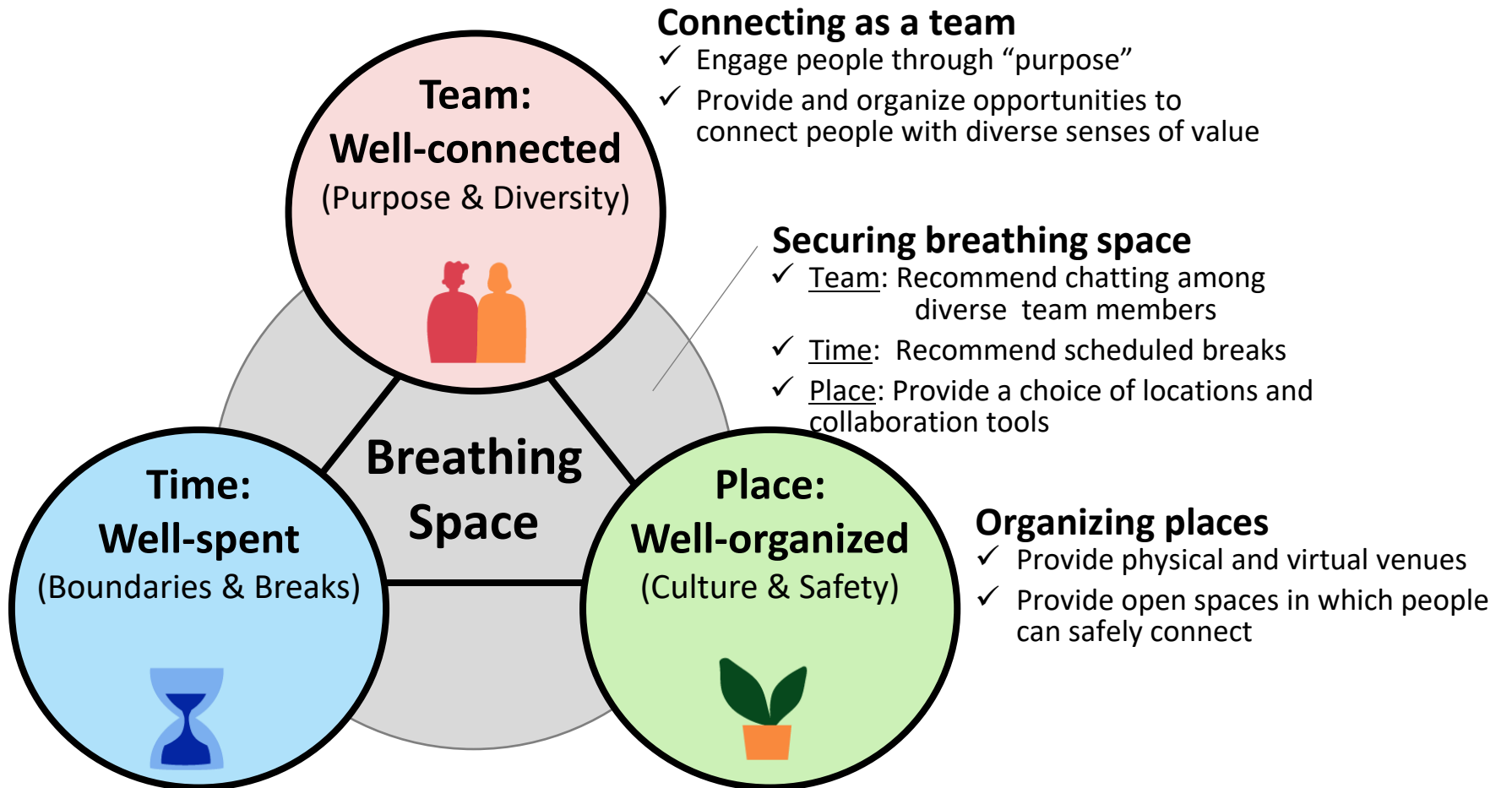# Best Practices for Collective Well-being
Realizing Sustainable Teams in the 'New Normal' Era
<Checklist for Management>　EN

