

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Knowledge Network

Webinar Series

Building Relationships and 'Social Capital' in a Virtual World

Wednesday, 21 April 2021 | 8.30 am to 9.15 am



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What a Year of WFH Has Done to Our Relationships at Work

by Nancy Baym, Jonathan Larson, and Ronnie Martin

March 22, 2021



Alan Powdrill / Getty Images

Microsoft Work Trend Index

How is the nature of work changing?

50 teams/productivity signals

Impact on organisational connections

Foundations of 'social capital'

Social Capital

‘The value that results from trust and connections that have been carefully cultivated between individuals in networks at any level’

‘The secret ingredient that makes some teams better than others’

‘The benefit we derive from knowing people’

Social Capital

Quantity



Type and frequency of interactions we have

A large part built on 'casual collisions'

Their value is functional and relational

Google and Project Aristotle



What makes a high performing team in Google?

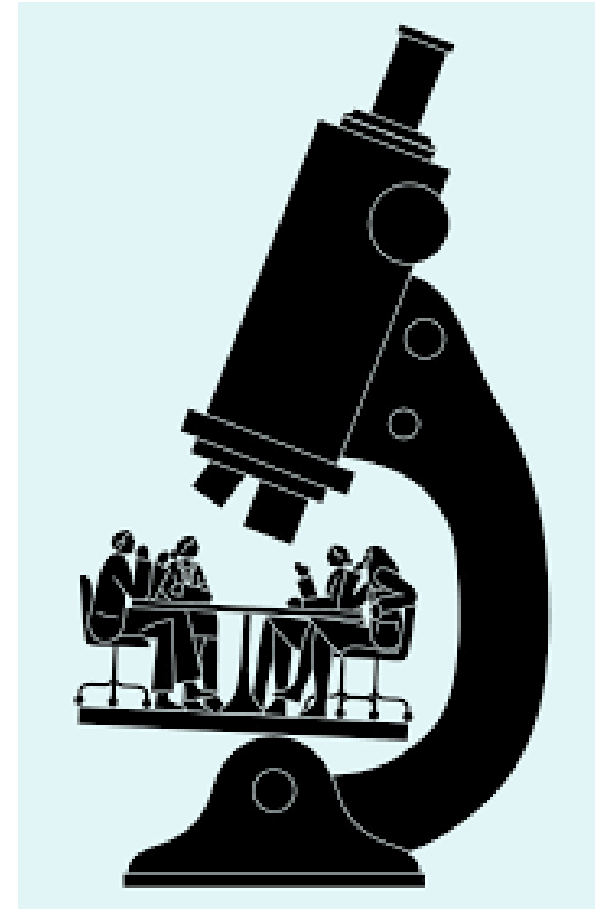
180 teams

Literature review to identify patterns

Google and Project Aristotle

Does it matter if people.....

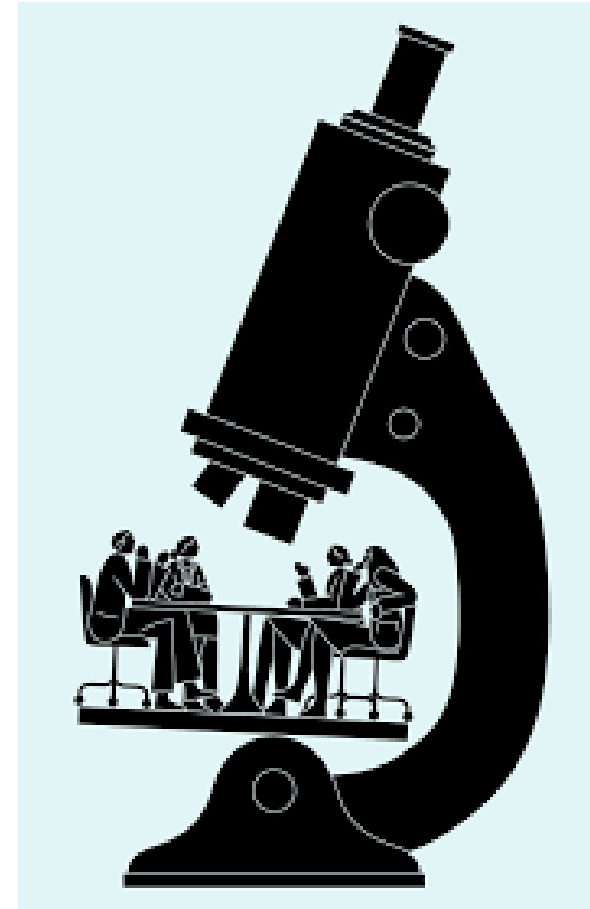
- Are motivated by the same things?
- Socialise with each other?
- Are introvert or extrovert?
- Have similar interests?
- Have similar backgrounds?



