time for a command-and-control leadership style. Everyone knows that you don't know how this will turn out. Instead, adopt a two-way communication style, seek the input of your people. Care for them, check in with them. See how everyone's doing. Build community. Be as authentic and compassionate as you can. Despite how uncomfortable many lawyers find it, vulnerability in a time of crisis builds trust, bonds, and connection.

Communicate to *everyone*—lawyers, business services professionals/legal operations/admin staff, support staff. Don't use different messaging for lawyers and others—everyone needs to hear the same message. (If you need to discuss financial or other

sensitive issues, you can always convene a separate partners-only call.)

Give people an opportunity to express their feelings and report ways that they're coping.

Direct peoples' attention towards those things that remain operational, that remain stable, things they can count on. In a time of change and uncertainty, it's reassuring to remind people about things that *aren't* changing.

Create routines, rituals, things that people can look forward to on a regular basis. The familiar is always calming and reassuring.

Above all, exercise your empathy muscle. Put yourself in the shoes of the other person. Ask yourself what experience they may be having. Ask yourself how your communication may land—are they likely to receive it the way you meant it?

Slow down—pay attention to your demeanor in talking to others. Pay attention not only to the *content* of your messaging but to the *way* you deliver it. Especially in a time of crisis, people are more sensitized to hearing tone and nuance. If you're stressy in the way you communicate, for example, then you'll arouse stress in your listener. Deliver your messages in calm, steady, reassuring ways.

Take time out during the day to manage your own stress. Take long, slow deep breaths. Exhale longer than you inhale. Or, do 5 minutes of progressive muscle relaxation—starting with your feet, tighten the muscles to a count of 3 (“one, two three . . .”), then slowly relax the muscles (“three, two, one . . .”), and work your way to the top of your scalp. Or consider mindfulness meditation.²

² Some suggested books on mindfulness meditation: *Search Inside Yourself* by Chade-Meng Tan; *10% Happier* by Dan Harris; *Mindfulness for Beginners* by Jon Kabat-Zinn. Some suggested apps for mindfulness meditation: Insight Timer; Calm; Headspace; 10% Happier.

You'll be most effective as a leader when you "put your own oxygen mask on first."

The bottom line is that your actions as a leader matter more now than ever. If you take those actions in a way that restores some sense of predictability, gives choices to your people, and supports maintaining connections, you will lower everyone's stress, foster greater well-being, and maintain productivity and performance despite the crisis.

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HOW TO DO HYBRID RIGHT

by

Lynda Gratton
Harvard Business Review

FEATURED ARTICLE

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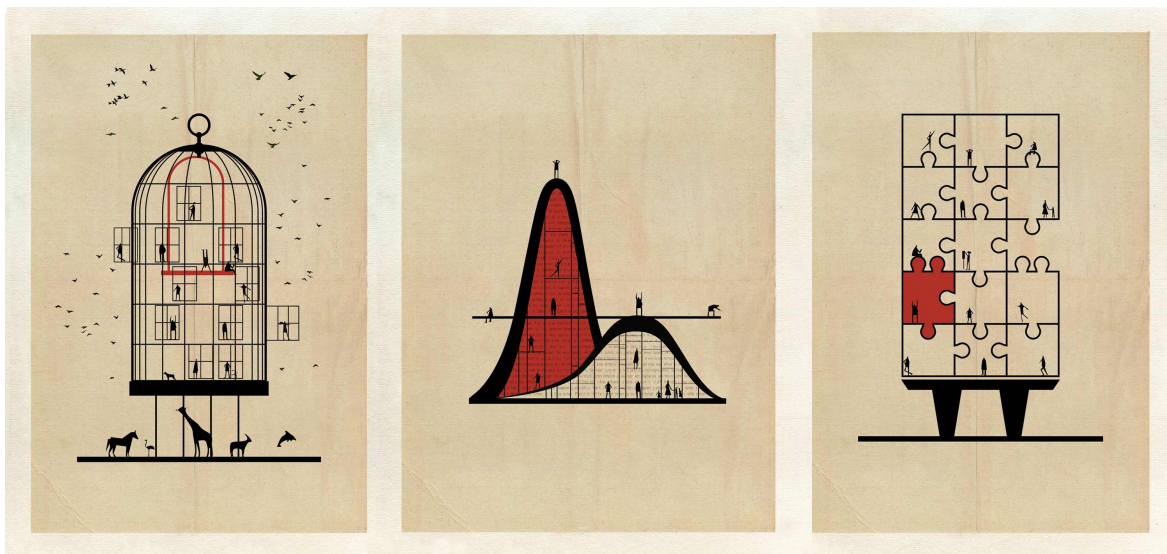
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Managing People

