

CAPITAL H Superteams: Where work happens

Superteams: Where work happens

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Burt Rea: Hello and welcome to the Capital H podcast, where we explore the latest topics and trends around the evolution of work, the workforce, and the workplace. I'm your host, Burt Rea, managing director in Deloitte's Human Capital practice. I'm very excited to continue exploring the findings of our 2021 Human Capital Trends survey, which after 11 years, continues to reveal powerful insights on the direction of today's workforce.

Today we will be discussing the concept of "superteams," which we define as "Groups of people and intelligent machines working together to solve problems, gain insights, and create value." In other words, "superteams" are the next step in AI's (artificial intelligence) continuing integration into the world of work. Traditionally, technology has been viewed as a tool and an enabler—but this is starting to change. Executives responding to our 2021 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends survey told

us that the application of technology and the role of people in the workplace is not an "either/or" choice but rather a "both/and" partnership. The big payoff from superteams is not just that they can get work done faster and cheaper. Rather, the greatest value lies in their potential to re-architect work, using technology to change the nature of work so that it makes the most of people's distinctly human capabilities while also optimizing our use of the technology. Again, both/and.

To explore this topic further, I'd like to welcome Bruce Sanchez, the global lead of Sales Learning and Development Technology at Dell, who, in partnership with his team at Dell, is pioneering new ways to use technology to redesign work. Steve Lancaster-Hall, my colleague and managing director in Deloitte's Human Capital practice and Deloitte's Knowledge Management Services leader, will join us to interview Bruce. Steve, take it away!

Steve Lancaster: So, Bruce, welcome to the Capital H podcast today. Thanks so much for joining us.

Bruce Sanchez: Yeah, this is great. I can't wait to chat with an audience and chat with you and really get out some great ideas. We're doing some amazing things here at Dell with AI, and I'd love to share that.

Steve: Well, we can't wait to hear about them. Before we hop into that though, why don't you tell our listeners a little bit about you and your role at Dell?

Bruce: Steve, thanks for asking. So, I'm responsible here at Dell for basically thinking about our technology and our experiences when it comes to our global sales audience. When you think about it in very simple terms, our salespeople need to know things and be able to do things to successfully sell stuff, it's pretty straightforward. And yet, how do we do that at scale? We have literally tens of thousands of sellers and so our ability to effectively improve their productivity and to really improve their experience comes only through technology. And so we created this position in the sales L&D team to really think about how we use technology in that way.

Steve: Well, Bruce, you guys have really been on quite a bit of a transformational journey over the last year. So, can you give our listeners some background on AI and how Dell is thinking about AI in its overall strategy and journey?

Bruce: Yeah, that's a great question. So, one of the things to just keep in mind, first of all, we're a very progressive and innovative company. We're always looking ahead, we're always looking towards the future, and I'm really proud to be part of that journey. Just a great company to work for, I really enjoy the people. And I think the thing that helps us here is not only are we very innovative and progressive, but people are open to new ideas. They want to improve, they want to get better, and when you bring in something like AI or the machine, that really introduces a lot of change and people have to have an open mind at some levels, right? So that's a big help for us. But you'll see AI really embedded across the company in multiple dimensions. First of all, it's actually embedded in our products and our solutions.

If you look at what we take to our market, we've heavily leveraged AI as a competitive advantage and a lot of our devices and our solutions are now smart. And so our customers can benefit from the investments we've made in AI. Second of all, at the very highest level, if you take a look at our 2030, what we call our moonshot goals, AI is actually threaded through a lot of those goals.

We actually have one that I'll talk about a little later about our security and our privacy when it comes to AI and machine learning. So when you think about the ways that we're going to make a social impact and how we measure that impact, you'll see AI threaded through, maybe not explicitly, but a lot of those strategies. And then finally, what we're here to talk about today is really enhancing the employee experience. How do we take literally thousands of employees, and in my case sales employees, make their lives better, make them more productive, make them more efficient, make them more effective?

Steve: Bruce, it's just such a great point you're making, because as we think about where the future is headed, where we see the future of work headed, we see this combination appearing where, rather than

AI coming in to replace employees or to augment their skills, we're really making this move towards collaboration where AI and humans are collaborating with each other to form this concept of super teams. And that's causing us to rethink and re-architect work itself, the way work is being done, the skills that organizations need to have, and employees need to have there. What are some of those top of mind issues that you're dealing with at Dell, and how has Dell really started to re-architect work to incorporate AI as to be a member of a team?

Bruce: This is a great question. So, think about this little event that happened a year ago called the pandemic. Literally the whole world has blown up, particularly for our sellers. Think about what you do as a salesperson. Oftentimes, unless you're an inside seller who's on the phone all the time, you are out with customers, you are going to meetings, you are meeting with your team to get ready for a meeting. And so, this whole notion of instant shift to virtual really, really was a big challenge for our company. But within that challenge, now think about it. We have an audience that is almost all virtual, all remote. And so, the need to augment, supplement, and collaborate through AI and machine-driven types of technologies just goes up like crazy. The opportunity gets even bigger.

