

Schachter Monthly

By Ephraim Schachter • Sep 03, 2024

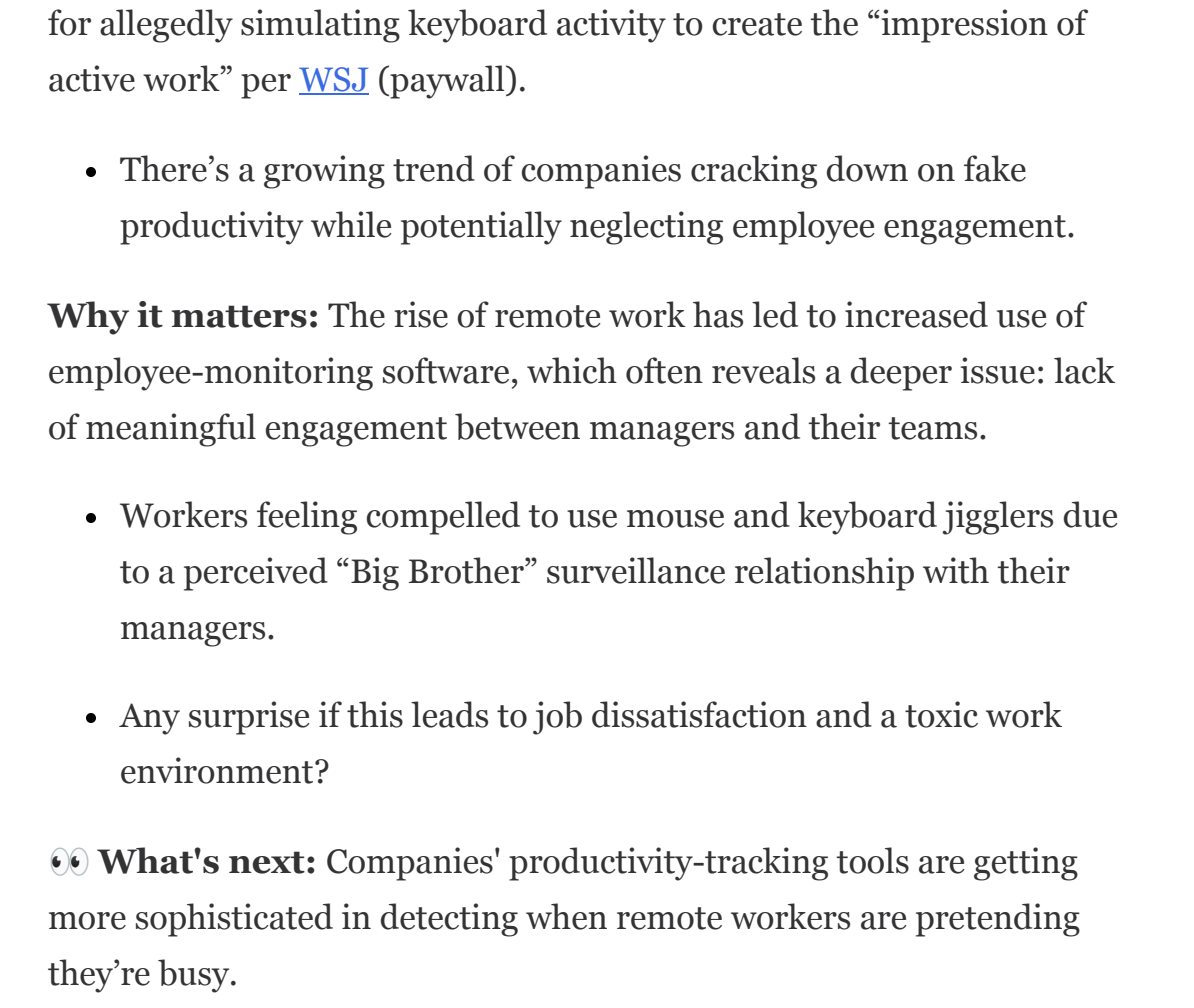
Smart Brevity® count: 4.5 mins...1204 words

🍎 **September is here.** Hope you had a replenishing summer!

🏆 **Let's be great leaders!** Here are some straightforward insights and actionable tools & tips.

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1 big thing: Managers failing to engage remote workers



📌 **Are your remote employees** “jiggling it in?”

Driving the news: Wells Fargo recently fired over a dozen employees for allegedly simulating keyboard activity to create the “impression of active work” per [WSJ](#) (paywall).

- There's a growing trend of companies cracking down on fake productivity while potentially neglecting employee engagement.

Why it matters: The rise of remote work has led to increased use of employee-monitoring software, which often reveals a deeper issue: lack of meaningful engagement between managers and their teams.

