

# PTTOW!NXT

FUTURE FORUM

## **CREATING COMPANY CULTURE FOR MENTAL WELLNESS**

81% of workers reported that workplace stress affected their mental health. It's time we start to create a culture where we prioritize wellness as a part of worth! Not only is it good for teams, it's good for your bottom line.

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### **Featured Mentors:**

Donald Evans // CMO // [The Cheesecake Factory](#)

Will Campbell // CEO // [Quantasy + Associates](#)

Waco Hoover // Chair // [Be The One](#)

Laurie Keith // VP, Emerging Media and Technology // [Ad Council](#)

**Donald Evans** CMO, *The Cheesecake Factory*

Donald Evans is a global marketing and strategy executive who has worked across film, TV, restaurant, real estate and gaming businesses, with some of the world's biggest brands. Before joining The Cheesecake Factory, Donald worked for The Walt Disney Company, Pixar Animation Studios, and Warner Bros. Additionally, he has consulted for The World Trade Center, Activision and Wieden + Kennedy as well as led partnerships with many Fortune 500 Companies including McDonald's, Volvo, Nestle, Kellogg's, Hershey's, Mondelez and Virgin Atlantic.

Since August 2011, he has held the position of Chief Marketing Officer for all brands at The Cheesecake Factory Incorporated – including The Cheesecake Factory and North Italia. Donald is responsible for overseeing Marketing, Public Relations, Crisis Media Relations, International Marketing, Gift Cards, Digital and Research. Responsibilities also include oversight of The Cheesecake Factory's grocery business as well as the company's partnership with DoorDash. He recently launched the company's first ever loyalty program, Cheesecake Rewards®

Previously, he spent more than 15 years in the entertainment industry, including Senior Vice President of Animation Marketing for Pixar Animation and Walt Disney Studios Animation. While there, he oversaw worldwide marketing campaigns for films including Academy Award® winners Up and WALL-E.

Donald graduated college from Northwestern University's School of Communication and received an MBA in Marketing from Northwestern University's Kellogg Graduate School of Management.

**Will Campbell** CEO, *Quantasy + Associates*

Will Campbell is CEO at Quantasy, the Los Angeles based creative agency. Will's vision for blending advertising, technology, entertainment and culture has created business growth for world-class brands including Google, Honda, Acura, Magic Johnson, Kevin Hart and others. Alongside his work with top tier organizations, Will serves as Chairman of the Quantasy Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Quantasy and as a Commissioner on the LA County Small Business Commission.

**Laurie Keith** VP, *Emerging Media and Technology, Ad Council*

As VP of Emerging Media & Technology at the Ad Council, Laurie identifies and establishes new partners across the emerging media ecosystem including 3D immersive experiences, Web3/Blockchain, artificial intelligence, AR/VR/MR, autonomous vehicles and more. Laurie has secured partnerships with major tech companies to develop new products and innovative opportunities for Ad Council campaigns. Her accomplishments include integrating a new Bullying Prevention emoji into the Apple keyboard, pioneering Ad Council's first foray into VR with a partnership with Oculus For Good, building Ad Council's first Amazon Alexa skill to reduce food waste, and custom in-game integrations with Zynga for Hunger Prevention and Recycling.



## **Waco Hoover** Chair, *Be The One*

Mr. Hoover is an entrepreneur and investor with over 20 years of experience in venture capital, M&A, entertainment, media and live events. He is currently Chair of the Be the One program for the American Legion. He is the founder of MCON, one of the largest events celebrating military culture, an advisor to Founders Factory, a London based venture capital firm, Managing Partner at Xperiential Group, and serves on the board of Grunt Style Foundation, a non-profit preventing veteran suicide. He has advised global brands including MGM Resorts, Informa, Vivendi, and Las Vegas Sands Corp. He was a co-founder and investor in businesses sold to Informa, Emerald, Endeavor Business Media and Onstream Media. He is a Marine Corps veteran, graduated from New York University, cum laude and completed Harvard Business School executive education programs. Mr. Hoover speaks at industry events including VenuesNow, CEMA, The American Legion, Military Influencer Conference, SXSW, Pollstar, TSE 100, Society for Independent Show Organizers, National Sports Forum and XLIVE. Mr. Hoover lives in Southern California with his wife, son and two yellow labs. In his spare time, he enjoys surfing, diving, and mountaineering as often as possible.



**BE THE ONE**



## Donald

### 1. LEADING BY EXAMPLE

- To establish a culture where others feel secure, begin by demonstrating vulnerability and openly sharing your personal challenges.
  - Engage in open dialogue rather than suppressing your thoughts. This isn't about venting but fostering transparency about your experiences so that others feel empowered to offer their support.
  - This openness cultivates a sense of two-way trust.
- Creating a welcoming and inclusive work environment requires both time and financial resources. In the context of remote teams, additional efforts are essential to ensure a sense of belonging.
  - Remote team members can often feel isolated; proactively plan opportunities for face-to-face interactions, including coordinating travel.
- Whether remote or in-person, try to do fun things with your team as often as you can. Put in the time to get to know them, what they're thinking, and what's going on in their lives.
- It is important to recognize that for many, work and personal lives are distinct and should remain separate. Each sphere can provide support for the other, but boundaries must be respected.
  - Figuring out what your boundaries are and how to instill them is key.

