



Crisis Management: Surviving and thriving in a post-pandemic world

As professional services firms and their clients emerge from the COVID-19 crisis, how will businesses adapt to the next normal? IR Global members tell all.



IR Global - The Future of Professional Services

IR Global was founded in 2010 and has since grown to become the largest practice area exclusive network of advisors in the world. This incredible success story has seen the network awarded Band 1 status by Chamber & Partners, featured in Legal 500 and in publications such as The Financial Times, Lawyer 360 and Practical Law, among many others.

The group's founding philosophy is based on bringing the best of the advisory community into a sharing economy; a system that is ethical, sustainable and provides significant added value to the client.

Our Founding Philosophies

Multi-Disciplinary

We work alongside legal, accountancy, financial, corporate finance, transaction support and business intelligence firms, ensuring we can offer complete solutions tailored to the client's requirements.

Niche Expertise

In today's marketplace, both local knowledge and specific practice area/sector expertise is needed. We select just one firm, per jurisdiction, per practice area ensuring the very best experts are on hand to assist.

Vetting Process

Criteria is based on both quality of the firm and the character of the individuals within. It's key that all of our members share a common vision towards mutual success.

Personal Contact

The best relationships are built on trust and we take great efforts to bring our members together via regular events and networking activities. The friendships formed are highly valuable to the members and ensure client referrals are handled with great care.

Businesses today require more than just a traditional lawyer or accountant. IR Global is at the forefront of this transition, with members providing strategic support and working closely alongside management teams to help realise their vision. We believe the archaic 'professional service firm' model is dying due to it being insular, expensive and slow. In IR Global, forward-thinking clients now have a credible alternative, which is open, cost effective and flexible.

Co-Operative Leadership

In contrast to authoritarian or directive leadership, our group puts teamwork and self-organisation in the centre. The group has steering committees for 12 practice area and regional working groups that focus on network development, quality controls and increasing client value.

Ethical Approach

It is our responsibility to utilise our business network and influence to instigate positive social change. IR Global founded Sinchi, a non-profit that focuses on the preservation of indigenous culture and knowledge and works with different indigenous communities/tribes around the world.

Strategic Partners

Strength comes via our extended network. If we feel a client's need is better handled by someone else, we are able to call on the assistance of our partners. First priority is to always ensure the client has the right representation whether that be with a member of IR Global or someone else.



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FOREWORD BY EDITOR, ANDREW CHILVERS

Crisis Management: Surviving and thriving in a post-pandemic world

Businesses across the world are undergoing the biggest remote working experiment since Europeans first sailed from their home ports to set up trading posts in Asia 500 years ago.

This time around, however, companies are moving colleagues out of their plush city centre locations to set up offices at home. What was unthinkable only a few months ago is now the new modus operandi for professional services firms and their clients. Crisis management and business continuity have indeed come of age thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All this may be difficult for businesses that prefer traditional ways of operating, but most are changing their habits of a lifetime out of necessity. The old adage of preparing for the worst while expecting the best has never been more apt.

According to Global Workplace Analytics, a quarter of employees will probably be expected to work from home for the foreseeable future. Furthermore, when businesses open their doors again, social distancing will mean a staggered, limited on-site workforce that will need to fall in line with emerging health and safety laws.

Remote working will typically mean using the latest technology, with home workers relying on social media networking apps (think WhatsApp, Facebook Teams) and video networking apps (think Microsoft Teams, Zoom). Digital collaboration will explode with the use of these diverse technologies and competitive companies will need to innovate like never before.

Until recently, the remote working experiment was much discussed among professional services firms and their clients but approached with a degree of caution. No more. Out of necessity, businesses have adapted to circumstances. According to a recent Gartner survey, a huge 74% of global CFOs expect to move a number of previously office-bound employees to remote working locations permanently post-COVID-19.

Similarly, with legal and financial services firms, the integration of technology and more flexible working patterns have been accelerated by the pandemic's impact on the workplace. What's important here is that this shift has not only affected professional services, but also had a huge impact on clients' expectations of future services.

In a recent Bloomberg survey of 600 law practitioners in the US, eight out of 10 firms stated clients now expect them to increase their use of legal technology to be more efficient post pandemic.

In the same survey, two thirds of corporate legal departments said they were prepared to increase their use of legal technologies, while three-quarters said outside counsel is expected to increase its use of technology.

This sea change in activity brings with it benefits and drawbacks. Businesses will need to re-evaluate their expensive prime city locations now that remote working is not just achievable but, in many cases, preferable. This could result in a huge cost savings for professional services firms and their clients. The flipside to home working means that new IT processes around data protection security and compliance need to be adopted – and often at some cost.

Recent research by business ISP specialist Beaming revealed the number of cyberattacks on UK businesses increased by a third in the first quarter of 2020. Respondents with internet connections said they had experienced 157,000 attacks each in the first three months of the year, an average of more than one a minute. This attack rate was 30% higher than the same period year on year. Beaming claimed networking apps were the most common targets for hackers, with 19,000 online attacks per company.

In the US a recent poll by threatpost.com reported an astonishing 40% of American businesses had increased cyberattacks since starting remote working in March. Only 30% of companies said they felt prepared for remote working, while 23% said there had been an increase in phishing attacks, and 10% reported that there had been an increase in coronavirus-themed scams. Some 70% of respondents said they were new to remote working while, rather ominously, only 37% reported that employees were using VPNs (secure virtual private networks) at home to access corporate resources.

In this timely and unmissable publication, IR Global members from across the world share their expert opinions on crisis management and business continuity in their different jurisdictions. They address questions relating to post pandemic workplace processes and share examples of the new ways of working that they are their clients are adopting. Members also discuss how different data protection regulatory bodies are addressing these issues. Their responses illustrate the diverse working practices that exist across the globe.

The next normal is here and businesses everywhere will need to change like never before if they are to survive and thrive.



