



Leadership in a Zoom Economy with Microsoft Teams

Applying Leadership to a Remote
Workforce

—
Peter Ward

Foreword by Matt Wade

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Leadership in a Zoom Economy with Microsoft Teams: Applying Leadership to a Remote Workforce

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New York City, NY, USA

ISBN-13 (pbk): 978-1-4842-7992-2
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4842-7993-9>

ISBN-13 (electronic): 978-1-4842-7993-9

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Cover designed by eStudioCalamar

Cover image designed by Pexels

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Printed on acid-free paper

*This book is dedicated to my wife, Geeta,
without whose love, encouragement, and advice,
none of the chapters would have ever been written.*

*Thank you to Allison Kennedy, Microsoft Certified
Trainer & MVP, Consultant Data Platform & BI Reporting,
for her wonderful technical review and feedback.*

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Table of Contents

About the Author	xiii
About the Technical Reviewer	xv
Introduction	xvii
Foreword by Matt Wade.....	xxv
Chapter 1: Personal Governance: The Art of Tidying Up	1
Why Do We Need To Focus?	2
Tidying Up Principles	3
Where To Start: Dispose	4
Deciding What To Dispose Of	5
Recategorization.....	6
Chapter Workbook.....	7
Disposing.....	7
Recategorization.....	10
Pitfalls of This Art	13
References	15
Chapter 2: Creating a Growth Culture with a Truly Remote Team	17
The Only Way Is Up, Ideally	17
SoHo's Growth Mantras	18
Chapter and Book Disclaimer	18
How Does SoHo Dragon Go Remote?	20
The SoHo Dragon Story	20

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SoHo Dragon's Non-Microsoft Tools23

The Expansion27

Unorthodox Advice for a Culture of Growth.....28

 Create a Culture of Shipping.....28

 Create a Culture of Accountability29

 Automate Anything That Can Be Automated29

 Do Not Do Tasks Below Your Pay Grade.....29

 Turn Emails into Tasks30

 Stay Out of Meetings30

 Delay Your Responses. Be Patient (Yeah, Right).31

 How MS Teams Meetings Should Be Run.....32

 Measure What Needs To Be Measured33

 Build to Spec33

Chapter Workbook.....34

 Shipping34

 Accountability35

 On the Go.....35

 Automate35

 Delegate36

 Meetings.....36

 Measure.....37

 Overruns37

Chapter Summary37

References38

Chapter 3: Using M365 To Be an Effective Executive with Remote Workers39

- Responsibility and Accountability 40
- Understanding Results and How To Get Them 42
 - Tiny Improvements Add Up To Massive Differences 42
- Good Decision Making 43
 - The Three Elements of Decision Making 44
 - Underperformance 45
- Time Killers 46
- Hiring Talent 47
- Delegate 50
 - How To Delegate More Effectively 50
- Chapter Workbook 51
 - Accountabilities 51
 - Hires 51
 - KPIs 51
 - Time Killers 52
 - Delegate 52
- Chapter Summary 52
- Reference 53

Chapter 4: Entrepreneurship 55

- What Is EOS? 57
- Using MS Teams To Implement the EOS Methodology 58
 - Vision 58
 - People 61
 - Data 63
 - Issues 64

