

*“Virtual Culture”*  
*The Way We Work Doesn’t Work Anymore, a Manifesto*  
*Bryan Miles*  
*Book Note by Dave Kraft*

With the world moving so quickly these days, we all need to have an adapt-or-die mindset.

By enforcing that everyone come back into the office, Mayer tried to apply old-school collaboration to a group of people that did not want that style anymore.

I suspect that Mayer fell prey to something that many traditional executives or business owners fall prey to: the idea that “If I can’t see you, I can’t control you. If I can’t see you, how do I know that you are working?”

What this thinking shows is that they have no trust in the worker.

Culture Can Be Present in a Virtual Workforce

Shared vision, not shared spaces, creates a culture. It is about instilling a sense of belonging for your employees and ensuring they identify with the greater mission and values of the company.

Culture can be created without an office.

We’ve won these major culture and business awards from prominent national magazines and outlets despite the fact that not a single one of our team members shares an office.

We instill our mission and values of gratitude, teamwork, vision, passion, fun, and God into every one of our six-hundred-plus team members.

To call her an assistant is a disservice because she was a kick-ass, take-no-prisoners executor of all things with an incredible work ethic.

And don’t miss this: we didn’t need to see each other each day to accomplish the results that were expected of me.

December 1, 2010, was our first day on our own company payroll. We went all in on all virtual.

We have no office space—not one square foot of it.

The real thing that ultimately keeps employees together is the mission and the act of working together toward something they truly believe in, not a physical office.

“You have to say it until you see it.”

If you want to create a certain future for yourself, envision it and talk about it.

Her story proves you can have a thriving corporate life and a rewarding personal life. You don't have to trade the two.

Accenture has predicted that by 2020, 43 percent of the workforce will be freelance; they've dubbed this workforce as a "liquid workforce."

In this book, I will outline the benefits for a business of moving to a virtual organization and employing remote workers.

Employee satisfaction and engagement is at an all-time low.

In the book *The Founder's Mentality*, Chris Zook and James Allen highlight that "a recent Gallup survey shows that only 13 percent of employees say that they are emotionally engaged with their company."

Organization models were designed to control the worker.

Visibility (I can't see you, I can't control you) is a depreciating currency.

Part of why employee satisfaction is low is because employees don't feel trusted.

There is a lack of trust among employees in corporate America. Their default is suspicion.

When there is trust, you will see a healthier bottom line.

My team can work from wherever they want as long as they have a quiet space, a solid laptop, a robust webcam, and a fast Wi-Fi connection.

By 2018, the global virtual assistant industry will exceed five billion dollars.

There are countless other roles that are filled by virtual employees.

Virtual accountants and bookkeepers will be a \$160 billion by 2018.<sup>2</sup>

Virtual Webmasters is currently a \$20 billion industry with a 7.1 percent annual growth rate.<sup>3</sup>

Your organization might be a workplace dinosaur if...

A couple of years ago, Dr. Rainer began a brave, new initiative to send 75 percent of his employees back home to work.

No business remains static; you are either in growth or in decline.

During those quarterly meetings when they absolutely need to get together, they rent a room at a place like WeWork,

I like to call what she is going through “corporate detox.”

The truth is, we are far more productive outside of an office than in it.

That’s a huge win for an employer and a company when you push in the virtual direction. It forces the nature of the people working for you to become more results-oriented.

That is just like my whole corporate team here in Atlanta. We get so much done because we are all results-oriented rather than task-oriented.

We don’t just give our employees a list of tasks; we tell them what results are expected of them. Results trump tasks at BELAY.

Fear is connected to control,

The fear primarily stems from trust.

If you can trust them, that need for control goes away. That fear evaporates.

It takes a big leap of faith to evolve from a control-and-fear-based environment to a trust-based environment where you don’t feel as if you must have a close eye on your employees.

Not only have I told my six-hundred-plus team members that I trust them in some way, but I have taught them to trust each other.

I like to call it trickle-down trust.

leadership wants people in the office so they can control them.

When an employee is engaged, they are productive.

If you are losing good people in your business, you must ask three very simple questions in the exit interviews: Why are you really leaving? What is the reason you are leaving? And what is the real reason you are leaving?

If a company is losing top talent, the problem is with the leader, not with the employees.

That leader hasn’t done a good job to communicate, share, or connect the employees to the purpose of the business.

“Terminally unique.” A terminally unique employee dances to their own tune.

A leader needs people who consistently do what is asked of them and who participate in something that is bigger than themselves.

To figure out if employees are hot or cold or lukewarm to your why, here are two ways to measure the temperature:

1. Focus Groups

2. Surveys

Leaders should survey their employees to understand where they are going wrong.

Why Do Employees Want to Work Virtually?

- No more long commutes!
- More flexibility.
- Productivity increases.
- Save money.
- Save time.

When employees feel trusted, they seem to more naturally connect to what the mission, or the “big why,” is.

There is a snowball effect when you create an atmosphere of trust.

Employees are also more likely to gossip when they don't feel trusted and when leaders don't create a clear enough vision

If I find that an employee is still not taking their problems up, but rather taking them to the side or down, I will free their future fast.

Now, with few exceptions, I promote from within.

A good virtual employee embodies these characteristics...

- Results-oriented
- Motivated self-starter.
- Gets their work done and feels satisfied when working.
- Values working from home
- Can work productively independently
- Values flexibility and autonomy in their work.
- Natural-born problem solver
- Has the ability and desire to see from the perspective of everyone he communicates with.
- Organized and have great time-management skills.

We love people who can just figure it out!

Adopt a communication style where they are forthcoming and able to correspond clearly and effectively with those around them.

We want them to understand boundaries because sometimes working from home blurs the lines.

It is a red flag if a virtual employee has no dedicated workspace.

You aren't going to get hired if your space isn't professional.

We are cautious about hiring employees who lack basic technical skills.

My hiring team also keeps a close eye on symptoms that reveal a person who is easily distracted or not self-motivated.

What makes a great leader? The answer is many things, but I believe it comes down to one primary thing: communicating the why.

More practically stated, our vision at BELAY is to help our clients achieve their vision.

I believe leaders who think of themselves as stewards are the ones worth following.

Don't sit there and worry about what your employees are doing day to day. Don't wonder if they are really doing their job. Trust that they are. Look for the results.

I have found that when we hold our values close, we can use them as a filter in our decision-making.

Five values bubbled up:

- God
- Team
- Passion
- Gratitude
- Vision

We adopted the sixth one in 2016: fun.

My Guiding Principles of Leadership

- Let Life Happen
- Trust Trumps Suspicion
- Delegation Is the Name of the Game
- Invest in the US

At BELAY, we run our company based on values. These values make up our culture, which in turn drives our mission.

We spend a lot of time training our virtual employees about how to prioritize. Like I said before, time management and prioritization skills are key.

“Don’t come to me with problems; come to me with solutions.”

If you have employees who are passionate about their job, are happy to get up and work every day, are able to work from wherever they want, are treated like adults, and are trusted, you will have a very happy employee and a very happy customer.

It’s not just virtual workers. It’s the right caliber, quality, and fit of workers, and that’s where, as a virtual placement organization, they seem to have an edge on almost everybody else.

We are running a seven-year-old business

My prediction: in twenty years, almost all employees will be contractors, with most of them working in a remote/virtual capacity.

It won’t be about the hours you worked; it’ll be about the results you produced.

Earlier in this book, I referenced Accenture’s prediction that by 2020, 43 percent of the workforce will be freelance. Accenture labeled this group, “the liquid workforce.”