The Joule hotel and its cantilevered rooftop pool
ARE AUSTRALIAN LEADERS BECOMING TOO COMPLACENT? WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO TAKE EVERYTHING TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

JANE NICHOLLS SEEKS OUT SOME SMART THINKING ON HOW TO INSPIRE PEOPLE, ORGANISATIONS AND EVEN NATIONS.

AUSTRALIA is lagging. As the golden era of mining dims, we are ranked 23rd on the Global Innovation Index, with New Zealand, Canada and Iceland among those in front. Leaders with the vision and courage to drive the nation’s future fortunes are desperately needed but short-term thinking and titular hierarchies remain entrenched in many C-suites. It’s old-style leadership that’s “no longer fit for purpose in the cyber physical age”, says Anthony Mitchell, co-founder of management consultancy Bendelta.

In what World Economic Forum founder Klaus Schwab dubbed the “fourth Industrial Revolution” – more than two centuries after the first – technology is integrated into every corner of our hyper-connected lives. With the rise of robotics, and machine learning and AI continuing to take over more mundane tasks, the role of humans at work – in everything from technology to manufacturing – has moved up the value chain since the model that emerged during the first Industrial Revolution where “you wanted people to operate machines in a reliable, consistent fashion”, says Mitchell.

In this digitised world, he adds, “You need people being creative, collaborative, customer-centred, empathetic, nimble, strategic and judicious.” But in Australia, “there’s a degree of complacency around leadership” that can stymie progress. Here, five Australians who’ve thought about the transformation of work offer pointers for leaders at every level to get the most out of themselves – and their organisations.
FOUR CHANGE factors are challenging leaders, says work futurist Dominic Price, head of R&D at Atlassian: the pace of advancing technology; millennials wanting to act with purpose and impact; customers expecting more; and competition from "everywhere and anywhere" as barriers to entry flatten. In the face of such shifts, he says, "The longer you’ve been in leadership, the more things you know, which means there are more things that you need to unlearn."

Price schedules a quarterly "retrospective" where he reassesses his leadership style. "I ask myself, 'What have I loved, what have I longed for and what have I loathed?'" From that, he identifies what to stop doing and replaces it with something he’s longing to do. "I'm a constrained resource as a human being," he explains. "I only have so many hours a day and so much energy. How do I, as a leader, use that on the most impactful thing? I can't just repeat what I did last year and be successful."

At Atlassian, the notion of leadership has been flipped on its head, says Price. Influence is "based purely on what you know and how you apply it... we don't have positional power." The model is simply "to create safe environments for people to go and explore and have powerful arguments and debates", while the role of good leadership is to set a strong vision "and then kind of get out of the way."

And it’s about aptitude, not years in the job. He quotes Patty McCord, former chief talent officer for Netflix, whose philosophy was to "hire, reward and tolerate only fully formed adults", no matter their age, based on their ability and mental state. Perhaps surprisingly, technical skills aren’t necessarily the No.1 consideration for Atlassian. It looks to hire graduates with "aptitude and passion matched to our values", says Price. "A lot of softer skills [such as emotional intelligence and creativity] actually aren’t very soft and are very hard to acquire."

He likes to cite non-tech companies he believes are getting modern workplace culture right, such as ING and ABN Amro. "In an industry as archaic as financial services, both of these companies have undergone massive transformations to create a more agile, nimble way of working."

Nucor is another favourite example. "The steel industry is very traditional, very old-school – just get the steel out of the ground, sell it and we'll be fine," says Price. "But Nucor took on the practices of technology firms – small, autonomous teams empowering their people and giving them a vision, direction, freedom and innovation – and put them in a steel company. They’ve outperformed their nearest competitor in terms of dollars per employee by a factor of about five or six. It shows that with the right passion and leadership, you can transform any type of organisation."
MAXIMUS is a consultancy helping companies rethink organisational architecture and leadership development programs as they deal with disruption and transformation. Its founder and managing director, Vanessa Gavan, defines the modern leader as someone who “can build a coalition of the willing around them” and look outside both their company and their country to do so. “It’s not only important to be able to compete on a global level,” she says, but also to partner with and learn from companies facing similar challenges.

