

# THE FUTURE OF WORK

On Thursday, November 19th, Cyber Group hosted a panel discussion regarding the "Future of Work". We invited a diverse group of thought leaders to join us for this time to discuss the professional journeys that they have been on since the onset of the pandemic and what they think the future of work will look like. John Humphrey, CRO & EVP of Cyber Group moderated this session.

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Our panel featured the following panelists:

- M. Tamra Chandler | Author, Speaker, Principal | Ernst & Young
- John Moyer | VP of Strategic Accounts | Vari
- Patrick Benoit | Global Business Information Security Officer | CBRE
- Doug Carignan | Managing Director | JLL

## KEY INSIGHTS

### **The Role of the Physical Office in the Future of Work**

We spoke quite a bit about physical office space during this session. The members of our panel had similar views on the future of the physical office. The consensus was that teams will gravitate back to using office space, but the overarching purpose of that space and the expectations for its use will look a little different.

Patrick Benoit, Global Business Information Security Officer for CBRE shared that, "As social beings, we have a sense of closeness based on the four walls around us. If we share the same four walls, there's a different sense of closeness as compared to when we're on a video call together where we don't share those same four walls."

Tamra Chandler, Author, Speaker, and Ernst & Young Principal, also shared on the topic of being around others in a physical office. "We are just social beings and we thrive on this, even if you're someone that mostly likes to be alone, you still at some point want to have that connection and that belonging." She shared that employees "need to be connected to the company we work for, we need to be connected to the people we collaborate with." She believes that human nature will organically drive us back to working together in physical workspaces.

Doug Carignan, Managing Director for JLL, shared from his perspective of working with clients regarding their office space needs. "Leaders of companies are coming out and they're saying 'look, we know that we have to have office space. Our people being together, it's going to allow them to be more innovative and more creative.'" So, the real question is, what will that look like going forward? One of his clients said that they want their office space to be an innovation center and many are beginning "to think about their space as a place that's more of a social hub, a place where people can gather and really just get together."

As companies figure out the logistics of going back to their offices and what they want their workplace to look like in the future, John Moyer, VP of Strategic Accounts for Vari shared about the changes they made to their office setup at Vari headquarters. They reconfigured everything for social distancing and have made tweaks since their team returned once they realized what worked for their team and what didn't. They strive for their products to provide customers with flexibility and adaptability. "We can tweak it and we'll continue to tweak. For clients today, we have a two-plan approach: schedule A and schedule B. We say 'let's design your space today with COVID circumstances and then let's build a plan for schedule B when things start to be a little more normal' and we can adjust for the future."

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## **The Hybrid Model**

If there is one buzz term that attendees walked away from this session with, we think it's "hybrid model." John Moyer brought this term up right from the start and the conversation kept circling back to the likelihood of seeing more and more companies adopt this style.

Regarding Vari's team, John Moyer shared that "We've realized that you can do a hybrid model. You can have a situation where employees come back on certain days and keep that same amount of space but let's say we take half the population and they're in one week and then the other half rotates and they come in the next week. Those types of hybrid models are what we anticipate to happen." This model also helps with a need that is the front of many organization leaders' minds: planning more space per person to allow proper social distancing.

Tamra also brought up the hybrid model while addressing the topic of whether working from home is an employee benefit or a company strategy. She shared, "if you are a person with a good workspace, internet connection, no small children running around, it's probably great. If you're trying to homeschool and work a job all at the same time, it's probably not so great... I think we'll find a more hybrid model with people defining a rhythm to their own week that keeps them connected, but also gives them that white space to do the work that they feel is good to do in a private setting."

Doug has also observed many companies choosing to go in the hybrid direction and they are going the extra mile to try to incorporate the aspects employees enjoy about working from home into their workplaces. "It's the commute, flexible work hours, you can still be productive and get your work done from home. As we look towards what that space is going to look like, what we're trying to do is incorporate some of those things like more comfortable furniture or more casual dress. That's what people are trying to get to right now. What environment can we create where we're giving our employees some of that feeling of being at home, but getting them to the office?"