How to Do Hybrid Right

by Lynda Gratton

From the Magazine (May–June 2021)



Federico Babina

Summary. Since the pandemic, companies have adopted the technologies of virtual work remarkably quickly—and employees are seeing the advantages of more flexibility in where and when they work. As leaders recognize what is possible, they are embracing a... [more](#)

By late February 2020, as the implications of Covid-19 were becoming clear, Hiroki Hiramatsu, the head of global HR at Fujitsu, realized that the company was in for a shock.

For years, flexible work arrangements had been on the agenda at Fujitsu, but little had actually changed. Most managers in the Japan offices still prized face-to-face interaction and long office hours—and according to an internal survey conducted not long before, more than 74% of all employees considered the office to be the best place to work. But the pandemic, Hiramatsu foresaw, was about to turn everything upside down.

By the middle of March, the majority of Fujitsu's Japan-based employees—some 80,000—were working from home. And it didn't take long for them to appreciate the advantages of their new flexibility. By May, according to a follow-up survey, only 15% of Fujitsu employees considered the office to be the best place to work. Some 30% said the best place was their homes, and the remaining 55% favored a mix of home and office—a hybrid model.

As employees settled into their new routines, Hiramatsu recognized that something profound was happening. “We are not going back,” he told me this past September. “The two hours many people spend commuting is wasted—we can use that time for education, training, time with our family. We need many ideas about how to make remote work effective. We are embarking on a work-life shift.”

For 10 years, I've led the Future of Work Consortium, which has brought together more than 100 companies from across the world to research future trends, identify current good practice, and learn from emerging experiments. Since the pandemic I've focused our research on the extraordinary impact that Covid-19 is having on working arrangements. As part of that effort, I've talked extensively to executives, many of whom, like Hiramatsu, report that they've detected a silver lining in our collective struggle to adapt to the

pandemic. These executives told me that given the astonishing speed with which companies have adopted the technology of virtual work, and the extent to which most employees don't want to revert to past ways of working, they're seeing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reset work using a hybrid model—one that, if we can get it right, will allow us to make our work lives more purposeful, productive, agile, and flexible.

If leaders and managers want to make this transition successfully, however, they'll need to do something they're not accustomed to doing: design hybrid work arrangements with individual human concerns in mind, not just institutional ones.

The Elements of Hybrid

Figuring out how to do this is far from straightforward. That's because to design hybrid work properly, you have to think about it along two axes: place and time.

