

STATE OF THE WORKFORCE: JUNE 2020

Thoughts on Leadership, Where We Are & Where We're Going

A White Paper from Tanzanite Leadership Development

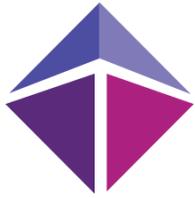
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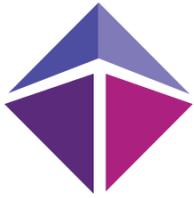
TANZANITE
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT™



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WHERE WE ARE



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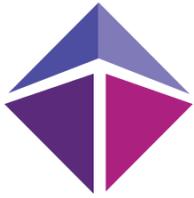
This report has been adopted from the leadership programs I've been conducting from May 15-Jun 3, 2020. The transcriptions have been reviewed and edited, but may not be actually perfect (but the concepts are there!)

-Eric Swenson

Who's Winning?

I'm starting to divide our clients into two categories. The ones that are doing well are uniformly the ones with the strongest management teams regardless of industry. In this crisis, we're dealing day to day with about 85 of our 250 clients.

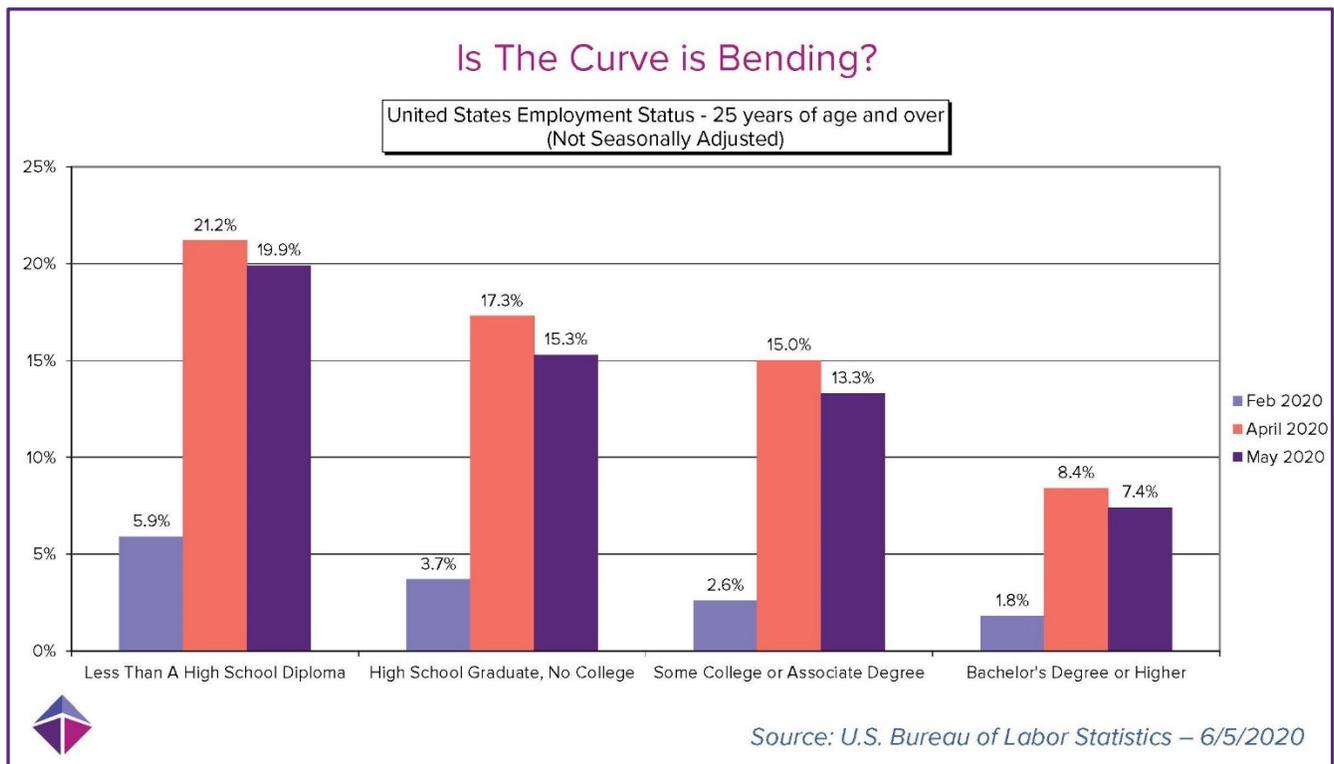
You can see the ones that are struggling. I'll talk to the CEO or General Manager, and they're saying, "I don't have confidence in my employees to try new things. Or that their employees aren't getting the job done, and they need to step up."



