

**CoreNet Global UK - 'Positive Disconnectivity'**

Thursday 26 October 2017, 7 More London Riverside, London SE1

**Organisers: James Ainsworth PWC, Holly Pauline PWC, Zoeyah Shaheen Trowers & Hamlins LLP**

**Moderator: Charlotte Gannon, Cushman & Wakefield**

**Speakers: Rachel Arkle, Yoke Consultancy  
Simon North, Yoke Consultancy**

At this morning's briefing meeting, put together by the UK Chapter's Young Leaders group, we were to be invited to consider how much and how often we actually switch off.

Setting the tone, **Charlotte Gannon** of the UK Young Leaders told us of the battery of phone calls, text messages and emails she had fielded on her two phones, starting off with an alarm call, before she even got as far as the meeting in PwC's eighth floor meeting room overlooking Tower Bridge.

**Rachel Arkle** and **Simon North** then introduced themselves. Rachel told us how she had set up Yoke just over three years ago to improve wellbeing in the workplace, or, as she said, 'to prod you and push your buttons to motivate all of us to make change happen'. Simon, who came through major corporates such as Rolls Royce and Shell, is one of Rachel's partners, specialising in leadership education, development and personal coaching.

First of all we were asked to put our phones down - well away from where we were sitting - and then to group ourselves in terms of our own productivity - with and without our phones - Simon pointing out how the English squad which won the 2003 Rugby World Cup had created team rules of engagement with each other which included 'no mobile phone in sight'.

Rachel, who has an MSc in organisational wellbeing from Bath University, then asked us what we understand by 'wellbeing'. Taking up the baton Simon asked us why we think 'wellbeing' is mentioned so much more in the press these days, before they jointly explained how the description has grown out of first 'satisfaction' and then 'happiness' to be

seen as a balance between the two - encouraging more purposeful organisation in an increasingly ethical environment.

Between them, they talked about 'interference' and 'interruptions' - why do people use emails rather than just speech? - and how important are emails to you and how long, if you allow yourself to be interrupted, will it take to get back to where you were? They also talked about 'empathy' - the ability to listen deeply and to build quality relationships - and 'sustainability' - how to be flexible and welcome challenges. And they talked about using time - to reflect as much as to work.



Finally they asked us to divide into three groups and consider from the points of view of top, middle and bottom management : what doesn't work, what we can do about it, and what is stopping us from doing it today? 'Are we afraid of being top?' they asked and 'is the middle the most stressful?' No matter where you are in an organisation, they said, you can make a difference, by defining boundaries within your team you can

empower everybody, but just remember while the team comes up with ideas, it is up to you as team leader to decide which idea goes!

It was a fascinating and inspiring morning and our thanks are due to Yoke and to the sponsors: PwC and Penguin.

Alison Sutherland