# THE FUTURE OF WORK IS HERE

## A COLLECTION OF INSIGHTS FROM SURGE OPTIMISM

SURGE 2018 OPTIMISM

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# INTRODUCTION

The following pages house the results of an industry-wide virtual collaboration.

**SURGE** Optimism assembled association professionals from across the globe to harness collective knowledge, through a virtual conference focused on transformative ideas and designed to maximize social learning.

Attendees could not only hear from speakers, but converse with them in real time and contribute their own thoughts. We have now assembled some of the best insights from these conversations into a body of knowledge for the benefit of the entire association community.

This eBook delves into the session, *The Future of Work is Here*. It includes themes from the speakers' conversation, snapshots of ideas from guest speakers, contributions from attendees, links to further resources, and more.

Thank you to all who participated – and if you missed it, go to the **SURGE** Optimism event page to watch all the sessions for free, at your leisure

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# FEATURED SPEAKERS

## Lisa Campo
**Senior Marketing Manager,
American Staffing Association**

**Lisa Campo** is a marketing and communications association professional with 12 years of editorial, writing and digital content experience (including 7 years in the association world). She enjoys innovation, laughter, red pens, sharp copy, good data, and simple-yet-effective email strategies.

## Liz Icenogle

**CAE Executive Director of Engagement, ARMA International**

**Liz Icenogle**, CAE, is the Executive Director of Engagement with a portfolio that includes strengthening the association's member experience by creating strong member value and offering a compelling reason to join the association along with overseeing the organization's 950 component volunteer outreach, serving as the corporate secretary to the Board of Directors, and engaging the association's various government affairs and international engagements. She connects strategy to programs and tactics that increase member value and impact a positive volunteer experience. She has recently served on Boards for community groups, ASAE committees, chaired a committee for KCSAE and leads portions on their programs for the CAE study group and Associations 101. As a remote environment employee and mother to a young child, she is currently exploring how to have it all: managing the fluidity of work and life, giving of her time and service, averaging 10,000 steps a day (usually alongside her great dane, Jordy) and having a herb garden that thrives.

## Adrienne Bryant
**CAE Account Executive,
IntrinXec Management, Inc.**

In 2013, she was selected as a Diversity Executive Leadership Scholar (DELP) by ASAE and earned the CAE designation from ASAE in 2014. With a combined 30 years of experience in teaching, hospitality management, and association management, Adrienne loves to help organizations identify and solve challenges. In 2017, Adrienne joined the IntrinXec Management, Inc. team as an Account Executive. Her current role involves strategic planning in the areas of digital experience and credentialing.

Adrienne is an active member of the Florida Society of Association Executives (FSAE) and the American Society of Association Executives.

## Cecilia Sepp

**CAE, CNAP, Association Expert and Founder, 501c/Association Mentoring Network**

**Cecilia Sepp** honed her expertise in the association management profession across multiple opportunities, advancing the missions of professional societies, trade associations, and a non-profit dance organization. She frequently speaks and writes on a variety of association management topics. An active volunteer, Cecilia has served on the ASAE Foundation Development Committee and ASAE Political Action Committee. Cecilia is a Trustee on the Board of Directors of the Sligo-Branview Community Association, the organization that represents her neighborhood. Cecilia received a B.A. in political science, with an adjunct in management, from Webster University in St. Louis, MO. She earned the Certified Association Executive (CAE) designation in 2015 and recently renewed her certification through 2020. She also is a Certified Nonprofit Accounting Professional (CNAP) and in July 2018, she founded the Association Mentoring Network (AMN), and is currently freelancing in the areas of communication, membership research, and strategic planning.

# 02

# THE PROS AND CONS OF EVOLVING WORKPLACES

*Is remote working the answer for the many or the few?*

## BY LISA CAMPO

**My friends and I are planning a get together in November at a cabin in Virginia.** While we were chatting and figuring out arrangements, one of my friends said, "We can head up on a Friday, but if we do, I'll have to work from the car. I can turn my phone into a hotspot for internet."

I didn't bat an eye at that at all. **It's become normal to be able to work from anywhere, even a moving car.** And while in this situation it worked out for us, it isn't always optimal to be able to work from, well, everywhere. It can be difficult to separate your work from your personal life if you don't have a dedicated work-from-home space, and many people struggle to stop checking work emails while with family or friends.

I consider myself an elderly millennial and, contrary to what some might believe about my generation, I didn't enjoy my one year of working remotely for a fully virtual company. At the time, I lived in a 650-square-foot basement apartment in the heart of Washington, DC. My dedicated workspace was tiny (as in, just the desk and the chair). There was no way for me to truly separate my home from my work. **There are alternatives to working directly from your home, but in terms of inclusion, some people don't have the money to create their own office** or rent something like a WeWork space. I had to make do with what I had.