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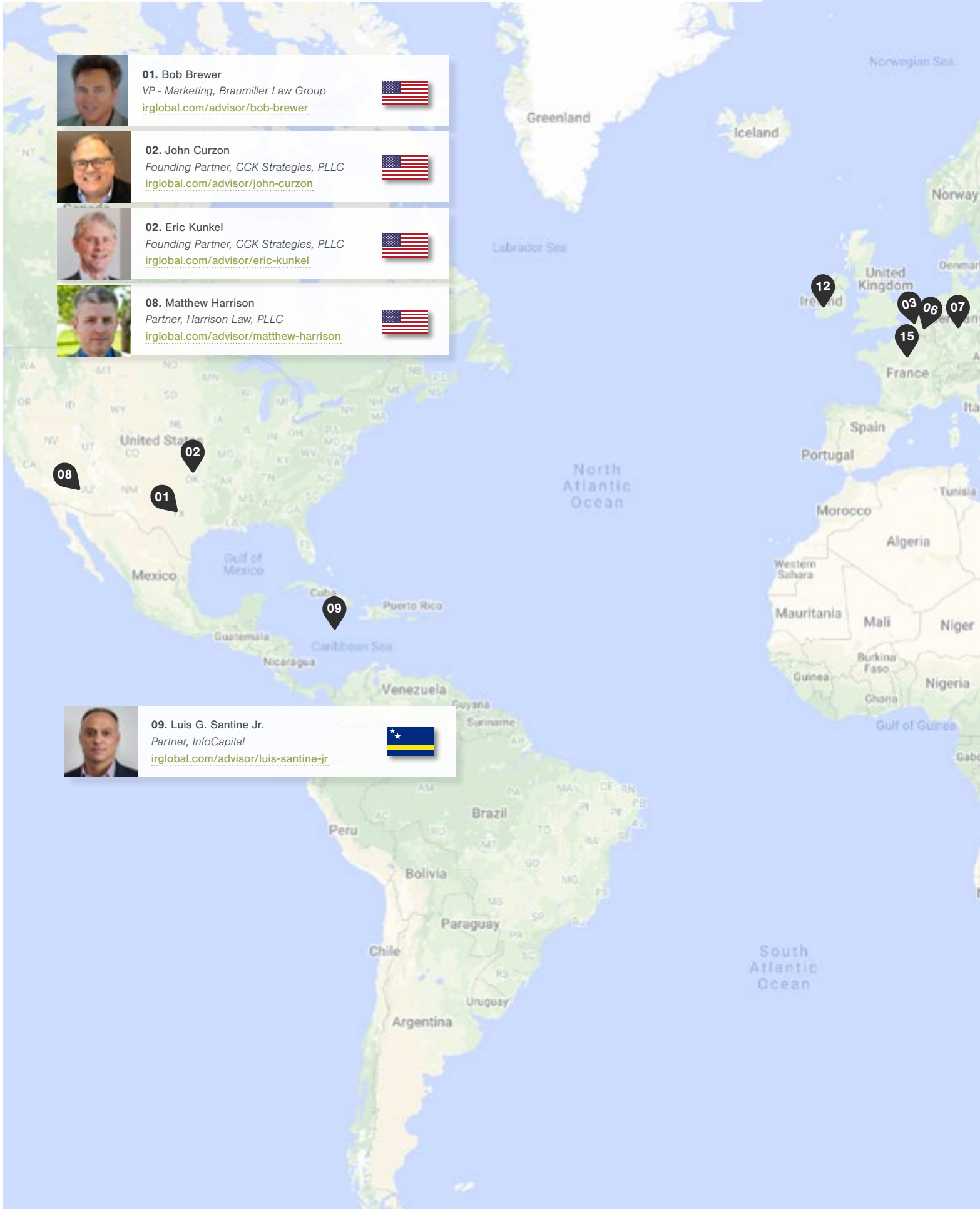
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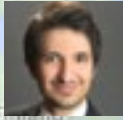
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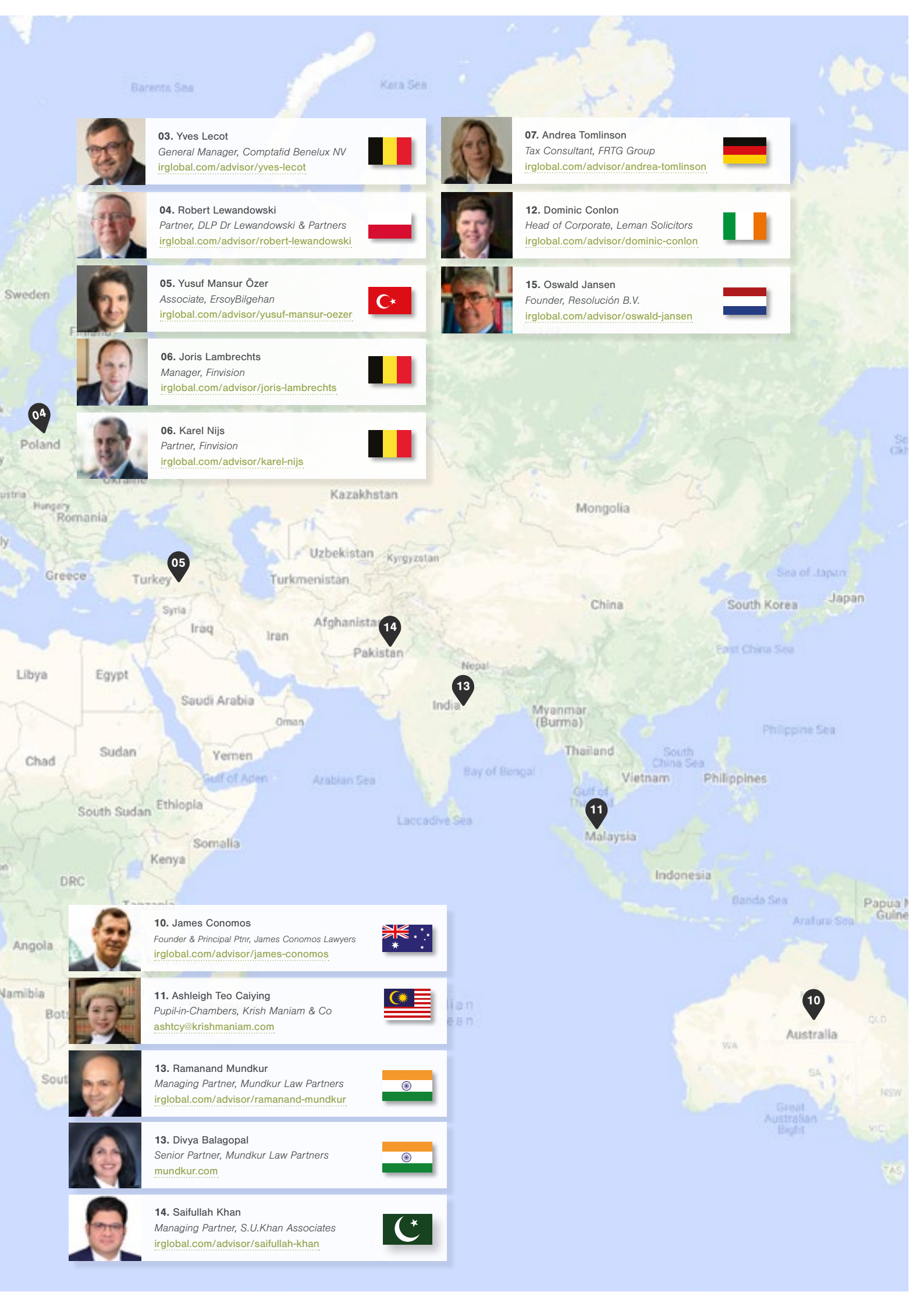
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Bob brings over 30 years of advertising and marketing experience to Braumiller Law Group, as well as Braumiller Consulting. He is responsible for all of the various marketing materials distributed to our client base on a regular basis, (as well as potential new clients).

After graduating from college, Bob began his marketing career with US Steel, Oilwell Division in Dallas, and later started his own advertising business called RD Brewer & Associates. Bob was later recruited by Sabre Corporation as Director of Sales for Virtuallythere.com, the sister site to Travelocity.com. After 3 years with Sabre, Bob joined Braumiller Law Group in 2002.

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| QUESTION ONE

Will the professional service business model change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

The professional services landscape has changed forever as the experiment with “working from home” has been a success for many companies. The technology allowing one to connect remotely and efficiently had been ramping up for a long time ahead of the pandemic and was put to the test in a virtual streaming world. Conferences that were cancelled became virtual training events and the streamed webinars have flooded the industry with all of the topics and speakers that were missed in the previous face-to-face world.

Many companies have found that their employees have become much more productive from home. Obviously with the lack of commute time shaved off of the day, one could be more productive remotely, not to mention the comforts of home in many cases. Social media integration on any given day has become the new norm of getting together, even for many who never previously gave it much credibility. Clients have become well equipped in the world of “Zoom” and several other platforms, and haven’t skipped a beat on the conference calls. Overhead in general is getting a second look, as the days of the fancy over-the-top marble and gold trimmed office foyer may be gone forever. Likewise, in our line of work – international trade law – with its \$750-\$1,000 per hour attorney fees.



In my humble opinion, people in general enjoy the opportunity to work and socialize with their peers face-to-face, and that aspect of the given workday has been sorely missed for many (the family pet is not the best substitute).

| QUESTION TWO

Remote working is being seen as the new normal, how will this affect the culture of professional services firms?

Even with the remote working plan in place, the business culture will still remain somewhat the same. In my humble opinion, people in general enjoy the opportunity to work and socialize with their peers face-to-face, and that aspect of the given workday has been sorely missed for many (the family pet is not the best substitute). In our particular case, the Friday round-up at a local pub for a drink to wind down after a busy week is also sorely missed.

We tried a virtual happy hour on Zoom, but it didn’t go very well. Everybody, (10 people) had a drink in hand, sat in front of their computers with cameras, and we proceeded to talk over each other for an hour and finally just gave up. It was truly a cluster of a happy hour remotely done, which would have been so much better in person, where one could at least move from getting stepped on by the group to

a one-on-one conversation at any point. There are aspects of the business world that just don't work virtually and this social aspect is key, as we tend to gravitate towards others in the office who share some of our same goals and interests, and the face-to-face look of sincerity is always observed in discussion.

We have also missed the face-to-face opportunity to network at the conferences we attend, such as with IR Global. The social aspect has always been built into these events, and our partner and founder is a very gregarious individual (she hated the shelter-in-place). At some of the major conferences that we attend in the US, we made it a point to organize various social outings with certain clients and that aspect of the business has been beneficial as a means to connect over the years. It's amazing how much you can learn over a few drinks.

Our business has been unaffected as we have always been well equipped to work remotely and clients don't necessarily see any change in our service.

| QUESTION THREE

With so many people now working from home using unsecure internet networks, should there be updated rules for data protection compliance? If so, should they be more relaxed given the crisis wrought by the pandemic?

This pandemic is a different world to many where data protection has become a great deal more than just an issue. The GDPR in the EU has always been somewhat more stringent regarding policy in relation to the US, but that may change. For example, videoconferencing services have become the new normal for individuals who have to work or attend school from home. While a variety of platforms are at one's disposal, Zoom has become the "go-to." But along with its increase in popularity are consequences, as Zoom is now facing new questions about the data security risk it may pose and its privacy policy. A class action lawsuit was filed against Zoom in California alleging it improperly shares user data. Zoom was accused of overstating its privacy standards and failing to disclose that its service was not end-to-end encrypted.

There is mountains of information to read relevant to data protection and privacy issues in the days of the pandemic, but obviously one needing clarification is the tracking of the COVID-19 individuals who are infected. When studying those countries like South Korea which have been successful in keeping the spread of the virus under control (with tracing software), it becomes clear that new guidelines need to be set so that authorities can make use of data while at the same time respecting privacy laws. If it comes to this with the Trump administration, it will be a huge issue in the US. The CDC would actually have to find a way to prioritize providing guidance on the use of location data while at the same time keeping it anonymous. The processing of health data for scientific and research purposes would take the lead and that would be a tough one to be blessed in the US, even when it may be a matter of survival.

