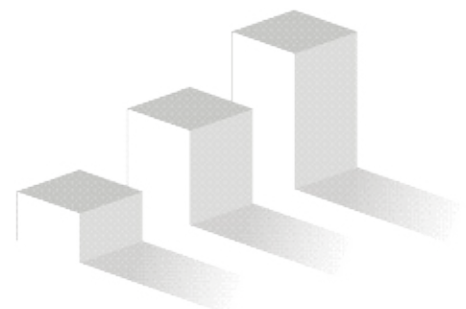# MAKING IT PERSONAL:
Leading Virtual Teams

Sergey Gorbatov, Ph.D.
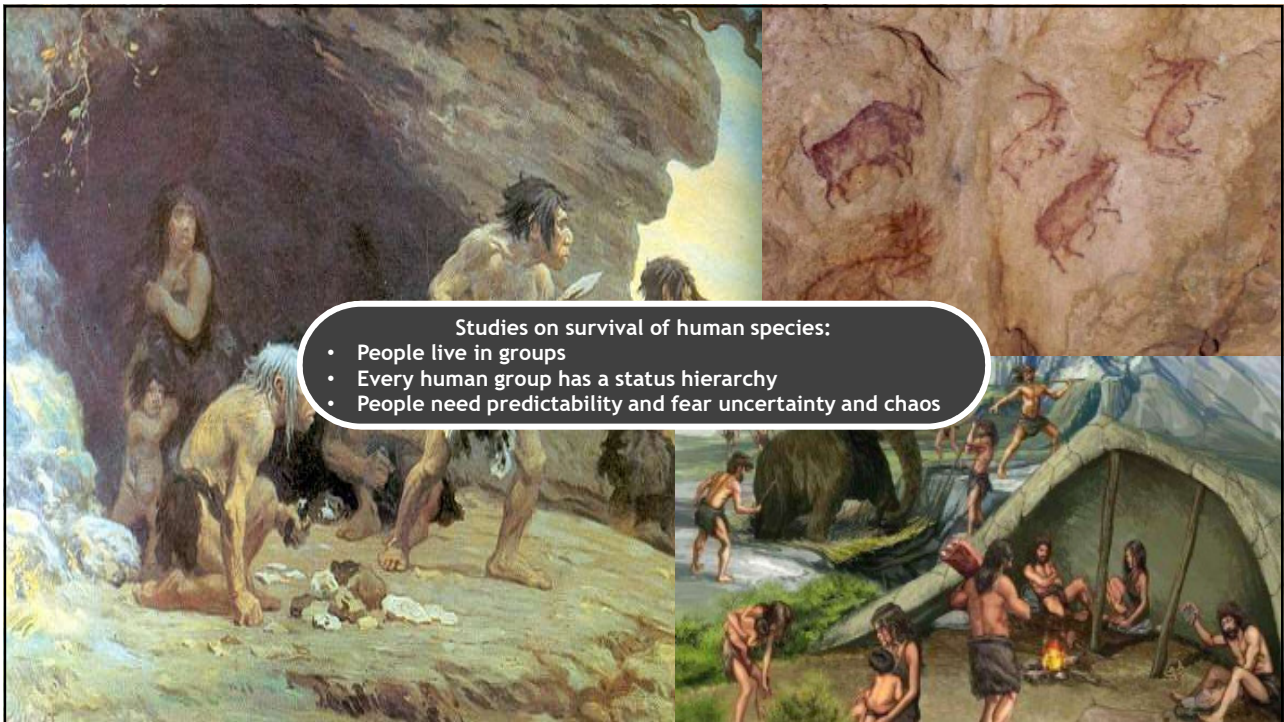
ie BUSINESS SCHOOL

Poll: why are you here?