Google and Project Aristotle

Group Norms –

Behaviour, or standard, or unwritten rules we adhere to when we gather in a group



MIT

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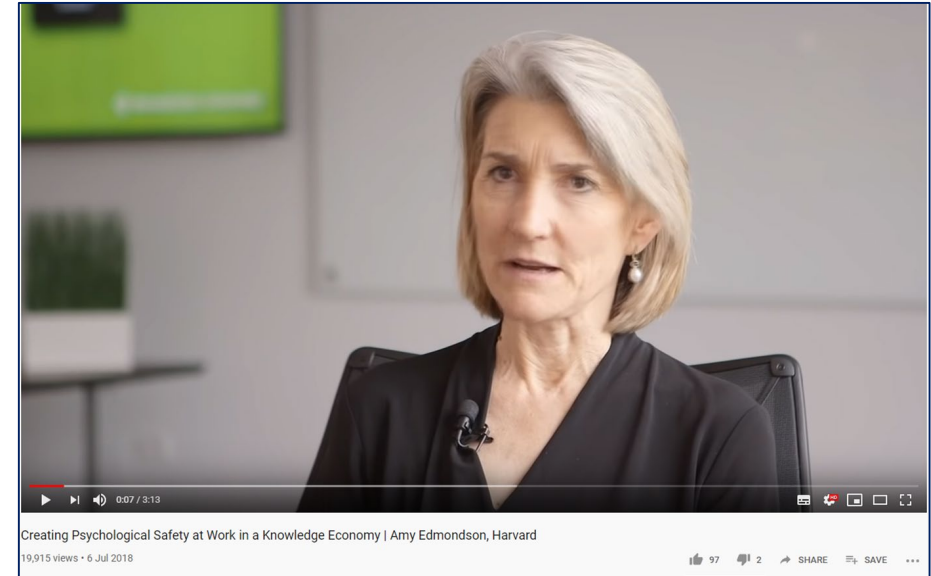
3 Qualities

- ‘Equal distribution of conversational turn taking’
- High average social sensibility
- More women



Psychological Safety

- **People feel comfortable in meetings**
 - ✓ **Contributing**
 - ✓ **Asking about things they don't know**
 - ✓ **Raising difficult issues, concerns and reservations**
 - ✓ **Expressing disagreement and offering dissenting views**
- **Mistakes seen as opportunities for team learning**
- **People give and receive feedback**
- **People question others' intent and purpose**
- **Members feel they/their contribution is valued and supported**
- **People ask for and give help**
- **Team members know 'stuff' about each others' lives**



Social Capital is Finite



Social Capital is like a bank account. If you continually make withdrawals your account dries up; unless it's replenished, you wind up broke.