And so when we think about that and the ability to pivot at scale, again, scale is always a big word for us. The only way you can do that in the end to be successful, in my perspective, is through the machine. But re-architecting is another key concept here, and you asked me that question. I think it's a very important question because you cannot take AI and essentially throw it against what I would call legacy processes or legacy thinking. It's like taking a giant, super-charged engine and sticking it in an old car, right? The car will for sure go faster, but it's probably not going to go around the curves as well and its brakes may be insufficient. So, you got to think about the totality of the experience.

So I actually like this framework that Deloitte has put together about superteams. I think it's a great way to gauge the maturity of where we are in the organization and also how we meter out our investments when it comes to AI. And so, I'll give you some examples of where we're using it along those spectrums, because I think that'll help bring it to life. So first of all, obviously we think about automation and that often is a robotic process automation or RPAs. And those are fairly low-hanging fruit. You look for large scale processes with lots of transactional, predictable flows, you throw essentially what I would call a giant macro against it, and off you go. For instance, in L&D, we have a lot of loading that we have to do of our courses and our training materials into a number of learning systems, there are a bunch of people typing away on keyboards doing that, and we've automated most of that through RPAs and literally saved hundreds, if not thousands of hours of people's time.

That's pretty straightforward, but I would say that's almost a tactical or an engineering mindset. The next one up though is augmentation. And that's probably where we are most heavily invested right now, mainly because of that next level up without really having to go the whole way. And so, when you think about that, the word that comes to my mind most frequently is recommendations. So as an example, in sales, we have propensity engines in our CRM tools that recommend better leads to our sellers. We have recommendation engines inside of our learning tools that suggest better courses to people. And so that notion of the machine suggesting or aiding or helping you is heavily built into our human experiences and our architectures. But then finally, there's that collaboration level, which to me is really where superteams comes to life.

And I actually think that's the most interesting thing to work on. And I think it's where the biggest value is. And so, as an example

for us, we're really heavily leveraging graph technologies. So, when it comes to collaboration, I think about really that graph-driven environment. The graph is the key that powers the whole thing. And so what I've been encouraging the company to do is, as we evaluate decisions we make when it comes to knowledge management, or platforms we're using, or experiences we're going to build, if we have to choose one way or the other, let's choose things that move us towards the graph. And siloed information, old-style databases that are over here and not connected to the graph are actually in my mind a drag on the company.

So, let's choose to move to the graph. As an example for us, we have some fairly extensive pilot projects in knowledge management related to topics. And we have a giant graph that is crawling all of our interactions of our employees and finding things that are important to people, finding topics. And then connecting experts, asset knowledge and things to that so that all of a sudden, what a human could never do, which is see across the company and what people are working on and what they're interested in, is immediately brought to life. And that's a tremendous discovery tool, it's a tremendous knowledge management tool, and we've harvested that and will continue to invest in that. Now the other thing I want to say, Steve, by the way, I'm on fire here talking about this stuff, is that it doesn't have to be complex.

This is what drives me a little crazy to be like, "Oh wow, that's going to be a lot of work and big AI." And some of it for sure can get pretty tough, right? You have to think about algorithms and tuning and graph technology and APIs and all this. Let's take a different example of where I see superteams. Some of the conferencing vendors now have the ability to essentially stream, in real time, a voice transcript of you and I speaking. And if we were on a radio call, we would see literally a ticker tape of my words flowing by

you. And if you don't speak English, you can change that to a different language.

So, if you're struggling in a video call, you can see a machine-translated version of what I'm saying in real time translated into your language. That's a huge amount of AI and machine learning processing going on behind the scenes, but you can just buy that today and you don't really need that much to set it up. And that is a perfect example of the machine being integral to our collaboration. And so, I encourage people and say, "You can get super far out on the spectrum or you can do some simple things and let's measure our progress along the way."

Steve: Well, it's so interesting that last comment you made, because it's not just about language, it's also about gestures, that AI is now being able to read gestures. So if you're hearing impaired and you're using sign language, the ability for you to translate that sign language into something that somebody who may not speak that or understand sign language into whatever language they do speak is also an important part of that AI.

Bruce: So, Steve, that's a great perspective because I think at some levels, we start to get a little bit into buy versus build here. You don't have to think of your AI journey as like, "Oh, I got to hire some data scientists. I've got to have people who understand algorithms, and then I've got to go buy a machine and build it all myself." You know, whatever. No, there are things that you can do. Literally, you can buy it off the shelf, take your first steps, add value to the organization, but not have to worry about setting up an entire team or an entire discipline within your company.

Steve: Yeah, for sure. Absolutely. And one of the things you mentioned, Bruce, was this notion even of personalization. So, as you start to move up that curve from replacement to collaboration, you're learning

more and more about the user and you're creating a more personalized journey for that user. You're finding out more data specifically about them and that can create some data and ethical privacy challenges. So how is Dell thinking about those and the challenges that are created from all this information you're gathering about the employees passively throughout the course of their workday and securitizing that data?