And then with others, I'm hearing exactly the opposite. This is so impactful, how a strong leadership team can step up in times of crisis. I bet you have seen people step up during this time and you were either pleased or surprised: "[I had no idea this person was that good](#)".

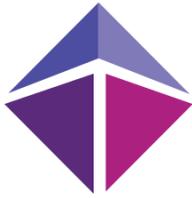
Well, congratulations. You just solved some of your leadership succession issues, because if they're capable of stepping up at a time like this, they will step up for you throughout.

What The Unemployment Issue Means for Leaders



This has been one of my favorites charts for years, in the context of where employees are going to come from. While there are different ways of parsing unemployment data, I prefer by education, since that's the universal need for our clients.

The chart shows the unemployment rates for February, April, and May. For people who have less than a high school diploma, it was 5.9% unemployment in February, and it's now 19.9%. Unemployment rate for people with a bachelor's degree is now just 7.4%.



This mirrors what we're seeing with our clients. Businesses that generally need more highly educated employees, are laying off fewer employees.

What I also see is a trend that I saw before the crisis: it doesn't matter how much experience or education a person has in order to be a good employee.

I think that's going to even be more magnified now, because more and more people are not going to be able to afford post-secondary education, and they may not need it, either.

Surely, some of your best employees may not have the most experience, or the highest level of education. So we're going from education *as a necessity* to education as a 'nice to have'.

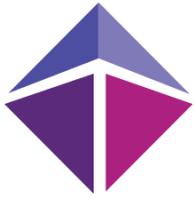
It's more about the person than their education. We can always train them to do more, we can always send them to places once we go there. [But the value now is in a person's character, aptitude, attitude and agility as opposed to education or experience.](#)

(I don't see [the massive error the BLS made](#) as significantly changing these numbers. There most certainly are far more people without high school education who are unemployed than those with college degrees).

And I also don't see the numbers overall being a real, actual reflection of the workforce right now - how many people are filing for unemployment who just had hours reduced? Not their jobs eliminated, but hours reduced. So nobody really knows what that number is, and what's going on.

A number of studies are now showing that people are finding jobs that are temporary jobs. So for example, a person who had a job eliminated is now driving for Uber, or delivering groceries. The question is, how much longer is that going to last for that overqualified person? How long will the demand for delivery of groceries last?

The UI bonus from the federal government may be cut off as of July 1. So does that get more people into the workplace? I think the alarms about 38 million people who are out of work overstates the crisis. They're not all going to get jobs right away, but you're going to start seeing numbers start coming down now, as businesses start to reopen. It may not be stable for a while, but it's going to happen.

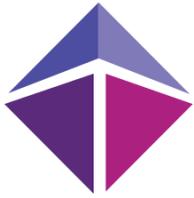


Is Leadership at a Tipping Point?

I no longer think leadership really is a tipping point, because people who are really truly leaders have shown their colors now, one way or the other. The really good leaders have stepped up and the bad ones have identified themselves. We are finally finding our new generation of leaders.

Should They Just Be “Happy to Have a Job”?

Some leaders are in danger of going back to the “you should just be happy to have a job” mentality. That’s kind of a jackass thing to say or think, to be honest with you. People know they're lucky to have a job right now. People know it. You don't have to lord it over them. They know it.



WHAT ARE EMPLOYEES THINKING?

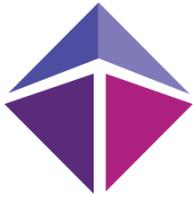
We reviewed research from three areas:

	Our RSJ/Swenson client Pulse Surveys, which surveyed 340 employees from May 15-May 31, 2020.
	Gallup client polls, conducted in April & May 2020
	KPMG American Worker Survey of 1,000 full- and part-time employees in April 2020.

