

# YELLOW PAPER

**Survival guide for the  
development year 2021**

Mariken Kooi  
Raymond de Looze

DOUBLE 

# Hello Yellow

**Sure, 2020 was a strange year. It has asked a lot from us, but has also brought us many good things. Nobody knows what 2021 will be like. These are all valid and important statements. And we say that without irony. That is exactly why we crave to move forward. Have a new start to get moving again, to develop.**

With that in mind, we launched Yellow Tuesday: 19 January 2021. The day after Blue Monday, which they say is the most depressing day of the year. Yellow Tuesday is the day to move ahead, with optimism and energy. Based on confidence, reflection and acceptance. Because we can.

But how? How can you ensure your people continue to develop? That you keep them on board? What have you learned from 2020? What are your tips for the year ahead? We asked thirty entrepreneurs and development-experts from large organisations. In this Yellow Paper, you will find their insights, their challenges, their learning points and their pearls of wisdom.

These were such incredible and inspiring conversations. So many ideas, lots of energy and beautiful one-liners. Sometimes we laughed. Sometimes it hit home. It all got Zoomed into us from home offices, kitchen tables or Corona-proof work locations. And it's all captured in this document. Have a look, think about it and take with you whatever serves you. Enjoy!



**Mariken Kooi**  
**Raymond de Looze**  
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# 1. Make it Freakin' Personal.

*If you don't keep people connected now, they will drop out.  
Or run away.*

## PLAYING FIELD

- The Corona period has actually led to deeper relationships in many teams and organisations.
- The field trip feeling of the first wave is gone. It is harder now, with less perspective.
- Small organisations can be on top of it more easily. That's harder in a large, process-oriented context.
- It is often difficult to keep everyone in sight: how do you know what you don't know?

## WHAT WORKS WELL AND WHAT DOES NOT?

- What works: asking questions. Different questions. And keep asking, because you really want to know the answer.
- People miss the random encounters in the elevator, moments of attention and interest in each other.
- Think about the underlying value of the Ping-Pong table and find an online alternative.
- People are now pretty much fed up with pub quizzes and virtual drinks.

## FOR INSPIRATION

- Not: How are you? But: How are things at home? How are you feeling? I really want to know how you are.
- Call with no other reason than to ask how he or she is doing. Not combined with business topics.
- Ask people whether they worry about something. That has a huge effect on their ability to keep up.
- Talk less, and leave more space for others.

*\* Make it freakin' personal is the motto of The Thrive. We could borrow it.*

## 2. Generations: who suffers the most?

*Corona puts most pressure on people with young children and singles.*

### PLAYING FIELD

- Young employees are in need of physical contact, especially with peers. They learn on-the-job.
- School-aged children create a lot of pressure. Especially when both parents work full days.
- Older people or those without children experience the upsides. More time together, no traffic, flexibility.
- Regardless of age: it is less pressing for people who work together than for solo workers.

### WHAT WORKS WELL AND WHAT DOES NOT?

- You cannot expect the same from everybody. Explore what this time is like for someone.
- Youngsters are working in the attic instead of that fancy office building they said yes to.
- Some young parents get up at 5:30: work, school, more work. That is not sustainable.
- It helps to give options. What do you need? There is no one-size-fits-all solution.

### FOR INSPIRATION

- Youngsters need to get away from the attic! They can meet each other, respecting safety restrictions.
- Let new joiners go out for a walk with more senior colleagues living in the same area.
- Help your employees discover what this period has brought them. That they have not paused their development.
- It is different for everyone, yet the same as well. Young and old, rich and poor. None of us can go to a bar.

# 3. From open office to experimental garden.

*A physical office no longer needed? We don't believe in that.*

## PLAYING FIELD

- Online onboarding of new employees is pretty much impossible. It lacks social grounding.
- Being together is different from being connected. We were more together, now we are more connected.
- The physical distance makes it harder to micro-manage. Did you do that yourself, too? This creates space.
- Young professionals living a digital life and being individualistic? Certainly not. They need contact most.

