Leading a team at a distance

A Literature Review on Distance Leadership

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Abstract:

In 2020 all of our lives changed, influencing many aspects of our daily lives. Over 60% of the Finnish population switched to working from home that year, and still today it's a possibility for many of us. Leading a team remotely have a unique set of challenges that require unique solutions. Remote teams with all their advantages and challenges are here to stay. Working from home separates the worker from the leader, which creates challenges such as lack of face-to-face supervision, lack of clear expectations, low productivity, lack of communication, lack of team cohesiveness and social isolation. This thesis was conducted as a literature review with the approach called the five-stage grounded-theory method and it included defining, searching, selecting, analysing, and presenting. Many factors go into effectively leading a team from a distance. Leadership is viewed as an activity, a responsibility, and an opportunity. It focuses on people, vision, influence, direction, and development. Leadership is a complex subject that requires regular practice and additional study to master. When leading a team remotely, it is critical to have a clear vision of what kind of organisation you want to be or how the workforce will fit into the culture you want to create. Creating a meaningful workplace with a team that works remotely, is crucial. To stay up with the evolving technology and remote workers, they require regular examination, restructuring, and modification. It's possible that what has worked before won't work as well in the future, and new concepts need to be created as people leave their jobs and are replaced by new workers, all of whom have unique talents, traits, demographics, and motivational factors.

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1 Introduction

Due to the global pandemic, the world and all our lives changed in March 2020 and influenced many aspects of our daily lives. Over 60% of the Finnish people switched to working from home during the year 2020 (Ahrendt et al., 2020). Fast forward to today working from home is still a reality and a possibility for many of us. Who would have expected it would turn out this way, and that it would have impacted how we work three years later?

Nothing changed, yet a lot of things did. According to a survey conducted by Business Oulu in 2021, 80% of people who responded indicated that working remotely will become more common in the future (Tuovinen, 2021). Before the pandemic, remote work was steadily growing across many sectors. The pandemic sped up this trend, and today businesses must run with people needing to remote work in locations other than the usual workplace (Contreras et al., 2020). Remote work was popular before the pandemic (He et al., 2020) and remote work infrastructure was already in place. As a result, many businesses have found it reasonably simple to implement this working style (Béland et al., 2020). There may be certain benefits to working remotely. According to empirical studies, remote work has positive effects on work performance, job satisfaction, work-family balance, stress levels, and lesser turnover intentions (Kossek et al., 2006; Fonner and Roloff, 2010; Coenen and Kok, 2014; Vega et al., 2015).

Throughout history, new leadership ideas have consistently appeared and been developed. Research on leadership in the 19th century concentrated on finding the personality traits and other characteristics of good leaders, as well as on the inherent attributes of a leader (Organ, 1996; Dziak, 2019; Johns & Moser, 1989). The core tenet of the Great Man theory is that leaders are not created or trained, but rather born. In other words, only a select group of extremely uncommon people have the special qualities needed to be great leaders and achieve greatness by divine design (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). The trait theories later developed from the Great Man theory. According to trait theories, leaders can either be created or born (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2013). In other words, the qualities of effective leaders can either be inherited or learned through instruction and experience. The belief that certain behaviours can be learned to ensure effective leadership is a product of behavioural theory, which

developed from characteristic theories (Johns & Moser, 1989; Denison et al., 1995). It emphasises the leader's actual behaviour rather than their attributes or characteristics, yet it generally disregards the leader's circumstances and environment. Later, it was realised that the leader-follower dynamic is greatly influenced by the surroundings, and the situational age was dominated by this idea (Safonov, 2018). The situational age, as its name implies, is more concerned with leadership in specific circumstances than it is with the qualities or behaviours of leaders. It was acknowledged for the first time that concentrating on just one facet or dimension of leadership cannot fully capture the complexity of the phenomena (Van Seters & Field, 1990). Demand for leadership theories that support situations of rapid change, disruptive technology innovation, and growing globalisation has evolved in a world that has grown more complicated and challenging. As a result, the old theories of leadership that characterise leadership as a top-down, unidirectional influencing process and establish a clear distinction between leaders and followers were abandoned, ushering in a new era of leadership. Instead, the intricate interconnections between the leader, the followers, the environment, and the system came into prominence, with a focus on the followers' latent leadership abilities. One of the most intricate and multifaceted phenomena is leadership, in today's quick-paced and increasingly globalised world, it has received much study throughout the years and now has more significance than ever (Benmira & Agboola, 2021).

Distance leadership refers to the ability of a leader to effectively manage and lead a team or organisation from a distance, typically using digital tools and technology to communicate and collaborate (Bennis, 2009). This type of leadership is becoming increasingly common with the proliferation of remote work and virtual teams (Contreras et al., 2020).

Effective distance leadership requires several skills and competencies, including the ability to effectively communicate and collaborate using digital tools (Jordan, 2022), the ability to build and maintain trust and relationships with team members who may be physically distant (Gertenbach, 2022), and the ability to adapt to the challenges and opportunities of leading a team remotely (Jordan, 2022).

Distance leadership also requires a deep understanding of the technology and digital tools available for communication and collaboration (Bennis, 2009), as well as the ability to utilise these tools effectively to achieve organisational goals (Gertenbach, 2022). It also requires a

strong sense of self-awareness and emotional intelligence, as leaders must be able to navigate the unique challenges and stresses of leading a team remotely (Lopez, 2022).

Overall, distance leadership represents a significant shift in the way leaders must approach their roles and requires a new set of skills and competencies to effectively lead and manage a team from a distance (Mayhew, 2020).

1.1 Research overview

Distance leadership, or the ability to effectively manage and lead a team or organisation from a distance, is becoming an increasingly important topic as more businesses adopt remote work and virtual teams. Distance leadership presents several challenges and opportunities, including the use of technology and digital tools for communication and collaboration, building, and maintaining trust and relationships with team members who may be physically distant, and adapting to the unique challenges and stresses of leading a team remotely.

Research on distance leadership is relevant to media management studies because it provides insight into how to effectively manage a team remotely, which has become increasingly important in the last few years. By studying distance leadership, I can better understand the challenges and opportunities of managing virtual teams, as well as develop strategies and best practices for effective remote leadership.

1.2 Problem statement

Leading a team remotely have a unique set of challenges that require unique solutions, remote teams with all their advantages and challenges are here to stay. Working from home separates the worker from the leader, which creates challenges such as lack of face-to-face supervision, lack of clear expectations, low productivity, lack of communication, lack of team cohesiveness and social isolation.

This research will examine how distance leadership can be done effectively. By focusing on only remote leadership, we can identify key components for effective leadership to lead your

team in the best way possible. The study assumes that the reader wants to know how this could be done in the best way possible.

This study, therefore, explores what prompts leadership to be done in the best way possible when leading a team remotely. Additionally, what that includes and how it differs from leadership face-to-face. This research will provide a deeper understanding as to how a leader should lead their team remotely and with what methods they could both attract and maintain the existing employees.

1.3 Research questions

The field of distance leadership requires more research. This thesis aims to provide an overview of studies and frameworks of distance leadership. Therefore, this research aims to fill a few of the many gaps in distance leadership research by answering the following questions:

How do you effectively lead a team from afar?

How can contemporary research on distance leadership help organisations lead more efficiently in a remote work setting?

1.4 Aims, objectives and goals

The rapid change and growth in remote work have thrust many leaders into remote leadership, which requires a different skill set than face-to-face leadership (Parker et al., 2020). This thesis aims to gain an understanding of how distance leadership can be used to effectively lead a team remotely. By conducting a literature review it is possible to identify gaps in previous research (Snyder, 2019) and entwine how contemporary research can help organisations lead successfully in a remote work setting.

1.5 Methods and limitations

This thesis is conducted as a literature review. The available research on a subject is compiled and evaluated in a literature review. It can be conducted as a standalone research project, or as part of a larger research study. Literature reviews are useful for identifying gaps in the existing research and informing the design and methodology of a new study. (vom Brocke et al., 2009; Paré et al., 2015.)

According to Wolfswinkel et al. (2011), there are five stages when conducting a literature review. The approach is called the five-stage grounded-theory method and it includes defining, searching, selecting, analysing, and presenting.

Define is the most appropriate set of data utilised for performing the literature review is defined, along with the criteria for data inclusion and exclusion, the study fields are identified, and the sources and search terms to be used. It's important to have a clearly defined topic before the literature search begins. It can be helpful to create a list of keywords related to the research question. Include all the major ideas or factors that are interesting, as well as any related terms and synonyms. When uncovering additional terms during the literature search, it's possible to add them to this list. Search is where the actual search of the literature is done using the criteria established in the first stage. The sources that are most pertinent to the research question, need to be evaluated. Select is where the chosen literature should all fall within the topic's parameters and help define its speciality.

It can be helpful to look at
- Trends and patterns (in theory, procedure, or outcomes): Do some methods gain or lose favour over time?
- Themes: What issues or ideas appear repeatedly in the literature? Where are these disputes, disagreements, and contradictions between the sources?
- Important publications: Have any hypotheses or studies significantly impacted the field's course? What are the gaps in the literature? Are there any areas that require improvement?

This stage will assist in determining the format of the literature review and, if necessary, demonstrate how the research will advance your understanding of the subject. Analyse is

where the material is categorised by using open, axial, and/or selective coding. Depending on the length of the literature review it's possible to combine several strategies to it, such as chronological, which is the easiest strategy to chart the topic's development over time. Analyse trends, defining moments, and significant discussions that have influenced the field's course. Explain the how and why of specific developments. The literature review can be divided into subsections that focus on various facets of the subject if you have identified certain recurrent primary themes. Key themes, for instance, would be healthcare policy, language difficulties, cultural views, legal status, and economic access if you are analysing literature about disparities in migrant health outcomes. These are just some of the few strategies that can be used to organise the structure of the literature review. Present refers to the section of thesis writing where the information's structure and substance are complemented and organised logically, starting with an introduction, and leading to conclusions. What is included in the structure depends on the objective of the review. (McCombes, 2023; Wolfswinkel et al., 2011.)

In this study, the keyword of "distance leadership", "remote leadership" as well as "leadership" are used. The databases I will use for the search are Perlego, Finna, Ellibs and EBESCO. On Perlego there were 5 books, 2 of which qualified for further investigation. Finna had 4 books, where 1 book qualified for further investigation. On Ellibs there were no books or material. On EBESCO there were 50 books and out of them, I chose 1 book since I didn't want several books from the same author to get a broader perspective. In addition, the inclusion criteria for the chosen literature are articles of study after 2010. Nevertheless, literature from before 2010, as well as literature that is not related to distance leadership, will be excluded. After the material is chosen, it is getting analysed and based on the analysis the thesis structure of the literature review will be compiled. Other sources were also used if they included the keywords and the study was after 2010.

