

Intro ([00:01](#)):

Welcome to the Workplace Forward Podcast with your host, executive coach, Tegan Trovato, founder and CEO of Bright Arrow Coaching. Are you a perpetually busy, always overstretched leader or executive who feels there's never time to keep up with leadership trends in an always changing landscape, much less self care? Workplace Forward will help you overcome both challenges and gain peace of mind. Through Tegan's conversations with executives, experts, authors, and innovators about their leadership journeys, you'll get quick hits of two things you need the most: essential insights to help navigate the future workplace and best practices on the more human side of leadership so you're empowered to take care of yourself while leading others. Enjoy some well deserved time for yourself to learn and recharge. Let's get started with today's guest. Tegan, take it away.

Tegan Trovato ([00:53](#)):

Elaine Boltz has served as Crocs' executive vice president, chief operations and transformation officer since March of 2020. She has over a decade of strategic and operating responsibility in retail, omnichannel and online businesses. Prior to joining Crocs, Elaine served as president of TJX Digital, a standalone operating division of TJX Companies, where she launched and built TJX's e-commerce business and oversaw the acquisition of Sierra Trading Post.

Tegan Trovato ([01:24](#)):

Prior to TJX, she led Chico's FAS direct to consumer businesses, including e-commerce, catalogs, and omnichannel initiatives for the company's portfolio of brands. Elaine also served as chief marketing and strategy officer at Ann Inc. Before her operating roles in these companies, Elaine was a senior principal at BCG, focused in the consumer and retail sectors. Her corporate board experience includes Brinker international, Inc., who's the global owner of Chili's and Maggiano's restaurants, which is listed on the New York Stock Exchange. She also serves on the board of Wyman Products, a private equity backed consumer products company. Elaine received her bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania and her masters of business administration from Harvard University. And we're so pleased to get to hear her leadership experiences today on the podcast. Elaine, welcome to the podcast.

Elaine Boltz ([02:14](#)):

Well, thanks, Tegan. It's nice to be here.

Tegan Trovato ([02:17](#)):

I want to dive right in. You've had a really interesting leadership journey, certainly leading up to Crocs, very much so while at Crocs. But how would you say that your leadership's evolved specifically over the last couple of years, and what's prompted that change for you?

Elaine Boltz ([02:32](#)):

I think my leadership is ever evolving and kind of keeps changing. The last two years, both were punctuated by the pandemic as well as me joining Crocs. So I actually started my role at Crocs as the chief operating and transformation officer the same week the pandemic started and [crosstalk 00:02:53]

Tegan Trovato ([02:52](#)):

No pressure.

Elaine Boltz ([02:54](#)):

Right. Starting a brand new job in a brand new role. And I think I'm still kind of processing what these last two years have meant and what I've been learning. I think there's a degree of emotional safety that the folks that work for me and that I work with ... We're all in much more stressful times that I think we've really dealt with in an elongated period. And so that has been an important part of how I think about leadership. There's just a massive amount of uncertainty out there. I think we're all trying to deal with that, and so kind of helping my team deal with that. Trying to figure out how I deal with that, and how we as a leadership team here at Crocs deal with that has been a big part of the last two years. And I think what's been interesting for me is we've made some pretty bold moves over the last couple of years at Crocs, and it's been teaching me about the impact of really seeing opportunities in difficult moments and trying to figure out how you really deal with them in the best way possible. So it's been unlike any other time in my career.

Tegan Trovato ([04:01](#)):

For sure.

Elaine Boltz ([04:01](#)):

For sure.

Tegan Trovato ([04:04](#)):

You mentioned a couple things I want to tease apart a little with you. One is you mentioned the emotional component, the emotional safety that you and your team have co-created. And at one point before we met today, in a previous meeting, you mentioned that, related to the emotional, the proverbial water cooler is gone because of the pandemic. And you said how you lead and engaged teams has to be different. So what would you describe as being different as a result of that water cooler being gone?

Elaine Boltz ([04:33](#)):

You know, I think when you're working side by side with people, right, you get to know them a lot faster and kind of a lot more easily. You establish a level of trust, because you're running into each other in the hallways and you're shooting the breeze before meetings. What's been interesting about this period is I spent my first four or five months at the company not having moved yet out here, working from my dining room with a laptop set up, and working with people around the world in a similar situation. We were going from sort of Teams meeting to Teams meeting to Zoom meeting without that real interaction. So trying to figure out how to build trust during that, setting up actual times where I could just talk to people one on one, even if it was just through a video screen and wasn't with an objective meeting became important.

