

The
NOW
Hello

WHAT TO SAY
WHAT TO DO
IN THE WORLD OF WORK

Remote | Hybrid | In Person

TRACY HOOPER



INDIE BOOKS
INTERNATIONAL™

The NOW Hello

WHAT TO SAY | WHAT TO DO
IN THE WORLD OF WORK

Remote | Hybrid | In Person

© 2022 Tracy Hooper

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other—except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

ISBN: 9798818022475

Editor: Davia Larson

Editing support by Mary Nienow, Cathy McMahan, Michael LaRocca, Henry Hooper, and Margaret Hooper

Cover and Interior Design: Melissa Farr

www.ConfidenceProject.com

Info@ConfidenceProject.com

— TABLE OF CONTENTS —

Foreword		xi
Introduction	The World of Work: Remote Hybrid In Person	xv
Chapter 1	Mindset + Skillset	1
Chapter 2	Plan + Practice = The NOW Hello	11
Chapter 3	Impress + Influence	25
Chapter 4	Presence + Posture + Power	47
Chapter 5	Camera Confidence + Connection	57
Chapter 6	Words to LOSE + Words to USE	81
Chapter 7	The NOW Apology	115
Chapter 8	Own Your Name + Honor Others	133
Chapter 9	The NOW Networking	143
Chapter 10	Confident Conversations	181
Chapter 11	The NOW Goodbye	195
Chapter 12	The Hybrid Highway	213
Conclusion		235
<i>Appendix: Magic Words and Kick Starter Questions</i>		239
<i>Endnotes</i>		249

———— CHAPTER 12 ————

The Hybrid Highway: Confidence Even in Uncertainty

“Be a Learner, not a Knower.”

— BRENÉ BROWN

In the fall of 2021, a financial advising firm hired me for a professional development training. There was a team of twenty-five, half sitting in the newly renovated conference room and the other half on Zoom with their kitchen or living room in the background. I was on Zoom too, in my home office.

Each of the in-person folks could see their virtual teammates and me on the large, wall-mounted monitor. But those of us who were virtual couldn't see the entire team in the conference room because they were sitting 6 feet apart. The only people I could see clearly were the early birds who snagged seats close to the camera. Everyone in the conference room was wearing a mask, so their voices were muffled.

It didn't take long to see that the mix and match of in-person and remote was going to be tricky. The CEO was conflicted about where to look—at the people in the room or the team on the monitor. When he introduced me, he had moved out of the camera frame so I couldn't see or hear him anymore. Because I could only see about 25 percent of the people in the conference room, I was missing many micro-cues, and so was everyone else in the Zoom room. Q&A was a problem too; I couldn't hear the questions and kept asking, “Could you say that again, please?” It was clumsy and ate up time having to ask participants seated near the camera to repeat the questions for all of us.

So started our journey on The Hybrid Highway.



Pro Tip

Collaboration equity

It doesn't matter where you and others are joining the meeting. In person or remote, everyone needs to be able

to see and hear each other. Google calls this Collaboration Equity, and it's an important part of the Hybrid Highway.

Technical Tips for Achieving Collaboration Equity:

- Install a camera(s) in the conference room so remote folks can see everyone in the actual room.
- Install a large monitor in your conference room. This way, everyone in the room can see the remote participants and any shared content.
- Make sure the whiteboard is visible to both in-person and remote attendees or use a common, digital document to share information and promote collaboration.
- If you are remote, lift your laptop to eye level so people feel as if you are looking at them across the table, not up at your ceiling.
- If one large monitor is not available, all the attendees in the conference room can dial into the meeting on their own laptop and keep themselves on mute.
- Set expectations at the top by acknowledging that it can be easier to recognize those in the room vs. those online. The message is: “No matter where you are, we want everyone’s voice to be heard.”

Welcome to the Hybrid Highway

Nobody's quite sure where their companies and workers are traveling along the Hybrid Highway, but in The World of Work now we all are on this bumpy road together. Business teams and leaders, individuals, and families are all trying to navigate the uncertain journey.

It's tough. Like someone who's trying to learn how to drive a stick shift and keeps stalling as they struggle to get into first gear, the world's businesses have sputtered, too. Nothing illustrates this predicament better than the continual shifts in the Return To Office plan: the Delta variant surged. Then Omicron forced companies and organizations to re-evaluate their return dates, again. Though many companies are going back, there are still degrees of uncertainty for RTO plans.

If you're exhausted, anxious, or short-tempered, there's good reason. Heidi Grant and Tal Goldhammer tell us why. "Our brains were not built for this much uncertainty."¹

In their *Harvard Business Review* article, they explain that the human brain likes patterns. It also works most efficiently when we perform routine predictable tasks.² But when life becomes less controllable, we feel threatened, and our brains have a hard time with the "unknowns." The feeling of uncertainty registers as danger. Continually feeling threatened or scared "leads to decreases in motivation, focus, agility, cooperative behavior, self-control, sense of purpose and meaning, and overall well-being."³ With the pandemic still hovering, remote work, and the ever-changing RTO plans,