Countries from around the world are encouraging collaboration between industry and universities. Israeli startup Zebra Medical Vision, which is pairing advanced machine learning with medical imaging to build fast and accurate diagnostic tools, lists the University of Oxford and Cedars-Sinai among its many partners and a Utah-based not-for-profit healthcare group among its investors. “Australia hasn’t had a strong model of enterprise partnering with research institutions,” says Gavan.

Data61 is a stride in that direction. Established 17 months ago by CSIRO chief executive Larry Marshall, Data61 is working to connect government, industry and academia in an Australian innovation ecosystem and boost R&D across areas as diverse as cybersecurity, smart cities, personalised medical treatment, agribusiness and fintech.

Gavan is passionate about training leaders in such a focused pursuit of collaboration. Breaking down transformation into smaller parts is key. “Let’s say you want to build more agility into the organisation, that means you need to take away some of the controls and the processes that are slowing you down,” she says. “You do that in one part of the business, test, learn, get the quick wins, understand what’s working and extrapolate across the business.”

Maximus injected that thinking into The League, a talent-acceleration program that it developed for high-potential leaders at Telstra. The program included a trip to Silicon Valley but Gavan cautions against vague corporate tourism and focuses on the lessons that can be learnt through commonalities. “It’s very easy to go and see Facebook and LinkedIn and understand what they’re doing,” she says, “but you want leaders to connect with organisations that have similar challenges and to get them developing relationships, cohort to cohort.”

For The League program, Maximus targeted incumbents over startups. “We looked at Adobe’s digital transition and at GE Digital, because they’re a big incumbent trying to drastically revolutionise the way they think about technology,” says Gavan. To get a leg-up in understanding a company’s problems and opportunities, she adds, “You need to look to organisations that have solved or are part way through solving similar problems.”
LEADERSHIP in Australia has become “fragmented, hidden and scared”, says Ralph Ashton, co-founder and executive director of the Australian Futures Project, a not-for-profit that, responding to bipartisan urging, has created leadership programs for public servants and MPs. Ashton thinks decades of prosperity has bred a sense of apathy around leadership, which his group is working to change. “Traditional leaders have retreated and become meek, enfeebled and, in some cases, simply gutless,” he says. While he has some sympathy for leaders, ruing the “chase and kill” short-term scrutiny lasered on them, he adds, “I feel like we’re all asking, ‘Where is the authority, where is the power, where is the leadership?’"

Initiatives such as My Big Idea (2016) and this year’s What’s the Future foster discussion around such critical issues as the energy crisis, the future of work and housing affordability. According to Ashton, politicians told the project, “We’re good at being elected but once we’re in Parliament, it’s a really hard job and we have no training.” Ashton’s team worked with the ALP and the Liberal Party to create a program to “give parliamentarians – federal, state and from all parties – the opportunity to take some time out to develop their skills”.

The Australian Futures Project aims to “encourage, embolden and enable” corporate and political leaders, as well as help all Australians see the opportunity to “step up and lead, even if it’s only in their suburb or even in their street”. Success requires the nation to vacate its corner and give leaders “the leeway to make good long-term decisions, stick with them and [know they will] make some mistakes along the way towards success. We need to back off a bit.”

“SHORT-TERMISM is death for companies, for governments, for all parts of society,” says Jennifer Westacott, chief executive of the Business Council of Australia. “Long-term thinking requires patient capital, patient investors.”

That means progress isn’t always on an upwards trajectory. “With the competitive threats they have to face, sometimes companies are going to have to take a sideways or backwards step. That requires everyone – the teams, the shareholders – to be patient. It also requires the CEO to paint a very clear picture of the context and direction.”