1. Make my team more effective in troubled times
2. Build a network around the topic of leading others in a crisis; discuss and share with global peers
3. Understand the why, what and how of leading at a distance

Can't see the work; can't see the worker

Studies on survival of human species:
- People live in groups
- Every human group has a status hierarchy
- People need predictability and fear uncertainty and chaos

These needs are universal and fundamental

Need for attention and approval	Need for status and power	Need for predictability and order
↓	↓	↓
GETTING ALONG	**GETTING AHEAD**	**FINDING MEANING**
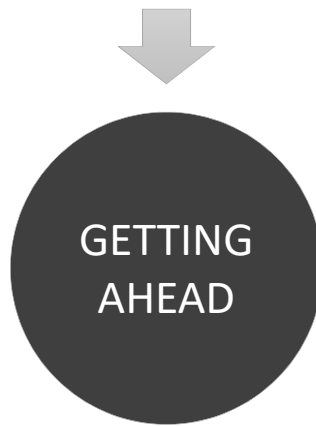
	GET ALONG	**GET AHEAD**	**FIND MEANING**
Context shift (physical ⋯→ virtual)	• Lack of support and trust • Isolation and loneliness • Concern for self, family, coworkers	• Frustration with lower quality and quantity of output • Lower speed and quality of decision-making • Less visibility and exposure	• Lack of control • Uncertainty • Information overload • Noise

Behavior shift

| **Mindset shift**	**Team lead ⋯→ Safe base**	**Driver ⋯→ Traffic controller**	**Strategy translator ⋯→ Sense-maker**

1

GET ALONG

Satisfy your team members' needs for attention and approval

Don't be a phantom leader... virtually or otherwise

- Phantom leadership is no leadership at all; being uninvolved and uncommunicative
- Phantom bosses are common and destructive
- They cause stress that negatively affects employee productivity and well-being
- Being ignored by a boss is more alienating than being treated poorly
- The negative effects of phantom leadership last for at least two years

Skogstad et al., 2014

Apart. Not alone.
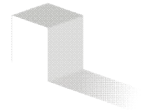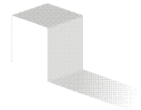

Become an anthropologist

Source: Liz and Mollie

Do you know your team?

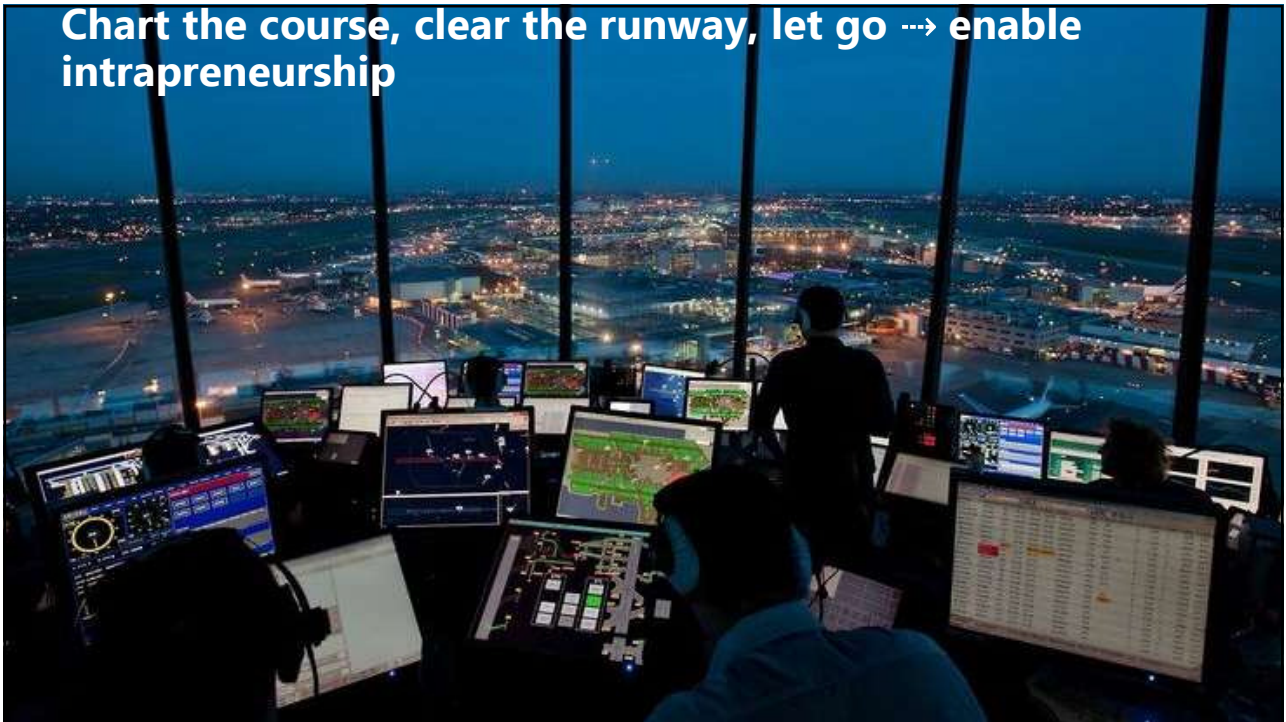*"I have an idea for the perfect birthday gift for each of my team members"*

