

Welcome to the Event Brew, where event professionals from different backgrounds talk about the latest, most controversial, and interesting topics dominating the minds of the industry right now. This is a candid conversation, the likes of which can only otherwise be found late at night in host hotel lobby bars during industry conferences. So relax and drop in on what event pros really say when no one else is around.

This show is brought to you by Endless Events, the event AV company that tells you how it really is. Now, let's brew something up.

Will Curran:

Hey friends, welcome to Event Brew. This is Will Curran from Endless Events. Today I am drinking a nice white peach tea.

Dustin Westling:

Hello everybody, this is Dustin Westling with OneWest Events, and I am drinking the Canadian favorite, a Tim Horton's coffee.

Will Curran:

Ooh, classy. I like it a lot. What does the Tim Horton's taste like?

Dustin Westling:

It kind of tastes like bean water. It's actually not my favorite at all. Those are the Keurig pods that are in our office are Tim Horton's.

Will Curran:

Nice.

Dustin Westling:

It's very weak coffee.

Will Curran:

And why not just replace the pods?

Dustin Westling:

I just because you know what, I don't know. I think everybody else-

Will Curran:

Like low on priority list of things to worry about.

Dustin Westling:

Yeah. I think everybody else likes it around here. I don't know why.

Will Curran:

Well, you know me and my affiliation with having to smuggle Tim Horton's Timbits across borders.

Dustin Westling:

You're going to get the end.

Will Curran:

All right. I'm totally not going to be allowed back in Canada every again. So, today we have a pretty interesting topic. A little bit on the outside of the events industry, but don't worry, we're going to swing it all the way back into the events industry. We stumbled upon an article titled The Four-Day Work Week. And basically, the four day work week boosted worker's productivity by 40% Microsoft Japan says.

Will Curran:

This is an NPR article that we stumbled upon. We thought it was pretty interesting. A, today it's only Dustin and I obviously, so Nick and Thuy are off on assignment, so we figured it would be really interesting to talk from our business owner perspective when it comes to this. But, if you're tuning out, again, I don't want to talk about business and what does this have to do with the events industry, don't worry, we're going to bring it right around for you guys. So yeah. So Dustin, looking at this article, what's your initial gut reaction when you read that title?

Dustin Westling:

Well, initially I look at it and from the headline I go, "Good luck in this industry." Good luck shaving a day off when I feel like so many people are needing to add a day or two. But yeah, I think there's some really great stuff in this article talking about how to create a more efficient workplace, and I think you mentioned before we went on that the titles have been a clickbait.

Will Curran:

Yeah.

Dustin Westling:

Yeah, no, I think that there is... So many people that I talk to in our industry are burning the candles on both ends and are putting in a lot of hours. I don't know a lot of people that work a 40-hour work week. So yeah, so I think this is an interesting topic, especially when we put it through the lens of our industry.

Will Curran:

Definitely, definitely. I'm curious to know from everybody out in the audience who's listening, send us an email or send us a Tweet, let us know what is your average work week look like in terms of days or hours or everything like that. Like absolutely no shame. Let's not obviously, we talked a little bit about at the beginning of this year, don't be prideful of being busy, but let us know. If you feel like you're overworked and you're doing more than 40 hours worth a week, let us know.

Will Curran:

But if you also, if you're below it, please help share that. We want to know from what you guys think. So, yeah, it's really interesting, you bring up the idea of the 40 hour work week, right? I that's become the normal culture, is that the right? No, I'm probably using bigger words than I probably need to. It seems like the standard, probably, for the work week today. So eight hours a day working for five days, right? So they're experimenting with less than that.

Will Curran:

And before we jump into that, there was a really interesting statistic. I don't like that it's at the bottom of this article because I thought this was the most fascinating, but basically there's a... It's called the labor list, and John McDonnell was quoted saying, " The average full time working week was 65 hours in the 1860s and then dropped to 43 hours in the 1970s." Which I always thought the 40-hour work week was standard always. That just seemed like a normal thing, but apparently it was way, way more in the 1860s. Granted, I think, work conditions were different.

