



The Global CEO Advisory Firm

Teneo Insights Webinar

**A weekly update from Teneo: How 2020 Has Forever
Changed Leadership & Workforce Management**

A discussion between Stephen Liptrap, Kerry Sulkowicz M.D., Jerome Hauer Ph.D. and
Kevin Kajiwara.

Thursday, August 13, 2020

Kevin Kajiwara (KK): Good day, everyone, and welcome to today's Teneo Insights Webinar. I'm Kevin Kajiwara, Co-President of Teneo Political Risk Advisory, calling in today from New York City. We are now some five months into the coronavirus-induced lockdown. During this time of fear, confusion, and adjustment, we have, while working from home, looked forward to numerous events that proved not only overly optimistic, but frankly, I think divorced from science and underlying realities of the pandemic regarding the flattening of the curve, the supposed suppression of virus transmission by warmer summer weather, wonder drugs like hydroxychloroquine and other even more wilder therapies, the notion that there was natural immunity in the young.

The list goes on and on, but all of these led to bad and/or premature policy decisions at national, state, local, school district, employer, and even family levels. And of course, the great holy grail of vaccine is what everyone is waiting for. We've been conditioned to anticipate one later this year or early next, but what if that's not the case? What if producing, scaling, and distributing such a vaccine is six months or a year or even more further out there. Today, we're going to focus on corporations and how 2020 has already changed leadership and workforce management and how the C-suite needs to think about and prepare for the next

developments. That being renewed stress and anxiety to the workforce.

I'm joined today by three superb panelists to help us think through the issues. Stephen Liptrap is President and CEO of Morneau Shepell, which is a leading provider of technology-enabled HR services that deliver an integrated approach to employee wellbeing, be that mental, physical, social, or financial, serving 24,000 client organizations in 162 countries. And they are based in Toronto.

Dr. Kerry Sulkowicz is a Teneo Senior Advisor. He's also the Founder and Managing Principal of the Boswell Group, advising C-suites and boards on people and culture issues and aspects of corporate and organizational life that have complex psychological and systemic underpinnings. I should mention he was recently elected the President of the American Psychoanalytic Association, and he was the Chairman of the Physicians for Human Rights, which shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 for its work to eradicate landmines around the world.

And we can't do a call like this without Jerry. So, Dr. Jerry Hauer is back. He's also a Teneo Senior Advisor. He served as the Acting Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, heading emergency preparedness during the SARS



Stephen Liptrap
President & CEO, Morneau Shepell
stephen.liptrap@teneo.com



Kerry Sulkowicz, M.D.
Senior Advisor, Teneo, Founder and Managing Principal, Boswell Group
kerry.sulkowicz@teneo.com



Jerome Hauer, PhD
Senior Advisor
jerry.hauer@teneo.com



Kevin Kajiwara
Co-President, Political Risk Advisory
kevin.kajiwara@teneo.com

outbreak, and he coordinated the response to West Nile virus in New York City when he was Commissioner of the New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.

If you have a question for our panelists today, you can submit them at any time via the moderator chat button on your screen. But let's go ahead and get started. Jerry let's start with you. It's been a few weeks since you were on the call, so give us an update on the state of the pandemic in the U.S., the trends that you're seeing, especially as we prepare for a variety of back to school approaches with all of that implies for working parents.

Jerry Hauer (JH): Good morning, Kevin. Good morning, everyone. Unfortunately, the virus continues to circulate. We, here in the U.S., started to see a trend down to under 1,000 deaths a day. We are now seeing a reversal of that trend to over 1,500 deaths a day. I think what's happened is, as we've gone through the summer, people have, because of the cabin fever that developed during the winter and spring, people were getting the messages from government leaders that things were returning to normal. And once that door was opened, we started seeing large scale events. A good example is one up in Sturgis. 250,000 motorcyclists. That virus is going to circulate amongst that group and they're going to bring it back to wherever they came from. So, the virus is going to continue to circulate, and I don't, at this point in time, see it going anywhere. We're going to have to deal with this virus for a long time to come.

Part of the problem we're seeing, Japan is a good example, they had the virus under control and did an excellent job. They're now on the verge of a second wave. France, the same thing. We're starting to see an uptick in cases in France. I fully expect, at this point in time, we will continue to see upticks in cases in countries that seem to have had the virus under

control. This virus is going nowhere and we're going to have to contend with it for quite some time to come.

KK: Give us an update now on the vaccine front, and give us a sense of what you're seeing in terms of the various developments, notwithstanding the Russian vaccine, but give us a realistic sense in your view of the breadth of scenarios, not just of when the vaccines could be approved, but when arms will actually start getting stabbed at scale.