Overall, says Westacott, the corporate landscape has changed for the better. She sometimes finds it hard to locate a CEO among the hot desks but moving the furniture around isn’t the main game. “Some sectors aren’t thinking through the entrepreneurial part of their organisation: how do you keep a startup culture, even in established companies?”

Westacott urges focus on the “completely unforeseen threat that comes from a technological innovation or a consumer innovation”. Companies able to define their mission are best placed in this age of disruption. “Purpose is more than financial returns,” she adds. “What is their compelling reason for being?” She lauds those companies that “stare into their problems” and says that, more than ever, audacity is essential. “Companies that don’t take on controversy, that don’t have a compelling purpose, that fiddle at the edges, are tremendously at risk of being taken out.”
Genevieve Bell of ANU on
which Australian traits to cherish (and which to lose)

Bell’s concerns centre on the fact that Australia is “shackled by its less-than-robust technical infrastructure” and she says that the Snowy Mountains Scheme – the nation’s 1950s visionary triumph of engineering – wouldn’t get built in today’s climate. Yet she is determinedly optimistic about her homeland’s true potential. “We have a prosperous, educated country full of ideas,” she says. “We need to work out what the critical problems are and direct our energy towards solving them.”

Bell advises modern leaders to engage externally and find trusted collaborators. “And manifest behaviour that says, ‘I look outside the walls of our company every day and I’m celebrating different kinds of behaviour inside our company, too.’”

Last year, after three decades in the United States, anthropologist Genevieve Bell returned to Australia to become professor of engineering and computer science at the Australian National University in Canberra. The country she found on her return is “much more risk-averse”, she says. “It’s about ‘manage risk to zero’. Really? I grew up with ‘just have a go and see what happens’.”

The professor suggests that the tall poppy syndrome and affluence-engendered apathy have undermined Australia’s freewheeling national identity. Bell, who spent much of her career in Silicon Valley at Intel, for which she remains a senior fellow, identifies some “exquisitely Australian” challenges.
Life insurance company TAL has been named employer of choice three years in a row, thanks to its emphasis on gender equality and closing the pay gap. The next step for its CEO? Tackling mental health.

By Kirsten Galliott.

Brett Clark

How do you define good leadership?
Humility, equality and inclusion. Those are the attributes I think about in terms of leadership. When I turn up to work, I turn up as part of the team.

Has the ego-driven CEO disappeared?
Well, there are different types of CEOs and leaders – and I'm not saying one style's good and one style's bad – but I'm not the rock-star CEO [laughs]. That's not me. Authenticity is a word that gets thrown around a lot but I really do believe in it. I've got to be who I am; I can't present another version of me. People see through that straightaway.

You've been in the job for two-and-a-half years now.
I do it very consciously; I have work patterns that I talk to people about. During the week, I work pretty hard. I spend a lot of time working and thinking about work – and that's inside the office and outside the office. I have a young family and, for me, it's not about spending time with them – it's about being present with them. On the weekends, particularly Saturday and most of Sunday, I try not to work so that I'm present with my family.

It's a difficult one to get right, isn't it?
Everyone does it in different ways and you have to respect different people's patterns. That's why I talk to people openly about what my pattern is so they understand it. Of course, I'm the CEO for a large
AIG Life

Managing director

Tenure 2.5 years

Current role Group CEO and managing director, TAL

Previous roles CEO and managing director of TAL Life; CEO of TAL Retail Life; deputy managing director of AIG Life; and chief actuary of AIG Life

Business so I’m always on call but understanding people’s patterns creates respect.

When and where do you do your best thinking?

I can be bold on some things but on other things I like to hear, reflect and seek other views. That can happen in the workplace or it can happen in the car. There’s no real time or place for me but I’m a reflective thinker in the way I process information and think about ideas and challenges.

Mental health is a pet project of yours. Why is that?

It’s a significant social issue and it’s a big part of our business. Last year, mental illness was the second most significant source of claims after cancer.

How much did you pay out?