Dustin Westling:

It's quite the gap though. It's a 110 year gap. I'm curious to know what happened in the middle of all of that and why that changed. I'm guessing that over those 110 years there was, well, there was a couple wars. There was probably more of a focus on family. I think cities got bigger. Traveling to work became more complex. Yeah, that's interesting. A 65-hour work week in the 1860s as a standard is crazy.

Will Curran:

Yeah, if anyone said I had a 65-hour work week to be considered crazy. I think probably too, working conditions probably changed too. Back then you lived potentially probably in your work in the factory. It was more like indentured servitude than it was actual work. And it probably was because output was just like pushing machines and doing that sort of stuff, where interestingly enough it's like obviously we've moved from having to work purely in factories to now we're working in offices on computers and things like that.

Dustin Westling:

More brain, less brawn.

Will Curran:

Exactly, exactly. So what's interesting about this article, and as you kind of mentioned, as I said, it's kind of clickbait. It talks not only did Microsoft Japan not only chop off a Friday, basically saying don't come to work on Friday, they did a couple of other things too.

Will Curran:

Let's start with that and then maybe we'll go into what the other things are an our opinions on it. So, Dustin, if all of a sudden there was a law that said in Calgary, you're not allowed to work five days a week, it's only four. What would be your gut reaction?

Dustin Westling:

I think it's doable. I think that there's, in our industry, I think cutting off a Friday would be really difficult. We will cut off a Monday every once in a while if we need to catch up with... When we got through a busy stretch, it's not uncommon for us to close our office on a Monday to make up for the extra time that's put in or give our team a minute to catch their breath. But yeah, cutting a Friday is pretty scary, and how we would replace that time is definitely a complicated one.

Dustin Westling:

I know for myself, I put in some crazy hours, and I think you can relate to this too. It's so hard to identify how many hours a week I actually work because I don't know that I ever get a lot of opportunities to turn off. And even when I'm not working, I'm always working, and that's not because I'm always answering emails or I'm always, it's that I'm always thinking about the work. I'm always planning something in my head whether it's for my business, for my clients, for my employees.

Dustin Westling:

So I think if those were all billable hours, I would probably be rocking out 1860s work weeks.

Will Curran:

1860s work weeks, that's going to be the new nickname for it.

Dustin Westling:

Totally.

Will Curran:

I think I definitely agree with you. Not necessarily Fridays per se, but definitely taking off a day in there or so. I don't know, for me, I'm very much in the office now less than I am working events and things like that. It would probably be totally different for asking my team versus me, but it feels like Fridays... So Fridays I have dedicated to recording content, so it's almost like a day off because I realize that's the day that less people want to have meetings, that's when people don't want to really do things. People are already gearing up for the weekend. People are just like, "I just want to clean up my inbox so that when I come in on Monday, it's not completely wrecked."

Will Curran:

So I feel like a Friday would be easier. But then the question is, does that then turn Thursday into the Friday for that?

Dustin Westling:

Totally would. Yeah, we've got a few large oil and gas companies that are headquartered in Calgary that have, they do, I think it's one Friday a month they close their offices to give their employees an extra day. I think another one only does half days on Friday, so this isn't super

uncommon. And I believe for those companies it really is about work-life balance and giving their employees time to do all the things that you need to do in life.

Dustin Westling:

I often wonder, in my role I get a lot of flexibility. When I need to go to the dentist, I just make a dentist appointment and it goes on my calendar, and I don't have to worry about how I'm going to get time off or anything like that. And I often wonder how the regular working crowd get anything done when so many services are available during working hours. So, I do think that it does make sense to give your employees some time off during the work week to go and get the things that you need to get done in life done without it constantly having to come out of normal working hours, if that makes sense.

