



17 Things Facebook Learned in Lockdown

from
FACEBOOK

Only people
can **adapt** to
uncertainty.

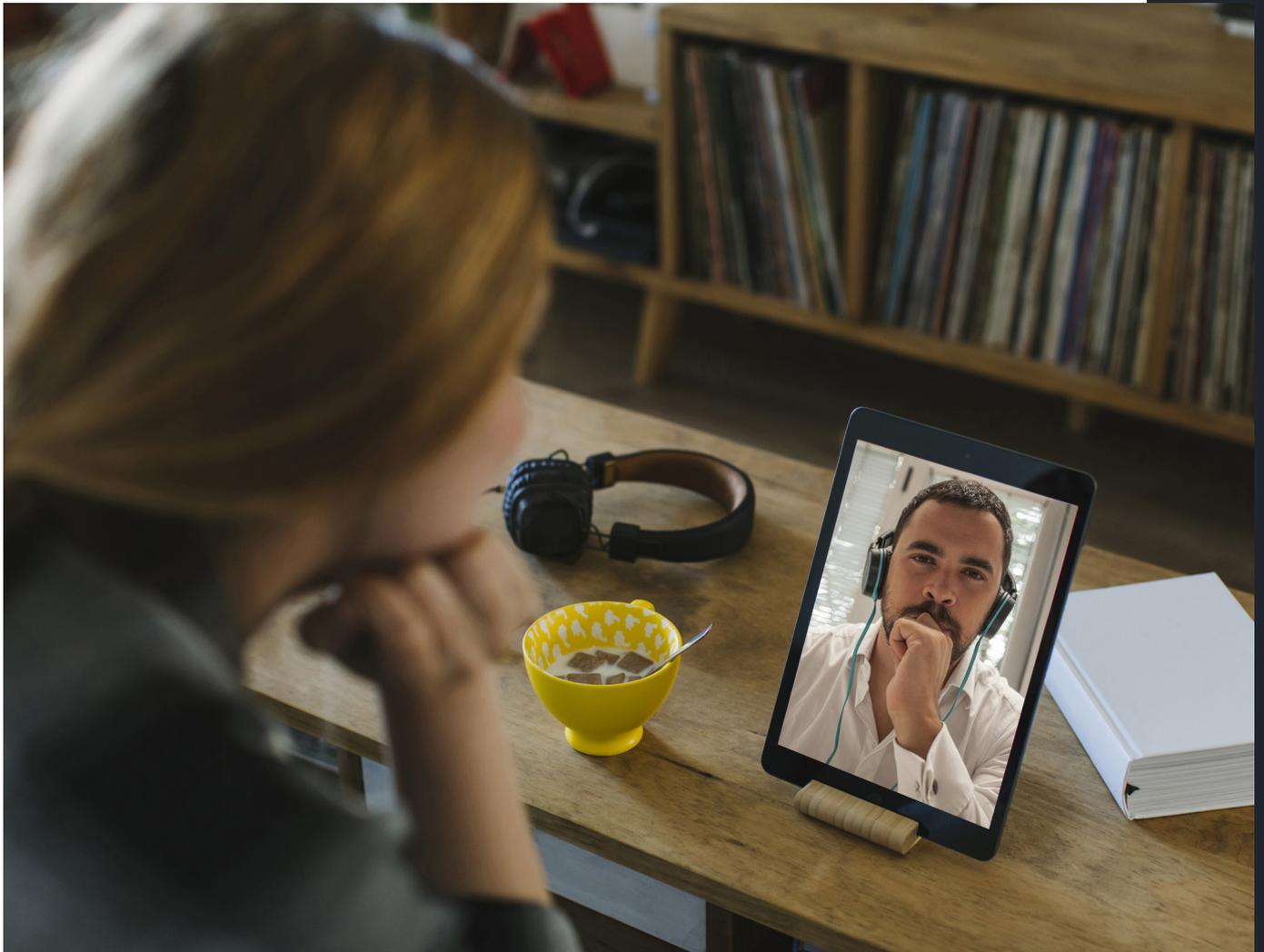
That much has become clear during lockdown. But there are other lessons to be learned as well. Like what does it take to shift a 40,000 person company to remote work virtually overnight? And how do you bring them back again?

These are just two of the insights that **Brynn Harrington, VP of People Growth**, and **Jonny Oser, Global Director of Internal Communications**, shared with us when we asked them what Facebook has learned over the last few months of lockdown. Read on to discover their insights.