2

GET AHEAD

Satisfy your team members' needs for status and power

Celebrate wins

Chart the course, clear the runway, let go ⟶ enable intrapreneurship
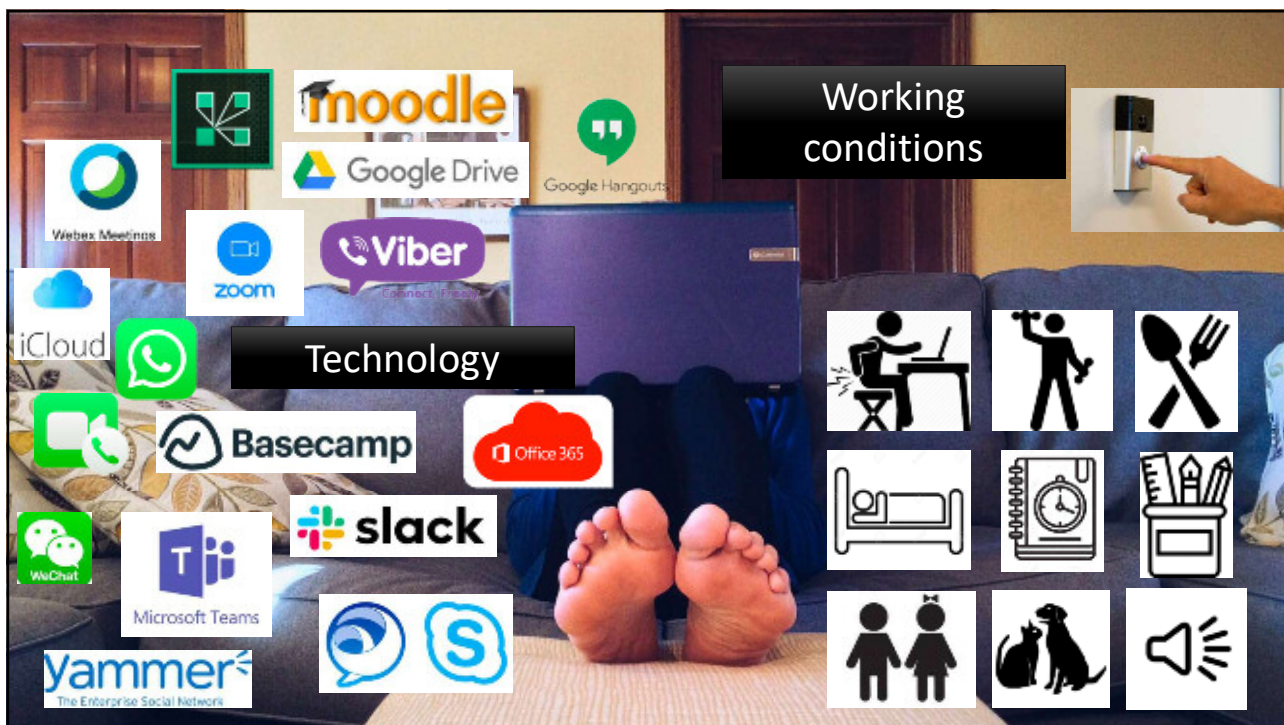
Deliberate planning

