

**Dentons Global Law Firm
Comments to Additional Questions posed via The Community**

Date	14 th July 2020
Time	5.00 – 6.30 pm BST
Title	A global mindfulness programme: systems, teams and processes
Speaker (s)	Karina Furga-Dąbrowska, Partner and European Chief Mindfulness Officer and Andrew Nathan, Europe Talent Manager (and core mindfulness ambassadors), Dentons Global Law Firm.
Facilitator	Andrew McNeill

How do you deal with non-acceptance, particularly for a senior manager who does not want to practice with the group?

First of all, as mindfulness champions/trainers we practice acceptance and non-judgement ourselves. In terms of the programme, from the outset, we have accepted that not everyone might be willing to practice/participate in our sessions, and also that some people might simply not be ready – for now. Although some taster sessions are delivered to whole teams, we accept if an individual prefers to abstain from participation.

We know that claiming that mindfulness is good for everyone, and helps with everything is a myth. It is clear from research that mindfulness-based interventions work better for some groups than others; likewise, there are some people for whom training is not appropriate, especially during some periods of life.

On the other hand, sometimes we simply face skepticism. And here also - we accept what is. We treat such skepticism as natural and as something to be expected in such a reason-based environment as the legal profession. So we are always prepared to address sceptics and, not infrequently, cynics. We base our programs in neuroscience and behavioral science – and we are constantly on the lookout for credible empirical studies pointing to the effectiveness of mindfulness practice. We present these results during our mindfulness sessions not only to win over the skeptics but because we believe it is important that everyone understand the scientific basis for what we are doing.

How do you network and bring people together?

We are trying to promote our mindfulness initiatives as widely as possible so that more and more people are aware it is available to them. We run daily online mindfulness sessions open to everyone within the firm. We have a network of internal champions promoting mindfulness locally in respective offices/markets. We also regularly issue a monthly magazine – NextMind Time, where we touch upon topics which are relevant in any given time and which can be addressed by developing mindfulness (eg. Sleep habits or Zoom fatigue during lockdown).

We are also working on some other ideas to create networks and communities of our practitioners:

- regular check-ins with the alumni of our 8-week program and our ambassadors,
- monthly Zoom calls with subscribers of our NextMind Time magazine dedicated to discussing the topics and practices covered by a given issue of the magazine,
- using MS Teams groups as a networking platform for our alumni and participants of the currently pending editions of our 8-week program.

We are aware that currently we are still focusing more on introducing mindfulness to as many people as possible, but for sure our efforts in the next quarter will be more focused on creating sustainable networks of mindfulness practitioners.

What might programmes look like in the future, for example, when younger people who are more accepting, join organisations?

Dentons' culture promotes a growth mindset at every level of our organisation, so open-mindedness is a quality we encourage equally among both our younger professionals and their more senior colleagues. Considering our circumstances, and Dentons' geographical footprint, we have been and will continue to be looking to design programs as fully on-line events rather than face-to-face. One area we wish to explore in due course is how to make our programs more effective by incorporating more digital learning tools. In terms of the content, we envisage future programs openly addressing such topics as change, uncertainty and fear – therefore focusing especially on building resilience and supporting mental health of our people. As our work will be more remote or blended, we will need to focus more on creating online networks, substituting real face-to-face connections. Therefore, most probably the programs will either use apps which enable creating peer groups or switch to more extensive use of MS Teams networking functionalities.