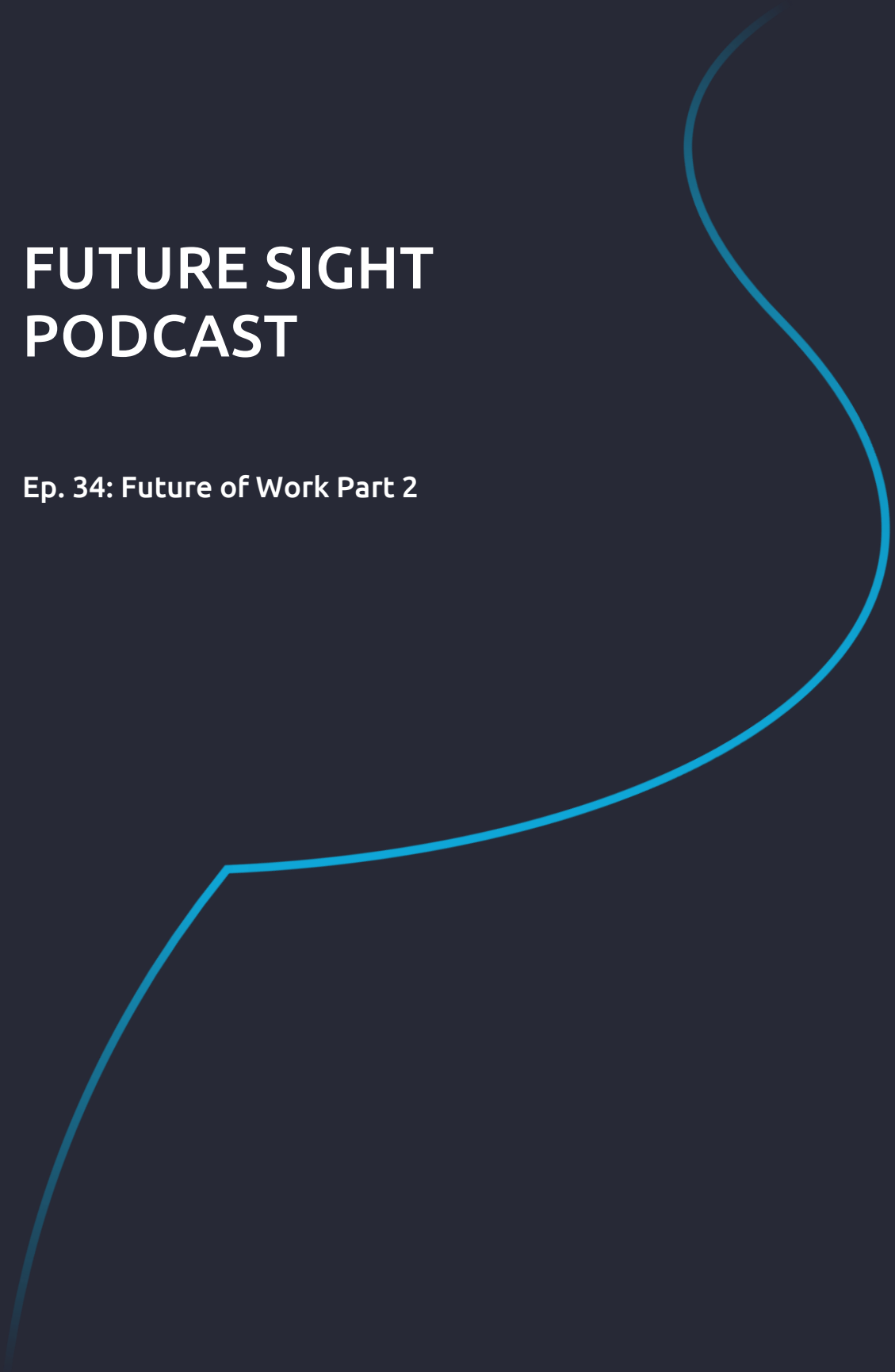


# FUTURE SIGHT PODCAST

Ep. 34: Future of Work Part 2





# Future Sight Podcast by Capgemini Invent

As business and technology move forward at a rapid rate, it has become increasingly important to explore new ways to adapt and grow for the future. This podcast is your guide to that future journey.

Join us as we explore a new topic in business, technology, and transformation. Find out more about the challenges businesses are facing today and what they can expect in the future. Listen to leading industry experts as they break down need-to-know, actionable approaches with strategic insights and provide tangible takeaways.

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# Episode Transcript

**Ollie Judge:** This is Future Sight – a show from Capgemini Invent. I'm Ollie Judge. On this show, we explore new ways for you to adapt and grow for the future in business.

The journey of the workplace into the future has definitely changed over the past couple of years. Now, more and more workplaces are helping to find the new hybrid model of working. What will the hybrid model look like, and how will it benefit the employee and the employer?

