

An HR Odyssey: From Troy to Itacha

Calvin Cassar & Nafsika Papavasileiou

29/11/23



The Characters – Nafsika Papavasileiou

- Hello I am Nafsika I am Greek and started my career in HR in Malta (and I love it).
- I studied Human Resources in the United States while I was competing in the collegiate volleyball level (and managed to Graduate on time!)



The Characters – Calvin Cassar

- Working in Human Resources for the last 12 years (and surviving).
- Graduate in Psychology – passionate about people and technology.
- Published a number of children's stories (including *Balloon in the Sky* from Faraxa Publishing)



The Characters – Odysseus

- The hero of today's story
- Goes around from one island to another in order to find what is most precious to him.
- A cheating couple got him in trouble, and he found himself fighting in a war at Troy that was very far from home.
- Holds a PhD in Diplomacy and can get away from sticky situations (but not sticky women).





Chapter 1

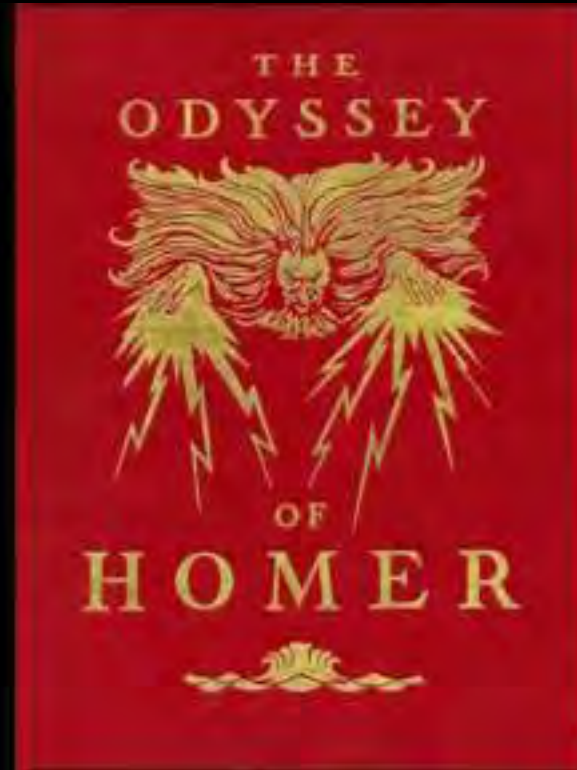
What is the Odyssey?

- The common area between Odyssey and the HR journey
- *The Odyssey* is a sequel to Iliad so we can colloquially refer to it as Troy Story 2.
- Troy Story 1 started like this...



Chapter 1

What is the Odyssey?



clideo.com

Session Outline

Chapter 2 Troy – Is Generative AI a Trojan horse

Chapter 3 Eating lotuses – A story telling us about remote work?

Chapter 4 Meeting with the Cyclops – Communication and Managing Conflict

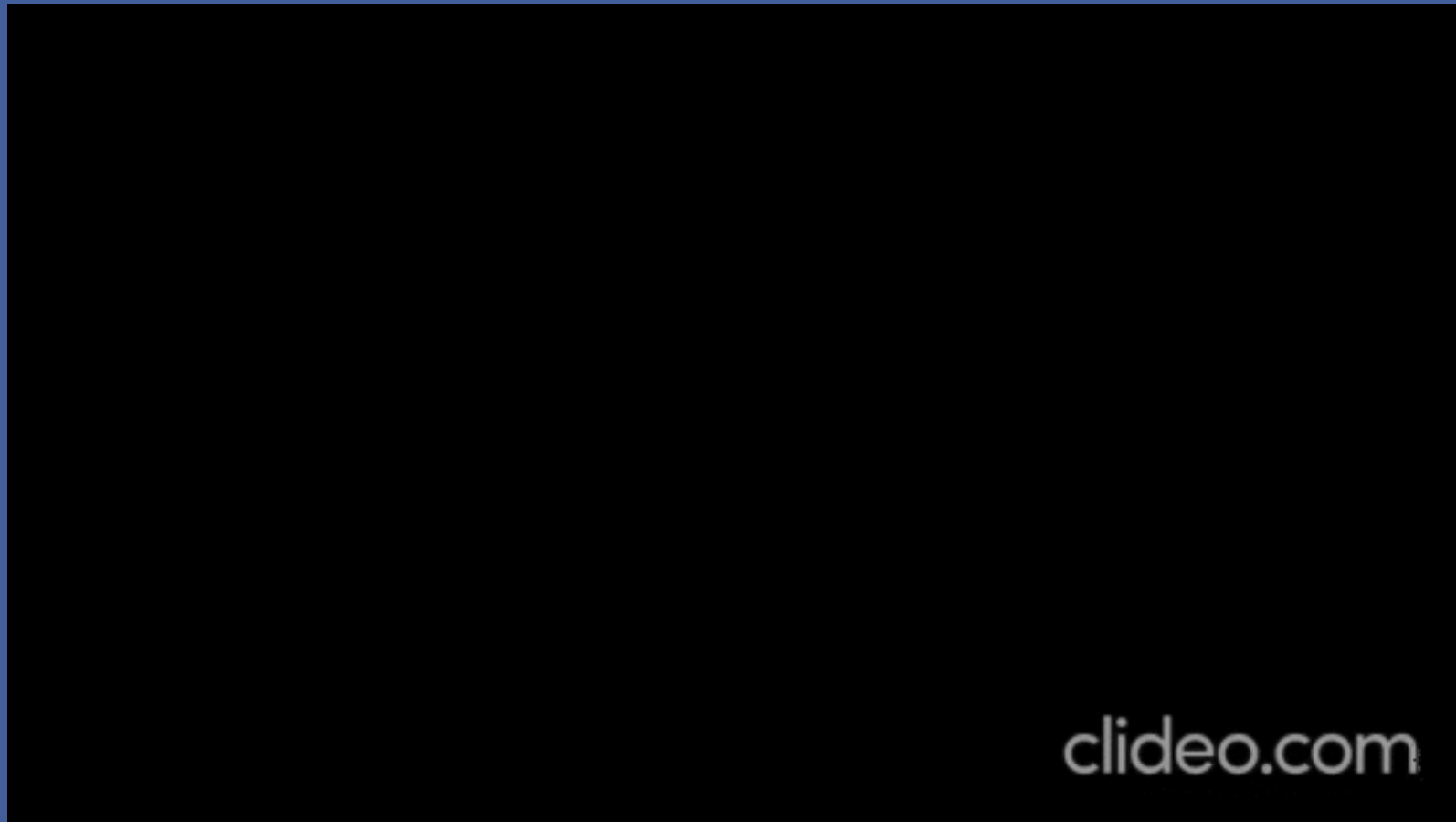
Chapter 5 Trip to Calypso – A non-Maltese trip to the island

Chapter 6 Back in Itacha – Are the right people around you?



Chapter 2.

Troy – Is Generative AI a Trojan horse?



Chapter 2.

Troy – Is Generative AI a Trojan horse?