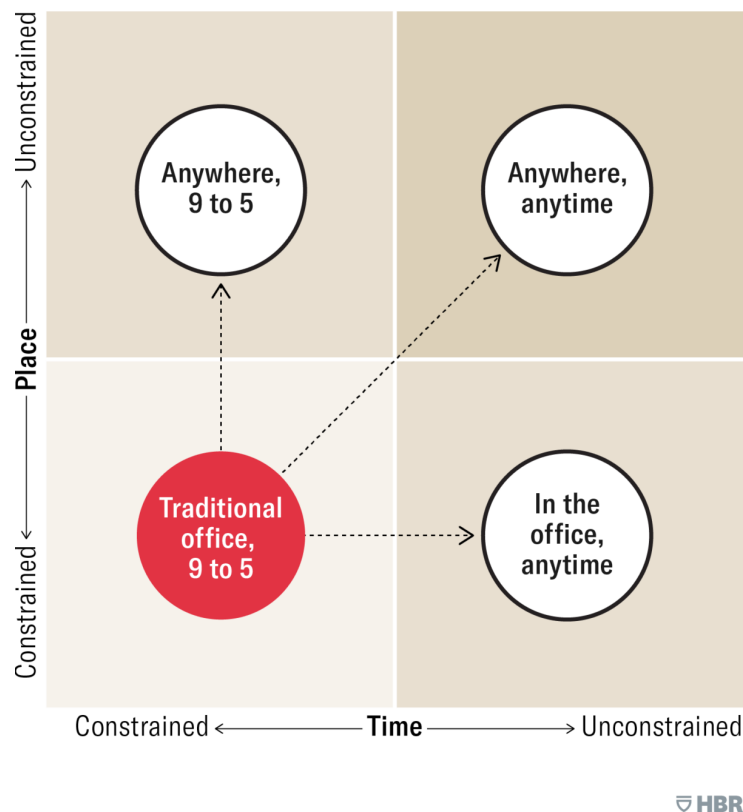
Place is the axis that's getting the most attention at the moment. Like Fujitsu's employees, millions of workers around the world this year have made a sudden shift from being place-constrained (working in the office) to being place-unconstrained (working anywhere). Perhaps less noticed is the shift many have also made along the time axis, from being time-constrained (working synchronously with others) to being time-unconstrained (working asynchronously whenever they choose).

To help managers conceptualize the two-dimensional nature of this problem, I've long used a simple 2×2 matrix that's organized along those axes. Before Covid-19, most companies offered minimal flexibility along both dimensions. This put them in the lower-left quadrant, with employees working in the office during prescribed hours. Some firms had begun to venture into the lower-right quadrant, by allowing more-flexible hours; others were experimenting in the upper-left quadrant, by offering employees more flexibility in where they work, most often from home. Very few

firms, however, were moving directly into the upper-right quadrant, which represents an anywhere, anytime model of working—the hybrid model.

Work Arrangements in Place and Time

Working in the office from 9 to 5 used to be the norm, with companies allowing limited flexibility in where or when employees worked. The pandemic has upended that model, as managers recognize that many employees can work productively anywhere, anytime.



But that's changing. As we emerge from the pandemic, many companies have firmly **set their sights on flexible working arrangements that can significantly boost productivity and employee satisfaction. Making that happen, I've learned in my research, will require that managers consider the challenge from four distinct perspectives: (1) jobs and tasks, (2) employee preferences, (3) projects and workflows, and (4) inclusion and fairness.** Let's look at each in turn.

Jobs and Tasks

When thinking about jobs and tasks, start by understanding **the critical drivers of productivity—energy, focus, coordination, and cooperation—for each.** Next, consider how those drivers will be affected by changes in working arrangements along the axes of time and place.

To illustrate, let's consider a few kinds of jobs and tasks, their key drivers, and the time and place needs that each involves:

Strategic planner. A critical driver of productivity for this role is focus. Planners often need to work undisturbed for stretches of at least three hours in order to, for example, gather market information and develop business plans. The axis that best enables focus is time—specifically, asynchronous time. If planners are freed from the scheduled demands of others, place becomes less critical: They can perform their work either at home or in the office.

Team manager. Here the critical driver of productivity is coordination. Managers need to regularly communicate in-the-moment feedback with team members. They need to engage in conversation and debate, share best practices, and mentor and coach those on their team. The axis most likely to encourage this aspect of productivity is once again time—but in this case, the time needs to be synchronous. If that can be arranged, then place again becomes less critical: Managers and employees can do their coordination tasks together in the office or from home, on platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