Bruce: Yeah, this is a highly important question to answer for any company, and at some levels, almost the heart of the matter. We all value our privacy at varying levels. And we have to respect that as companies about our employees, about our partners, about our customers, about the world, really. I've mentioned our 2030 moonshot goals just earlier in the call, and Dell takes this extremely seriously. Upholding ethics and privacies are absolutely a core part of our company's culture. And if you take a look at those goals, you'll actually find there is one that is a focus on making it easy for our customers to control their personal data. So, we actually have stated as a company, "This is where we're going."

And, Steve, so we were named, for the ninth year in a row, to Ethisphere's World's Most Ethical Companies list, and I think we're very proud of our achievements there. So, now taking it down a level from our company goals, and let's talk about myself and my organization as practitioners. We have a very comprehensive set of policies and procedures that we have to follow when it comes to data. We obviously respect global standards, regional regulations, et cetera. And every single one of our projects has to buckle into that. So, we just literally don't deviate from it.

Now here's the interesting thing. This is going to be true for many companies. When we start talking about piloting, oftentimes those policies and procedures are based on global needs or global regulations, but you still need some flexibility. You still need some agility to experiment in ways that

don't violate the policies, but maybe take on some new dimensions to things we hadn't considered before, right? New challenges that come with this new world. And so, what we've been able to do fairly successfully is put some fences around it. So, for instance, we might pick our audience in a region where we comply with a less restrictive set of privacy laws. I'm not telling you we're trying to get around things, but we have varying standards around the world as an example, right?

And then we always ask our audience to opt in. We want you here because you want to help us grow. We want you here because we want to innovate, but we completely respect your personal values. And we're not going to ask you to even participate if you're uncomfortable doing so. And so picking that right use case, picking the right region, picking the right audience and then being respectful and interweaving your company's policies and procedures throughout that, are really the key to being able to experiment and innovate and still respect our core values.

Steve: That's great. I think it's, as this topical area continues to grow and as AI becomes more and more a member of the team, the ability, to your point earlier, to look across the organization and to connect dots in ways that people miss sometimes is going to be a real challenge. And this concept of data privacy and just because technology can do something, should it, is going to continue to remain a top of mind issue for our clients.

Bruce: Yep. One thousand percent. And it's interesting, I mean, at some levels this particular topic is really very personal. And so, you have to decide where are you going to land? If you net out to the common denominator, you would never go forward and do anything. If you go too far too fast, people are going to feel creepy. People use this word creepy, right? And finding that balance in the middle, but what I try to do is I really try to show people the value, right?

Look, let's take our translation example and both either for deaf people or non-English speaking people, is a great example. Is that creepy? I don't know. I don't think so. Is it helpful? For sure. Is it a great way to show you the value of using this type of technology in a way that is noninvasive? I would argue, yes. And so, I think we're going to just have to grow people's expectations over time by increasingly showing them the value and then extending some of those boundaries.

Steve: I think that's right. And I think this concept of leading-edge technology that is going to continue to advance over the next few years is going to require even new ways of thinking that we're not even prepared for yet.

Bruce: Oh yeah, 1000%.

Steve: I would love to get your perspective around things like, as you're trying to move closer to that user experience, speed and latency become an issue. So how do you push things down to edge computing so that performance improves to the point where you drive better adoption?

Bruce: Yeah. That's a great question as well. And in our world, I'll tell you what that translates into, it really is a regional question. One size does not fit all when it comes to sales, learning, and development. And so, we always have this balance of the central organization, the corporate organization, which I'm part of, how do we put out programs, technologies, and experiences that are valuable for our audience? But how do we make sure that they're also relevant to you in a foreign country? Maybe halfway around the world and 12 and a half hours of time zone differences. And so, we've had to engineer into our systems this notion of some shared services, which basically [inaudible] some centralized services, which allow us to provide a platform on which people can develop and build and grow programs. But then with some regional autonomy so that they can personalize and tailor that.

And by the way, when you try to do that with a common graph engine, that's a tricky slope, right? Because now you have different data sets and different languages and et cetera, et cetera. So that's an ever-evolving question for us. That's a great one. And I can't say I'm confident we've solved it. And I don't think it's really solvable, because the moment you swing too far out into the region, you'll be so customized that everybody will have to do the work locally. And they won't like that. The moment you swing back to centralize, everybody thinks they don't have control. So, I think that's a pendulum that just swings forever back and forth.

Steve: So, Bruce, we talked about some of the more advanced technologies that are out there today. As you think about some of the things that we're seeing around knowledge graphs and machine learning and other emerging technologies that we're seeing from the cognitive side, how are you using those to help you break down silos?