JH: Sure. At this point in time, Kevin, there's over 140 vaccines that are not in clinical trials. There are 18 vaccines that are in Phase 1, 12 vaccines that are in Phase 2, and 6 vaccines that are in Phase 3. When a vaccine gets into Phase 3, you're basically doing 30,000 - 40,000 people to look for adverse events. There are two vaccines in China. One of them has been tentatively approved. And Russia, at this point in time, has a vaccine that is in Phase 2, but what they've chosen to do is go into mass vaccination. So, they're basically skipping that step and they're going to start doing a mass vaccination program.

The problem with that is that, once you get into a program like that, you're going to start seeing adverse events, and they could be everything from local irritation from the vaccination all the way up to death. So, the Russians have a long history of dealing with viruses and bacteria. They had a very aggressive weapons program where they've weaponized various viruses and bacteria. And so, I would imagine their vaccine is probably pretty good, but they're rushing it to get it out to a lot of people at this point. So, where do I really think, at this point in time, we stand with vaccine? The vaccine that's getting the most attention right now is Moderna. It's a messenger RNA vaccine. One of the first vaccines ever made like that. They are in a Phase 3 trial. They want to do 30,000 people to look for both safety and efficacy.

Part of the problem, at this point in time, they've only got 5,000 people registered. So, could Moderna have a vaccine ready by the end of the year? Possibly. But they're doing mass production along with their Phase 3. First of all, they're having trouble getting people into the trial. So that's delaying things. And then once you have mass production, you've got to start distribution. So, at this point in time, you look at the Pfizer vaccine in Phase 2/3, the AstraZenica, which is the Oxford vaccine, and again, Phase 2/3, Novavax and Johnson & Johnson, Phase 1/2. I do believe we will have one of these vaccines by Q1 of next year. Know there's a caveat here. Just because we have a vaccine, Kevin, doesn't mean it's going to be 100% effective. We might have the first vaccine with only 50% efficacy.

Now, 50% is better than nothing, but in parallel, while that one is being distributed through a vaccination program, some of these other vaccines could come along and be 60, 70, 75% effective. So, this parallel track for vaccines is really important at this point to ensure we have a very effective vaccine. And then, as you mentioned, we've got to have a strategy for getting it out to 100-150 million people. And that is going to be a challenge. Then the other component of that is uptake. People are going to be very nervous, and there's already a lot of concern that any vaccine that gets out there is being rushed, and because of the politics involved, they're rushing a vaccine to vaccinate people, and that's causing concern.

I don't believe, at this point in time, the FDA is going to allow any vaccine on the market that is not safe and effective. Then the final component is going to be the anti-vaxxers. These are those folks that are absolutely against vaccines. They're already out there saying nobody should take this vaccine, it's going to be dangerous. So, this notion that the vaccine, or any vaccine, is going to be a magic bullet is really false at this point. It's going to be very helpful, but I don't see 100 million people, or 125 million people being

vaccinated over the next 10 or 12 months. So, we're in this for the long haul.

KK: Yeah. I want to come back to the politics of vaccinations later on in the call, but I just would comment that it seems to me that this Russian vaccine, as an example, if it doesn't work or if it harms people is clearly going to compound some of the anxiety and concern around vaccines or bolster the arguments of the anti-vaxxers. On the other hand, I would suggest that, while Russia has not fully prepared for the vaccine, they probably are fully prepared to suppress any information regarding people who are harmed by it in their country.

Stephen, I want to turn to you though, because Jerry has given a pretty sober assessment here. I know you and your firm have conducted studies on workforce wellbeing in all of this. So maybe you can give us a sense of what you've found, but then also, off of that foundation, as Jerry suggests, we've all been conditioned to hope that a vaccine, and actually more than that really, it's a proverbial silver bullet. We've been conditioned to think that it's going to be ready by the end of the year or early next year, and that once that happens, life is going to return to something sort of resembling normal.

And what does this mean for workforces if that's not the case? We've picked these random dates in the fall to target for return to work sometimes coinciding with the return to school and so on. Bill Gates was interviewed in Bloomberg today, suggesting that he doesn't think this is until an end of 2021 kind of solution. So, what are you finding?

Stephen Liptrap (SL): Yeah, thanks a lot, Kevin, really appreciate the time today and the comments. A couple things. As global leaders in total wellbeing, as we moved into the pandemic, we knew we were sitting on an incredible amount of information. We think about the 20 million employees that are associated with the 24,000 clients that we support around the world, and we've been tracking for over three years their level of mental health. And we thought this was a fantastic opportunity to start putting out an index around the world, which really started looking at people's mental health as we went into pandemic. And we're on the fourth iteration of that being released.