### 2. "ALWAYS BE LEARNING"

- Rome was not built in a day. Building an open and inclusive culture is a gradual process; it requires time and patience.
  - For individuals with fast-paced, busy minds, it's essential to avoid appearing disingenuous with your team; make a conscious effort to remember personal details about your colleagues.
  - Also remember that some people are never going to want to share or never going to be comfortable in a team setting, so you have to find ways to get them included or give them opportunities to share.
- In learning more about your team, you can meet them where they are.
  - The different personalities of your team will also dictate the type of programs you can offer them, such as off-the-record mental health days, an open door policy, no-meeting Fridays, or even activities such as sound baths.

# KEY LEARNINGS

## Waco

### 1. ALWAYS SIP WATER

- It can be so easy to forget to drink water and rehydrate. We need to do the same when thinking about mental health and remind ourselves to constantly and consistently check-in with ourselves and each other.
  - No one questions when you bang up your shoulder or walk into a room with a sling. Mental health should be approached with the same openness and understanding.
- Programs, such as “Be The One”, work to normalize and de-stigmatize the conversation of mental health by removing the barrier of those getting help.
  - The goal is to foster a personal and approachable dialogue, creating an environment where individuals feel safe to share their experiences. Even internal staff members of the program have shared their own personal journeys.
  - This program also extends training to corporate partners, enabling them to cultivate a supportive and open mental health culture within their own teams.

### 2. LEARN, LISTEN, LEAD

- We are still in the early stages of normalizing conversations about mental health in the workplace. Factors such as work environment, upbringing, and cultural background can significantly influence comfort levels around this topic.
  - Listening to people can be one of the most powerful things you can do - sometimes people just need to vent.
  - **“Community inspires social connections, and social connections save lives.”**
  - To create the kind of open community that has these kinds of conversations, you have to start by getting support from the top of leadership.
- Leveraging data can provide leaders with valuable insights into employee needs, guiding the development and enhancement of programs and initiatives that foster a healthier workplace culture.

## Will

### 1. A NEW WAVE

- While there is a growing awareness around mental health, many marginalized individuals, especially young BIPOC people, continue to face significant barriers in accessing the resources they need.
  - True Voice is a solution to provide resources and create inclusive, safe spaces whether as a company wide benefit or for students.
- Focusing on mental health and mindfulness is crucial; developing coping tools even when you feel fine can be preventive and supportive in times of need.
  - Just as with physical health, it's essential to build resilience before reaching a breaking point.

# KEY LEARNINGS

## **Will** (Continued)

### **2. A CULTURE OF MINDFULNESS**

- Creating a culture of acceptance and empathy allows for teams and members to engage within one another.
  - Sometimes this is a lot more powerful than doing an activity such as bringing puppies into the office.
- How do you facilitate a culture of belonging, acceptance, and camaraderie so people are engaging with each other even when they can't make the time in their daily work structure?
  - There is no one-size-fits-all approach; offering diverse solutions and opportunities—from wellness days and PTO policies to gym memberships, wellness apps, and therapy services—ensures broader accessibility.
  - Be mindful of your team's composition, and ensure that the initiatives you implement are inclusive, accommodating diverse backgrounds, roles, age groups, abilities, and more.
  - Create an open feedback loop and listen to your team's needs and preferences.
  - Find and empower partners, whether internal or external, who can help drive connectivity.

### **3. EMPOWERED LEADERSHIP**

- Establishing an "open door" policy can bring challenges, particularly when addressing sensitive issues brought forward by team members.
  - Equip yourself with knowledge and resources so you know when to step in and when to point people towards another type of support.
- Recognize that there will be moments when you may not have the answers or when a situation might encroach on personal boundaries. A thoughtful response could be, "I'm happy to talk and learn, with that said here's some information I can pass your way that can help in ways I may not".
  - This type of response acknowledges that someone is coming to you for help and that you may not be the most qualified person to provide it, while simultaneously offering direction to resources that are able to.
- Challenging times, such as layoffs or other significant disruptions, are inevitable.
  - The focus should be on maintaining transparency and proactively preparing for potential challenges. By anticipating issues and having a plan in place, you'll be better equipped to manage crises effectively rather than reacting under pressure.

## **Laurie**

### **1. CREATING SPACE**

- The ongoing mental health crisis, fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic, racial conflicts, political divisions, and various global and personal challenges, continues to affect us daily.
  - Implementing programs and benefits in your organization are just one way to help support your team.
- A few years ago, the Ad Council instituted "Health Days" instead of "Sick Days", along with different community and employee resource groups.
  - These can especially shine when addressing a community driven topic or issue, so people can feel like they're speaking about it with others who will understand them.

# KEY LEARNINGS

## **Laurie** *(Continued)*

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

- [Love, Your Mind](#) - A campaign by the Ad Council focused on providing resources and insights into adult mental health.
  - [Social Amplification Toolkit](#)
  - ["Anthem"](#)
  - ["Rituals"](#)
- [Veterans Mental Health toolkit](#)
- [Seize the Awkward's "Capture the Convo" Toolkit](#) - Focused on inspiring and empowering teens to have conversations about mental health.
- [Quiet: The Power of Introverts In A World That Can't Stop Talking by Susan Cain](#)
- Call 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (It can also be used if you just need advice on helping someone in crisis)

# TRIVIA MOMENT

## QUESTION:

How often does mental wellness come up as a topic of conversation in your org?

- A. **Often** - It's an open conversation & we have programs to support it. **(37% voted)**
- B. **Sometimes** - We have broached it but not a primary focus. **(42% voted)**
- C. **Infrequent** - Maybe once but definitely not often. **18% voted)**
- D. **Never** - We stay away from talking about it all together. **(3% voted)**

**READY TO WATCH  
THE REPLAY?**

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HERE!**