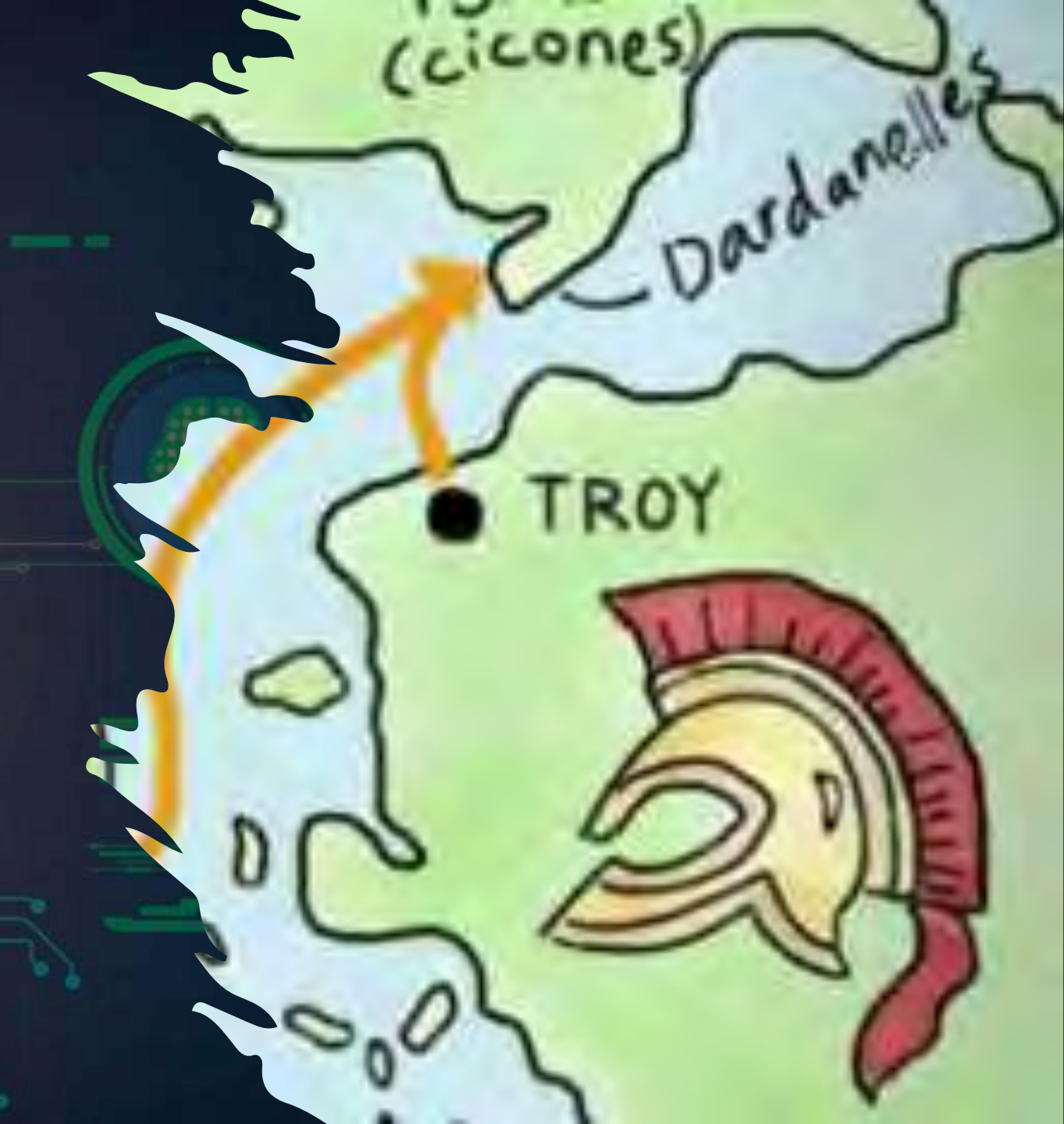
- The war between the Greeks and the Trojans had been going on for ten years with the Greeks being unable to break the siege.
- Athena spoke to the Odysseus and suggested that they build a Trojan horse and leave it outside the city walls and give it as a gift to the Trojans.
- It was a perfect solution to a very difficult problem!



Chapter 2.

Troy – Is Generative AI a Trojan horse?

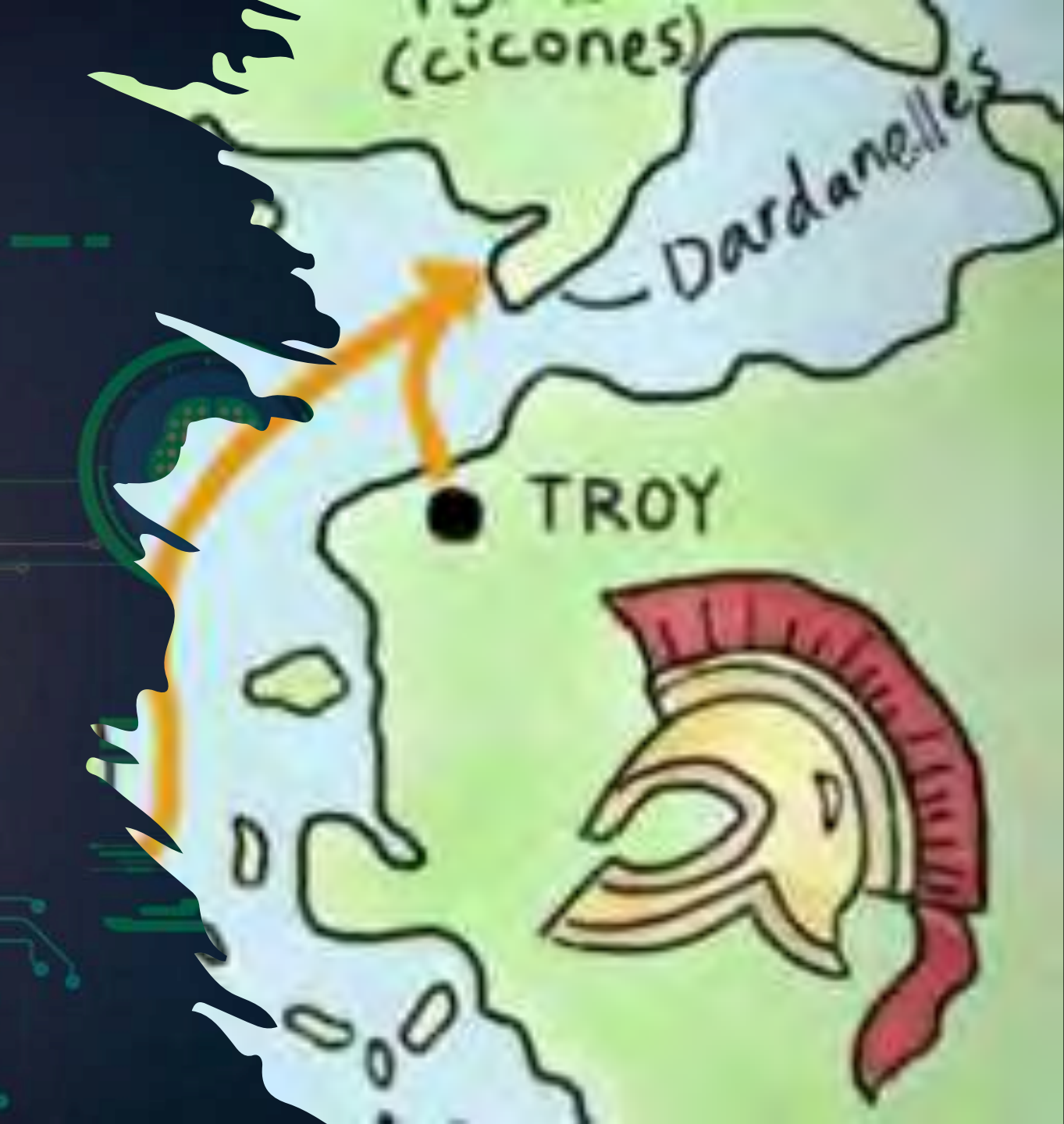
- Generative AI is a perfect solution to a lot of our modern day problems.
- Or is it?



