REALITIES REMIXED

People · Culture · Industry · Tech

RR004

The trust gap with Dr. Tim Currie, Author

Capgemini

RR004

The trust gap with Dr. Tim Currie, Author

Disclaimer: Please be aware that this transcript from the Realities Remixed podcast has been automatically generated, so errors may occur.

It's got a bit of rig to it. like Dr. Tiff. thing is if you make people call you doctor, they expect you to be able to help them or fix things. Oh, have you ever done that? Is there a doctor on the plane? stop them with APA formatting and they expect you to have some utility. It's connected to the doctor thing. Zero. Is there a doctor on board? Who needs changed? Anyone need organizational change? Anyone having trouble innovating? (00:36.78)

I'm Dave Chapman. I'm Esmee van de Giessen. I'm Rob Kernahan, and this is Realities Remixed, an original podcast from Capgemini. And this week we are going to look into the truth of remote working, different leadership styles and the gaps that may exist. Later on in the show, I'm delighted to say that we'll be talking to Dr Tim Currie, disruptor, author, innovator, advisor, lots of roles, great conversation with Tim coming up. But before we get to that, anyone seen the Bone Temple yet? No, I haven't actually. It's one I want to watch, but not got there yet. The third in the trilogy. Well, it's the sort of, it's the second in the sequel.

Sorry, second. Yeah, that's right. Yeah, sorry. if you don't know what I'm talking about, Esme looks very blank first. I just started the new season of Bridgerton. It's a bit different to that. Yeah, you might find it's at the other end of the sort of artistic spectrum. Yeah. It's been out a few weeks now and it's the second of the sequel trilogy to 28 Days Later. Crackingford. 28 Years Later came out last year, which was Danny Boyle with Alex Garland. And then the new film, which came out in January this year, if you haven't caught it, which is Nia da Costa also working with Alex Garland. What a film. Like really, really good. The original premise of the series, Killian Murphy on the bridge in the middle of London wondering what's just happened. mean, like a seminal point in moviemaking is something very, very different and the Danny Boyle style. underneath it all and then that's fired off all these other films, all which are very good. Yeah, I think the key to the new ones are Alex Garland writing all of them, I think, really. And he just goes to different places, like really interesting stuff. And the two central performances that everyone's banged on about, know, but Ray Fiennes and Jack O'Connell's central performance is just amazing, like properly amazing. (02:47.694)

I mean they are, mean, Ralph Fiennes though. What an actor. Very good. English Patient. Fantastic. Scott. Anthony Mungala director. film is, well won eight Oscars. was one of the biggest Oscar winning films of all time. absolutely outstanding, but it's not talked about as much as like the others that have done the big Oscar runs. Slightly forgotten, I would say. I do find it amusing that that's, I don't know what that says about you, but that's one of your favourite films. It is a bit, did that surprise you, David? I can only vaguely remember it, but it's a big sort of soft romance thing, innit? I don't wish to underplay it. No, it's a tragedy of what could have been. It's much closer to a film of tragedy, which is all the potential that was there. You can like a nice emotional film, Rob. all right. Be a sensi and just get into it all. No, no. is all the way through the film relationships form and they get torn apart. Which like life, isn't it? It is. It's dramatic. Also, The photography and cinema photography in it is absolutely outstanding. Ez, how's Bridgerton? New season? I love it. it's so good. and what I also love is that so many connections like friends pop up like, have you started? Have you started? And I love that. There's also an entire community going on, right? If you have a new season that a lot of people, did you watch season episode? And you actually feel like, shh. I still need to watch it because otherwise I'm not able to join the conversations. this of course is the one of the things that streaming has done a bit of a disservice to is that, you know, the moment in the week that the new episode of whatever show you're watching drops or whether it's a live event that you know that almost everybody in the country is going to be doing the same thing at the same time. And that creates a weird sort of communal feeling, doesn't it?