My position had strange hours: being at my desk and ready to work by 9 a.m., ending the day around 5 p.m., and then working a few nights a week from 10-midnight with overseas contractors. I work to live, not the other way around, and I love my sleep! I used to work 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. when I was a newspaper copy editor, and that schedule was hard on me, so I had hoped to stick to 9-5 if I could help it.

I'm also a relatively introverted person who gets my daily dose of social interaction by going to an office and speaking with my coworkers. **So, when I worked remotely, it was difficult to fit weekday social time into my routine.** I didn't stick to an exercise plan, and I found the outside world overwhelming when I finally did get up and leave my apartment.

For my personality, it didn't go well. As I look back on it, I realize that **my time working remotely could've gone better if I had laid down stringent rules as to when I would be working**, made a better plan to socialize and exercise, and asked for the company culture and expectations to be better defined. But hindsight is 20/20, and I didn't realize any of those things at the time!

Despite my experience, I recognize that remote opportunities are invaluable for people with chronic pain, health issues or anxiety disorders that would otherwise hinder their ability to work. I hope that the future of work is accessible and bright for everyone-**whether you're on the road, someone who only works remotely a couple days a week, an introvert who needs an office space, or a remote-working whiz.**

## From the Chat - Why Do Attendees Love the Option to Work from Home?

*From pregnancy to time zone challenges, attendees saw different different benefits to working from home.*

"I also think having your pets nearby does wonders for your productivity and happiness."

— *Lauren LeMunyan* —

"On the diversity and inclusion space, remote opportunities also enables differently abled folks who might be able to use tech remotely greatly expand their available work hours."

— *Randi Summer* —

"The work from home option makes it so a handful of folks are out of the office on different days. It helps cut down on noise and distractions!"

— *Dee Marsden* —

# 03

# HOW WE TRANSITIONED FROM BRICK-AND-MORTAR TO A VIRTUAL WORKSPACE

*The story of an organization transitioning into the future of work*

## BY LIZ ICENOGLE

**I work with ARMA International, a completely virtual organization.** In the fall of 2016, we transitioned from our brick-and-mortar office with the option for employees to regularly work remotely into a completely virtual the environment. How did this process work out for us? And is the future of work virtual beyond our organization?

### The state of the workplace

A study done on the state of workplace analytics showed that in the last ten years there was an increase of teleworking opportunities by 115%. In 2016 alone, 43% of employees in the private sector had the opportunity to telework. If you follow these trend lines, **I believe more organizations will increase the opportunities to telework primarily because it makes financial sense and can increase employee satisfaction.** For individuals, virtual work is appealing as they seek to find an environment that allows them to live their best life. As people and organizations get more comfortable with virtual work, I believe more organizations will become completely virtual environments.

There is often an uncertainty from organization's leadership about how virtual work will affect production. I know this is a question our organization heavily discussed. **How do you measure work product? How do you know your employees are working?** This led our organization to holistically discuss productivity measurement. We determined that what we were doing was not incredibly different than how we anticipated we would operate in a virtual environment. However, as technology improves organizations are becoming less concerned about following more traditional models of employee work tracking.

## Our transition story

During our transition at ARMA, we tried various tactics to ease concerns about what work life would look like and, in particular, how we would continue to communicate. For example, there were a number of extroverts on our staff who loved going to the office and found interacting with other people energizing. What made them happy in the physical office could not necessarily be duplicated in the virtual environment.

With the help of our outside HR resource, we talked about about the importance of self-care along with the importance of setting boundaries and even distributed some resources to help support the conversation. **One of the primary topics we discussed:** *When you're at work, you're at work.* The physical space doesn't change that you are working; your mother-in-law shouldn't expect to just stop by anytime! It is imperative that employees build a structure of communication with the people in their lives and with each other.

We set expectations about how people communicate. For example, let's not use email all the time for quick questions because our inboxes will be unmanageable. ARMA uses Office 365 platforms to chat and video chat. The platform also includes a virtual water cooler where we share pictures of our pets, families and other personal moments of interest. **This helps us keep up our communication and personal connections.**

It was important to establish limitations around video calls and communication. Calling someone without warning is akin to dropping in on someone's office. It can be an intrusion on their concentration. In a physical space, someone's door might be shut for a reason; and we try to use availability statuses to mimic these cues.

**With the transition, we expanded geographically into hiring employees from other parts of the US**, outside of Kansas City where our office was formerly based. With our virtual hires, we've experience an influx of people interested in working with us due to the flexibility this environment offers. Our interviews were conducted via video to better get to know the candidates and to filter out people who would be uncomfortable with this type of communication.