Will Curran:

Yeah, I think that there's definitely a need for people to have time to do things outside of life. It seems like more and more there's other things going on that are causing us to have less time to do other things. And it's funny, whenever you hear employees say they're stressed, it's always because, not because oh there's so much going on at work, it's work plus everything else going on in their lives, and they feel like, wow, I just never have time to do this.

Will Curran:

I think it's interesting enough. I'm curious to know what your thoughts are. So at Endless, we have an unlimited vacation policy, which is take time off whenever you need it basically. Like, look, we hire responsible people. We trust that you're not going to abuse it. And if you need to take some time off, take it off. No questions asked, just let everyone know you're going to take the time off, but just go ahead and do it. And what's ironic about that policy is that you find that people use it less, in fact, because they don't have a limited amount to use. It doesn't expire. People tend to actually take less vacations, which is really, really interesting.

Dustin Westling:

Yeah, we share a similar policy when it comes to time off, and we allow for a lot of freedom in the time that our team needs. And I'm definitely not sitting here counting hours and fussing about time people come in and what time they go home, and there's a level of trust that needs to be there that you understand what needs to get done and that you're going to do it. And I also know and respect the fact that the work doesn't stop because it's 5:00, and so many of our team are activating on site, they're working from home, they're responding to clients after hours. So in exchange for that, I believe in flexibility, and I think trust is the most important thing there to say you take care of your life, and whatever you need to do, you make sure that everything that you're responsible for is taken care of and go and do and you don't have to check in with me every day to tell me what appointment you have because I just probably wouldn't remember anyway.

Dustin Westling:

Yeah, no, I agree with you. I think that one of the great things about having a smaller business is that you don't need so much structure, and I have lots of friends that work regular corporate jobs, and they long for the opportunity to take an extra long weekend or have more time. And often the working stiffs that are my friends, they say, "Oh, it must be so nice to be able to go where you want to go and do what you want to do." And sometimes I'm like, "Well, yeah, I kind of have to earn that," but I'm also like, "No, it is really nice." And that's not just for me.

Dustin Westling:

I think that because in so many parts of this industry, you have to give so much extra time and so much time outside of normal working hours, that I think traditionally there is a lot more flexibility and having an industry that, at least for us and a lot of people I know, it comes in waves and seasons. You get really busy times where it's 1960s work weeks.

Will Curran:

1860s.

Dustin Westling:

1860s, sorry. 1860s work weeks, and then you get times where you can come to work at 10:00 or 11:00 or take a half a day, or the dreaded work from home. So yeah, so being able to be flexible with that has been really important.

Will Curran:

I think you bring up a good point. Yeah, definitely I feel the same way. It's waves. It's always interesting whenever you talk to people outside the industry like, "Oh wow, you've been really busy. Oh man." Obviously go back to that. If you haven't listened to the Why Event Professionals Need to Stop Using the Word Busy conversation that we had, that definitely go listen to that right after this because you'll love that episode. But I think definitely it's really interesting because sometimes I'll just be like, "Yeah, actually it's really quiet right now. I have nothing really going on." But then sometimes you blink and you're like, "It's November already? What happened?"

Will Curran:

So yeah, very, very interesting. I definitely, so I think we probably can preach on this forest one day off per week extra that they did where you have to take it versus being an optional vacation, but what's interesting about this article as well, is I think it's important for us to note, and I don't think we'll dive too much into it because maybe we can talk about whether we'd like it or not in future episodes, but this is where the clickbait comes in is that they say they improved productivity by 40%, but if you click on the original press release from Microsoft in Japan, and granted, I apologize. I had to use a Google Translate, so it seems like it did a pretty good job, but they had multiple things that they rolled out as part of this, what they're describing as a four days a week trial and working in a shorter time, a more efficient time. So they did a couple other things too, which I know a lot of people there.

Will Curran:

So first one is, and I'm curious your thoughts on it, it says that instead of making the standard for meetings be an hour, they're 30 minutes. It says but we start in 30 minutes and of course, depending on the content of the meeting, number of participants, 30 minutes may not be sufficient, but changing to set to 30 rather to set 60 instead of set 30, it helped reform. It just made meetings shorter. Have you felt like the same thing as well? Like 30 minutes meetings way more productive.