(04:54.092)

I don't know, because now a lot of streamers go back to that, to do it once in a while. really don't like it. You it all in one go. Do you? Yeah. So you can gulp it down. Yeah. So I'm going to Bridgerton. If you ask what I'm going to do this weekend, I'm going to binge Bridgerton. Now, before we get onto the actual main subject matter of today's show, I want to go a bit deeper on that, which is when you say you're going to binge watch something, what's your definition of that? because some people are like, well, I watch two and then I limit myself. I limit myself to two and then I'll go back to a couple of, and I'm like, bullshit. I'm to do five. yeah, sorry. If you limit yourself, it can't be a binge. That's true. A binge is when you don't limit. Yeah, yeah. You can't have the two. So if somebody says I'm going to limit myself, well, you're not binge watching by very definition. How would Netflix or other streamers would actually see that? When do they decide, that person is binging? this is the debate about the way the streaming services launch. So a couple do all the episodes at once, drop it, have at it, and others have make you wait for weekly cycles. And they keep you engaged that way. And I'm not sure which one creates more excitement because after you've done a binge, you can be a bit deflated about a program. Whereas if you're anticipating each week, what's going to happen, then that maybe builds a little bit more suspense. to say though, like, well, let's say one way they did do that recently, which is Pluribus, right? I think it was one of our favorites from last year collectively. Yeah, very good. Tremendous thing. I don't think I could have it weekly. I literally watched Pluribus in two lumps of five. You know, like I just absolutely hammered through it in probably less than 12 hours, like one night. And then I got the next morning during the Christmas betwixtness bit. So like watch loads of it, went to bed, slept, got up the next morning, watched the rest of it, it's excellent. What's perfect about that is it is in the sense of storytelling very novel or is novel by very definition in the sense that not seen something like that before. It's very well thought out. Vince Gilligan strikes again with good storytelling. Brilliant. mean, I've got, I put a small amount of money on this could be his best bit of work, but let's see how it pans out in the next few seasons. (07:16.224)

Anyway, on that note, let's get on to today's major topic, which is the trust gap that may or may not emerge when you are working in an organization that is predominantly remote. Now that might be an organization that post-COVID has ended up being remote or they haven't moved to a hybrid model or something like that, or it might be an organization...that it's just been remote forever. It's predominantly set up to be remote. There's a lot going on in the West Coast of the US that hire people all over the world and 100 % remote. And I think the question we're going to ask ourselves is within that sort of organization, what's real and how does trust manifest itself? So you would say that in a traditional face-to-face situation, the four of us work together. And because we see each other on a daily basis, because we're kind of going through good and bad things together, and you know very quickly when someone's got your back or helping you out or whatever it might be, a deep trust starts to emerge and that can be with across the team, like with your lateral teammates, or it can be up and down a team with your manager or leader, whoever that might be. Es, I was going to come to you the trust system for you? I think for me it is about being able to be your true self. You that you dare to show who you are when you're vulnerable or if you don't know anything or if you ask for help. I think those are signs that there's room for connection and it opens up the floor for others to do the same.

And it doesn't mean that it should all be fancy dancy all the time. I see that a lot. yes, we as like we're spending in the bar every day all day, although some days we are actually literally, but it

really is about having healthy conflict. Are you able to do that as well? I think that's also a sign of we're really trusting each other. We can really have a good discussion on work or on the topic and not so much on the person itself, obviously. there's an element there of (09:37.152)