Bruce: Yeah. That's a great question because there's actually a yin and a yang there from my perspective. So first of all, powerful tools, absolutely, and we are embracing them as fast as we can go, essentially. And the word that we haven't used here in our discussion yet is pervasive. Because for me, what I want, when I think about learning in the flow of work and knowledge in the flow of work, I want a pervasive experience across all of our platforms. I want knowledge to follow you, to know about you. I want you to feel, like in this concept of superteams, essentially, I don't know, let's call it your machine buddy, for lack of a better word, right, knows about you, is helping you all the time. And it's just there. It's just like, I could call on you as a friend. Now that's a pretty big stretch to think a machine might work that way, but okay. That's my mental picture.

Now here's the challenge. We, like other large organizations, have multiple silos and there're silos for a reason. Nobody

builds a CRM system like our CRM vendor. I would never expect our productivity suite vendor, or anybody else to do what they can do. And simultaneously our learning management system, right? They are great at that. Our HR system. So, companies have specialized purposely in their technology and their domains. And I would never stop that, that's how you build amazing tools. Now, the challenge is, every single one of them is also building a graph and an AI-driven experience, but there's only one human being. There's only one Bruce Sanchez, there's only one Steve Lancaster that is traversing these systems. And if I find myself facing different recommendations, different experiences, different outputs of the knowledge graph essentially, now all of a sudden I have a pretty big problem.

Because I'm getting potentially conflicting recommendations. And so, I think the challenge for the industry is to say, "Okay, is there an uber graph or is there not? And if there isn't, how do I, the practitioner, make sense of my HR graph, my productivity graph, and my CRM graph, and my learning graph?" There's four that I need to unite just for my sales employees. And do I do it? Does the vendor do it? Is there a common template? These are some really interesting questions. I'm not concerned about tackling them right now, per se, but I'm planning for them in the future because as we really start rolling these things out two to three years from now, I know we're going to hit that wall.

Steve: Well, and does the proliferation of graphs create more silos within the organization? And not only that, by connecting them, again, you're learning so much more about that one employee and you can create such powerful recommendations of them across all of those systems. You're truly integrating this ecosystem of things in a way that helps them be more productive.

Bruce: Yeah. Steve, think about our sales makers world here just for a second. Let's

think about some things I could do if I were to describe it to you colloquially as a human being, right? Okay. I'm an AE, an Account Executive, and I'm getting ready for a meeting with a bank on Friday, and I'm going to sell them product ABC. And what does the system know about me spread across different things? In my CRM system, it knows I have an opportunity selling to that bank for a particular product for a particular dollar amount. In my compensation systems, I know my quota and I know my targets. In my HR system, I know about how long I've been with a company, et cetera, et cetera. And in my productivity suite, I know about the calendar and the fact that I have an appointment, and maybe even that I'm having a meeting later this afternoon with my team to get ready for that appointment.

That's a pretty powerful set of knowledge and would allow me as a training or a learning organization to say, "Hey, sure seems like you may be getting ready for this meeting on Friday. Here's some useful information tailored to your expertise about selling this product to a bank and competing against this competitor." That is all possible, pulling it out altogether in the reality of today's environment is pretty tough, but that's definitely where we want to go.

Steve: I love it. I love that learning in the flow of work, knowledge in the flow of work and really, that's such a great example of this concept of superteams beyond just the digital twin piece of it. It truly is that assistant that is walking side-by-side with you all the time.

Bruce: Yeah. I think we talked about this notion of people's feelings about that, and you kind of have to embrace that. I mean, you have to say, "That's valuable for me, me as a person." I think it's great. I don't mind at all when some AI engine pops up and gives me a recommendation or suggests something. It may not be accurate, but I'm happy it's trying to help me. Other people find that very invasive. And so back to our privacy discussion, you really have to be

sensitive to that. And at some levels deploy it for the people who want it first, the early adopters, right?

Steve: Right. That's so true. Going back to something you said at the beginning of our conversation. For many of our clients, they were on this journey maybe just dipping their toes into the pool a couple of years ago, but COVID really changed and accelerated that journey for them. What was COVID's impact on Dell and your journey and strategy with AI?

Bruce Sanchez: Yeah, that's a great question. I hinted at it a little bit earlier when I talked about our sellers, but about a year ago, literally over a weekend, we transitioned a huge percentage of our company into remote work, just literally over 48 hours. And while that wasn't without its challenges, I think it's really done some amazing things for the company in creating new perspectives. It's also had a big impact, right? There's no way we can minimize the impact of all of a sudden everybody being at their house on the employees. But I think we're doing a pretty good job. If you look at some recent nominations, we were named to Fortune's World's Most Admired Companies. And we were also on the top 100 list of companies hiring remote workers by flexjobs. So even though we may find ourselves in a more difficult than normal environment, I think the company has been acknowledged for its efforts there.

Now, from a sales perspective, we don't see this changing anytime soon. It will go back somewhat to what it was, but we don't anticipate it's ever going to really go back to the way it was. How it used to be. As we think about that, we really need to think about the things we've already talked about, which are, what are the boundaries? We talked about there's new things we're going to encounter. There will be new policies and procedures we have to think about two years from now when we really, truly have AI firing on all cylinders. And I think that's really one of the

keys as we go forward, is really imagining that future now and planning for it.