Don't underestimate the power of processes
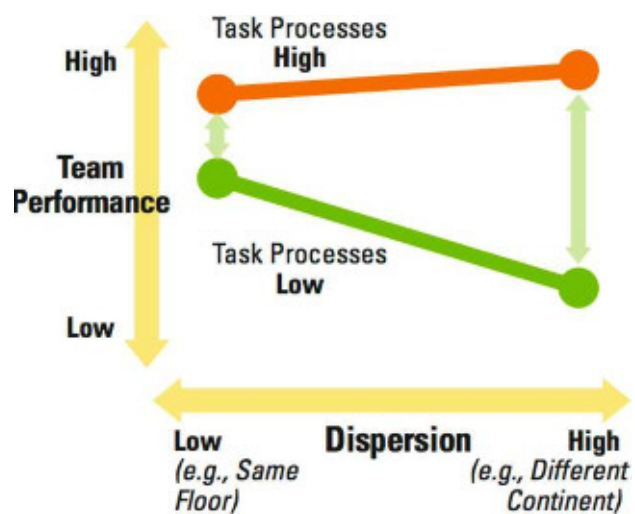
About the Research
- 80 software development teams
- 28 labs worldwide
- 20 and 5,500 software developers (lab size)
- each team contained up to nine member
- 392 managers, team leaders and team members participated in the study

https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/how-to-manage-virtual-teams/
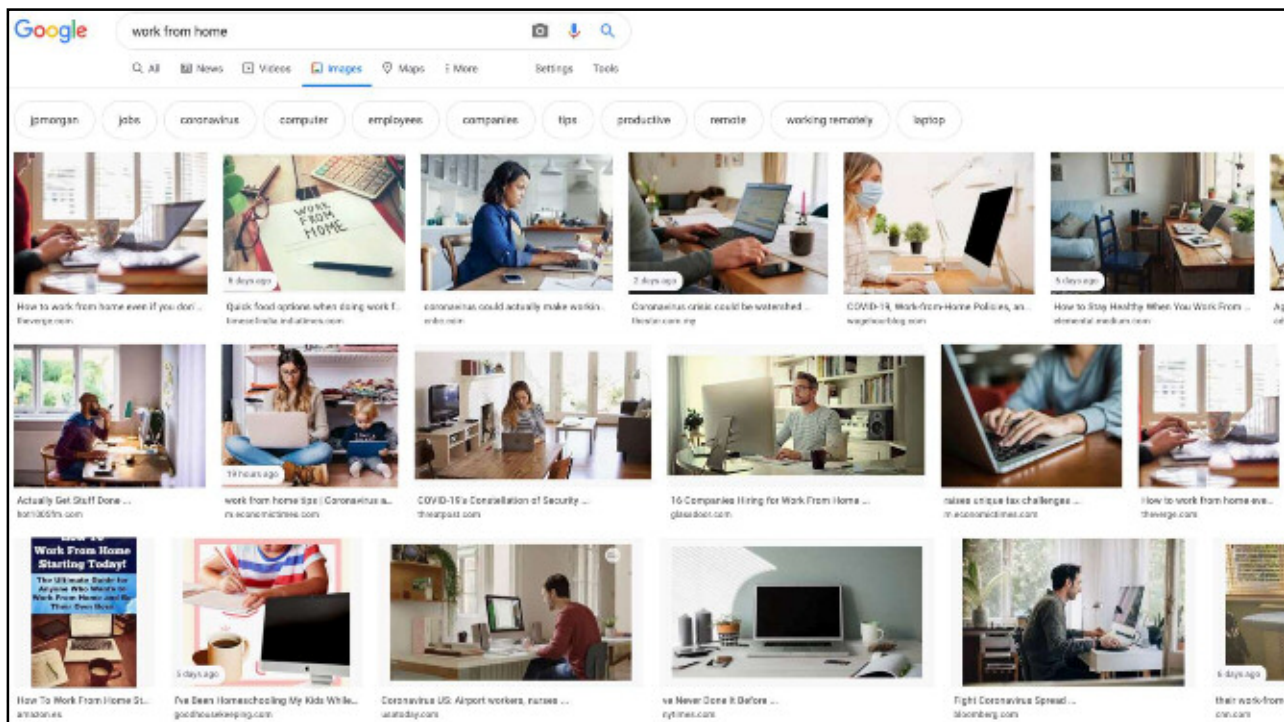
3 FIND MEANING