## **Pandemic-Spurred Organizational Change**

Patrick mentioned how "there was a big test that occurred when COVID hit as to who had strategically been moving their company from a technology point of view to a place where they could do distributed work." There are many who say COVID forced them to implement certain leading-edge strategies. Pat said he's fascinated by those who blame COVID for late implementation of strategies they should have been considering years ago.

Tamra said that "we have the opportunity to put a bad crisis to good use." She mentioned how "we've gotten a lot more personal in this world because we have seen the kids and the dogs and the days without makeup. I think it's given us a chance to be more human, which I think is what everyone wants, we want to be our authentic selves. I'm hoping we see organizations grab onto that and to make this more inclusive. I hope people take this and leap forward and don't go back."

## **Pandemic-Spurred Technological Advancements**

John Humphrey brought up how Patrick has said in the past that "security is a culture not a process or technology." Patrick shared that "security can't be isolated to office equipment. If it is, then it's not part of the culture. We have to start thinking in terms of helping our employees and contractors be more secure in everything they do from a technology point of view - at home and otherwise... If you do that, it will naturally bubble over into workplace and you'll have a better, more secure workforce... If we can help people do what they're supposed to do, we cut the potential for that risk exponentially."

In regard to innovative ways of serving customers during the pandemic, John Moyer shared how Vari has pivoted to giving virtual tours while people are hesitant to come see their showroom in person. "It's so simple to do and it's fun and intriguing. We can put our best, most qualified people on that, but we don't lose all that time going to the airport or checking in to a hotel."



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## **Pandemic-Spurred Technological Advancements** *(continued)*

Patrick built on this and shared his own idea on the topic of virtual tours: "I'm not sure why we haven't taken greater advantage of virtual reality and augmented reality to conduct those tours. I can send a customer, for less than \$500, a virtual reality HoloLens type device and do a virtual tour with them and that's way cheaper than flying out there and flying back. The novelty of that experience would be incredible and then they have this cool virtual reality tool as their takeaway parting gift. How much impact and contact would that create compared to flying in, shaking hands, and going to lunch? We have to think outside the box and take advantage of these technology offers."

## **Mental Health of Employees in the New Worklife**

We received several questions in the chat during this event regarding employee mental health in today's workplace and the future.

## **Mental Health of Employees in the New Worklife** *(continued)*

Tamra responded, sharing how EY is approaching this topic. "We started a roundtable with HR leaders in the Pacific Northwest. Consistently, the top concern for them has been on the mental wellness of their people. As we've been talking to a lot of clients, this tends to rise to the top of conversations and considerations." EY offers employee resources that they encourage employees to take advantage of from exercise apps, sleep apps, and counseling to free teacher aids for teaching at home. "We are just trying to plug in wherever we can to help provide a little relief and give people that venue where they can talk about what they are going through... The general state we are in has caused so much stress and anxiety."

John Moyer closed us out with encouragement for leaders to talk about mental health. He said that, "You think of C-suite leaders as the strongest, least vulnerable people. When they admit that this is something that we all need to agree is there and be vulnerable... employees are much more likely to open up."

## OUR TAKEAWAYS

- Teams will gravitate back to offices, but the way offices are used will likely look different
- Expect to see many companies implementing a hybrid workplace model through COVID & beyond
- This time has shown us the human side of our colleagues & it's up to us to keep that aspect as work gets more "normal"
- The future of serving customers requires more technological innovation now than ever before
- It's essential for companies to do their part to look out for employees' mental health and well-being, now more than ever

Watch the full recording of this event [here](#).

**A big thank you to our wonderful panelists, attendees, and post-event readers! We hope you enjoyed this discussion and gained some insight into the key factors that will impact the future of work.**