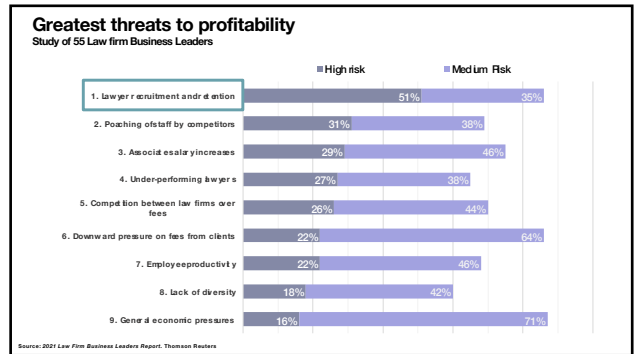**Taking care of our assets
– looking after our people**

The Law Firm of the Future
International Bar Association
Stockholm May 5 2022

Jens Näsström, Occupational Psychologist

©2022 Jens Näsström

1

Greatest threats to profitability
Study of 55 Law firm Business Leaders

■ High risk   ■ Medium Risk

	High risk	Medium Risk
1. Lawyer recruitment and retention	51%	35%
2. Poaching of staff by competitors	31%	38%
3. Associate salary increases	29%	46%
4. Under-performing lawyers	27%	38%
5. Competition between law firms over fees	26%	44%
6. Downward pressure on fees from clients	22%	64%
7. Employee productivity	22%	46%
8. Lack of diversity	18%	42%
9. General economic pressures	16%	71%

Source: *2021 Law Firm Business Leaders Report.* Thomson Reuters

2

Trends

- Stress levels are high
- Intensified war on talent fanned by high staff turnover
- Shift in values?

©2022 Jens Näsström

3

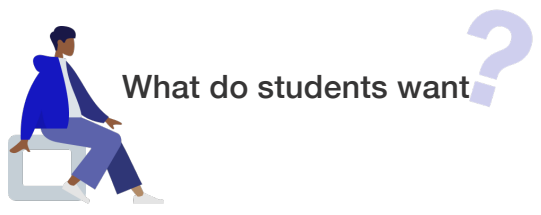---

1. Recruiting & well-being

©2022 Jens Näsström

4

What do students want ?

©2022 Jens Näsström

5

WHICH ARE YOUR MAIN CONCERNS ABOUT WORK?

Importance/priority

	Top	Mid	Low
Many hours of work	47 %	30 %	22 %
Work-life balance	36 %	37 %	27 %
Competition with other lawyers	34 %	33 %	33 %
Work culture	27 %	40 %	33 %
Pressure from leaders	26 %	47 %	27 %
Difficult tasks	25 %	45 %	30 %
Discrimination	15 %	21 %	64 %
Lack of diversity	14 %	23 %	63 %

©2022 Jens Näsström

6

Slide 7

Student version of work-life balance:
"The demands in my studies have a negative impact on my private life"

■ 800+ Swedish top students in law school

Fully disagree	Disagree	Neither nor	Do agree	Fully agree
8,6%	14,6%	19,0%	35,4%	22,4%