It's part two to an episode we did back in November. So, we'd recommend that you go back and [check out that episode too](#). Joining me today to explore this, our experts from Capgemini.

**Claudia Crummenerl:** Hi, my name is [Claudia Crummenerl](#), and I'm a Managing Director for Capgemini Invent.

**Ollie Judge:** ...and from Steelcase.

**Mickaël Locoh:** I'm [Mickaël](#), Vice President for [Steelcase](#) for Southern Europe and Africa.

**Ollie Judge:** What we're talking about today is hybrid working, which we've spoken a lot about on this podcast, in general. But we've come a long way now. We're not in the like first stages of the pandemic when everyone's scrambling about. We're not in that second stage when everyone thought that they were the best expert at hybrid working that had ever existed. We're in the stage where the realities have set in, we know what the challenges are, and we know where hybrid working also doesn't work.

So I'm going to start off with Claudia: what factors make hybrid models so difficult?

**Claudia Crummenerl:** I think there are a few if I have to name them. I think there's one is the human connection is important. And as it's missing through the hybrid working contact or reduced through the hybrid working, it needs an extra effort, which needs our continuous awareness and consciousness to deal with that.

[Leadership is getting harder](#). You have to make sure you involve and include your employees, your team that is remote, and that is on-site. So you have to really take a conscious effort. So it's really about awareness and consciousness in the human connection.

And secondly, I would say there is a bit of a technology challenge because most organizations have now completely boosted their tech investments. But they saw in the past two years that they are not at the best in class that they could be.

So there was a technology challenge that is ongoing. So, what is kind of the best tool to use? What is the most secure tool to use? I think continuously over the last half year or so, it's been about security – how you can ensure connection.

And then lastly, I would say there's policy challenge or there's something around HR policies where people can work from for how much time. Particularly in Europe, there is a bit of conversation going on how much time can you work abroad? So, we've been comparing companies what they allow in terms of remote working policy. Do you have to stay in your apartment where you registered, or can you move somewhere else? So designing those kinds of policies has been a bit of a challenge.

**Ollie Judge:** And Mickaël, you've been designing a lots of policies for Steelcase and putting things into action. Could you tell us a little bit about what Steelcase does and then maybe, just a broader overview of some of the challenges that you guys face so we can use them as an example throughout the episode.

**Mickaël Locoh:** So first, I wanted to confirm that hybrid is indeed hard, and it's hard because it's a wicked problem, if I can say so. It's because it's highly complex and fluid. And what we have learned is that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. And this is also the case within our company, when all this started – starting from Asia and then coming to Europe and then from the US.

And then we all know that different measures were taken by governments during the crisis. And then the going back to normal, it's completely different country by country. We are still living in different countries. In Germany, for example, right now, it's a completely different state than what we have here in France. In France, we are opening things, we have a stop the mask. And I know that where we have our learning innovation center in Munich, there is still I think that it's called a 2G or 3G rule where people have to wear mask also in public spaces. So,



this difference of perception within the country makes that defining a solution within our own company – it's complicated.

And this is why I think one of the first lessons of why hybrid is so hard is that things have moved into something a bit more less physical and you're in a more individual world, and you need to dial up a lot – your emotional connection with your employees. So I have to understand that maybe my colleagues and my peers that are working from different countries are in a completely different state of mind because of their current environment than what I am.

And this is not something that you can see because it's intangible. For me, I can go to a restaurant. I can eat outside without a mask. I can be in the office without a mask. And my peers, my colleagues cannot do that. So how can we make sure that in the world where hybrid will be the norm because hybrid is here to stay, that we all have this in mind while we are working and while we are interacting in a world where we do have global teams, and everyone is interacting with everyone, on a day-to-day basis.

**Ollie Judge:** Nice. So I want to drill into that connection a little bit more. So, we've spoken a lot about technology and the systems that people put in place and all that kind of thing.

But Mickaël, as you've just said, every company is different. It's a very individual and personal thing. Where have we seen the biggest breakdowns in connection? This might be a question for Claudia.

**Claudia Crummenerl:** It's probably one for both of us. I think one of the breakdowns is, certainly is, like on your screen you have this little excerpt of your life. And as much as things can come in or people can come in, so you see in the background, what kind of pictures I have or the dog or the cat is walking in front of the screen. So, there's little glimpses of your life, but basically, you're reduced to this little square where you see each other. And that leaves a lot of things out, which you usually use to understand whether somebody is feeling well or not.

The whole physical, your gestures and everything, I think this makes it more difficult and that's where a little bit of a break in the connection is happening.

And then secondly, I think humans are just herd animals. We need physical interaction, seeing people shaking, hands hugging, or just being with each other. So I think that's the second break point that I would see.