Dustin Westling:

Yeah they can be. I think that when you have an hour, you use an hour. And when you have 30 minutes, you use 30 minutes. So many of the meetings I'm in could be done in 10 minutes if everybody came to the table organized and ready, and myself included in that. There's definitely, as we were reading this before recording, I was thinking about just that, about how to cut down meeting times. And I know that my team and myself, we sit through so many meetings. Every stage of the process with our clients is just meeting after meeting after meeting.

Dustin Westling:

One of the things that really drags me down is travel time to meetings. And I'm lucky because I live in a city that is really easy to get around. Most of my clients are downtown so it's easy to deal with, but all it takes is a couple of meetings outside of the office to burn an entire day, and you're on the go. And that can become really taxing, so I really try and be mindful about the meetings I take in person, and when I know that my physical presence isn't needed, I will call in for a meeting.

Dustin Westling:

I use to, when I first started my business, I took every meeting and I was never the person to say that I couldn't make it, so I would move everything around all the time to make meetings work. Ten years in, I'm a bit more vocal now to be like, "That doesn't work for me." It's like yes, I know I'm often the supplier at the table and that's a whole other episode of ranting, but it doesn't work for me. And there needs to be another way. Oftentimes, I find that, and I love all my clients that may be listening to this, I oftentimes find myself sitting in meetings that don't need to have everybody at the table that's there.

Dustin Westling:

Yeah, so being a whole lot more mindful, and more and more, getting people to come to me, which I know is just taking that travel issue and putting on somebody else, but. We've adopted a couple things in our office to create some efficiency. One of them is our key partners that we work with a lot, we set up standing meetings so that they will come to our office for however long, but you know every Monday our floral designer is coming in. She comes in at 3:00. She works from our co-work space for an hour or two, and everybody knows that that's when she's coming in. So they don't have to fuss about a lot of emails back and forth. They don't need to worry about booking a meeting with her or a phone call with her. They know that on Monday

they can talk about it then. So it creates a lot of efficiency and cuts down on those communications because you just know that she's going to be there.

Dustin Westling:

And then on the flip side, we do a similar thing with some bigger key clients where we have two days a week that somebody will go and actually work from their office half days, and that is when everybody on those teams can do the same thing with us and sit down and hash out whatever needs to be done without having to book all of the separate meetings that take up everybody's days.

Will Curran:

I think that's a lot of really cool ideas, I think, definitely just came out of what you said. The idea of doing a standing chance to work because honestly, a lot of times it's because it's external people that you're having these meetings with too. But I think the interesting thing you said as well is that if you don't need to physically be there, asking if you can call in.

Will Curran:

What's interesting is there's been a side benefit for me being 100% remote is that literally it's actually the rarity that I have in-person meetings. In fact, I'm having a coffee with a client today. I think this is my first coffee, other than maybe flying into a city, "Hey I'm in town, let's have coffee," or "Hey, I'm going to fly there to have a meeting with you," this is one of the few times I ever have an in-person meeting. And I feel like it's made me insanely more productive because the travel time is eliminated 100%. Just clicking on Zoom links is probably the travel time that I have.

Will Curran:

Granted, the thing that kind of sucks is that you tend to end up having a lot more back-to-back meetings, so you end up not having any buffer time, so you're just jumping from meeting to meeting. And I realize, whenever I don't have a buffer, honestly, the first meeting you have is completely erased from your memory because you're rewiping your brain every single time.

Dustin Westling:

It's hard to be prepared when your meeting schedule is so packed. I find that, today's a great example, where we got on a call at 8:00 AM my time and there's not a single break in my schedule until 3:00, and then I've got...