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Process..... 64

Traction..... 65

Chapter Workbook..... 65

 Roles..... 65

 Your Time..... 66

 Free Time..... 66

 What Gets Seen Will Get Measured 66

Chapter Summary 66

References..... 67

Chapter 5: Being Productive with Your Productivity 69

 What You Will Learn 69

 Eisenhower Matrix: Where To Start 70

 Start with a Good Plan 71

 Pareto Principle 73

 Establish Priorities and Focus on Them 74

 The Path to Progress Is All About Self-Exploration..... 75

 Sleep Hygiene..... 76

 Time Management..... 77

 Final Point 77

 Chapter Workbook..... 78

 Create an AM and PM Task List in One 78

 Prioritize These Tasks with Letters 78

 At The End of the Day, How Did It Go? 78

 How Many Emails During the Day Did You Resist Responding to
 Immediately? 79

 After One Week, Did You Notice Any Improvements? 79

 Chapter Summary 79

 References..... 80

Chapter 6: Decisive Communication Over MS Teams81

- What You Will Learn82
- Figure Out Who You Are and How You Must Speak and Lead.....82
- For Projects To Thrive, the Doers Must Also Be Deciders.....85
 - Numbers Give Me Good Comfort85
- Be Vulnerable85
 - Identify the Muscling.....86
- The Type of Project.....86
- A Meeting Is an Alternative to Work.....87
- Chapter Workbook.....88
 - List the Projects/Initiatives That Report to You88
 - With the List Above, Ask Yourself Which Level You Operate From88
 - With the List, What Actions Do You Need To Implement To Operate at the Define Level?.....88
 - With Each Status Team Meeting, Reflectively Look at Your Communication Style and List How Many Binary Questions You Ask.....89
 - After One Month, Are You Operating at the Define Level?89
- Chapter Summary89
- References.....90

Chapter 7: Selling Over MS Teams.....91

- What You Will Learn92
- Become Fast Friends92
 - Project Technical Requirement Questions Template.....93
- The Sales Pitch/Demo.....95
 - Focus on the Why95
 - Respect People and Their Time96
 - Give Them a Takeaway97
 - Use Digital Ink98

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Do the Same Demo Over and Over Again99

Give Them Insight into Scenarios 100

Watch Your Language 103

Chapter Workbook..... 104

 Add the Questions to Your Pre-Demo Questionnaire 104

 Record a Sales Demo and Ask Yourself the Following Questions..... 104

 Are You Noticing a Pattern with the Pain Points of Customers?..... 105

 Has the Win Rate with Demos Increased?..... 105

Chapter Summary 105

References..... 106

Chapter 8: Get Organized with Your Organization107

 What You Will Learn 108

 SoHo’s Org Chart..... 108

 Why So Late for Me To Be in the Know?..... 110

 Creating a Good Org Chart 111

 Org Chart Rules 113

 Understanding an Org Chart..... 114

 The Discovery of Empty Suits 117

 SoHo Had Several Fragilistas 118

 Job Descriptions..... 118

 SoHo’s Job Descriptions..... 119

 The Butterfly Effect of the Org Chart..... 121

 What the Butterfly Effect Is Not 121

Chapter Workbook..... 122

 When Was the Last Time You or Anyone Looked At or Studied Your
 Company Org Chart? 122

 List All Departments in Your Company..... 122

Add Your Current Employees to the Org Chart in the Roles They Perform.....	122
Is Anyone in More Positions Than They Should Be?	123
Are People in the Wrong Positions?.....	123
For Each Role, Define the Position Agreement	123
Chapter Summary	124
References.....	124
Chapter 9: The Wrap-Up Chapter	125
How to Start the Actual Implementation	125
What Will Move the Needle?.....	126
Gridlock	126
Create Your Next Day	127
Chapter Summaries	127
Introduction	127
Chapter 1	128
Chapter 2	128
Chapter 3	128
Chapter 4	129
Chapter 5	129
Chapter 6	129
Chapter 7	130
Chapter 8	130
Final Words	130
Index.....	133

About the Author



Peter Ward is a Solution Architect on Microsoft Cloud software. He is the founder and CTO/CEO of SoHo Dragon, a New York-based Microsoft Gold partner focused on helping CXOs and technical teams obtain as much value as possible from Microsoft Cloud. He prefers taking the technical lead on Microsoft Azure / M365 projects from an architect and deployment standpoint. He is an M365 trainer and motivator.

- A Microsoft MVP, co-author of four Microsoft SharePoint books, and a frequent contributor to GitHub
- Is keen on UX simplicity and stays on the leading edge of technology
- Thinks on his feet in meetings and complex situations and gets to the heart of an issue while not ruffling too many feathers
- Loves yoga, vegetarian food, and reading books by Malcolm Gladwell

About the Technical Reviewer



Vikas Sukhija has over a decade of IT infrastructure experience with expertise in messaging, collaboration, and IT automations. He is a blogger, architect, and Microsoft MVP and is known by the alias TechWizard. As an experienced professional, he has assisted small to large enterprises in architecting and implementing Office 365 and Azure.