©2022 Jens Näsström

7

Slide 8

SLEEP PROBLEMS

Law firm students	All law students	Lawyers
2,7	2,8	2,2

©2022 Jens Näsström

8

Slide 9

K6 – Kessler distress scale

Law firm students	Lawyers
2,4	2,0

©2022 Jens Näsström

9

Slide 10

K6 – Kessler distress scale

■ Law firm students

Low or no distress	Moderate distress	Severe distress
12,9%	53,6%	33,5%

©2022 Jens Näsström

10

Slide 11

Lawyer Burnout Prevalence

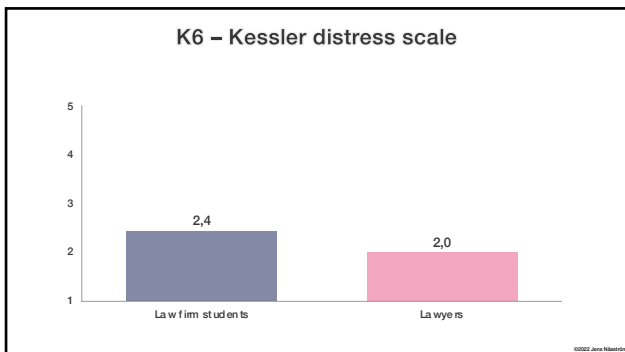Burnout level among lawyers

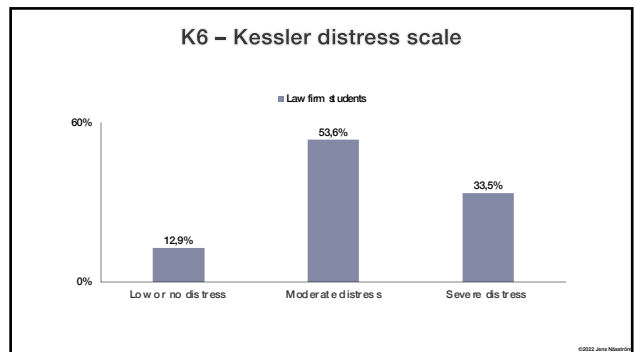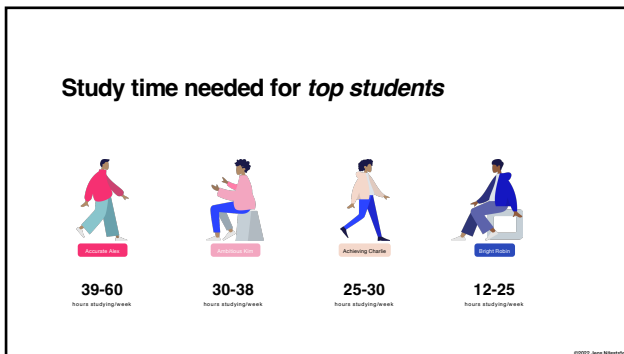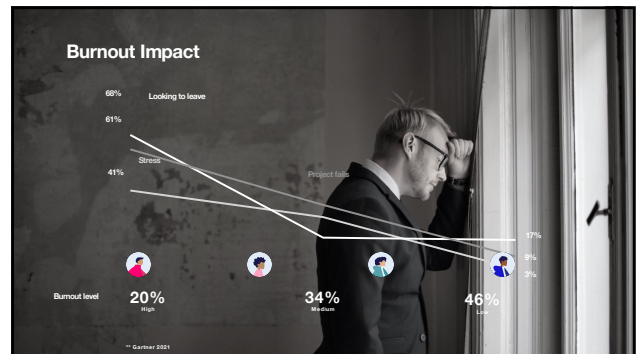**20%** High   **34%** Medium   **46%** Low

** Gartner 2021

11

Slide 12

What's the problem with current recruiting?

The Stanford Duck Syndrome

©2022 Jens Näsström

12

Slide 13

Study time needed for *top students*

Accurate Alex	Ambitious Kim	Achieving Charlie	Bright Robin
39-60	**30-38**	**25-30**	**12-25**
hours studying/week	hours studying/week	hours studying/week	hours studying/week

13

Slide 14

Burnout Impact

68% Looking to leave
61%
41% Stress
Project fails
17%
9%
3%

Burnout level
20% High
34% Medium
46% Low

** Gartner 2021

14

Slide 15

Pacing

Activity zone	Purpose	Average power
Zone 1	Active recovery	< 55%
Zone 2	Long term endurance	56-75%
Zone 3	Tempo	76-90%
Zone 4	Making a push	91-105%
Zone 5	Maximum	106-120%
Zone 6	Pushing way too hard	121-150%

15

Slide 16

Pacing
- My inner conversation

If I fail my Life is over!
Off=lazy
I can always Do more
I am a Failure
Work harder!
"I must never-ever make a mistake!"
I'm never good Enough
AVOID CATASTROPHY
You snooze You lose
Work late every day
I will get No second chance
Answer all Mails within 1 Minute
24/7
I must not Fail
Someone Is always better
Accurate Alex
mistake= disaster

16

Slide 17

Pacing
- My inner conversation

If I fail, I will take responsibility And move on
How much work Is necessary?
I need to take A break now
Off=necessary
I am Good at something
Let me check If I made a mistake
I'm good enough
I WILL FIX ANY CATASTROPHY
Pay attention!
I will work late And get extra rest tomorrow
I will ask For a second chance
I check emails As often as is Necessary
Working 9-5, 7-9
By planning. I avoid mistakes
I will do My very best
Bright Robin
mistake= Learning opportunity

17

Slide 18

Do you put demands on yourself in your studies?

■ Law firm students

No	Yes, but no effect	Yes, effects positively	Yes, effects negatively
3%	13%	25%	58%