Aug 28, 2020

Rakuten People and Culture Lab

Rakuten
People & Culture Lab

3 Key Elements + Breathing Space for Collective Well-being

In the New Normal era the future is uncertain and change is a given. We believe that the company, acting as a centripetal force, needs to clarify its purpose (raison d'être) and create an environment in which the employees with diverse values who gather there can sustainably demonstrate their inherent skills. Toward this objective, we recommend the designing of "well"-considered breathing space in terms of Team, Time and Place.

Connecting as a team
- ✓ Engage people through "purpose"
- ✓ Provide and organize opportunities to connect people with diverse senses of value

Team: Well-connected
(Purpose & Diversity)

Securing breathing space
- ✓ Team: Recommend chatting among diverse team members
- ✓ Time: Recommend scheduled breaks
- ✓ Place: Provide a choice of locations and collaboration tools

Breathing Space

Allocating time
- ✓ Establish work and team boundaries (starting and finishing work, taking breaks)
- ✓ Foster understanding and acceptance of working rhythms and routines that differ from your own

Time: Well-spent
(Boundaries & Breaks)

Place: Well-organized
(Culture & Safety)

Organizing places
- ✓ Provide physical and virtual venues
- ✓ Provide open spaces in which people can safely connect

Team: Purpose and Diversity

Engage people through "purpose"

☐ **Messaging from company leaders**

  ❑ Weekly video messages from management, weekly all-hands calls (companywide meetings), daily or weekly messaging to employees. These should aim to continuously share awareness of the purpose and convey the company's stance in accordance with changing circumstances

  ❑ New mission-focused messaging based on the response to COVID-19 to indicate the company's direction and foster a sense of security

  ❑ Virtual town hall meetings featuring leaders casually attired in their own homes. A sense of familiarity can be created by offering attendees a glimpse into the private lives of these leaders through the inclusion of pets, children or personal belongings

  ❑ Creating more time for CEO and leaders to discuss business objectives

  ❑ CEO participation in online new-grad training to address the company's purpose and show acknowledgement

  ❑ Ads to reinforce pride and mission-focus of critical businesses, indirect messaging to employees

  ❑ On-site visits to check in with frontline workers, thank them, and raise awareness within the company

☐ **Launching socially significant projects**

  ❑ Discussions on how the company can contribute to society amid difficult circumstances

  ❑ Launching of new businesses/services employing existing company assets to contribute to society

  ❑ Internal sharing of stories connecting own business and social contribution to promote re-recognition of the company's purpose

Team: Purpose and Diversity

Provide and organize opportunities to connect with colleagues with diverse senses of value

- ☐ **Revisiting team's shared purpose**
  - ❑ Relaunch sessions to ensure everyone is on the same page regarding direction and available resources
  - ❑ Checking in on and updating of 2020 goals in accordance with direction toward what team aims to achieve
- ☐ **Relaunching team periodically as circumstances change**
  - ❑ Understanding members' constraints and finding preferred work style(s) as a team (See "Time")
  - ❑ Reconsidering norms to connect people with diverse senses of value (See "Time")
- ☐ **Encouraging various means of socializing**
  - ❑ Virtual lunch and dinner gatherings to intentionally connect people and provide opportunities to feel the corporate culture
  - ❑ Designating first 5 minutes of meetings to social time: checking in, venting, catching up and "water cooler" talk
  - ❑ Having one-on-one sessions with colleagues (especially newly joined team members) to better get to know each other through non-work-related exchanges
- ☐ **Encouraging facets of a personal and fun nature**
  - ❑ Virtual happy hours or "Quarantini" parties to get to know team members from new perspectives
    - ❑ Relaxed employee dress code, virtual costume parties, wacky T-shirt Tuesday
    - ❑ Virtual "Bring your kids or pets" meetings

