

Taking This Time to Retool Our Work World: Renewed Focus on Relationships and Teamwork

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An Outside Counsel Perspective

This is an unsettled and truly unprecedented time for companies and for individuals. We are each being confronted by COVID-19 in different ways. The pandemic affects our everyday lives, our businesses and our unpredictable futures. We have to live with uncomfortable restrictions on our usual movements and lack of certainty about when things will return to a “normal” that might not be like the “normal” we knew before.

In a way, I am reminded of the 9/11 event and how it created a different dialogue between colleagues, between attorneys and clients, and between employers and employees. We were instantly all facing the same set of fears and challenges. What mattered in the grand scheme of things was slightly adjusted to place more emphasis on relationships and less emphasis on heads-down striving for our own individual goals.

This current phenomenon is not the same type of event, of course, but what is similar is the nature of the discussions we are having with our colleagues and clients. These conversations include more time to check out how each person is doing and how they are coping.

Teamwork in Times of Crisis

Many terms like “teamwork” are used to get everyone pulling toward the same goal within an organization or between an organization and outside counsel. This is understandable and necessary human resource management. Most of us do strive to be on the same team, but how do we interact with

each other on the team?

In the intellectual property area, clients are very special, smart, driven companies and individuals that give a lot of themselves to their vision every day. I think this is a time of opportunity for us as attorneys to continue to value the relationships we have with our innovative clients, to be excited about being able to do this important and interesting work in a hard economic environment and to be there for our clients in any way we can.

Focusing on mental tasks is a great and much-needed diversion from the issues of the larger world. And there is nothing more mentally absorbing than our clients' innovations. Let's keep it going together!



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