Satisfy your team members' needs for predictability and order

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Panic is rarely helpful
- News outlets thrive on panic
- Social media penalizes calm
- Negativity sells better and faster
- Like a virus, panic needs social nodes to spread
- Don't be one
- Neutralize nodes that spread panic

Signal safety

"We will help our workers keep their jobs, and retrain during their downtime... And we will give those who are retrenched and unemployed, as well as their families, an extra helping hand to see through this difficult period."

~ Lee Hsien Loong, Singapore Prime Minister

Sense-making and sense-giving

"A map is not functional until you know where you are on it."

David Allen,
author of "Getting Things Done"

Flip the pyramid

	"TECHNICAL"	"ADAPTIVE"
Why do we uniquely exist? Why is this work important? Whom are we serving?	Purpose	Purpose
How should we behave? What's most important right now?	Values/ Principles	Values/ Principles
What outcomes do we want? What's essential and what isn't?	Vision	Vision
What choices must we make? (arenas, vehicles, differentiators, sequencing)	Strategy	Strategy
What specific actions and workstreams need to get done? What problems need to be solved? How do we solve them?	Execution	Execution

Michael Chavez & Sudhanshu Palsule "Rehumanizing Leadership"(2020). https://twitter.com/DukeCE/status/1240660732661940224

Provide clarity

"Transparency is 'job one' for leaders in a crisis. Be clear what you know, what you don't know, and what you are doing to learn more."

Amy Edmondson, professor at Harvard

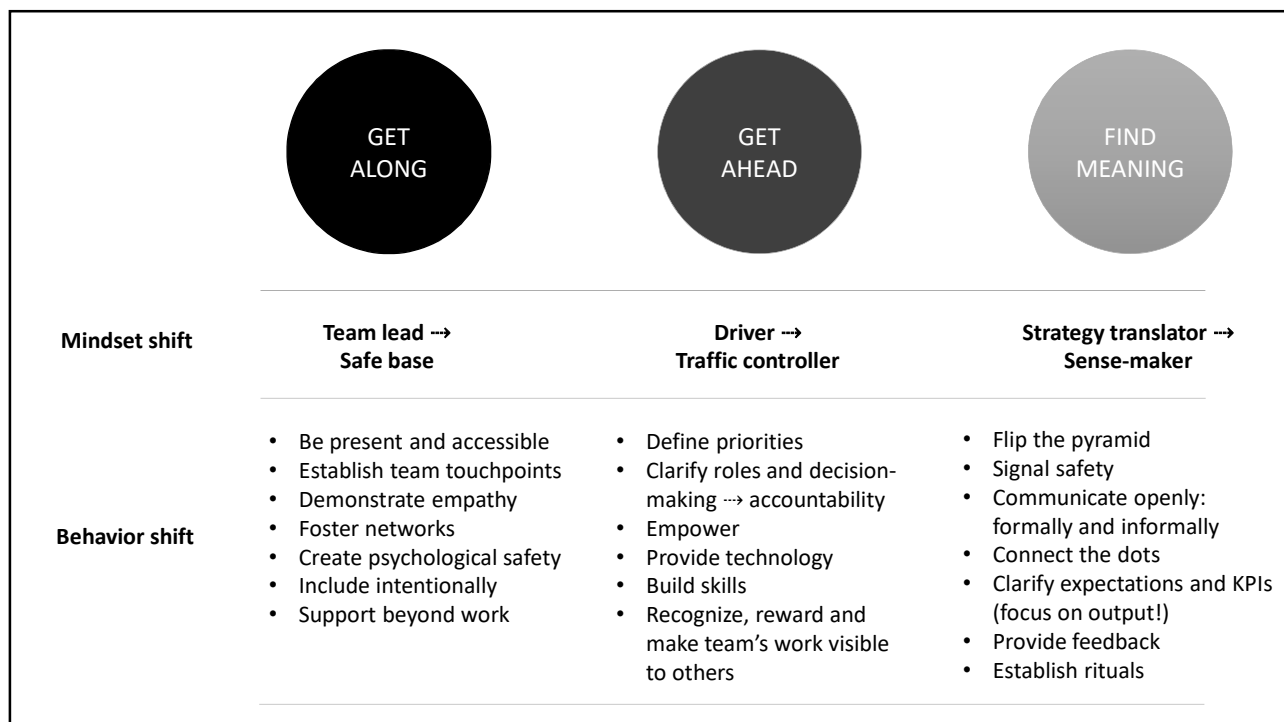|	GET ALONG	GET AHEAD	FIND MEANING
Mindset shift	Team lead ⟶ Safe base	Driver ⟶ Traffic controller	Strategy translator ⟶ Sense-maker
Behavior shift	• Be present and accessible • Establish team touchpoints • Demonstrate empathy • Foster networks • Create psychological safety • Include intentionally • Support beyond work	• Define priorities • Clarify roles and decision-making ⟶ accountability • Empower • Provide technology • Build skills • Recognize, reward and make team's work visible to others	• Flip the pyramid • Signal safety • Communicate openly: formally and informally • Connect the dots • Clarify expectations and KPIs (focus on output!) • Provide feedback • Establish rituals