Braumiller Law Group, PLLC, is a highly respected law firm based in Dallas, TX, U.S. focused on international trade compliance and proven strategies to optimize global trade business practices. www.braumillerlaw.com



Braumiller Law Group, PLLC, is a highly respected law firm focused on international trade compliance and proven strategies to optimize global trade business practices. The attorneys and trade advisors of Braumiller Law Group know how to navigate the intricate maze of global trade regulations, and they have a successful track record helping clients save millions of dollars in compliance penalties. These clients also leverage the expertise and experience of the Braumiller Law Group team to ensure that their global trade operations are legally structured to maximize efficiency and profitability. For clients worldwide, a partnership with Braumiller Law Group generates measurable business value.

| Guidelines for dealing with Crisis Management in the US - Texas

- Stay focused on keeping business as normal as possible on a day-to-day basis for both clients and employees. For employees, this requires a little more contact, simply to check in and make them feel as though they are part of the functioning office on a normal daily basis. Clients have always been primarily just a phone call, or conference call, away.
- Stop watching so much CNN if you are in the US, as it will only bring you down and instead simply remain diligent in keeping yourself safe and healthy.
- Keep doing the things that were positives within the day-to-day operations before this pandemic ever hit. In my particular case, it's new business development and marketing. I have become a little bit more aggressive in my efforts, not just to stay busy and focused but to make sure our brand is very noticeable, and that we haven't skipped a beat.



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| QUESTION ONE

Will the professional service business model change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

The overall professional service business model has been in a state of change for years, primarily caused by technology changes but change has been slow and challenged by established norms. Change will be accelerated out of necessity for survival. Some will be able to resume business as usual, when operating in a local economy that resists change but those 'small towns' eventually fade away.

The professionals of the future will be nimble and entrepreneurial, creating change for their clients through visionary and strategic consulting. Those that restrict their services to measuring historical data or documenting past events will find themselves in a much less valuable commoditized service environment. Those with vision will create value for their clients and for themselves and align themselves with other professionals having similar cultures and outlook.

Resources for providing services will shift from expensive facilities in prime locations for all of their staff, to utilization of less expensive locations for staff performing routine or 'commodity' tasks, and investing in multiple, smaller, premium locations for business development and recruiting entrepreneurial partners. Executive office or co-working spaces will become much more prevalent. The high cost of real estate will be re-invested in digital branding, premium technology and cyber security.

As an example of what we see the future to be is that our current physical location in the Central US is already an advantage due to the lower cost of living, centralized transportation access by road, rail and port and labor costs are lower than many other parts of the US. As a result, recruiting businesses from other regions (east/west) as well as international locations has been on our agenda and will continue with even greater success.

| QUESTION TWO

Remote working is being seen as the new normal, how will this affect the culture of professional services firms?

A remote work environment has been in place for several years at CCK on a limited basis. When COVID-19 hit, we were able to react quickly with the use of technology and procedures. As we progressed, we were able to evaluate those staff that thrived in a remote environment and those that struggled. It will be similar moving forward as we move back to a modified model. Our recruiting has changed to account for this new model, and our facilities requirements will change.

Recruiting for staff has opened unlimited new markets geographically, which in turn creates business development access to new clients in other markets. This new model then allows for accelerated growth and expansion of the strategic professional services we provide. The more traditional services can be centralized as needed.



Everyone has been impacted by this change to our global economy and our immediate goal is to assist clients with how they can react well to the change.

Everyone has been impacted by this change to our global economy and our immediate goal is to assist clients with how they can react well to the change. Clients who are looking ahead to opportunities created by this new economy will adjust and succeed, just as we must adjust to succeed.

A solid culture within a healthy organization will survive change. In fact, a healthy organization is ever-changing to avoid stagnation and meets growth head on. We have been able to continue our all-firm meetings, weekly, and other large group training sessions, all through Zoom conferencing. We also have creative staff who have been able to add some fun with contests around Zoom backgrounds, creative remote work space, theme-based family contests, and the like. Our staff “get together” for Zoom Happy Hours and Wellness Meditation.

Meetings among staff and partners continue to occur for strategy meetings, mentoring meetings, evaluations, along with client service team meetings.

| QUESTION THREE

With so many people now working from home using unsecure internet networks, should there be updated rules for data protection compliance? If so, should they be more relaxed given the crisis wrought by the pandemic?

Professional service firms cannot afford to operate in an unsecure environment. And should not have to rely on government to enforce behaviour that should be expected of professionals. However, we all do in fact operate in regulated environments regardless of industry or jurisdiction. Although our firm has operated in a virtual space for years using secure VPN technology, we are constantly monitoring and updating our technology to protect our data and our assets. Continuous education and reinforcement to staff is crucial in a remote environment. As remote technology changes, professional firms will be required to stay current in order to protect data.

Self-regulation and enforcement will be most effective within an organization that has a culture that is trained and held accountable for maintaining strict standards for data protection. Clients must be trained as well, which can be challenging. But best practice for any professional services firm is to communicate the processes and procedures you are following to your clients and encourage them to do the same. There are many qualified data protection providers including those affiliated with our IR Global family.



CCK Strategies is a Tax and Business Consulting firm with a team of more than 100 people serving clients worldwide. CCK provides innovative solutions and creates value at every stage of a business's life cycle.

CCK's unique corporate environment is based on mutual respect and teamwork. Staff members have direct access to partners, who also serve as mentors and co-problem solvers. We believe that true collaboration is represented by locking arms with colleagues and clients to achieve results and realise goals and dreams. This is only accomplished in an environment of care for one another.

| Guidelines for dealing with Crisis Management in the US - Oklahoma

- Communication is key. Communicate with staff, clients, vendors, families. People take comfort in knowing their leaders are addressing the crisis.
- Stay focused on your mission. Your mission should be rock solid. It gives your team a central point to focus on, rather than focusing on the fear caused by crisis.
- Cast your vision without ignoring the crisis. People need hope to look forward to. Leaders can provide that to their team.
- Crisis management is about leadership. Not just management. Managers react to events and monitor tasks. Leaders identify priorities, give clear direction to the team and, well, lead.



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With its international experience, Comptafid emphasises the knowledge of languages and is sensitive to different legal cultures. Languages such as English, French, Dutch and German are commonly spoken in the company.

comptafid.be

| QUESTION ONE

Will the professional service business model change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Without doubt the professional services business model will change, but not just as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Changes had already taken place some time ago, but it's just been accelerated, and managers have quickly had to reinvent their businesses. In Russia, people are used to that type of revolution where businesspeople see a crisis = an opportunity. In Western Europe, and definitely in Belgium, business managers do not have that kind of outlook. The COVID-19 pandemic has pulled a lot of these old structures down and the real entrepreneurs in the next few months and years will be those who can rise above the current crisis.



Prime office locations will still be important but will no longer have the same value for a professional services business. Smaller office space and online video conferencing will now be the order of the day.

Prime office locations will still be important but will no longer have the same value for a professional services business. Smaller office space and online video conferencing will now be the order of the day. Why travel several hours in your car or on a train/taxi/plane if you can book a meeting on Teams or Zoom or use WhatsApp as the main communication platform for colleagues?

Office colleagues will now be working from home and will need all the relevant equipment and communications applications. Technology will be essential to enable all this to happen. Along with remote working will come new ways of ensuring that the working day is carried out as efficiently as possible. Above all, consultants must have the self-discipline to be able to work from home and not get distracted.

An important part of this new office landscape is the immediate rise of electronic documents. Remote working will mean that the paperless remote office will take over from all those paper files and cabinets back at headquarters. For an accountant, it's critical to have two screens. On the one screen documents are presented, while on the other the documents are processed. Furthermore, clients will need to deliver their documents in a digital format, and this will largely be an automated process.

Consequently, it's essential to have a centralised cloud environment so all consultants can gain access to the digital workspace. All data that is processed will be published straight to the client and approval must be organised digitally between the manager/partner and the remote consultant.

| QUESTION TWO

Remote working is being seen as the new normal, how will this affect the culture of professional services firms?

People are sociable by their nature, but the focus of the new ways of working via online video conference and mobile apps will cut that traditional social tie with colleagues.

When I asked my staff about COVID-19 and the idea of remote working, everybody was immediately motivated to work from home. Nevertheless, this initial enthusiasm wore off after a few weeks and people were more eager to get back into the office to meet their colleagues. We organised, from time to time, a few

day's work at the office, keeping social distancing measures. This proved to be a hugely successful experiment and most people said they preferred to work back in the office for 2/3 days a week and to work from home for 2/3 days, so splitting the week. We discussed all these issues with all the partners and managers via our video conferencing facility. In those online meetings we also learnt about each other's remote working experiences, questions around the technology and, of course, how we all worked with our families around us. These discussions were hugely important and helped each of us understand how our colleagues coped working from home. This also helped us to plan a blueprint for working practices in the future.

QUESTION THREE

With so many people now working from home using unsecure internet networks, should there be updated rules for data protection compliance? If so, should they be more relaxed given the crisis wrought by the pandemic?

For all our colleagues working from home we set up a dedicated computer workstation – this was solely reserved for work. The network is set up on a private VPN with a firewall and access to a private cloud solution on Microsoft Azure.

We have set up the relevant software on all home computers and control all data on-premise with Intune. In the cloud, all security level 5 software is provided by Microsoft and all documents have their own security. All the phone and data communications are on this private network. For any outsiders who communicate via the cloud, they must be identified over the AWINGU platform, with controlled access with triple identification. The private phones of the employees are also included in the network but separated between professional and private. We do not have any access to their private phones or data.