Elaine Boltz ([05:20](#)):

So I think the distance made it a little bit more difficult. I think the lack of being in person made it more difficult, but I was actually pretty happy to find that, as long as you were making time to have those deeper conversations, even if they were on video, we were able to build trust. I think we increased the number of team meetings that we had so that we were together more and wrestling through decisions more together. That really, I think, made a difference. So it's been an adjustment, but I think we found our way there in a really good way.

Tegan Trovato ([05:56](#)):

You shared with me also that, when you took on the role with Crocs, your first week was when North America and the EU had their first week of shutdown, and your job was to oversee supply chain, IT. What other areas were you overseeing?

Elaine Boltz ([06:12](#)):

So I oversee supply chain, IT, planning and inventory management and a transformation team that actually oversees large change projects in the company. The interesting thing about this role is I had never really worked in any of those areas before. So I spent my career ... And I've been in a lot of changes in terms of the types of jobs I've had, in trying new things. I've always had a bit more of a general manager role, which means that I haven't really come up through any function, but I've been overseeing different things. And this was really very new. It was applying a lot of transformation and change, which is something that has been a thread through my career, but in areas I didn't know very well [crosstalk 00:06:54]

Tegan Trovato ([06:54](#)):

Right, during a time of global supply chain crisis, might I emphasize for listeners.

Elaine Boltz ([07:00](#)):

I didn't know that when I signed up for this. That was a surprise. It was it's it was an incredible time. All of a sudden, we were trying to figure out ... We didn't know what was going to happen. We know stores were closed. We had to pivot very quickly to relying on digital. We had goods in factories we didn't know if we needed anymore. We had goods in inventory we didn't know how we were going to be able to sell. And so it was a really, ... Crocs has had such success since then that it's amazing to think back on that time where we don't know what's going to happen next. I remember after the first week with my team, we'd met as an executive group and put together a plan of action, which was sort of an offensive plan and a defensive plan. And how are we going to deal with this pandemic? And I went back to my team and I said, okay, we want to cut back on our inventory and cancel orders, and we want to make sure we're lean and mean going into this. And I said to them, "So I'm new to this. How exactly do we shut down a supply chain?" And I think the [crosstalk 00:08:03]

Tegan Trovato ([08:04](#)):

The gravity of that question is not lost on me.

Elaine Boltz ([08:05](#)):

The general response was, "We don't know. We've never done that before. No one's shut down supply chains." But it was a great answer on their part, and I'm happy I asked the question because I think it immediately meant we were all at the same place, that I'm lucky to work with a team of people who really know their areas extraordinarily well. I'm coming at it from a very different perspective, and realizing that we were all in uncharted territory together was actually kind of a great way to start things off and say, okay, all right, let's just start from scratch. Let's pull out a white sheet of paper. Let's figure out what we need to figure out, and let's start making some decisions. It was an incredibly unique moment. I'll never forget it, but I was incredibly bonding. I mean, what a great way to kind of get together with your team. A crisis really accelerates how much you come together in a lot of ways.

Tegan Trovato ([08:57](#)):

It does. I'll share ... At Bright Arrow, we coach a lot of leadership teams, and where we often see leadership teams go south is when there is this need for someone in the room to have the answer already. And what we've noticed through the pandemic was that many leadership teams were very much in the space you're talking about. And the ones who have had just insane success were the ones that were able to throw up their hands and go, "No idea. We have no idea. We have never seen this," and to be able to just step into that as you describe, that white space or the white piece of paper. So applause to you and the team, because it takes a lot to be able to say that, especially when our amygdalas are hijacked and we're scared and we don't want to get it wrong. And the potential as a new leader to go that route, to prove like that you were the right choice early on, it's amazing your ability to stay poised and overcome that. So I just want to kind of highlight that.

Tegan Trovato ([09:50](#)):

There were two pieces when I asked you earlier about where you felt you were stretching and where your leadership prowess has really been exercised over the last couple of years, and you said there were two places, and we'll unpack both. One you said was managing risk, and the other is leading systems. I cannot wait to hear more about both. So let's start with the managing risk component and hear your take on not just the stretch you experienced, but also what you learned and what you now know as a result of the last couple of years.