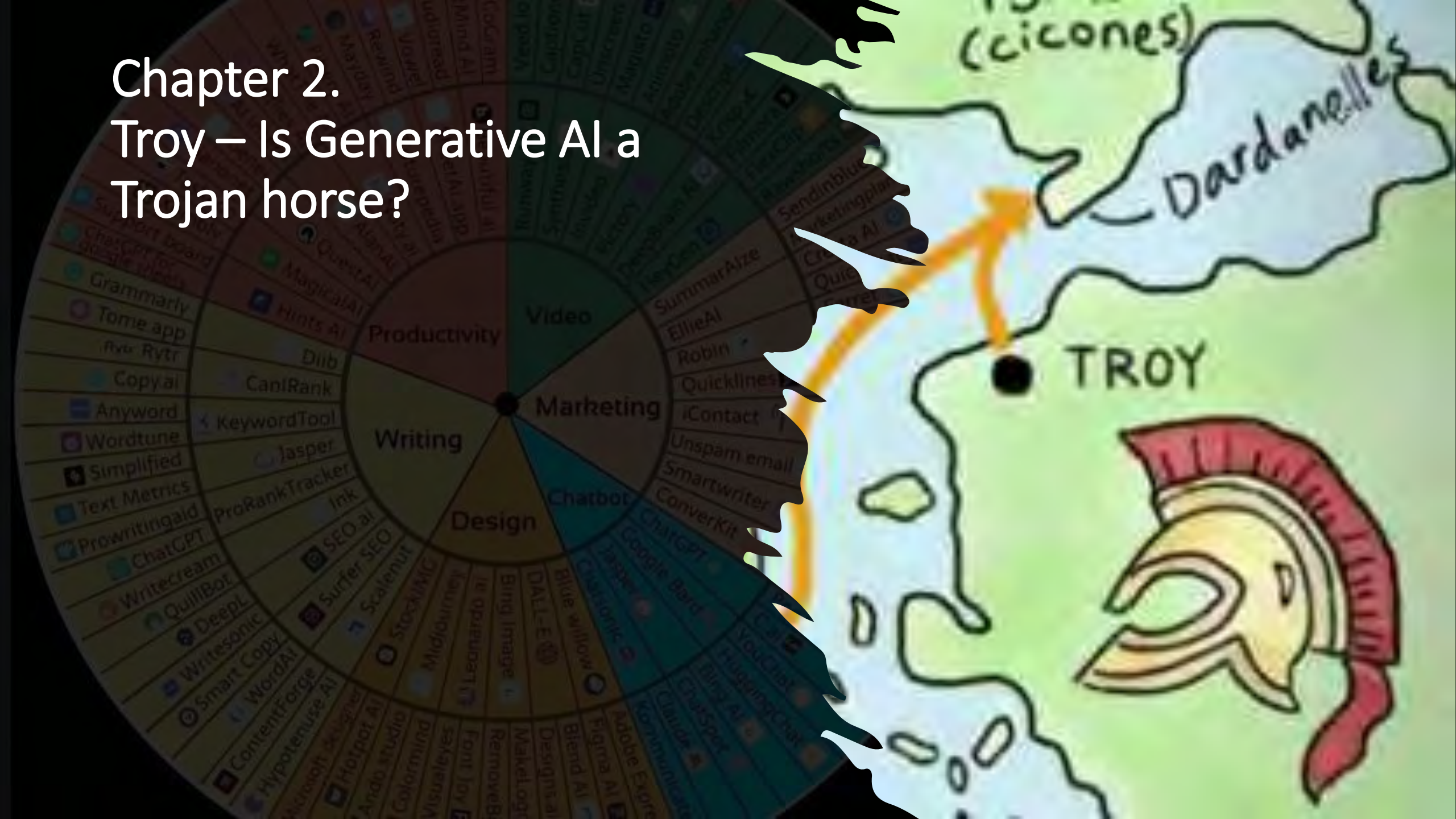
Chapter 2. Troy – Is Generative AI a Trojan horse?

What is Generative AI?