- Workers feeling compelled to use mouse and keyboard jigglers due to a perceived “Big Brother” surveillance relationship with their managers.

- Any surprise if this leads to job dissatisfaction and a toxic work environment?

🔮 **What's next:** Companies' productivity-tracking tools are getting more sophisticated in detecting when remote workers are pretending they're busy.

The state of things: Advanced monitoring tools use machine learning to detect repetitive or irregular computer activity patterns and also scrape screen images to verify genuine work activity.

The bottom line: This is a train wreck.

- Employers need to focus on meaningful engagement and trust-building rather than solely relying on surveillance.

- Engaging with workers and understanding their needs can lead to better productivity and job satisfaction.

2. Overconfidence hinders self-promoted managers



📌 **Overconfidence is to blame** for why self-promoted managers do not perform as well as those who hadn't raised their hand, per a new study cited in [Fortune](#) (paywall).

Why it matters: Traits like extraversion and self-confidence, while valued, can create blind spots for managers.

- Specifically around hubris, particularly over their social skills.

By the numbers: The study split 555 managers into two groups: self-promoted and lottery-appointed.

- 55% of self-promoted managers rated their performance as “better” or “much better” than others, but performed worse.

- Only 38% of lottery-appointed managers rated themselves similarly, yet they performed better overall.

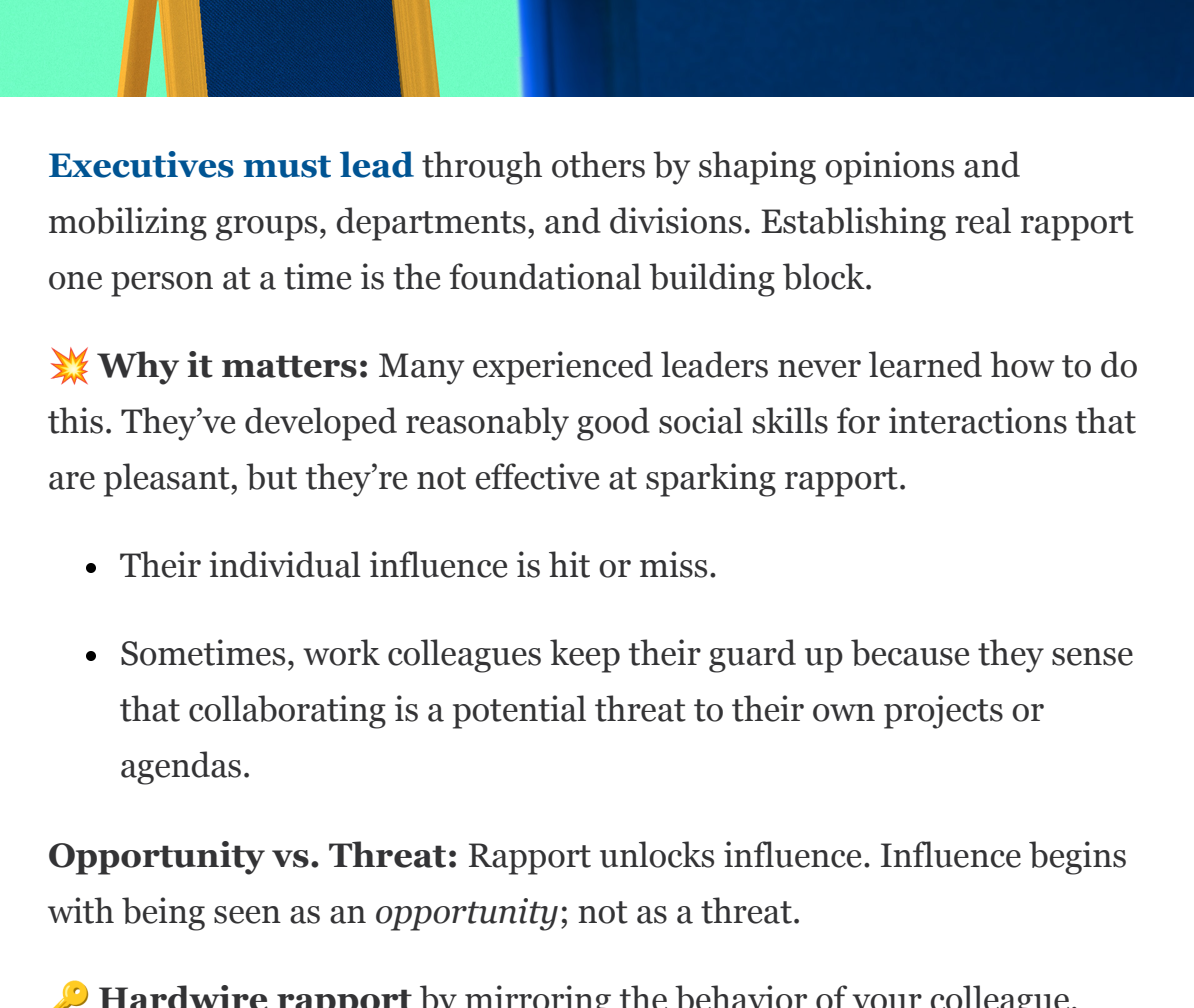
💡 **The big picture:** C-suite leaders should take a broader approach to promoting managers, considering those who haven't self-promoted.