The available data will then be collected, analysed, prepared and presented understandably. To guarantee that the results are legitimate and dependable, the study design is properly constructed in the following way. The first step will be to research the available data, after that, I will read the articles, analyse the findings, evaluate how the article is relevant to this research and write about the key findings.

1.6 Structure

The thesis constructs an introductory section, which is laying the foundations of the thesis. First, we'll examine the concept of leadership, after that, we will look at remote leadership as a concept and then at remote leadership in practice. The fifth chapter consists of the results and the sixth chapter contains the discussion. The last section of this thesis presents the literature reviewed in this work.

2 Leadership

Leadership is being written about more than ever before. According to Eikenberry & Turmel (2018), leadership is present when people are choosing to follow someone towards a desired future outcome. When Kevin Eikenberry was visiting leaders from NASA, he asked which was more complex – rocket science or leadership, leadership was the clear winner. They explained that when building rockets, they can determine the right answer. But as a leader, you are dealing with people, and people are more complex. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018.)

Leadership is an action and is typically considered a role or a person, and if leadership is an action, it means that it isn't a role or a position (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018). Leadership is not about an authoritative role in an organisation, it's rather about the choice and actions. People become leaders by the actions they perform and because of their behaviour in general towards the people around them, and not because of the authority position of domination power they were assigned. It is action and not titles that make leaders. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018; Garg, 2022a.)

Leadership is a responsibility. Outside of people's closest family or friends, their boss is the most influential person in their life. As a leader, you have an impact on their pay, their work environment, the level of stress they experience, and the amount of satisfaction they get from their job amongst many other things. While leading is a responsibility and not a power grab. It's the behaviour that leads to others granting you "power", it doesn't come from you simply wanting it. It's a result of your unwavering dedication to helping others. If you try to have power or grab authority, you aren't leading. When you lead in the right way, lots of "power" will be granted to you. (Eikenberry, 2020; Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018.)

Leadership is an opportunity. Nothing in this world happens without leadership. It's huge and exciting to make a difference. It all requires leadership, whether you are thinking about the difference you can make for your team, your customers, your organisation, changing the world or the communities where you work and live, it all requires leadership. An ideal leader opens the door not only for himself but also for other teammates equivalently. It's an opportunity for you to defeat your weakness, it also allows you to be understood and to learn new things. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018; Garg, 2020b.)

Leadership isn't a gift from birth, we are all given a unique DNA that can allow us to be remarkable leaders. Some of us have innate strengths that help us as leaders. Even though it doesn't matter if we don't do things to use those strengths and do things to improve in areas that are harder for us. Leaders change things for the better and first, they change themselves. To lead you're going to have to do something scary, you'll have to stand for some, and some people will criticise you. The worst detractor is found in the mirror and William Ury calls this 'your worthy opponent'. To be a successful leader is not about genetics, it's learning and improvement. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018; Sharpe, 2015.)

Leadership isn't management. The management skills are focused on things like processes, procedures, plans, budgets, and forecasts. Leadership skills focus on people, vision, influence, direction, and development. Both sets of skills need to be taken into consideration. Great leaders aren't necessarily great managers and vice versa. (Duggal, 2023; Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018.)

A good leader is made by developing and building qualities and not born by birth. Good leaders perform small positive actions every day to develop the personality they have. (Garga, 2022.)

2.1 The three levels of the leadership model

In 2011, James Scouller created a leadership model called the three levels of the leadership model. It was designed to be used as a practical tool for leadership presence, know hill and skill. The model aims to summarize what leaders have to do, not only having to bring

leadership to the organisation but also themselves as leaders both technically and psychologically. The model attempts to combine the strengths of older leadership theories as well as address their limitations and offer leaders ways to apply authentic leadership. (Scouller, 2011; Businessballs.com, 2012.)

In the model, there are three levels of leadership, public, private and personal. The first two levels public and private are the outer and behavioural levels. The two outer levels are what leaders have to do behaviourally with individuals and groups to address the "four dimensions of leadership". These are:

1) A shared motivating group purpose or vision
2) Action progress and results
3) Collective unit and team spirit
4) Individual selection and motivation

The third level is personal on an inner level and it refers to what leaders should do to grow their leadership presence and skill. It has three aspects:

1) Developing one's technical know hill and skill
2) Cultivating the right attitude toward other people
3) Working on psychological self-mastery

With this model, Scouller (2011) sees two aims. 1. To help leaders what they have to do in their role and 2. To help leaders understand how to develop themselves so they can behave powerfully, skilfully and flexibly while staying true to character and being authentic.

2.1.1 Public leadership

Public leadership are referring to the actions or behaviours that leaders are taking to influence two or more people at the same time. It could be in a meeting or when the leader is addressing a large group of people. Aspects of public leadership are focused on three main objectives; including setting and agreeing on a motivating vision or future for the organisation or the group to ensure the purpose of unity. It's also about creating positive peer pressure towards shared, high-performance standards and an atmosphere of trust and team spirit; and fostering effective group action and results. (Scouller, 2011.)

2.1.2 Private leadership

Private leadership focuses on the leader's one-on-one interactions with people. Although the fact that leadership entails fostering a sense of group cohesion, groups are made up of individuals with different goals, levels of confidence, backgrounds, and psychological profiles. As a result, they must be regarded as unique individuals, which highlights the need for private leadership. The intense discussions required by private leadership (such as performance reviews) can be unsettling for certain people. As a result, some private leadership actions may be avoided by leaders which lowers their effectiveness as leaders. According to Scouller, the closeness of private leadership causes avoidance behaviour either due to a lack of talent or due to bad self-image views that produce strong anxieties about what can occur in such meetings. This is why developing a leader's interpersonal skills and overcoming interpersonal phobias are so crucial. (Scouller, 2011.)

2.1.3 Personal leadership

Personal leadership examines the leader's intellectual, emotional, and moral growth and how it affects his or her presence, ability, and behaviour as a leader. In essence, it is the secret to making the two outer behavioural levels hypothesis work in real life. Personal leadership entails three elements: technical know-how and skill; the right attitude towards other people; and psychological self-mastery. (Scouller, 2011.)
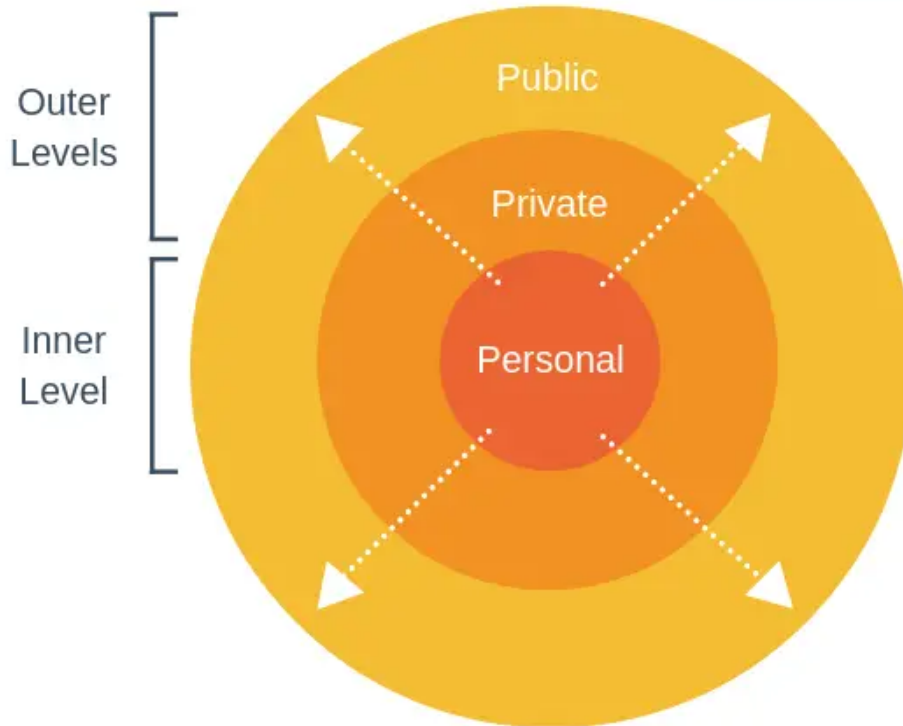
Figure 1. Three levels of leadership model. (Scouller, 2011)

2.2 The three O model of leadership

According to Eikenberry & Turmel (2018), when it comes to effective leadership there are three things we should keep in mind, or in this case specifically the three O's. Everything about leadership revolves around the three O's which are outcomes, others and ourselves. Outcomes refer to, you leading people to reach a desired outcome. Others refer to, you leading with and through other people to reach those outcomes. And Ourselves refers to, you can't leave yourself out of this model. While leadership is about outcomes and other people, none of that happens without you whether you like it or not. By themselves, they are all equally important, but each of these elements plays off the others. The three O's are a critical part of effective leadership but are even more important in a remote environment.

2.2.1 Outcomes

Organisations exist to reach outcomes of one sort or another. There are many types of goals objectives and targets. Reaching an outcome is an overlap between manager and leader, because you have to manage the details of the metrics, but also attend to the underlying

behaviours involved to reach them. By leading remotely, the focus on outcomes becomes even more important and can be harder to achieve. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018.)

Potential reasons why it's more important to focus on outcomes when leading remotely could be because of several reasons such as isolation, lack of environmental queues and potentially less repetition of messages. When people are working remotely, they are likely to be alone more of the time. Our ideas, our routines, and the things we prioritise form a bubble around us. This kind of isolation often leads to silos of the smallest nature, people are acting as if they were a team of one, solving the problems by themselves and making things happen from their home desks. If they don't receive direction, they gradually shift their attention from team goals to personal objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs). Wherever their workstation may be, leaders want proactive, motivated employees, but they also need to show them how their actions fit into the bigger picture. Finding as many strategies as you can to keep people focused on the outcomes is a part of the job of a distance leader. Online portals and other high-tech tools can and should be used for this. To keep everyone on the team on board, in sync, and focused on the aims and objectives of the team and the organisation, the leader needs to communicate as frequently and creatively as they can. At a distance, our jobs in communicating and outlining objectives could be harder. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018.)