**Ollie Judge:** And Mickaël, where have you seen the biggest breakdowns in connection?

**Mickaël Locoh:** The biggest breakdown in the connection is in fact, the issue is that there is not one single one. For me, this is a very tricky question because the first one that I see, and I will use maybe an example that may resonate with everyone.

When you are entering into a dating relationship. We all have, and everyone has, and we all know some dating apps are very popular nowadays. Things are starting online. But at one point, people want to meet – want to meet each other, because if you want to move to the next steps you, you need to somehow meet. And this is the same with people that have joined a company during the crisis. They have, of course, started to get to know their colleagues, their leader, their boss but they have something that is missing.

So, for the ones that have joined the company during the crisis, it was hard. But then, I will use another example. We all have, I hope families, right? That we are getting along. We are used to see them more or less, right? Depending on how well you go with your family, but you have built some capital, and you meet regularly.

And I think that at one point, when you have something that is not working within your family, with your spouse, with your children, you don't deal with your most difficult issues that you may have with them over a team call or a zoom call. You want to meet them. And this is also the same with your own teams and with your team members or with your colleagues.

If you have a tricky problem to resolve, you cannot deal with that only online. And our studies have mentioned that when it comes to innovation, solving complex problems, people are doing it way faster when they are physically together than when they're not.

So, to answer your question Ollie, I think I see two things. The wicked thing, the trickiest part of this is where there's a breakdown is for new people in a company, but also with people that were of at a company for a long time, but which have very regularly complex issues to solve.

**Ollie Judge:** I really like those examples. And I think it's something that will definitely resonate with a lot of people. So, we're talking about these quite intimate relationships with likening stuff to dating and family. But we're



in corporate settings. What are some of the biggest mistakes we've seen with people trying to solve these issues?

**Claudia Crummenerl:** I think maybe before we start going into that, I think the biggest misconception is that there is a difference between, you know, corporates. Like there has to be two different settings because there's the theory as well. If you only bring your whole self to work, you're going to be productive. And I think there is less of a difference between you as an individual and your family, and in your corporate setting.

And I think that's what the pandemic has brought out. That it is one and the same. You are still, even if you were on a zoom screen, you are still a father, a mother, you're an animal dad or owner or whatever it is. You still have human needs.

And I think this is the interesting part about hybrid work or the paradox thing, maybe, in a way that it has brought out the humanity, the human thing in our relationships even more. And that's where I think maybe there isn't such a big difference in these two settings.

**Mickaël Locoh:** One of the mistakes that I have seen is to think that because hybrid is hard and people are social animals, as we just highlighted, is to think that the office should be the place where people will only socialize. Which is true, but it's not the only role of the office. In fact, the office should be the place where people can feel the culture of a company. Because we are working for a company. So, this is a place where we should relate to, we should have a sense of belonging.

So, turning offices into nightclubs is not the solution, but it's what people thought we should do right. First, remove all the desk. We remove everything. We put only meeting rooms. We put places where people can be together. Yes, but it's only just one piece.

The second biggest mistake was to think that because, indeed in the hybrid work, the areas where people could work could be from home for alternate location. There was also a financial approach to say, I can save a lot of cost because real estate is one of the biggest costs that the company have. And so people jumped into conclusion. The office is there – we were reduced by a number of square meters by 50%. Without having thought about all the consequences.

Of course, changes needs to be made. But how and in which direction? This needs to have a bit more thought than just what has been shared in the first weeks or months after the crisis began. And also now. And we have a lot of companies that have changed their mind completely in how to approach this new ways of working.

**Claudia Crummenerl:** I think I can fully agree to your last point. I think people have been very quick in seeing financial gains out of the pandemic. Whether it was the closure of the real estate or the office, but also, I think they've been tempted by the productivity gains that they have been calculated in the first year of the pandemic.

So I think, I've read a lot of articles and we have had our own study around the productivity gains because people don't have commuting times. The time is reduced where they have chats or coffee breaks and things like that. So they appeared more productive.

But I think what we have seen as well is that the well-being or burnout as the downside of that productivity really has played a role. So, I think this jumping into the business case has been a little bit of a misconception or too quick to jump. I think we need to be more cautious around where to really have that kind of business case. Because not everything is just about cost savings, productivity gains, and so forth.

[It does have this human side, the social side to it](#), and we need to make sure that we have healthy employees. We have, we have connection to the culture so that we can retain them. There's loyalty. There's an experience. There's a feeling to an organization. I think that's one. And I want to add another mistake. I think maybe not a mistake, but more challenge.

I think we've been very fast in putting a lot of task and pressure to the leaders. But haven't really thought about, are they enabled to do that job? Whether this is in dealing with personal situations of employees or whether that is around really bridging the gap through remote and on-site interaction or how to maintain the business.