It doesn't have to be conjured as a result of buying everybody drinks or, you know, the equivalent all of the time. There's more of a natural authentic element to it, I think, that kind of comes through, you know, being part of a team and all of those sorts of things. But also there's an element of, you know, being your true self within that situation. I think that's true. If you can't really feel like you're being authentic, then honestly, how real is the situation that you're in the middle of? Rob, when you started to work remotely, the way you sighed there, it probably looked like you were about to be set up for something. Well, normally that's what happens, I was going to ask you a legit question this time. Yes, David. What questions do you have for me? Yes, I'm ready. Go. How do you think being remote changes some of those dynamics? I hark back. to an episode we did with Dave Snowden. Those who maybe not have listened to those episodes, he's the one who does the Kenefen framework and is part of the institution, talks about complication complex. And he said they've tried to measure human performance when you're all together in a room and you're remote. He says they don't know why, but they see the output being better when everybody's in a room together. So there is something there about local human connection. And then if you've always been remote, do you really know the human? Have you properly built trust? And then you couple that with the, you arrive on a meeting, the agenda starts. You don't often get the small talk where you learn about the human, the conversation, where you understood what they did at the weekend or what the family's up to and that sort of stuff. What they're excited about doing next, David, as an example. And so I think it's got to be a balance. You've got to know the human properly if you're going to get proper trust, but...in the modern world and geographical constraints, et cetera, I think you have to be able to be better at working in remote circumstances to keep going. And in fact, I did some research for this one, David. have some stats and figures. mean, this is unprecedented. So trust as an impact on a team. So the overall measurements are if you don't have good trust, lower collaboration, more friction, worse resilience in the team. But the statistics were a team that trusts properly. (12:00.238) is 15 % more performant. It has 41 % less absence for a reason. 41 %? 41%. And here's the best one, 59 % lower attrition on average. scientifically has been measured. So it's not a thing that is soft in inverted commas. It is a thing that has actually been measured as trusting teams do get better results. And 15%, if you were offered a 15 %...productivity boost or performance boost in any team, you'd say, love that. I think the science says trust is better, but I suppose the whole point is how do you form it when you've got a bit of a, you know, all the constraints we see today. think that ties very much into, Patrick Lansione's, right? His five dysfunctions of a team and the first base, just the first level is to have trust and then you can start building from there. And the one I will bring in, I know Mr. Chapman will be very excited about is Simon Sinek talks about this and the US Marine Corps and he says they will take a slightly less capable person if it's a person who will form more trust with the team because the team that trusts themselves in stressful scenarios perform a lot better than one who you might not trust but has excellent capability. And so this is one of the biggest factors that affects team selection. Rob. Go on. You knocked that out of the park mate. Not only.

Not only did you come up with numbers, but you actually came up with one of my favourite models. That's brilliant. There you go. Maybe, just maybe I paid attention. Solid work there. But honestly though, on a serious note, the Sinec Marines video that's on YouTube, really worth going to have a look at. It's only about 10-15 minutes long or something. And he sets out what

Rob said in a very compelling way. And do know why Dave likes it so much? It's because he uses a four box matrix to explain it. Which is like your nirvana of if you can put in a four box matrix. Most of life problems can be explained with a four box matrix if you get the axes right. That one, the Kinefin framework is a four box matrix as well. Have you spotted that Dave? And you love that as well. I'm doing a session next week with the Kinefin framework in it. There you go. All the time. Love it. it. Anyway, let's finish off on the trust gap before we go to Tim. How did the dynamic shift in a remote working environment? Let me tee this up. I think (14:22.604)

Well established, we have data. The model as talked about that says trust in the team, authenticity, all of those sorts of things are actually a hard driver of productivity as well as human happiness in that situation. then when you split that apart, the core aspect of building those relationships, the experience of remote working. So I hadn't done a great deal of remote work in pre-COVID. For me, I clicked into it quite quickly. But my day's work, and you hear this talked about a lot, I think, from people is back-to-back teams meetings or choose your video conferencing platform of choice. So your day of having those conversations that you were saying, Rob, may be superficially less productive actually when you're in the office because you're moving between meetings, sometimes floors, sometimes buildings, you're chatting with people at coffee machines, all of those sorts of things. But as I think we said that...That kind of thing is the mortar in between the bricks. when you're blasting through teams meetings, it feels like you're being hyperproductive, right? I've done like 10 teams meetings today, absolutely solid. Can't get a cigarette paper between them, knocking it out of the park. But it's quite one dimensional, isn't it? You lose all the incidentals when you go in, you see people you haven't seen for a long time. It keeps relationships fresh. You have sideline conversations. It's better for your mental health for a lot of it because if you go back to back on teams at the end of the day, you've had enough. Whereas actually a little bit of an interaction with somebody you haven't seen in three months that you talk about something completely disassociated with work and suddenly you feel a lot better. So energised. So if you look for example, there's also a Ted video. The voice from above. It's me, Dr Mike. Hey mate, how you doing? I'm fine. Glad you could drop in. So, so just check also on Ted, there's a person who's giving a sort of presentation around what will make you live longer, the top 10 things. And of course there's no obese. the boring stuff. All the boring stuff, but the top three is all social. So it's linked to human connectivity. It's going out and talk to people and trust each other. it's... (16:43.278)