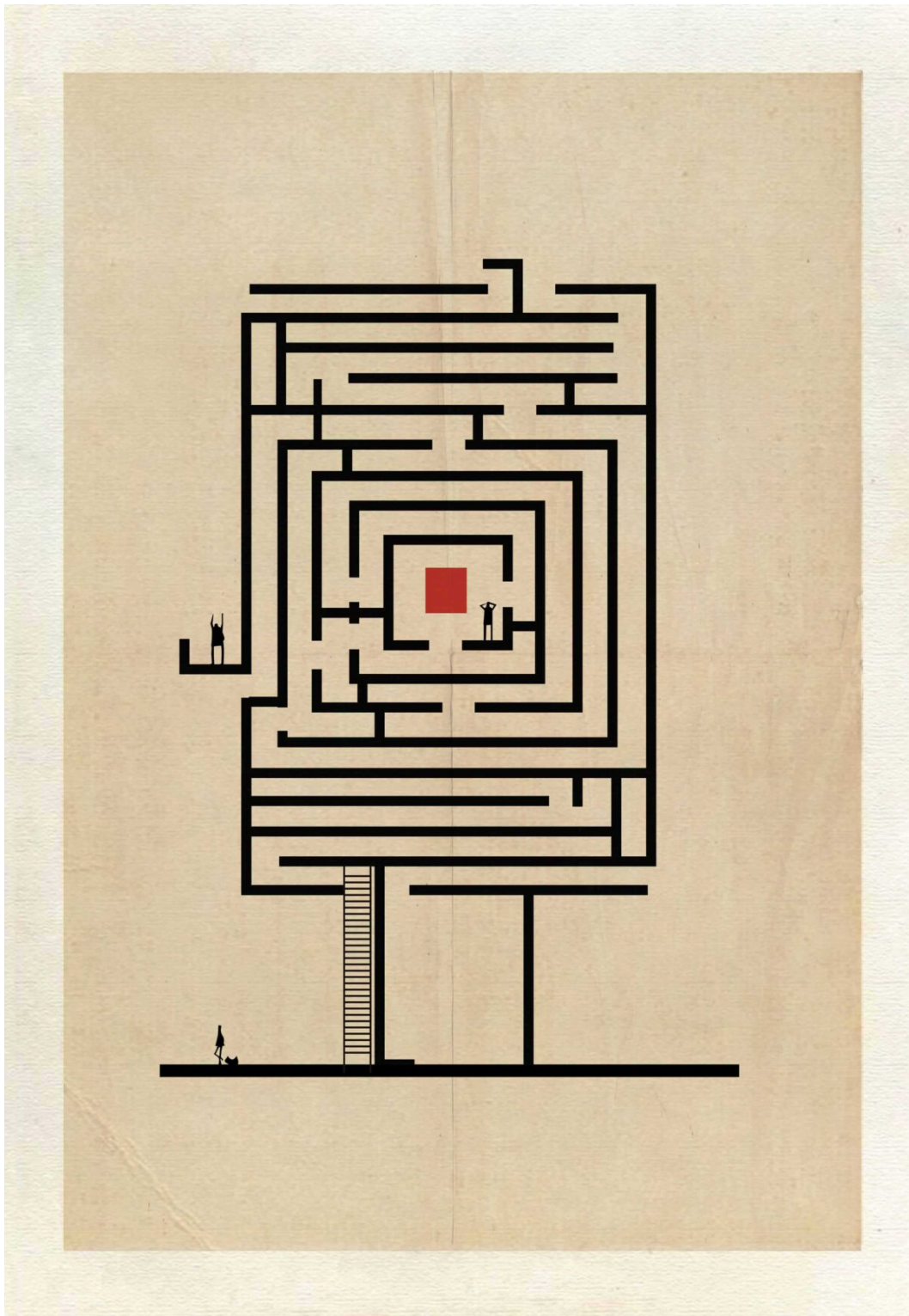
Product innovator. For this role, the critical driver is cooperation. But now the important axis is place. Innovation is stimulated by face-to-face contact with colleagues, associates, and clients, who generate ideas in all sorts of ways: by brainstorming in small groups, bumping into one another in the hallways, striking up conversations between meetings, attending group sessions. This kind of cooperation is

fostered most effectively in a shared location—an office or a creative hub where employees have the chance to get to know one another and socialize. To that end, cooperative tasks must be synchronous and conducted in a shared space. Looking to the future, we can expect that the development of more-sophisticated cooperative technologies will render shared physical space less of an issue.