Dustin Westling:

... a quick, which is fine, no, no, it's fine. And then I've got a quick personal thing and then I've got a community review meeting for a fundraiser I'm working on, and then I go to an opening of a gallery event. And what happens when it's packed that tight is that I can't properly prepare for anything, so I'm rolling into these meetings coming in hot, and I'm trying to figure it out as I go. And that doesn't make for productive meetings. And that is when meetings get really long because I'm trying to get myself organized in the moment, whereas I do find that sometimes the

travel time is where I can reset a little bit and get on my phone, hands free of course, and download whatever it is that I was just talking about. Because like you, I will forget everything that we talked about on this podcast by midday today because there will be so much other stuff that gets packed in.

Will Curran:

Totally, totally. So, pivoting from meetings. Like these almost all could be episodes on their own, but the other one I thought was really interesting as well is they have a five-person cap on meetings. That's one of their rules, which I know ironically, this idea of smaller meetings... I don't know about you, I'm curious to know from you how many times you have meetings that have like 30-plus people in it. But I know Amazon and Jeff Bezos had this saying at Amazon that said meetings should be no bigger than the number of people who could sit around a pizza. So if you can't feed the whole entire meeting with one pizza, it's too big of a meeting. I thought that was really interesting.

Dustin Westling:

Yeah, that's tough. I sit in a lot of meetings with a lot of people in them. I think bigger meetings are okay as long as there's a hierarchy established and as long as... I'm a big fan of the people that, I don't want to say most important, but I'm a big fan of first and second chair. I think that if people need to be in the room and hear the information, they need to not be the active participants. So in my mind it's yes there's five people sitting around the pizza, but it's okay to have more people that are behind those people that are there as observers. I do find that when everybody gets an equal seat and everybody gets an equal spot at the table, that is what makes meetings drag on and on.

Dustin Westling:

So, I think less about reducing the number of people in the meetings. So obviously if people don't need to be there, don't be there, but having a really strict protocol on what it is that you're there to accomplish and who around the table needs to be there and provide input is a bit more important. We have a weekly team meeting where we review events for the next week and then touch base on the week after that. And it's a lot of people there, and every one of them needs to be there. And for me, it's more about not everybody is a participant but we work together as a team to make sure that we've dotted every I and crossed every T, and the more Is that I can put on it, the better chances are that we're going to catch something that needs to be addressed.

Dustin Westling:

Would it be faster if there was less people? Yeah, of course, but there's a certain amount of experience that I want around that table to make sure that everybody's hearing the same information. I do think there's some validity in that. And I think in maybe a more structured environment like Microsoft, they probably have a lot more information on the types of meetings they're having. But yeah, I think some efficiency in the people that are in the meeting and then establishing, right off the bat, some hierarchy as to what you're there to achieve, who's going to participate, who leads what is really important, and good meeting management and not letting

meetings go off track. I find that is more of the issue where whoever's moderating the meeting is not taking things offline as fast as they should, and you end up spiraling down the well on topics that don't pertain to everybody. So, I'm the first one to say take it offline.

Will Curran:

Yeah, me too, me too.

Dustin Westling:

Take it offline, report back to whoever, and we don't need to talk about this here.

Will Curran:

I concur. I definitely am a fan of, "Hey guys, can you just take this offline? Okay cool, thanks." Interestingly enough too, in the blog post that Microsoft Japan, again translating Japanese using Google Translate, is that they talk also about using the optional participation feature of meetings or CCing people saying, "Look, join if you'd like," versus saying you have to. I think that's one of my favorite features of Google Calendar is now you can mark people as optional. But sometimes, I can't tell you how many times, even this week three or four invites came into me, and I said, "I know I was on the original email talking about this, but it's because the client CCed me, but do you want me on this meeting?" And a lot of them should be, "No, you don't need to be here."

Will Curran:

So I think it's using technology now to mark people as optional because we love to just fling around calendar invites now. It's kind of like the new spam of what's going on and the new BCC, I think is really, really interesting as well.