18

Slide 19
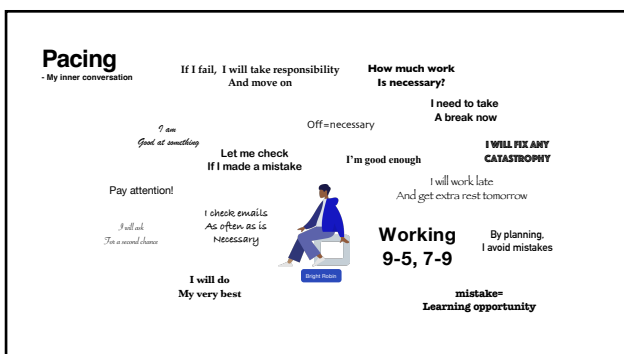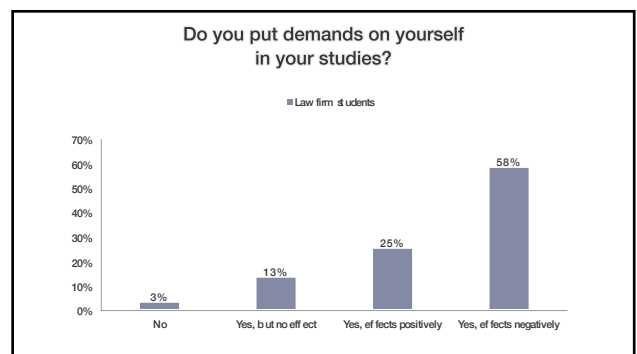
Organizational context in law firms: UNCERTAINTY AMPLIFICATION

- Up or out
- Prestige associated with the position and fear of high psychological, social, and economic losses if failing
- High demands in the workplace: qualitatively, quantitatively, time wise
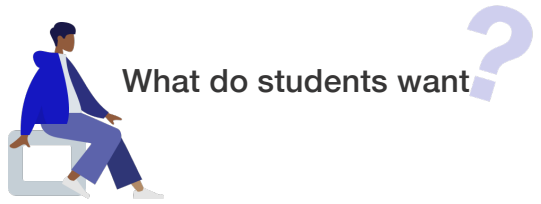- Very low tolerance for mistakes

19

Slide 20

Lawyer performance

"Studies show that top-performing lawyers outstrip other lawyers in competencies such as stress management, independence, self-knowledge, general mood, problem solving, and interpersonal competencies."

– Susan Daicoff, author of *Lawyer, Know Thyself*
J.D., LL.M., M.S. Professor of Law
at Arizona Summit Law School

Daicoff, Susan. Lawyer, Know Thyself. 2004.

©2022 Jens Näsström

20

Slide 21

What do students want ?

©2022 Jens Näsström

21

Slide 22

WHICH ARE YOUR MAIN CONCERNS ABOUT WORK?

	Importance/priority		
	Top	Mid	Low
Many hours of work	47 %	30 %	22 %
Work-life balance	36 %	37 %	27 %
Competition with other lawyers	34 %	33 %	33 %
Work culture	27 %	40 %	33 %
Pressure from leaders	26 %	47 %	27 %
Difficult tasks	25 %	45 %	30 %
Discrimination	15 %	21 %	64 %
Lack of diversity	14 %	23 %	63 %

©2022 Jens Näsström

22

Slide 23

What do law students want?

A SUCCESSFUL CAREER
– traditional employer branding

TRUST & CONNECTION
– the differentiator

- themselves
- the firm
- pre-career relationships

©2022 Jens Näsström

23

Slide 24

Screening 1: Psychometric (incl. resilience) — Easiest to screen quickly

Screening 2: CV & Grades

Career Program — G-3 — Psychosocial evaluation. Spotting promising candidates for mentorship program

Mentorship Program — G-2 — Leadership training for Junior Associates. Soft skills training for mentors & mentees

Summer Trainee Program — G-1
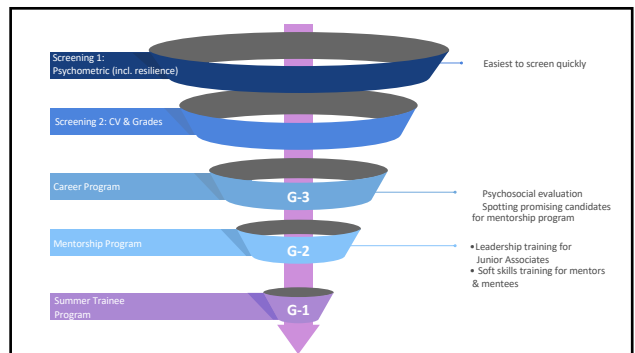
24

2. Hybrid work & leadership

25

Pros of office based work

- Established and proven
- Collaboration
- Professional development
- Social life of the firm

26

Cons of office based work

- **Unflexible working arrangement**
- **Reduces work-life balance**
- **Employer branding problem**

27

<u>Hybrid leadership:</u>
Structure, clarity,
psychological safety
and *connection*

28

Gold Standard Hybrid Leadership

- Top quality delegations
- Sincere 1-0-1 checkins
- Honest and psychologically safe evaluations
  of well-being and work processes in the team

29

3. Legal workflow redesigned

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

Slide 37

Means of delegation among 505 Swedish lawyers (2021)