2.2.2 Others

Several things compete for your attention as a leader. Budgets, projects, process improvements, new products, service development, sales, customer service and margins. When you don't know where to focus, instead of focusing on the pressing things you should focus on something different, others. Distance leaders focus on others, including coaching their team, communicating about priorities and projects, hiring, onboarding new team members and providing support and guidance. As a distance leader, you have to focus on others because you can't do it alone, you win when they win, you build trust when you focus on others, you build relationships when you focus on others, and you are more influential when you focus on others, team members are more engaged when you focus on them and lastly, you succeed on everything on your list when you focus on others. As a leader, you have to encourage, direct, and enable others in achieving worthwhile objectives and results.

You produce greater results for the company, the team, and yes, even for yourself when you keep that in mind and concentrate on them and their needs. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018.)

2.2.3 Ourselves

Fundamentally leadership is about outcomes and others. But who you are, what you believe and how you behave, have a huge impact on how effectively you do other things. The things you hold dear and consider are what make you who you are as a leader. They determine your course of action, how you interact with your team, your level of influence over them, and ultimately how your team will react to and perform under your leadership. Nevertheless, when you are leading from a distance, some of this is less obvious, and your views and assumptions are much more significant. Who you are and how you lead are important wherever your people work. Reasons, why this is important, are assumptions, intentions and making a decision. You must identify your assumptions about both yourself and those you lead, challenge them, and revise them when facts dictate. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018.)
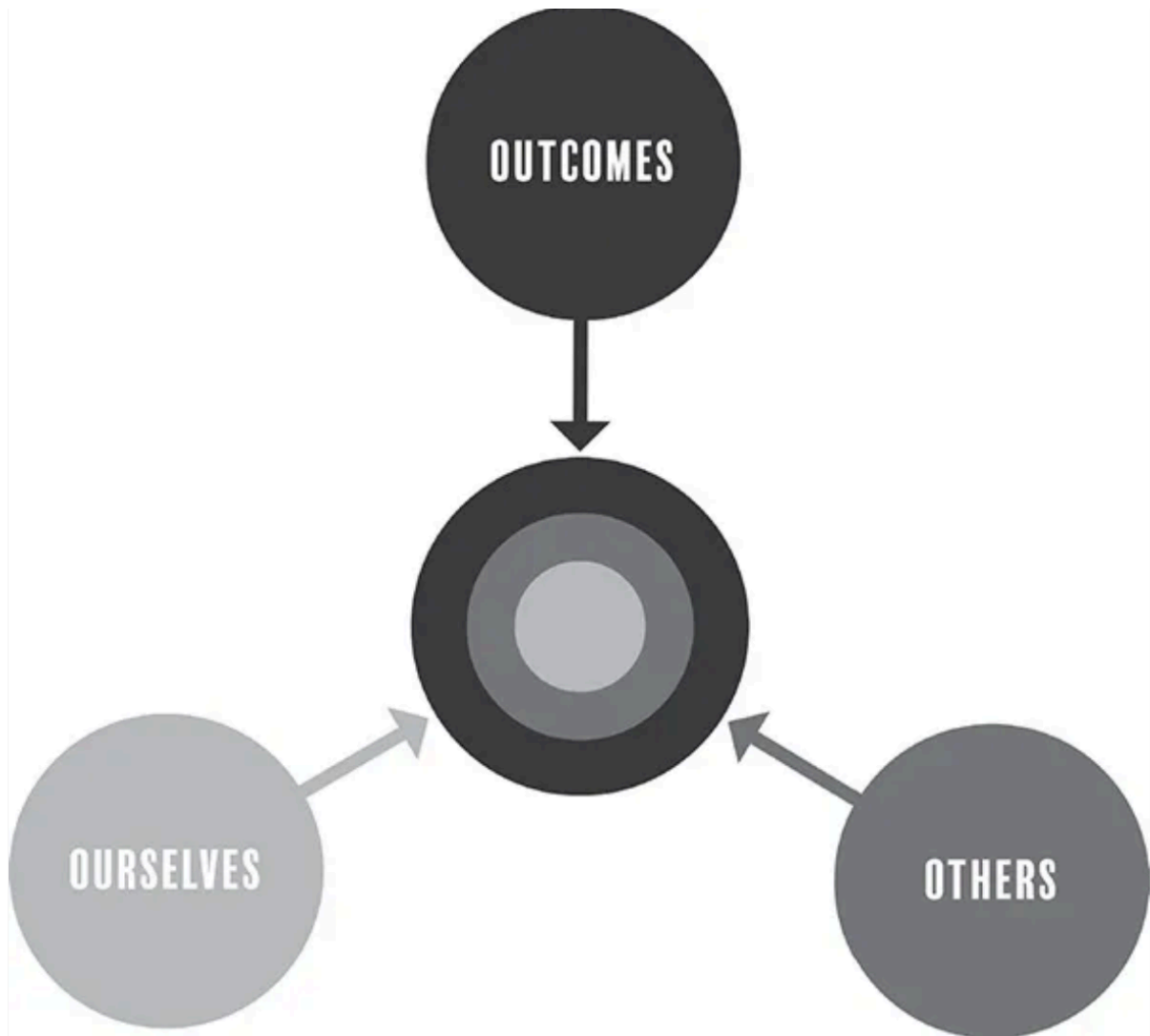
Figure 2. The three O model of leadership. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018)

3 Introduction to remote leadership

3.1 Concept of remote leadership

Distance leadership or remote leadership is the management of employees from a distance (Heinz, 2022). Leading a team remotely is first and foremost about leadership, and the principle of leadership hasn't changed. What instead has changed, is people working remotely in different places at different times. Organisations are looking for the best available talent, regardless of their geographical location, which has led them to use virtual collaboration. With those changes, how we manage to apply the timeless principle of

leadership in this new world matters. It matters for the team members, the organisation, and you as a leader. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018; DeRosa & Lepsinger, 2010.)

Leadership is a complex subject, it's not easy or simple. It's something that needs practice and study to get good at. When we add leading people from a distance, it gets even more complex in different locations. The dictionary defines leadership as a noun, leading as the action that defines leadership as a verb. Leadership is nothing that we have or possess, it's something we do. Even though virtual and remote teams continue to grow in popularity, it doesn't mean they are always being used and managed properly. (Eikenberry & Turmel 2018; DeRosa & Lepsinger, 2010.)

According to Knox (2016) leading remotely have more similarities than differences to leading face-to-face. The first fact is that the work still needs to get done and that the team members have assignments, tasks and duties that must be done on time and with high quality. When people know what to expect, it shouldn't matter where they are. Even though it's easy to avoid difficult conversations when leading remotely, it's inevitable to have them sometimes. Good leaders know when feedback is important and understand the importance of offering it honestly and appropriately. A skill many managers struggle with is delegating their work because you can only do so much. Two reasons why we should delegate are for development; people learn new skills by facing new challenges and a manager's head will explode if they don't delegate their work. When working remotely the trick to delegating is to do it equitably, you don't just pick the first person on your list, and you are establishing guidelines, metrics and check-ins that will allow the "delegatee" to succeed. Another thing when being in the same place is that we see when someone is banging their head on the monitor in frustration. In a virtual world, we are working with the information available to us. If we don't proactively seek input, we may not have the information we need to avoid problems or make good decisions. You still need the information, but you must go after it more purposefully and more often, rather than waiting for it to catch your eye. The number one factor in whether people stay in a team or leave a team is caused by the manager. If there's trust and good communication, and the person feels valued by the manager, it's more likely for the team to stick around. If those indicators aren't established, the team member will jump at the first opportunity offered. Virtual team members are statistically more likely to be picked by head-hunters or chase greener pastures unless they feel connected to the work, their teammates, and their boss. This concludes that remote leadership doesn't differ

that much from general leadership, it's more about how we do our jobs that have changed, but what we are supposed to do haven't.

3.2 Developing long-distance leaders

Having a clear picture of what kind of organisation you want to be or how the remote workforce fits into the culture you want to create is an important question to take into consideration. Leading a team remotely means there are certain skills and knowledge that might need to be added or addressed, in your learnings. Specific techniques of working remotely and particular strategies are something a leader needs to be aware of to help address and mitigate those differences. Tools and technology directly impact how leaders make the shift from traditional leadership to leading a team remotely. Important questions to think about with tools and technology are what tools you want them to use, do they know how to use them, what it looks like when the tool is being used effectively, and also helping them to leverage the application to facilitate an engaging, interactive and effective meeting which is more about facilitating and leadership than technology. Having tools is only helpful when you can use them properly and effectively. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018; Mayhew, 2020.)

Developing distance leaders is about connecting learning to work. Learning happens the fastest and best when it's directly related to the work people do, it has to be practical. Teaching individuals how to communicate effectively in a remote setting is useless if there are intranet bandwidth restrictions and corporate policy prohibiting webcam use, or if the company's servers are unstable. If everyone's key performance indicators (KPIs) are individually oriented—encouraging collaboration and teamwork during a workshop is useless. The available learning needs to be made in different ways. If your workplace is a complex mixture of people working in all sorts of locations, the ways to learn the related skills should reflect this reality. Learning is a process, and if people are going to transfer into distance leadership, it always needs to be a process as we learn skills over time, not all at once. (Dhawan & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2018; Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018.)

3.3 Remote leadership model

The remote leadership model represents three interworking gears that work together to propel remote work forward. The largest of the gears is called "Leadership & Management", the second one is "Tools & Technology" and is used to make the work happen at a distance. The smallest gear is "Skill & Impact" which is the ability to use the tools well, although it is the smallest gear of the three, you can't ignore it or dismiss its importance. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018.)

The leadership and management gear reminds us of our job as a leader and that the behaviours we are expected to do haven't changed, regardless of where people are working from. To improve your effectiveness as a leader the author suggests continuing to develop in competency areas such as continuous learning, championing change, communicating powerfully, building relationships, developing others, focusing on customers, influencing with impact, thinking and acting innovatively, valuing collaboration and teamwork, solving problems and making decisions, taking responsibility and being accountable, managing projects and processing successfully, setting goals and supporting goal achievement. The job of leading remains even if you are working remotely or not. Leading hasn't changed nearly as much as how we do it even if we are working remotely or not. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018.)