AI

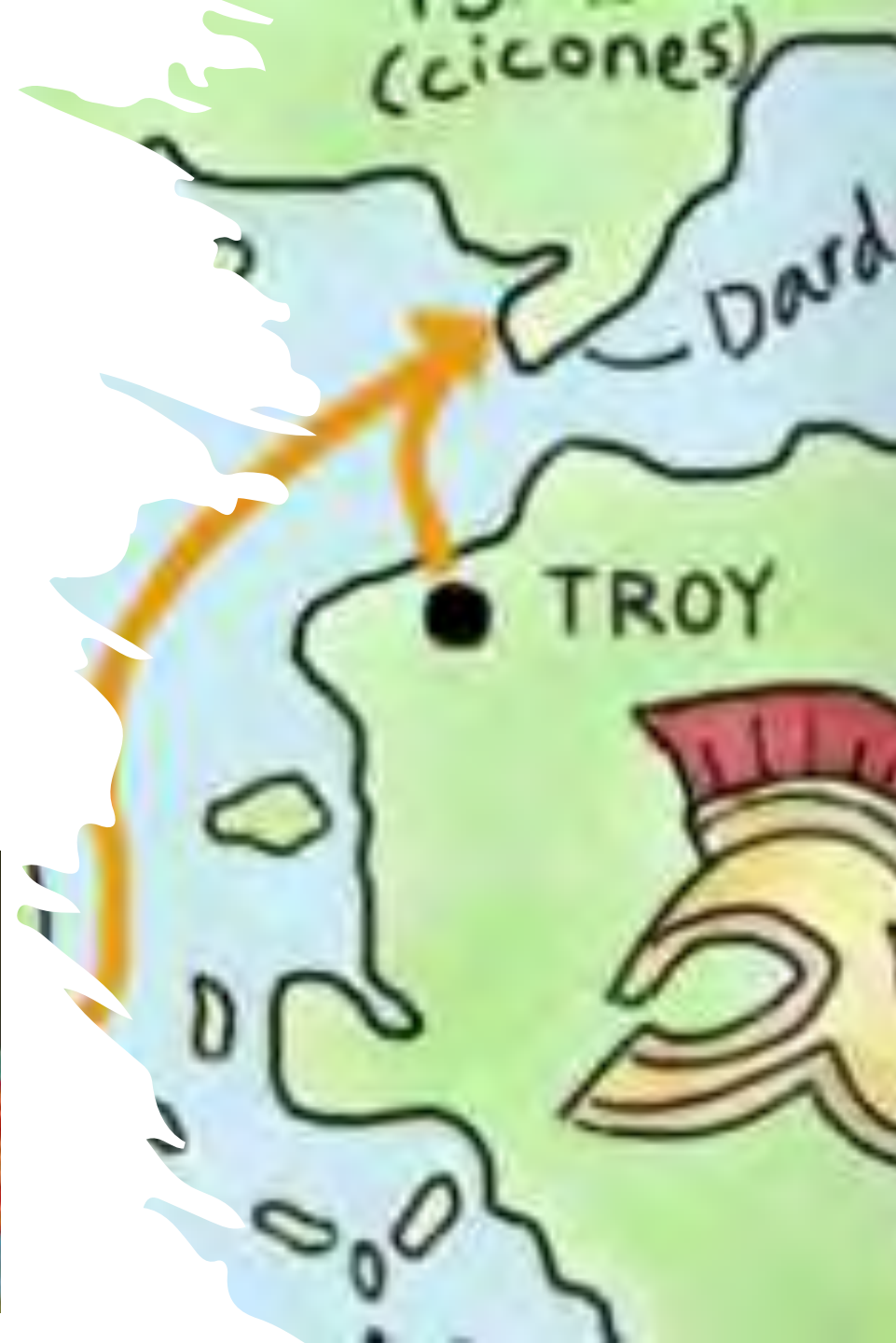


Chapter 2. Troy – Is Generative AI a Trojan horse?



Chapter 2. Troy – Is Generative AI a Trojan horse?

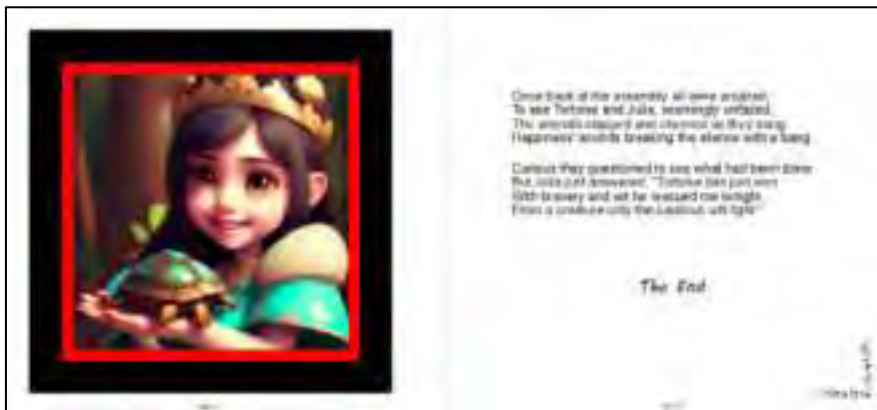
Publishing a book without AI and doing so
with AI



Chapter 2.

Troy – Is Generative AI a Trojan horse?

Publishing a book without AI and doing so with AI



Chapter 2.

Troy – Is Generative AI a Trojan horse?

- Time to look into how AI can impact the world of HR
- Are our jobs as HR practitioners at risk?



Chapter 2.

Troy – Is Generative AI a Trojan horse?

Setting out the challenge – HR vs AI

- You have 15 minutes to work together to write (without downloading from external sources) a Disciplinary Policy for the financial services company that you work for.
- Try to be comprehensive and cover the legal requirements.
- We will then look at ChatGPT3.5 tackling this same task to see who can do it better.



Chapter 2. Troy – Is Generative AI a Trojan horse?

Is this the end?



◆ People against machines





Usain Bolt
100 meter record run: 37.58 km/hr



Bugatti Veyron
0-100 km/hr:

2.6 seconds



Gregg Ernst
Record weight lifter: 2,422kgs lifted



XGC88000
Lifting capacity: 3,628,739kgs



Garry Kasparov: Multiple times Chess World Champion



Deep Blue
Defeated Kasparov $3\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ in a 1987 rematch

A new hope



Meaning



Customer Service & Human Interaction



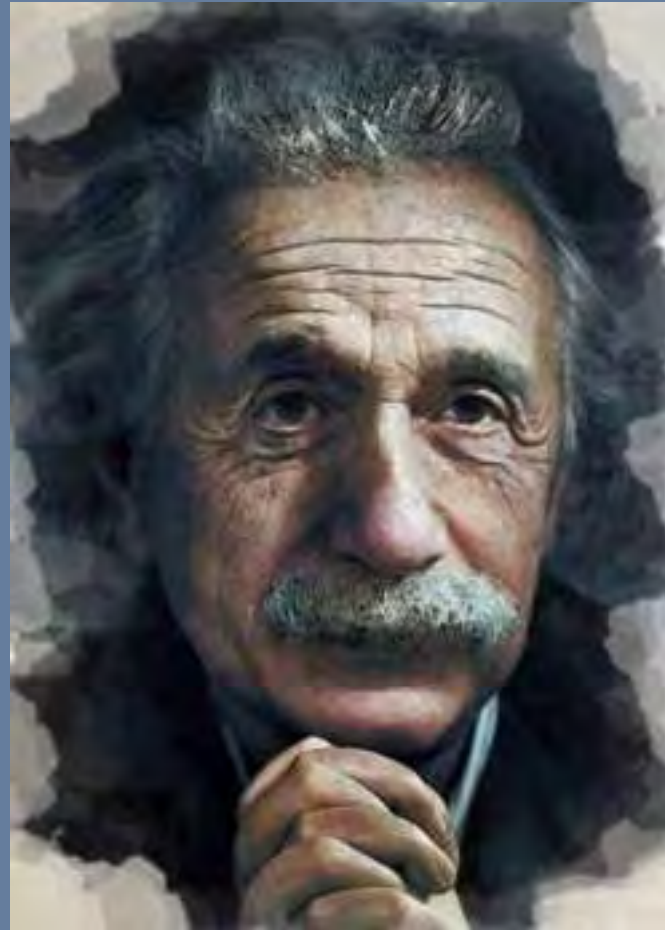
Ethics



Garbage in, garbage out



Critical thinking



AI does not ask the
right questions



Chapter 2.

Troy – Is Generative AI a Trojan horse?

- AI use within the companies should be captured and regulated through internal policies (is it ok to use? Or rather in which situations is it ok to use, and in which not?).
- Security should remain key.
- As HR professionals we should look into maximizing the opportunities offered by generative AI.
- The onset of AI might require re-skilling and re-training of the workforce and of the employees.



Chapter 3.

Eating lotuses – A story telling us about remote work?



Chapter 3.

Eating lotuses – A story telling us about remote work?

- In their journey Odysseus and his crew find their way, after going through some storms, at the Land of the Lotus Eaters.
- The Lotus Eaters come across as friendly and offer our crew lotus fruits for them to eat.
- The fruit however makes the crew members drowsy and they neglect to return to Odysseus, who has to drag them back by force to get back to work on the ship!
- Is management currently doing this to remote workers?



Chapter 3.

Eating lotuses – A story telling us about remote work?

