



The New Working Reality of Covid-19

Seth Randall was hired pre-COVID and relocated his family from out-of-state while amid a global pandemic. His thoughts are from his personal experiences and his time here at KRAMER since starting in May.

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As with many people, the onset of COVID felt more like a temporary inconvenience than a world-altering event. The fact that a pandemic has become a permanent part of our social fabric feels more like science fiction than fact. The loss of life, economic damage, and limits on socialization have become far greater than I could have ever envisioned. As we continue to understand the pandemic, it is clear we will not be returning to the in-person social interactions as we once knew in the near future.

Pre-COVID, the commercial real estate industry was filled with environments that knew nothing of social distancing. People regularly commuted to their offices, would travel for business, and few consistently worked from home. This longstanding work model is ingrained in our culture. Fast-forward to pandemic onset, when the business world was forced to adapt to working remotely almost overnight.

Remote working has been a learning curve for many businesses. Worldwide quarantine measures brought on new virtual challenges to the CRE landscape. Fortunately, my new firm Kramer Consulting was prepared to act quickly as they had already invested in the remote server technology and Microsoft TEAMS.

Standout virtual tools such as Zoom, TEAMS, and WebEx have become the new business standard to connect team members and clients. The widespread use of new and evolving technologies is having a positive impact on business, the economy, and the environment.

In the past several months I have witnessed virtual meeting blunders consisting of visual mishaps and endless background noise. Moving through the collective comedy of errors, the idea of the workplace is becoming more elastic. Along with it lies a chance for greater efficiency while simultaneously producing an opportunity for people to have more flexibility in their personal lives. The movement towards flat organizations has taken the next logical step.

With its great promise, technology has its limitations. Many of us must hone our time management skills amidst what can seem to be an endless string of video calls. In some cases, our work styles extend our workday beyond normal business hours. In-person interactions are limited and these important aspects of teamwork are not easily digitized. During this time of social distancing, it is apparent that the value of human interaction has been reaffirmed as creativity has its limitations in isolation.

As we come out of this, the new office may look and feel different, but if we take the best of what used to work and what is working now, we might just end up with a better workplace of the future.



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