It was more than $200 million last year for mental illness claims. This is a community issue that we need to help solve for our customers. It’s also a significant issue for our staff; we need to ensure that we have a mentally well and healthy workplace.

You’ve hired a head of mental health, psychologist Glenn Baird. In practical terms, what does his role involve?

There are internal and external dimensions to it. Internally, in terms of the mental wellness of our staff, we need to do all we can to provide a workplace that is healthy. In business, we are insurance experts and we like to think we know a little bit about mental health but we’re not mental health experts. The more we can understand mental health, the better we can cater for people with mental illness.

What does it look like internally? Counselling, meditation?

The best way to describe it is we look at mental health across multiple dimensions—physical health, mental health and financial health—and we have programs across all those dimensions. We have a really strong physical health program here and a gym that’s free for staff to use, with a lot of physical activity classes—we believe there’s a strong connection to mental health. We also put a lot of focus on R U OK? Day, employee assistance programs and counselling where necessary.

Insurance companies are often painted as the big bad wolf. How do you work with the community to dispel that?

We spend a lot of time thinking about reputation. When you come to a business like ours, what are you buying? You buy a promise that when you’re going through difficult times, we will be there to help and support you. And to come on that journey with us, you have to trust us. Our whole business is built on reputation, trust and confidence.

Why do you think TAL has been named employer of choice by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) for three years in a row?

We have thought more broadly about what diversity and inclusion mean for the business. We spend a lot of time on those issues because it’s the right thing to do and reflects our place in society. And the commercial business case has been proven time and time again.

What do you think every company should be doing to promote equality and diversity?

You have to take a stand on it. We have complete commitment to gender equality. We didn’t stop until we achieved what we set out to achieve (50 per cent gender representation through the organisation and flexible working, which has been taken up by 60 per cent of employees; the next objective is equality in leadership positions by 2020). I’m a big believer in doing less really, really well.

How do you wind down?

I don’t want to be the CEO who wakes up in 10 years’ time and wonders where my kids’ childhood went. I will not be that person.

So the weekend is family time?

I’m pretty rigorous about that. I also try to keep active.

Do you use the gym at TAL?

Absolutely. I’m in the change rooms with everyone. I think it’s more uncomfortable for them than it is for me! We talk about all sorts of things and I love all the banter.

What advice would you give to a new CEO?

Turn up as who you are; don’t turn up as anyone else. Don’t try to be another CEO that you might see somewhere else or read about in the paper. You can only be who you are and if you try to be anyone else, you will fail. ●
TEXAN FOLKLORE has it that Dallas was established by hookers and horse rustlers. If that’s true, it seems those ne’er-do-wells had a knack for urban design, too. Not only is the Big D built to a perfect grid, it’s also roughly equidistant from the United States’ east and west coasts, which has seen its airport become one of the busiest in the world in terms of footfall.

Forbes magazine pinpointed Dallas as the No.1 place to buy property in America in 2017, as growth – in terms of both population and international business – continues to accelerate. Things are very much on the up and up here; even the Dallas Cowboys have their best team in a generation and look to be Super Bowl contenders again.

The majority of business is centred on Downtown Dallas, about 35 kilometres from Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport. From here, the neighbourhoods fan out in every direction, most notably the vogueish Dallas Design District to the north-west and hipster haven Deep Ellum to the east. Head north and you’ll find Lower Greenville with its bustling cafés, restaurants and rooftop bars, while south-west of Downtown is the Bishop Arts District, a hub of unconventional boutiques, concept stores and art galleries.

Throw in the Dallas Arts District (19 blocks crammed with museums, restaurants, theatres, a Norman Foster-designed opera house and the Dallas Museum of Art) and you have one of the most dynamic and entertaining – yet underrated – cities in the US.
Forget about public transport – Dallas is a driving city. So if you don’t have a hire car, taxis or Uber are your best bet. Fortunately, price surges here are rarer than in most American cities.