What's funny about it is it's something we can't measure yet. know it has an impact. It's a classic. It's like what Dave Stave said. We know it has an impact, but we do not know why. It's something we don't understand about humankind. other thing I think that eroded it in sort of post-COVID definition of remote working is the absence of trust in terms of, are people working? Are they actually doing what we said they were going to do? Like, are they actually...productive during the day and that of course starts to erode trust in a different sort of way. I guess turning that on its head then and saying well what does good look like in remote work and how can organizations, and there are plenty of them that are 100 % remote, operate correctly?

create the right level of camaraderie and drive the right type of productivity with all of that mortar in between the bricks.

With that in mind, let's go to our conversation with Tim Currie, an author of Swift Trust you (17:57.358) And I am delighted to say that joining us in the conversation today, we have Dr. Tim Currie, disruptor, author of Swift Trust, and is currently the chief strategy officer at InBalance

IT. InBalance. InBalance. Is that like imbalance or new balance? You find customers who are imbalanced and we get them inbound. That's right. Excellent work. I like that. How are doing, Tim? Good to see you. Doing great. Wonderful to be on the show. Longtime listener, first time caller. Well, it's wonderful to have you on. yeah, we used to work together. back in the days of cloud reach. you're still willing to come and talk to him? Yeah, well, you know, it's... How big was the HR case file? Old habits are hard to kick, actually you might recognise the intro to my book is actually a vignette about our former workplace. Is it really? I will look forward to that. Now, Swiftrust, I assume it's about the rise of Taylor Swift? If it did, the royalties would be much bigger. I mean, that's the way I would have gone with it. Which way did you go? Missed opportunity. do think somebody goes in and thinks, a book about Taylor Swift, then goes, this isn't what I expected. Seems to be more about the trust than the Swift. Ironically enough, if you look up Swift Trust on a podcast or do a search or on a pod app, you get a lot of Taylor Swift stuff back, which you have to read through. But no, Swift Trust is a book. It's about, actually, rather specifically, it's about trust in the remote workplace. Specifically, based on my dissertation that I did, was trust in the remote workplace in high-tech consulting companies. So I did research against companies that were 100 % remote and examined how trust was established, how it was built, reinforced, how it was repaired. sort of what were the implications for the workplace and for the people within the workplace, you know, longer term. And was this particularly inspired by changing working habits come out of COVID or was it more that you'd seen kind of remote organizations? was very directly impacted by the experience we all had during COVID. Being in the IT industry or the technology industry, a lot of us were remote or hybrid or semi remote for decades, right? Before COVID hit. So it was a little different game for us. (20:19.534) But I noticed that within my doctorate program, that was supposed to be a hybrid program that due to COVID, it was 100 % remote. so I saw a professor struggle. You have this image, this is actually an interesting aside. You have this image of what, you go back to your side at a certain point in your life, you're gonna invest the time and the energy and the money to go do a doctorate program. And you have an image of, I'm gonna be sitting in this, Don't break it, please don't break the image. This lecture hall and getting this amazing lecturers and everything's gonna be a Ted talk every day. And it's not the way higher education works. And it's certainly not the way that higher education responded to COVID. some works like anything, like any organization, some of the professors were amazing. a couple of them were my mentors through the process and the inspiration for coming up with the book. And some were, you know, using Zoom for the first time on their laptop, you know, in their lake house and it didn't work. I bet that created some very boring moments and also some comedy gold in the middle of that where things didn't go. I always remember in COVID when they did the legal thing and the guy comes on and the judge there and he's got the cat overlay activated and he can't disable the cat overlay. So it's something very serious and illegal. situation they're having this chat about. the judges saying, sir, you do realize you've got a cat. And then the guy says, I'm not actually a cat judge. the goes, yeah, I kind of worked that out. But the other half of what you said when you were introducing your book there was specifically in tech consulting firms. What around that was enough of a signify to call out? Yeah, right. So the research was in tech, but obviously it is.