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Introduction

Guy Finley: Nothing in the universe can stop you from letting go and starting over.

The Fundamentals

People will look back at what COVID changed and they'll see it changed the way we worked, as it has forced people to experience a different type of working that they wouldn't have normally done. For our industry, in the medium to longer term, it will be transformational. Of course, it has also created problems for both employees and organizations.

Employers and workers have been forced to shift to remote working and have crammed years of transformation into just weeks and months. Keeping workers cooped up in spare bedrooms and entrenched social distancing rules has had a dramatic impact on other parts of the way we work. The Zoom economy has as many losers as winners, but it'll have a profound, lasting effect on our daily work routine.

Technology is part of the solution, but it's the way we use the technology that provides the win.

The Zoom Economy

"Zoom" is a cool word. It means getting somewhere super-fast. The Zoom product name was a great marketing coup with COVID impacting the economy, and soon journalists started to bounce the term "Zoom economy" around.

INTRODUCTION

Definition of the Zoom economy: People can telework and still do their normal job functions by communicating not via the watercooler or in the conference room, but over video conferencing technology, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams (MS Teams).

Another popular phrase that journalists bounced around was “Zoom town,” where a community experienced a significant population increase due to telecommuting. This name is a play on “boomtown.”

About Me and This Book

For those who do not know, like a lot of readers of this book, I am Peter Ward, the founder and CTO/CEO of SoHo Dragon (SoHo), a New York City-based Microsoft Gold Partner. There is nothing eye-opening about SoHo. We ain't putting rockets on Mars or defining the metaverse. We are a Microsoft partner that was started in 2010 and has had impressive growth for the past ten years, with a semi-remote workforce leveraging MS Teams to aid the leadership activities of the employees.

You always read about expansion and growth in bigger companies, but it's the smaller companies where this is a struggle. According to Forbes, only half of small businesses survive past the five-year mark, ranging from 45.4% to 51% depending on the year the business was started. Beyond that, only about one in three small businesses get to the 10-year mark and can party.

Statistics from The Small Business of Entrepreneurial Council state that almost 90% of companies have fewer than 20 employees and firms with fewer than 10 employees account for 78.4%.

Looking at the statistics, the odds don't look good to build a company with over 10 employees, and although SoHo's activities probably won't make the pages of *The New York Times*, for the owner of a small company that has ambitions of growing to 50+ employees, I hope this book provides value.

Often owners will write a book where they are the hero of their own story, which I've tried not to do. Rather, I explain how SoHo operates with a growth mindset in a new world of a remote workforce.

The book charts a very personal account of what I've experienced in growing a company to over 100 employees, with 3 offices on different continents, and how organizational principles are key to building and scaling a company, but also how MS Teams is a fantastic aid to supporting leadership processes and teamwork altogether.

I've been working with collaboration software since 1993 and the now-obsolete Lotus Notes, and I started writing about my SharePoint collaboration experiences on my blog in 2006, www.wardpeter.com. I've co-authored four SharePoint books with Microsoft, Microsoft MVPs (Most Valuable Professionals), and other talented SharePoint peeps, so I like to think I know how remote teamwork works and doesn't work in the workplace. This book shares everything I have learned about running a distributed team and how I grew as a team member, manager, and leader, and how SoHo Dragon grew—the highs, the lows, and everything in between.

Prior to 2020, the company had always been working semi-remotely, with staff in multiple time zones: Philippines, California, New York, Lithuania, Beirut, Ahmedabad, Singapore, consultants on client sites, or sitting in coffee shops while electronically staying in touch with employees and clients, which for some companies at the time may have seemed like black magic. Since SoHo had been working remotely for some time, we had figured out issues like Zoom fatigue and collaboration. Lack of physical meetings appeared very natural, but new hires and customers kept on asking questions like: “How does the company function?” “How do you have these growth rates year after year?” or “How do you maintain your corporate culture?”

This book answers these questions.