



# "Shards of Light"

Antarctic Peninsula, Jan 2022  
World Navigator Cruise  
Landscape Competition Winner

# RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES OF A CHANGING WORKPLACE AND WORKFORCE

## THE 2020s CREATE A WORK LIFE REVOLUTION



BACK TO  
WORK  
AFTER  
COVID-19



Alan Cabelly, Ph. D.,  
SHRM-SCP, SPHR

Portland Leadership Institute

[www.PortlandLeadershipInstitute.com](http://www.PortlandLeadershipInstitute.com)

[alanc@pdx.edu](mailto:alanc@pdx.edu)

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# Recent Life in America

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- ❖ 26 Months
- ❖ CHANGE!
- ❖ Stress
  - COVID, Economy, Politics, Race Relations
- ❖ Our People
  - Their Needs
  - Resilience
  - Mental Health and Stability



Background

Prof. Alan Cabelly, SHRM  
alanc@pdx.edu @AlanLeads  
503-250-3758



We're both right





# Today's Opportunity

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- ❖ This change is real, nothing since WW II and Great Depression.
- ❖ Service and government sector: working in conditions established for 1950s industrialization and machinery. Static.
- ❖ Opportunity for transformational change
- ❖ Your Leadership will be tested
- ❖ You choose to meet the challenge.....  
.....or be passed by
- ❖ **Redefine the future of public service, make it more sustainable for the widest possible variety of people and.....help your port function better**



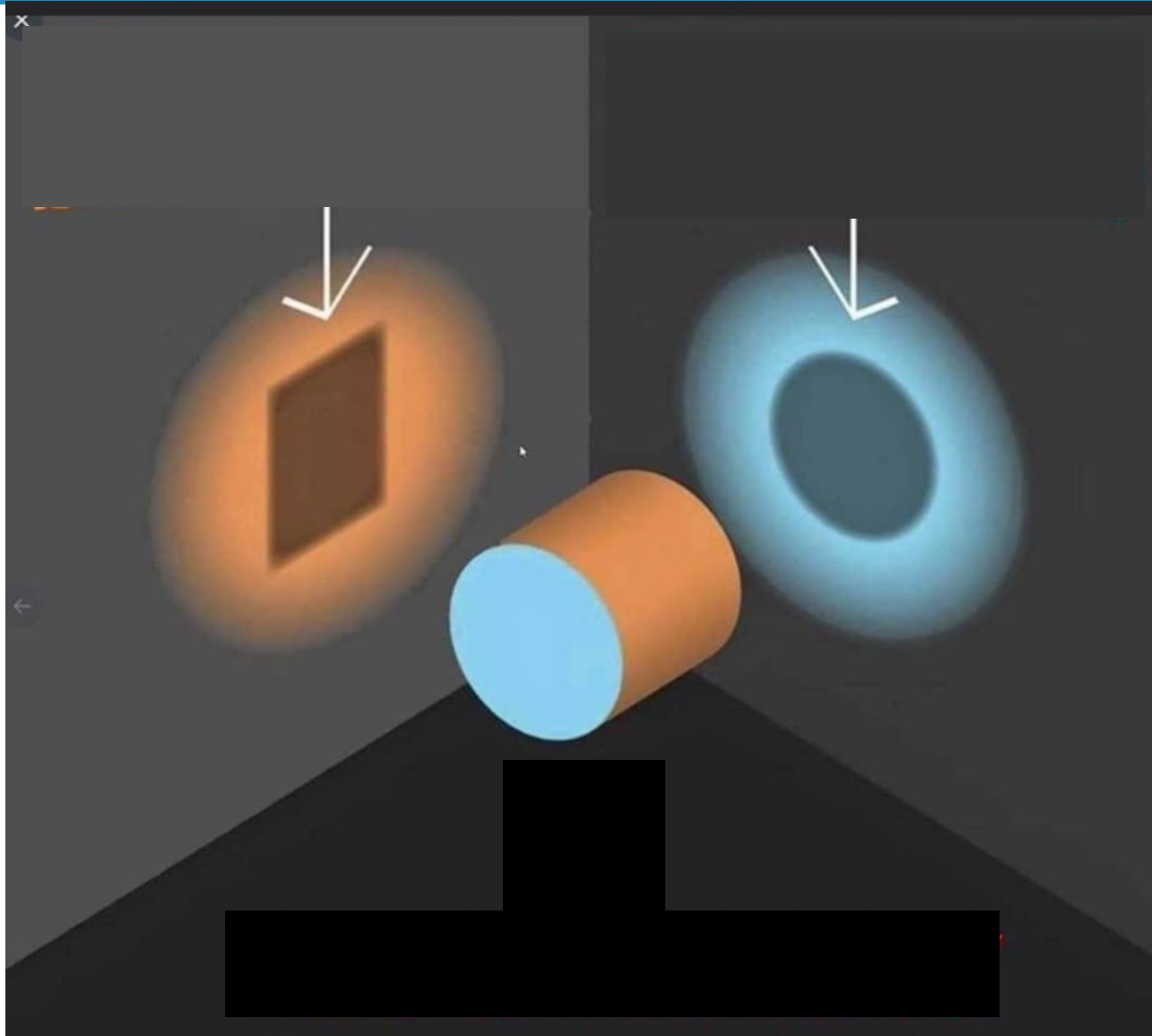
Opportunity?