- Potential managers should be aware of how their confidence might limit their leadership performance.

What they're saying: “I think it would be a step in the right direction if people were able to cast the net much more widely and do these broad skill assessments to see prospectively who might be good managers,” says Ben Weidmann, director of research at Harvard Kennedy School's Skills Lab.

- **Nota bene:** Weidmann emphasizes the need to seek individuals with strong economic decision-making skills.

3. Recognizing team dysfunction patterns



Three common patterns of dysfunction often cause leadership teams to fail, per new [HBR research](#) including interviews with over 100 CEOs and senior execs.

📌 **Why it matters:** Recognizing these patterns can help CEOs diagnose and address issues that hinder organizational success, strategy execution, and morale and prevent long-term damage and improve team performance.

The big picture: The three patterns identified are Shark Tanks, Petting Zoos, and Mediocracies.

1. **Shark Tanks:** Marked by excessive competition and infighting, where decisions are made through power struggles, and personal agendas trump collective goals.

2. **Petting Zoos:** Characterized by overemphasis on collaboration and conflict avoidance, leading to unchallenged ideas and ineffective decision-making.

3. **Mediocracies:** Occur when neither competition nor collaboration is emphasized, resulting in unmotivated team members who fail to drive performance or create synergies.

📌 **Details:** The causes of these dysfunctions include:

- **Shark Tanks:** Often result from a lack of clear direction or boundaries set by the CEO.

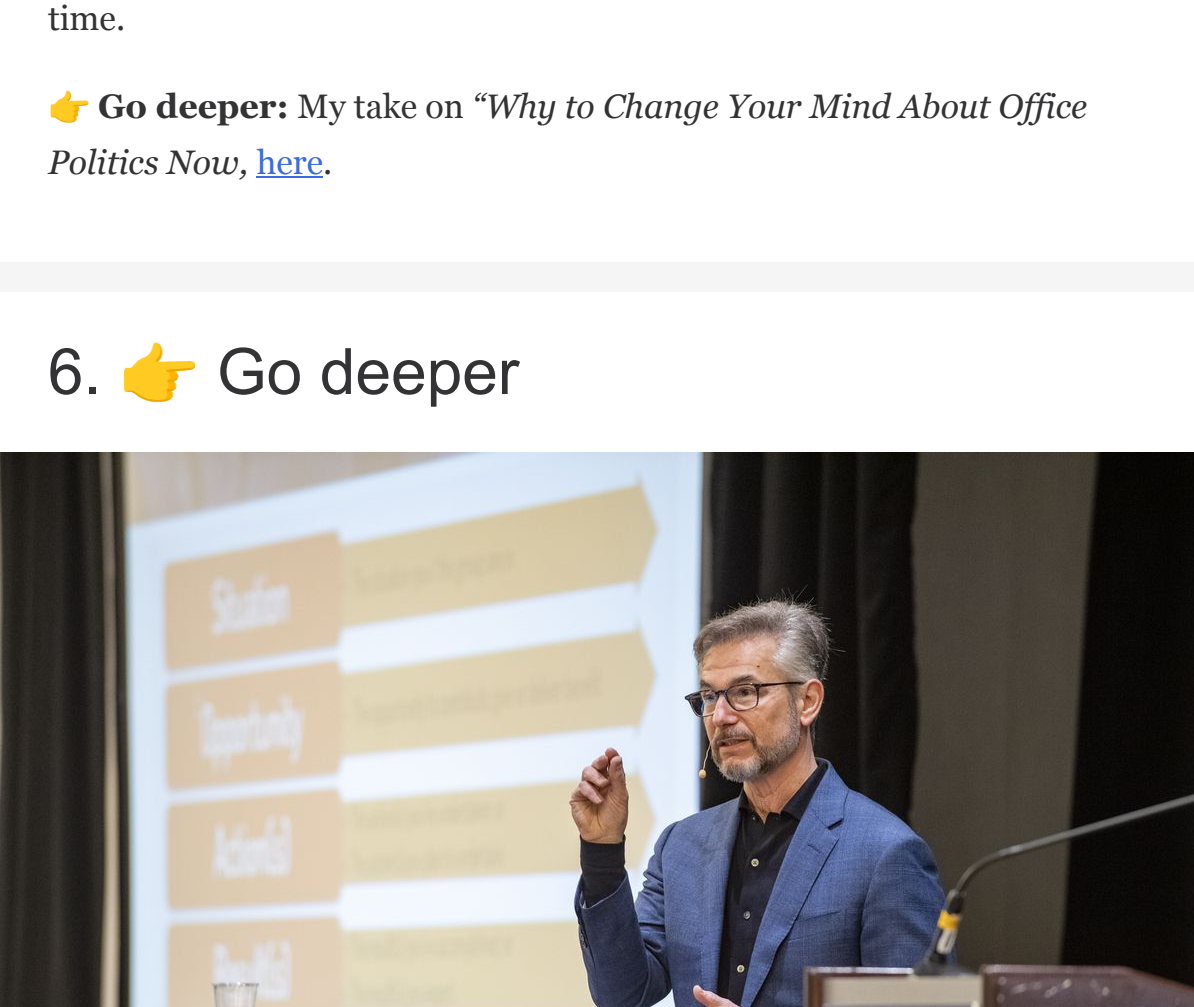
- **Petting Zoos:** Can emerge when there's too much emphasis on collaboration without healthy debate.