Time: Rhythm and On/Off Switch

Establish work and team boundaries (starting and finishing work, taking breaks)

- ☐ **Encouraging personal routines and taking breaks, providing guidance to identify each employee's preferred work style**
  - ❑ **Rules/Routines:**
    - ❑ Establishment of personal daily check-in/check-out rules (morning to-do list, review of feelings at end of workday)
    - ❑ Development of personal dos and don'ts for working from home
  - ❑ **Time management:**
    - ❑ Setting goals and timeframes, blocking time for individual work and breaks based on identification of best times for concentration
    - ❑ Pomodoro technique (25 min work + 5 min break = 1 set / 20 min break every 2 hrs)
    - ❑ Setting time for "thinking" and time for "engaging hands without thinking"
  - ❑ **Mindset:**
    - ❑ Promoting a tolerant attitude toward personal performance
- ☐ **Maintaining a team routine and sharing a teamwide On/Off switch**
  - ❑ Morning/evening meetings (check-in/check-out rules) to separate work time and private time
  - ❑ Weekly or bi-weekly team routines
    - ❑ 15-minute virtual coffee or tea-time breaks
    - ❑ 15-minute mindfulness or yoga sessions

Time: Rhythm and On/Off Switch

Establish work and team boundaries (starting and finishing work, taking breaks)

☐ **Introducing or expanding well-being programs to promote self-management**
- ☐ Suggestions for how to maintain physical and mental well-being at home
  - ☐ Well-being and mental health trainings and webinars
  - ☐ Virtual "lunch-and-learn" sessions focused on well-being, working with kids at home, etc.
  - ☐ Promoting use of wellness apps (exercise, stretching, meditation, sleep management, etc.)
- ☐ Mental Health Champions: training staff to provide mental health advice and guidance
- ☐ Sharing of "success stories"

☐ **Presenting and encouraging ways to ensure the taking of rest**
- ☐ Encouraging flexible work styles that make the most of existing flex-time system
- ☐ Encouraging use of paid-leave days to relieve unconsciously accumulated fatigue and stress

Time: Rhythm and On/Off Switch

Foster understanding and acceptance of working rhythms and routines that differ from your own

☐ **Regularly acknowledging members' constraints to identify preferred work style as a team**

  ◻ Confirming added demands on team members (family responsibilities, familiarity with tools, etc.)

  ◻ Supporting members, managing deadline expectations, and rebalancing task loads accordingly

☐ **Periodically reestablishing team norms to reconsider how to connect people with diverse senses of value**

  ◻ Discussing communication frequency and tools (with or without video) to reduce online meeting fatigue

  ◻ Discussing etiquette regarding contact, request and collaboration procedures

☐ **Checking in to assess and address stress and frustration**

  ◻ Checking in with team members on a one-on-one basis to assess and address stress, frustration, burnout, etc.

  ◻ Mutual confirmation between leadership teams regarding stress, frustration, burnout and fatigue to provide reciprocal support

☐ **Regular pulse and other surveys**

  ◻ Using pulse surveys (periodic employee engagement surveys) to stay abreast of employees' well-being, mood, preferences, concerns, needs, etc.

  ◻ Delaying annual engagement/satisfaction surveys in favor of targeted pulse surveys

Place: Place and Tools

Provide physical and virtual venues

- ☐ **Provision of unique company tools**
    - ◻ Providing virtual backgrounds and chat-system stickers
    - ◻ Sending of company products or items featuring service mascots homes of employees

- ☐ **Support and encouragement for preparation of a comfortable home working environment and expression of supporting attitude**
    - ◻ Support for creation of at-home workstations
        - ◻ Sending of laptops/monitors to home, subsidizing of utility expenses, support for WiFi set-up and purchase or rental of office furniture
    - ◻ Guidance for creating a better working environment
        - ◻ Changing room layout and color of lighting, integrating foliage plants and acoustics; use of aromatherapy, maintaining of optimal room temperature and ventilation
    - ◻ Maintaining a tidy work room to facilitate a positive working attitude and environment
    - ◻ Placement of favorite belongings around work area to support a positive mindset