The tools and technology gear are considered to be the most important ones when leading remotely. It's about using the right tools to help get the work done, and what kinds of tools you are using. If you are using the wrong tool for the job, it can be frustrating and diminish your effectiveness. The skill and impact gears are the smallest and simplest concept and the easiest one to maintain, but often the ones that can cause the biggest problems. But if you can't use the tool you have chosen, all the hard work won't get the job done. It can undermine our credibility and effectiveness. This model shows that remote leadership is a difficult job where it's hard to excel. You are being asked to do your job in ways you haven't done it before and using tools you aren't familiar with. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018.)
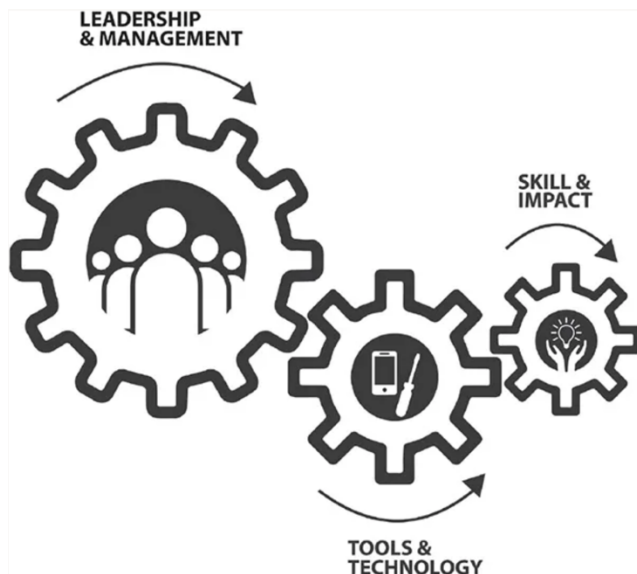
Figure 2. The Remote Leadership Model. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018)

3.4 Achieving outcomes at a distance

Leadership is all about reaching outcomes and helping your team reach outcomes at a distance can be tricky and is a bit different than face-to-face. Sometimes you might be wondering what the remote workers are doing and if they are even accomplishing anything. Instead of being focused on the activity, you should be focused on the accomplishment. Is it more important for you how hard people work or how people are doing their work, than that the work is done correctly and on time? After all, it's the outcomes you want to achieve. Having this kind of focus change is important, it shouldn't matter if someone is doing their laundry during the workday, as long as their work is getting done and the rest of the team doesn't suffer from the results. You might be someone who struggles to get things done in a quiet environment of working from home, but just because you are having the issue, doesn't mean everyone else struggles with it. If you are worried about your ability to lead team members to a successful outcome, you might have control issues. If people have been well-trained and have the tools they need, they will be successful in their work. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018; Hall, 2020.)

Leading a team successfully requires achieving goals of many types. You might be responsible for setting organisational targets or being responsible and helping your team reach these targets. The organisational goals and targets need to be crystal clear for you as a

leader so that you can help your team members successfully move towards achieving them. There are larger organisational goals, some paint the bigger picture and might seem harder to understand by your team. When you have your team in the same location, you catch side conversations, but when the team are working on their own these clarifications rarely happen. People must know how and what they do fits into the work and success of the team. They also need to know what outcomes they are responsible for, what targets they are shooting for and what qualifies as success. Individual goals are necessary even when people are essential to a cooperative effort. Beyond the short-term targets, they have to think beyond their role to their overall career development and as a leader, we have a role to play there too. Leaders need to be concerned with both team and individual results. When the team is working remotely collaboration is harder, and leaders need to be aware of this and facilitate this communication. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018.)

Working remotely can be like living alone on an island. There is less interaction and without solid, clear targets, individuals can drift, losing sight of both the big picture and their role too. That's why tools like electronic dashboards, intranets, and online project management systems are so important—they provide visibility even when people are miles apart. When people don't have any clue about the work of others, they are less likely to understand the questions they get from them, assume they aren't busy or their work isn't important, and much more. This lack of awareness and understanding can cause team rifts, poor communication, frustration, and conflict. As a leader, it is your responsibility to ensure people hear about the good work of their peers and get a chance to build trust in each other. It doesn't matter if you are busy or if it is hard to do—this is one of the remote leadership challenges you must accept. You also need to decide how often you'll check in with each team member on these metrics. This will help keep your remote team members from feeling either abandoned or micromanaged. (Bilal Nazir, 2014; Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018.)

Expectations are possibly more crucial than goals when working on a daily basis. Expectations aren't just about goals. They cover the procedures for working together, how you'll support and assist one another, the equipment you'll use, and what effective communication entails. When the expectations are clear and understood, the chances people will be successful are higher. Expectations provide clarity, it provides focus and set priorities, it provides context, and sharing expectations helps everyone understand both their own and the expectations of others in the group. Expectations must also be mutually agreed on, just

sending an email to someone without discussion doesn't create true clarity or an agreement. Setting clear, mutually understood expectations with team members is one of the most important things you can do as a leader. In doing so, you are doing the simplest thing you can to improve the chances that people will achieve the desired outcomes for their roles. The importance of doing this for the success and confidence of the other person, and your sanity, can hardly be overstated. It may seem that doing this remotely may be even more important because your team members are out on their own with less interaction with you to help guide and set expectations. Invest the time in your team members to help this become clear to them, regardless of work location, and you will give them a much clearer picture of the outcomes that will make them successful. (Eikenberry & Turmel, 2018.)

3.5 Challenges with remote leadership

Many organisations recycle the same guidelines and best practices they are using for their co-located teams and hope for the best. Quality leadership is essential for a remote team's success, and that's not an easy job. Distance leaders face similar challenges as those who lead in co-located teams. In a study made by DeRosa & Lepsinger (2010), where they asked 150 leaders to identify the top challenges when leading a team remotely. The following challenges were pinpointed: infrequent face-to-face contact, lack of resources, difficulties in building a collaborative atmosphere virtually, lack of time to focus on leading the team, shifting team and organisational priorities, and difficulties in managing poor performers.

Infrequent face-to-face contact was the top challenge in the study. Virtual team leaders reported that the lack of face-to-face contact makes it tougher to build trust within their teams, engage their teams, and monitor their team members' work. These challenges require leaders to change their approach when managing virtually. To expect that you can build a relationship on a conference call is naïve. Instead, simple things are important, such as calling on your way home to check in with people could have a huge impact. It's almost like popping into people's offices when working on-site. You need to figure out how to apply the same time of interaction that effective team leaders do when they are face-to-face. Lack of resources is something remote team leaders are frequently suffering from, and it's also a specific kind of resource, technology. Since the teams don't meet face-to-face, they must have the technology to effectively communicate and transfer information. Sometimes it was

difficult to gain access to the company's video conference technology because it was always booked. Other leaders were not able to use instant messaging because of company policy or videoconferencing because of restrictive security and firewalls— even though both technologies would have enhanced their teams' effectiveness. In addition, many teams lack the resources to cover travel expenses so they could periodically meet in person, a practice that would help them compensate for their technology shortfalls. Difficulty building a collaborative atmosphere virtually could be difficult to achieve when having large virtual teams and must work around differences in time zones. Encouraging and sustaining cooperation and collaboration in a virtual team environment is an intimidating challenge. But it's not too great to overcome. Group size isn't the only critical factor. There are certain conditions where cooperation is more likely to trump, it's when communication is clear when transparency exists when people understand what they can expect from the other person and how they will work together, and when the interests of individuals or groups are aligned. Lack of time to focus on leading the team, as team leaders often take on more work in addition to their work and get pulled into different directions and have little time to effectively manage a team. In many cases, the remote leader is leading many different teams at the same time. Shifting team and organisational priorities, while some leaders communicate goals up-front, they may neglect to inform when priorities shift. This becomes particularly a problem when you are leading a team in many time zones, where team members aren't informed about changes and priorities and goals, and instead waste time and resources because they weren't aware of the change. Difficulty managing poor performers, forty percent reported that employees aren't being held accountable for results. One of the most common reasons leaders fail to hold team members accountable is that they don't effectively communicate expectations—or for that matter, what "good" behaviours or deliverables even look like. Many leaders would rather attempt to wait out a problem than risk getting into a potentially contentious conversation with a team member. (DeRosa & Lepsinger, 2010.)

4 Remote leadership in practice

Before 2020, most of Upwork's employees already worked remotely from eight hundred cities around the world. The company had several traditional office locations for employees

who weren't ready for remote, but even the office receptionist was a virtual employee who managed multiple front desks from her home office. As they had done the research and had been a supporting pillar in the remote-work movement for long enough, but just kept hanging in their office space. It was time for them to become fully remote when a novel coronavirus started spreading. (Burkus, 2021.)

4.1 Building a shared identity in remote teams

Going remote can provide several obstacles as well as opportunities for teams and their leaders. Two components in particular—common awareness of one another's work habits and environment and shared identity among the team—present distinct challenges that leaders must address whether they are establishing a new team in a remote location or relocating an existing team there. (Burkus, 2021.)

According to a conventional theory of team development, there's controlled chaos in the early moments of the team's life. Team members are voicing their opinions and feel one another out and gradually settle into norms of behaviour and everyone learns about others working habits. As these kinds of models are created for face-to-face teams, it is the leader's responsibility to establish these norms while reducing conflicts in a remote team. That's where shared understanding comes in. It refers to the degree to which members of the team have a commonly held perspective on the team's expertise, assigned tasks, context, and preferences. Different team members have different kinds of knowledge, skills and abilities. On a remote team, team members will likely have various cultural backgrounds and different contextual constraints. This also occurs in face-to-face teams, but it's easier to misunderstand someone in a remote team. Team members need to know who knows what, who's taking on what responsibility, and also how to approach each person with requests for help—or offers of help. Providing team members with space to develop this shared understanding is crucial. Including purposely unstructured time to explore a variety of topics during team meetings or other times during the week is a straightforward approach to getting started. Giving the team space to talk about daily life events, family moments, or even industry news unrelated to the task at hand provides each team member with an opportunity to learn more about the others. (Burkus, 2021.)

Developing a shared identity is crucial for any team, but for a remote one, it's even more important. It refers to the extent to which team members feel the same sense of whom they are as a designated group. A strong shared identity in a team reduces conflict, standardises norms of behaviours, increases collaboration and ultimately enhances the team's performance. One strategy to develop a shared identity and to help motivate team members could be to brand your team by creating a group identity by developing a team logo, name, slogan or other insignia. Team branding can be a great way to establish strong group identification and build team pride. Having a subordinate goal, which is a goal that impacts everyone in the group and requires engagement from everyone in the group to be achieved, is a strong approach to developing a sense of team identity and a bond between team members (Deutsch, 1973). Studies of superordinate goals show that when multiple groups are brought together and tasked with something that requires them to choose between collaboration and failure—they choose collaboration more often. Superordinate goals may be the key to smashing silos and ending turf wars throughout an organization. And for a remote team, superordinate goals are the secret to shared identity. (Burkus, 2021; Citrin & DeRosa, 2021.)