Marketing manager. Productivity in this role—indeed, in most roles—requires sustained energy. Both time and place can play a role here. As we’ve learned during the pandemic, many people find being at home energizing, because they are freed from the burden of long commutes, they can take time out during the day to exercise and walk, they can eat more healthily, and they can spend more time with their families.

The challenge in designing hybrid work arrangements is not simply to optimize the benefits but also to minimize the downsides and understand the trade-offs. Working from home can boost energy, but it can also be isolating, in a way that hinders cooperation. Working on a synchronous schedule can improve coordination, but it can also introduce constant communications and interruptions that disrupt focus.

To combat these potential downsides, Hiramatsu and his team at Fujitsu have committed to creating an ecosystem of spaces that together make up what they call the borderless office. Depending on employees’ or teams’ specific drivers of productivity, these spaces can take several forms: hubs, which maximize cooperation; satellites, which facilitate coordination; and shared offices, which enable focus.



In his project *Archisolation*, artist, architect, and graphic designer Federico Babina explores the experience of quarantine and isolation and examines our relationship with technology, imagination, and play. Federico Babina

Fujitsu's hubs are designed with cross-functional cooperation and serendipitous encounters in mind. Located in the major cities, they are comfortable and welcoming open-plan spaces, equipped with the advanced technologies necessary for brainstorming, team building,

and the cocreation of new products. When Fujitsu employees want to work creatively with customers or partners, they invite them to a hub.

The company's satellites are spaces designed to facilitate coordination within and between teams that are working on shared projects. They contain meeting spaces where teams can come together, both in person and virtually, supported by secure networks and advanced videoconferencing facilities. These opportunities for coordination, especially face-to-face, address some of the isolation and loneliness that employees may suffer when working from home. Shared offices, which make up most of Fujitsu's ecosystem of spaces, are located all over Japan, often near or in urban or suburban train stations. They can be used as short stopovers when people are traveling to visit customers, or as alternatives to working at home. They are designed to function as quiet spaces that employees can easily get to, thus minimizing commuting time. The productivity aim here is focus. The shared offices are equipped with desks and internet connections, allowing employees to work independently and undisturbed or to attend online meetings or engage in online learning.

[2]

Employee Preferences

Our capacity to operate at peak productivity and performance varies dramatically according to our personal preferences. So in designing hybrid work, consider the preferences of your employees—and enable others to understand and accommodate those preferences.

Imagine, for example, two strategic planners who hold the same job at the same company, with focus as a critical driver of performance. One of them, Jorge, is 40. He and his family live some distance from his office, requiring him to commute an hour each day to and from work. He has a well-equipped home office, and his children are at school during the day—so, not surprisingly, Jorge feels he is most

productive and focused when he can skip the commute and stay home alone to work. He prefers to go into the office only once or twice a week, to meet with his team.

Lillian's situation is very different. She's 28. She lives in the center of town and shares a small apartment with three other people. Because of her living situation, she can't work for long stretches of time at home without being disturbed. To focus, she prefers to be in the office, which is not far from where she lives.

Jorge and Lillian differ in another way: tenure with the company. This, too, affects their preferences. Jorge has been with the firm for eight years and has established a strong network, so time in the office is less crucial for his learning or development. Lillian, on the other hand, is new to her role and is keen to be mentored and coached, activities that demand time with others in the office.

Companies on the hybrid journey are finding ways to take their employees' perspective. Many, like one of the technology companies in the Future of Work Consortium, are providing managers with simple diagnostic survey tools to better understand their teams' personal preferences, work contexts, and key tasks—tools that allow them to learn, for example, where their team members feel most energized, whether they have a well-functioning home office, and what their needs are for cooperation, coordination, and focus.