What we have found and what's really incredible if I just take a look at the U.S. for a second, and the rest of the world is very similar. The stress and anxiety of people today is equal to the most distressed 7% of the population before the pandemic. So, if you think about the most distressed part of the population before this pandemic, that is now where the average of the population is today. So, I don't know if there's going to be a second wave of the virus, but I do know that there is a significant wave of mental health issues that are going to be impacting all of our workplaces for many, many years to come. The other interesting pieces of data are women are more impacted than men through the pandemic, and it's probably be it right or wrong needing to pick up more of the work around the home or more of the education of children at home.

We also find that older workers are having an easier time than younger workers. Probably relates back to more younger workers living alone or having more financial concerns. And we also find that organizations that do not have programs in place call it employee assistance programs or anything like that, their workers are significantly more impacted by mental health challenges than other workers. So I do

think as organizations really think about employees coming back, as we think about in many jurisdictions, cold weather hitting and people moving back into workforces and all that. We're going to have to be very sensitive or else we're going to have a mental health issue on top of a significant physical health issue with the coronavirus.

KK: Yeah. Can you expand on that just a little bit? Because I mean, I'm thinking as I sort of suggested, we cling to targets. And so, this kind of notion that we're going to go back to work in the fall or things will sort of return to normal early next year. If you've got that target on the horizon and you can see it, you say to yourself, "You know what, I can make it through another four or five months. I've done it before, I'll do it again." But if all of a sudden that target becomes no longer feasible or it's plus one year or unknown, is that going to, I mean, you've already talked about how the anxiety levels are workforce wide or what the most anxious 7% were pre-pandemic. What is this going to mean if that news becomes what people are thinking?

SL: Yeah, it's a really good point, Kevin. And you think of that for a second what Jerry said around a vaccine only hitting 50% of the population or needing boosters or multiple rounds. Because I think people in general are looking forward to someday a vaccine is going to come out, everyone's going to be okay and you'll be back to going to concerts, sporting events, whatever it is. And that's kind of in everyone's mind. And I think a lot of organizations and I think generally organizations have done a great job and played a leadership role, but where we probably have not done a good job is say, "Oh, everyone's going to come back in, first of all, let's lock down for two weeks and then everyone's going to come back in two months." And then it was September and now it's December and now it's next year.

And I think a lot of our employees are holding on waiting for those dates. And every time one of those dates slip, we see the anxiety levels go up substantially. And you just think about how that's playing on people. The other thing I would say, and one of the things that I try to do as a CEO of an organization is every week, get together with small groups of employees and quite often there are 10 employees and we're getting together on Teams or Zoom around the world. And when you hear from them or what you realize is what a different place, all of those employees are in.

Sometimes it's the person sitting at the end of the dining room table with their spouse at the other end, four kids and a dog running around. And other times it's a person who is sitting home alone, never gets any social interaction just he's craving to get back to the office. And then there's others that have elderly parents that are significantly at risk. The last thing they want to do is come back to the office and touch an elevator doorknob or an elevator button and bring it home and infect their family. So, I think we've also got to realize that in our workforces, in society, in general, we can't think of them as all being one homogeneous group. They're very different. And we need to think about the anxiety levels of those different groups and come up with programs or be thoughtful around how we're going to address all of those different groups of employees within our workplaces, within society in general.

KK: So, Jerry has laid the foundation of where we are and where we're heading with the pandemic. And now you've given us a good overview of where workforces are. So, given all of that Kerry, let's talk about the leaders of companies having to deal with both of those things. But then let's add on top of that, demand destruction for their products in many cases at a supply shock, leading to a historic economic contraction. In many cases

they've had to reduce head count or prepared to do so. In the midst of all this, you've got the largest social justice movement in U.S. history. You've got the rethinking of corporate and law enforcement relations.

The list goes on and on. So how are leaders doing in all of this? And Stephen's talked a lot about the mental wellbeing of employees, but let's talk about it with regards to the leadership, how are they doing and how are they preparing for what comes next and what are you recommending to them to do, to prepare for what's going to come next?

Kerry Sulkowicz (KS): Thank you, Kevin. It's great to follow Jerry and Stephen because I think their comments lead naturally into some of the challenges that leaders face. I mean, Jerry clearly was not painting a rosy picture here, but it's good to hear it because we need to be wedded to the reality rather than to wishful thinking. And we're clearly in this for the long haul. And I think that Stephen's work too, is really important talking about the various permutations of experience that employees are experiencing. And frankly, there's a wide range of experiences that I've seen the CEOs that I advise going through.