People want a sense of purpose, and this need extends beyond their personal life. They want it at work as well. Organisations frequently discover this and portray this purpose in a way that makes employees feel their job is important. The mission statement may be a contributing factor, but it might also be that leaders are failing to explain how particular positions or teams contribute to the success of the objective. Creating a sense of purpose and meaning for your work, motivates the team. People want to join a crusade rather than a business. And as a leader, the greatest method to foster a shared purpose that produces a shared identity and even results in the growth of a shared understanding is to constantly emphasise how the work your team is doing is furthering the cause. (Burkus, 2021; Citrin & DeRosa, 2021; Turner, 2023.)

4.2 Building a positive team culture

The unstated beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, and customs that exist within an organisation are referred to as its culture. The culture of a team will have a significant impact on whether or not it succeeds, and it will have an even more significant impact on your sanity as the team leader. Company culture as an overachieving influence on team performance becomes less

relevant when the number of in-person teams decreases and the number of remote teams rises. This implies that it is your responsibility as a remote leader to establish the greatest team culture. Good interaction between leaders and subordinates increases team communication and collaboration, leading to job satisfaction. (Burkus, 2021; Tsai, 2011.)

Why certain teams function better than others was an ambitious question that Google's people analytics team posed in 2015. The study reveals five team culture components that appeared to explain how the top teams evolved into the best teams: Dependability: The extent to which team members were accountable to shared expectations; Structure and clarity: Whether the team had established roles and rules of engagement; Meaning: How much the team felt their work had significance; Impact: How much the team felt their work made a difference; Psychological safety: How much the team felt they could be vulnerable and authentic with one another. The degree to which team members feel free to share their thoughts, experiences and entire selves with the group is determined by their level of psychological safety. It makes the team members more open to sharing wacky concepts that might take the group in a different but ultimately brilliant route. Your team has to foster a climate of trust and respect if you want to create a culture of psychological safety. (Burkus, 2021.)

Trust is the first building block of psychological safety, and research shows that high-trust organizations have 74% less stress, 106% more energy, 76% more engagement, 50% more productive, and 13% fewer sick days than low-trust organizations. Leaders should create opportunities for individuals to feel trusted and share their thoughts and concerns openly, admit mistakes, take responsibility for performance concerns, and demonstrate respect in every interaction. It may become more difficult to notice a lack of psychological safety in a virtual setting, and leaders must be more intentional about this when some workers work from home. Leaders must focus on fostering an equal culture in which individuals feel confident speaking up, sharing concerns, and making mistakes. (Burkus, 2021; Citrin & DeRosa, 2021.)

Leaders should demonstrate respect in the workplace by being present and attentive when being in real-time conversations, engaging with others, and taking extra care not to talk over or interrupt others. This will help build psychological safety and create a thriving team culture that keeps the team productive, engaged, and fun to lead. A 2013 survey of more than

twenty thousand workers found that 54% of respondents don't regularly get respect from their leaders, which can lead to less engagement, turnover, less focus and productivity, fewer feelings of meaning and significance, and even greater healthcare costs for the organization. Respect is a learned behaviour and can be contagious, so leaders need to be present and attentive in their interactions with their employees. A respectful environment combined with a sense of trust between team members is a solid foundation for building psychological safety and psychological safety is the cornerstone of a positive culture. When team members trust and respect one another, conflicts ate more likely to be resolved positively to produce mutually beneficial outcomes. (Burkus, 2021; Citrin & DeRosa, 2021.)

4.3 Hiring and onboarding remote workers

After you have taken your team remotely and built a culture around psychological safety, depending on whom you are hiring next when you have an open position will affect whether your culture stays that way and will have an equally large effect on the team's performance. Choosing candidates that not only have the skills for the job but also have the right collaboration, communication and motivation habits to fit the team, is important because you need to know the answers to these three questions for potential remote workers: are they collaborators; are they communicators; are they self-motivated? In an office or a remote team, the means of production is between the ears of every employee, so it may be tempting to assume that this kind of work lends itself to working in isolation. But when it comes to remote work, the reality is that collaboration becomes even more vital to the success of the individual and the organisation. We've assumed for a long time that individual performance is the result of an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities. But the more we research, the more we learn that it's not quite that simple. Collaboration and team dynamics have a significant impact on individual performance. Talent flows from teams. If you want to get the best out of individuals, you need to make sure they work best with the team they will be joining. If you can't run a try-out, at least try to bring as many current team members into the interview process as possible. Especially in a remote team, this new hire won't be working for you as an employee who takes direct orders so much as working with you as a teammate who works independently toward mutually beneficial objectives. So it just makes sense to let the people who work with new hires be the ones deciding who gets hired. (Burkus, 2021.)

Next to collaboration, communication is likely the most influential factor in the success or failure of your team and your new hire. It was true for the world of in-person work, but it's even more true now in a remote-work world. The cover letter offers one of the best glimpses into the communication ability of candidates for remote teams. Looking deeply at the cover letter helps you decide if candidates are strong writers and if they can formulate an argument—the argument for why they're the right candidate. It's about how well they make the case for the job and how easy it is to understand their train of thought. And the cover letter is the first time they've been asked to do both for you and your team. It's not so much about their command of the English language, or even their ability to consult a thesaurus. What matters isn't how grammatically correct their language is. What matters is how well it fits into your existing team. If your team uses more emojis than adverbs, then your ideal candidate probably isn't the one with an MFA in English literature. (Burkus, 2021.)

The first two factors to consider in a remote candidate have to do with how well they work with their potential new team. Much of remote work is working alone, so the ability to be self-motivated still matters a lot. One great way to know if a candidate is self-motivated enough to work remotely is to examine how much they have done it in the past. If they've previously been on and thrived on, remote teams, that's a strong indication that they're able to motivate themselves to get to work. But if they haven't, there are still other clues. Have they ever worked as a freelancer or contract employee, or owned their own business? Even if they weren't ultimately successful in those endeavours (which is safe to assume, since they're looking for a new job), the reasons are highly variable and may have nothing to do with work ethic. But the experience of doing that type of work likely taught them how to get to work when no one was watching. If they've never worked remotely or independently, then it's worth examining other aspects of their life where they have to draw from self-motivation. (Burkus, 2021.)

Onboarding is usually a process driven by human resources and legal, but recent research suggests that these elements are the least important part of a new team member's success. To bring a new team member on board, it's important to prioritise connection over documentation. To do this, it is important to schedule a welcome video chat for the whole team to meet and greet their new colleague, or if that isn't an option—have each existing team member write and send a short welcome note and a reason why they're excited to see the new hire join the team. Additionally, it is important to ask the team to share what stood

out to them during the interview process, if you included them in that process and assign new team members a short task that requires them to meet each of their teammates over the course of the day. Putting connection over documentation also means making sure your new hire gets the resources and technology needed for a fast start. This includes sending any equipment ahead of time and creating usernames and passwords before the official start date. If necessary, assign another recently hired team member to walk them through the process. Additionally, if possible, add an in-person component to the onboarding process, such as welcoming and working alongside the new hire in person or aligning their start date with an in-person all-hands meeting. Finally, if possible, send a care package full of company swag or meaningful items selected by each team member. (Burkus, 2021.)

The most important details are to ensure that new hires have a one-on-one with the team leader at the beginning and end of their first day. As the team leader, the burden falls on you to make sure their concerns are addressed and, more important, that they know they can voice any new concerns freely. It's important to call the new hire at the end of their first day to ask them how it went and how they plan to celebrate a job well done, likewise to plan and meet with the new hires at the end of the first month and the first quarter to check in and see how positive or negative their onboarding experience has been, by doing this you have their vital feedback to improve the process for future hires. The people you choose to work on your remote team are one of the most important components of creating a successful team. Paying close attention to each candidate's skills and history with communication, collaboration and self-motivation during the recruiting process, will help with that. Working remotely makes teamwork more important, not less. The most significant influence on new hires' performance will come from those who work with them. So give them a say in who gets hired as well. Getting off to a strong start creates momentum from which to build and accelerate. (Burkus, 2021; Citrin & DeRosa, 2021.)

4.4 Building connections with a remote team

Working on a remote team can seem like it's somewhat lonely, versus an in-person team where you might feel forced to interact with and build connections. In a remote team, those organic interactivities must be replaced with deliberate ones. If it's done well, it can build deeper bonds with the team. Building bonds between teammates matter, but building them on

a remote team is one of the hardest tasks remote leaders take on. To go further and begin to build bonds you need to structure deliberately unstructured time for people to chat about both work and life. (Burkus, 2021.)

Find time for *fika*. The Swedish tradition translates simply as "to have coffee", *fika* is much more than just getting a warm drink. *Fika* is a ritual meetup between two people taking a break from work and socialising. The coffee is just an excuse to connect. Many remote companies have experimented with their digital *fikas* and found them to be vital tools for building connections. In the digital version, two people partner up to take a short break and chat about nonwork topics. It works best when the pairs are random, but leaders can also let people self-select while encouraging everyone to be deliberate about connecting with those with whom they don't chat often. Make sure these are scheduled during work hours so no one feels like it intrudes on their off-work time. And if you want to encourage *fika*, ask a few people to share what they learned during the next team call. (Burkus, 2021.)

Plan shared meals. Like *fika* but for the whole team. When in-person teams break for lunch or other meals, they bond over an activity that humans have shared for millennia. A 2017 study from Robin Dunbar found that people who eat socially are happier, are more engaged in the community, and have more friends. You might not be able to re-create a communal, shared meal across a large circular table with your whole team, but you can add shared, virtual meals to everyone's calendar. Lawyerist, which holds regular Taco Tuesday lunches where team members join a video call to share lunch. Simulating the communal meal, teammates order tacos from their favourite local restaurant. It's completely optional to join, but anyone who shows up and shows their tacos gets the cost of the meal covered by the company. (Burkus, 2021.)

Partnering with teammates for work sprints allows for a balance between working in isolation and feeling like they are not alone. In a work sprint, two or more people sign into a videoconference and, after exchanging a few hellos, settle into focusing on work. Their videos stay on, but the application moves to the back of everyone's desktop while they focus on their work and work in silence. Breaks are scheduled at a designated stopping point but are not required. It gives a small opportunity to connect and engage, but research has shown that people are motivated to work harder in a variety of ways when others are watching. People for example run faster, are more creative, and work harder on math problems when

they know that someone is watching them. The trick isn't to signal to employees that Big Brother is always watching, but to invite them to find a partner on the team to help keep them accountable, and vice versa. (Burkus, 2021.)