Steve: And in that future, as you become more remote, AI can actually—

Bruce: Oh yeah [crosstalk].

Steve: Help on the other side of it.

Bruce: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Steve: On the other side, from a wellness perspective, and a wellbeing and a connecting across the organization. We talked about the ability to pull a bunch of information around your day. It can also give managers insights as to how the employees are struggling, that they may not share with their managers otherwise. It can make recommendations around when you can project some time off that may be coming in a way that helps you look forward to that. It can help you connect with SMEs across the organization on things that you're working on that, because we sometimes go heads down, we miss the fact that there are other people in the organization that are doing similar things that we can learn from.

Bruce: Yeah, yeah. Again, and absolutely. I think, we talked about this notion of our graph-driven evolution. That to me is the next step where we're not only just tackling things that are, procedural is probably the wrong word, but we're not just saying, "Hey, you should call on this customer because they may have a higher propensity" or like, "Here's a view into some knowledge." Now we're saying, "We're actually touching on the human side of you. We're thinking about your wellbeing and maybe your work-life balance. And how are you feeling?" That's kind of wild to imagine AI in that environment, but I see some technologies that are already driving towards tackling that employee experience. And we, for sure, are going to start experimenting there. And again, kind of back to this notion of, does it have to be perfect out of the box? No.

Do I care whether an employee experience engine pops up and says, "Hey, Bruce, sure seems like you're working a lot and it's 9:00 p.m. at night. Maybe you should hang up the phone." Well, that's pretty obvious. "Thanks for letting me know. I didn't know I was tired." Right? That's usually the cynical human response, but that's first-generation. The fact that it's keeping an eye on me and helping me, I'm saying, "Okay, great. Maybe it didn't get it right. And maybe I already know it's 9:00 p.m., but next time around as we work together, my machine, you'll get to know more about me, and at some point you're going to say, 'Hey, what if you did this?' And I'll go, 'Well, that's a good idea.'" Right?

Steve: That's great. So, Bruce, I really want to thank you for your time today. As we wrap up, you guys, like I said, have been on this journey for a while. What advice do you have for leaders and other organizations who are just starting on this journey or just starting to think about making a similar transformation? What advice would you give?

Bruce: Yeah, that's a good question. Let me think. So, I think I would think about a couple of things. One is how you approach the problem set and maybe how you have to shift your mind a little bit. I would coach people that you have to be fuzzy. Get your fuzzy out. And what I mean by that is the following. We went into some of these big AI projects with our traditional waterfall project management methodology, right? We're going to do this for two weeks, we're going to test the results, we're going to validate our benchmarks and our hypothesis. And then we're going to do the next thing, and then... And I'm going to tell you, you couldn't have found a bigger dog's breakfast, right? We didn't get the results, there were new things we didn't even anticipate. I mean, it was all over the map, and we were actually pretty frustrated.

People who were used to working in a linear fashion and one day somebody said to me, "Hey, Bruce, calm down. This is how AI works. You're going to find things that you

never even imagined and you're going to have to flex to incorporate them." And so, when I say get fuzzy, take off that precision hat a little bit and be willing to flow with the system. And I will tell you, after three or four months of struggling in one case where everybody was like, "Man, this just isn't working, we're going to just shut this whole thing down." I said, "No, let's keep going. We've got the right vision. It'll come through." Now it's like some hockey stick change. I mean, that project is on fire. And if we hadn't had the persistence and the patience to get the fuzziness to deal with it, we would have never gotten there.

And then I think the other thing, and I always tell my team this, I said, "Look, in the end, we will be successful based on literally only two things, our courage and our compassion. All the technology in the world doesn't matter. All the corporate policies and procedures, the way we approach our work. First of all, we have to have the courage to pursue our visions, to pursue our dreams, to hold close our ideals, and to speak the truth respectfully." Because there's lots of things that can come and try to knock you off your axis. And you just have to have that courage to keep going.

And then as we've been talking about all along, this is, in the end, is a human topic. And so, you have to have compassion. You can't just think that everybody's going to absolutely love that you have the bot that tells you go to sleep at nine o'clock, right. For some people they're not going to like that at all. So, we have to create a safe space for people where they can enter this new world, feel like they're protected, they're safe. And yet they also have the ability to stretch and keep growing. And I think if you have courage and compassion, you can combine those in your project team and hold those dear as values, you're going to be in great shape.

Steve: Awesome. Well, Bruce, again, thank you so much for joining us today on our Capital H podcast. I really appreciate you taking time

out and to share some of your ideas and your lessons learned with our listeners.

Bruce: Yeah, it's been terrific. I'm super happy to be on the show, and thanks for inviting me.

Steve: All right. Well, thank you so much, Bruce.

Burt: Thank you, Bruce and Steve, for your insights on superteams and how Dell has started to rearchitect work and incorporate AI as part of the team.