- We have gone from this ...



Chapter 3.

Eating lotuses – A story telling us about remote work?

- To this ...



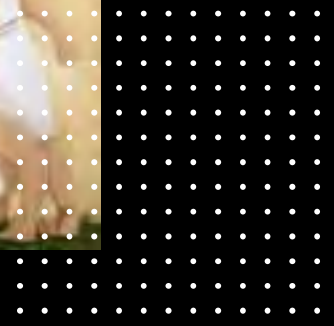
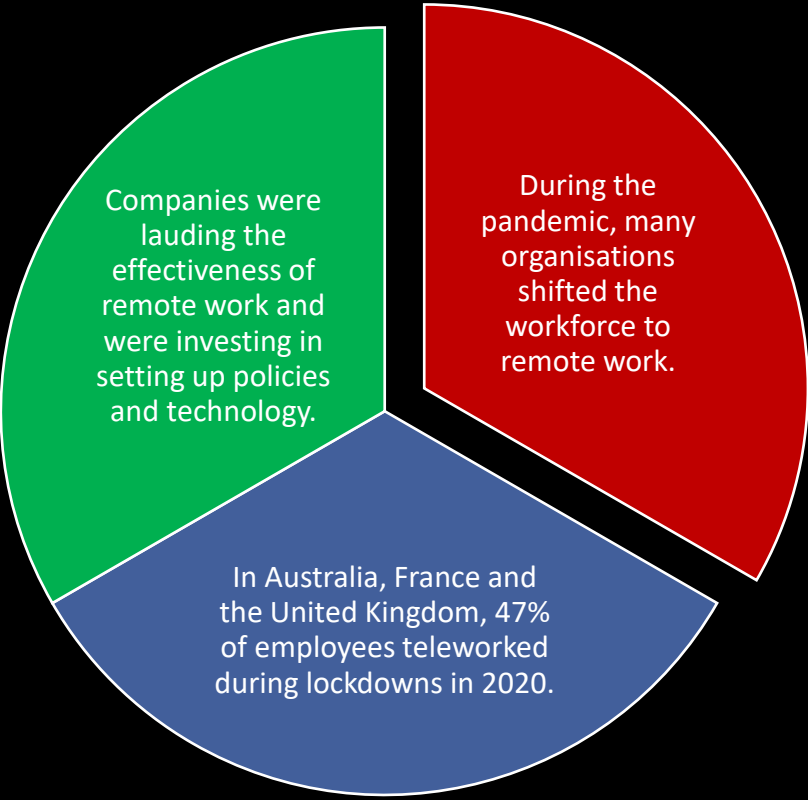
Mark Zuckerberg's new 'in-person time policy' will crack down on Meta's remote work rebels




Elon Musk ends remote working for Twitter staff | Daily Mail Online



Chapter 3.
Eating lotuses – A story telling us about remote work?





Chapter 3. Eating lotuses – A story telling us about remote work?



What worked?

- Employees were generally able to maintain good productivity levels while working remotely
- Work tasks shifted to the digital equivalent.
- Most employees enjoyed an improved work-life balance, and gained time on the day through avoiding the commute to work.
- Traffic and environment metrics, showed improvement over the time period – in a study by the National Institute of Health, emissions were reduced by 8.4% in the EU and the UK in 2020 compared to previous years.



Chapter 3.
Eating lotuses – A
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remote work?

What did not work?

- Managers complain about the reduced level of collaborative activity.
- Creativity is thought to be impacted through remote work.
- Some studies (undertaken by Meta and others) have shown challenges in onboarding of new employees and in sharing company culture in full remote work jobs.




Chapter 3. Eating lotuses – A story telling us about remote work?

Why the Conflict in the Review?

- Employees tend to see remote work favourable as most elements relating to their work (productivity, work-life balance, etc).
- Employers tend to review the matter from a different level and at a higher level where the picture might be less positive.
- This is creating a disjoint in understanding with employees and management looking at the matter from a different perspective.





Chapter 3.
Eating lotuses – A
story telling us
about remote
work?



Where do we go from here?

- Better communication
- Context is key
- There is no one size fits all
- Hybrid might be a compromise solution
- Balance might make us avoid the path of the lotus fruit eaters!

Chapter 4.

Meeting with the Cyclops – Communication and Managing Conflict



Chapter 4.

Communication and Managing Conflict

- After managing to escape from the land of the Lotus eaters, Odysseus and his crew find themselves in the land of the Cyclopes (one-eyed giants).
- Odysseus and his men become trapped in the cave of Polyphemus, a Cyclops, after seeking shelter on their journey home from the Trojan War.
- In an attempt to escape, Odysseus cleverly blinds Polyphemus by telling him that his name is "Nobody," allowing them to deceive the Cyclopes when he calls for help.
- However, Odysseus' pride leads him to reveal his true identity after escaping, prompting Polyphemus to curse him, setting off a chain of challenges on his journey back to Ithaca.



Chapter 4.

Communication and Managing Conflict

- We are going to provide a description of the image presented to the group.
- Rules
 - No questions are to be asked
 - No gestures are to be made
 - No feedback is to be provided



Chapter 4.

Communication and Managing Conflict

- Take 2
- Now let us repeat the exercise but with the possibility of the audience to ask questions and provide feedback.



Chapter 4.

Communication and Managing Conflict

- How and why is communication and managing conflict trending?
- At a time in which we have data, tools, AI and great information to support us in business decision making, effective communication and conflict resolution is becoming increasingly more critical to organisations.



Chapter 4. Communication and Managing Conflict

A Case Study: The Sam Altman drama at Open AI



Chapter 4.

Communication and Managing Conflict

Nov. 17, 2023	OpenAI board fires CEO and co-founder Sam Altman. President Greg Brockman quits after being removed from the board. Company names Mira Murati as interim CEO.
Nov. 18, 2023	<p>Altman's firing was over a "breakdown in communication between Sam and the board," and not "malfeasance," chief operating officer Brad Lightcap says in an internal memo.</p> <p>Early investor Khosla Ventures says it wants Altman back at OpenAI, "but will back him in whatever he does next."</p> <p>Some employees contemplated quitting if Altman was not restored as CEO by the end of the weekend, while others expressed support for joining his new venture, people familiar with the matter say.</p>
Nov. 19, 2023	Altman discusses a possible return to the company, considers launching new AI startup, source tells Reuters.
Nov. 20, 2023	<p>Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella says the Windows maker has hired Altman, Brockman and their colleagues to lead a new advanced AI research team.</p> <p>OpenAI appoints former Twitch boss Emmett Shear as interim CEO. Shear pledges a probe into Altman's exit. The OpenAI board approaches rival Anthropic's CEO about a merger and taking the top job, sources say.</p> <p>Nearly all OpenAI staff threaten to quit and join Altman at Microsoft if the board doesn't resign, according to a letter seen by Reuters.</p> <p>Some investors in OpenAI explore legal recourse against the company's board, sources familiar with the matter tell Reuters.</p>
Nov. 21, 2023	OpenAI said Altman will return as CEO with a new initial board of Brian Taylor, Larry Summers and Adam D'Angelo. Brockman will also return to the startup.