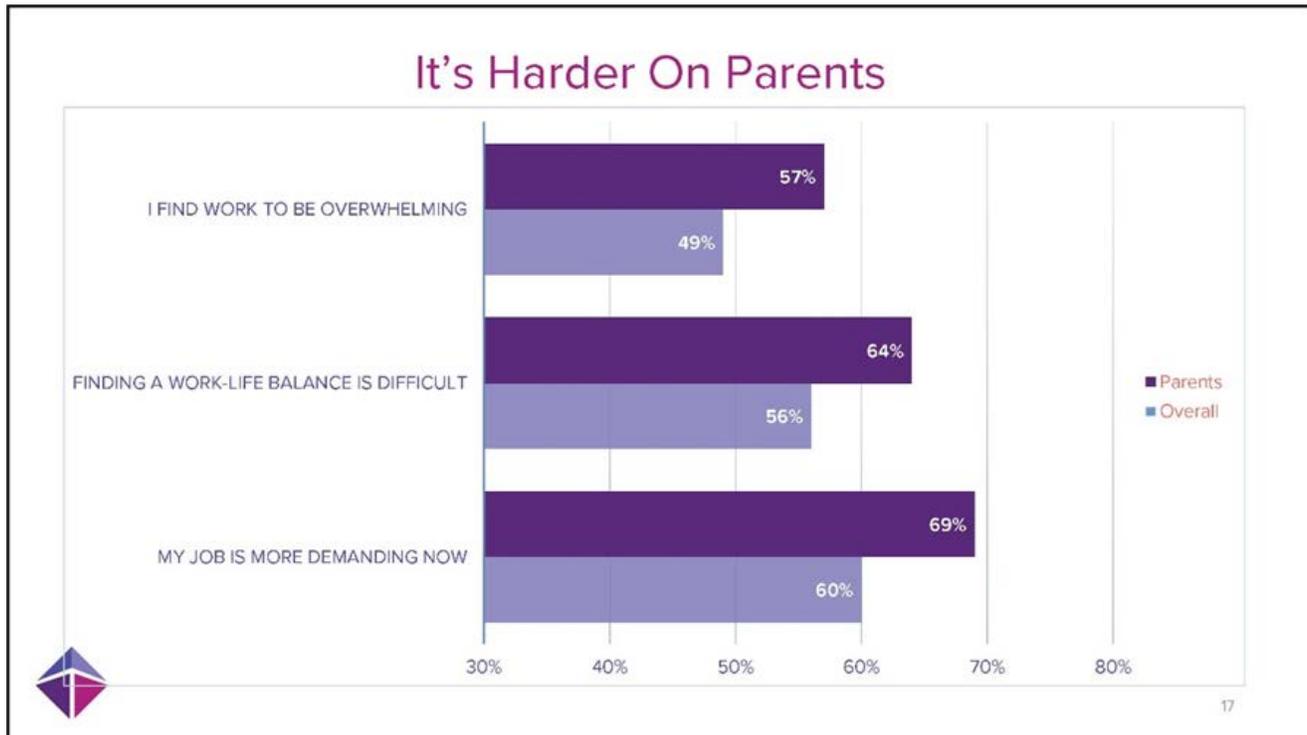
I see a great deal of optimism and stability in the workforce that I hadn't back in March. Now, there's a difference between optimism and actually getting out of the house right now and going to or restaurant or getting a pedicure. People are still going to be a little reluctant to do it. But that's a matter of time.

The Top Issues On Employees' Minds

- **Work Life Balance**
- **Tech for Remote Work** – This is interesting, because at the beginning of the crisis employees were worried they didn't have the right technology to be able to effectively work from home. Now, the concern is over-reliance and the impact of too much technology (Zoom meetings, etc.)
- **Two Way Communication** – Our surveys show a common complaint is "I'm not getting enough communication from my boss."
- **Productivity & Engagement** – "I'm not being as productive as I should be. I'm worried about my job." And ruins engagement.
- **Emotional & Social**
- **Physical Wellbeing**



It's Harder On Parents

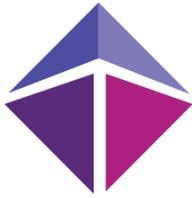


One thing that we've all learned in the past few months is that if you're a parent of school-aged children, it's much, much harder for you than for the rest of us. They have become full-time teachers and day-care facilitators in addition to being employees

So how do you make somebody return to work who has to take care of school-age children full-time in addition to their work from home responsibilities? Come back to work full time? How do you make them come back to the office? How do you do that? How do you accommodate their needs?

