

THE
“GREAT
RESTART”

VS

“GREAT
RESET”

:SYNOPSIS

BY

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September often serves as a natural “restart” or “reset”. The summer holiday season ends, kids return to school, and quite often work expectations increase. This September seems to carry the weight of even greater expectation. Over the past few months, many organizations have experienced the most significant return to in-person work since the start of the pandemic. September will likely be another big push to spend more time at the office.

This return to office has been coined by many as the “great restart”. However, I wonder if it instead should be referred to as the “great reset”. To me, there is a subtle yet important difference. Restarting connotes picking up where we left off and resuming pre-pandemic activities. I think most of us would agree this hasn’t been the common experience. Far too much has changed over the last couple of years.

Whether the team is in 5 days or 3 days or any other permutation of ‘in-person’, this has felt like a big transition. The return to office made me more aware of how many assumptions we’ve been making while in a “virtual reality” and how many things have changed. Meeting people hired during the pandemic in person and seeing colleagues again, has highlighted how some changes are outwardly discernable, and others can’t be seen but are just as real. I’ve heard comments

around the office about how people are taller than anticipated or how they look different than they used to. But non-visible shifts like needing more flexibility, emotional support or opportunity need to be recognized.

This applies not only an individual level, but also to organizations as well. During the pandemic, businesses have changed. Business structures or priorities may have shifted in response to changing customer needs. Not only have there been changes in how we work, but also in the work we're doing. Expectations of leaders have also evolved.

This all has led to the need for a “reset” rather than a “restart”. We need to recognize what has changed and where we are today. There is no one-size-fits-all approach for how employees will effectively contribute to the organization and let's face it, the organization may have also significantly changed during the last couple of years.

A “reset” serves as a unique opportunity for organizations. It allows for everyone to pause together and find a collective way forward – a way forward that recognizes what has changed, what people need now to do great work and unifies everyone around the organization's purpose and shared values.