Source: Reuters (CNN)



Chapter 4.

Communication and Managing Conflict

What worked?

- Very little.
- Imagine working in HR at OpenAI and having to manage the communication and fallout of this.
- How do you communicate internally about the firing of the Founder and CEO?
- How do you communicate internally about the rehiring of the Founder and CEO?



Chapter 4.

Communication and Managing Conflict

What did not work?

- Communication between the Board and the company
- Communication between the Board and the shareholders, especially the wider Group
- Communication between the Board and the public
- The handing of PR and general narrative.



Chapter 4.

Communication and Managing Conflict

Be Clear

- *HR professionals are the ones that see the whole aspect of the story*
- *But also have to be very careful when it comes to the delivery of the information*
- *We have to pass on the message clearly but we can not be completely upfront*



Chapter 4. Communication and Managing Conflict

Be Concise



Chapter 4.

Communication and Managing Conflict

Know Your Audience

- *Give them information that are related and necessary*
- *There are audiences that are familiar with different topics compared to other*



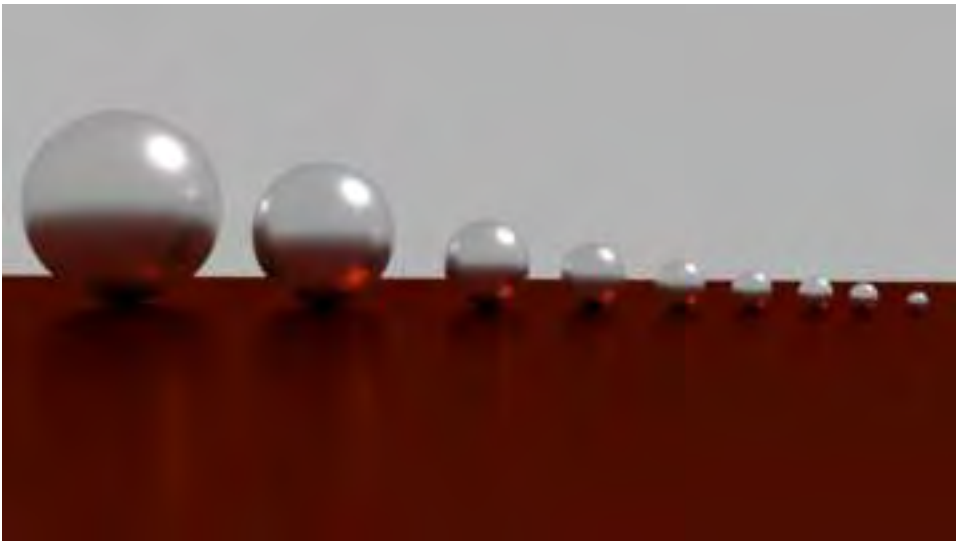
Chapter 4. Communication and Managing Conflict

Know When to Speak to Your Audience



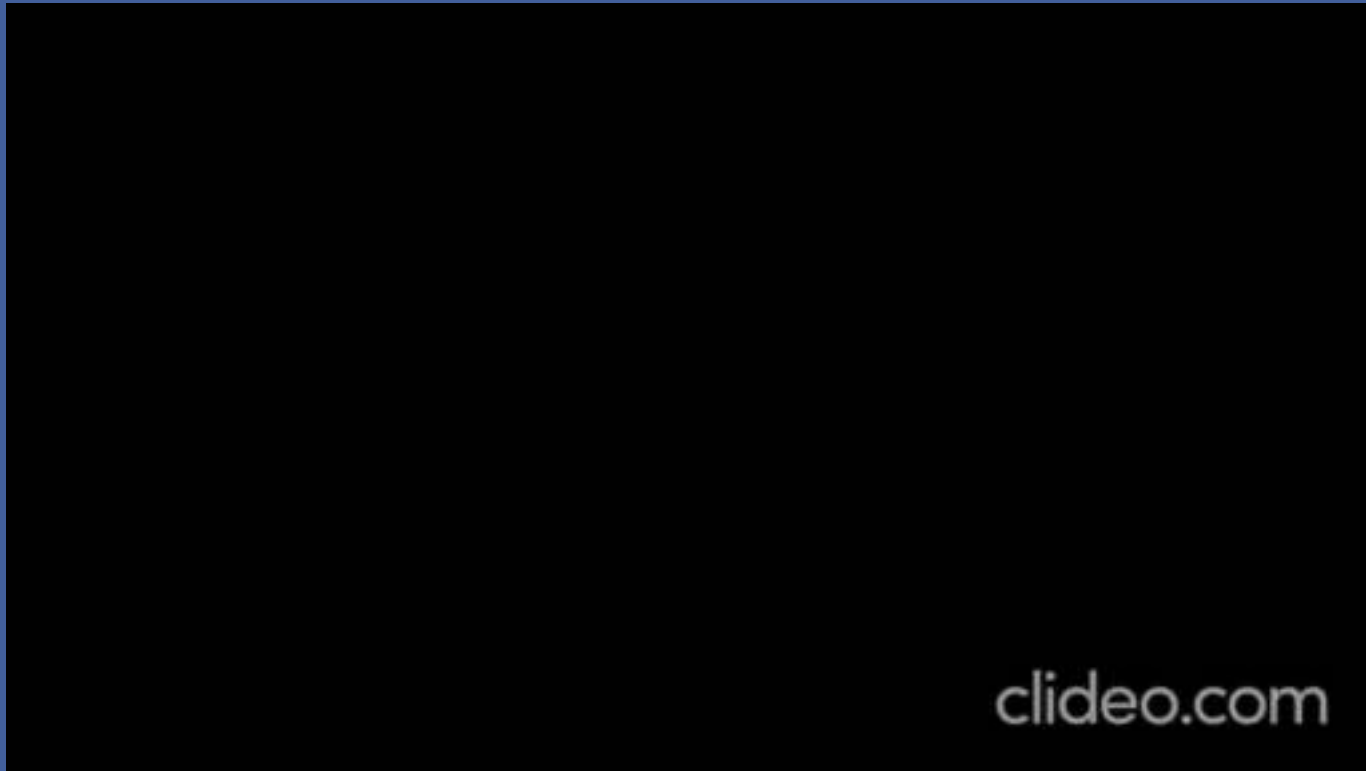
Chapter 4. Communication and Managing Conflict

Be Genuine and Transparent



Chapter 5.

Trip to Calypso – A non-Maltese trip to the island



Chapter 5.

Trip to Calypso – A non-Maltese trip to the island

- In the journey, Odysseus' extended stay in Calypso's island is a pivotal episode.
- Captivated by Calypso's enchanting charm, Odysseus spends seven years on her secluded island, facing the challenge of longing for his homeland while grappling with the allure of Calypso's immortal offerings.
- Despite the luxurious surroundings, Odysseus remains determined to return to his wife, Penelope, and faces trials of both physical and emotional endurance during his time in Calypso's captivity.



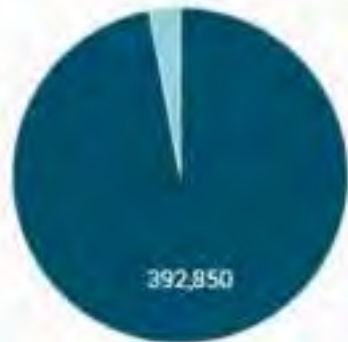
Chapter 5.

