

# Achieve

4TH  
ISSUE

2020

ABWA PERSPECTIVES

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## MANAGING IN THE NEW NORMAL

### Tactics for Better Telework and Remote-Employee Engagement

KATE ZABRISKIE

*It was one thing to see her entire family during meetings when everyone first went into lockdown, but we're months into this. Shouldn't she have come up with some kind of work-at-home plan by now? I did. The situation is maddening! Her kids, dog, and husband to not mix well with work.*

*At first, I was thrilled with my new commute and the idea of working from home. At this point, I'm a little lonely and disconnected. Worse still, there doesn't seem to be much light at the end of the tunnel.*

*If I have to have another on-camera meeting, I may scream. Enough is enough. What happened to good old email? It was working just fine. I don't need to see his face or his kitchen to communicate basic information. I'm worn out.*

Sound familiar? It just might if you and your team members are participating in the new normal of remote work. For those of us not expecting it, the switch came fast and furious, and we did the best we could. Some parts of the

*continued on page 4*



The mission of the **American Business Women's Association** is to bring together businesswomen of diverse occupations and to provide opportunities for them to help themselves and others grow personally and professionally through leadership, education, networking support, and national recognition.



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# save the date

### LEAGUE RELATED ITEMS

#### ASAP

2020-2021 Officer Election report  
2020-2021 Committee Chairs report

#### September 1- November 30

Fall Member Recruitment Campaign

### NATIONAL WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

#### August 5

4th payment for NWLC

#### September 2

5th and final payment for NWLC

#### September 14

Early Bird Registration Ends for NWLC

#### September 7

Labor Day – National Office is Closed

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transition went well, and others are prime examples of what not to do when working from home.

At this point, many managers find themselves in an uncomfortable calculus. Remote work isn't going anywhere, and it's not going as well as it needs to. The good news is there are concrete actions managers can take to steadily improve to make the new normal productive and enjoyable.

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#### Tip One

### THINK IN STAGES

We've had the introductory phase and at some point, we'll be bringing people back to the office. Now, we're living in that middle space, and it's time to focus on smoothing out the rough edges.

When talking with your team, stay positive about stage one, and take the opportunity to congratulate people for making it this far. Then, once you've recognized the positives, you can begin to discuss steps to improve. For example, *"Everyone, I appreciate how quickly you transitioned from working in the office to working remotely. We get a grade 'A' for speed and attitude. Now that we're a few months in, it's time to start thinking long term about what remote work should look like between now and the end of the year."*

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#### Tip Two

### REVISIT EXPECTATIONS

In a perfect world, organizations that move to telework have policies, procedures, guidelines, and even training to prepare people for the transition. During the pandemic, however, the cart may have come before the horse. But, nothing says you can't get the horse back on its feet and start planning after the fact. The key to this process is communication and seeking input. This is especially important if you've been operating in something that looks and feels like the Wild West. As a manager you may (and probably will) encounter resistance from people who are happy conquering the frontier and operating without a lot of policies, procedures, or rules. Go slow, use the questions found listed in tip four, and be prepared to handle a range of reactions.

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#### Tip Three

### BE HONEST ABOUT WHAT'S WORKING AND WHAT ISN'T

When something is wrong on a team, it rarely fixes itself, and this is especially true when work goes remote. A member seems checked out, someone is missing deadlines, or people

seem disconnected; whatever the problem, it probably won't magically disappear. As the person in charge, you have the obligation and responsibility to find the issues. If you don't your team will never function at its full potential.

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#### Tip Four

### ASK QUESTIONS

People rarely argue with their own data. And for that reason, you can accomplish more with questions than you ever will by simply telling it like it is. Here are a few questions any manager should ask related to working in the new normal:

- *Do people need to keep set hours to perform their jobs remotely?*
- *Are there core hours when we expect people to be available and free from home interruptions?*
- *Can people switch to part-time status if they're having difficulty balancing work and home?*
- *Must people work a certain number of hours, complete a number of tasks, or both?*
- *What are the protocols for updating task status?*
- *What are the rules for returning calls, emails, and other communication?*
- *What communication channels make sense for various interactions?*
- *Do people need to be on camera when they meet as a team?*
- *How often does the team need to meet?*
- *What technology is standard?*
- *How can we infuse a little fun into our interactions?*
- *How much communication is too much or too little?*

---

#### Tip Five

### DEVELOP A REGULAR RHYTHM, AND SEEK CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Few teams get the telework equation right on their first try, and yours probably won't either. Adopting an "evaluate – plan – act" mindset will allow your team to systematically reflect on what's working and make adjustments. Start practicing that cycle at regular intervals as you transition your team's norms. Once you've established a rhythm, you'll most likely find people become used to the process and frequency of change.