I think there are a lot of tasks that have been pushed to the leader where we have been maybe missing a little bit the support from an HR and organization-side to really make sure that they know how to do that.



**Ollie Judge:** There were two things in there that I really wanted to unpack. The first one that I want to have a little bit of a think about is: are there now new unrealistic expectations for productivity based on how we were all working from home last year. But then when you go back into the office, you can't work that way.

So, for example, if I've been working at home, I can put my headphones on, like really focus in. Yeah, I might have a few zoom calls during the day, but like you said, I don't have my commute and all that kind of stuff. So my productivity obviously goes up. But the minute I go get on the train, I go into an office, someone taps me on the back, all that kind of stuff.

But then I get to the end of that day, and I haven't done the same amount, but my manager is on my back because I haven't been as productive as I usually would. Even though that usual is now different. Is that a phenomenon that we've seen across the board – that now employees are now under more pressure with a hybrid working system than they could have been, if they were just attending the office?

**Claudia Crummenerl:** I think we have to figure out what this new system is. I have to smile when you're saying this because I had myself the feeling or the emotion, what it was like going back to a workshop or to an office.

Actually, it was last June. The first time we were holding a leadership meeting. And as much as it was nice to see the people that I was in the team with, I was completely frustrated the whole day of how much more I could have achieved in terms of what to do during the day.

And I think the first half hour, which we just used to chit chat, to get to know each other, to have a conversation around the objectives as with my arms and feet, trying to like, let's do something because that's how you're wired the year and a half before that you sit in your computer, and you go all energy into your tasks.

So, I think we have to reestablish what that model is and how to do what task, where. And as Mickaël was saying, I think the office is there to experience the culture. So, things are going to be slower or are going to be different than if you sit at home. But this consciousness around switching the work mode, I think is needed.

**Mickaël Locoh:** And there is one thing that we need to be careful also is that working means different things for each one of us. And working is not just writing an email, producing an article. For example, this is part of my work as a leader, I need to take time to understand what people in our company have in mind. What they are thinking about.

Having a lunch with one of my colleagues, this is work. And people may think, yeah, I'm not that productive. But this may be a turning point for a retention of a key talent of our company. And we need to invest time into this.

When we think about productivity, we are wired to think about maybe a tailored model. Which is not really the only way of working and being productive. So we have different ways. Of course, everyone has a different job, so we have different KPIs and the things that we need to do in our days, but work is not just about production. It's also about making sure that we help, and we bring the company in the right direction. So, this is also a different way of looking at this.

**Ollie Judge:** I think that's a good point to go back to something that Claudia was talking about, which was it not just being on the leadership. It's also, you know, middle management, project managers, team leaders that maybe they need to shift away from being what's traditionally known as a manager. And this might be a bit cliché, but maybe a bit closer to a coach and finding ways to encourage. And as Mickaël was talking about it earlier, like actually emotionally connect with some of the people that they work with.

Obviously, you don't want to become a therapist to your employees or your team members, but you still want to be able to connect with them maybe in a bit of a different way, because you do have that a bigger window into their lives.

How do we help people that may, especially the older generation, that aren't so used to communicating over technology and all that kind of stuff? How do we move them from just being, you know, your standard, middle manager, that's trying to squeeze every ounce of profit and productivity out of a team to something that's a bit more understanding of the ebbs and flows of people's lives and helping them realize that yeah, maybe they might be able to get a bit more productivity out of their employees because they're actually encouraging them rather than planning to the nth degree?

Claudia, this might be one for you.



**Mickaël Locoh:** Just before Claudia answers, I just want to highlight one thing. I think it's not a generation thing. You mentioned maybe the highest, it's not a generation thing. The leadership trait that everyone has in him himself or herself, but yes, just wanted to highlight that, but I will let you, Claudia, answer.

**Claudia Crummenerl:** I would have said something similar. Cause I don't think it's a generational thing either. And I think it's maybe a rejuvenation of some of the leadership concepts that we had in the past. So, I think over the last 20 years, a lot of leadership was dominated by management, by objectives. You have to rationalize, delegation, you have to fulfill certain tasks.

But I think the last couple of years, and in the pandemic in particular, has I think brought back values like care or, or [trust](#), or really establishing a relationship, empathy. Those skills has brought it back. Because that's what was the crucial tasks of a leader. And you said it's a fine line to not become people's therapist.

On the one side, I must say, I think it's actually normal to listen to your teams' or to your colleagues' problems. Because that's what is part of leadership – that may be blocking them from actually being productive or being able to do their job or even listen to their family situation.

So I had a lot of team members in Germany who had struggles with childcare. And that's a real problem because obviously you need to juggle all these tasks, right? You have your kid, that's maybe two years old next to you, and have to do video calls and phone calls. And God forbid that the kid has a disease or is sick or something.