Trip to Calypso – A non-Maltese trip to the island

Maltese & non-Maltese population 2005-2021

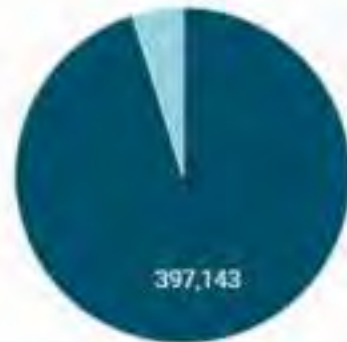
Malta's non-Maltese population increased from under 2% in 2005 to 22% in 2021.

■ Maltese ■ Non-Maltese



2005

Total population:
404,962



2011

Total population:
417,432



2021

Total population:
519,562

Source: NSO • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)



Chapter 5.

Trip to Calypso – A non-Maltese trip to the island

malta**today** HOME NEWS BUSINESS SPORTS ARTS COMMENT VIDEO ARCHIVES MAGAZINES [DONATE HERE](#)

Malta resident population at 519,000, of which one in five is foreign

Census snapshot of Malta: 82% Catholic, 90% Caucasian, with one in five residents a foreign national



18 February 2022, 10:00am
by Matthew Wila
0 1 min read



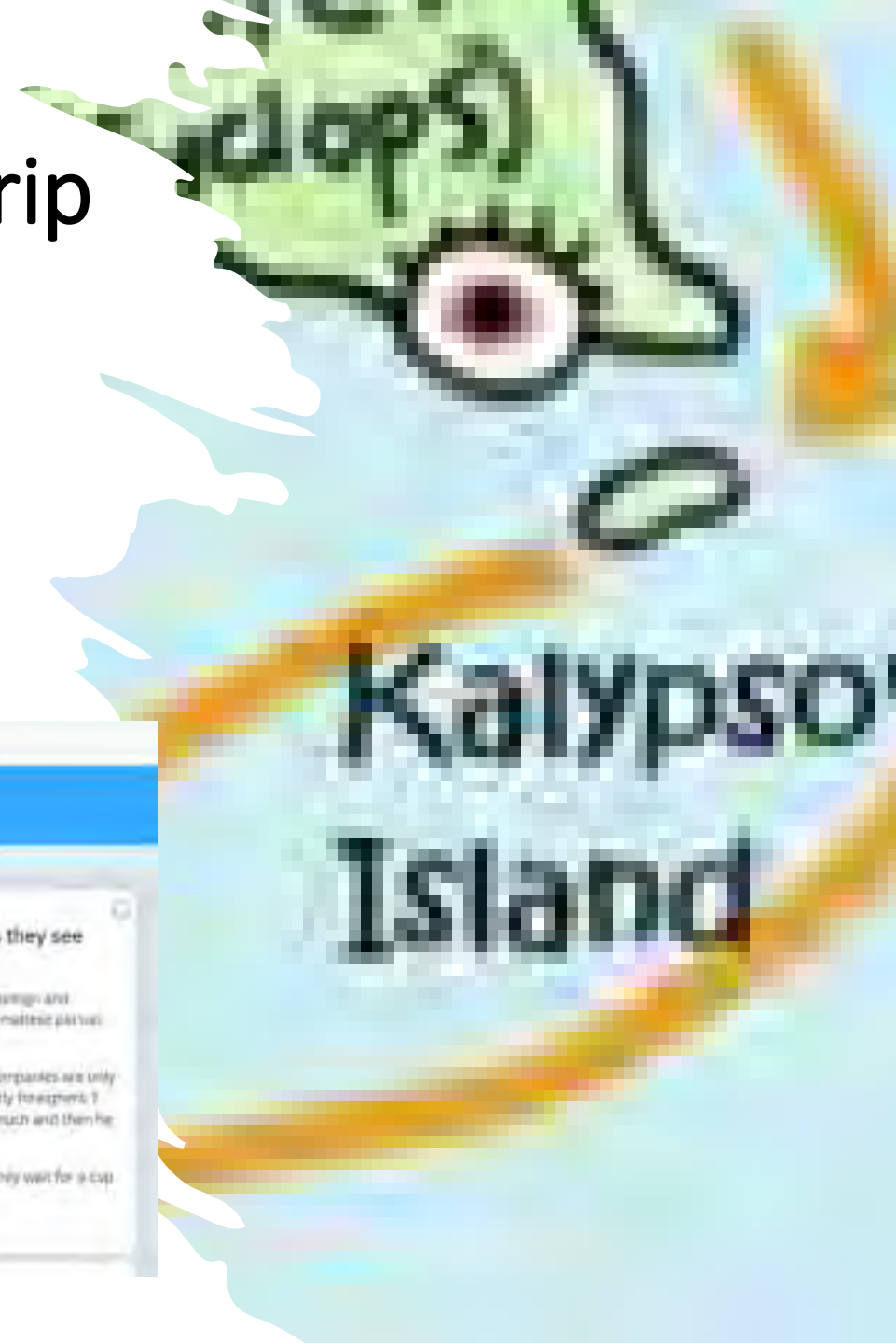
reddit r/malta

Are Maltese people really sad about the number of foreigners they see every day?

I work with a maltese guy and every 2-3 days he brings the discussions of how many foreign and maltese people are seeing in a couple of minutes. He brings on him for sales. Add 1-2 maltese person while he see 20 foreigners in a span of 10 minutes.

This happens continues every 2-3 days on how foreigners are taking jobs and how companies are only interested in taking TCN, and how many number plates vehicles are being driven by mostly foreigners. I always try to keep the discussion neutral not to hurt him. But when gets he brings so much and then he starts sweating heavily.

So, do that people really angry about the number of foreign people they see while they wait for a cup of coffee / anything?



Chapter 5.

Trip to Calypso – A non-Maltese trip to the island



Chapter 5.

Trip to Calypso – A non-Maltese trip to the island



Chapter 5.

Trip to Calypso – A non-Maltese trip to the island

A vibrant, abstract graphic on the right side of the slide. It features a central white circle with a purple dot inside, surrounded by swirling patterns of green, yellow, and orange. The text "Calypso Island" is written in a stylized, colorful font across the center of the graphic.

Calypso
Island

Chapter 5.