Hold office hours and encourage others to do the same. If tactics like *fika* or work sprints feel too structured or inauthentic, encourage your team to set regular office hours when they're available for work-related or non-work-related discussion. You could do this as an open video call that's just left on for people to jump into, or an open block of time on the calendar for anyone to reserve. Office hours are one of the most effective meetings for business school professors, and office scavenger hunts can be done regularly to build shared expectations. Additionally, team rituals can be created, such as a set of core values and wristbands, or a regular "talk" series where different members come prepared with a five-minute lecture on any topic that interests them. These rituals can create a sense of group identity and build trust and can be both meaningful and playful. For example, one group developed a set of core values and wristbands so that participants reflect on the values and choose one wristband to wear to signal to others their focus for the meeting. Rituals can be combined with other bonding elements, such as Lawyerist's Taco Tuesday. These six activities are a great place to get started, but it is up to the team to decide which activities become traditions. As the team grows and works together longer, it should consider instituting one specific tradition: the on-site. Meeting in person and occupying the same physical space is still one of the fastest ways to build connections. If the team can't bring the whole team together as often as they'd like, they can help coordinate their in-person visit when they happen to travel near each other. Remote teams work well, but only if the team truly feels like a team. If the team takes deliberate steps to build bonds between individual members of the team, and maybe even bring the team together physically, they will find they have brought them much closer together emotionally, and more emotional bonds will quickly turn into more team wins. (Burkus, 2021.)

Meeting in person and occupying the same physical space is still one of the fastest ways to build connections. Ideally, a company with remote teams should get all its employees together on a fairly regular basis to focus on high-level strategy, goal setting, and other companywide initiatives, while also providing ample time for socialisation. If the team can't bring the whole team together as often as they'd like, they can help coordinate their in-person visit when they happen to travel near each other. If the team truly feels like a team, they can

take deliberate steps to build bonds between individual members of the team, and maybe even bring the team together physically, to bring them much closer together emotionally. This will quickly turn into more team wins. (Burkus, 2021.)

4.5 Effective communication strategies

Coordinating work becomes even more important when the whole team is working in isolation. Communicating virtually means setting the right expectations about what types of communication are used and how often. The goal of it is to talk about the work being done and still leave enough time to do it. Communication isn't just communication. It's both asynchronous communication and synchronous communication. Setting expectations for when to use each and creating norms around each goes a long way. (Burkus, 2021.)

There are a lot of types and tools to help people keep connected. Asynchronous communication can be email, message board, comments on shared documents or a group chat. Whatever tool is chosen for communication, it has to be truly asynchronous. This means that the communication forum needs to be paired with the expectation that people won't respond immediately. Communicating about work is rarely as productive as doing the work itself, and if remote workers are expected to always be available for communication, that benefit is not there anymore. Having shared expectations and norms of communication should be the default mode of communication. Not just because it frees everyone's calendar from too many meetings, but it also respects the varied work schedules the calendars are structured around. (Burkus, 2021.)

When synchronous conversations are called for, it's tempting to assume that our technologies have made these kinds of discussions so much easier and better. Usually, here a phone call is better to reach for first before you send a calendar invite for a video call. Modern technology makes it tempting to jump on a call with someone every time you want to communicate something. Reminding yourself that uninterrupted work is one of the core benefits of working remotely and filling your people's days with calls works against that benefit. (Burkus, 2021.)

Setting expectations and norms for communication will have a drastically positive impact on the team's productivity. Even if every team member might be working by themselves,

choreographing that work requires deliberate communication, without the guidelines, teammates can fall into the trap of finding themselves repeating the work of someone else on the team. Every great remote team has clear norms and expectations for what, when, how and how often they communicate. (Burkus, 2021.)

4.6 Effective virtual meetings

In a virtual meeting, the positives and potential negatives are underlined. It might be the only time of the week or month that you get your whole team together at the same time, and it's your best chance for making them feel like they truly belong in the team and are a part of it. But if their feelings after every meeting are that "this could have been an email", it's going to shape their feelings about the overall team as well. (Burkus, 2021.)

Inefficient meetings are not just roadblocks to productivity. They can also kill motivation and engagement, sapping employees of their commitment to their work – leaving them thinking, "Why do I need to even be here?" Because these meetings are often the primary means of communication and collaboration for virtual teams, making them effective and engaging is crucial – but because the shift to video meetings was so sudden, very few leaders were trained on how to lead meetings effectively in this medium. (Citrin & DeRosa, 2021.)

Effective virtual meetings should be planned with a purpose. The reason can be that you want to connect everyone, but you'll need to tell the team. It will make the planning process easier, as people will have realistic expectations about what will be discussed. Other solid reasons for a meeting could be generating ideas, and making a decision. One purpose per meeting should be the rule of thumb, any more purposes and the meetings should be broken up into two smaller meetings. Not everyone in the team needs to be at every meeting and every invite that's sent is a distraction from the real work they want to do. For every meeting there should be the right agenda, having that lets everyone know it is an effective meeting. Every meeting should start on time, in a virtual setting if the meeting is started on time, some of the time of the meeting will go to socialising. By opening the meeting line ten minutes earlier and letting people casually come in, the meeting can always start on time. In the meeting, there should be someone documenting unforeseen issues, new ideas and action items that come from decisions to make sure of what ideas were presented and who committed to take what action

on them. As the meeting was built with an agenda with a purpose, it's also important to stay on topic. When the meeting time draws to a close, bring everyone back together with a quick review of what just happened. Call the meeting to a close at or before the planned time, but leave the line open for people to continue socialising afterwards. (Burkus, 2021.)

4.7 Creative thinking with your team

Leaders often face the problem to gather people and brainstorm. When you study the methods of some of the world's most creative companies, you notice pretty quickly that creative thinking isn't a meeting, it's a process. Brainstorming is a part of the process, but it's not the entire process. Real work begins many steps beforehand. Brainstorming can be done on a video call, but it shouldn't be the only meeting you have when working on a problem. When looking at the creative problem-solving process and the limitations of remote teams, you will probably need at least three different meetings at three points in the process. (Burkus, 2021.)

When you need to think creatively with your team to solve a problem, don't schedule one long meeting. Instead, schedule three meetings over the course of several days, a problem meeting, an idea meeting and a decision meeting. Start with the problem meeting, which purpose of the meeting is to discuss the problem. The goal of the first meeting should be to step back and determine what problem, will have the most benefit if it's chosen to be solved. What's most important is to stay focused on discussing potential causes of the problems as well as constraints. Once the problem is explored and written down, it's time for the idea meeting. It is the type of meeting that mostly resembles brainstorming. Everyone should be familiar with the background and relevant experience of everyone else, then briefly outline the problem you discovered, the constraints and the problem question "How might we ____?". Depending on the team and the problem there should have some guidelines in place to encourage everyone to speak and minimize distractions. The goal of the meeting isn't to have the final solution, but once there's a list of ideas, it might be worth narrowing it down and combining options. The final meeting, the decision meeting, doesn't need to be a separate meeting unless the attendee list would change drastically between the meetings. But there should be some kind of break between the two meetings. These three meetings ensure you've fully examined the problem, generated multiple solutions and arrived at one of the best possible outcomes. (Burkus, 2021.)

Deliberately planning out problem-solving meetings will go a long way toward making sure your team is thinking most creatively. As the team leader, you're most likely to become the facilitator. The virtual meeting facilitator plays a crucial role in making v-meetings a worthwhile experience. He or she guides the process, encourages suggestions, keeps the team on track, creates a positive climate, and anticipates pitfalls. Great facilitators are prepared to interrupt discussions when necessary to realign the team with the meeting's goal, refocus it on the agenda, and help it improve its productivity. (Burkus, 2021; Citrin & DeRosa, 2021.)

For the idea meeting, open with a warm-up, a quick warm-up activity gets everyone ready to generate ideas fast and furiously. There may be a creativity muscle that needs to be warmed up. A warm-up activity helps the group get comfortable with one another by respecting and responding to ideas. If everything goes properly, these meetings will be lively. During discussion portions, make sure everyone can see and hear everyone else, as it is hard to spot cues in a virtual setting. Adding periods of silent generation and silent reflection increases the number of perspectives shared and enhances the overall creativity of the group. The larger an attendee list gets, the quieter each person's voice becomes, why it's useful to leverage breakout rooms. Giving clear instructions on how long the breakout lasts, and how to capture ideas from the breakout room and bring them back. One of the most common ways to get stuck during the decision meeting is to have people to over-discuss the strengths and weaknesses of various ideas. If the list of possible options is long, adding a round of ranked-choice voting to narrow it down could be useful. So that the ideas that didn't receive any votes can be taken off the table. Applying some of these when facilitating will help the meeting run more smoothly and help participants feel more included and make it more likely that they will contribute in the future. (Burkus, 2021.)

4.8 Balancing engagement and distractions

One very common misconception about leading remote teams is that it's harder to keep employees engaged. In-person companies believe that the office perks such as free food keep their people focused and motivated. But in reality, the ability to work remotely often significantly increases employees' focus and motivation. For remote employees engagement isn't about helping them work harder, it's about making sure they don't work too hard and

helping them limit distractions. Part of keeping people engaged depends on relationships: the more that people trust each other, the more engaged they tend to be. (Burkus, 2021; Citrin & DeRosa, 2021.)

For decades many corporate America made jokes about working from home is a synonymous with "not working". But the jokes don't reflect the real experiences of many remote workers. More often than "not working", working remotely leads to overworking and burnout. (Burkus, 2021.)

A study of more than seven hundred remote workers across three organisations felt that their employer had done them a favour by giving them flexible working conditions. To compensate for this, remote workers intensified their efforts at work, this intensification came in many forms. It could be working longer hours, shifting hours and doing work tasks during what was supposed to be family time or even continuing to work when fighting an illness that would have kept them from a traditional office. The results were the same in any case, workers almost always worked harder than they originally planned for or agreed upon and working longer hours with less distinction between work time and downtime, is the equation for burnout. Fortunately, that equation can be reversed. (Burkus, 2021.)

By setting "business" hours, that don't need to be normal nine-to-five business hours, but there are very real benefits to working when everyone else is and tackling little else outside of those hours. If you want to stay focused at work and avoid working too much, you will have to develop a set schedule for when you're working and when you're not. Sometimes, in addition to setting established hours, you need to establish a good ritual to signal that it's time to end the day. That could be clearing out your email inbox, or scheduling times tomorrow when you're going to tackle outstanding tasks. The important thing to remember is that it's about saying when enough is enough and refocusing on other elements of your life. Working from home makes it all too easy for work to become your life. (Burkus, 2021.)