Complying with GDPR standards is essential and security in our business is a high priority. We are aware that we cannot block hackers at the firewall. Therefore, we designed a security level inside our Cloud, so in case of any intrusion the data is still safe. We also insured our company against data-loss and hacking.



Comptafid Benelux is a Belgian company established in Brussels in 1978 and Antwerp in 1995. The company's main activity is accountancy and tax advice (both national and international). Other than its own services, Comptafid Benelux guides its clients to different specialists on the Belgian market such as notary firms, law firms, insurance brokers, real estate and financial specialists, marketing and publicity firms, etc.

The firm is headquartered in the capital of Europe, Brussels, and is committed to producing high quality work, delivered and aimed at practical solutions. Comptafid Schweiz is the Swiss subsidiary that offers a full range of services such as accountancy, financial planning, corporate trust and legal services. The clients of Comptafid Schweiz range from listed multinationals to individual entrepreneurs.

Guidelines for dealing with Crisis Management in Belgium

- Start with a blank page and rewrite your procedures.
- Trust your employees, but also make sure you manage them properly.
- People need leadership. Help them to discipline and motivate themselves much more than you did in the past.
- Give them a safe environment. It's up to the firm to implement this.
- Take the opportunity to educate your clients in the new ways of working.
- Be consistent.
- Regularly evaluate your new environment and get outsiders to test your security.
- See professional IT help; don't do it yourself.
- Work on team spirit; it's critical for your success.



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Robert studied mathematics and German philology at the University of Warsaw, before studying law at the University of Mainz and passing the second state legal examination in Mainz in 1998. He enrolled on the list of German attorneys in Frankfurt am Main (2000) and from 2001–2005 worked as a lawyer at Gleiss Lutz in Warsaw, which included a secondment to Herbert Smith in London.

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QUESTION ONE

Will the professional service business model change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals and businesses is rapidly growing. The pandemic has not only created an alarming health crisis around the world but also caused disruption to previous method of conducting traditional business. In view of the current lockdown periods and social distancing, and the closure of borders, professionals are considering alternative ways to carry out their affairs and to ensure business continuity.

First of all, due to restrictions, the bulk of legal work for clients will be prepared by members of law firms using virtual forms of communication focusing on remote work from their homes. If the pandemic remains, firms will no longer need expensive offices with large office spaces.

Until recently, prime locations (headquarters) were only used to keep the work of computer servers and electronic facilities, and to maintain communication with the courts/stage agencies and clients, via traditional postal correspondence. Law firms in Poland are now considering the option to extend the remote filing of different motions/petitions and official documents to the courts and government agencies and authorities where legally possible, largely because of the impossibility of physically making submissions. In this respect, virtual meeting and teleconferencing tools like Microsoft Teams and Zoom have become very popular. All this requires additional investment on remote technical facilities to better coordinate and improve law firms' day-to-day work and communication with their clients, to sustain a high level of service and meet clients' expectations.

These significant developments require increasing the visibility and reputation of legal firms via internet and memberships in local and international organisations, and networks that offer platforms for reaching out to potential clients located worldwide. Passively awaiting the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and hoping for a vaccine could turn out to be disruptive and negative for the image of a law firm and its standing in the market.

QUESTION TWO

Remote working is being seen as the new normal, how will this affect the culture of professional services firms?

Traditionally, professional services such as those of lawyers, were performed by an individual who had already met his/her client face to face and learnt his/her problems during a physical meeting or over lunch, and then provided advice on a close personal relationship basis.

This manner of attracting and meeting clients is no longer the case in these challenging times due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, a new mode of relationship with clients needs to be adopted using an 'impersonal' remote working and meeting model that might be the norm in the future.

This remote working method on the one hand could speed up some services of legal advice if well organised and internally co-ordinated through establishing a system of digital files, with all employees having access to data rooms and cases. On the other hand, this new approach may lead to a more mechanical and generic treatment of clients, without taking into consideration their specific needs and wishes. Consequently, if using the "impersonal" remote technique of communication it is important to exercise the highest degree of care and caution that each individual client requires.

Dr Robert Lewandowski & Partners (formerly Derra, Meyer R. Lewandowski) has been advising clients for more than 15 years in all areas of commercial law. We offer clients legal services at the highest level.

We specialise in providing legal services to entrepreneurs and private individuals in the business sector. Our main fields of expertise include M&A, company law, financing, insurance law, real estate law, bankruptcy and restructuring law. Dr Robert Lewandowski & Partners offers legal advice to domestic and foreign entrepreneurs in local and cross-border cases, based on cooperation with international partner law firms in cooperation.

Guidelines for dealing with Crisis Management in Poland

- Adapt yourself to present circumstances and cultivate your relationship with your clients digitally.
- Legal firms may consider the possibility of reducing their physical work premises in favor of usage of technology to assure remote working.
- Legal firms must be specially aware of safeguarding and protecting all digital communication as remote working increases the risks of data protection infringement and cyber -attacks.

QUESTION THREE

With so many people now working from home using unsecure internet networks, should there be updated rules for data protection compliance? If so, should they be more relaxed given the crisis wrought by the pandemic?

“
Implementing remote work raises concerns of a business’s exposure to phishing attacks, ransomware or cyber-attacks, among others during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.”

Implementing remote work raises concerns of a business’s exposure to phishing attacks, ransomware or cyber-attacks, among others during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. We think that that some considerable precautions for businesses on data protection and privacy should include the following measures:

(i) ensure that employees are well-informed about the increased cyber risks and are taught how to detect phishing e-mails and avoid downloading software applications outside legitimate online stores, onto devices used for assessing corporate documents and e-mails.

(ii) ensure that passwords used to access e-mails, corporate files, IT hardware or software are not easily guessable and changed regularly. All corporate information and documents should be encrypted to ensure that only authorised parties can access them. Key remote work security tools, such as multifactor authentication, may also be used for securing sensitive information;

(iii) establish a cyber-response strategy in the event that a business has to manage a cyber-attack. This response strategy should cover both technical and legal responses.

In addition, businesses need to ensure that the collection, disclosure and/or sharing of personal data of employees (particularly personal data of employees diagnosed with COVID-19), is in line with the provisions of the Polish Data Protection Law and especially with Regulation (EU) 2916/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27th April, 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regards to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and repealing Directive 95/46/EC.



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His passion for and background in information technologies enables him to not only analyse the matters from a legal perspective but also provide his advice based on technical understanding. He is an active member of the International Association of Privacy Professionals where he previously acted as the Young Privacy Professional Leader for Turkey.

ersoybilgehan.com

| QUESTION ONE

Will the professional service business model change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Change usually comes from necessity or disruption. While the world has seen creative disruption in the past decade with technology and internet start-ups, urgent change deriving from strong necessity was rare. That was until COVID-19.

The outbreak marked a new era for teleworking. Businesses are now aware that teleworking 'works' and that they can do without renting prime locations in cities. Many businesses that would not have otherwise tried teleworking are now transitioning to a new way of doing business. For instance, most, if not all, call centres service their clients in remote working environments, which would be considered inconceivable in the past. The crisis proved in real-time that with adequate technological infrastructure and digital literacy among employees, any business can migrate its processes to the online world. It also showed that the transition is not as hard as it looks and that it can even happen instantaneously with the right motivation.

Remote working will undoubtedly be more mainstream after this crisis. It used to be considered by many businesses and employees as a fringe benefit, but the perception is likely to change now. Remote working might become the new "normal." COVID-19 pushed business to their boundaries and made them notice the alternative models of employment, which, as a bonus, provide more flexibility and reduce costs. Further, businesses are now more prepared and better equipped for remote working, meaning the remote working trend may continue after the crisis. Employees are also more familiar with remote working now, as their workplace and home have become one and the same.

In the remote working era, the key differentiator among professional services firms will continue to be their people, but the focus will be more on digital skills. Businesses should accelerate efforts to build key digital skills, capacity, and efficiencies to build and sustain their reputation as "top tier."

| QUESTION TWO

Remote working is being seen as the new normal, how will this affect the culture of professional services firms?

Remote working constitutes a major threat to businesses adopting traditional ways and rejecting innovation in work processes (i.e. businesses with conservative company culture). If these businesses do not welcome new technologies, they might not be able to survive while remote working is becoming the new norm and other firms reduce their costs and increase their efficiency. Those who never invested in digital skills training, online collaboration, and technology infrastructure in the past will struggle to overcome this crisis as it would be difficult to allocate funds to these now.

On the other hand, remote working is an opportunity for businesses that built the capacity to welcome change and new norms into their work processes. The businesses that were able to instantaneously transition into an online servicing model and avoid any interruption in their service have already scored several points with their clients. Moreover, businesses that were able to maximise the benefits of remote working by reducing costs, increasing efficiency and allowing flexibility have gained a significant competitive advantage.



Firms that turn the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity for digital transformation will be able to showcase their innovative side to their clients, changing the view that professional services firms are traditionally conservative.

Firms that turn the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity for digital transformation will be able to showcase their innovative side to their clients, changing the view that professional services firms are traditionally conservative. This will certainly have an impact on client relations and future work processes. It is reasonable to expect an accelerated adoption of 'smart work,' which means utilising remote working, reducing travels and meetings and increasing the efficiency of processes in general.

QUESTION THREE

With so many people now working from home using unsecure internet networks, should there be updated rules for data protection compliance? If so, should they be more relaxed given the crisis wrought by the pandemic?