Equinor, a Norwegian energy company, has recently taken an ingenious approach to understanding its employees: It surveyed them about their preferences and developed nine composite “personas,” with guidelines for hybrid work arrangements tailored to each one. One of the personas is described like this: “Anna” is a sector manager in Oslo who has been with the company for 20 years. She has three teenagers at home and a 40-minute bicycle commute into the office. Before Covid-19, she worked every other week from home, primarily to focus. But with her teenagers now doing remote schooling in the house, she is often distracted when working from home. When the

pandemic is at last behind us, and her kids are back at school, she hopes to spend two days a week at home, doing focused work, and three days in the office, collaborating with her team.

As managers seek to identify the hybrid arrangements that are best for their teams, they consider, for example, how they would respond to an “Anna”: How would her circumstances and preferences affect her capacity to collaborate with others? More broadly, managers consider the implications of coordinating a variety of personas across virtual teams. What are the risks to the safety, security, and effectiveness of operations? How will changes affect collaboration, leadership, and culture? What might the overall effects be when it comes to taxes, compliance, and external reputation?

[3]

Projects and Workflows

To make hybrid a success, you have to consider how work gets done.

An executive who manages Jorge and Lillian, the hypothetical strategic planners mentioned above, must not only consider their needs and preferences but also coordinate the work they do with that of the others on their team—and with other functions and consumers of their work. That kind of coordination was relatively straightforward when team members all worked in the same place at the same time. But in the era of hybrid work it has grown significantly more complex. I’ve observed executives tackling this in two ways.

One is to significantly boost the use of technology to coordinate activities as employees move to more-flexible work arrangements.

Consider the case of Jonas, an Equinor employee. Jonas works as an inspection engineer in the Kollsnes plant, which processes gas from fields in the North Sea. After the pandemic hit, the plant’s managers made it possible for Jonas and his team to carry out some inspection tasks from home, by supplying them with state-of-the-art video and digital tools. These include, for example, robotic devices that move

around the plant recording detailed in-the-moment visual data, which is then streamed back to all the team members for analysis. As a result of these changes, Jonas and his colleagues can now conduct very effective remote field-safety inspections.

Managers at Fujitsu, for their part, use a range of digital tools to categorize and visualize the types of work their teams are performing as they experiment with new arrangements on the axes of time and place. That, in turn, has enabled them to better assess individual and team workloads, analyze remote working conditions, and confirm work projections. Team leaders are also able to understand employee working patterns by studying detailed movement data and examining space utilization and floor density data. This allows Fujitsu managers to design the right arrangements for their workflows and projects.

When thinking about jobs and tasks, consider how key productivity drivers—energy, focus, coordination, and cooperation—will be affected by changes in working arrangements.

Other companies are using this moment as an opportunity to reimagine workflows. New hybrid arrangements should never replicate existing bad practices—as was the case when companies began automating work processes, decades ago. Instead of redesigning their workflows to take advantage of what the new technologies made possible, many companies simply layered them onto existing processes, inadvertently replicating their flaws, idiosyncrasies, and workarounds. It often was only years later, after many painful rounds of reengineering, that companies really began making the most of those new technologies.

Companies designing hybrid arrangements need to work hard to get workflows right the first time. Leaders at one of the retail banks in our Future of Work Consortium analyzed and **reimagined workflows by asking three crucial questions:**

Are any team tasks redundant? When executives at the bank asked themselves that question, they realized that in their new hybrid model they had retained too many traditional meetings. By eliminating some and making others (such as status updates) asynchronous, they boosted productivity.

Can any tasks be automated or reassigned to people outside the team? In many new hybrid arrangements, the bank executives realized, the simple answer was yes. Take the process for opening an account with a new high-net-worth customer. Before Covid-19, everybody assumed that this required face-to-face meetings and client signatures. But now, thanks to the redesigned process introduced during the pandemic, bank managers and customers alike recognize the ease and value of remote sign-up.

Can we reimagine a new purpose for our place of work? Here, too, the answer turned out to be yes. To make their hybrid model work successfully, the bank executives decided to reconfigure their existing office space in ways that would encourage cooperation and creativity, and they invested more in tools to enable people to work effectively and collaboratively at home.