Elaine Boltz ([10:21](#)):

I think it's interesting. I spent a good part of my career in the digital world running digital businesses within larger companies prior to joining Crocs, and so I was pretty comfortable with moving quickly and being agile and making fast decisions and reading data. And it wasn't really, I think, until I oversaw a supply chain that was in a historical level of disruption that I realized how much of this role now is about managing risk. It's the risk of not having goods. It's the risk of not being able to get things across the ocean. It's the risk of what's going to happen at the ports, but it's also the risk at a time of just enormous growth here at Crocs. How do I scale up during that? How do I get enough supply to meet the demand? We grew 67% last year. It was just absolutely remarkable, and so there was this constant balance of taking risks to get enough supply to meet the demand and managing those risks to be able to get them in, and not building too much capacity and going too far. It's a constant balancing in this role, and I think we're constantly struggling with it.

Elaine Boltz ([11:34](#)):

I think, what the team has been really good at thinking about is how do we manage flexibility. How do we give ourselves the most amount of options possible? And I think the other part of managing risk that has been super helpful is the team here has been really good about facing reality. As I've talked to peers in this industry and other industries, there's a real desire to want to wait and see. The world changes. You hear a bad thing. Let's wait and see how it develops.

Elaine Boltz ([12:02](#)):

I think what we've done at Crocs, and it's been really terrific to be a part of it, is to say, listen, let's play this out in our minds. Let's take a look at the reality of what it is. If we have a percentage of our factories in Vietnam, Vietnam shut down for three months last year. As opposed to going, well, let's see if it gets better, we kind of said, all right, it is what it is. Let's make some decisions, and let's just go, and if we have to change those later, we'll change them later. I think similar to a number of the different changes

of the pandemic, it's been, let's face the reality and let's understand the risks that we're facing, and let's make a call. And if we're wrong, we'll figure it out. But let's at least move forward.

Elaine Boltz ([12:41](#)):

So I think that's been the other big piece of overseeing a global supply chain is thinking a little bit less about just managing a team or a person and more about, how are we setting up the right ways of looking across the whole almost global architecture of how our business runs to understand how to pull the right levers to encourage people to act the right way? So how do I set up the best information possible? How do I think about the processes that I establish? And we're thinking this through kind of across all of the areas that I'm overseeing right now. How do we solve the right processes and behaviors for folks and expectations so that, when chaos happens, we're better able to deal with it? Because chaos is not everywhere. There are some things that we can rely on.

Elaine Boltz ([13:27](#)):

We're particularly working in this time when inventory is ... We need a lot of units to sell. It's sometimes hard to get. And so we're talking a lot about ... So what processes do we put in place around forecasting and managing our risks and making shifts as we're in the midst of sales? And so thinking not just about the impact of that team or that function, but really across the entire stream of the company, from our sales teams and our design teams all the way through the supply chain to how our customers will feel and our ability to service them. So I think this role has really required an ability to think about all of the pieces and how they come together, versus making change to one piece.

Tegan Trovato ([14:14](#)):

Absolutely. And as you share that, what comes up for me almost visually is we have, certainly, through this pandemic become much more conscious as leaders about how interconnected everything is, everything socially, economically, politically. I mean, it's more of a fabric than it's ever been, or at least our awareness of that is now there. So I just imagine, as you've described what you're leading at Crocs, that, of course, what you're doing has to mirror what's going on in the broader environment. And then that trickles down into the company, as you mentioned, that your system that you're leading is supply chain, but my goodness is it connected to all the other systems inside of Crocs.

Elaine Boltz ([14:55](#)):

Absolutely true. What's interesting, Crocs is an incredibly global company. We do a significant amount of sales around the world. There's not too many places we don't touch in some way. And so the interconnectedness of our sales, of our supply chain, as a global leadership team, that has to come together and sort of figure out how the pieces come together. It's been incredibly important to keep that really healthy and alive and keep the communication flowing. It's been interesting diving into operations and supply chain during this time of disruption because you really do realize how connected we are globally, not just Crocs, but just as a people, what we rely on from other places in the world. And so this idea of looking as a global system, I don't know how else we would be able to manage that, but it adds in a tremendous amount of complexity, and during these last two years, a tremendous amount of uncertainty.

