

---

## Recipe for Success

**Somewhere along the way in our home, I became the expiration police for the contents of our refrigerator and**

pantry. While it has become a funny running joke for us, missing key ingredients for a dish you are ready to make and/or discovering the ones they have are clearly out of the “safe” zone given their provided expiration date is a problem that takes some effort and expense to remedy. The ironic thing about insisting or being tempted to save time and money with using those ingredients that are well past their noted expiration date is that you put the very people you want to impress with your recipe at real risk. While I’m certainly no chef (see my Pit Boss paper – although I’m proud to report progress), I do believe it’s definitely time to do some hard checking and soul searching of the ingredients in the current “workplace” recipe.

**Quality control:** We all know it to be true. Those dishes that make our tastebuds smile are often the ones that take up the least amount of real estate on the plate and are comprised of the fewest number of ingredients. It is the quality of the ingredients used and expertly assembled that determine the end product. I learned the hard way once when doing a batch of gingerbread cookies with our youngest daughter that it is important to know the difference between “tsp” and “tbsp” when measuring salt. They looked fine but were inedible thanks to my careless oversight. In other words, throwing in “pinches” of proptech, amenities and flex offerings without a clear vision for the overall vision for the workplace recipe makes my gingerbread snafu look pretty tasty in comparison.





**Keep it Focused & Simple:** Picture what you'd see if you walked around the corner and into the kitchen of Office right now. The scene might resemble what Chef Gordon Ramsay walks into in the first episode of one of his shows with aspiring chefs – i.e., Total chaos. There are lots of good, but undeveloped ideas, and no one taking leadership or ownership of the ensuing disaster. If you dare to peek into the dining room, customers may have some inkling of the mess that's coming via panicked wait staff looks and stalling, but the full force of the mess in the kitchen hasn't quite been discovered. Office, occupiers definitely sense the chaos – they haven't folded their napkin, placed it on the table, and walked out yet. But they're thinking about plan B and C because they're about to get hangry and need to eat. Choice C is cooking at home (i.e., WFH) – something they already do but not their first choice for dinner. We need a Gordon, hopefully still forceful but with a little less profanity to yell (the only way they'll hear him), “Just stop! Take a deep breath and get your ... stuff... together! Here's what needs to happen. Those people out there are counting on it.”



**NWFA:** The productivity numbers are coming in and, just as the chaos of the last couple of years is proving beyond problematic for our education system, it has also limited our effectiveness as workers. And while I am a huge advocate of better work environments with better versatility and optionality, I am a big fan of seeing the overall dignity of work resurrected. We do need to get back to work. It is meant to be purposeful but not always easy, rewarding but not always perfect, engaging but sometimes fatiguing. Some of the greatest lessons I learned and continue to apply to life and work occurred in less-than-ideal work situations. In this sea of “a better workplace will solve it all”, I want to offer that a key ingredient of this recipe is a worker that expects as much of themselves as they do their work environment. Otherwise, we run the risk of Not Working From Anywhere (NWFA) continuing to be the reality and “I'm just there for the benefits” being the launch comment about a job.



---

Of all the interesting and potentially more sophisticated things I learned in two years at business school, one of the simplest but often lost ideas, centers around the question of why companies and industries need to exist. They exist to meet an unmet need – sometimes one that people don't even realize they have. But if you keep plowing ahead meeting the need nobody has, then you are in trouble. Office, you're in trouble, but the good news is we still do have an unmet workplace need. The race to see who within the industry steps up to answer, not just parts of that, but all of it holistically is completely up for grabs.



Sincerely,  
Mike Fransen  
Founder / CEO, Workng