Category	Percentage
E-Mail	42,5%
Telephone	16,9%
Meetings	32,6%

©2022 Jens Näström

37

Slide 38

Effects of increasing emails

- Increasing amount of time spent on email
- Raising volumes of email

→ Email overload →

- Higher levels of burnout
- Lowered performance
- Reduced *task coordination*

Sources: Barley et al., 2011; Dabbish & Kraut, 2006; Mark et al., 2016

©2022 Jens Näström

38

Slide 39
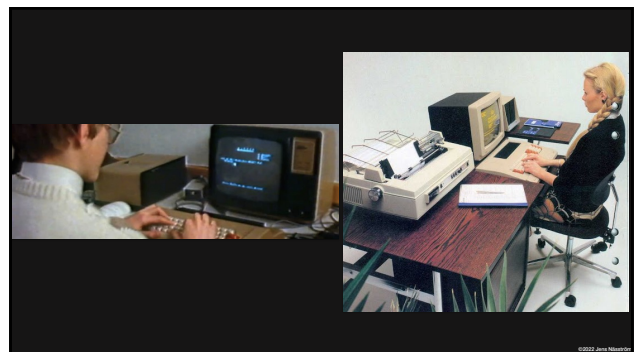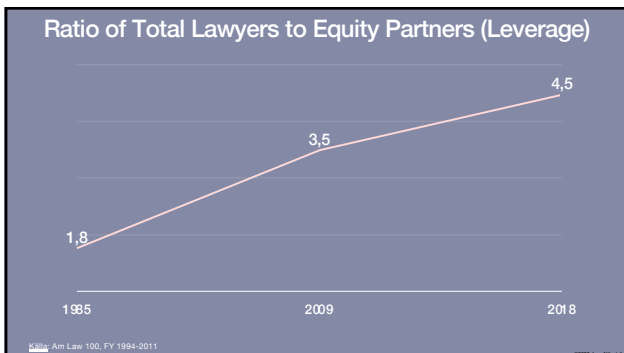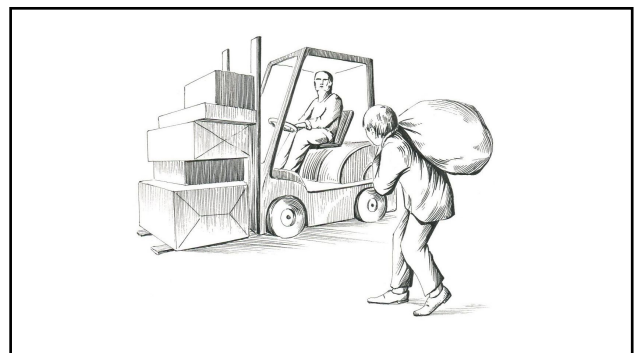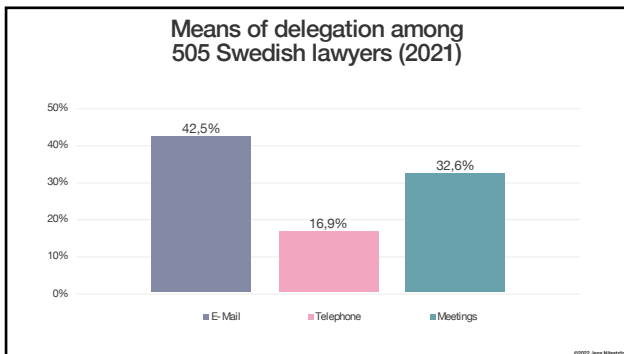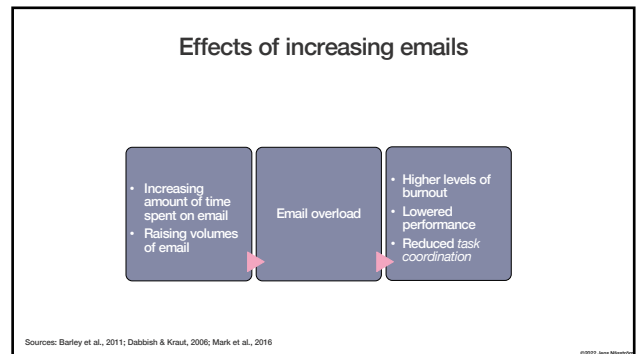
What suggestions would you give to leaders to improve their leadership in remote mode?

"Take your time to delegate the task properly in order to receive a better final product."

©2021 Jens Näström

39

Slide 40

Rules of engagement

Communication channel	Push or pull?	Urgent?	Pros
Email	Pull	✖	Instructions, documents, CC:, documented trail
Phone	Push	✔	Confirmation, follow up questions
Text message	Push	✔	Respectful push alt. simple message – *Could you call me?*

40

Slide 41

2019:

This industry can't function effectively in remote mode.

©2022 Jens Näström

41

Slide 42

2022:

We made it through a pandemic in remote mode.

What else can we do that is "impossible"?

©2022 Jens Näström

42

Thank you.

jens@ambitionprofile.com

Welcome to connect on Linkedin

43