Privacy and data protection are fundamental rights enshrined in the Turkish Constitution and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. However, they are not absolute rights and can be limited under certain conditions. The key issue is to determine such conditions that would justify a limitation. Under the current circumstances, processing of personal data in the fight against the pandemic is generally allowed under Turkish law. But this does not mean that healthcare trumps data privacy and data protection obligations are suspended during the pandemic. Businesses should carefully consider the general principles under the Turkish Personal Data Protection Law (PDPL) such as proportionality and transparency in their efforts to fight the coronavirus. Processing of health data is a particularly sensitive subject and as a principle businesses should always prefer less intrusive methods, where possible.

Considering the fundamental nature of the right to privacy and data protection, regulations protecting these rights should not be relaxed due to the COVID-19 crisis. But data protection authorities should also act reasonably. Leaving personal data vulnerable in a remote working arrangement cannot be tolerated. However, deploying cybersecurity measures in such a remote working environment naturally takes time. Therefore, the crisis wrought by the pandemic should not eliminate the possibility of fines, but they might have extenuating effect in the determination of the fine amounts within the legally defined limits.

COVID-19 has also reinforced the importance of cloud computing in ensuring business continuity. Businesses utilising the cloud were able to access and manage their corporate data remotely, while most on-prem systems required the use of additional remote access software, which raise many security concerns. It is reasonable to expect business to accelerate their digital transformation projects as well as increase their reliance on the cloud during and after the crisis.



ErsoyBilgehan is an independent full-service law firm recognised for its strong national and international practice. Since our foundation in 1999, we act for enterprises across the full spectrum of business including local, national and multinational companies in a wide range of business sectors. Clients range from single-owner start-ups to household name companies, from government companies to global giants.

We are a law firm which has a strong national presence with a full-scale global reach. Our long-standing network of relationships with pre-eminent law firms around the world ensures we are ready to provide comprehensive legal services in virtually every jurisdiction.

Guidelines for dealing with Crisis Management in Turkey

- **Create smart workspaces with technology.** Businesses should continue maximising their efficiency with digital collaboration and servicing tools and minimising their reliance on paper and physical processes.
- **Train employees and increase digital literacy.** Technology and digital tools have no use if people cannot use them to their maximum potential. Businesses should train their employees and make sure that their investments in IT and software services are properly utilised.
- **Continue implementing sanitary measures.** Businesses should maintain most of the sanitary measures they have implemented during the crisis.
- **Promote well-being and resilience.** Mental health and motivation of the employees are key in providing quality services to clients.
- **Adjust to the rapid change of technology.** This crisis proved that it is of paramount importance for businesses to take immediate steps when faced an extraordinary situation. Businesses should be open to innovation and change instead of sticking to habits and customs.



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Karel has vast experience in financial audit work in Belgium as well as in the US (Silicon Valley). He also has experience in transactions, due diligence, audit and consolidation assignments in IT, venture capital and other sectors. He is a native Dutch speaker. He is fluent in English and French.

finvision.be

| QUESTION ONE

Will the professional service business model change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

The COVID-19 pandemic had a tremendous impact on the Belgian professional service business model. We saw a rapid shift to remote working when the Belgian federal government ordered that remote working would no longer be the exception but the rule. Companies whose activities contributed to vital aspects of Belgian society and the population's wellbeing were still allowed to have their employees physically present at work, but only if needed. Accountants and auditors were considered 'vital' in that respect. They were obliged to implement remote working and safeguard the rules of social distancing (1.5 m) as much as possible. Companies active in non-vital sectors were forced to shut down if they couldn't comply with the social distancing-rules.

Surveys show that Belgian employees and executives immediately saw the obvious benefits of remote working and want to keep on (at least partially) doing so after the pandemic. It doesn't take a genius to see that such aspirations and an already earlier growing awareness on the financial and climatological impact of daily commuting, could impact rental prices/m². Yet, social distancing could question the so-called positive effects of the open space offices. Moreover, companies might rent more m² per employee. On the other hand, it seems too early to jump to conclusions on how our economy (and by consequence also the rental prices) will evolve.

As certified auditors, we were just developing a 'remote working policy' whereby we decided not to allow structural home work (defined as 'working a fixed day per week from home'). We frequently work 'on site' in our client's offices. We did, however, heavily invest in paperless processes in previous years including but not limited to electronic working papers, allowing clients to post information on a so-called file cloud server. An effort that clearly paid off in the last few weeks.

| QUESTION TWO

Remote working is being seen as the new normal, how will this affect the culture of professional services firms?

We don't expect remote working itself to be a driver of change as long as professional service firms don't change their mindset. It remains 'business as usual' when they don't see the possibilities of automated production and data driven decision-making. If one sees 'remote' and 'digital' as just a different location to work from (the fact that one works from different locations leads to a paperless office), they'll continue to miss the countless opportunities to minimise input and maximise output through personal contact. To see those opportunities, you need an open-minded-culture within your organisation where employees are willing to adapt and executives are ready to support bottom-up formulated and IT-driven suggestions for improvement.

| QUESTION THREE

With so many people now working from home using unsecure internet networks, should there be updated rules for data protection compliance? If so, should they be more relaxed given the crisis wrought by the pandemic?



When remote working increases, so do cyber-risks if the remote working isn't the result of a well thought out policy that creates awareness and provides the necessary IT-infrastructure.

When remote working increases, so do cyber-risks if the remote working isn't the result of a well thought out policy that creates awareness and provides the necessary IT-infrastructure.

In this regard, secure networks aren't a magical solution if they are not backed up with awareness. Companies should foster a culture of privacy and IT-security-concern. To be clear, this isn't about employees understanding each and every legal aspect of the GDPR, but about them knowing when you should or shouldn't open an e-mail attachment, that you shouldn't access a public WiFi-network (especially not if your laptop/smartphone is linked to sensitive information) and that forwarding company documents to your personal hotmail or gmail account isn't a 'best practice'.

If companies fail to meet such requirements, we don't see why the authorities should refrain from imposing fines. As long as the fines come with a prior warning so companies can adapt. Compliance based on sanctions is a start, but compliance based on culture and self-motivation should be the goal.

The question if healthcare should prevail on privacy, might be a false question. One of our clients (Rombit – www.rombit.be) provides industrial companies such as the Port of Antwerp with a safety bracelet with COVID-19 functions. It warns when employees come too close to one another and allows contact tracing by a health advisor or trusted confidant. As long as we as a society don't have a vaccine ready, such privacy-compliant contact tracing monitored by trusted gatekeepers could be the solution to have both concerns reconciled.



Finvision is your professional, financial business coach that guides, supports and provides insight. In addition, we not only focus on your daily financial policy, but we also provide you with a vision for the future. Our greatest asset is a wide range of financial services, managed and implemented by directly deployable professionals. From family business and SME to multinational, at Finvision you will find the financial expert that your organisation needs. We will screen your company and communicate clearly; that is the only way your company can adapt quickly to the changing business world of today.

| Guidelines for dealing with Crisis Management in Belgium

Crisis Management by nature reacts and Risk Management prevents. We think companies should use this pandemic to rethink the latter as they have little impact on the first. Therefore:

- Do as Warren Buffet does and “know what you are doing” to minimise risk. Don't engage in matters you know nothing or little about.
- “If it's too good to be true, it probably isn't”. Don't allow yourself to be tricked into a professional opportunity (urgent requests by new clients or exciting offers by new suppliers), just because you urgently need to generate some business. Do your customer and supplier due diligence.
- The board isn't the sole manager. Your lower and middle staff has broad knowledge of your companies' strengths and weaknesses. Create a psychological safe environment where people dare to speak up. So that they don't fear to become the laughing stock when warning of something unthinkable such as global pandemics...



GERMANY

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Andrea has been working for the FRTG Group since her studies in business administration and has been employed full-time since 2012. During her long affiliation with the company, she has driven the digitisation of the firm and its services.

In her daily work she mainly advises small and medium-sized corporations in business and tax issues. In 2017 she acquired the title of tax consultant and has become the team leader of the tax department at the head office in Düsseldorf. Her goal is to provide each client with the best possible basis for their operational success through specific advice.

frtg-group.de/en

| QUESTION ONE

Will the professional service business model change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Since the outbreak and the worldwide spread of COVID-19, our former predominantly personal world has been replaced by a mainly digital world. Conferences are cancelled due to travel bans, client appointments can no longer be attended personally in order to comply with hygiene regulations, contacts with colleagues, institutions and clients are limited to telephone and video calls.

Currently nothing seems certain, except that the world will be different in the post-Corona times. However, this crisis offers a great opportunity to rebuild, to leave behind what is outdated and to tackle structural and technological changes that have long been necessary.

To take advantage of the opportunities arising, companies must ensure that employees and customers are enabled to work digitally with each other in high quality. For this purpose, not only the technical equipment in the form of remote workstations with the corresponding hardware and software is essential, but training for its use and the new etiquette for customer relations must be provided.

Our company has long relied on secure remote connections, whether for the use of laptops in the home office or for direct access to all data during client meetings on site. It is not only in these times that it has become apparent that our emphasis on internal digitisation, ie the paper-less office, and the conversion of our mandates to digital document exchange is proving successful.