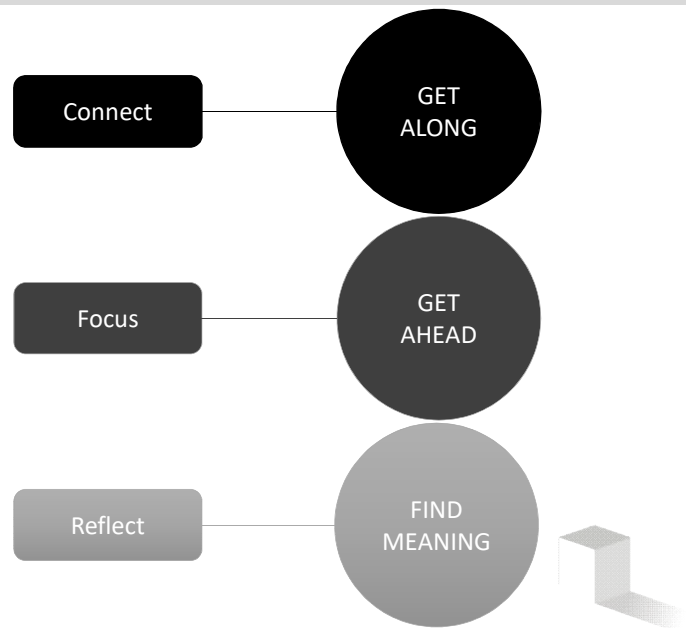## Gennaro Arma: deliberate calm + bounded optimism

- Regular appreciation
- Walking on the deck, apologizing for delayed medicine distribution
- Sent notes of encouragement to the passengers
- Used humor: peppered his talks with Italian words and even mocked his own accent when speaking in English

GET ALONG

- Re-wrote the duties handbook: enabled the crew to step up to unfamiliar duties
- Empowered the crew to work with the Japanese quarantine authorities
- Called his crew "my gladiators"
- Last person to leave the ship

GET AHEAD

- Regular announcements of information
- Answering passengers' requests by consulting quarantine officers
- Demonstrated a calm and reassuring leadership style

FIND MEANING

Finally, take care of yourself

Everything's An Offer

How to do more with less

Robert Poynton

Illustrated by Gary Hirsch

Connect — GET ALONG

Focus — GET AHEAD

Reflect — FIND MEANING

Thank you!

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Сергей Горбатов и Анджела Лэйн

Обратная связь в бизнесе

Честный диалог с клиентами и сотрудниками

альпина | бизнес