Back to Microsoft Study

- Impact on organisational connections
- Initial increase connection in immediate networks
- Decreased connection with distant contacts
- People feeling disconnected
- Networks – even close - getting smaller
- Strong workplace relationships matters
 - Productivity
 - Innovation

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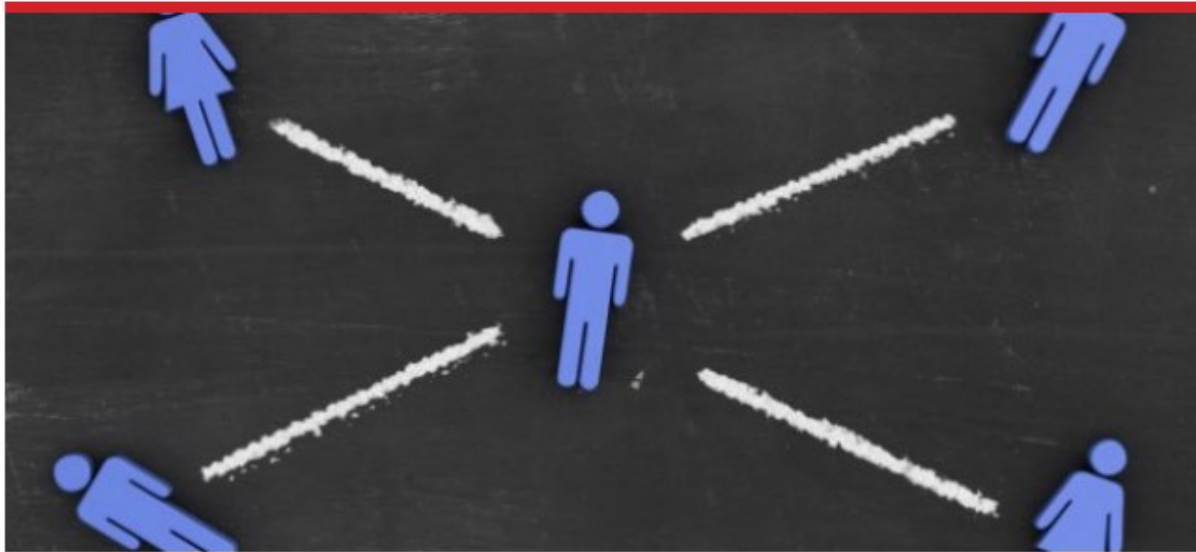
Not all bad news



LEADERSHIP & ORGANISATIONS - BLOG

The Great Covid-Driven Teamwork Divide

Michael Lee, INSEAD Assistant Professor of Organisational Behaviour, and Koen Veltman (INSEAD MBA '09J), Founder, OrganizationBuilders | October 15, 2020



For most teams, the pandemic either brought colleagues closer or drove them increasingly apart. There are three key reasons why.

45% - decreased connection

31% - increased connection

24% - no change

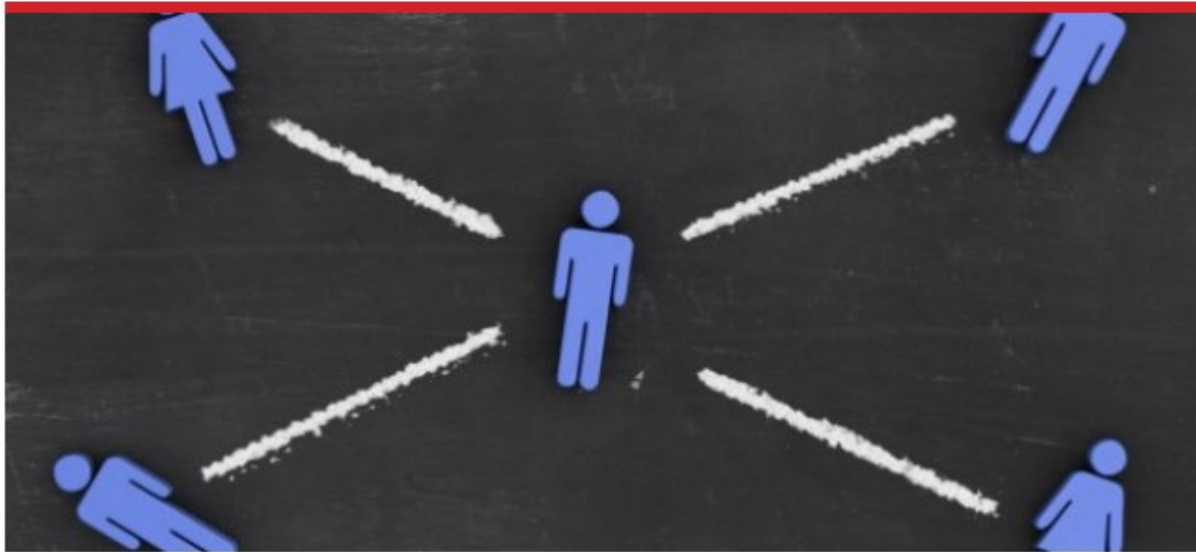
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For most teams, the pandemic either brought colleagues closer or drove them increasingly apart. There are three key reasons why.