Now, I'd like to welcome my colleagues, Dana Swanson Switzer and Kraig Eaton to join Steve and me to share their perspectives. Dana is a principal in Deloitte's Human Capital practice with a focus on supporting clients in the high tech and media sectors as they navigate the future of work. Kraig is a principal in Deloitte's Human Capital practice and is a co-author of our Deloitte Human Capital Trends report. And, as I mentioned before, Steve is a managing director in Deloitte's Human Capital practice and is Deloitte's Knowledge Management Services leader.

Burt: Welcome Dana, Kraig, and Steve.

Steve: Morning, Burt.

Dana Swanson Switzer: Thank you, glad to be here.

Burt: Steve, thanks for your great interview with Bruce, and welcome back. Dana and Kraig, thank you for joining and I'm looking forward to continuing to dig into this topic with you all. We all know that COVID-19 is disrupting our view of what essential work is, but it also has challenged our collective ideas about how we can set teams up for success, and what role AI can play in those teams. That's what I'd like to focus on with you all today. How AI can be a team member and a collaborator, creating a superteam, as opposed to a more traditional team, where technology is only a tool or an enabler.

So, to get into this topic, Steve, maybe let's start with you, since you just recently spoke with Bruce. How does the concept of superteams fit into this bigger picture or this shift to future of work that organizations are navigating today?

Steve: So, when we think about the work that our clients are trying to do to transform their business for the future, we've seen them look at how technology plays a role in that transformation. And over the last few years, they've added more and more technology to the workplace, but that's had mixed results for them. They've added on average about 200 apps that are used in large enterprises, in the hopes of enhancing workplace productivity. But that was really focused around substitution of activities. So, when you think about the substitution of work, RPA has really taken a big part of that already, taken it out of the system. So, doing low-value tasks for workers.

As they look to make this transition to the future now, technology is moving into the augmentation space, and that augmentation is really putting computers alongside humans, working side-by-side with them, to help them enhance a skill that they already have. Things like data visualization and enabling people to see trends that are happening in the organization more prevalently and earlier in the process. Using things like having internal auditors detect fraud that's happening within an organization earlier. And looking for signs that are happening of fraud that they can intervene sooner on in the process.

Having RPA work with recruiters to identify high-target candidates for jobs in a very competitive workspace. So, this kind of concept of augmentation is starting to take a more prevalent role from the substitution or replacement thought that they originally were using technology for. And now as we look ahead, the next step in that chain will be full collaboration, where rather than just sitting next to and enhancing the skill of an

employee, AI will actually have a role on the team. They'll have their own independent roll on the team, just like any other human would have on the team, and use that as a mechanism to enhance the value that they bring to the organization, as well as the impact that the work that they do adds to the company's mission.

Burt: Steve, that's a great perspective. I really appreciate that insight.

Dana, in terms of some of the experiences that you're having with your clients, what are you seeing out of the marketplace? Maybe some examples where AI is moving beyond a tool and becoming more of a true enabler.

Dana: Yeah. I love what Steve was digging into around the enablement of work. And I'd love to take and build on that to talk a little bit about how AI, and kind of pull in the superteams concept, AI is also being used as a connector. Some of us may have read, Harvard Business Review came out with a study in February with research that shows our professional and personal networks have actually shrunk in this fully remote environment by close to 16% or more than 200 people during the pandemic. And what we're seeing were in some of our more progressive clients is the use of AI and machine learning to actually identify experts that might be outside of our typical reach in our current or potential network.

And in a remote environment and as companies continue to enable a virtual-led environment and working space, and looking to enable the flow of work in an asynchronous environment, their network of knowledge, of humans that have knowledge and can be collaborators with you, becomes even more important. And so, if you contrast the importance of your network and the shrink of the network, you really have an exacerbated problem as we look ahead to the future of the workplace. But those that are using AI and machine learning in more

progressive ways are identifying experts and intentionally bringing them together in collaboration spaces to solve problems at point in time in their process, in their app development or software development cycles, and really enabling this expansion of how we think about our networks and our people via AI and machine learning.

Burt: And that's really interesting. It's not just about what the AI tool can do itself as a "member of the team," but how we can also expand our team to other human experts that we would otherwise perhaps not know about. Wonderful.

Kraig, what else can you share with us about this dynamic of AI becoming more than just a fancy Excel spreadsheet?

Kraig Eaton: Thank you, Burt. This really is about the evolution and the enhancement of the team concept. What we found is that teams learn better, they create faster, and overall they perform at levels that are drastically enhanced than if individuals tried to work independently.

But to your specific question, and to give you a little bit of context around the report, one of the key research items that we did to develop the report, we went out and surveyed over 3,000 senior executives, 1,200 of which were C-suite members. And one of the most interesting responses that we got was around a question that we asked with respect to the big transformational shifts that organizations are making in a post-COVID world, and that is to really move from optimizing work to fundamentally transforming work. We saw a huge spike, over 60% of executives said they are thinking about transformation differently post-COVID and really thinking about how to reimagine work.