**Grande dame**

**THE ADOLPHUS HOTEL**

@1321 Commerce Street, Downtown @hotel.qantas.com.au/theadolphusdallas

The Adolphus Hotel has received guests for more than a century (opposite); behind its magnificent Neo-Gothic façade (above) are modern, art-filled interiors (below).

The Adolphus Hotel is to the Big D what the Waldorf Astoria is to the Big Apple: a beloved historic hotel with a built-in social scene that’s been attracting locals for more than a century. Built in 1912, this Beaux Arts masterpiece has hosted Queen Elizabeth II and baseballer Babe Ruth, who enjoyed its timeless architecture, first-class service and dynamic Downtown location.

**Business facilities** The 2230 square metres of meeting space includes five boardrooms and 22 rooms. City Hall Bar is a lively co-working area that serves coffee and snacks. Wi-fi Free throughout.

**Food and drink** At refurbished fine-diner The French Room, afternoon tea remains a drawcard. Rodeo Bar serves a mean Angus burger and is a more relaxed option.

**Fitness and wellbeing** There’s a spa and fitness centre but main bragging rights go to the rooftop grotto with splashes of space-age technology. The adjacent Vital Fitness Studio offers group sessions in cycling, yoga, boxing and high-intensity interval training.

**Run route** For a three-kilometre loop, turn right onto Commerce Street then right at South Houston Street after six blocks. Pass Dealey Plaza and the historic grassy knoll outside the old Texas School Book Depository. Turn right at the tram line and return to the hotel via Pacific Avenue, with another right turn at North Harwood Street.

**Coffee nearby** Urban Blend Coffee Co. (urbanblendcoffee.com) on Elm Street also does great smoothies.

**Luxury**

**THE JOULE**

@1530 Main Street, Downtown @hotel.qantas.com.au/thejouledallas

Housed in the former Dallas National Bank building, a magnificent Neo-Gothic edifice on Main Street, The Joule is the city’s hottest and most stylish hotel. It’s renowned for its spectacular cantilevered rooftop pool, world-class subterranean spa and multimillion-dollar art collection displayed throughout.

The hotel’s underground cocktail bar, Midnight Rambler, is one of the city’s most prominent nightspots, where the in-crowd goes to see and be seen (but sometimes struggles to be heard above the music).

**Business facilities** There’s more than 2780 square metres of indoor and outdoor meeting space, from terraces and salons to boardrooms and ballrooms. Wi-fi Free throughout.

**Food and drink** Buzzing Americano restaurant is great for lunch; check out the pizza menu and request a patio seat for people-watching. The cream of the crop for dinner is bouillabaisse with Gulf shrimp, mussels, spinach, calamari and saffron aioli is a must-order.

**Fitness and wellbeing** The 24-hour fitness centre is fitted out with aerobic equipment, free weights and strength-training machines. Deep beneath the lobby is one of the best spas in North America. A luxurious underground oasis, The Spa at The Joule is a geothermally inspired healing grotto with splashes of space-age technology. The adjacent Vita Fitness Studio offers group sessions in cycling, yoga, boxing and high-intensity interval training.

**Run route** Turn right onto Main Street and head east. Pass pretty Main Street Garden Park on your right before heading under the flyover and into Deep Ellum. Turn left onto Hall Street then left onto Elm Street to return to the hotel, a loop of four kilometres.

**Coffee nearby** The Joule has its own outstanding coffee shop, Weekend (see page 170).
Tip, tip, tip. Tip your barista, tip your Uber driver, tip your Stetson hat from Wild Bill’s. This is a town where manners are important. Remember to use “Sir” and “Ma’am” whenever possible and always add a tip of at least 15 per cent to any transaction.

Historic
ROSEWOOD MANSION ON TURTLE CREEK

@2821 Turtle Creek Boulevard, Uptown
@hotel.qantas.com.au/rosewoodmansionturtlecreek

Built in 1925 as the palatial home of a cotton baron, this mansion on a landscaped estate of almost two hectares was converted into a luxury hotel in 1979. Revered for its Renaissance-style décor, impeccable service and The Mansion Restaurant, it remains a Texan icon. Unlike Dallas’s other five-star options, it’s a short drive from Downtown, located on a terraced hill near the well-heeled suburb of Highland Park.