- Harnessing the full value of new communication technology
- Designing new rituals for the virtual format
 - ✓ Meeting cadence
 - ✓ Building in social time
 - ✓ Increased formalisation makes communication more intentional
- Leveraging the opportunity to show compassion

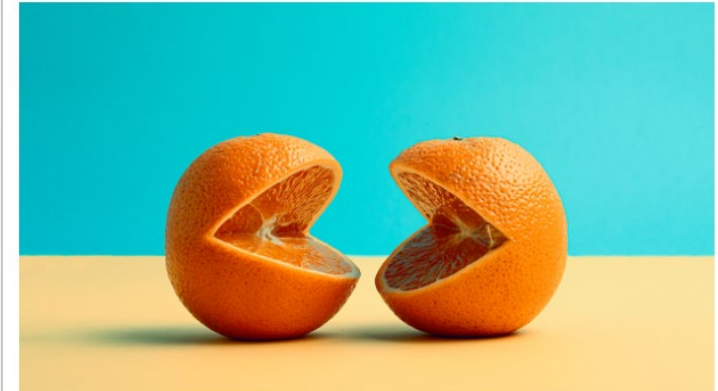
Building Social Capital in a remote world

- Meetings
 - ✓ Make small talk an agenda item
 - ✓ Start meetings with individual check ins
 - ✓ Share a bit about yourself
 - ✓ Introduce agenda items based on opinion
 - ✓ Leave unstructured time at the end of meetings
 - ✓ Make hybrid meetings intentional and inclusive

Make Time for Small Talk in Your Virtual Meetings

by Bob Frisch and Cary Greene

February 18, 2021



Francesco Carta fotografo/ Getty Images

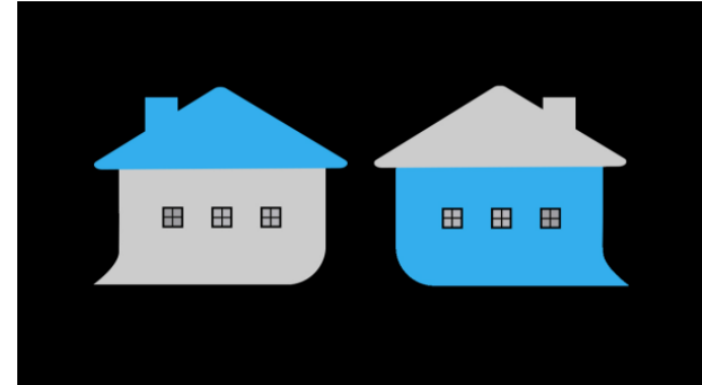
Building Social Capital in a remote world

- Make time to connect
- Encourage new social rituals
- Keep it positive
- Encourage social support
- Emphasise the upside
- Ask yourself 'how connected am I feeling?'

Remote Workers Need Small Talk, Too

by Jessica R. Methot, Allison S. Gabriel, Patrick Downes, and Emily Rosado-Solomon

March 25, 2021



HBR Staff

Summary

- ✓ Remote working impacting on sense of connection
- ✓ Social capital a driver of effective teams
- ✓ Social capital may be running low
- ✓ Some teams have been getting it right
- ✓ It's time to think about reconnecting