It's not like there's one way that CEOs are experiencing this. And I've been saying for a while that I believe that we're leaders, we're CEOs in particular, but really for all people in leadership roles, that this is the defining moments of their careers, how they navigate this period that we're going through and will remain in for, as Jerry said for some time. Leaders are, some of them are energized finding it the most exciting and most challenging, most interesting period of their careers.

Others are feeling, frankly, varying degrees of helplessness in terms of what to do. I think they're all tired too Kevin. I think there's just a wave of

fatigue that everyone from leaders on down in the organization is feeling because of just the duration and the uncertainty of this situation. I've talked in other Teneo presentations, Kevin, about some of the effects of anxiety on leaders. I won't go into that in great detail except to mention very briefly two of them. One is that these protracted and high levels of anxiety affect the way leaders think and affects their ability to perceive reality accurately and all of that in a sense, conspires to interfere with their ability to make sound decisions. And so, what that says to me is that leaders first and foremost need to be managing their own emotions because they're obviously responsible in a major way as Stephen's work points out for the emotions of their employees.

But if they're not in touch with their own first, it's kind of like needing to put on the oxygen mask on the airplane on yourself first, before putting it on the person sitting next to you. The other effect of anxiety on leaders and on all of us is that anxiety understandably focuses our attention on the very short-term and the here and now. And while that's understandable, it's also a problem if leaders aren't aware of that effect because it can interfere with their ability to think longer term. And that's important not only because of the opportunities and challenges that are further out, but also, it's thinking the longer term is a way of giving people hope.

And I wanted to talk about the leadership role and in terms of giving hope under circumstances that as Jerry has emphasized are kind of a downer frankly. But there are opportunities to give hope. People are struggling with loneliness, with lack of privacy, with job insecurity. I would describe all of this in a cumulative sense as what psychoanalyst sometimes refer to as "strain trauma." And what I mean by that is, think of a rope, if you put tension on both ends of a rope, the rope is under stress. And at some point, if the stress is long enough and hard enough, the rope will break. But

what you don't see before the breakage is the micro tears that take place in the rope.

And I think that's not a bad analogy to the strain trauma that society and corporations within society are experiencing right now. And so, leaders need to be really cognizant of that and to understand their effect on the culture of their organization, which can either have a protective effect on managing that strain, or it can have the opposite effect. I've long believed Kevin, that leaders, their behavior, their personalities, their values have the single greatest impact on the culture of an organization. That's certainly not the only influence on culture, but by far the biggest in my view. And so people look to leaders for comfort, for truth, for a kind of humane leadership during these ambiguous times and those leaders who don't provide that, there's going to be a lot more morbidity and mortality within their organizations, within their employees.

The last comment I'll make now, maybe we can open it up for questions about the politics, because that's such an interesting thing is that, the new normal that people keep looking for or talking about, and that's combined with the question of when are we going to go back to work? I've sometimes felt like that question has been answered up to now by throwing a dart at the calendar. And because it hasn't really had much bearing on the reality of the virus, but the new normal right now is actually, it's not an equilibrium. It's a new normal of constant flux and uncertainty. And so, CEOs need to prepare their organizations for that. And CEOs need to be fluent in the political realities of the world, the political uprising around racism, the upcoming American elections and political instability in places.

I think that in many ways, the leaders of corporations, the best ones, frankly, that I've had the opportunity to advise are feeling fold into a kind of leadership vacuum that's created by an absence of moral leadership that's at the top of some governance, frankly. And I think the

best leaders are feeling that pull without transcending the boundaries too much. They are speaking to some of the political and social issues that do go beyond what might ordinarily be part of their CEO role. So, I'll stop at that point Kevin.

KK: Yeah. I want to unpack some of that over the course of this conversation, but I want to go back to something you said at the very beginning with regards to the spectrum of reaction that you've seen out of the corporate leaders that you talk to and advise, this sort of everything from really grabbing this challenge and running with it to, suffering much more anxiety and borderline helplessness as you mentioned. Is that mostly a function of the personality of the leader themselves or how much of that can also be correlated to the success of a business and all of that? If you're an eCommerce doing very, very well through all of this, that's one thing, but if you're running a hotel business or a restaurant business or something along those lines that is really getting hit hard, that it's just, it's that much more difficult to cope with.

KS: Yeah. It's an interesting question, Kevin. I'd be interested in my colleague's views on this too. My own view is that while it'd be naive to suggest that the state of the individual business, a business that was nearly shutdown versus a business that's managed to thrive in a virtual environment, it'd be naive to suggest that those things don't have an effect on the CEO's emotional experience of this period. On the other hand, I actually think it's more the personality than the environmental circumstances.