01

Decide early and communicate loudly

We were one of the first companies to come out quite boldly and say that people could work at home until the end of the year. I think it gave people a huge sense of relief.



02

Think about your impact on the wider community

We felt like it was our responsibility to give people the option to work from home both for themselves and also because the fewer people that are out and about, the greater the benefit to the community.

03

Lockdown has affected people differently

The reactions we're seeing to working from home are all over the board. For some people this is better, especially if you're in a good living situation and avoiding a long commute. But we've got a lot of people who are struggling, especially with school closures. We're definitely seeing some burnout.

04 WFH is not remote work

I talked to someone at a fully remote company who said, 'What you have to realise right away is that working from home is terrible. Remote work is awesome and will change the world but those are two very different things.' What we're all doing now is working from home. That means people are still taking office practices and trying to apply them at home.





05

Good remote work means giving people the tools and support they need

Good remote work means that everyone is on the same playing field, that people are able to collaborate asynchronously and meet when it makes sense, but use that meeting time really effectively. It's making sure people can onboard and understand what to do quickly even if they're not in the same place as other people.

06

Remote work requires a rethink, not a tweak

Facebook was a really in-person culture from the beginning. We feel like it's really important to have people in the same place for creativity and holding onto our culture. The way you do that when everyone's not in the same place looks really different. It's a full rethink of how we're running all of our people processes and our day-to-day work. We've got to start optimizing things for remote work while knowing that our offices are still going to be important.

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People are hungry for information

Before shutdown, attendance at Mark Zuckerberg's weekly Q&A was around 7% of the company. Since we went remote, we've seen anywhere between 45-70% of the company tuning in.



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Make company communications more engaging

We're using Workplace Live for CEO communications with a comment thread where people can react and ask questions. It's a much more engaging way to participate. Because Mark is now talking directly to-camera, and directly to the broader community, it's much more intimate. You get a more raw and authentic version of him.

09

Lockdown is temporary, changes in behavior may be permanent

During COVID, we were making such big, bold announcements that people were keen to hear what was happening. But what's interesting is that we've retained the audience. People are continuing to come back every week to hear what he has to say - and they're staying for the whole thing.





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Make remote work part of your talent strategy

We were looking at remote work as a talent strategy before COVID because our offices are in such expensive locations that it's tough to get people to relocate. There are also diversity challenges in those locations. We're looking at remote work to expand that talent pool and increase diversity.

11

Put criteria in place for remote work

In North America we opened up the chance for people to request remote work. But we're not opening up to everybody right away. We're giving our senior leaders and their HR partners a set of criteria to think about - things like the composition of the team, the average tenure, the tenure of the manager, what they're working on and any cross-functional dependencies. We want them to review requests with their eyes wide open about what the risks might be. It will be imperfect and controversial but it's the best that we can do.



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The culture comes first

When it comes to long-term remote work, Mark was really clear that the company is solving for a healthy org and a healthy culture ahead of employee choice. He was very direct that we want to start moving in this direction where there will be more opportunities, but we want to make very sure that in the process we're not doing anything to dilute our culture.

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Only people can create culture

If we have clusters of people in remote locations, we might task some people there with organizing get-togethers to make sure those people have some sort of physical community regardless of whether there's a space or not.



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Be prepared for hard conversations

Our compensation philosophy has been to pay cost of labor relative to each market. So if people do move out of New York or Menlo Park to an area where there's a lower cost of labor we'll adjust their pay to reflect that. It's a little bit controversial internally, and we definitely got a fair amount of questions about it.

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Make sure people are requesting remote work for the right reasons

We built in a self-assessment tool as part of the remote work request process to help people evaluate whether they're doing this for the right reasons. And we built in a calculator so people can model different locations and have absolute certainty over what they'll get paid if they're relocated.





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Leverage managers to support internal comms

Around every big announcement we provide director guidance, which is very clearly structured around what you need to know and what you can do. The what-you-can-do piece is really important because it's action oriented. Just providing talking points isn't really sufficient in these circumstances. We're relying on our directors to do the work.

17

Find ways to take the pressure off

In terms of reducing the pressure, we took away performance ratings. We saw people were really stressed out and trying to perform in circumstances where they just weren't able to work full time. So Mark made the decision not to issue performance ratings and still give people a bonus. We saw a positive response to that as it related to stress.

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