*continued on page 5*

RESILIENCE *continued from page 4***Tip Six****CONNECT PEOPLE TO THEIR WORK**

When a team is not together, employees can feel disconnected from each other and from the purpose of their work. As a manager, you have an opportunity to reestablish those connections. Do this publicly when possible. "Thank you, Chris for finding the new online collaboration tool. It's going to make our online brainstorming sessions a lot easier. This is important because new ideas are the core of what we're working on for the next six months. Good job."

**Tip Seven****REPEAT IMPORTANT MESSAGES**

Even with advances in technology, remote communications often compete with a multitude of distractions. Know that you may need to repeat messages and send them using more than one channel.

With some focus, tenacity and those seven ideas, any manager can successfully navigate the new normal. Now what will you do to chart a course?



KATE ZABRISKIE is the president of Business Training Works, Inc., a Maryland-based talent development firm. She and her team help businesses establish customer service strategies and train their people to live up to what's promised. For more information, visit [www.businesstrainingworks.com](http://www.businesstrainingworks.com).

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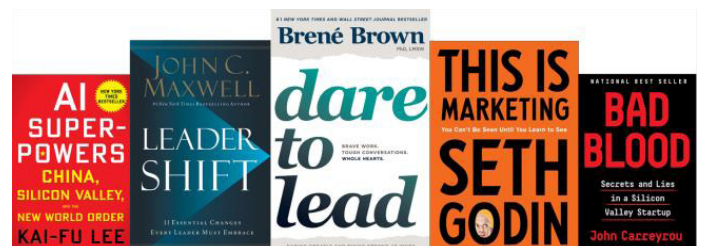
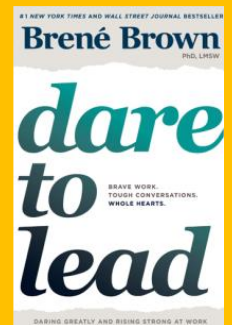
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### LOOKED WHAT YOU MISSED

#1 New York Times Best Seller,  
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means to dare greatly, rise strong,  
and brave the wilderness. Now,  
based on new research conducted  
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practice so we can step up and  
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**THE BUSINESS SOURCE**

# FIVE POWERFUL PHRASES FOR DIFFICULT DISCUSSIONS

Do you ever come up with your best responses an hour after a conversation has ended? Do you ever say to yourself, "I wish I would have said..." or "I wish I wouldn't have said..."? Do you ever get tongue-tied when you are put on the spot?

If you can relate to any of these situations you can improve your confidence by adding a handful of powerful phrases to your skill kit.

People who communicate with confidence are calm and in control. They strive to be positive and helpful in order to get a good result that benefits everyone. However, it can be hard to keep your cool if you aren't equipped with the right tools. You might avoid saying the things you should or say things you wish you hadn't.

Here are five of the most powerful phrases to add to your skill kit so you can communicate like a boss in every situation:

## 1 "THAT SOUNDS REALLY HARD."

Whether it's the co-worker who vents non-stop about their job, the friend who goes on and on about their relationship problems, or the employee who complains about how overworked they are, they have one thing in common - they don't want your advice. They aren't telling you about their problem because they want a solution. They just want you to listen. They are looking for empathy, not advice.

It can be difficult to listen to problems without giving a solution, especially when you know exactly what they should do. Trying to convince them that you have the answer will only lead to frustration and a potential argument.

Resist the temptation to tell them what to do and try saying "That sounds really hard" instead. You'll find that pulling a phrase like this will validate the other person's feelings and help them move on.