So that stuff you need to listen to, and you need to help and take care of it. That's also for me, part of leadership. And that's what I think is part of values that your team and your peers will like or will be attracted to. I think this is what makes a true team.

**Ollie Judge:** So, staying on that connection line and Mickaël something that you picked up on, in the challenges, was that in different regions, there are different ways of working. There are different expectations on your working life and how things work. Both culturally, but also, systemically. Obviously, you've done some work for Steelcase globally, and you've been working with multiple regions.

How do you find similarities and how do you begin to build systems around the diversity in those systems?

**Mickaël Locoh:** You have a couple of things that you need to take into consideration when you deep dive into this topic. You have, of course, the culture of the company, but then also the culture of the country. Let me give you one specific example.

For example, I'm working with a lot of companies within Africa. And when you talk to them about working from home, this is perceived completely differently than what we can see here, for example, in countries like in Western Europe, France, UK, Germany. Working from home in Africa, or I should say not leaving in the morning to go into the office, is from a social perspective, not well-accepted in Africa. Because this is a sign that maybe you are not working.

And those stereotypes are so deep into the culture that people prefer to pretend to go to work, even if they don't have work sometime so that they feel, I would say more accepted. So those are subtle differences, but those are differences. And, of course, in terms of infrastructure, I think that you have differences that you need to take into consideration in terms of technology, equipment depending on where you live.

You don't need to go as far as Africa, but in some areas, for example, I do live in France, in Paris. So, you have here high-speed bandwidth internet. But in some areas in the middle of France, you don't have those level of connection. So when you have to do a remote working session, you cannot do it from home. You need to go into an office or to an alternate location, which may bring different challenges than when you have internet.

So you have to take those small little differences into your strategy about defining what hybrid means for your company. People in New York do not have the same challenges of commuting and the places that they live in than people that are living in the area of Massachusetts or in Michigan. It's not the same spaces.

And we do have that in all the countries that we are living in – we have those differences. And this is things that we need also to take into consideration when we're putting together a hybrid work strategy or when we're trying to define what does it mean for our colleagues and employees?

**Claudia Crummenerl:** I would like to add, I think, despite the differences is that you highlighted Mickaël, I think what I thought was interesting is that the human connection. So being social animals, is the same across all countries and across all cultures.



It may be slightly different around what kind of interaction you need. But I have teams in India and Australia and the US – they all need that interaction and the social connection. So that's what people were craving for. And then the context you're in, whether it's like your country's culture, your company culture, and then maybe even, politics does a big thing.

Mickaël, you were mentioning before, like the COVID regulations in the countries are very different. And that's why the perception of how you can meet or interact are very different. Or whether you can go back to the office or not are very different. That's all making a difference, but this need for social interaction is the same.

**Ollie Judge:** A bit of a question on that. If you've got all these different expectations within different nations – if you've got an international company, how do you stop one specific country's way of doing things overriding every other country?

So, if you, for instance, had a company that was headquartered in France, how do you stop the French way of doing things – putting too much pressure on places that aren't France? And like you said, Mickaël, that don't have the infrastructure that you might have? How'd you create balance there?

**Mickaël Locoh:** This is where you need to have very strongly leadership pillars. And this all starts with the leadership at the highest level, but also in mid manager or mid leadership. You need to have very strong pillars and some traits that may be...

We say that one of our key pillar is about trust, right? We are trust-based company, and we want to make sure that this trait is across all our locations, right? And when you have this, of course you need to follow the local rules and regulation, but this doesn't mean when you need to trust your teams, this has some very clear and tangible impacts and outcomes also on the way you need to manage things.

So, you need to have clear common leadership pillars on which everyone can relate to and then implying themselves in and tweak them into their culture and tune their local regulation and rules. But then you can always highlight, yeah, but this is part of us.

We have six, for example, in our company that we relate to, and this is helping us to also make the right choices as leaders. So this is an example that I could give.

**Ollie Judge:** Could you go into those pillars? Can you let us know what people on your team really focused into?

**Mickaël Locoh:** Yeah.

One of those is, for example, cultivate resilience. Cultivate resilience means we need to make sure that despite what our teams or what we're going through, we need to make sure that we can help nurture the team to go back at the level where they used to be before or enable us to move forward.

One of other of our other pillars is around making sure that we built a strong team. By that, we mean, by strong, we mean retain the talents that we have, hire the right ones that are also fit with our company values.

And yeah, all of those pillars are helping us to create a sense of unity between leadership, but also within our company. And this is why also I want to come back to what Claudia was mentioning – leadership needs to be trained, need to understand that things have changed and needs to evolve.