# Focus Your Restart

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Focus

Prof. Alan Cabelly, SHRM-SCP  
alanc@pdx.edu @AlanLeads  
503-250-3758

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# Agenda

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- ❖ The great two year 50 million person experiment. The state of 2020-2022. What happened.
- ❖ How we feel about it, managers/employees, what we are doing right or wrong. How we are all different, what that means for all of us.
- ❖ How might we return?
- ❖ Recommendations/advice, do you really want to step backwards?



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Prof. Alan Cabelly, SHRM-SCP  
alanc@pdx.edu @AlanLeads  
503-250-3758

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# Today's Workspace







2022

alanc@pdx.edu @AlanLeads  
503-250-3758

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# Three weeks in March 2020.....

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- ❖ “The only thing holding back flexible work arrangements was a failure of imagination” John Williams, Director, Center for Work Life Law
- ❖ The Great Resignation (reshuffle)
- ❖ McKinsey Report:
  - We have reset the way we live and do business
  - Future of work arriving faster than ever expected
  - 100,000,000 more workers worldwide will need new work rules by 2030
- ❖ Necessity is the mother of invention





# Three weeks in March 2020.....

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- ❖ Bill, Fish Market Manager: “It’s almost impossible to get people to come to work anymore.”
- ❖ Joe, Engineering manager: “I don’t wanna go back to the office very often, no one wants to go back. But there is benefit to being able to walk down the corridor and collaborate with someone.”
- ❖ Dawn, 60 year old Portland city Director: “I loved the last two years. No commute, work when I want, zoom with my friends, take my dog on leisurely walks. And I was more effective. I think it’s time to retire.”
- ❖ Woman in gift shop, bringing her baby to work: “They’ve got my loyalty.”



# The Great Resignation: Private Sector

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## ❖ No No No

## ❖ The Great Opportunity

- US DOL: April-June 2021: 11,500,000 resigned
- Gallup: 48% actively searching
- Microsoft: 54% of Zoomers searching
- 1/21-1/22, private sector:
  - resignations: 2.3% → 2.8%
  - Retail trade: 3.6% → 4.6%
  - Leisure/hosp: 5.6%; food services: 6.0%
  - Moderate surge in retirement
  - “free agency” for low wage service sector





# The Great Resignation: WA Public Sector

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- ❖ The Great Opportunity in WA public sector
  - Cheryl S-C: [ofm.wa.gov](http://ofm.wa.gov)
  - FY 21: moderate T/O increase in younger employees, rising to FY 19 levels
  - FY 21: retirement up to 2.8% (from 2.6%), equals FY 17 levels
- ❖ Conclusion: anecdotal and individual evidence of a Great Opportunity here, but little supportive data.
  