Tegan Trovato ([15:53](#)):

Softball question for you, Elaine, on systems. I imagine that most of the leaders that work for you very much think in systems already just by the nature of supply chain and IT, but I would assume not

everyone around us does. So I'm curious how you've impressed upon the broader leadership ecosystem how to think in terms of systems.

Elaine Boltz ([16:19](#)):

I'm fortunate in that Crocs has got really, I think, one of the more sophisticated and certainly smartest kind of leadership teams I've worked with. And so I've got so much respect for my peers across the company, and I think that Crocs is very much managed as a system. We think cross functionally, I think more so than a lot of other companies that I have worked at, where it's much more kind of functional and fiefdom oriented. I'm really fortunate that the president of Crocs is as interested in the supply chain and what we're doing there as she is in kind of driving sales and creating really amazing products for this brand.

Elaine Boltz ([16:56](#)):

I think because the leadership team is so interconnected, more so than most places ... So I would say I haven't had to teach that. I've really been a beneficiary of kind of what I come into here with a team that really gets how these systems connect together. And I think that reflects in how we work with each other. It's pretty candid, open conversations, I think, most people are willing to kind of just open the book up and kind of say, here's what we're dealing with, and here's the pros and the cons. And I think we've all got a lot of respect for what each of us is bringing to the table, and I think it makes it easier. And so I think the lens here is much more cross-functional and systemic than I think a lot of other places I've worked. And I think that's a big part of the success is that we're thinking about the whole piece together.

Tegan Trovato ([17:41](#)):

That makes a lot of sense. A word you used, or a phrase, that the work is so interesting because of that. I just want to pull that one sentence out and offer that up to our listeners because it is true that many, many organizations, our executives and leaders still stay very functional focused. It's so hard. And top requests from CEOs we work with is, "Help my team think more about the enterprise, to have them step out of the functional view even more," and what I love about offering up from your answer is, not only is that just good for the organization, but personally satisfying in that the work is more interesting that way. So thank you for sort of impressing that on listeners.

Elaine Boltz ([18:20](#)):

I'd say interesting and supportive. I'm not alone in thinking about these challenges around the world. I've got an incredible team of peers who are part of that, so it makes a big difference.

Tegan Trovato ([18:29](#)):

It sure does. So you have clearly led through in an unusual amount of ambiguity, as many of our leader listeners have as well. But I'm curious for you what the crucible leadership experiences were prior to this that have helped ready you for what you've been leading the last couple of years and today.

Elaine Boltz ([18:51](#)):

One of the things that has definitely helped is my career has taken a lot of unusual shifts and turns. I mentioned I haven't come up through a single function. I started out my career in sort of the strategy world and then shifted into marketing and then shifted into digital retailing. And now I have shifted again into this operations, supply chain, technology world. And I think that going through a number of

those shifts over time and taking on things where I frankly was coming into something not knowing what I was doing has been an enormous amount of help to getting through this time period. We talk about the need to really build confidence in general, as an executive, putting yourself in situations where you're very uncomfortable and where you actually don't know what you're doing. And it's a little scary, but kind of intriguing.

Tegan Trovato ([19:47](#)):

So, Elaine, I just want to recap what you just shared and have you expand on this a little more, because I think it's so important. You mentioned there is a lot of conversation in the executive and leadership space around, how do we build confidence? And you're sharing that your confidence has come from taking on those engagements and assignments over the years where, quote, unquote, you really had no idea what you were doing. And I might be paraphrasing a little. Tell us more about how that's come into play today for you.

Elaine Boltz ([20:17](#)):

I think, having roles where I've jumped into ... And I've had the fear of jumping into areas where I'm new and I need to understand and I need to learn quickly, and I don't know if I'm going to be able to figure something out or if it will be successful, I think does develop this kind of muscle for how to deal with some of the uncertainty that is out there so much today. I think I've grown a little more comfortable getting uncomfortable as a result, jumping into new things, having to learn about it, not really having it make sense, feeling the feeling of being out of my element and not really understanding everything that's going on, but having to lead it.

Elaine Boltz ([21:01](#)):

I remember when I first started working in digital businesses, there was a lot of it that came as second nature to me, but the technology didn't. And I tried to ignore it a little bit as a leader and figure, well, I've got people who can figure that out. And then I realized I have to actually learn it. If I'm going to be in this business, I have to learn this piece, and had to throw myself in and get better educated about it.

