

Remote Successes: Finding Value in Working at Home

By [LawVision](#) on August 3, 2020

On the lookout for some positivity in a world of uncertainty and heartbreak, we recently asked our clients to share with us some of the positive benefits they and their firms have discovered working from home. Their responses are both inspiring and instructive. We hope they spark your own epiphany of positivity in these uncertain times.

Our firm has a Women's Leadership Group that hadn't met in-person for at least a year. When we moved virtual, I took the opportunity to find ways for our women attorneys to meet at least monthly to discuss everything from what they were watching on Netflix to the importance of storytelling when developing business. Instead of worrying about what external speaker we were going to invite, we used organic conversations between us to get to know each other. This month we're meeting to discuss self-care in the workplace. In this new normal, we're all looking for ways to stay in touch, and the virtual format has helped us to come together to discuss pertinent topics.

Sheenika Gandhi
Director of Marketing
Greenberg Glusker LLP

As we've transitioned to working remotely, I – somewhat surprisingly – find even more collaboration among my colleagues. Because nobody is in close proximity to each other, the tendency to gravitate towards the same few team members for discussion has all but disappeared, and we all connect via video or team chats more freely. With an entire team on a video chat, there is no one feeling disconnected because they are based in a different office or were traveling when we met. Everyone is on equal footing. We actually meet more as a group to share ideas, opportunities, and challenges, and I'm loving it.

Amanda Steinbach
Assistant Director of Business Development
Fox Rothschild LLP

Working barefoot is kind of nice. I am finding more time for exercise and careful eating. We seem to be seeing some more receptivity to what I think of as material changes. For example, we have an increased focus on a real approach to competitive fees and reliance on professional staff for more support. And, our younger lawyers are ascendant. They are built for remote work and seem to be more productive than ever. I also think the pandemic will hasten some people who are on the bubble about retiring.

Murray Coffey
Chief Marketing Officer
Haynes and Boone

The first benefit of going virtual was getting webinars going – legal marketing is such a “contact sport” that the attorneys did not want to make the digital move. But very quickly, the charge became – how do we move beyond webinars and happy

hours? How can we stretch the technology to work for us? Here are a couple of ways that we have expanded our use of Zoom:

1. We have several blogs and a number of dedicated bloggers. We started using the webinar platform to record interviews between the author and another attorney about posts, using them as teasers to promote the posts. Zoom offers a live streaming option, and we thought we would do that, but we have found that the conversations are free-ranging enough that we need the ability to edit. Here's an example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nylNmYvIcw0>
2. One of our practice groups developed industry roundtables (held on the meeting platform), inviting curated lists of clients, contacts, and referrals. We started the series by identifying a topic, but quickly we learned that the participants were more interested in talking to each other about what they were doing and how they were addressing thorny issues – which gave the attorneys great opportunities to both have a window on what problems were top of mind and also be able to offer ideas, counsel, and feedback (and/or to ask other attorneys in the firm about issues that arose outside of the practice area and follow up). We are doing them about every 3 weeks.

Mary Sicheloff

Director of Marketing and Business Development

Weintraub Tobin

One of my team members works from one of our Carolina offices and has no other marketing team member with her. About a month into the pandemic she shared that she never felt so close to the entire team and the firm. All of our Zoom meetings and daily/weekly emails helped pull her into the bigger picture in a way it had not before.

Lesson learned? Communicate like everyone is both right next door and 1000 miles away.

Holly Lentz Kleeman

Chief Business Development & Marketing Officer

Fox Rothschild LLP

We've found new ways to help pro bono clients in need remotely. This is critical because many of those most in need are away from population centers and where the lawyers are. This experience has shown us we can still try to help people who are not geographically close. It has also extended the work of our cross-office teams who have partnered up on important pro bono causes and developed stronger relationships within the firm.

Many of our people are more effective working at home because they don't have the commute time. Others are saving money by not going out for lunch, and some are losing weight. I have a team member who has lost 45 pounds!

Remote work has positively impacted our current and future real estate initiatives by advancing the creation of a more modern workplace that offers flexible work areas and the ability to work from multiple locations, reducing our footprint/costs along the way. When initially rolled out the Workplace Solutions program was met with some 'fear' about remote work, that is no longer the case.

Our ability to move forward with initiatives like virtual mail is noteworthy. We do not plan to go back to delivering mail 3-6x per day. People get their mail quicker and can forward it on to others (clients, too) since it arrives in a PDF. It's also a win from a labor/resource perspective. This is changing the way we structure our office services in each office.

Awareness of firmwide centralized services like the Hub, Marketing Help Desk, Service Desk, etc. has increased. Teams that were already built to operate in a virtual 24x7 mode are thriving in the remote work environment, which means people are relying on them more.

Deborah Ruffins
Chief Marketing Officer
Perkins Coie LLP

Working remotely hasn't had as big an impact on my work as I had imagined it might, but it has disrupted my daily routine sufficiently to enable me to view my life from a different perspective. I don't know that the experience has changed me in any observable way, but I've enjoyed some unique moments that I might not have noticed otherwise.

Paul Manuele
Director of Marketing and Communications
Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP

Having video conferences with my attorneys in their home environment has allowed me to develop better relationships with them. In addition, as they are not traveling to clients, attending conferences etc., they have had more time to focus on business development.

Stacey Flynn
Director of Business Development
Fox Rothschild LLP

A silver lining of working remotely is reducing my carbon footprint and personal impact on the environment by not commuting!

Angela Petros
Chief Marketing Officer
Morrison & Foerster LLP

My role at the firm is 'SALES.' For the first time in 10 years, I was able to reach my clients easily; they were all at home! And, because we were isolated, the human contact was much more important than an e-mail. I was able to call my clients and connect like never before. Long, deep conversations, wow!

We connected on many levels, not just business. I was also arranging for meals to be delivered to my clients at home, nice meals like Coopers Hawk, for example. They loved it!!

So for me, while many lost track of their clients I found mine.

Steve Scissors
Chief Client Officer
Evans & Dixon

Remote working has helped my team get to know one another in ways that have brought us closer together and strengthened our relationships. The topics have varied from week to week, and although I kicked off the first two after that, it became sort of organic. Someone kicks off with a note to the whole department, and others chime in with replies to all. Topics have included: the view from my window, little things (a photo of something small that brought pleasure), what am I reading, who do I miss most today, etc. The funniest was a video of someone riding a llama on a dirt road in Ireland—shot out the window of a colleague who was working from home there!

Also, steadily improving WebEx skills and the increased use of visual information during what previously would have been conference calls, has made meetings and decision making more efficient. Discipline around meeting planning—advance distribution of materials for review, agendas, etc. has improved.

Renée Miller-Mizia, Esq.

Chief Marketing Officer

Dechert LLP