However, it will not be possible or desired to completely do without personal contact in the future either. Trust and confidence between parties are essential for a flourishing working relationship and both are mainly built in personal meetings. On-site meetings have always been a crucial part of understanding our client's business and for finding tailored solutions for their needs. Those expectations will not change after the world has found the new normal. At the end of the day: It's a people business.

| QUESTION TWO

Remote working is being seen as the new normal, how will this affect the culture of professional services firms?

The implementation of the home office as an integral part of new working processes involves not only opportunities but also risks for both companies and employees.

While companies will be able to save on rent for office space, other formally unknown challenges will arise. Not every home can offer the high demands on the spatial and technical conditions for a smooth workflow. There's the possible lack of high-speed internet access in rural areas, the lack of space for hardware or the lack of peace and quiet to work in, as the partner also works from home. When the goal is to provide constant and consistent qualitative performance for clients, such unequal location factors can result in high performance discrepancies, which are difficult to eliminate by the management.

In recent years, aside from the high-quality service to the client, the management's focus has increasingly shifted to employee satisfaction and loyalty. In addition to financial incentives, social measures such as employee events have increasingly taken their place in a company's planning. In times of remote working, it will be a challenge to continue to form a collective from all colleagues and not to lose sight of the social aspects of a workplace despite the physical absence.

The service sector will have to put in place new standards and guidelines to ensure that the work delivered will remain at a high level and that employees will feel motivated and as part of the company even when they do not work at the offices. In our opinion, the current practiced approach to workplace sharing might become the future 'part-time-office work'-model. Shared office space might no longer be restricted to freelancers and start-ups but will be practice in the company's own office buildings.

| QUESTION THREE

With so many people now working from home using unsecure internet networks, should there be updated rules for data protection compliance? If so, should they be more relaxed given the crisis wrought by the pandemic?



With the ongoing digitisation in recent years, more data protection regulations have been issued. With good reason – not every country attaches as much importance to data protection as Germany.

With the ongoing digitisation in recent years, more data protection regulations have been issued. With good reason – not every country attaches as much importance to data protection as Germany. Large companies use all kinds of private and business information from apps and the internet to turn it into money. It has not been uncommon for personal rights and data protection to be ignored.

So while the protection of such data is more important than ever, reasonableness must not be lost sight of. Neither companies nor their customers have sympathy for the ever-increasing number of regulations, declarations of consent to be signed, processes to be created and the associated loss of productivity. In some cases, the workload to meet data protection regulations exceeds the workload of the actual task at hand.

Assuming that working remotely will increase significantly it should not solely be the company's responsibility to ensure secure access for their workers. Just as with industrialisation and the digitisation, the switch to a widespread remote-working-landscape will have to be supported financially and organisationally by governments. Instead of imposing heavy fines for non-compliance, governments should provide incentives and digital solutions to ensure data security for all stakeholders.



The FRTG Group is an association of five tax consulting companies. This means the group can draw on a pool of experts who are able to provide their clients with qualified, comprehensive and personal-ised advice in different specialist areas. FRTG Group provides clients with individual solutions tailored precisely to their needs, from a single source for national and international companies of any legal form and size, entrepreneurs, associations, foundations and private individuals in the following areas;

- Auditing
- Tax consulting
- Services
- Business management consulting
- Restructuring

Independent institutes and magazines have awarded the FRTG Group several times already.

| Guidelines for dealing with Crisis Management in Germany

In a crisis as far-reaching as this one, it is more than ever necessary to make level-headed decisions, not based on stoked fears but on concrete assumptions. Our top tips for finding the right answers in difficult times are:

- Analyze the concrete effects on your market, on the resulting wishes of your customers and plan short-term adjustments accordingly.
- Review the assumptions and actions taken at regular intervals to allow for flexible adjustments. In such fast-moving times, the adaptability of the business will be essential for its competitiveness.
- Install liquidity planning as a central component of your business planning and use the target/actual comparison to check your business decisions and adjust them for the future if necessary.
- While making sure that you are able to react to environmental impacts quickly, never lose your long-term goals out of sight. Every crisis will pass and your business model must remain viable for the future in spite of current events



US - ARIZONA

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Previously, Mr. Harrison was a Deputy County Attorney with the Maricopa County Attorney's Office for over seven years where he held leadership positions and mentored less-experienced attorneys. Matthew Harrison has combined these experiences into a law firm that has established itself both locally and nationally as a highly-regarded law firm.

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| QUESTION ONE

Will the professional service business model change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Before COVID-19, there was already an active discussion in the professional service industry questioning whether prime downtown locations and paying premium rent price tag that accompanied them were necessary. Gone are the days when law firms would need to be situated next to the courthouses or key government offices for easy access. That convenience factor is no longer essential. For the last few years, most pleadings and key documents are filed electronically and most court hearings are held telephonically or by video conferencing.

Typically, an attorney from my firm will need to be physically present in court an average of 2-4 times a month. It is easier to commute to the downtown location during those rare occasions. This easy commute is why my firm is located in a suburb of the Phoenix Metropolitan area. Our firm is located in a modern professional building with all the amenities and easy freeway access, so our clients avoid the traffic and downtown commute as well.

In addition, most of the firm's business clients are spread throughout Arizona, the US and the world. Clients are rarely physically present at the firm's offices. As a result, we have already been utilizing electronic options to communicate for several years. Clients do not care whether the firm is in a modern office building in a suburb or a high-rent Phoenix high rise. The clients appreciate the fact that the firm offers lower rates because we do not have the higher overhead a downtown law firm carries.

The ability to remotely access files and client material is important and has already been in place for years. What COVID-19 has emphasized is the need to upgrade secure client communication. The ability to securely speak to a client by telephone or video conferencing and the ability to share documents during these meetings will become more important.

| QUESTION TWO

Remote working is being seen as the new normal, how will this affect the culture of professional services firms?

I believe the term 'business culture' is often vague and involves several factors that evolve over time. In this specific setting, I think of this issue primarily in terms of finding, hiring, and retaining the best employees. If a business's goal is to hire and retain employees who are diligent, professional, self-motivated, and honest, whether the employee is working remotely or in an office down the hall, it will not matter. In the current COVID-19 environment, having diligent employees work remotely has not led to a drop-off in work product. Instead, it has allowed flexibility beyond the typical 8-5 job setting. As these restrictions are being lifted, I can see more opportunities for certain employees to work remotely than before.

I do not see the entire current remote access scenario as a permanent fixture to my practice. Allowing certain personnel to work remotely because of issues with travel, family obligations, or looking after school-aged children has been relatively successful during this period and will somewhat remain. However, this situation is not as efficient as having firm personnel present at the office. There are certain scenarios where being able to quickly gather key personnel together to work a problem or the ability to just walk a few feet to speak to a colleague about an issue is not as efficient when handled remotely.

Since the majority of the firm's clients are businesses, and those who own and operate them, their concern remains the same: legal work should be provided as effectively and efficiently as possible. As long as the quality of the work remains

the same, and the client is not experiencing an increase in fees and costs because of employees working remotely, a client does not care whether the work is performed in-office or by an employee sitting next to his or her computer at home.

| QUESTION THREE

With so many people now working from home using unsecure internet networks, should there be updated rules for data protection compliance? If so, should they be more relaxed given the crisis wrought by the pandemic?

The importance of electronic data privacy and protecting client files has been present in the legal industry for several years. Fortunately, my firm already had in place the safeguards needed to safely allow for remote access to information from non-firm locations. The only change in this area, post COVID-19, is that we have utilized these procedures and protections more than ever before. In addition, during these recent events, certain clients have inquired about these protections for the first time and have been well-pleased to learn these protections had been in place for several years.

The issue beyond client files and securing data is the use of video conferencing and similar forms of communication. The firm has established policies on what forms of video conferencing can be utilized for firm work and those that cannot. For example, because of the data privacy issues concerning utilizing the Zoom platform, use of this platform within the firm is prohibited. However, there are similar programs that have the same features that are allowed.



I always become concerned when a government entity becomes heavily involved in privacy protection matters because of their tendency to make a situation worse.

I always become concerned when a government entity becomes heavily involved in privacy protection matters because of their tendency to make a situation worse. There already exist secure networks and a multitude of options to protect privacy. Having the government micromanage a situation rarely leads to a more favorable result. In addition, because of health records and employee protections already established for several years, I do not see a scenario in the US where a health event would act as a waiver of these protections. In fact, an attempt by a government entity to waive personal privacy protections would probably not survive judicial review.



After over 15 years of practicing law in both the public and private sectors, Matthew Harrison saw the need for a law firm that focuses on the requirements and goals of business clients. From start-up companies to multi-billion-dollar organizations, along with individuals who were searching for high-quality and cost-effective representation, Harrison Law delivers what was not being provided at your classic large metropolitan law firm. To cater to our clients, Harrison Law, PLLC was founded with the goal of providing high-quality representation for the variety of legal areas that a typical corporation, its owners, and employees would encounter.

The firm is based in the Phoenix Metropolitan area and represents clients in Arizona, Utah, and throughout the southwestern United States.