Dustin Westling:

I'm a big fan of when I drop into meetings, in my role and if I have a project manager that's working with a client and they've got a phone call booked, I will pop in for the first five minutes and do a quick level set and take the temperature, and then I'm not afraid to bow out when I'm no longer needed.

Will Curran:

Nitty gritty, yeah.

Dustin Westling:

Yes, they're having an hour long meeting, but I don't need to be there for that. And I also on the flip side, I encourage my team to do the same. So whatever the meeting is about, don't be afraid to be there for the part you need to be there for and then exit yourself out so you're not just sitting there because the meeting is in your calendar. You're there when you need to and leave when you don't need to be there anymore.

Will Curran:

This is a good episode. This one's chock-full of really good ideas from Dustin. This one's awesome. Like we were just going to talk about how productivity of cutting off a day, but unpacking some really good ideas. Honestly, I probably can use that as well. I always feel the need to stay there the entire time, but in reality it's like hey, if you can make it 15 minutes of your time, boom, bow it out.

Will Curran:

I wish there was a way to do a Google Calendar invite so it could say, well I guess you can edit your own personal calendar, so I could edit the calendar on my end to be 15 minutes, so I can book it properly. You know, that's a really good idea.

Dustin Westling:

They should do that actually. They should allow you to schedule an event in Google Calendar and assign certain times to people within that. Google, are you listening?

Will Curran:

I guess you could, in theory, do it where you just write in the description and say what times you want people to join, and then that person then can just edit their own personal calendar. Because you know how whenever you edit it and you're not the host it says oh just so you know, it's only changing on your calendar. You could almost do that as well. Hmmm, interesting.

Will Curran:

And the last one that they talk about is one of their big things that they talked through. And they talk about a bunch of other work-life balance things as well, which I think we'll save for another day, but one of the last things that they made as far as one of the rules, is the first place to collaborate is inside, obviously they're Microsoft, Microsoft Teams, which is like the equivalent of Slack or if you're using Skype for Business, basically some sort chat software.

Will Curran:

So they're saying like, "Look, use this to start the conversation. And then take it to a meeting then if you have to." And interestingly enough, I'm curious because I don't think if I know this but Dustin, do you guys use any sort of chat software over at OneWest?

Dustin Westling:

Yeah, we use the chat within Gmail a lot.

Will Curran:

Oh yeah, the Google Hangouts?

Dustin Westling:

Yeah, so we use Google Hangouts and Google Meet. I use Slack for my, I think I'm the only one in our office that uses it, but all of my communications with my team gets pushed through Slack.

Will Curran:

Oh, interesting, so your sub-set of it is in Slack.

Dustin Westling:

Yeah, it's a bit of a pain in the ass for everybody else, and Slack is more project-based, so for my team, they need to start a channel if we're working on a project of they need input from me, I find that because there are so many projects going on all the time and there's so much need for me and my input that email just doesn't work for me. It'll get buried. I've watched my email populate 50 new emails since we've been on this podcast. So in order for me to keep organized, I have my team communicate with me through Slack, and they're welcome to use it for whatever they want, but I know that we try and keep our communications all in one place so Google Hangouts and Meet is where the majority of that would go.

Dustin Westling:

I haven't really been all that pushy on how this team communicates with each other. I let them find their own groove and make sure that the resources are available for them. Something next year I think we'll, as a team, we'll figure out how do we become more efficient all the way around, but long story short, when working with me, I ask them to push it all through Slack so that I can keep it organized and then the team members that work with me directly to keep me organized, have a way to keep an eye on things as well and it's not just locked away in my email.

Will Curran:

Nice. I just wrote that down as an idea for us. Maybe a future episode is unpacking chat softwares as a whole and it's impact on productivity in the events industry as well. I'm curious to know, everybody's opinion, but our whole team is on Slack. We've been on Slack since like the beta version of it. So we use it for project management. Honestly, just to give you an idea of how in depth we are in Slack, I had an employee that I went into Grand Rapids and she lives in Grand Rapids. And I realized I never had her cell phone number.