Although I would have no way diminish the importance of the environmental circumstances, I think some CEOs are temperamentally more capable of dealing with these high levels of uncertainty and strain and

find it intellectually challenging to navigate their organizations through this. And others, even if their businesses are going along fairly swimmingly under these challenging circumstances are struggling emotionally. So, I think it has more to do with the CEO's personality and temperament, their preexisting pre-pandemic personality, if you will that determines how they're coping now.

KK: Stephen, how has this impact on leadership that Kerry has just described, how does that then impact the body of the workforce itself? Do you see that manifest profoundly?

SL: Yeah, and I would say, first of all, I'd 100% agree with Kerry. I mean, I talk to CEOs of airlines that are passionate, invigorated and rethinking about the model. And they're in a pretty tough spot right now. I talk to CEOs of tech companies who are struggling, and the business is doing phenomenal. So, I do think it comes back to personality. And I think even our own organization as we look at talent, we're taking a look at who's rising to the challenge as we go through this. Back to your question when you really think about the impact, there is no doubt as we drill down into well-being's organizations and start to take a pulse of it for a lot of our clients, leadership is making a big difference.

And you can see a significant difference around total health and I'll talk about mental health, physical, financial, and social, for groups that are even working under a department leader down in an organization versus under another department leader. And I think it comes back to, is a person portraying confidence? Is a person looking for how do we use this to come out of it even better, even stronger? Is a person checking in on a regular basis? Does the person understand what their staff is going through? And it might be they have a staff member who has a lot of young kids at home,

and they have to try and help them out with schooling during the day but they're going to work really early in the morning or really late at night to get their work done.

I think the more flexible leaders are, and the more they're able to connect is better. So, I do think it comes back to the individual, and we really see it as we look into organizations, and you can see big pockets of differences within the same organization. And it does come back to that leader at the end of the day.

KK: So, guys, let's get down to some brass tacks here. I mean can you talk a bit about communication between leadership and their employees during this time knowing that the leadership itself is facing the issues that you've both described, but also just the uncertainties of the situation, not just with the pandemic, but with regards to the economy and the future? But managements can get as lulled into new normal thinking as anybody else can.

So, I mean, I presume that there were a lot of CEOs and other senior members of management of companies who early on were in very, very regular contact with the rank and file, and then it becomes more and more difficult to have something new and inspiring to say without it sounding trite and repetitive. So how do they keep that cadence up, as Kerry said, still instilling hope and optimism, and that we're rowing in the right direction, but also being realistic and candid with your workforce?

KS: I can take that first, Kevin. I think that the best way to instill hope and optimism is to make sure that it is real as opposed to fictitious. And so, I think we have to give employees a lot of credit for being very tuned into when they're being spun too. So, I think if there has ever been a humbling time for all of us who've been in

leadership roles or who are, this is it, because we don't really know what's going on. We've never done this before, even if we've done lots of challenging things before.

So, humility and empathy I put way up on the list of things that leaders need to be, and that can't be fake, it's got to be real. Leaders do need to be taking care of themselves, and then talking frequently, communicating a lot, but it's okay to communicate not knowing everything. It's okay to communicate uncertainty. It's okay to communicate that we're going to learn as we go and try to be highly adaptive to the changing environment. When I coach CEOs, I certainly preach those kinds of behaviors. It seems paradoxical, but if you talk about the bad news, it actually may give more hope because people feel like you're being genuine with them.

SL: Yeah, and Kevin, I can't reinforce that enough. I mean you just can't communicate enough. We know as we talk to organizations, that their CEOs that used to talk to their full workforces quarterly are now doing it monthly. I talked to other CEOs who are talking to all of their key leaders around the world weekly. In our own organization, our most senior team that we get together once a month, we're getting together weekly. So, I think one, you can't communicate enough. Secondly, totally agree with Kerry, you've just got to be open, you've got to be honest, you've got to be authentic.

And I've even seen in our own organization where I thought oh, we're communicating too much. People aren't going to ask questions. We're having the exact same number of people call in, and ask questions, and be on the phone weekly for an hour, and that's not dropped off one iota. And I think at the end of the day business is filling a void. And I think that's really important for people. And I think they need to hear it. I also think we need to communicate in very different

ways. Some people need videos, some need small group chats, some need larger group chats, some prefer to read on email.

I think you've just got to remember that everyone is in a different spot, and the more ways you communicate the better. And finally, one of the things fascinating for us, because part of our HR platform that we roll out to our clients is we've got a recognition platform, and we have just seen uptake on that tremendous. So, 60 to 80% of our client's employees are on it every single day. And I think it's just a way that, because people are working at home, they want to feel connected to something, so they've got the ability in our world, and there's lots of other ones out there, to have a chance to recognize each other, to realize what's going on in the organization, to figure out what other people are doing, and as a CEO, it also tells me what's going on in parts of the world.