## 2 "WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?"

After you have expressed empathy, follow up with a question such as "What are you going to do about it?" Most people know what they should do and by nature they will put more energy into their own ideas than yours. Don't waste your time telling people what to do. Avoid any statement that starts with "You should" or "You have to." Instead ask them what they think.

This will also reveal whether they have any interest in solving the problem or if they just want to continue complaining. If you sense that they aren't interested in solving the problem, then you may have to distance yourself. However, if it's a direct report you will have to deal with it. Negative attitudes are contagious. See #4 for how to address a negative attitude.

## 3 "I AGREE."

This short, powerful phrase will stop an argument in its tracks. It's nearly impossible to argue with someone who is agreeing with you (although some people will try). There is little upside to arguing your point with anyone.

For example, say a team member didn't complete their work for the day and when you ask them why not they say "There's too much work. We're too busy. I can't do everything around here." Simply say "I agree. It has been really busy around here."



*continued on page 8*



POWERFUL PHRASES *continued from page 7*

4

**"I NEED YOUR AGREEMENT."**

Dealing with performance issues can be challenging and given a choice, many managers prefer the 'wait and see' approach. That usually doesn't work. When someone isn't meeting performance or behavior standards a coaching conversation is needed to help the team member get back on track.

The one and only goal of a coaching conversation is to get the team member to agree to improve their performance or behavior. Because many managers don't have this phrase in their skill kit they never come out and clearly state what they want.

Behavioral issues, such as negative attitudes, can be especially challenging but they must be addressed if you are going to put an end to negativity in the workplace. Chronic negativity is a drain on the bottom line and risks losing your top performers if you allow bad attitudes to go unchecked.

Don't avoid having these difficult conversations, there is too much at stake. Say "I need your agreement that you will maintain a professional, respectful attitude in the workplace." And then hold them to it.

5

**"I NOTICED..."**

The words you use to start off a potentially difficult conversation are the key to a positive or negative outcome. When addressing a performance issue you'll have the best outcome if you focus on the observable behavior rather than on the person. Keep in mind that the principles of good communication include being positive and helpful.

For example, when addressing an attitude issue try saying, "I noticed that you don't seem like yourself lately." Not, "What's wrong with you?"

If you choose the wrong words and the other person immediately gets defensive you might as well end the conversation and come back to it later.

Be aware that even if you use all the right words and say all the right things, there is no guarantee that the other person will respond in the same professional way. That's okay. Communicating like a boss is about taking ownership of what you do and say regardless of the outcome. You are responsible for making the effort. You are not responsible for how the other person chooses to react.

These five phrases will help you remain calm, confident, and in control in all situations. Take them out and use them. The more you use them the more comfortable you'll get and soon you will be communicating like a boss.

LIZ URAM is a nationally-recognized speaker, trainer, consultant, and author. She equips leaders with the tools they need to communicate like a boss so they can make a bigger impact, get better results, and motivate others to do their best. With 20 years of experience, she's developed systems that work. Uram's written four books packed full of strategies leaders can implement to get real results, real fast. For more information, please visit [www.lizuram.com](http://www.lizuram.com).

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SUSAN MORELL  
Youngstown Charter  
Chapter  
Poland, OH

30  
YEARS

VICKI JORGENSEN  
Mo-Kan Chapter  
Overland Park, KS

CAROLYN BARRY  
Trendsetter Chapter  
Indio, CA

50  
YEARS

KATHLEEN WHEELER  
National Member  
Milan, IL

DIANE EHRET  
National Member  
Royal Oak, MI

55  
YEARS

MARSHA ERICSON  
National Member  
Jewell, KS

## AUGUST LEAGUE ANNIVERSARIES

GEM CITY CHAPTER  
Dayton, OH  
*celebrating 1 year*

MONARCH CHAPTER  
Decatur, IL  
*celebrating 45 years*

## leveling up IN THE INNER CIRCLE IN JUNE

ANNE O'NEILL  
Harris County Charter Chapter  
*Blue Sapphire Star*  
*sponsored 44 members*



RICHIE MORRIS  
Hidden Hills Chapter  
*Emerald Star*  
*sponsored 24 members*



# save the date!

## REGISTER NOW!

AMERICAN BUSINESS WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

## 2020 NATIONAL WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

WESTMINSTER, COLORADO

OCTOBER 14-17 2020



The 2020 National Women's Leadership Conference in Westminster, Colorado will be a celebration of ABWA members and leagues as we recognize accomplishments, learn from key business experts, and become inspired by others around us.