Harrison Law understands how businesses work and of the significant issues at stake when problems arise. Harrison Law has a highly favorable reputation for its discrete representation of high-profile business and individual clients whose legal issues may involve the media.

| Guidelines for dealing with Crisis Management in the US - Arizona

- Have contingency plans in place. From my observations and personal experience, I can immediately pinpoint those businesses that had contingency plans in place and those who did not.
- **Learn to quickly adapt.** Even though businesses had contingency plans in place, I would call COVID-19 a hundred-year event. No business was completely prepared for this global health crisis scenario.
- **Avoid analysis paralysis.** Unfortunately, businesses and individuals often wait for the perfect combination of information and answers in order to make a decision.
- **Nostalgia is not a friend.** When a crisis event happens, businesses and individuals need to quickly react to the specific event.
- **Read the book *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*.** This is the classic book originally published in 1841 by Charles MacKay on the problems with groupthink, panic, and following the crowd. Events described in this book that occurred hundreds of years ago parallel current global events.



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He is active as board member of various charitable and for-profit organisations through his extensive international network.

infocapital.cw

| QUESTION ONE

Will the professional service business model change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

What the COVID-19 situation has taught us is that some key roles or functions that were previously believed to be on-site critical can be easily addressed remotely. Mobility, has therefore, moved to the forefront of importance when analysing business continuity and cost containing strategies. While, firms may not want to reopen completely and immediately to remote work, they will most definitely rethink their service offering strategy and re-evaluate the added value of paying premium rents for prime locations. Depending on the business type, firms may consider moving to a more flexible model, using their main office for periodic or key client visits and meetings, while resorting to video conferencing and periodic travel for personal and face-to-face meetings.

As companies will need to comply with new health protocols as part of the 'new compliance', many will need to abide by health monitoring procedures, maintain social distance and apply hygiene and health-oriented guidelines. Moreover, it is not unthinkable that some sectors will be faced with new mandatory compliance guidelines that will require organisations in the future to report relevant COVID-19 related information to the health authorities. As a result, sectors and businesses may need to implement new requirements and procedures to safeguard the health of their workers and clients/customers. This will, therefore, undeniably lead to a move towards more remote working practices to better cope with the increased pressures of health compliance.

Clients, customers, and other business relationships will likely all apply different views and expectations towards use of products, programmes, services, meetings, and technology. The abrupt modifications that were required due to the lockdown, forced both companies and clients to adapt to a new normal. Accessibility, regardless of which form, is the single most aspect that prevailed.

| QUESTION TWO

Remote working is being seen as the new normal, how will this affect the culture of professional services firms?

We will face an unprecedented change in our lifestyles, our habits, thoughts, personal interactions, new behavioral paradigms, and new business models will have to be studied, accepted, and implemented. Company meetings will assume a more hybrid form as many organisations and entrepreneurs switch to the use of online tools. And there is a lot more possible than we used to think. But when issues in organisation get more critical and complex, online meetings will come under pressure and require companies to adapt. At the same time, the new online environment will present efficiencies as rescheduling of meetings due to travel delays will no longer be necessary, because you can simply check in from behind your laptop or even smart phone and connect for a meeting.

While many industries face increasing challenges of switching to an online or digital environment, they will need to guard against an emergence of new online fraud methods. Cybercriminals will try to take advantage of the fact that many businesses and institutions moved online as fast as they could, without adequate fraud prevention tools. So, companies will be wise to assess their strategies and policies towards e-commerce and ensure to learn about the latest fraud trends and get actionable insights into how to address them.

Strategic decision making will take center stage as strategy is about deciding, communicating, and resourcing the key things an organisation needs to do to secure a prominent, sustainable, and differentiated market position. The return



This is probably the best time for companies and service providers to rethink their strategies, adapting their services and developing new products in order to be able to assist clients in their efforts to survive and overcome the consequences of the crisis.

to the 'new normal' will require strategic and out-of-the-box thinking by senior leaders. This is probably the best time for companies and service providers to rethink their strategies, adapting their services and developing new products in order to be able to assist clients in their efforts to survive and overcome the consequences of the crisis.

| QUESTION THREE

With so many people now working from home using unsecure internet networks, should there be updated rules for data protection compliance? If so, should they be more relaxed given the crisis wrought by the pandemic?

As the challenges that COVID-19 has brought about are so unprecedented, there will likely be some degree of relaxation of the protectionist measures applied to safe and reliable data sharing. We can expect close monitoring and a delicate balancing act between facilitation of data to save human lives and maintaining data protection and privacy rights. As all business and societal principles and practices have been challenged by COVID-19, the same can be expected with previous fundamental rights and related public interests that will likely see some revision or modification.

Governments will likely have to rearrange their priorities regarding the infrastructure to ensure communication networks are at a level to support increased remote work demand. Ensuring reliable and secure networks for home workers will depend on companies and entrepreneurs themselves. Depending on the nature of business or service offering, security measures and high-speed networks will vary greatly from business to business or profession. However, as there will be many crossovers since home schooling will also increase in popularity, access to internet and Wi-Fi coverage will become an increased priority of local governments.

Should healthcare trump data privacy? This is a complex and sensitive issue which will require a fine line to be walked. Data is the single most critical aspect when managing information and taking calculated decisions. When we look how the different countries have taken on the COVID-19 pandemic, those that were able to take the most effective measures are the countries that had access to the most timely and accurate data. As in the case of COVID-19 we are dealing with human transmission of the virus, it is questionable whether the data would be as relevant if identities of individuals were kept private. What will be crucial for the safeguarding of privacy is that information is used for its sole intended purpose.



InfoCapital is a boutique-size consultancy firm that offers management and diversified advisory services to a wide range of clientele ranging from corporate to small business owners and from institutional to individual investors.

With a multicultural exposure and cross-border approach, InfoCapital provides C-Level advice to help direct and control organisational operations while providing strategic guidance and direction to companies. InfoCapital is a multi-disciplinary professional service provider whose expertise stretches across different areas which include overseeing fiduciary services, providing effective corporate governance, compliance and risk management advise, designing innovative business models, facilitating payment solutions, and developing e-commerce activities.

Guidelines for dealing with Crisis Management in the Dutch Caribbean

- In times of crisis, surround yourself with a strong and diversified team of senior leaders, stakeholders, collaborators, key influencers and truly think different.
- Take time to reassess and reshape your business practices, workforces, service offering and product delivery models.
- Continue monitoring technological advancements and innovation to keep up with consumer demand and efficiency.
- Use the situation to understand what your clients truly expect and value most from your firm and re-imagine a new path forward amidst the changing business dynamics.
- Look for new (strategic) partnerships and opportunities through bold and different investments in innovation and product diversification.



AUSTRALIA

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James was admitted as a solicitor in 1987, having completed a year in 1986 as associate to the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland, The Honourable DG Andrews. In his early years, he gained experience in a wide range of areas but quickly settled into litigation. By 1990, he was established as a commercial litigation lawyer with a keen interest in insolvency matters. He established James Conomos Lawyers on 1 July 1992 as a specialist practice in commercial litigation and insolvency. Since 1990, he has practised as a solicitor primarily in commercial litigation, dispute resolution and insolvency matters.

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| QUESTION ONE

Will the professional service business model change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

The COVID-19 pandemic presents a perfect opportunity for professional service firms to move towards technology to adapt to the remotely working environment.

Professional service firms, particularly law firms, weather these changed conditions (particularly as referenced by downturns in the past 30 years) better than most businesses in the Australian economy. That said, different professional service areas will fare better than others. It might be expected that the demand for restructuring and litigation will not fall and may well grow, whereas other practice areas might struggle.

The pandemic has presented different challenges for professional services unlike in previous downturns. Isolation and remote work have presented a whole new playing field.

The changed conditions have exposed the reality that most professionals have access to technology, which is not costly and enables work to be produced as efficiently as previously.

Working remotely has significant benefits as well as many challenges. The instant reaction is to abandon offices in lieu of remote work practice. For senior professionals, and possibly busy administration staff such as practice managers and those in finance, working remotely has great attraction and efficiency. Often there is no effect on productivity.

The key is how to maintain productivity, quality and mental health, particularly for team members other than managers and senior administration personnel.

For a team that works together to achieve outcomes, often the remote environment is not conducive to their collective mental health unless managed carefully.

The current experience has shown us that there is a place both for remote working as well as an office environment. Finding the right balance is the key.

In these times, keeping in regular contact with contacts, colleagues and also publishing papers to keep your brand top of mind is critical. There is no substitute for hard work, whether during a crisis or in normal times – what changes is how to perform.

| QUESTION TWO

Remote working is being seen as the new normal, how will this affect the culture of professional services firms?

Culture comes from the top. Managing your team during COVID-19 has presented challenges but also opportunities. This has been the time for leaders to shine. Teams expect that their leaders will provide the guidance and support they need through difficult times.

Remote work can lead to less communication and for younger team members working from home can and will present problems, particularly with mental health. These are unavoidable. Leaders, managers and all team members need to regularly communicate to maintain positivity and minimise the effect that isolation can have.

Mental health is the enemy or by-product of remote work for more junior team members. Also, home offices are often not designed for the kind of isolation recently experienced.

Regular communication is key to avoiding mental health issues.

If managers show the right kind of leadership, working through times of remote work can build even stronger bonds with team members.

The key is leadership and communication. The challenge is how to achieve this effectively and, to a lesser extent, what technology is best to use.