And this is why also you cannot do leadership only remote. This is my personal opinion. You cannot be a leader by just being remote. Otherwise, you become a manager because if you have back-to-back teams, zoom, or whatever, WebEx calls, you will start to manage, in fact. You're not leading, you're not coaching.

What we're doing when this is stopping, we will stop this recording and we will move to something else. You're losing those in-between chit-chats and all those types of things. So I don't believe in the just remote leadership.

**Ollie Judge:** I think that that's a very sensible thing to latch onto that a lot of having an emotional connection with someone is being in the same room and actually understanding what their behaviors are like. And it's very tricky to figure out who someone is when all you've done is talked to them on the other side of a screen.

In this space, we talk about culture a lot. And it's a word that's thrown around and means many things in this industry. But it does sound like it's a cultural layer that sits across everything from management, leadership, human resources, even hiring could probably fit under this, that your pillars essentially define a new way of thinking about things that adds a few questions when you're about to do anything.





Much of an employee's experience is based on culture. How do we build that culture and help people get nurtured into that culture on their way into a company, or if they're new to what's going on? Is it a bit of stuff in the office? Is it then a bit of remote? I know that for instance, my fiancé started a job during a pandemic, and she did everything through e-learning, which she hated.

So what's the best approach here? How do you get people ingrained in these new coaches? Both from a new starter, but also someone that's maybe been there a while that you've got to re-train into thinking a little bit differently.

**Claudia Crummenerl:** I think, you know, culture is a tricky thing because a lot of the things in culture are intangible. There is a few things that are written down or like values or leadership principles. There's some things that have been put into writing. However, a lot of the culture you experienced in the social interaction – intangible. Those are unwritten rules. Those are unwritten things, or those are experiences you have when being in the office, being with your colleagues, being in the job.

For example, for consulting. A lot of the experienced consultants want when they join is around traveling, is around staying in nice hotels from time to time, is around being at client site, interacting with them – that is all going to change.

So how are you going to change this experience? What consulting means to people? And what can a new experience be that takes over this hype or this adrenaline push that people used to have? So this is a very small example about how culture influences how people feel as part of the organization.

And so, when you talk about onboarding; this was your example, Ollie. What you have to think about is what do you want to convey to your new hires and that is how you choose the format – how you choose what kind of content to do where.

So, e-learning may not be the perfect solution if you want to convey social interaction or certain values or associate; you might have to choose different formats in doing that. So we designed, for example, an onboarding process for 4,000 employees in North America. And a lot of that, I would say 60, 70% was also e-learning. So doing things online by yourself, but the other 30 to 40% was interaction with leaders.

So being on a zoom call at least to interact, ask questions but that's a different experience than if you sit alone in front of your computer and just watch a video or answer questions online. So you have to try to think about what kind of culture you want to convey, and that's how you choose content and channel.

**Ollie Judge:** It makes a lot of sense to me. Mickaël, did you have anything to add there?

**Mickaël Locoh:** Yeah, no, I agree to everything what Claudia just mentioned. I want to share... do you know the monkey story, about the three monkeys?

**Ollie Judge:** Let's do a story time – do you want to tell us about the monkey story?

**Mickaël Locoh:** This is about the culture. And this is an experiment that has been done between three monkeys were put in a cage. And every time they were given a banana and they love bananas. They wanted to eat that, but every time they were given a banana, they were giving electroshock.

So after a couple of shocks, of course, when you put the banana, none of the three monkeys were trying to grab it and to eat it. Then you take one monkey out and you put a new monkey into the cage, and then you give them a banana. What will happen is that the new monkey will try to grab and eat the banana.

And all the time, the two other monkey, they will try to stop him, right? Because they know that the electroshock will come. And at one point the new monkey will stop trying to grab the banana. Then you remove another one and then you repeat the experience, and then you remove the last one and the same thing happened.

And then after all those changes, you put a banana, you have none of the monkey that is trying to grab it, but none of them have ever experienced electroshock. And this is what we mean with culture. Sometimes we do things, and we don't know where it's coming from. This is something that we have learned by experience.

This is something that we have been taught. And we all have this in our companies electroshock-banana moment that we don't know, that on a good thing and bad things. And the challenge is for new joiners is how do we make sure that they can learn from it? They can also unlearn things that needs to be unlearned, but they can also learn those.



And this is why also we need to build those moments, where those in-betweens and things can be shared. And can be learned and taught. So as companies have to really think about how can we build experiences so that everyone can learn. This is a negative example but there are also some positive things that can be learned in the same way.

**Claudia Crummenerl:** But as a really good example of how deeply rooted culture is and how, if you want to address it, how much you have to consider how to do that. Or consider of what are these unwritten rules that you might have in an organization because that's...you can't display that through a zoom call.

**Ollie Judge:** So I want to take this one step further and maybe let's get into some of, the spiky things that happen when you try to implement hybrid working models.