the remote workplace now has a much broader impact. when we work remote, some of the things that as I got into the research around this topic, I found myself greatly underestimating the impact that the in-office, the before times a lot of us refer to, the in-office situation or in-office environment had on people's lives. (22:37.23) For instance, in the United States, one third of all marriages originated in the workplace. Really? A third? Oh, wow. That's a good start. necessarily with coworkers, but a friend of a coworker or a coworker of friend. It's the network

around it. Yeah, the network around network around it. And as we all, think, are pretty aware since COVID, that has shifted very... Now it's online apps is the number one. Right. Now, that begs the question, will you...

Clearly you can build trust remotely without being in an office if that's where- Or you don't need it in the online apps case. You don't need it in the online apps case, but the motivation is different, right? So what people will risk to reveal themselves, what people will risk to engage with others is different in a peer-to-peer workplace versus if you're looking for romance, right? So in the workplace, the dynamic is much different. there was a really, I'm forgetting the, I apologize, but I'm forgetting the name of, there's a, There's a woman who's an executive of WeWork back during the glory days of WeWork. And she was in charge of all social programs. Right, right. Social engagement programs. And they did all kinds of really interesting research. they found, you know, adding onto this concept of one third of all marriages or long-term relationships, whatever, originate in the workplace, they dug into that. And they found that the majority of people, that they met someone through the workplace or workplace adjacent, weren't initially attracted to the person that they ended up with. So that raises a question, right? whether it's, know, whatever the initial first impressions were, those people revealed parts of themselves over time, know, layers peeling back the onion, whoever you want, whatever metaphor you want to use. And this could be applied both to, you know, in the extreme here, the romantic relationship, but it's also an peer to peer work relationship or, you know, managers, board members, they reveal different parts of themselves over time authentically, which impacts the perception of them to that. Personality does count after all, We'll see about that. We'll get to the end. So this gets to how you build interpersonal relationships, how you that sort of fabric of corporate, organizational culture. And the depth of trust, the depth of those relationships are sort of the fabric that typically or historically has gotten an organization through tough and challenging times. (24:59.566)

And if we're all remote and we're all operating in a more transactional, which is what Swift Trust really refers to as a very transactional sort of, you know, I trust you to do the work and you trust me to pay you if you do it. it doesn't necessarily need to go any deeper than that. really. No, it's to compartmentalize sort of very transactional level. Well, I'll join you in a story about cloud reach because you might recall this. I'm pretty sure you're in the conversation. There was one point we were looking at acquiring a look at acquiring a company in North America. it was a hundred percent remote. And I remember at the time I was quite vociferous in objecting to this. it was like pre-clinical. And my take on it was there's nothing there. It's like, it's a series of individuals that are contracting together. And if they decide to leave, the thing evaporates. Within the work that you've done around Swift Trust, how does that? sort of position a hole, do you think? Or is there something deeper there? So you've kind of hit on it for larger organizations. I always have to have this caveat that we're surrounded by tech folks who've worked remotely for a long time. And some might be very happy to never see another office in their lifetime. There are organizations absolutely thriving, working 100 % remote. Those organizations tend to be smaller. They tend to have a core group that work together and establish deeply

deeply interpersonal relationships and trust in the before times. Yeah, the sort of the founding vibe. The founding, yeah, the founding vibe. You know, they can finish each other's sentences, they've done this before, they're running back an old playbook. to the extent, so other remote people in that organization see, witness, experience that, and to the extent that core can

extend that sort of circle of trust, circle of love, if you will, and they're also typically very sort of like tech savvy cloud native type organizations, they do quite well.