- ❖ What do you do?



# And we all went to zoom

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- ❖ No No No
- ❖ 50% with advanced degrees worked remotely, while 90% with HS or less came to “the shop”
- ❖ Not:
  - Blue Collar, Service Sector, Retail, Clerks, Construction
  - Our Servant Class, Underprivileged, Low Paid
  - Women were hardest hit
  - Depression and anxiety quadrupled
- ❖ What happened in your port?



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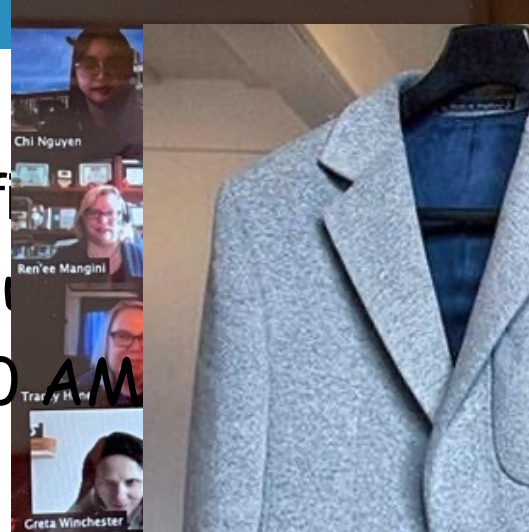




# We Zoomed, .....

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- ❖ We met this way
- ❖ We learned what the hybrid office
- ❖ We wore sweatpants (sweats)
- ❖ And we drank wine..... at 11:00 AM



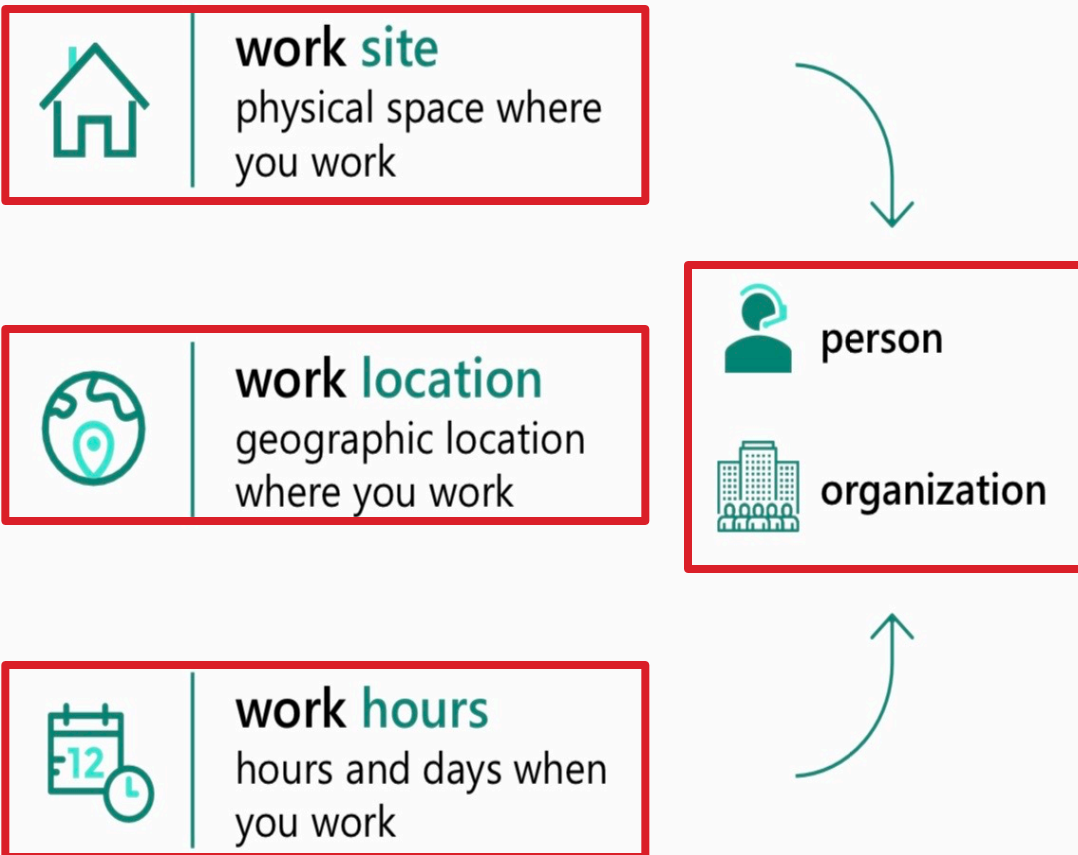
Prof. Alan Cabelly, SHRM-SCP  
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# Three dimensions of a **hybrid workplace**