Elaine Boltz ([21:23](#)):

And so, when it came to Crocs and I was in this new role, I knew that there were parts of things that I did have a certain skill set on, change and transformation and driving corporate wide revolutions, if not evolutions. It's something that I've kind of done before, but doing it within operations and IT and within supply chain, those were new. And then of course the pandemic was new, and then, of course, factories shutting down was new. We're dealing with how do you manage around a war for the first time in my work environment. And I think you still feel like, gosh, how am I going to deal with this? But I think you build this confidence of, listen, I've been in this place before, and I've figured it out, and I've succeeded. And you also build the confidence over time of, I've been in this place before. I thought I figured it out. I didn't succeed, and it didn't kill me.

Tegan Trovato ([22:25](#)):

Muscles and callouses all at the same time.

Elaine Boltz ([22:27](#)):

Exactly. And so I think that applies to this world that we're in today. And I think certainly, I think, for kind of the generation of people coming up during this time today, I think they're going to develop that even

better and stronger as we go forward. They'll be a bit more used to living in this ever changing environment where it's much more unpredictable. We got used to change during the digital kind of evolution, but this is a level of unpredictability that I think we haven't really seen before. And I think as difficult as it is, I think those are great muscles to build.

Tegan Trovato ([23:04](#)):

I'm going to reflect back a few things, because this was really juicy, this whole scenario, from a talent development and talent acquisition perspective and leadership development perspective. So one of the things that stood out for me is, when we have that feeling as leaders like, oh my God, I've never done this before, we could reframe that as we know that's the hallmark of a big career move, instead of just being afraid of it. That is truly what it looks like to step into something big.

Tegan Trovato ([23:34](#)):

The second piece that stood out for me when we think about talent acquisition is ... And kudos to Crocs on this. But also, anyone listening, as we think about who we're putting in our leadership roles. If we bring someone in who's done the exact work, that's probably a lateral move, and that also signals, if we bring someone in who's not done the work before, our unique capability and talent to identify capability and competency over just hiring for experience, and that is not easy. That's actually very sophisticated recruiting work. So I just want to call that out, and I have to imagine then that some of that's cascading in your team where you're giving other people those opportunities.

Elaine Boltz ([24:14](#)):

Absolutely. I think, we've been in such an incredible time of growth, and I do think that we think a lot about folks who are skilled at what they do, but also folks who are just really good leaders and kind of understand the environment that we're in. Crocs is an amazingly innovative company, and fortunately landed on the Fast Company list for a while and have had incredible designs and collaborations and ways of doing marketing and business that I think have been really unique. And so also finding people who have that muscle, who know how to innovate, who know how to think differently. If it's in footwear, great. If not, that's okay too. But how do we think about those core capabilities that go beyond skill sets that are very transferable and that can often I think really excite an organization and bring different ways of thinking about things?

Tegan Trovato ([25:04](#)):

I want to keep following this chain a little about Crocs, because I've heard that the philosophy there is come as you are and that you all take that very seriously. So I'd love to learn more about, what does that really look like in practice? Because it feels very aspirational from a corporate culture perspective for most of us when we hear that. But I am clear from talking with you and others at Crocs that this is the real deal. So how do you live it?

Elaine Boltz ([25:31](#)):

Yeah, it's interesting. So come as you are is really, as a culture, actually came out of a lot of the branding work that we did several years ago as Crocs was reinventing its brand and its business. And I think we realized that the Crocs shoe can be very polarizing. Some people love it, some people hate it. Along the lines of kind of facing reality, we said, well, let's appreciate that for what it is. Some people love us. Some people hate it. It's okay if it's polarizing. Come as you are to Crocs. And I think we feel that way about the brand and the product, and I think that's become a really key element of the culture as well. I

think, for me, coming in relatively new, over the last couple of years, I've been kind of surprised by it. When I heard it during the recruiting process, I kind of did the eye roll, yeah, it's a really nice phrase.