## WHAT WORKS WELL AND WHAT DOES NOT?

- It's surprising how fast you can get to the core in an online session. It provides a kind of extra safety.
- Are we going back to five days a week? No. But there will be an office. We need physical contact.
- Many things are now more efficient. The importance of physical togetherness is now more explicit.
- You cannot do the same thing, and just switch on the camera. You need to change your ways of working.

## FOR INSPIRATION

- Always take 10 minutes of each online meeting. So 60' = 50'. This allows for everyone to stretch their legs.
- Development requires being together. Having to make an appointment to discuss something is a hurdle.
- Back in the days, working from home was the Holy Grail. Now we are just happy to be back in the office.
- In the office I had to redo my make-up three times a week from laughing out loud. At home? Nope.

# 4. Go figure it out yourself!

*The classical way of developing people is truly outdated.*

## PLAYING FIELD

- Organise your talent. That's different from the organisation itself, which is about the chairs at the table.
- People's resilience and creativity are enormous. They do find different solutions. Really.
- Doing things on your own requires real responsibility. There's no hiding behind 'John told me to do it'.
- There's no point in recruiting super talented people only to give them detailed instructions.

## WHAT WORKS WELL AND WHAT DOES NOT?

- What do people need to develop? Trust, freedom and, without doubt: mistakes.
- Be creative. Make new combinations of what can be done and make it work for you.
- No instructions and processes but ownership and goals. Accept that things are different.
- Giving space is about equality. You are not above others. Even though you have value and you are boss.

## FOR INSPIRATION

- Development takes time. Let them spend one day a month on their development. They decide how.
- You wonder: can I get away with this? The answer is: yes! Do not work based on fear, but ability.
- Challenge yourself, be vulnerable and keep an open mind. That's how to activate people better and faster.
- This is the right time to invest in development. Even though it takes time and money. It pays for itself.

# 5. Mood: Yellow or Blue?

*The Corona virus can no longer be an excuse.*

## PLAYING FIELD

- It is getting increasingly difficult to keep people inspired, connected.
- We have a job, we are busy. You have more time with your kids. How cool is that?
- The we-feeling from March-April is fading. People are fed up.
- The art is taking the learning points from Corona. No going back. A win-win.

## WHAT WORKS WELL AND WHAT DOES NOT?

- Make things smaller, not bigger.
- Now is the time to maintain the energy, that 'we got this' mindset.
- Some people are trying to duck out. It is tough yet important to have that conversation. Virtually, too.
- New employees just don't feel the connection that they chose to be part of. That's not possible now.

## FOR INSPIRATION

- The basis of getting better is to put aside your own pride. That may seem harder than it is.
- For some, work feels like prison now. They go into survival mode. That has to stop.
- I get itchy from all those questions about additional financial compensation for phones or toilet paper.
- Our people are more into snacks than courses.

# 6. And now? The roaring '20s?

*Our hunger for touch, thrills and hoo-ha.\**

## PLAYING FIELD

- The coming months will be most impactful on our psyche. There is hope, but far away.
- Thereafter, there can be a party atmosphere. You have to create space for that. How can you facilitate?
- The post-Corona world will always be a mix of old and new. How will you blend physical and digital?
- You have to grow now and make sure you are ready to go all in as soon as the situation allows.

## WHAT WORKS WELL AND WHAT DOES NOT?

- Playing and experimenting are crucial. With courage. That's how people learn, starting in kindergarten.
- Now is the time to stand out as an organisation. People first. Compassion and moving along. You'll get it back.
- Each organisation has to shape their 2.0 ways of working.
- How will you know if you have done well? Staff retention and satisfaction will tell you.

## FOR INSPIRATION

- Never think that you'll do it later. Go surfing in Hawaii if you can. Do not postpone what you want most!
- All development programs will have to be hybrid in the future.
- This time teaches us that not everything is self-evident. That we often have no influence. You learn from that.
- You can see the glorification of the digital world diminishing again.