So, obviously we want everyone to be happy, and change. What if you have someone that's so entrenched that they say, this is how I've always done it. I'm not going to change. I'm not going to take on this hybrid model. It's not how I think. I'm not productive doing this. What's your response to those kinds of people?

**Claudia Crummenerl:** I mean, first of all that's the beauty of this hybrid model. It's the employee's choice. So, we are very much in an employee-driven labor market. And so if somebody's saying I want to work from the office because I have that's how I've always done it. That's where I'm more productive. That's why I want to separate my work and my home completely, they can. So it's their choice.

And I think that's what organizations have to respect. Now it's a tricky bit, like you suggested only in saying, like how, how can you get them to learn some of the lessons and take the benefits of this hybrid working model? That's really around the team dynamics. So, I think that if we're talking about a leader who says, well, I've always been in the office, I want everybody in my team to be in the office. It's really this leadership enablement, this leadership conversation that needs to happen to allow people to decide for themselves where they can be most productive for what kind of task.

He or she might be right to enforce people coming to the office, let's say once a week, in order to make sure you have that team connection or that collaboration or that innovation, that creativity that is needed for your teamwork.

We had the debate with some engineering teams for one of our clients. So where do you, how do you need to organize teamwork in an engineering product development team in order to be most productive? So it's number one, it is their choice is one size fits one, I would say. And the other one is really around leadership enabling and really giving some rituals, some support on how to organize effective teamwork.

**Mickaël Locoh:** And this is where also your company culture is very important. Because as Claudia mentioned, I think that the beauty of hybrid is that you cannot go along in your company without embracing hybrid model, I do feel. And this is allowing to give choice and control to all employees. So, this is different. But if you have your own culture, then at least you need to have people that are matching with your culture. And it's okay also that some people are not fitting into your company culture, and that's okay. And if you can decide that... I will go very extreme, right now.

You can say everyone can work from everywhere, worldwide. And this is how we do; we don't need to be in the office. But some people can say, this is not who I am. I want to be in an office. I want to be behind the desk, and I want to work. So if you feel that your own employee is not in sync with your home, it's okay.

So this is why also having a very strong company culture and be explicit about it can help you also to attract the right people, but also maybe help other people to see this is not the company for me anymore, or things have changed, and I need to do something else. It's not that they are good or bad or that they're not productive but there is not a fit anymore.

And I say always to my teams, I prefer to have people that are engaged, fitting with a company culture than having people that are not in sync because they will be the one counterproductive. They will be the one slowing things down. And this is in the hybrid world, this is even more complicated to deal with those people than it used to be before.

**Claudia Crummenerl:** And most of the times, these people, these employees are also not happy. They're frustrated. So, they're getting cynical; they're being frustrated. So it's, it's about having that open conversation. Is there a fit, or no? And if there's none helping maybe also to find other work, which may be more suitable.



**Ollie Judge:** That makes a lot of sense. And I think it's that important cultural staple to make it known that yeah, this is a good way of doing things. It might not be your way of doing things, but the team is trying to do this and awareness together. What I'd like to land on now when you're getting going with this kind of stuff, I think every company in the world right now has some form of hybrid work.

But if someone was looking to, really start honing in, really start to take it seriously. Obviously, offices have now opened a bit more, but things are still in a state of flux. People aren't quite sure what the right etiquette is and all that kind of stuff. What would you say is the most important things for leadership to really get down now?

**Mickaël Locoh:** So here, maybe it seemed that we need to start by making sure that everyone has a good experience from wherever. And a good experience in the sense that there is a good perception of what is happening on both sides of the camera. So maybe good images we need, and people need to sync maybe.

And this is when I talk about very concretely. Their offices, more like a movies director, right? Considering lighting, camera, audio experience, content that they want to share. And really thinking about what does it mean to collaborate in a hybrid way. And here, I want to highlight three key ideas.

The first one is making sure that there is inclusion despite the location, and that people need to, and things needs to be designed in this way. The second thing, if you want to thrive in a hybrid collaboration is engagement. So design experiences across a range of settings maybe that are done for human and engaging.

And then the third thing is ease, right? Making to have the right tools and to have an intuitive, virtual and physical experiences. So if you really want to go in a direction of making things very concrete, think about how to make hybrid collaboration work. And for this, three key pillars – equity, engagement, and ease.

**Claudia Crummenerl:** The things you mentioned – I totally agree. Particularly as for me, this would be the people aspect, right? So that you have inclusion, you have ease in use to how to make it [the people-centric, human-centric experience work](#). I think there's also a bit of a performance element.

So what I mean, but with that is you need the KPIs, the performance processes of your organization to match the kind of work culture you're trying to create. So, if we're saying we're going to hybrid, that kind of people-centric leadership, that hybrid process design needs to be rewarded and needs to be fostered through your performance management.