- ☐ **Team confirmation of communication frequency and tools to find effective work style(s)**

Place: Place and Tools

Provide open spaces in which people can safely connect

☐ **Advanced information-security education to provide a secure working environment**

☐ **Connecting employees through online networking and community activities**

☐ **Ensuring a safe, contactless environment in which to interact**

- ❑ Establishment of new office-usage rules to ensure safety
- ❑ Provision of in-office hand sanitizer and protections for frontline workers, distribution of boxed meals in cafeterias, installation of thermal cameras for safer non-contact office environment
- ❑ Gradual approach to resuming office-based work
- ❑ Consideration for colleagues working in the same office area (e.g., controlling speaking volume amid multiple simultaneous online meetings)

Rakuten Initiatives: What Rakuten is doing as of June 2020

➢ **Purpose & Diversity:** remote team-building and social contribution

1. Enhancing appreciation of Rakuten's corporate values (Asakai, CEO readings)
2. Maintaining a sense of belonging among staff (virtual backgrounds, Viber stickers)
3. Online networking/community activities to connect workers
4. Sharing of stories highlighting connections between own business and social contribution (Connecting hotels and patients displaying no symptoms, Realtime takeout, Clutch Special Charity Fund, etc.)

➢ **Rhythm & On/Off Switch:** flexible work styles supporting well-being

1. Promoting flexible remote work styles using existing satellite and time-shift systems
2. Wellness webinars and stretch activities led by wellness team at team meetings
3. Daily online team huddles (morning and afternoon meetings)
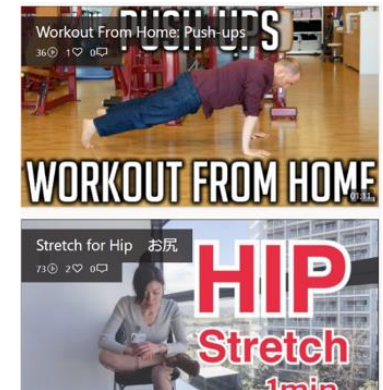4. Executive participation in radio calisthenics and meditation sessions

➢ **Place & Tools:** consideration for remote workplaces

1. Supplementary education on information security
2. Support for at-home working environment
3. Consideration for coexisting with family and pets
4. Initiatives promoting safety, health and optimism

Virtual background

Rakuten Travel
Social contribution

Corporate philosophy stickers for a chat system

Rakuten リアルタイムテイクアウト

Promoting exercise

Sharing tips on working with kids

Rakuten Initiatives: Supporting the transition to remote work

ブログ ／ 2020年3月18日

新型コロナウイルス対策について、楽天 代表取締役会長兼社長 三木谷 浩史 からのメッセージ

VIDEO ／ MARCH 19, 2020

Working From Home the Rakuten Way

BLOG ／ MARCH 24, 2020

Working from home: Employees offer insights on the challenges and possibilities

A message from Rakuten CEO Mickey Mikitani (article)

On March 18, 2020, Mickey shared precautions the company is taking protect all of its stakeholders amid the spread of COVID-19.

(English) https://rakuten.today/mickeysvoice/rakuten-response-to-covid-19.html

(Japanese) https://rakuten.today/mickeyvoice-ja/rakuten-response-to-covid-19-j.html?lang=ja

"**Working From Home the Rakuten Way**" (video)

The PR team created and shared on March 19, 2020, a video promoting the Rakuten approach to working from home via the Rakuten News Network.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtlvkTX64ow&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR23IHoxzn3KGW1E6WUYq02bnzkyUJzKeFRyX7-tSund-3DrTLwr3e_R43E

"**Working from home: Employees offer insights on the challenges and possibilities**" (article)

Rakuten employees shared WFH experiences on March 24, 2020

https://rakuten.today/blog/working-from-home-employee-insights.html