And I might read about a great story where we helped a client out in Australia, or in the Southern U.S., or whatever the case might be. So, I would just encourage everyone who's on the phone right now to look for as many ways to communicate as possible and to be really open, honest, frank, and authentic in those communications because employees are smart, and they will recognize it.

KK: Stephen and Kerry, I want to address a little bit, this term that Kerry brought up, but that we all are very familiar with, new normal. Now, frankly, none of this seems normal, although I will acknowledge it's all new, but I would say that, at first, after things kind of settled down following the initial COVID and lockdown chaos, it felt like a lot of corporate leaders, and by the way, the caveat here is I'm really focused much more on professional services than a lot of other types of businesses, but corporate leaders seemed to be pleased and pleasantly surprised by, in some

cases, but they seem to readily buy into how well work from home was actually working.

And it's to the point where you would hear leaders even talking about how they were going to ultimately be able to reduce their real estate footprints, and all of this, and have all these very flexible workforces. I'm wondering if you're starting to sense that there's starting to be a change in view here the longer this goes on. That the collaborative workforce, it becomes more diffused, it's harder, people are more isolated, onboarding new employees becomes very challenging. Do we lose some of the, I don't know what you want to call it, the esprit de corps of a workforce? We spent years transforming the workplace from individual offices to an open plan for just this collaborative purpose, so I guess now what, is my question.

KS: I was just going to say quickly that, all right, I'll be brief. I was going to say that I think you're pointing out a really important issue, Kevin, because I think it is fair to say that the conversion to working virtually has, for many organizations, gone well under these circumstances, and people have been quite surprised by that. People have been quite surprised by how much of their work can be done virtually that they had previously assumed needed to be done in person. That's certainly been true for my coaching practice, frankly, with CEOs. It's 100% virtual right now, and I would have never dreamed that that was possible, but I think that the reason why I think we have to be attuned to how that may change as this wears on is that a lot of the effectiveness of the working in the virtual environment has been based on working virtually with established relationships.

But as new hiring goes on, as people start to change jobs during the pandemic, and as the usual opportunities for social interaction that facilitate the

continuing human bonds that are so important in the workplace, as all of that changes, this may not be working quite so well as we have described it as working in the past five months. So the other thing is that the opportunities for social interaction, and particularly the serendipitous interaction that leads to creativity in the workforce, we've been making do by trying to do that over virtual technologies, but I think people are really missing that, bumping into each other, and bouncing around an idea, or just having an accidental conversation in the cafeteria. All those things are gone, and so what we have to be really creative in trying to create similar opportunities, knowing that they're not going to be quite the same.

SL: Yeah. I was going to make a very similar point. I think it has worked so well because of relationships that have been built up for so many years. And those relationships are people traveling together, its people having dinner together, it's people bumping into each other in the hall, it's going for a walk, it's having that coffee, and all of those things. And I think what we've done is we've drawn down on those relationships, and that's a very good thing, and I'm so glad that organizations have built them up, and people have built them up because it's just so critical, but I do think it's really, really hard as a new employee joining an organization, how do I build those relationships? How do I build trust? How do I showcase what I'm able to do? Because that's just so much more difficult.

You think about the fact that so many of us have got to be in leadership roles because we've had great mentors, people gave us development opportunities, all of that is a million times more difficult in the current environment. I do think we're going to come out of this and, for the most part, organizations are going to be way more flexible, and people will be in the office a couple days a week, but I do not think that we will move to a 100% virtual world because humans need that connective tissue. It's just so important. And again,

I just think what we're doing right now is we're drawing down on deposits that we made into an emotional bank for many, many years, and that's okay, but that does run out at some point in time.

KK: Hey guys, I want to turn to politics here in just a second, but I want to ask you to both focus for just a minute on junior employees, if you could, because I think, Steven, you said at the outset, you were talking about some of the special issues that some of them face. They, in many cases, are less financially secure, they either live by themselves, or in an apartment full of roommates, or they're in their childhood room at home with their parents, and they are unmentored, some are excellently mentor through this with their bosses, but others have been thrown into the deep end of the pool.

It can be depressing when you commute from your bed to the end of the bed to go to work when you see some of your colleagues calling in from the pool. I mean what do you recommend? Are there special recommendations for managements with regards to handling your most junior employees during this time?

SL: Yeah, I'll jump in first of all, Kevin, and I think the number one thing is just to realize that there are different groups of employees within an organization. I think it's too easy to think about the ones who sit most closely to us and assume that's absolutely everything, and I think the more we as leaders can be aware of all the different groups that exist in the organization, and those can be new young employees joining, it can be employees with a lot of family members at home with them, and it can be people who are at home and isolated, or it can be the others who are able to do their job up at the cottage and it's fantastic, but I think the first mistake that a lot of us can make, and I would caution everyone not to, is thinking about a workforce as being homogeneous, because it's really not.