Will Curran:

It's obviously it's in a directory. I literally looked it up in Slack. I was able to find it really quickly, but I never texted her or called her ever because we literally use Slack and Zoom so much for everything.

Dustin Westling:

Crazy.

Will Curran:

And that's not uncommon. People who like this is the main way everyone knows to communicate with each other. Which is kind of nice because if you see a Slack notification you don't want to work, you know to get rid of it. Whereas sometimes if you're melding in multiple ones, but anyways, that's probably a full topic on its own, but very, very interesting.

Will Curran:

Obviously, they want them to use their own software, dogfood it. If you haven't ever heard the term dogfood, it's the idea of using your own stuff. But yeah, very, very interesting. So yeah-

Dustin Westling:

How does one start to figure that out? So, I've figured out the way that I want to be communicated to, and I haven't put a lot of effort into how we communicate with each other as an organization. Where does one start? How did you end up on Slack, and how did you make that a priority and a part of your communications culture if you will?

Will Curran:

Oh man, so let me know if we go down too much in the rabbit hole this one, but I very much... So, for those who know know my personality style, I'm primarily interpersonal, so I really care about people and want to interact with people, but my secondary is dominance. That I have to have it my way. It's very common entrepreneurial status to do it that way. Well especially in software, it is my thing to know what's the newest, what's the thing you have to be aware of, so when I discovered Slack, we were using Google Chat inside Gmail originally.

Will Curran:

And I remember that it was so annoying anytime you had to message more than one person because it was like starting a new text thread every single time. And I remember Slack, came out and I was like this idea of chat rooms, and I grew up on chat rooms. Like IRC, internet Chat Relay, AOL chat rooms. So I was always used to the idea of having chat rooms and multiple people talking. And instantly, I wanted to experiment with it because I saw it as really good. And also saw a lot of tech companies adopting Slack. And very much our company model, we kind of look very, very outside the industry to see what are people using, for example, the remote culture, that was not an events industry thing to start off with. It was very tech oriented. What are a lot of tech companies saying, we're getting rid of our offices.

Will Curran:

So, anyways, honestly, it was primarily a dominance thing of me being like, "Look, we're going to try this out. We're going to do it. And I actually remember the push back I got in the beginning. People hated it. People really didn't like it, and this is before threads existed, before you could set different notifications for different devices. I don't think there was a snooze feature at all. A lot of what the work-life balance things that exist now and the ability to manage it properly, didn't exist. But it was just one of those things I was like, "Look, I really like the idea of us having a chat room for the operations team and a chat room for the Marketing team, and we can all jump in it as we go along.

Will Curran:

I remember in the beginning there was a ton of pushback, but it was one of those things that I... I didn't want to say like I saw the future and it was going to go to chat. I wanted it, so I pushed it

and made it happen. To people being pissed off and that's very much now everyone knows Will sometimes goes overboard on software and will for a while have too many softwares too, so there's obviously a downside to it. But then eventually I kind of realized okay, whenever you want to test a software out, you need to really vet it that it's something that's really going to improve everybody before you try to do it as well. But it was one of those things I think I was just really excited about. So yeah.

Dustin Westling:

Very cool. I'm curious now for everybody that's listening to send us a message and let us know what tools you're using for communications, and I ask that completely selfishly as I start to think about a stronger effort to be more efficient within our office, so send us a message, and I'd love to know what tools people are using and yes, Will, you use way too many softwares and way too many platforms. Every day that we record, it's always a surprise to figure out how many tabs I have to open to get into your head. It's too much.

Will Curran:

Totally, totally. Well, let's definitely do an episode on chat softwares and communication tools for teams because I think that's very, very interesting. All right, so as we kind of circle it all back, anything else on this article that you think that we need to chat about as well? And then I kind of want to slightly pivot for maybe a quick teaser for maybe a future conversation to talk about as well.