Larger organizations, not so much, right? The more traditional hierarchy, more traditional organization just tries to do this digital overlay of what they used to do before. It doesn't work. It doesn't work. Like eight years ago, they'd have been sending copy-all emails to 50 people. And those 50 people are now all asking why they're not in the Zoom, right? With the camera off, stacked back to back, and it's just not really working. So getting back to your question now: there can be a remote culture that's built if you have that sort of seed germination of, we've got a core group that all know each other, trust each other, and we're just going to get the band back together. As it gets bigger, though, you have to ask yourself, if you think about Gen Z and some younger entry-level workers, they're starting to indicate a desire to return to the office, which is a shock to many people. But if you think about what their day is—well, they might not even be in their own place. They might be in a house share or something similar. Younger people particularly struggled with that during COVID. We ended up opening the office just to give them somewhere to go. If you're stacked back to back on Zoom meetings with your camera off, it's not a very fulfilling existence. Two, in that environment, you tend to get very focused on task-oriented, outcome-oriented, just-the-facts conversations. And there's no "in-between." The in-between is where we build trust. Simon Sinek says this all the time: trust is built in the in-between. It's not in the meeting. It's in the hallway before you go into the meeting. It's in the prep for the meeting. It's in the discussion after the meeting. And there's no in-between — you just have the meeting. And that meeting is happening in a poorly engineered, poorly engaged remote work environment. It's happening while someone has the TV on and they're scrolling on their phone. And they may well have eight or nine solid meetings during the day, 50 emails firing up, multitasking with the TV on mute — you have an attention challenge there as well. So yeah, not surprisingly, they're finding that unfulfilling and want to work in the office because they want the same things everybody else wants: mentorship. They want observational learning of corporate norms, to understand what it takes to be successful, a career path — and they're getting none of that, or a poorly implemented version of that, in a fully remote setup.

When you did the research, was there a difference in tenure — how long people would stay in a completely remote job versus having office connectivity in a group? Because it feels like if they're not as invested, there's less loyalty and they flip-flop more between jobs. I didn't have the runway on that because during COVID this was still new. But if you think about it, there's another component. I don't want to make this about AI, but think about yourself as remote: "I've compartmentalized my work life. I just do these tasks and trust that if I do them, they'll pay me." That's what's easily replaced by AI. Workers aren't unaware of that. But it also means: how much am I invested in this situation? How much energy am I going to put into this if I might be replaced? I should be looking at what I can replace my employer with. In a world that's more portable, if you're 100% remote, AI doesn't help — it compounds it. And if you're going to be remote, you have to make sure you're engaging authentically with employees in ways that matter. Organizations that do that successfully build a remote culture at scale.

So before we move to that, you touched on Gen Z. Millennials and Gen X are the predominant demographics in the workforce today. What's your sense of their desire to return to the office? It's a mixed bag — almost a normal distribution. Gen Z is overwhelmingly more in favor of returning, at least in hybrid form. Everyone loves autonomy and flexibility, but at some point you've got to live your life. For 150 years, since the invention of the typewriter, the workplace has been the office — that's been a third of your life. As you go up in age it matters less. Older professionals are more specialized, more established, need the scaffolding of the workplace less because they provide it. Social circles get smaller, family matters more, and for Millennials

and Gen X with young families, that becomes more important than the workplace. So there's a downward slope as the demographic gets older.

You touched on mentoring — it's so underestimated. Teaching younger workers, but also learning from them. I understand older workers are established, but I'd still want a growth mindset at any age, to hear what young people think and value the social contact. Sure. I remember not too long ago, I had a CEO offer me a coach for a new role I was taking — it doesn't end. But that's different from the day-to-day exposure younger people need. I'll give you an example: I had a family friend who wanted an internship. I made five phone calls. Four of the five companies said the same thing: she's smart, great personality, has skills we could use, but we're a remote organization — what's she going to do, manage spreadsheets? We can't offer her the experience we'd feel good about. The fifth one was hybrid — and she's still with them. If you think back, 90% of an internship is learning how the world works, observational learning of social and business interaction — and you get none of that in a fully remote world.

Looking at leadership: running an in-office team is different from hybrid or fully remote. In 100% remote setups, the younger, established core who know each other are fine, but the larger the company, the more likely leaders are good "in the room" — working the room, working the hallways. But there is no room, no hallway. Many great CEOs are front-of-room people. That dissipates remotely. The three biggest indicators of trust in a 100% remote environment were: one, online availability — seeing the green light. Two, responsiveness. Three — the most important — authentic engagement in non-work channels. Whether Slack or Teams, channels not about tasks. Sharing personal moments — "I took my daughter to Taylor Swift," dropping photos in the channel. That's the in-between. How well leaders engage there drives trust because people feel like they know them.