So, then we asked that very important follow-up question that gets to the importance of superteams. And we asked them, what are the most critical areas that they need to focus on in order to

successfully transform. Technology was number three. So that's good. We still see that there's a focus in on the role that technology plays. But the top two were more around human capabilities. The potential of humans with the first response over 45% around building a culture of growth and celebrating adaptability and resilience. And the second being building some of those capabilities as agility, re-skilling capabilities within their workforce.

So what it shows you is when you really empower these teams, you have to bring technology together, and you have to really elevate the role that the human brings to that team in re-skilling, adaptability, those essential human capabilities that when working alongside of a team really allow organizations to fundamentally transform the way in which work gets done.

Burt: And, so, Kraig, how much of what your describing is about the ability of teams to work better, work more collaboratively, just improve their team dynamic, and how much of it is access to better insights, better use of data, the information science? Is it a combination of the two things?

Kraig: Yeah, I would say there's three things that really allows a superteam to become super and when you think about the humans and machines working side-by-side. Number one is, people do their best work in teams. And technology needs to play a role in how to bring the teams more effectively together and really be a bit of an enabler around how do you pull out an introvert and give an introvert an opportunity to really weigh in and share his or her perspectives in the context of that team.

Number two is it enhances decision making. We're seeing things like the importance of well-being in COVID and how organizations are pulsing, are listening to their workforce around their mental well-being and how technology can do a great job of helping to sense real time.

And then, I made reference to the third point, which is that teams, superteams, innovate faster. And similarly, technology helps you innovate faster. We use tools like Remesh that allow us to better share knowledge in the context of a crowdsourcing forum so that knowledge can be created at a pace that is unprecedented. So, it's really all three of those things, Burt.

Burt: Wonderful. Steve, as our knowledge management expert, how does this idea of AI and superteams help us with that time crunch?

Steve: Yeah, so it helps in a couple of ways. The first is by connecting knowledge to trends and to metadata that allows it to be found later. So as we curate knowledge through the organization, that knowledge graph that organizations are wearing on top of it, being able to identify what's there so that it can be found later—through the right taxonomy, through the right ontology—using that as a way to generate metadata that can help it be found. Once it's been curated, and curation is also part of the process, because now there's multiple channels to curate. There are channels that are happening in social conversations through things like Teams or Chatter or Yammer or other kind of tools that companies are using inside the organization. There's document repositories where people are sharing and collaborating on documents and work. There are systems of record that are ERP systems or more larger enterprise systems where information is stranded.

So, this curation of information that's proliferating within an organization is being also helped by AI because you want to make it easy for people to contribute. When I add something in, I don't want to have to know all the thousands of metadata tags that could potentially be added to it. I want to just submit my knowledge and let somebody else do that work for me. So that's a layer that comes in.

And then once the knowledge is in place, providing that personalization of need, so what you need and what I need may be supplied by the same piece of content, but different pieces of content. And I may ask a question to get to it that's different than you because you may be sitting in HR and I may be sitting in finance, and we may have need for that same document, but at the same time, need different parts of it. So, the way I ask a question, the things that are important to me, knowing who I am as a user and what you can present to me is helpful in driving that consumption of knowledge. So, AI then plays a role in helping to understand ourselves and the information that can be presented to us. It can help connect knowledge across the organization so that it can be exposed at that point of need, and it can also aid in the curation of knowledge throughout the organization. And once it does that, that knowledge really, truly becomes the collective intelligence of the organization that can be leveraged on day-to-day business.

Dana: Some of the feedback that we get from clients all the time is, "We feel like we're solving the same problems over and over." If I use the customer service example, or services space, if we're limiting ourselves to just those humans that we would normally sit next to or that we are physically sitting next to, think about what we're forming in terms of our small space as opposed to unlocking the potential of not just our full organization, but maybe even beyond the walls of the company.

So, why couldn't we crowdsource some of these solutions. Or, better yet, put in an AI or machine learning solution to actually capture these customer service solutions or product solutions as we encounter them so that individuals can access those solutions and move on about their work in a more accelerated and kind of more meaningful way.

Dana: And I think in terms of kind of incorporating new individuals, as we evolve and create more flexibility in our teaming on a day-to-day basis, that will become part of our motion. Just like learning new skills and seeing new problems and seeing how much we don't know because we get exposed to new problems or efforts or projects. In the same way, the more we get access to other ideas, other information, other individuals, and that's part of our day-to-day, having new won't even be new anymore. It'll just be part of the way that we do work.

Burt: Absolutely. Wonderful. Stephen, one of the key enablers and motivators of performance in an organization is the traditional performance review, performance management. How does that need to change in this more superteams-oriented environment?

Steve: Yeah, it's a really good question. I think as we think about the way performance will be incentivized, it's really driven off the behaviors you're trying to seek, right? So, performance management is really about behavior management within organizations. And what gets managed is what gets measured.

So, part of what we're looking at in the superteam environment is what are the outcomes that you will be working to generate and how are those outcomes enhanced by the entire team working together? How do you minimize the fear of using collaborative tools in technology in that space so that you can get to that better outcome that everybody is trying to get to and then incentivize people on that type of a behavior. And building new skills within the organization around those enduring human capabilities, that around collaboration and innovation and communication, and then as AI is continuing to enhance, how we layer those in so that by working together, we get a better outcome.