Business facilities Fully equipped private business offices of various sizes can be reserved, while more formal meetings can be held in one of the larger event spaces such as the Sheppard King Suite. Car transfers to off-site meetings within a five-mile (eight-kilometre) radius are complimentary. Wi-fi Free throughout.

Food and drink The Mansion Restaurant is lauded for its global twist on American cuisine, while Mansion Bar is perfect for mingling in stylish surroundings, closing deals and toasting new partnerships (try the hotel’s signature gin and tonic).

Fitness and wellbeing The outdoor pool with a Tuscan-inspired sun terrace is a genuine treat, particularly in a city where summer is almost permanent. The sizeable state-of-the-art gym is open 24/7 and personal training sessions are available on request.

Run route Cross over Turtle Creek Boulevard to meet up with the Katy Trail (katytraiddallas.org), a 5.6-kilometre pedestrian path that takes in some of the city’s parks.

Coffee nearby Popular neighbourhood haunt Oak Lawn Coffee (oaklawncoffee.com) is a 10-minute stroll from the hotel.

A Deluxe Room at Rosewood Mansion on Turtle Creek (above); Omni Dallas Hotel’s Texas Spice restaurant and bar (below)

Cutting-edge
OMNI DALLAS HOTEL

@555 South Lamar Street, Downtown
@hotel.qantas.com.au/omnidallashotel

On the underdeveloped south side of Downtown, the Omni Dallas Hotel offers spectacular views of the city skyline. Add an incredible rooftop pool, an impressive 1001 rooms and skybridge access to the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center – the largest in Dallas – and it’s ideal for hosting business travellers.

Business facilities The hotel can accommodate 2500 attendees in the Dallas Ballroom and has more than 13,200 square metres of function space, both indoor and outdoor. There’s even an on-site UPS Store for shipping presentation materials in and out. Wi-fi Free throughout.

Food and drink Enjoy cocktails by the fire pit on the Uptown Terrace, on the fourth-floor pool deck, with glorious views over Downtown Texas Spice, which focuses on Southern classics made with fresh, local ingredients, serves three meals daily. Other dining options include Bob’s Steak & Chop House and The Owners Box, a sports bar and grill.

Fitness and wellbeing Treadmills in the 24-hour fitness centre overlook Dallas’s skyline. The heated outdoor infinity swimming pool is open year-round, while Mokara Spa offers a full range of treatments.

Run route To access the 75-kilometre Trinity Skyline Trail, turn right onto South Market Street, then left onto Commerce Street and continue over the bridge to the trailhead at Trinity Overlook Park.

Coffee nearby As well as excellent brews, Opening Bell Coffee (openingbellcoffee.com) serves breakfast tacos in the morning and live music at night.
If in doubt, go the Cowboys. America’s Team — aka the Dallas Cowboys — are a city-wide obsession. Even the rare few who don’t follow the scores will have an opinion, normally about owner Jerry Jones or star quarterback Dak Prescott. Simply asking about the team will endear you to 90 per cent of locals.

Local knowledge

Restaurateur and entrepreneur Tina Miller shares five Dallas highlights.

1. Mokah Coffee & Tea (mokahcoffee.com) is my favourite place. It’s in Deep Ellum, tucked away near live-music venue The Bomb Factory. They brew amazing coffee and the atmosphere is chilled — a great place to power through emails.

2. For quirky gifts, go to Neighborhood (neighborhoodstore.com) in the Bishop Arts District. It’s an eclectic store with all kinds of imaginative pieces, including homewares, accessories and jewellery.

3. For a morning treat, I often head to Village Baking Co’s boulangerie (villagebakingco.com) on Lower Greenville. Their croissants are to die for.