[4]

Inclusion and Fairness

As you develop new hybrid practices and processes, **pay particular attention to questions of inclusion and fairness. This is vitally important. Research tells us that feelings of unfairness in the workplace can hurt productivity, increase burnout, reduce collaboration, and decrease retention.**

In the past, when companies began experimenting with flexible approaches to work, they typically allowed individual managers to drive the process on an ad hoc basis. As a result, different departments and teams were afforded varying degrees of flexibility and freedom, which inevitably gave rise to accusations of unfairness. And many employees, of course, had time- and place-dependent jobs that made hybrid arrangements either impossible or far from optimal. They often felt treated unfairly.

Brit Insurance has done admirable work on inclusion and fairness. As the company's CEO, Matthew Wilson, and its chief engagement officer, Lorraine Denny, began the design and implementation of new ways of working, early in 2020, they made a bold choice. Rather than involving "the usual suspects" in the design process, they randomly chose employees from offices in the United States, Bermuda, and London—amounting to 10% of the workforce, from receptionists to senior underwriters—to participate.

During the following six months, teams of six employees—each drawn from multiple divisions, levels, and generational cohorts—worked together virtually across Brit Insurance. They began with diagnostic tools that helped them profile and share their own working capabilities and preferences. Then they embarked on a series of learning modules designed to create deeper insights into how they could work together to better serve one another's needs and those of the company as a whole. Finally, they engaged in a half-day virtual "hackathon," during which they came up with ideas and pitched them to the CEO. The result was what they called the Brit Playbook, which described some of the new ways they would now all work together.

Selina Millstam, the vice president and head of talent management at Ericsson, a Swedish multinational, recently conducted a similarly inclusive effort. Every new work arrangement, she and the executive team decided, would have to be rooted in the company culture, important aspects of which were "a speak-up environment," "empathy," and "cooperation and collaboration."

Hybrid arrangements should never replicate existing bad practices—as when firms began automating work processes, decades ago.

To ensure that this would be the case, Millstam and her team last year engaged employees in “jams” that were conducted virtually during a 72-hour period and supported by a team of facilitators, who subsequently analyzed the conversational threads. One of these jams, launched in late April 2020, played a crucial role in giving Ericsson employees a platform to talk about how hybrid ways of working during the pandemic might affect the company culture. More than 17,000 people from 132 countries participated in this virtual conversation. Participants made some 28,000 comments, addressing how working during the pandemic had created both challenges (such as lack of social contact) and benefits (such as increased productivity through reduced distraction).

This jam and others like it helped Ericsson’s senior leaders develop a more nuanced understanding of the issues and priorities they need to take into account as they design hybrid work arrangements. Change, they realized, is bound to create feelings of unfairness and inequity, and the best way to address that problem is to ensure that as many employees as possible are involved in the design process. They need to have their voices heard, to hear from others, and to know that the changes being made are not just the result of individual managers’ whims and sensibilities.

...

So how can you propel your firm toward an anywhere, anytime model? Start by identifying key jobs and tasks, determine what the drivers of productivity and performance are for each, and think about the arrangements that would serve them best. Engage employees in

the process, using a combination of surveys, personas, and interviews to understand what they really want and need. This will differ significantly from company to company, so don't take shortcuts. Think expansively and creatively, with an eye toward eliminating duplication and unproductive elements in your current work arrangements. Communicate broadly so that at every stage of your journey everybody understands how hybrid arrangements will enhance rather than deplete their productivity. Train leaders in the management of hybrid teams, and invest in the tools of coordination that will help your teams align their schedules.

Finally, ask yourself whether your new hybrid arrangements, whatever they are, accentuate your company's values and support its culture. Carefully and thoughtfully take stock: In the changes you've made, have you created a foundation for the future that everybody in the company will find engaging, fair, inspiring, and meaningful?

A version of this article appeared in the May–June 2021 issue of *Harvard Business Review*.

Lynda Gratton is a professor of management practice at London Business School and the founder of HSM, the future-of-work research consultancy. Her most recent book, coauthored with Andrew J. Scott, is *The New Long Life: A Framework for Flourishing in a Changing World*.