Elaine Boltz ([26:23](#)):

But I have really found that this place is super inclusive and accepting and really wants you to bring your authentic self and your opinions and your thoughts and your perspective to the business and to the team. And I think what's been interesting for me during such a time of volatility and uncertainty ... And frankly, it's just been difficult for all of us individually over this pandemic time. The world keeps changing. There's a certain amount of fear where we're disinfecting our groceries, where it's just been a crazy, crazy amount of time. And kind of in the midst of all of that, to feel like you can show up just as yourself, that you're not putting on a different identity, that you don't have to go into work and kind of suit up emotionally, I think has really made it a lot easier for us to cut to the chase, to get to work, to kind of band together a little bit more easily. When I started my career, we used to tell women going into business how to be, how to act, how to [crosstalk 00:27:21]

Tegan Trovato ([27:21](#)):

Yes, we did, and sometimes still do, unfortunately.

Elaine Boltz ([27:27](#)):

And I spent the early part of my career really being conscious of how I showed up at work in a very big way. And I think being at a place where I can walk in and feel comfortable being myself and bringing my humor and bringing my good days and bad days and bringing my opinions and perspectives to the table and feeling comfortable around people who also feel comfortable themselves really makes an enormous difference. And I think it's been a huge benefit during this time. We talk about comfort a lot because of course, we try to really put as much comfort as possible into our shoes. So we want everyone to be comfortable in their own shoes. And this come as you are idea, I can really feel it in the culture. We really kind of push it. I think it's made a big difference to our ability to being able to work together these last few years.

Tegan Trovato ([28:19](#)):

So speaking of push it, push you a little more on, what are the specifics that you think leaders are doing, or not just leaders, but the broader organization that would signal it's safe to come as you are? So I ask the question, but then to give an example, when you were talking, I imagine that means we might run our meetings a certain way, or maybe we do innovation sessions before certain things. What are the things that signal like you are welcome to bring your ideas, you're welcome to bring your authentic self?

Elaine Boltz ([28:48](#)):

Certainly I think creativity runs through the organization. What I appreciate about this is we tend not to have massive, oversized meetings. We like to keep them small. I think that enables you to be a bit more open, when there's not such an audience. I think candor and really being kind of truthful and honest about what's working and what's not working, I think, helps dramatically. That just sets the right tone. We have a survey that we do of our employees pretty regularly that tap into, how are you feeling about work and your roles on a number of different dimensions? And it goes across the entire corporation globally. As leaders, we have the opportunity to really hear from the team and be able to rate and understand and hear comments, and I think it really is a great pulse point for us to check in and to say, so it's been a tough two years. How are folks feeling? How are we doing with all of this? It gives us a

systemic way of really building in communication and feedback beyond just the ad hoc that we all try to do as managers.

Tegan Trovato ([29:57](#)):

The box checking, beyond the box checking.

Elaine Boltz ([29:58](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. And I think it holds us accountable. If we want people to feel empowered, let's see how we're doing on that metric. If we want people to feel that they're super engaged at work, let's understand that. Let's really track that. And I think we talk about that. I had a staff meeting yesterday where we were talking about our scores in these areas. And what are we seeing across our teams? And how do we think about that? So I think that kind of orchestrated feedback is super important.

Elaine Boltz ([30:24](#)):

We have a program we call walk the talk here where, every month or two, we get together in very small groups, generally facilitated by some senior leaders in the company. It changes every year, so I meet different people through it all the time. And it's a great opportunity to talk about, how do we become more productive? How do we become more open? How do we think about engaging more people? How do we think about driving innovation? And it's sort of an hour where we get to set everything aside and just come together and just sort of chat about topics that, in the course of a normal day, you're trying to get things done. You don't always have that chance to connect with folks across the organization and across different levels.

Elaine Boltz ([31:04](#)):

So I think there's a lot of things that we built in to make sure that communication, that feedback goes two ways. And I have to say it's, from a communication standpoint, a really great organization. We all build in a number of different town halls across our areas. The CEO is terrific about setting up sessions with the leadership around the world on just, what are we seeing as a business? And what's working, what's not working? And we can ask pretty tough questions during those sessions. I think that openness is a really big part of it.

Tegan Trovato ([31:34](#)):

And what are you noticing that employees are sort of expecting of you or the organization as an employer that might be newer or different over the last couple of years?