For the final round of our interviews, we brought a few team members onto the call for a group interview. We purposely built in time at the beginning for the team to chat so that when the interviewee came on the call they would get a sense of our culture and have the opportunity to join in naturally. **It made the whole virtual hiring process more human and personal.**

The transition to virtual was a significant time investment from identifying our physical document retention policies to the nuts and bolts of our technology to planning for business continuity with no drop in service to our members and customers. The planning and discussions around employee policies and office culture helped us with a great transition, but we have learned a lot in nearly two years. **The conversation continues as we seek to improve our practices and to gather ideas for maintaining a strong employee culture.**

## From the Chat - How Do Employers Play into the Option to Work from Home?

*What attendees have experienced regarding the employers role.*

"I've worked 100% from home for three different employers. The experience worked very differently for each. How well or poorly depended less on the employees and more on the company and their attitude and approach."

*— Holly Roseski —*

"We have a staff meeting every Monday morning for about 30 minutes and before we go around and give updates on our schedule and work week/projects, everyone tells us about their weekend and we have employees who calls in as well. It's such a good way to kick-off the week and build employees rapport, you learn/know more about your team."

*— Hien Huynh —*

# 04

# WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION: THE CASE FOR REMOTE CAREERS

## BY ADRIENNE BRYANT

The phrase *work-life balance* has never sat well with me. The two aren't always as separate as the term suggests.The concept gets even more vague when you make the switch from a brick-and-mortar workplace to working from your desk at home, like I did in 2017. At the AMC where I work, I am currently the only person who works remotely full-time.

I am an introvert, which I feel makes my personality a good fit for working remotely. For me, this job is the perfect situation because I do not feeling super sociable first thing in the morning. In an office, I walk in with blinders on and go straight to my office because my head is full of my to-do list. At home, I can knock out some tasks before I speak to anyone, then log into Slack ready to talk, work, and socialize with my colleagues.

When I first started working remotely, everyone told me to get up, get dressed and brush your teeth every day before you start work. In the beginning, I heeded this advice, but as time went on, I slowly slipped into a pajama wearing, non-teeth brushing habit. As I continued to do this, I learned that it really does affect your psyche. I'm a different person when I adhere to a healthy routine.

That said, the beauty of working from home, is that it accounts for the days when maintaining that routine isn't possible. This is where the concept of *work-life integration* becomes a more useful phrase.

My mother was unwell when I was offered my current position. She was going to have surgery the day after I received the job offer. I asked my soon-to-be boss, who was extremely understanding, if I could get back to her later in the week when I was in a better place to make a decision. After mom's surgery, I discussed the opportunity with my family and decided I couldn't pass it up. In addition to the professional benefits it would offer, this job would allow me to care for my mom during her recovery. I could integrate the demands of my life into my work day, and vice versa.

At another job, driving her to appointments and taking care of her would have required me taking off full days. Remote work allows me to take only the time off I need to be out of the office and return to my job without having to commute or work around the office schedule. I can get my normal "8 hours" in at any time during the day.

I also don't lose as much work time when my health is not optimal. When I would get sick in the past, I would spend the early morning hours worrying about whether or not to call in and miss a day, or will myself to feel *better*, drive the hour to the office, and sit miserably waiting for 5 o'clock when I could make the hour drive home and crawl into my bed. Today, when I am unwell, I can sleep the extra hours I need to heal and then spend the day taking care of myself while I work. Now, I am able to integrate the ups and downs of my life into my career.

## From the Chat - Facing the Downside of a Flexible Environment

*How can lack of structure be dangerous and how do we mitigate it?*

"One of the things about working nonstop (danger of having "work" accessible when you work from home) is that it sets up member expectations that you're on call 24/7…"

*— Dee Marsden —*

"Constant communication is key. Let people know when you're going to lunch, when you come online, when you are taking a break, etc. I also always make it a point to say hello in the morning on Slack when I get on and goodbye when I sign off!"

*— Dee Marsden —*

"Move away from to do lists (that never end) and towards scheduling."

*— Meagan O'Toole —*

"I saw a great quote yesterday, "balance is not a state, it's a series of decisions"."

*— Emilio Arocho —*

# 05

# A PIONEER OF THE VIRTUAL FRONTIER

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*How did one association professional forge her own virtual path?*

## BY CECILIA SEPP

**For some people, remote or fully virtual work is a shock to the system.** They need the separation of going from home to office and have difficulty adapting to a completely different method of working which relies on self-discipline and self-management.

Not everyone is cut out to be alone most of the time, and let's face it: working virtually is isolating. Some people need interaction with others because it energizes them or helps them focus. Others need the structure that comes from being physically at the location of the organization. These are all things to be aware of for each person, and **I highly recommend analyzing your personality type (e.g, introvert, ambivert, extrovert) when making a decision about work styles.**

I was a typical 9 to 5-er with a rigid schedule for years before I leaped into virtual working. There was an adjustment at the beginning but at this point I love it and I can't imagine working any other way.