4. The food-truck scene in Dallas, particularly around Klyde Warren Park, is great. Check out the incredible sausages from Just Encased (justencaseddfw.com).

5. Dallas Farmers Market (dallasfarmersmarket.org) is a must-see. The place is packed with entrepreneurial, family-run food ventures and craft shops. It’s the epiphany of the American dream.

BETWEEN MEETINGS

JFK MUSEUM
More than 60 per cent of Americans believe that president John F. Kennedy’s assassination in Dallas on 22 November 1963 was part of a conspiracy. Explore the story from every angle at the outstanding Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza (jfk.org) in the former Texas School Book Depository building. Set aside at least two hours — despite its name, the museum is spread over several floors.

BARBERSHOP BAR
In need of a spruce-up after a long flight? Head straight for the brick-lined High & Tight Barbershop (highandtightbarber.com) on Main Street in Deep Ellum. The 1920s-inspired barbershop conceals a “speakeasy” behind the back wall that serves classic cocktails.

BEST BARBECUE
Folks here take Texas barbecue very seriously and are fiercely defensive of its claim to be the country’s best. Judge for yourself at the most popular joint in town, Pecan Lodge (pecanlodge.com). The pit-smoked food here is exceptional — just ask the patrons queuing out the door, around the corner and into the car park every lunchtime.

URBAN GREEN
Klyde Warren Park (klydewarrenpark.org) is a superb place for a mid-meeting stroll. Built over a former recessed freeway, this beautifully landscaped park links the Dallas Arts District and Uptown. Choose a book from one of the free outdoor lending stacks and wander over to Lark on the Park (larkonthepark.com) for one of their mouth-watering housemade sandwiches.

WESTERN STYLE
If you’re after a classic souvenir from Texas, check out Wild Bill’s Western Store (wildbillswestern.com), which stocks everything from cowhide boots and Stetsons to bolo ties. Everyone from Bon Jovi to Mick Jagger has been kitted out here and the store has created the costumes for several films and TV shows.

Klyde Warren Park
an urban green space built over the Woodall Rodgers Freeway
QBUSINESS.

Dress up a little. Dallas is a very fashion-focused city and people tend to err towards the smarter side, particularly for meetings and dinner. Gone are the shoulder pads and power dressing of the '80s TV series but a blazer and smart shoes goes a long way, even in a relaxed bar environment.

**Breakfast meeting**

**ASCENSION**

@1601 Elm Street, Downtown  
adascensiondallas.com

Light, bright and airy, Ascension is perfectly positioned in the middle of Downtown within easy walking distance of many of the major hotels. Founded by an Australian, Russell Hayward, this cheery café-restaurant is the ideal place to host an upbeat early-morning meeting from 7am. The croque madame eggs Benedict is a perennial favourite.

**Dining alone**

**MERCAT BISTRO**

@2501 North Harwood Street,  
Harwood @mercabistro.com

Tucked away in dainty Harwood – an arty district between Downtown and Uptown – Mercat Bistro is lively and welcoming without being even remotely overbearing. There are plenty of seats for solo diners at the chic metallic bar. Alternatively, small Parisian-style tables dotted about the bistro are perfect for one. The French-themed menu is exemplary and includes possibly the best steak tartare this side of the pond.

**Business dinner**

FEARING’S

@The Ritz-Carlton, Dallas,  
2121 McKinney Avenue, Uptown  
fearingsrestaurant.com

Run by celebrity chef Dean Fearing (aka “the father of Southwestern cuisine”), this establishment is known for hearty Texan food served with a fine-dining flourish. Standouts include the Dr Pepper-braised Rosewood Ranch short ribs with whipped potatoes and crisp tobacco onions. There’s prime celebrity-spotting to be had, too. Fearing, who is also a musician, sometimes treats diners to an electric-guitar performance. The restaurant benefits from its position on the ground floor of The Ritz-Carlton hotel and staff will happily customise a menu or arrange a private room for larger groups.

