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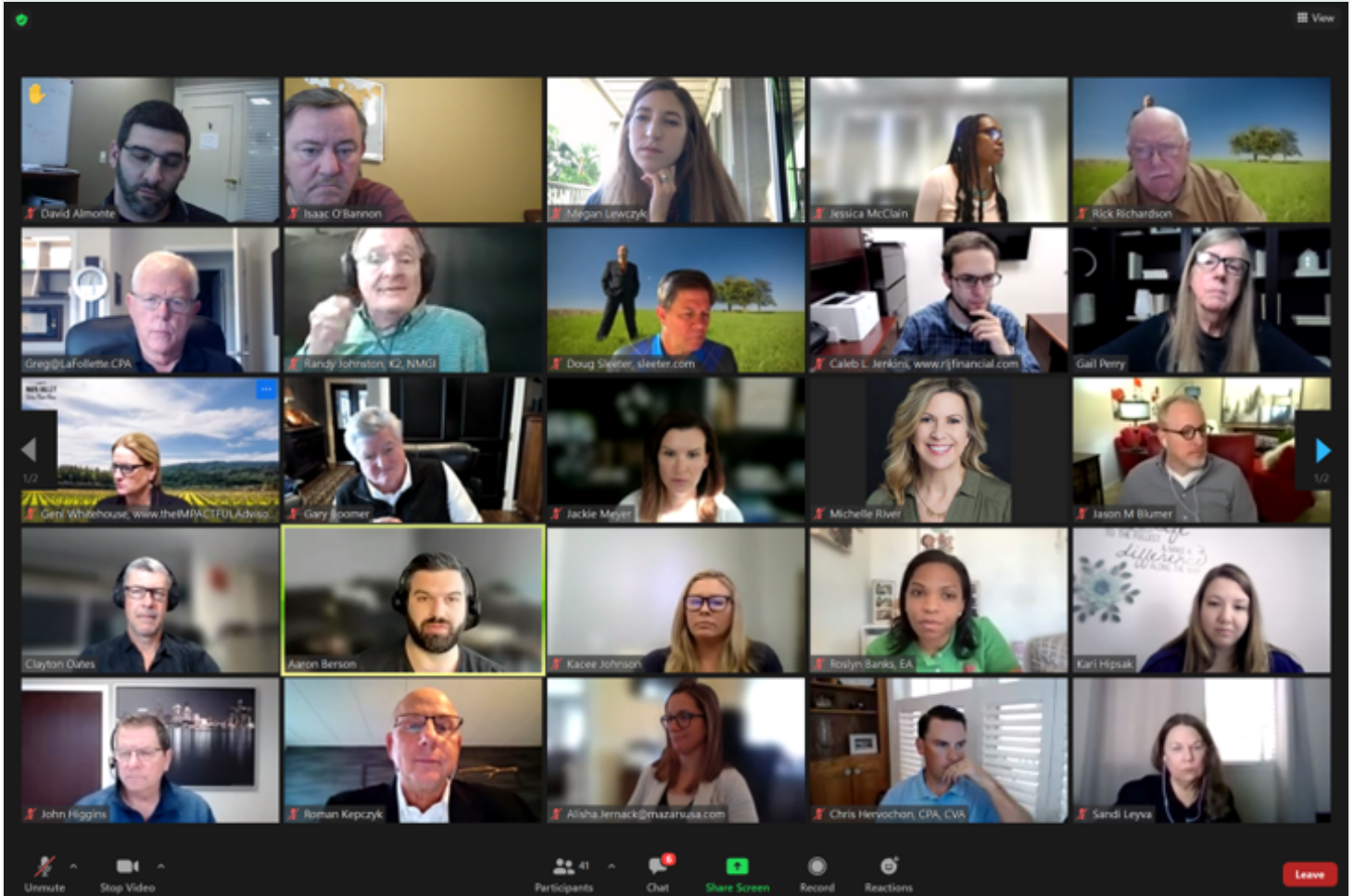
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FIRM MANAGEMENT

Creating Digital Experiences is the Future of Remote Work

Shared experiences are a great way to help your team members feel connected. Even if your entire team is working remotely, you can still create digital experiences that engage people wherever they are. When you do that, you'll have a cohesive team that...

Jon Hubbard • Jun. 13, 2022



The workplace as we know it has evolved. Remote work is here to stay, with nearly 50% of workers in the U.S. saying they would **take a pay cut to continue working remotely** at least part-time, and 25% saying they would quit their jobs if forced to return to the office full-time.

Yet one issue persists in many firms with remote and hybrid team members: people miss that feeling of “connectedness.” Without sharing the same physical space for hours each day, coworkers don’t get to know one another well. As a result, they don’t feel like they’ve made genuine friendships at work, go above and beyond to help one another, or consider themselves dedicated to the team.

Digital experiences: a solution to the disconnect

The Josh Bersin Company’s **HR Predictions for 2022** forecasts the metaverse as a solution to this disconnect. While there’s a lot of marketing hype wrapped up in selling the idea of “the metaverse” — Facebook, Microsoft, and Google are all on board — it may not be as futuristic or dystopian as it seems. After all, according to Bersin, a metaverse is “a digital space represented by digital representations of people, places and things.”

At Boomer Consulting, Inc., we tapped the metaverse for our Boomer Technology Circles Summit in 2020 using **Virbela**. When meeting in person was impossible, our

members and sponsors had fun creating their avatars and exploring Virbela's virtual expo hall, auditoriums and breakout rooms.

You visit a type of metaverse every day when you meet with clients or coworkers over Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Your live video or static profile picture is a digital representation of you in a virtual meeting space.

Creating digital experiences

Of course, most people who've been working remotely for the past two years know how mentally taxing it can be to be on Zoom calls all day or stuck in a dull "virtual conference" that feels more like an eight-hour webinar. That's why it's essential to be thoughtful about how you bring in-person meetings and events virtual and focus on creating a positive digital experience.

I encourage you to start experimenting with virtual reality to make meetings, events and even onboarding and training more immersive. But even if you're not quite ready to buy VR headsets for every member of your team, there are things your firm can do today to improve the digital experience and thus the connection between your team members.

Start with a vision

What do you want your digital employee experience to look like? How will it work for people at home, traveling, and in the office? Taking some time to think about what kind of experience you want to create will help you select solutions that will execute your vision.

Fully leverage video

If you aren't already, fully leverage video in all internal meetings and strive to do the same with your clients. That means everyone has their camera on! Other tips for making video meetings more interactive include:

- **Present content or information as succinctly as possible.** The human brain can't maintain attention for long stretches of time — especially while staring at a computer monitor. So avoid long monologues during virtual meetings.
- **Use interactive features.** Many video conferencing platforms include interactive elements such as in-meeting chat, polling, and breakout rooms. These tools help to break up long sessions and keep participants engaged.
- **Plan some social time.** It's tempting to launch right into the day's business, but plan for some non-work-related chat at the beginning of each meeting. Come

prepared with an [ice-breaker question](#) if you're worried that the conversation won't flow organically.

Think beyond Zoom

Tools like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Slack are great but look for other ways to elevate your team's online experience. For example, after using Virbela for our largest conference, we're not testing what it might look like to recreate our "Boomer offices" in this virtual space. We've also used [Sococo](#) and [Workplace](#) to help our distributed team feel more connected. Many more solutions like these will come onto the market in the months and years to come. So if you try one and don't find what you're looking for, don't give up.

Shared experiences are a great way to help your team members feel connected. Even if your entire team is working remotely, you can still create digital experiences that engage people wherever they are. When you do that, you'll have a cohesive team that is more motivated to meet organizational and client needs.

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