All employees have a **work site**, a **work location**, and **work hours**. A hybrid workplace assumes a mix of workstyles across all three dimensions for our employees as well as within our organizations.



## ❖ Hybrid Decisions

- All three components
- Business necessities
- Person/organization collaboration





# The Hybrid Workplace

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- ❖ In Hybrid World: 98% of meetings take place with someone who is not there.
- ❖ Successful Hybrids:
  - Gauge the “temperature” of those who are not in the room
  - Create environment where all are equally included in the sessions
  - Connect and align teams in transformational ways
- ❖ Choice of how to **Hybridize**: likely to be your strategic advantage with your people (e.g., attraction, commitment, turnover, etc.)

Hybrid

Prof. Alan Cabelly, SHRM-SCP  
alanc@pdx.edu @AlanLeads  
503-250-3758

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# The Hybrid Workforce

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- ❖ Marginalized, never fit in
  - Office banter has always been a small annoyance for Kristen, never felt she belonged
  - Sandy: not much point in returning to the old boys club
  - People of color, second language, others
- ❖ Office talk: politics, religion, sports, fashion, reality TV:  
“I don’t want to waste my time on that.”
- ❖ Office spaces built for “efficiency”
  - Cubes or tiny square offices
  - Thermostats: 1960s model, 40 year old male, 70 kilos

For these people, zooming was/is.....



# However.....

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- ❖ We have a fundamental need for socialization, shared by many (but not all) of us
  - “I feel depressed when I wake at 8:00, go to my coffee table, sit there all day then close my computer and I haven’t left all day.”
  - “The first few months without interruptions were great, then I discovered there was no one to talk to and I got bored.”
  - My husband comes home and turns on the TV and I’m thinking “you just turned on the TV in my office!”
  - **“I just don’t have the focus and self control to work without people around me.”**

Return

Prof. Alan Cabelly, SHRM-SCP  
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## ❖ Mental Health and Stability

- SHRM COVID report says mental health showed some improvement after a terrible first year.
- Yet mental health statistics remain unacceptable
  - Women, millennials, members of vulnerable populations fare much worse
  - >40% consistently report burnout and worse
- Provide consistent resources; SHRM, EAP, etc.