*Tagline translated from Dutch: 'Onze honger naar huid herrie en hosanna';  
Roland van der Vorst, [Het Financieele Dagblad](#), 16 december 2020.*



# 7. The L-word

*Leadership now requires a lot of attention. So does the business. The cigar is burning at both ends.*

## PLAYING FIELD

- Do you need to step in on day 1 of the crisis, the Ebola-strategy? Because: 'you just never know'?
- When people loose connection, they say goodbye sooner. That is the biggest risk.
- Combining the old and new crew can be hard, especially when it comes to culture and energy.
- Be proud of your people and take good care of them. They will ensure your survival.

## WHAT WORKS WELL AND WHAT DOES NOT?

- Most importantly: peace in an unsafe world. Everything is going to be OK. Communicate about goals and roles.
- Bonuses paid, contracts extended, salaries increased. We reap the benefits of doing that now.
- Vulnerability and honesty are our key strengths. It makes people want to give back.
- Downside is that development is more expensive now. Mainly due to smaller groups. But it is necessary.

## FOR INSPIRATION

- These days, leaders must be liaison officers rather than strong on content.
- You need to be close to people. If you're not, the organisation will simply slip through your fingers.
- Walk the talk. Every Friday, all members of the management team call three people.
- Pay genuine attention to people. Do it. It can be done in a 1,000 different ways.

# OUR INSPIRATORS

**These were our energetic and inspiring interlocutors:**

Alexander van Eerden	<a href="#">Building Blocks</a>
Alie Snijders	<a href="#">Deloitte</a>
Anouk Rasenberg	<a href="#">GroupM</a>
Audrey van Zuilen	<a href="#">Corpag</a>
Bodo de Wit	<a href="#">Mind Your Talent</a>
Chantal Riedeman	<a href="#">Shopology</a>
Cherique Cuppen	<a href="#">Code Geel Communicatie</a>
Dewi Habraken	<a href="#">JTC Group</a>
Edwin van Haare	<a href="#">WVDB Adviseurs Accountants</a>
Eric Stubbé	<a href="#">ALLSAFE</a>
Erik-Jan Hoekstra	<a href="#">The Thrive</a>
Evelien van Geemen	<a href="#">Hogeschool van Amsterdam</a>
Ewout Langemeijer	<a href="#">Corpag</a>
Fransje Westermann	<a href="#">Randstad</a>   <a href="#">Auteur Is brak een gevoel?</a>
Jaap Heeringa	<a href="#">Boer &amp; Croon</a>
Jan-Hein Schouten	<a href="#">Schouten &amp; Nelissen</a>
Joris Nagtzaam	<a href="#">Nagtzaam Accountants &amp; Fiscalisten</a>
Laurens Simonse	<a href="#">Team Rockstars IT</a>
Machteld Pot	<a href="#">Hoek en Blok</a>
Madzy Maljaars	<a href="#">Erasmus MC</a>   <a href="#">Maljaars Mediation</a>
Marc Schram	<a href="#">Proud People</a>
Matthijs Claessens	<a href="#">Proud People</a>
Maurice Schouten	<a href="#">Taxperience</a>
Minka Driessen	<a href="#">SBMOffshore</a>
Rob Hendriks	<a href="#">Simmons &amp; Simmons</a>
Roelof Gerritsen	<a href="#">Atlas Tax Lawyers</a>
Ruben Spelier	<a href="#">Creatief Perspectief</a>
Selma de Ridder	<a href="#">TU Delft</a>
Willem van der Steen	<a href="#">PI Marketing</a>

**Thank you for your contributions to this first edition of Yellow Tuesday!**

## BEFORE YOU GO....

**Excited to continue the conversation about development? Let us know!**

There is nothing we would rather talk about so be welcome and do get in touch.



**MARIKEN KOOI**

+31 6 30 05 07 32

[mariken@double-oo.com](mailto:mariken@double-oo.com)



**RAYMOND DE LOOZE**

+31 6 21 87 32 71

[raymond@double-oo.com](mailto:raymond@double-oo.com)

DOUBLE 

[www.double-oo.com](http://www.double-oo.com)



[www.diygoeroe.nl](http://www.diygoeroe.nl)