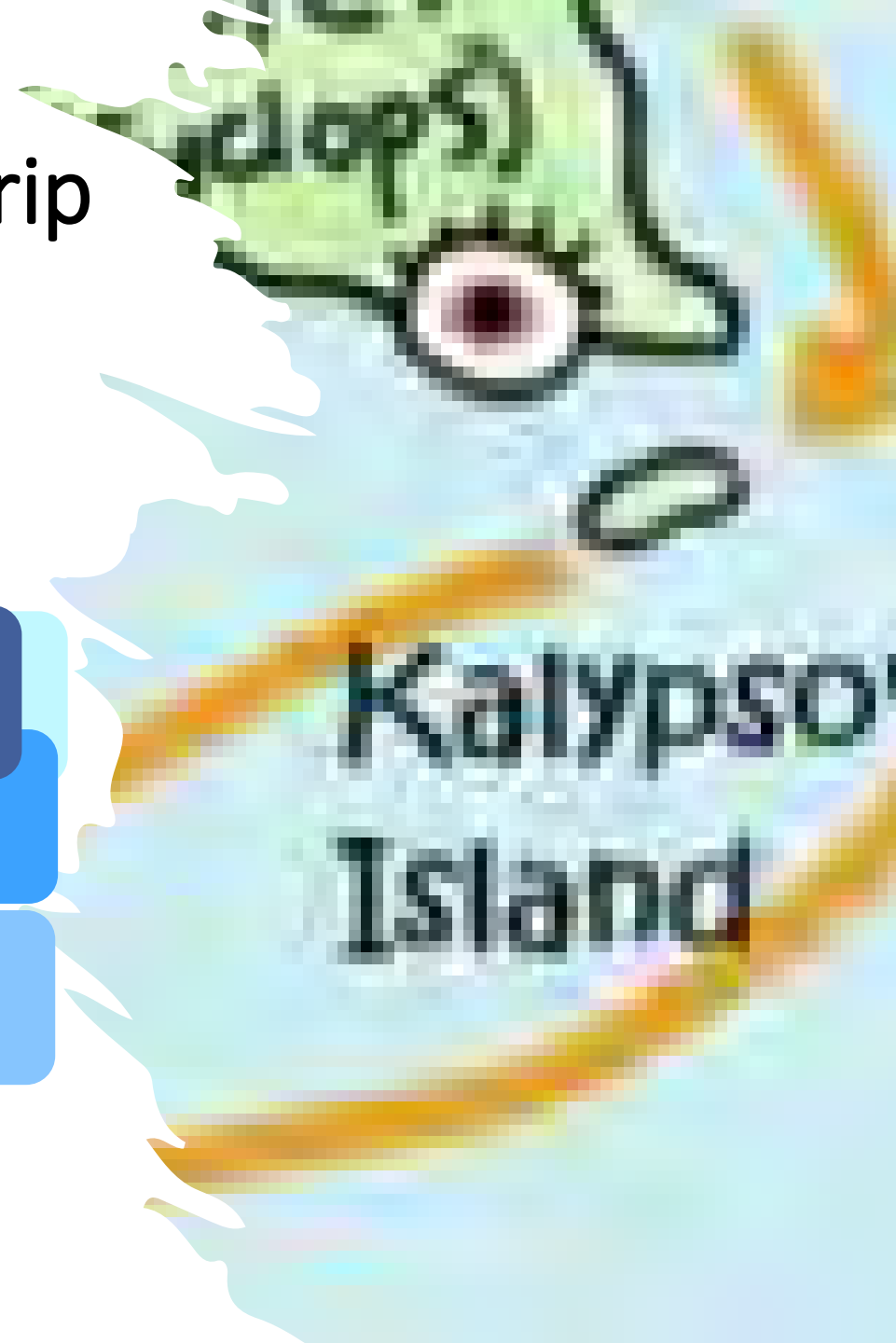
Trip to Calypso – A non-Maltese trip to the island



Calypso
Island

Chapter 5.

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Trip to Calypso – A non-Maltese trip to the island



Calypso
Island

Chapter 5.

Trip to Calypso – A non-Maltese trip to the island

- Overall, Maltese history has been about welcoming persons to the island and setting up a space for sharing and collaboration – from Odysseus, to St. Paul, to others after them, the experience has always been a positive one.
- Our culture from language, to food is shaped by the persons who have visited our country.
- In true inclusive spirit, it is something that we should look into retaining.



Chapter 6.

Back in Itacha – Are the right people around you?



Chapter 6.

Back in Ithaca – Are the right people around you?

- Once Odysseus arrives in Ithaca, he disguises himself as a beggar to assess the situation in his homeland, which is overrun by suitors vying for his wife Penelope's hand.
- With the help of his son Telemachus and a few loyal servants, Odysseus plans a strategy to reclaim his household.
- After revealing his true identity, he engages in a battle against the suitors, ultimately emerging victorious and reestablishing his authority in Ithaca.



Chapter 6.

Back in Ithaca – Are the right people around you?

- Having the right people around you is critical to organizational success.
- In some cases, like the suitors in the story, persons initially pretend to be there to do the right things for you but this might not always be the case.



Chapter 6.

Back in Ithaca – Are the right people around you?

- How likely from 0 to 10, is this person someone who could be CEO at your company?



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Chapter 6. Back in Ithaca – Are the right people around you?

- Ted Bundy – Serial Killer and Rapist



Chapter 6. Back in Ithaca – Are the right people around you?

- Nelson Mandella – South African Revolutionary and former President



Chapter 6.

Back in Ithaca – Are the right people around you?

- Christine Lagarde – French politician and current President of the European Central Bank, former Director of IMF



Chapter 6. Back in Ithaca – Are the right people around you?

- Bernie Madoff – convicted for fraud and running the biggest pyramid scheme in Wall Street



Chapter 6. Back in Ithaca – Are the right people around you?

- Angela Merkel – former German Chancellor (2005-2021)



Chapter 6.

Back in Ithaca – Are the right people around you?

- Bill Gates – Microsoft Founder and CEO; founder of Bill Gates Foundation



Chapter 6.

Back in Ithaca – Are the right people around you?

- Appearances can deceive.
- The suitors at Odysseus' hall might be the ones who have bad intentions.
- It is important that as HR we remain guardians of who comes into the company, and make sure that we are making the right hiring decisions.
- This ties to key trends for hiring in 2023.



Chapter 6.

Back in Ithaca – Are the right people around you?

Key Trends in Hiring in 2023

- Diversity and Inclusion
- This is a development rather than a revolution over what has been happening in the last few years.
- 78% of employees in America value Diversity and Inclusion
- This is not just about hiring but also about having the right culture and values in place, respecting diversity.



Chapter 6.

Back in Ithaca – Are the right people around you?

Key Trends in Hiring in 2023

- Employer Branding
- Pizza Fridays don't make a company worth working for.
- Employers need to work on the defining characteristics at their organization and what makes them special.
- Employers need to be good at articulating the purpose of why we are here.



Chapter 6.

Back in Ithaca – Are the right people around you?

Key Trends in Hiring in 2023

- Social Media
- Evolving trends – more people on TikTok and Instagram.
- Messages needs to be adapted to the target audience.
- Questions arise on whether specific campaigns should be used to target set groups, say, millennials.



Chapter 6.

Back in Ithaca – Are the right people around you?

Key Trends in Hiring in 2023

- Online Recruitment and Onboarding
- There is still discussion on remote work. Despite this we are still hiring and onboarding people remotely.
- We need to find the ways of sharing and communicating the company culture, even when the process is done remotely.



Chapter 6.

Back in Ithaca – Are the right people around you?

Key Trends in Hiring in 2023

- Candidate Demands and Expectations
- Demand of workforce still outstrips supply in Malta, so it is still an employee's market.
- Internationally, things are starting to change.
- Until then, we need to have sensitivity to candidate expectations which are at an all time high.





At the end – we get back home
Thanks for joining!