To your question in particular, I do think there is a lot that you can do, and I think it starts with making sure that managers, and all of us as leaders, reach out and connect with those people on a regular basis. I think it's not just to talk to them about work but understand their home situation. Listen, don't talk. I must admit, as I have these small group meetings with our employees, I learned so much about what people are going through, and we encourage all of our managers to be doing that on a regular basis.

So I think it does come back to some management or leadership basics, which is know your people, understand them really well, understand them as a whole person, not just who they are at the office, and be sensitive, and ask them what would work, and maybe a part of their job can be done at night, or maybe you can offer them flexibility in different ways. Maybe it is important to have a coffee meeting, physically distance with them, and some people need that, but I just think we need to reach out to listen and to be aware.

KS: I agree. Yeah, I mean first of all, I agree wholeheartedly with everything Stephen just said. It's really sound advice, and I think he's spot on. The only part of it that I would emphasize, which he touched on for sure, is the role of CEOs in modeling that kind of attitude towards their most junior employees, who are undoubtedly, or most cases anyway, not reporting directly to the CEO. They're far deeper in the organization, so the CEOs may not have that much contact with them, but those are the employees who have the most job insecurity right now and feeling most vulnerable, the least connected, presumably, to the organization as well, which is part of their vulnerability. So, the CEOs, the empathetic ones, will get this intuitively. All CEOs need to be demonstrating this, modeling it for their teams and to have that cascading on down.

KK: I want to spend some of our remaining time here on politics. I want to get Jerry back in the conversation here because I want to start specifically, and then we can move out more generally. Jerry touched on this in his initial comments. Jerry, how concerned are you and your peers in the public health policy sphere about this politicization of vaccination, if and when it's ready to go? I mean, we have already seen in this country just how politicized the simple act of wearing a mask has gotten to be. Vaccines are obviously that much more complex.

As you pointed out, you already have a built-in anti-vaxxer movement out there representing or speaking to some percentage of the population. How big of a worry is this as we get ready to, I mean, it's sort of ironic. Everybody wants to get back to work. This is the thing that will allow us to do so, ultimately, and yet there's this resistance.

JH: Yes, there is resistance, Kevin. I think that the politics, that this has created an environment of mistrust. There is so much mixed messaging. There is so much in the way of false expectations that I think it is going to be very difficult to get people onboard with being vaccinated. I think just looking at the clinical trials that are going on right now, they're having trouble recruiting people to be part of the trial. Now imagine a vaccine coming out sometime in Q1/Q2, and people getting these mixed messages about whether it's safe, whether it's not safe, whether it was rushed, and having to make a choice between being vaccinated or waiting.

And then the component of this, you start seeing adverse events that hadn't been reported earlier on. We're going to wind up with a battle between the political leaders, the anti-vaxxers, the scientific community, trying to get messages out. These messages are going to be conflicting. We're seeing

it with everything going on with this pandemic. I think it's in part hurting business leaders in trying to make plans. There is so much misinformation, so many so-called experts opining about things. It becomes extremely confusing trying to get a good source of information. The politics of vaccine administration, widespread vaccination program, it's going to be the same thing. There's going to be so much mixed messaging, both from the political side, from the scientific side. It is going to confuse people.

KK: Well, I will just say in your defense, Jerry, I know that there's a lot that's unknown about the virus and so on and so forth. It's not the experts opining that worries me so much as the avowed non-experts who still opine anyway. Anyway, Stephen and Kerry, I want to just pick up on all that you have said before because on top of all of this stress and anxiety that's caused by the pandemic and what it means for you in the workplace and so on, we can't separate all of this from what's obviously a very deeply polarized political moment. We're on the eve of a very contentious and highly consequential election and in the midst of a very profound social justice movement. How does politics play into all of this and in terms of how employees are expressing themselves? How does leadership navigate this situation, most importantly, between now and through the November election period?

KS: Sure, Stephen. Maybe I'll jump in first. I mean, Kevin. Actually, I would say a couple of things. One is tying back to Jerry's comment about the vaccine, interestingly, that in addition to his expert opinion about the importance of the vaccine, I would also say that when a reliable vaccine does come out and begins to be deployed, I would love to see pictures or, maybe even better, videos of CEOs of organizations getting the vaccine and distributed to their employees. I suspect that because of the role-modeling function,

the permission-giving function, if you will, of leaders, I think that a picture of the CEO getting a vaccine is probably worth a thousand memos from an anonymous department inside the organization.