And the third one, I think you have it in your equity, ease. And I forgot what the third one was, engagement. Yes. You have it in there. I think it's technology-enabled, right? So all of this is only possible if you continue to invest and continue to look at technology, right? Whether this is the office space, people want to be able to connect through the office. They want to be able to dial into video conferences, maybe some immersive technology, immersive experiences. So this continuous investment into technology is going to be important.

**Ollie Judge:** Did you want to expand on your three things, Mickaël? And unpack what they are?

**Mickaël Locoh:** So, when I was talking about equity one of the things that are key is definitely, we call that to... the challenge is to eliminate the gap that people have when they're not co-located. That it's exactly the same experience that we have currently. How do we make sure that we are all at the same level, that there is not one of us that is taking more delight, if I can say.

When everyone is on behind his own computer, it's easy. When you have 10 people in a room and one people outside, things may be a failed as an unbalanced. So how can we make sure that also the people, the team members that are not on stage can feel that they are on stage, right? When they're not.

So, this is one of the things that is important. About the engagement is also make sure that's I don't know who and maybe people that are listening to this podcast, right? When we had some virtual meetings who was also at the same time doing some emails or reading something else.

So we need to look at tricks and also settings that are making sure that people continue to be engaged. So it might be from the tools as Claudia was mentioning. The tools, I think that we never had so much new tools at our disposal. We need to look at the right one that are engaging to people, make things more interactive and also use the right platforms to make it happen.

And then the ease, of course, enabling seamless transitions between the different things when you are using a tool, then you're moving to a camera. And so this is one of the key element. And I think that we're still learning



and we're not there yet. How many presentations have we seen where people are on mute and then the things that the screen is not sharing?

And so, all this needs to be worked on. And I think that we see more and more progress. And I think that investing in those platforms, putting money and looking and deep diving into the solution will be key in the future; to provide the right ease of use for each one of us.

**Ollie Judge:** I actually like that as a nice sort of finishing note. However, I do have my favorite question though that I would like to ask on every episode, which is we have all been in a lot of meetings. I have recorded a lot of shows around hybrid working, and Claudia is doing some hybrid working – I will start with Mickaël, what's the worst bit of advice or the worst thing you hear people say about hybrid working when you are in meetings?

**Mickaël Locoh:** It's when I hear leaders say, we just have to ask people to do this or to come back to the office or to stay remote or to do this. We just have to ask – it's a people thing. It's hard, it's complicated. It's not like if you ask someone to do something, he may not be able and willing to do that. So, it's a transformation. That's the worst thing that I have had heard.

Also, the second thing might be, we will, and I know that this is due to the revelation that we have in many countries. But when I hear people say, hybrid will be two days at home and three days in the office. This is not how we work. This is not how our schedules are made. And I can assure you that, we don't have two days of work from home type of work and three days, every time in the year. So, this is not working, and I will not recommend to do that.

I know that from a legislation perspective this might be different, but we not here to talk about legislation. And maybe legislation needs to be adapted to be a bit more flexible in this sense. So, this is the two things I wanted to share. It's not easy, so never say you just have to ask, and people will do. And then don't try to put a specific timeframe around work from home, work from an office, or work from some place. This will not work.

**Ollie Judge:** I've to agree, you've fairly put your points there. Claudia, what's the worst and the nice thing you hear around this stuff and what do you wish people would stop bringing up?

**Claudia Crummenerl:** It's actually quite similar to Mickaël's second point. I think people are trying to look for a standard, which is natural because this is what HR has been based on – efficiency and standards to manage employees in the most cost-effective way. But I think, that doesn't work anymore. That's not suitable anymore. Like Mickaël said, there's no, I don't know, it's Mondays, Tuesdays you have to be in office. Or every other day, you have to be at home. So, this standard doesn't exist.

And that's what makes it hard, but also, I think, that's what makes it fun. Because that allows you to redefine it yourself. Everybody can just define for themselves what is the best work environment that they want to be in. And so, this for me, to turn this into a positive direction your question, I would hope that employees and leaders at the same time, allow themselves a little bit... that freedom to decide for themselves of what's going to be the best work situation that I need. For me, for my family, for my home environment, for the work that I do, within the company that I am in.

So, I think this freedom, this independence of deciding that, is key.

**Ollie Judge:** From today's discussion that the hybrid model is definitely here to stay. But with factors such as employee experience, cultural differences, and possibly teared workforce, how businesses adapt to this new reality is yet undecided. One thing is for certain though – that the future of the workplace is changing before our eyes.

Thanks to both today's guests, Claudia, and Mickaël. If you enjoyed this episode, don't forget to subscribe on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts. This has been Future Sight, a show from Capgemini Invent. Goodbye!

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