On the opposite side of the path is a ditch that pulls us toward not working, distractions. Distractions aren't unique to remote work. The in-person office is probably a more distracting space than a home office or coffee shop. Establishing a few boundaries between work and life will go a long way toward limiting distractions. Creating different "zones" in the home where work is done and where it's not can help develop mental boundaries that limit distractions.

All the physical boundaries in the world won't matter if the people in your life don't respect them. Friends, family and especially children are likely to consider the days you're working from home as days you're merely at home and hence available to them. If you've set up a routine, make it clear that they should consider you occupied during those times. One of the easiest ways for distractions to creep up on us is when we have very little structure in our day. To avoid this, think of your day as blocks of time where only certain tasks are done at certain times. This could mean the first ninety minutes of every day are spent on emails and communication, then, after a short nature break, the next ninety minutes are spent focused on larger projects. Keeping your people and yourself engaged is a constant priority for any leader. If you establish some guardrails and encourage your people to do the same, you'll be able to increase the likelihood that they'll stay productive and healthy over the journey. (Burkus, 2021.)

4.9 Celebrating departures and saying goodbye to team members

Part of setting a remote team up for success is helping them say goodbye, not only so that remaining teammates stay engaged, but also so the whole team is best prepared for new teams and teammates. Saying goodbye is never easy and when a teammate announces that they're leaving, it's always bittersweet. Smart remote leaders should celebrate departures for two reasons: the first is that leaving a job doesn't mean losing touch with the rest of the team, and the second is that people will be watching the way you treat departing employees. To make sure either element doesn't backfire, it is important to respond with grace and celebration when teammates announce they are leaving. (Burkus, 2021.)

Showing appreciation and excitement for your teammates and focusing on the high points of the relationship instead of trying to "win" to end it amicably. This is especially true if the reason for finding new work was driven by disappointment with the team. Ask them how they want to handle the announcement and plan for a graduation ceremony of some sort. Everyone has different levels of comfort when it comes to these situations, so honour their preference as much as possible. Make sure to show appreciation and excitement to the rest of the team as well. Prepare your comments ahead of time to express appreciation and excitement for the departure. Lay out your perspective that departures are less a betrayal and more a celebration, and don't worry about struggling to find the right words. Make a plan for

logistical issues such as shutting down usernames and passwords and collecting company property, and communicate it before the teamwide announcement. You don't want to end up like a remote manager whose disgruntled employee drove his company car eight hours to a Chicago airport, parked it in the economy lot, and boarded a one-way flight back home. All because his manager had only asked him to bring his "laptop and keys" to the exit interview and didn't mention the car, so he decided to make a statement on his way out of the company. (Burkus, 2021.)

As members of your team will move on, you will most likely also grow out of the position of being their leader at some point. it is important to break the news to the team on the same day that you inform your manager. This is especially important in remote teams, where rumours will circulate if you wait until the all-hands call later on in the week. If you have time and desire, you can reach out to a few closer members of the team to give them more personal notice. When making the announcement, it is important to show appreciation for the team and recognition for what they have achieved together. This call is the time to explain how you want to stay in touch with your team in a digital age. You should give them the email address or specific social network you prefer to use. (Burkus, 2021.)

5 Results

The empirical data goes over the idea of leadership and its importance in businesses. Leadership is a decision and behaviour towards others rather than an action that is always connected to a position of authority. It asserts that good leaders are those who inspire and empower their team members and that leadership is a responsibility rather than a power grab. Anyone can become a good leader through learning and development. Leadership is a chance to enhance the lives of others. The content emphasises that a model is a useful tool for enhancing one's presence and leadership abilities, and it seeks to integrate the advantages of earlier theories of leadership while resolving their drawbacks. The model proposed in this content is based on the idea that leadership is a process that involves both the leader and the followers, and it highlights the importance of communication, motivation, and trust in achieving successful outcomes. By adopting this model, leaders can create a positive impact on their team members and ultimately enhance their overall performance.

Due to isolation, a lack of environmental clues, and perhaps less repetition of messages in a remote setting, the emphasis on outcomes becomes even more crucial. To keep the team on the same page, leaders must develop methods for maintaining people's attention on the end goal, communicate regularly and creatively, and use internet portals and other high-tech tools. For distance leaders, focusing on others is equally essential. This includes coaching the team, communicating about priorities and projects, hiring and onboarding new team members, and offering support and assistance. Who they are and how they lead have a significant impact on their success. Leaders need to identify their assumptions about themselves and those they lead, examine them, and change them as necessary.

The idea of remote leadership, or the supervision of workers from a distance, emphasises that the fundamentals of leadership have not changed and that leading a team remotely is essentially about leadership. People working remotely at various times and locations have, however, altered how we apply these concepts. Businesses employ virtual collaboration because they want to hire the best talent available, regardless of where the person is located.

To become proficient in leadership, which is a hard subject, one must practise and study. Leadership is a behaviour we engage in rather than a quality we have. According to the text, face-to-face leadership and distant leadership are more similar than dissimilar. It states that regardless of where team members are, there is still work to be done and that all assignments, tasks, and duties must be completed on time and to a high standard. The significance of distributing work fairly and setting up rules, measurements, and check-ins to ensure the team members' success.

The significance of trust and effective communication in remote leadership explains that the leader has the most influence on whether team members remain on the team or leave. Team members are more likely to stay on the team if they feel appreciated and connected to the work, their co-workers, and their supervisor. On the other hand, team members are more inclined to depart and look for alternative chances if those signs do not develop.

The value of creating long-distance leaders who have the abilities and expertise required to successfully manage a distant workforce, when creating remote leadership strategies, the culture and objectives of the company should be taken into account. Technology and tools are also crucial in assisting leaders in the transition from traditional leadership to remotely

managing a team. It's essential to make sure that leaders can use these tools, though. If employees are going to transition into distance leadership, learning needs to be practical, tied to work, and constantly a process.

The remote leadership paradigm consists of three interdependent gears: tools and technology, skill and impact, and leadership and management. The most important gear is leadership and management, which emphasise that a leader's responsibilities are the same whether or not the team is working remotely. It advises that leaders should keep enhancing their skills in areas like connection development, compelling communication, supporting change, and constant learning.

When managing remotely, the second gear, tools and technology, is regarded as being the most crucial. The ability to utilise these tools successfully is a skill that impacts gear, and it's crucial to do so to do the work efficiently. Leaders' credibility and efficiency may suffer if they are unable to effectively employ the instrument they have been given.

The remote leadership paradigm recognises that managing others remotely can be challenging since it necessitates using tools and methods that are foreign to the leader. The model emphasises how crucial it is for all three gears to function effectively to advance remote work.

The material covers the difficulties of managing a distant workforce to get results, the significance of emphasising accomplishment over activity, and making sure that the team's leader and members have a clear understanding of the goals and objectives. Career development and personal objectives should also be taken into account. Tools like electronic dashboards and online project management systems are required for providing visibility and developing trust between team members because the absence of contact and visibility in a remote team might lead to communication challenges. Success depends on having clear and fully understood expectations for teamwork, equipment use, and communication. These expectations should be established through discussion rather than by sending an email. Regardless of the team member's location, making the effort to create clear expectations may help them have a much greater understanding of the results that will make them successful.

The difficulties that leaders of remote teams must overcome are covered in the text. These issues include rare face-to-face interactions, a lack of resources, the inability to create a collaborative environment electronically, a lack of time to concentrate on team leadership, shifting team and organisational priorities, and the inability to manage underachievers. According to the text, having rare face-to-face interactions is the biggest obstacle because it is more difficult to establish trust, motivate team members, and keep an eye on their work. Lack of resources, particularly in terms of technology, is a problem since it can make it difficult to share information and communicate effectively. It can be challenging to create a collaborative environment electronically, especially when working with large virtual teams and different time zones. Another issue is that remote leaders sometimes take on several jobs, leaving them with little time to effectively manage their employees. Problems might arise when organisational priorities change and team members are not notified of the adjustments. Managing underachievers can be difficult since leaders may fail to communicate expectations or hold team members accountable for their performance. Leaders must be aware of these issues and make an effort to address them because distant leadership necessitates a different strategy than conventional leadership.

In the text, the pros and cons of remote leadership are discussed. Upwork is used as an example of a business that successfully made the switch to remote work before the COVID-19 pandemic. In a distant context, it emphasises the value of team members creating a shared understanding and identity.

The level of agreement among team members regarding the group's knowledge, tasks, context, and preferences is referred to as the shared understanding. Leaders should provide the team members with the time and space they need to create this shared understanding, including purposefully unstructured periods during team meetings or other times of the week. This strategy can lessen disagreements and miscommunications that might occur in remote teams.

On the other side, shared identity refers to the degree to which team members have a similar sense of whom they are as a chosen group. In a remote team, forging a strong shared identity can lessen friction, standardise behavioural standards, foster greater collaboration, and ultimately improve the team's performance. By establishing subordinate goals that necessitate participation from every member of the group, leaders can promote a sense of

shared identity. In particular for remote teams, superordinate goals may be the solution to breaking down organisational silos and putting an end to turf conflicts.

By highlighting the significance of cultivating a shared purpose that generates a shared identity and even leads to the development of a shared understanding, leaders should consistently emphasise how the work being done by their team is advancing the cause because people want to feel like they have a purpose. This strategy can provide workers with a sense of purpose in their work and enable them to contribute to the achievement of the goal.

The importance of creating a supportive team culture is covered in the material. The effectiveness of a team and job happiness can both be significantly influenced by an organisation's culture, which includes beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, and rituals. The task of creating the best team culture falls to remote leaders as the number of remote teams rises.

One research was done in 2015 by Google's people analytics team, which found five factors that helped explain how top teams improved over time to become the best teams. Dependability, structure, clarity, meaning, effect, and psychological safety are some of these elements. The level of psychological safety that team members enjoy affects how freely they can express their ideas, life experiences, and whole selves to the group.

The foundation of psychological safety is trust, and research has shown that high-trust workplaces include less stressed employees who have more energy, are more engaged, are more productive, and take fewer sick days. Leaders should foster environments where people can be open and honest about their views and concerns, admit mistakes, take ownership of issues with performance, and treat others with respect at all times.

Leaders must be present and attentive in their interactions with their staff since respect is a learned behaviour that can spread. Building psychological safety requires a respectful working environment and mutual trust among team members, and psychological safety is the foundation of a healthy culture.