I do think that the role of leaders in enabling and facilitating that process is going to be important. On the subject of the elections with the political unrest that's going on, these painful conversations around racism, I think that this gets to the moral dimension of leadership that I was alluding to before. I think that the most enlightened CEOs that I have the opportunity to coach feel an obligation to set the example and to facilitate those kinds of conversations, which are often difficult, and awkward, and painful, and to get permission for those conversations to take place inside the organization.

They can be messy, but I think it's better to try to have them in a thoughtful, measured way, to have them than to try to avoid the topic altogether. I think some CEOs are afraid that they're going to say something stupid or stick their foot in their mouth. Frankly, there is that chance, but I think, again, the moment demands that CEOs be attuned to, and hopefully, fluent in some of the language around what's happening right now. I think they avoid these issues at their own peril.

KK: Stephen, I want to hear in just a second here, or Jerry too. Kerry, I just want to push back for one second on this notion of the potential of a leader to put their foot in their mouth because we know that the response to them doing so is going to be withering on social media and elsewhere. It's understandable that there's some reticence on their part. Now, how do you thread the needle?

KS: It is totally understandable. I'm glad you pushed back on that, Kevin, because you're right. These are fraught topics, for sure. By the way, my encouraging CEOs to talk about these issues doesn't

mean that CEOs should just say whatever, blurt out whatever comes to mind. You just have to pick up the newspaper every day to see that there are CEOs who are losing their jobs over doing that. It is not an easy thing or something to be entered into lightly.

They should give thought to these topics before talking about them. They should educate themselves. They should get outside advice rather than thinking that just because they're the CEO, that they have all the answers, which they really don't. They should get outside help if that's appropriate. There are lots of things that CEOs can do to prepare and to protect themselves from some of the obvious pitfalls.

JH: Yes. Kevin, quick comment, to follow up on what Kerry was just discussing. I think CEOs need to have a good source of information so what they're communicating to their employees is accurate and timely. There is so much misinformation that CEOs need to know where to go to get credible information so that they don't trip up on misinformation. Really important point for a CEO.

KK: Stephen, your thoughts?

SL: Yes, totally agree with what Jerry just said. Quick plug for Teneo, I know I very much appreciate their daily updates I get on what's going on in the world. As I've been out though talking to employees, groups of employees, and other CEOs, I always find it's good to kind of start with acknowledging what people are going through and having alluded to it. Essentially, right now, people are going through the Spanish flu, the civil rights movement of the '60s, and the Great Recession all at once. That's never happened before in the history of the world. Then layer on top of that, a fairly divisive election coming up with people in some very different camps. I just think we need to, again, I'll sound like a broken record.

Over-communicate, be in front of people, be open to acknowledging that people are facing all of those things at once and encourage an open dialogue around it because I do think people are smart. The more we can tell them, "Hey, you folks are going through all of this right now. That's okay to feel stressed. It's okay to feel anxiety." It's really important to get those conversations out and let people know that everyone else is going through something similar. If they can be part of a broader community, and that can be a workplace or whatever, that's great. The other thing I would say is kudos to a lot of CEOs out there that I think have totally stepped into a leadership void right now. I do think in so many cases, business has provided leadership through this. Kudos to those folks that have. I would just encourage them to keep doing so.

KK: Well, we are approaching the bottom of the hour. Thank you, guys, for your thoughts and comments today. I want to advise our audience that there's a lot of good information and practical recommendations that were given here today. If you feel like your colleagues or leadership should hear this, the replay of this call will be made available by Teneo. In addition, if you want to follow up specifically or have any questions, you can contact your Teneo representative or email us at teneoinsights@teneo.com. We will be back again next Thursday.

We will continue our election series. Last week, you may recall, we focused on looking at the election through the Democratic perspective. We are going to look at it through the Republican lens with our panelists next week. For today, I want to thank Stephen Liptrap, Kerry Sulkowicz, and Dr. Jerry Hauer. Guys, you've been fantastic today. It's been very interesting and enlightening. Thank you very much. Thanks, everyone, for joining us. We'll talk to you next Thursday. Have a good rest of the week and a good weekend.



Teneo is the global CEO advisory firm.

Working exclusively with the CEOs and senior executives of the world's leading companies, Teneo provides strategic counsel across their full range of key objectives and issues. Our clients include a significant number of the Fortune 100 and FTSE 100, as well as other global corporations.

Integrating the disciplines of strategic communications, investor relations, digital advisory, diversity & inclusion, management consulting, physical & cyber risk advisory, financial advisory, corporate governance advisory, political risk advisory, and talent advisory, Teneo solves for the most complex business challenges and opportunities.

teneo.com