Kraig: Yeah. If I just layer on that, because it's such an important point. Two comments. Number one is we actually just as part of our upcoming summer trends report, sorry for the commercial here, we actually just conducted two crowdsourcing sessions with senior executives across the globe, which, by the way, we used our own Remesh tool, an AI tool, to help facilitate that as well. And we heard a lot of responses from those senior executives around this measurement pivot that Stephen just mentioned, from moving away from measurements in performance, rewarding the process, to measurements in performance, rewarding the outcomes, and the net new outcomes. Outcomes of the team versus the outcomes of the individual.

But there's a second component to it, which is really important, that needs to occur in the shift of our performance management systems. Here's the reality. This is hard. And these shifts, you're gonna try, you're gonna test, you're gonna fail, by the way, a little bit. You're gonna have to go back to the drawing board, and you're gonna have to refine and adjust and then try again. And, unfortunately, a lot of our respective performance management processes and policies don't really allow that try-and-fail mentality. And so we also have to rethink how do we create safe environments for folks to test out some of these new concepts that we're mentioning, that are in many cases potentially counter-cultural to an organization's current culture. And not ding or penalize individuals for having to work through some of those change management steps or pain points.

Burt: Right. Excellent. We're just about at our time. If I could ask each of you to give a little summary and what one thing would you like our listeners to take away from this conversation. And, Dana, maybe I'll start with you.

Dana: Sure. A little bit of good news is that we are entering a moment where companies are getting a bit of a clean slate and are using this pivot, and we'll call it a slow return to the office and a thoughtful re-think of work, workforce, and workplace, to try new things and, to Kraig's point, allow themselves to fail a little bit in the spirit of embracing the future of work. So, my overarching and final message would be that you are in the boat with large and small companies, local and global companies, that are all trying new things and attempting to pave the way for what this future could look like. So, join in, jump in, got a lot of space to play around and a lot of colleagues and partners out there that are willing to share their experiences and help you get where you wanna go.

Burt: That's really great. There is this sense of we're all in this together collegiality, I'm seeing in the market. Absolutely. Stephen. Your thoughts as we wrap up?

Steve: Yeah. Building off what Dana was just saying, as we start to think about what the future of the workplace will look like, this hybrid work environment that we're all thinking is going to be kind of the next normal. There is truly an opportunity to really heavily double down on some of the technology that we have been forced to use over the last year and understand the implications that it means for your workforce going forward. And using it is not just a temporary bridge to get through a pandemic, but now think about what it means for your longer-term way of working with your employees.

Burt: Wonderful. Good advice. Kraig, your thoughts?

Kraig: Yeah, I kind of figured this may happen, that Steve, Dana, and I are all gonna hit on a little bit of the same point, but maybe that's okay. I would say many may look at this and say, "Gosh, this move to

the superteams, technology, and humans working side-by-side, that's gonna be really hard, and I don't know if we'll ever get there. And if we do, it's gonna take us a decade." Look what organizations have been able to accomplish just over the last 12 to 14 months. And I would venture a guess that many of you listening to this podcast have a lot of examples of where you've been able to apply these principles out of necessity and yielded success. So, that's good news. It should be a very good proof point that you can get there, that it won't take you a decade, and that there are things you can learn as you try and scale this.

Maybe I'll close my comments, Burt, you've referenced the trends report a lot. And we interviewed the VP of biology at AstraZeneca and think about they're right in the thick of trying to help us all as a society and a world respond to this pandemic and what this gentleman, whose name is Steve Rees, said, and I'm gonna read this. He said, "What we've learned is that nothing is actually impossible. Nothing's impossible. That if you assemble the right team with the right skills, both technical and behavioral, you can move more quickly than you ever have in the past." So, I'll leave you with maybe that positive note.

Burt: Yeah. I think that is a positive note and a bright spot from the last 12 to 14 months that we really have been able to accomplish things previously thought impossible. So, thank you all for your perspectives. It's been a wonderful discussion. Great insights. Dana, Kraig, Steve, thank you for joining us today.

Kraig: Thank you.

Burt: Thanks, everybody.

Dana: Thank you.




Burt: As technology continues to advance, it's more important than ever that leaders think holistically about how they integrate technology into the construct of work and the composition and capabilities of their workforce. Organizations today have an opportunity to use technology to rearchitect work in ways that allow humans to perform at their best. As we've learned, this is no easy feat, but the time to get started is now.

A special thanks to Bruce Sanchez, global lead of Sales Learning & Development Technology at Dell, and to my Deloitte colleagues, Steve Lancaster-Hall, Dana Swanson-Switzer, and Kraig Eaton for sharing their insights on this important topic. And thank you for joining us!

In addition to tuning in to our Capital H podcast series, you can also read our 2021 Human Capital Trends report online at deloitte.com/HCTrends. Thanks for listening, and please join us for our next episode.



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