You can legally make them return to the office, but morally, that's another story altogether. And it's not going away until all schools return to campuses; and we have no idea when that's going to happen.

As leaders, we need to be extra compassionate with parents because they're in an incredibly tough position.



WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT THIS?

Employees need to trust you. They need compassion and understanding, stability, to the extent possible. Then finally, hope and realistic optimism. I see changing. It may not happen overnight, but I do see this happen.

The four things are trust, compassion, stability, and hope. One of my heroes, [Dan Sullivan](#), says “you have no responsibility for what's happening in the outside world, but you have 100% responsibility for how you respond to it.” And the best leaders have already proven how well you do that.

5 Tips For Leading People Right Now

1. Understand there is no “best” practice and there is no “normal”
2. The same fundamentals of leadership apply with this caveat:

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In a crisis, lead exactly the way you would during normal times.

Except, do it on steroids.

3. **Tell Them The Truth & Be Empathetic**

The Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern, is someone I'm incredibly impressed with. You ought to go online and see some of her Instagram Live talks and Facebook Live talks. She is authentically empathetic. And boy, do people respond to that.

Leaders who genuinely ooze trust and compassion are the leaders that I'm seeing right now that people are absolutely responding to.

4. **Don't Forget The Importance of “Social” in the Workplace**

While many might be displaced from the office, that shouldn't stop you from providing the social things that make an office or business great.



We've done thousands of exit interviews for clients over the years, and when we ask a departing employee "What's the one thing you're going to miss most about this place?" the overwhelming response is "The people I work with."

I had a really great idea from a client yesterday. He's the COFO of a private school, and teachers are starting to tell the leaders they're miss the lunchroom. So they're opening up a zoom lunchroom. And whoever wants to come in during lunchtime can come in; if they don't want to come in, they don't have to. And people just start talking like they were in a lunchroom trying to replicate kind of that camaraderie.

Because the social stuff is equally if not more important than just the work stuff. The human voice is really reassuring. It's really important. And so it's not just about technology; it's the social connection as well.

5. One Size Fits One

This has been a leadership mantra of mine for many years. It means – treat people differently because people are different. What works with one person does not with another, and the sooner you recognize that, the more effective you'll be.

For example, some people are more anxious than others. So what is impactful to the highly anxious person won't resonate with someone else. And wow, we are in the most anxious time of all:

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The anxiety people have is manifest 24/7. They're worried about their families, their health, their jobs, their livelihoods (and that of their partners), managing kids, elderly parents, etc.

And it's not like they can go to work and get away from those problems. And most can't go home and get away from work problems.

So our role as leaders is to provide employees with realistic reassurance, with empathy, honesty and emotional intelligence.

—Eric Swenson
May 20, 2020



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ABOUT TANZANITE

Contemporary Leadership Strategies for Today's Contemporary Leaders

Tanzanite is one of the rarest gems in the world, just as rare as truly impactful leaders. Our programs are designed to develop leaders who truly want to be impactful and memorable. Cutting-edge concepts and design, created and presented by people who have been and are still leaders of people.



Follow us on social to get access to in-depth wisdom, coaching and advice from Eric Swenson and the Tanzanite team!



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The Tanzanite Signature Leadership Program turns today's leaders into tomorrow's gems.

The truth is: Most leadership programs, and even MBA educations, have not evolved to keep pace with the shifting dynamic of the workplace. As technology changes, so must companies, jobs, and requisite skills. More than anything, tomorrow's leaders must be agile, transformational, and emotionally intelligent.

The Tanzanite Signature Leadership Program is designed to integrate what you have already learned about business and management with new concepts that will be the foundation for leadership success.

This year-long program consists of four live sessions held quarterly. Between sessions, students will be assigned podcasts, reading, and interactive discussions designed to fine-tune the skills learned in the live workshops which can be held at your business, virtually, or at our offices.