Dustin Westling:

No, I think there's some cool stuff to be learned in this. I don't know that there's a lot of people out there that are looking to reduce the number of days a week they work, but increasing the efficiency and the productivity in your office is always, always a good thing. And for event pros, being more mindful of not only your time but other people's time and really thinking through how necessary a meeting is or who's conducting that meeting, who needs to be at the table, and then showing up prepared, and there's nothing I love more than walking into a meeting and the person that's facilitating it has actually done their work and handed you exactly what you need to know about the meeting and not spending the first 30 minutes talking about the meeting you're about to have and then running out of time.

Will Curran:

Yeah, absolutely. Preach, preach. Well, I did want to pose a future thing for people to think about as well. Maybe this will become a separate episode, but as I was looking at this, I also thought about not only how does this parallel with us running event companies, but also thinking about events in general. How long is too long of an event? We talked about obviously that's why I think this article is a little bit of clickbait. It was not just only taking off a Friday, but it was also these 30 minute meetings, the five person caps. All these things put inside that probably increase their productivity, but at some point, how long is too long for an event, as well, and just something to think about.

Will Curran:

Would we have more events if more people have Fridays off? Lots of ideas to come out of it, but maybe that's a future episode. Wouldn't you agree, Dustin?

Dustin Westling:

I think so, yeah. No, I totally agree. I think that there's a lot of events that are way too long. And yeah, I think we should crack that open. Especially in the meeting and conference world, how what you're doing with people's time while they're there. And maybe it's not always about the total length of the event, but what it is that you're doing with people while they're there. Not to unpack this now but some of my best experiences attending a conference are when I can jump in and out and when there's a space created for me to do something else. And then I don't think about the time put in there because I can get all the other things that I want to get done in that day done in a productive workspace. And I think we've talked about that a couple times, but it is really important, and we focus a lot on how long things are especially in the conference world. I think the more important topic is what are you doing with people and what opportunities are you providing while they're there?

Will Curran:

I love it, I love it. All right, should we wrap this one up, Dustin?

Dustin Westling:

Yeah, let's wrap it up. Listen, half the time because we're half the crew, so sounds good to me.

Will Curran:

That's true, that's true. I mean, yeah, hopefully you guys didn't miss Thuy and Dustin, we definitely did while we were recording this. But, Dustin, thank you so much for taking the time to hang out, and you and I get to dive into some conversations about four-hour, four-hour weeks.

Dustin Westling:

Four hour work week, yes.

Will Curran:

Yeah, I know, getting into some Tim Ferriss level stuff right there. But thank you, Dustin, for joining us.

Dustin Westling:

Yeah, you've got it.

Will Curran:

All right guys, well thank you audience also. You guys, everyone tuning in right now, you guys are awesome. We're getting a lot of great feedback from you on all the episodes, and we really love hearing from you. So make sure that if you are listening right now, go and give us an email. Shoot us an email, eventbrew@helloendless.com or [#eventbrew](https://twitter.com/eventbrew). We're also all over the

interweb, so feel free to DM us or send us a Tweet or anything like that. And we always share those with the whole team because we want to share all the good feedback you guys are giving, so thank you so much.

Will Curran:

And if this is your first time ever listening to Event Brew, make sure to head over to eventbrew.com. We have all the show notes, the links to everything we shared, the original NPR article that we had on here, the original press releases from Microsoft, transcripts, also invites to our Facebook groups and all that jazz. You want to make sure that you hop on there because that's where all the good stuff is.

Will Curran:

Also, if you're listening to this on a platform you don't like, for example, you don't like Apple Podcasts and you'd rather be listening on Google Play or you'd rather listen on Spotify or let's say you found us on YouTube and you want to find how to listen to it on your favorite podcasting app, just head over to eventbrew.com. We have all the links over there, and make sure to rate and review because we need that feedback. We're a new podcast. We need people to help discover us, and it helps a ton with discoverability, so make sure to give a shout.

Will Curran:

But thanks again for listening. Everyone, you are fantastic. I hope you have an awesome day. This is half the Brew Crew, and we're out.

Dustin Westling:

Bye guys.

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