The necessity of selecting the best people for a remote team is discussed in the text, with an emphasis on teamwork, communication, and self-motivation. It's crucial to take into account candidates' collaboration, communication, and self-motivation skills when making a

recruiting decision for a remote team. The text makes the case that a candidate's communication skills may be seen in their cover letter and that it's crucial to put connection ahead of documentation during the onboarding process. Experience working remotely, whether as a freelancer or contract worker, might be a useful indicator of a candidate's capacity for self-motivation.

The text offers several strategies for remote team leaders to foster relationships among their team members. Scheduling digital *fikas*, a Swedish tradition when two people get together to socialise and take a break from work is one of the techniques. Planning shared meals is an additional strategy that mimics the social interaction of dining together in person. Work sprints are another option, in which two or more team members join up for a video call and collaborate while the video is still on. Members of the team may feel more inspired to work when others are looking, thanks to this. Team members can be made accessible for work- or non-work-related discussions throughout office hours. It is possible to hold office scavenger hunts where each team member demonstrates and discusses personal items in their workspace. All of these techniques can promote a stronger sense of community among remote team members.

The relevance of virtual collaboration and communication in remote teams is covered. Setting expectations about the sorts of communication to use and when to use them is necessary for effective communication, which is vital for the success of remote teams. To enable employees to focus on their job without interruptions, asynchronous communication platforms, including email, message boards, comments on shared documents, and group chats, must be asynchronous. The usage of synchronous dialogues should be limited, and a phone call may be preferable to a video call in some situations. The text stresses the importance of establishing clear communication rules and expectations in remote teams because doing so can greatly increase productivity and reduce duplication of effort.

Organising meetings virtually effectively necessitates having a purpose and an agenda that are both clear. It's crucial to keep meeting invitations to a minimum and make sure the appropriate people are invited. Meetings should begin promptly, but it's a good idea to open the meeting queue a few minutes early to allow for light conversation. Documenting any fresh thoughts and action items that surface throughout the meeting is also essential. To make sure that the meeting was beneficial, stay on topic and go over what was addressed at the end.

The meeting should conclude at or before the scheduled hour, although the line can stay open for individuals who want to stay and chat.

Creative thinking is a process that involves brainstorming rather than just a meeting. An issue meeting, an idea meeting, and a decision meeting are necessary at least three times during the process for a remote team to think creatively. These gatherings ensure that the issue is thoroughly investigated, that several ideas are developed and that the best solution is ultimately reached. To get everyone acquainted with one another and spark quick idea generation, the team leader should run these meetings and incorporate warm-up exercises. Make sure everyone can see and hear one another during the conversation segments, and introduce silent generation and contemplation moments to broaden the variety of viewpoints offered. Large guest lists should be utilised by using breakout rooms, and clear instructions on how to record ideas from the breakout room should be provided. Ranked-choice voting can be used to reduce the number of alternatives if the list is lengthy. These actions will improve the meeting's efficiency and increase the likelihood that attendees will contribute in the future.

The material addresses the myth that it is more difficult to keep remote workers motivated and focused when working from home. To avoid distractions and preserve work-life balance, remote employees must establish boundaries and a plan because they frequently face overwork and burnout. It is emphasised the value of developing a routine with set aside periods for particular work, setting "business" hours, and creating mental and physical boundaries to prevent distractions. Leaders must place a high priority on maintaining the engagement and health of their remote workers by establishing boundaries and motivating others to do the same.

In a remote team environment, saying farewell to departing peers is important because leaving a job does not mean losing contact with the rest of the team. The material emphasises the significance of celebrating departures. People will also be watching how the leader handles departing staff members. The text stresses the necessity to prepare for a graduation ceremony, express gratitude, and respond with grace and celebration. Making and discussing a plan before the team announcement is also essential for practical difficulties like locking down accounts and passwords and gathering corporate property.

As a remote team leader, one could eventually outgrow their role as their leader. On the same day, the manager is notified, it is crucial to inform the team. Additionally, it is crucial to express gratitude to the team and acknowledge the accomplishments they have made together. The text concludes by recommending that the team should be given an email account or a specific social network to use for communication.

Overall, the material thoroughly analyses remote leadership and emphasises the significance of tailoring leadership ideas to the evolving workplace. It emphasises the importance of effective delegation, trust, and communication in managing remote teams.

6 Discussion

This thesis attempted to cover relevant literature on distance leadership and in this chapter, we will discuss the results of the literature review and answer the previously stated research questions. We will analyse how the results relate to existing research regarding distance leadership discussed in preceding chapters; how the results can be used to fill the gaps in contemporary research and also develop strategies and best practices for effective remote leadership.

Based on the results of the theoretical framework it is evident that remote leadership is not that much different than leading a team face-to-face, leading a team is first and foremost about leadership and that principle hasn't changed. The thing that mainly distinguishes them is that the team is working remotely in different places and at different times. As the work still needs to get done, and the team members have their assignments and task that needs to be done on time and with high quality. It is significant to highlight that the majority of the theories and concepts discussed in this thesis have strong connections to distance leadership research conducted in English-speaking or Western cultures.

The thesis process followed a literature review, which is useful to identify gaps in previous research. The data was collected with grounded theory as it is a suitable method when collecting data. Distance leadership is a relatively new area of study that hasn't yet been studied thoroughly, let alone implemented in organisations that have switched to working remotely. The general frameworks available for leading a team are relevant to any kind of

team thinking to switch to remote working, and by studying the area we can entwine how contemporary research can help organisations lead successfully in a remote work setting.

Some limitations that I found by using the method were the possibility for bias, the constrained scope, and the lack of original data are some of the limitations of literature review research. It is crucial to carefully choose sources and undertake a thorough analysis to make sure that the review is fair, complete, and current in order to get around these constraints. Additionally, it would be advantageous to use primary research techniques, like surveys or interviews with distance leaders, to expand on the findings of the literature analysis and give the study more depth.

It has previously been argued that distance leadership is crucial to any organisation as more and more will be switching to working remotely in the future. Implementing good leadership and ensuring the team's success creates a win-win situation for your team.

The thesis aimed to answer the following questions:

> How do you effectively lead a team from afar?

> How can contemporary research on distance leadership help organisations lead more efficiently in a remote work setting?

Many factors go into effectively leading a team from a distance. Leadership is viewed as an activity, a responsibility, and an opportunity. It focuses on people, vision, influence, direction, and development. Leadership is a complex subject that requires regular practice and additional study to master. When leading a team remotely, it is critical to have a clear vision of what kind of organisation you want to be or how the workforce will fit into the culture you want to create. Tools and technology have a direct impact on how efficiently you can lead a team remotely, but they are only useful if you know how to utilise them. Having clear expectations and having them understood by the team increases the likelihood of success because it offers clarity, and concentration, and sets priorities and context. It is one of the simplest ways to increase the likelihood that people will achieve the expected results for their work.

The team members need to know who knows what, who is taking on what task, and how to approach each individual on the team when asking for help if they have a shared awareness of each other's work habits and environment. Having a shared identity refers to team members feeling a sense of belonging to the team, which enhances collaboration and lowers team conflicts. This is critical when leading a team efficiently from a distance since people seek a sense of purpose at work. Creating the best team culture boosts team communication and collaboration, which leads to job happiness.

Ensuring psychological safety allows team members to be receptive to discussing outlandish ideas that may lead your team down an even more exciting path in your project. It is your obligation as a team leader to foster that environment and to be polite in the workplace, as this contributes to psychological safety. Effectively leading a team includes the hiring process, where you have the potential to influence whether your culture will remain intact and have a significant impact on the team's performance. Working on a remote team may appear to be lonely at first, but it enables deeper relationships to be formed with the team by organising deliberate encounters, such as having *fika*, planning shared meals for the entire team, and partnering up with teammates for work sprints. By following the steps listed above, you can assure that you will be able to effectively lead your team remotely.

By applying the tactics outlined above, contemporary research on distance leadership can assist organisations in becoming more effective leaders. It also entails determining who needs to be on specific team calls and who can skip them to ensure that everyone on the team has adequate time to complete the work for which they were hired. Another critical step is to establish "guidelines" for remote working. As of present, firms apply the same techniques used in their face-to-face teams to their remote teams, which does not work. When attracting new remote workers, make sure you have the proper tools. This also ensures the success of the teams. Contemporary research also benefits organisations by bringing to light the reality that leaders are never fully prepared and must always grow to have the finest tools accessible to be the best leader remotely.

These approaches give a practical strategy to aspiring remote leaders and remote organisations. Leadership is crucial in any organisation, but in a remote setting, it gets even more key as the significance of distributing work fairly and setting up rules, measurements, and check-ins to ensure the team members' success. The significance of trust and effective

communication in remote leadership shows that the leader has the most influence on whether team members remain on the team or leave. Team members are more likely to stay on the team if they feel appreciated and connected to the work, their co-workers, and their supervisor.

The thesis also provides information about how to create a meaningful workplace with a team that works remotely. It takes up important elements when leading a team remotely and effective strategies for building and maintaining trust and relationships with remote team members. The use of technology and digital tools for a leader to communicate and collaborate with a remote team is crucial as leaders must be proficient in using virtual communication platforms and project management tools to ensure effective communication and coordination among team members. Key skills and competencies are required for effective distance leadership, leaders should possess strong interpersonal skills to build trust and maintain a positive team culture despite the physical distance.

Researching the perspective of the distance leader explicitly and incorporating that independently into the remote concept is another area that could be researched further. Although the distance leader aspect was included in the concept, team leaders were not questioned for the thesis. More distance leaders or individuals in leadership roles could be incorporated into the remote work concept by broadening the case organisation's scope, which would further the subject's understanding and add depth to the remote concept.

Another area that could be researched would be to know how diversity and inclusion matter from a leadership perspective. Diversity and inclusion are essential components of leadership as they foster a climate of mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation. But having a diverse team is not enough; it is also critical to cultivate an inclusive environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging and equity. Could organisations where diversity and inclusion build a more dynamic and productive team, improving performance?

How best practices can be implemented in different organisational contexts could be another focus that identifies the key factors that affect the successful implementation of best practices in various organisational contexts. For example, the research could explore the role of leadership, organisational culture, employee motivation, and communication in implementing best practices.

An organisation's environmental elements are continually shifting, creating new problems and crises that must be handled by leadership. To stay up with the evolving technology and remote workers, they require regular examination, restructuring, and modification. It's possible that what has worked before won't work as well in the future, and new concepts need to be created as people leave their jobs and are replaced by new workers, all of whom have unique talents, traits, demographics, and motivational factors.

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