This leads to how you replace the front of the room. Leaders need to become influencers to their own companies. There's a future where VR or digital environments simulate presence, but beyond that, leaders need to meet employees where they are — on their phones, in their algorithmic feed. That might mean having your own internal YouTube-like presence. Skills that used to be about the room now become making TikToks — or something like that. Not literally, but the idea is inserting yourself into the feed. It changes communication. Traditional internal comms — newsletters, intranets — feel outdated. People engage on open platforms.

Take examples from US politics: regardless of opinion, when Trump posts on Truth Social, you know it's him — authentic, bypassing traditional channels. Another is Mondani in New York doing first-person street interviews — breaking paradigms and creating authentic energy. It works. Podcasts, too, have replaced traditional media for many people. Socials are heavily edited for perfection, so asking leaders to show flaws online is hard. But effective leaders already had humility and authenticity.

You also see the cult of personality — parasocial relationships, like Peloton instructors, where people feel deep connection without real interaction. Leadership needs to recognize people relate digitally now. The organization could choose to be transactional because labor is cheaper and expertise easy to find, but if it wants culture, it needs to adapt.

On return-to-office: no, I don't see many doing it well. RTO tries to reestablish a paradigm that doesn't exist anymore. We've disassembled it intentionally — remote work lets you hire the best architect in Nebraska instead of San Francisco. They get to live where they want, make more than local jobs pay, and the company gets the talent. Telling everyone to commute just to sit on Zoom with someone in pajamas somewhere else is the worst of both worlds. A pizza party won't fix it. You need intentional organizational design to make office time meaningful.

You must design for early career workers, mentorship, adjacency between teams. Avoid inverted hybrid days where you're in the office but just on Zoom all day. One potential outcome: hyperlocal teams — if you go into Chicago, you work with Chicago teams on Chicago clients. Another: functional pods, a different kind of matrix. Intentional physical space design matters. At home, people have dual screens and ergonomic setups. Why go to an office to sit with one small screen and headphones? Offices need collaborative rooms, social energy, and proper tech. CFOs won't love that, but it's required.

I visited a customer recently in Cleveland. Parking lot full — unheard of. Turns out it was company picnic day. CEO on site, food trucks, everyone required in. The energy was incredible. We walked the halls, met people, and it felt amazing — something we hadn't felt in so long. You can't have a picnic daily, but you need something between that and empty offices. Intentionality is key.

At the end of the day, organizations need deeper thought about structure, collaboration, and human connection, not just "come back in." And now we ask Tim what he's excited about next: he has two teenage daughters and they're huge Wicked fans. They loved the theater show and movies. The Wizard of Oz is now playing at the Sphere, and he wants to bring them. It's immersive 4DX — wind, vibrations, expanded AI worlds. He also wants to explore trust further — how parasocial relationships form between influencers and audiences, and how that translates into leadership. Leadership has many facets, but influencing people was always part of it — now the techniques differ. Traditional concepts like transformational leadership, servant leadership remain, but influence happens in new digital contexts.

If you'd like to discuss any of the topics on this episode or how they impact your business, contact us at realitiesremix.capgemini.com. We're all on LinkedIn and happy to engage. Please rate and subscribe — it helps the show. Thanks to Tim, our sound and editing team Ben and Louis, producer Marcel, and all our listeners. See you next week in another reality.

About Capgemini

Capgemini is a global business and technology transformation partner, helping organizations to accelerate their dual transition to a digital and sustainable world, while creating tangible impact for enterprises and society. It is a responsible and diverse group of 340,000 team members in more than 50 countries. With its strong over 55-year heritage, Capgemini is trusted by its clients to unlock the value of technology to address the entire breadth of their business needs. It delivers end-to-end services and solutions leveraging strengths from strategy and design to engineering, all fueled by its market leading capabilities in AI, generative AI, cloud and data, combined with its deep industry expertise and partner ecosystem. The Group reported 2024 global revenues of €22.1 billion.

Make it real.

www.capgemini.com

Capgemini