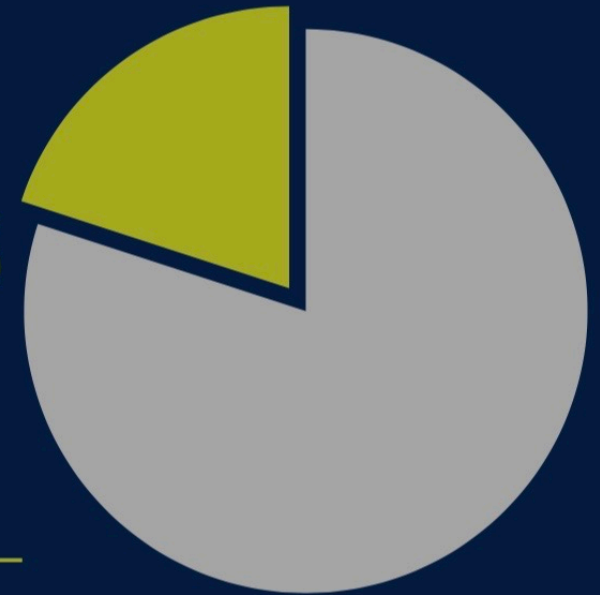


# What about our People (II)

SHRM COVID 19 RESEARCH: SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

DESPITE IMPROVEMENTS SINCE APRIL 2021  
**AS MANY AS 1 IN 5 EMPLOYEES**

STILL STRUGGLE *OFTEN* WITH SYMPTOMS  
RELATED TO DEPRESSION



SOME EMPLOYEES FARE WORSE; POSITIVE NET CHANGE IN DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS IS:

**4X SMALLER**

FOR THOSE THAT LIVE WITH A MEMBER  
OF A VULNERABLE POPULATION, THAN  
THOSE WHO DO NOT

People

Prof. Alan Cabelly, SHRM-SCP  
alanc@pdx.edu @AlanLeads  
503-250-3758

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- ❖ Tim Cook, Apple: “I can’t tell you how much I am looking forward to being together again”
- ❖ Jeff Shell, Comcast/NBC: “I hope everyone is feeling as energized as I am, looking forward to seeing your colleagues in person again”

## BACK TO WORK

- ❖ Future Forum, 10,000 person survey:
  - $\frac{3}{4}$  of execs,  $\frac{1}{3}$  of ees want to return 3-5 days/week
  - Of those who currently work remotely: 44% of execs, 17% of workers want to come back every day



- ❖ Execs have different lives than subordinates
  - Better work setup, office, door, etc.
  - Fewer childcare issues, more quality time with family
  - Employees believe that hybrid settings provide better work life balance
  - What is best for the organization vs. best for the individual

## BACK TO WORK

- ❖ Belief you need to be at work for productivity, “moments of serendipity”
  - Research shows ambiguity; nominal work group often more effective, not bogged down in groupthink or office politics





- ❖ Relationships contribute to happiness
  - Our thought and emotional processes drive the body's functionality

## BACK TO WORK

- ❖ Resilience
  - How will new physical locations support employees
  - How will companies support families and individuals through EAPs, support groups, etc?
  - How will work related and non work related activities, such as book clubs, social gatherings, and sports activities, support workers?



❖ Safe Start Guide, [ofm.wa.gov](http://ofm.wa.gov)

➤ Detailed, academic

## BACK TO WORK

➤ Training tools and Guidelines for

- Supervisors and Leaders
- Employees and Teammates
- Change Management Guide (Bridges)



## ❖ Jeff ....WA DOT:

### ➤ Huge paradigm shift in languaging:

- Instead of language prior to 2020: “tell us why you need to stay home,” now “convince us why you need to go to the office.”

**BACK TO WORK**

- ❖ Facility needs: City of Seattle focusing on saving money by reducing office space. **BE CREATIVE** with your facilities, search for possibilities. WA helps
- ❖ WA Ferries as an example: repurposing training laptops into home laptops





# Office Space

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- ❖ WA OFM has guidelines
  - Assigned workspace
  - Assigned shared workspace
  - Unassigned workspace

## BACK

## TO

## WORK

- ❖ Route-Fifty.com

- States rethinking their real estate strategy
- Desk sharing, hoteling.
  - Determine the right amount of collaborative and individual space needed; talk to employees
  - Pros/cons for employees
  - Clean desk policies
- National Association of State Chief Administrators report, summer 2021 ([nasca.mclms.net](http://nasca.mclms.net))

