



#R2T | Strengthened connections with a side of coleslaw

1 min read | 01 Dec 2021 | [Derek Brown](#)

While the way we work has changed, the importance of connections has not. Even the smallest gesture to bring people together can have a huge impact on team culture, as FSO Audit Partner Steve Kenny demonstrated when he hosted Tysons FSO Assurance professionals over the summer for a #R2T moment.

They gathered in his driveway, noshed on platters from Mookie's BBQ, and enjoyed seeing fellow team members, some for the first time since joining the firm during the pandemic.

"It's important to remember that we're colleagues but we're human first," shared Steve. "With the end of summer approaching it was important to reconnect and share our experiences from the time we spent apart," Steve added that face-to-face interactions with team members are something that many people miss, and he's challenging himself and others to create more opportunities to get together as a group in a fun setting and strengthen the connections to our purpose and colleagues.

"Having only met so many people through virtual meetings, being able to finally connect in person made me feel so welcome to the team," said Nicole Schwien, a senior in the Tysons FSO assurance practice. "You hear so often that it's the people that make EY great, and getting together like this, when so many of us are in similar situations adapting to a hybrid work environment, truly affirms that."

Kudos to the team for adapting to the changing dynamics of our work and demonstrating WOW in action!

Return to Together (#R2T) is a campaign powered by the EY Way of Working (WOW) that helps us think intentionally about moments of connection. While the road ahead is different for all of us, #R2T will share how FSOers are meeting the changing dynamics of work-life — and how we can all help to build high-performing, well-connected teams.



Save the date: July 19: We're gonna need a faster boat

I'm going to start with a story and a challenge.

In 1998, Ben Hunt-Davis was part of an underachieving Olympic rowing team that set themselves what seemed like an improbable goal of winning an Olympic Gold Medal at the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

To achieve that goal required experienced rowers to find a whole new way of working. The first step was to examine everything they were doing through the lens of one question: [Will It Make The Boat Go Faster?](#) If yes, they would continue to do it. If the answer was no, they'd strengthen their focus around the tactics that did work. As their boat became more efficient through the water, the team became more efficient in the execution of the race. Just 2 years later, the team won the very gold medal they set out to claim.

As I begin my role of FSO Accounts Managing Partner, one of my highest priorities is to foster a high-performance culture where our teaming is at the core of how we operate. That is my challenge and one I am confident we will achieve together.

I hope you'll join me, along with Ben Hunt-Davis of 2000 gold medal rowing team and executive coach Harriet Beveridge from the leadership and performance consultancy, on July 19 to learn more about how we can individually, and collectively as a team, make our boat go faster.

I'm confident this event will make each of us look at new ways we can expand our client relationships, identify new engagement opportunities and bring a mindset of continuous and collective innovation to our team.

Those who attend will also have a chance to win one of five books by Ben and Harriet on strategies, habits and mindset that the gold medal crew adopted and how to use similar strategies in your own professional growth.

I hope that you'll make time to attend. We will provide a replay link for those unable to be there in person.

Mike



Julio Castillo: A man with a mustache on a mission

2 min read | 14 Nov 2021 | [Derek Brown](#)

In 2015, FSO Tax Senior Manager Julio Castillo began growing a mustache. Seven years later, that mustache, and the man attached to it, continue to raise money and awareness for men's health. FSO Flash met with Julio to let readers know a little more about what it means to be "StacheStrong."

FSO Flash: How did your mustache start?

Julio Castillo: In 2015, I started growing the mustache to raise awareness for men's health — mainly suicide prevention and prostate and testicular cancer — through Movember Foundation. Earlier this year, an EY friend introduced me to StacheStrong, a charity that supports research for brain cancer.

FF: What made you focus on StacheStrong?

JC: The charity was created by GJ Gerner, an EY alum who was diagnosed with glioblastoma in 2017. Unfortunately, he lost his battle two years later, but through StacheStrong his legacy continues. It's a smaller charity, and 99% of all funds raised go directly to funding brain cancer research. This year, I had that feeling inside me that was whispering "support StacheStrong."

I still support Movember, as there are some folks that are loyal to this foundation, but at the end all that matters is to raise men's awareness regardless of the charity you support, and sometimes what makes a big difference can be something as simple as asking with these three simple words: *How are you?*

FF: What has been the reaction?

JC: It's been great. This year a lot of people supported the change and donated to StacheStrong, and some keep donating to Movember. One thing I noticed this year and that I loved is that people open up with me and share that they have a friend or family member that's been affected by brain cancer. I appreciate connecting on more a personal level with some folks because they have opened to say thanks for doing this.