

Change in work environments and its impact on stress

Audience Member:

You know, the rapidity of change, it's constant. We all have to be able change, and change, and change, and we were talking about how the environment changes as everyone goes to urbanization. What occurred to me is that people's stress levels get higher. I mean, you can see your neighbor's kitchen from your kitchen, right? I mean people are closing in around you, so you have less space. It's in our work environment as well, right? The cubes keeps getting smaller and smaller and smaller and lower and lower and it's like you are on top of each other, right? So, stress increases yet we have to be able to change and be more, you know, nimble and resilient and all that kind of stuff and yet our environment is not supporting that.

Brandon Carson's Response:

That's the key challenge. And I remember at Home Depot, they were recruiting me away from San Francisco to come to Atlanta. Of course, every friend I had said, "that's not ever what you want to do. Don't ever even think about that." And so, my first round of conversation with him was, "okay I really want to work here in San Francisco," and he was like "oh no we don't really do that." I was like, "oh you don't do remote work? You don't have flexibility? And you are getting engineers to go to Atlanta?" And there like "we have a problem with that."

We're in the world now where we are going to have to go to where the worker is, right? If you're an engineer right now you can sort of say what you want to do and where you want to do it. So yes, [we have] some of that flexibility at Delta, [but] we are compressing the cubicles now. I heard about this new initiative the other day. The senior managers and the managers used to have a little bit [of space], you could actually have two or three people in there. [Nope], down to you and your... yeah like a phone booth.

We have to be more open to figuring out how our employee experience, right, how it can map expectations appropriately. Or how people want to work now versus... we're going to some open environments now about three years after that trend died. It's like you need to stop, open environments don't work. I don't... [pause for laughter] we just really need to stop that. I don't want to be a part of this other person's conversation as they are fighting with their wife or husband. Because there's been times I've been in an environment where I just put down my work and like "I'm okay I can help you through this" [laughter].