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Prof. Alan Cabelly, SHRM-SCP  
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- ❖ Showcase Value (public service pride)
- ❖ Track Burnout; support staff with EAPs/wellness programs
- ❖ Reevaluate Benefits, especially retirement (Social Contract, final slides)
- ❖ Think Beyond Traditional Benefits: what else?
- ❖ Prioritize DEI (EDI) Goals (lead with Equity)
- ❖ Ask:
  - Why are people leaving
  - What is your competitive advantage
  - How can you impact retention



# What are we already doing wrong?

33

- ❖ Kelli, 25 year old professional, returning from a FMLA emotional illness leave, needing flexibility, had her boss write upon her return: “the hybrid work schedule currently being piloted by the company was introduced during COVID and is not guaranteed. You may take advantage of it now, but we may revert at any time.”

## BACK TO WORK

- ❖ Jacob, 25 year old assistant store manager in his first job, with a physical disability: “my manager loves me, but corporate says I can’t do the job with a cane; there are cameras everywhere, so my manager can’t go against corporate.”
- ❖ Tony, 55 year old mid level executive: “every other part of the company (nationwide) continues with hybrid, but my manager thinks we should be there. So I drove an hour for a zoom meeting, found the locks changed, and all the food cleaned out, half the attendees on zoom!”

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# Choose Your Own Adventure

35

- ❖ Salesforce: “Success from Anywhere”
- ❖ PriceWaterhouseCoopers: 40,000 of its employees would never be required to return to an office
- ❖ DowJones and Mellon: their workers would have more flexibility than their industry peers
- ❖ But:
  - Will it penalize those who opt for flexibility?
  - Can I come whenever I want?
  - Will there be core hours?
  - How will we collaborate?



- ❖ WorkSite, WorkLocation, WorkHours
  - Possibilities and Needs
- ❖ The model of your hybrid workplace depends on
  - Product/Technology
  - The Needs of the Hybrid Workforce
  - The Flexibility of the Executive Team
- ❖ Reimagine People, Places, Processes
  - Don't force an old model into a new situation





- ❖ Based on HumanCentric Relationships
  - The woman in the gift shop, 8 month old baby
- ❖ Employees and candidates will judge leadership by the way they treated employees during the pandemic (which continues)
- ❖ The view from the top is not the same as the view from the bottom



# My office space

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- ❖ My work group?
- ❖ Do I have my own space?
- ❖ Am I sharing? With whom?
- ❖ My computer, my cup, my pictures?
- ❖ Google's "hot desk" or "inflatable balloon"
- ❖ MW, TTh, TWTh, ??? Can I come in when it's not my day?
- ❖ Working needs?
- ❖ Other?



Recommendations

Prof. Alan Cabelly, SHRM-SCP

alanc@pdx.edu @AlanLeads  
503-250-3758

# Managers, Meetings, Collaboration

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- ❖ What will success look like in a hybrid environment:
  - Flexibility/Adaptability
  - Inclusivity
  - Supportiveness
  - Technical security
  - Effective Leadership and Management





# You....As the Leader for Today

40

- ❖ Opportunity for transformational change
- ❖ Your Leadership will be tested
- ❖ You choose to meet the challenge.....  
.....or be passed by
- ❖ Redefine the future of public service work, make it more sustainable for the widest possible variety of people





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*Alan Cabelly, Professor Emeritus, Portland State University, is an Internationally Recognized Speaker, Teacher, and Consultant, the recipient of numerous leadership awards. Alan is a student of the human condition; his personal mission is to help individuals increase their leadership skills and find passion in their work life. Using the DiSC<sup>®</sup> as an effective tool, his work focuses on Leadership Excellence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the Workplace of the Future, Generational Relationships in the Workplace, and Teambuilding with the DiSC<sup>®</sup>. His multigenerational family includes two grandsons and three granddaughters. In his spare time he gardens, mentors, and travels the world with his wife and partner Jean Benevento.*