**Drinks with clients**

THE TIPSY ALCHEMIST

@2101 Cedar Springs Road, Uptown  
@thetipsyalchemist.com

High-end and hipster in equal doses, The Tipsy Alchemist looks like the conflation of an industrial laboratory and a boutique hotel. The theatrics involved in cocktail creation (think tubes, funnels, liquid nitrogen) are invariably impressive but the finished products alone are worth the journey. Try the Smoking Barrel Old Fashioned served with brûléed vanilla sugar.

**Flight path**

**DFW**

Qantas flies to Dallas from Sydney, with connections from other Australian capital cities. qantas.com

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**WORD OF MOUTH**

**Coffee pit stop**

**WEEKEND**

@1511 Commerce Street, Downtown  
@ahhweekend.com

Despite the name, Weekend is open daily from 6.30am to 6pm. Located at the foot of The Joule hotel, this sleek white establishment – think bohemian barista meets Apple Store – prides itself on using high-quality ingredients, including beans from Seattle’s famed Victrola Coffee Roasters. Simply relax with a newspaper and a steaming cup of the flavoursome Empire Blend.
The Office

And another thing...

Does the CEO really need to know that your headphones are missing? Perhaps think twice about that all-staff email, suggests Evan Williams.

When war breaks out in the office, the all-staff email is the most drastic measure that a combatant can take.

It’s used only when all other options have been exhausted; you’ve already placed the slip in the suggestion box about the disgusting pile of dirty dishes in the kitchen or you’ve had a quiet word to your manager about the lack of toilet paper. If you really want something to change, you have to get out of the trenches and meet your enemies head-on.

Office Sociopath badge is ready for you to pick up from reception.

Though I’ve been confronted by fridge smells, disturbed by questionable bathroom etiquette and frustrated by milk-cadging colleagues, I’ve never sent a serious all-staff email. To find out what it’s like, I spoke with the author of one of the more spectacular all-staff emails I’ve encountered. The sender wishes to remain anonymous so I’ll refer to her as Senior Commander of Crockery.

“When you work in an office,” the Commander tells me, “the only thing there is to look forward to in the day is lunch.”

That day, the Commander was looking forward to a delicious crisp salad. “I go to make it,” she says, “and there’s no bowl, no knife, no fork.” They had all been stolen from her desk and she could not control her rage. “I sat down, then and there, and smashed out my manifesto.” Perhaps, in hindsight, not a wise decision. “I was hungry and that probably made me angrier.”

The diatribe was a masterpiece among all-staff email writing, with several helpful suggestions for colleagues seeking kitchen implements. After noting the plentiful supply in the kitchen cupboard and the plastic cutlery available upstairs, she ended with a map and directions to a nearby Victoria’s Basement kitchenware outlet.

“I have to admit that the moment I hit send, I felt an impending sense of doom,” she recalls. “I felt like everyone was looking at me... it’s not for the faint-hearted.”

Was it all worth it, though? Unfortunately, no. Not only did the Commander never see her bowl, knife and fork again, she was also taken aside by her supervisor. “I’m not saying this as your boss, I’m saying this as your friend,” he said. “Don’t do that again. I’ve worked in offices a lot longer than you and people don’t like it.”

Yes, it’s a risky business, calling out many for the sins of a few. But when Justin’s baked beans start looking like they need a biohazard sign, the communal fruit bowl is sabotaged by Bianca the banana hoarder or the office headphone thief remains at large, all-staff emailers around the world would be wise to remember the words of former army officer Sir Winston Churchill: “If you’re going through hell, keep going.”

Be warned: the all-staff email is a high-risk manoeuvre. Do it well and you’ll be celebrated by colleagues stewing over the same dish pile. But do it poorly and the only honour you’ll be awarded is the title of Office Sociopath.

There’s no room for error. Any use of exclamation marks, underlining, bolding or caps – no matter how tasteful – could firmly place you in the latter camp. And thinking of increasing the size of the text in your email? Congratulations! Your