Back in 2003, I started working virtually before it became a relatively common practice. **Since no one else was doing it, I had no models to look to so I figured it out as I went.** I had a brand new consulting company, no money, no clients, and no office to go to. There were a lot of long quiet days with little or no email, no phone calls, and no personal interactions.

**My virtual workspace evolved over many years.** At first, it was my laptop and a briefcase. Since my office was completely portable, I worked wherever I wanted - the living room, dining room, or back deck. At the end of the day I packed up my briefcase and put it in the closet, which gave me a clear separation of work time and personal time. The next step was a folding scrapbook table that had drawers and a nice tabletop where I would work. Eventually I bought a "real" desk that sits in the corner and is not at all portable.

However, my work is still portable because of all the devices, online services, and internet advancements. From thumb drives as small as a paper clip that hold 5GB of memory to online drives, **you can take everything with you and even edit documents on your phone.**

At first it was a struggle, and again, there were not many resources to help me transition to this style of work. I faced loneliness, a lack of social interaction, and poor personal habits (not eating right, not exercising, not using my time well). Eventually I figured it out and used my strong sense of self, self-discipline, and focus to become a successful virtual pioneer. **Over time I started counseling other people about working virtually and helped them figure out their own "virtual style".** I was glad to share my experiences and lessons because I saw that this was going to be the way we live.

I have worked as a solo consultant, member of a virtual consulting organization, and as a CEO of a fully virtual organization. All the models work if you put the effort into creating a system that works for you and your team. What associations specifically are facing is the hesitation that comes from trying to manage a virtual team while creating a sustainable culture. **I have learned a lot about what works and what doesn't when it comes to managing a virtual team.**

For example, all our onboarding was virtual. As we were very small staff, the new staff person would schedule a series of calls with the other staff people so they could get to know each other and learn about what the other staff did. There was also a lot of online training and I encouraged the use of video-calling during this process. Some people weren't comfortable with using video, but it was a necessary part of our communication culture so I encouraged people to relax into it.

We also held monthly staff meetings. Admittedly, they were very boring at the beginning: it was a series of people reading out their to-do lists and reminding each other about deadlines and other things we talked about all the time. We scrapped that format before we wasted any more of our working hours.

**Instead, we started off with water cooler talk for people to chat about whatever they wanted - books, movies, and social stuff.** That was followed by an 'Ask the CEO' section which turned out to be mostly unnecessary. Then we did something called Shared Learning, where somebody on the team would make a presentation about a webinar or a conference they attended or an article that they found of interest, presenting the learning to everybody else. Our culture as a virtual organization was strengthened through these conversations.

Ultimately, virtual work has taught me that the future of work is freedom and independence. At some stage, none of us will be employees anywhere in the traditional sense of the word. We will all be independent contractors attaching ourselves to projects that require our expertise rather than attaching ourselves to a place. Work will be you: you will be your own office, your own brand, your own company. **Let's embrace every step of the journey towards creating our own working world.**

## From the Chat - What About In-Person Social Interactions?

*Working exclusively from home can be lonely.*

"My former colleague was an introvert and working from home didn't work for her because she didn't motivate to get outside of the home and actually see people (which even introverts need to do!)."

*— Claudia Trapp —*

"I work in a hybrid model. We basically work from home but have an office (reduced environmental footprint than what we previously had) but go into the office once a week to meet physically with my team. Other team members meet on other days. Then entire staff does meet in the office once a month for a Lunch & Learn or other activity to stay connected and have social time together."
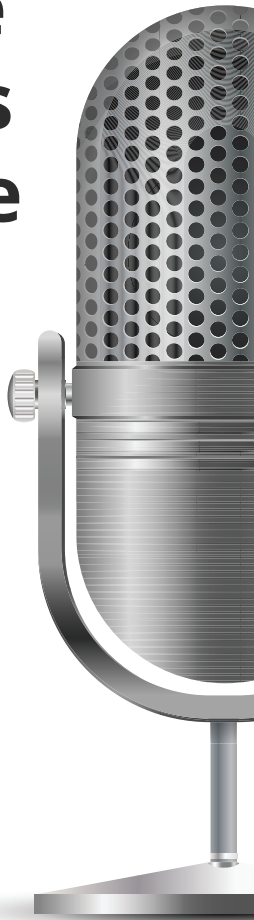
*— Jana Wells —*

# 06

# FURTHER RESOURCES

During the live chat, speakers and attendees alike chipped in with their tips for further reading and resources about the future of work. We've compiled them into a list here.

- [Book](): Gigged: The End of the Job and the Future of Work

- [Blog](): Guide: Raise awareness about unconscious bias

- [Company](): Productive Spaces For Modern Professionals

- [Book](): From Insight to Action: Six New Ways to Think, Lead and Achieve

- [Report](): The 2017 State of Telecommuting in the U.S. Employee Workforce