

Federal Reserve Bank of New York

Culture and the New Workplace: A Primer

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The apprenticeship model in banking is a process of learning that takes place when a less experienced hire gains practical experience from someone skilled in a particular art or trade. Historically, financial services executives have argued that this model is only effective when the apprentice and teacher are located in the same physical place. Many times over the course of the last few years we have wondered, is this true? If so, is it only the case for technical skill-building, or is it also true for learning “how we do things around here” – a loose characterization of culture. And is it also accurate to say that remote work “slows down honesty and decision making,” as one banking CEO recently [claimed](#)?

We will explore these and other questions with experts in their respective fields during The New York Fed’s [next installment](#) in its series on culture. This webinar is focused on “Culture and the New Workplace,” and the panel of experts we have assembled will consider the research and evidence on the questions outlined above and will examine how culture forms and evolves within the new workplace.

In 2021, during our discussion of [“Culture in a Post-Pandemic Workplace,”](#) panelists began a discussion about how remote or hybrid work impacts the distribution of norms within an organization, the different management skills required to lead and establish desired behaviors in a post-pandemic workplace, implications for diversity, equity and inclusion, and the effects of a dissolution of boundaries that took place during the pandemic. Our October session will build on that conversation, with the benefit of an additional year of data and a different set of expert perspectives. We have some ideas about what that conversation might entail, some of which are laid out below.

We look forward to the panel probing further some of the topics we introduced last year. For instance, we have entered a period in which many people’s experience of the workplace is highly customized and personal, reflecting a trend we have seen across many dimensions of our lives, where nearly everything – from our marketing to our sneakers – is specialized and tailor-made for us. One might hypothesize that it would be more difficult to establish shared identities and norms within this context. If this is the case, then what other levers might leaders consider for shaping behavior? Is organizational cohesion even a worthy goal in this new environment? And are we still in a “liminal space” of change, or has our new reality – and the norms that come with it – already been established?

We are also interested in learning about some other fascinating areas of inquiry associated with the future of the workplace, including how our physical space affects our patterns of behavior. There are studies that have used “wearables” to understand individual responses to physical space, but can place and design be used to influence collective behaviors? Does virtual design count (are there norms in the metaverse)? And how will our evolving relationships with technology – accelerated in the new workplace – affect our interpersonal experiences and expectations?

Importantly, we will ask the panel to consider what organizations can do to understand our evolving patterns of behavior, and to steer that change towards positive ends. Is the apprenticeship model still an effective model for influencing behavior in the new workplace? Or are there other, more impactful approaches to meet the challenges of the day?

Join us on October 4 to find out! Our panel brings to the discussion a unique mix of experience and expertise in areas as diverse as psychology, technology, neuroscience, ESG, people analytics, organizational design, computer science and artificial intelligence.

We hope you will (virtually) [join us there](#).

For further reading, please see the following publications from our panelists:

Alison Taylor on:

[The Intangible Company](#) in World Economic Forum

[Why Business Integrity Can Be a Strategic Response to Ethical Challenges](#) in MIT Sloan Management Review

Roshni Raveendhran on:

[The Psychology of Behavior Tracking Acceptance](#) in Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes

[Evaluation apprehension and leaders' preference for communicating through avatars](#) in Computers in Human Behavior

[Managing remote workers during quarantine: Insights from organizational research on boundary management](#) in Behavioral Science and Policy

Jay Van Bavel on:

[The Power of Us](#) published by Little, Brown Spark

And many other topics on his [personal website](#)

Ben Waber on:

[Did WFH Hurt the Video Game Industry?](#) In Harvard Business Review

[The Implications of Working without an Office](#) in Harvard Business Review

[Understanding the Impacts of Remote Work on Org Health with Workplace Analytics](#), a Humanyze Whitepaper