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## Sign Up for the 5-Part Payment Plan for Members Only

The 2020 National Women's Leadership Conference in Westminster, Colorado, will be a celebration of ABWA members and leagues as we recognize accomplishments, learn from key business experts, and become inspired by others around us. To make sure you don't miss this event, ABWA National is offering an affordable five-part payment plan **for members only**.

**PLANNING AHEAD:** At this time, we are still planning an in-person event, however, we anticipate there will be lingering effects from the COVID-19 pandemic which may require adjustments in the conference agenda to keep everyone safe. As such, we are exploring virtual conference options which may be held in place of the in-person event.

Be assured, all keynote speakers, entertainment, and facilitators for break-out sessions, are prepared to pivot to a virtual conference format if necessary. *A final decision will be made no later than September 9.*

### IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO HOP ON THE PRE-PAYMENT PLAN FOR THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE!

Your credit/debit card will be charged in five payments, as follows:

• May 6, 2020	- \$116.00	<b>TOTAL REGISTRATION FEE:</b> <b>\$580.00*</b> <i>This fee does not include optional conference events</i>
• June 3, 2020	- \$116.00	
• July 1, 2020	- \$116.00	
• August 5, 2020	- \$116.00	
• Sept. 9, 2020	- \$116.00*	

*\*If the conference is delivered virtually, the conference registration fee will be reduced to \$479. whereby the final payment will be \$15 (vs. \$116).*

### Cancellation Policy and Forfeiture:

- A \$225.00 cancellation fee will be charged for **any** conference cancellation.
- Members cancelling their registrations after *September 9, 2020* will forfeit the entire conference registration fee; however, the member may transfer their registration to another member prior to the conference event.
- If a member registers for but does not attend the conference, their entire registration fee will be forfeited.

**Complete the payment form and mail, call, or fax it to ABWA National on or before **August 21, 2020****

**Mail:** ABWA National  
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# RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

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Each engaging session will be led by accomplished professionals, inspiring you to build your business to the next level with knowledge, strength and confidence.

***Rise to the challenge and climb on!***

- ***50% of the fees collected will be donated to SBMEF to fund the National President's Scholarship honoring Sharon Godbee in 2021.***
- ***There are no refunds on fee based sessions.***

Dell Technologies is sponsoring a contest for ABWA members who are also small business owners. The winner will receive a 34" Dell Technologies curved monitor! Submit a 500-word essay about how your business has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and how you have navigated during this challenging environment. The contest dates are August 1– Sept. 4, 2020. The winner will be announced at the final Summer Summit Series in September. The application form is in Community Connections/National Resources. Download the form from the "Forms, Flyers and More" category.



### **Protect Your Biz from Hackers, Attackers, Scammers & Fraudsters**

**Date:** Tuesday, August 18th

**Time:** 6:00-7:15 PM Central Time

**Registration Fee:** \$10:00 per session

**Go to:** [ABWA Online Store](#) to purchase  
(Registration link will be posted in the team board)

#### **Session Overview**

Every few seconds, someone has his or her identity stolen. Computers are hacked, wallets are stolen, credit cards are compromised, credit is ruined...and the instigators make more in a day than most of us make in a year. The fact is, the system we function under is set up to fail—and unless consumers know their options, it's just a matter of time before they are victimized themselves.

There is a reason why we keep hearing about data breaches involving millions of credit card and account numbers: Data breaches cost thousands to millions of dollars per incident, and organizations and corporations take on a huge potential financial loss when it comes to the potential of identity theft and data forfeiture. The bleeding will not stop anytime soon—and the more time you spend uninformed, the better your chances of being targeted.

**During this presentation, Robert Siciliano will examine:**

- **The clever ways thieves look for—and get—information**
- **Numerous strategies you can protect your valuable data**
- **How you can use various tools to ensure the data that criminals want are impossible to get**



**ROBERT SICILIANO, CSP** is a security expert and private investigator fiercely committed to informing and educating people so they can protect themselves from violence and crime in their everyday lives.