Elaine Boltz ([31:45](#)):

I think what we are asking of our employees is agility in dealing in these uncertain times. And I think what they're asking back is flexibility. know, I think what we're seeing is we're finding different ways of working. We're finding different ways to connect. We've had to travel less, and so figuring out how we build in touchstones with people around the world and build relationships and make sure that we keep them strong. So those are, I think, different ways we've had to kind of work differently. And I think this flexibility of in the office, out of the office. What do the hours look like when you're a global company and you've got a 7:00 AM call with Europe and a 6:00 PM call with Asia, if you take a few hours in the middle of the day? Because how else are you going to live your life? So I think there's a certain level of just being very open to working in new and different ways. And I think part of that flexibility is being

flexible to come as you are as well. I mean, that is a way to kind of drive that ... We know it's high stress. It's a lot less stressful if you really feel comfortable in your own shoes.

Tegan Trovato ([32:56](#)):

Wonderful. We've touched a couple times on how there's this personal component. You even just said it again in terms, if you're leading multiple geographies, how do you get a break and catch your breath in the middle of the day? That's got a personal component. The whole the water cooler is gone. How do we connect? That's got a personal component. So thinking about leaders' personal lives, Elaine, what do you think leaders might do for themselves in their personal lives that would positively impact their ability to lead at work?

Elaine Boltz ([33:27](#)):

I don't know that I'm going to take on speaking for leaders everywhere, but I can certainly see it for myself. I need to turn off. I need to, on the weekend, be a little unplugged. I need to have activities outside of work. I worked at a company years ago in a very small town. What I realized when I moved there and joined the company is I was working a lot. My friends in the town all worked at the same company. We all had Thanksgiving at each other's houses. It was lovely for kind of building a community, but your whole life was about work.

Tegan Trovato ([34:00](#)):

It's centered on work. I hear you.

Elaine Boltz ([34:04](#)):

And I think one of the things I learned from that for myself is I need that space away. And whether that space be kind of having activities that you love, having friends who don't really truly understand what you do for a living, spending time with family that doesn't care what you do for a living, all of those things I think are helpful at causing you to unplug. I find I do some of my best thinking when I'm actually not at work, and so if I didn't preserve that space for myself, I don't think I'd be as able to really kind of come up with more creative thoughts and different ways of looking at things. So I think having that mental space out of the office and out of the day to day is super, super important, however you do it.

Tegan Trovato ([34:43](#)):

Love it. Thank you. Well, listen, how can listeners find you online, Elaine? What's the best way for them to know more about you and about Crocs?

Elaine Boltz ([34:52](#)):

So the best way about Crocs is to go to our website at Crocs.com. We've always got the best, the latest, the coolest, the newest. So it's a fun way to see what's going on there. I'm fairly active on LinkedIn. And so that is the best way to find me is through that network.

Tegan Trovato ([35:08](#)):

Great. And we'll be sure to include links to both in the show notes.

Elaine Boltz ([35:12](#)):

Great.

Tegan Trovato ([35:12](#)):

And as we close today, Elaine, I want to ask you the question I ask all of my guests, and to remind you and listeners that the podcast was created to discover the behaviors, practices, beliefs, and skills that the leader of the future needs so they can keep leading these systems that have changed and will continue to change at warp speed. So to get your take on what's required of future leaders, just finish this sentence for me. Leaders of the future will ...

Elaine Boltz ([35:38](#)):

I think leaders of the future will be comfortable being uncomfortable. I think that the change we've gone through the last two years ... I think for a period of time, I was feeling like, we're going to get past this period and go back to normal. And I think I'm now realizing that the world is in a very different space and likely will be for a while. And so I think, as leaders, our ability to keep navigating the unknown and dealing with the volatility and the uncertainty means that we've all got to develop that muscle of being uncomfortable and being in new things and realizing that we can work through that.

Tegan Trovato ([36:14](#)):

Well said. Thank you so much for joining us today, Elaine. It's been a pleasure to learn from you.

Elaine Boltz ([36:18](#)):

Tegan. Thank you. This was fun. Appreciate it.

Tegan Trovato ([36:22](#)):

Thank you.

Outro ([36:24](#)):

Thanks for listening to this episode of the Workplace Forward podcast, where leaders and executives can stay ahead of the curve on emerging leadership ideas and self care best practices, guided by executive coach, Tegan Trovato, and her expert guests. Please take 60 seconds to help others discover the Workplace Forward Podcast. By going to iTunes to subscribe, give five stars, and leave a comment. Want to learn more about Bright Arrow Coaching & Leadership Development? Visit the website at www.BrightArrowCoaching.com. See you next time. And while you're filling your team's cups, remember to take care of yourself too.