- **Mediocracies:** May arise from complacency after long periods of success or failure to adapt to changing situations.

What's next: CEOs and executives should use these dysfunction patterns as a diagnostic tool to:

- Identify signs of dysfunction early.
- Understand the root causes of team issues.
- Carry out targeted strategies to foster high performance and alignment within the leadership team.

4. September pro tip: Hardwiring personal rapport



Executives must lead through others by shaping opinions and mobilizing groups, departments, and divisions. Establishing real rapport one person at a time is the foundational building block.

🌟 **Why it matters:** Many experienced leaders never learned how to do this. They've developed reasonably good social skills for interactions that are pleasant, but they're not effective at sparking rapport.

- Their individual influence is hit or miss.
- Sometimes, work colleagues keep their guard up because they sense that collaborating is a potential threat to their own projects or agendas.

Opportunity vs. Threat: Rapport unlocks influence. Influence begins with being seen as an *opportunity*; not as a threat.

🔗 **Hardwire rapport** by mirroring the behavior of your colleague. This is long proven to establish rapport, independent of cognition or persuasion.

- At an unconscious neurological level both parties experience a relationship that feels like it's in flow and highly trusting. Really!

🕒 **Behaviors to mirror** fall into three buckets. Sync up with these categories:

1. **Their look:** take on your colleague's posture, position and breathing.

2. **Their sound:** calibrate to their volume level, speed of speech and amount.

3. **Their content:** find opportunities to affirm words or phrases they suffuse with meaning, and their degree of directness.

The bottom line: Be attentive to them. You'll know if you're in sync.

5. Career Corner: Unlocking senior promotions with relationships

There are few things more disheartening than watching a high-achieving client unknowingly sabotage their senior-level promotion aspirations.

Why it matters: Promotions from SVP to EVP can mean significant emotional and financial benefits, often worth \$50,000 to \$200,000 in extra compensation the first year alone. Over a career, this could amount to millions.

- Missing out on such opportunities can lead to frustration and a sense of underachievement.

Stop blaming politics: The major career-limiting infraction is avoiding office politics, which is really about relationships. Building strong relationships in any organization is crucial for advancement.

- Viewing it as “playing politics” is self-indulgent and counterproductive.

👉 **What's next:** Shift your mindset to understand the value of relationship-building.

- Map your organization's context and people.
- Develop empathy-based profiles of colleagues.
- Form mutually satisfying relationships.
- Pursue desirable assignments.

The bottom line: Stop blaming office politics and focus on strategic relationship management to achieve the promotion you deserve. It's your time.

👉 **Go deeper:** My take on “*Why to Change Your Mind About Office Politics Now*,” [here](#).

6. 🙌 Go deeper

Photo by: Randy Belice

Ephraim Schachter is an award-winning C-Suite Coach and Leadership Strategist. He helps organizations thrive through disruption by developing their leaders' capabilities to accelerate trust, navigate obstacles and communicate influentially. These skills have never been more in demand than in the evolving workplace with its growing disaffection with traditional management practices. Ephraim is a trusted expert and thought partner known for strategic, insightful and practical problem-solving.

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💡 **Parting wisdom:** “*What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.*” Pericles

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