While working remotely has been a significant change for some professionals, it is critical to recognise that client expectations will not change – clients still want and should be provided with prompt professional service cost effectively. How we deliver that service is the challenge. This pandemic has shown us different ways to deliver our services, particularly using technology.



One of the challenges of remote working is privacy. This is a key issue for all professionals, particularly lawyers. Depending on the technology being used, most firms will be working remotely utilising the same protection utilised at their offices. Many firms are and have been utilising cloud based services that offer effective and efficient privacy.

| QUESTION THREE

With so many people now working from home using unsecure internet networks, should there be updated rules for data protection compliance? If so, should they be more relaxed given the crisis wrought by the pandemic?

One of the challenges of remote working is privacy. This is a key issue for all professionals, particularly lawyers. Depending on the technology being used, most firms will be working remotely utilising the same protection utilised at their offices. Many firms are and have been utilising cloud based services that offer effective and efficient privacy.

Professional firms must maintain appropriate levels of data protection – nothing should change. Governments should assist by providing more secure networks.

In this pandemic, there must be a balance between saving lives and saving the economy. Debate rages in modern media about the significant damage done to the economy by lockdowns, isolation, self-distancing etc. The debate is presently at fever pitch.

Everyone has their own personal views on what issue takes priority. For me, life is sacrosanct. Finding balance is never going to be easy. Should we have treated the pandemic as 'business as usual' and left people to die? To me, the answer is an unreservedly, no. Then we would have had significantly greater deaths and the pressure on the healthcare system funded by Australians may well have fallen and then damaged the economy irretrievably.

The alternative, which the Government's adopted, was to flatten the curve, minimise loss of life but at the same time the economy has suffered.

The question is therefore, which comes first – preserve life or preserve the economy. To me, the answer is to act responsibly to preserve life and support the economy to reduce the effects on the economy.



Established by James Conomos in July 1992, James Conomos Lawyers is a boutique legal firm offering specialist expertise in commercial litigation and insolvency.

From humble beginnings, the firm has become one of Australia's leading boutique law firms. Based in Brisbane's central business hub, James Conomos Lawyers is a team of high calibre professional staff who take an active role in the legal community, ensuring their expertise is always at the leading edge of their profession.

The team at James Conomos Lawyers takes the time with clients to understand what their needs are and provide the best solution overall, rather than seeking to represent them as lawyers.

| Guidelines for dealing with Crisis Management in Australia

- Clients are king, more than ever – listen to their needs and what they want;
- Provide prompt and impartial advice and assistance – what can you do to keep your clients abreast of changes of interest to them? How can you deliver services promptly?

Manage your team by leading by example;

- Focus on service and cost effectiveness. Discounts and other support in difficult times is a form of empathy recognised and appreciated by clients;
- Regularly communicate with all clients.



MALAYSIA

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Ashleigh is a Barrister-at-Law of England & Wales of the Middle Temple and an accredited civil and commercial mediator. She is currently undergoing her pupillage at Krish Maniam & Co, a boutique commercial firm at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She started her Law Studies at Taylor's University (Malaysia) and graduated via the University of Reading (United Kingdom) prior to being a member of the Bar of England in 2019. She is expected to be admitted and enrolled as an Advocate and Solicitor of High Court of Malaya by 2021.

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| QUESTION ONE

Will the professional service business model change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Subject to ongoing contractual obligations for rent, premium rent is not always a must have for the long term. Due to staggered working hours and working on rotation, it depends on how resourceful and flexible professionals are; there are many options out there such as shared co-working spaces to reduce cost, such as WeWork and Common Ground.

The business has to be more adaptable and stay relevant in the future, now that the world has adopted remote working. Some firms may even find that working remotely is more effective and convenient without the need for a physical presence. Firms should adopt standard operating procedures for employees working from home, increase access to relevant ICT services, and purchase remote working equipment which may include software such as antivirus and a VPN, along with secured and safe applications to help with work tasks.

Firms should merge and collaborate to promote sustainability and cover a wider range of sector and services; generating new leads through new ways of marketing online, subject to advertisement rules from the Legal Profession Act 1976, Legal Profession (Publicity) Rules 2001 and Website Rules for Law Firms 2005. Although Malaysia has strict rules on advertisement, law firms may find other avenues for promotions like holding public webinars and featuring special panel speakers/hosts such as retired judges and lawyers.



Firms are to notify clients of any changes to manage their expectations first, especially on ways of communication, and the firm's own Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) form now that private information and services will be provided online.

Firms are to notify clients of any changes to manage their expectations first, especially on ways of communication, and the firm's own Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) form now that private information and services will be provided online. Firms may offer new personalized services or alternatives to each client to maintain their satisfaction in professional services provided such as holding weekly scheduled meetings online via Zoom/Webex/Skype, advising through e-mail, and having phone calls to update clients on their legal cases.

| QUESTION TWO

Remote working is being seen as the new normal, how will this affect the culture of professional services firms?

There is now a pressing need for special measures and adaptations to new systems available, as well as innovation to create new services, programmes, and applications. However, this transition threatens existing traditional businesses models, as technology may be better suited for the modern world to make tasks and jobs more efficient now that remote working may be prevalent. Firms must be aware that artificial intelligence, blockchain and other advanced applications may render their current services obsolete. In the legal sector in Malaysia, an AI judiciary is already in place to recommend likely sentences for criminal cases –

perhaps the second of its kind in Asia, after by China. Following this, there is the definite future threat of the 'AI Lawyers' replacing actual lawyers to better serve clients' needs.

Service firms are completely reliant on their customer base and must implement search engine optimization (SEO) to better help new clients find the firm online, along with verified reviews and referrals to boost authenticity. Firms need to understand that with remote working, an online presence would be the growing trend and they may need to tweak their services to better suit their existing clients and clients that are generated online.

As mentioned, firms need to innovate due to disruption caused by the virus along with disruption caused by other firms that have more advanced technologies. Clients may opt for firms that have better technology that has been already implemented than those that struggle to find a proper avenue to communicate and deliver services. Effective means of communication, consistency and security are key to retaining clients to be reliant on our remote services. Professionals will need to reassure existing clients that their privacy and services will not be affected by any ongoing changes.

| QUESTION THREE

With so many people now working from home using unsecure internet networks, should there be updated rules for data protection compliance? If so, should they be more relaxed given the crisis wrought by the pandemic?

With the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) in charge of Personal Data Protection Department (PDPD) in Malaysia, laws and policies for data protection compliance in Malaysia may have to be specially reviewed just for professional services that are currently forced to work remotely. Currently, the concerns and risks utilising unfamiliar digital platforms requires special continuous ongoing updates from the MCMC and the Bar Council. For these reasons, punishment must not be harshly imposed yet.

The MCMC should guide the public of possible risks and, if possible, even come up with a portable secure network and database just for professionals, along with steps to comply with the rules; as best practices, there have been privacy and security flaws, with the latest issue the end-to-end encryption on Zoom.

Professionals should have their own compliance, to be specially reviewed, and authorised as PDPA compliant, as they have a higher standard of duty than the Personal Data Protection Act 2010 (PDPA) provides. This is particularly the case regarding remote database of personal information of clients when using new third party applications for remote working.

KRISH MANIAM & CO

ADVOCATES & SOLICITORS

The firm of Messrs Krish Maniam & Co. was established on 05.02.1996 under the stewardship of Datuk Seri Krishna Kumar J.P. The firm, originally started as a commercial litigation firm but since then has grown into a broad based commercial firm with wide and varied expertise in the commercial segment. The firm is well known in the regions as it has done many corporate exercises and various types of contentious work. The firm is one of few globally to have its own application to serve clients and the public at large. The application is known as MyPocketLawyer.

| Guidelines for dealing with Crisis Management in Malaysia

- Traditional firms to rethink business models & SOPs.
- Firms to source for avenues and applications that help with communication, productivity, and for working remotely. This will prepare companies to reduce further costs via collaborations and transitioning to co-working spaces, and saving time by holding online meetings.
- Be PDPA Compliant and Certified.
- Bar Council to rethink publicity rules for law firms in Malaysia – to be more competitive online and sustainable.
- Traditional firms to be prepared for major future disruption due to Cyber Courts, AI Lawyers, and AI Judges.



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A graduate of Trinity College Dublin, Dominic practiced for 15 years in the corporate department of A&L Goodbody, before spending three years as head of international firm Walkers Irish corporate department.

leman.ie

| QUESTION ONE

Will the professional service business model change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes.

'Traditional' professional service firms (PSFs) will be impacted by the fundamental changes in societal values and behaviours arising from COVID-19 and will need to change their traditional business models to cope. The traditional model for delivering professional services was already under significant pressure pre COVID-19, from both clients and junior staff.

Staff and clients now know that remote working 'works' and are rapidly getting comfortable with and learning how to optimise video conferencing and other virtual collaboration tools. Reluctance to commute/work on-site will continue for some time to come and will accelerate the decline of face-to-face meetings.

COVID-19's financial impact on PSF balance sheets will have a profound effect on budget allocation across cost lines such as rent and technology spend. Budget spend on rent will be bad. Spend on remote work technologies will increase. PSFs will reduce premium rent spend, moving to smaller core office space in lower rent locations, to be used for client meetings only. Remote working/hot desking and indeed a diffused location strategy, will be core to service sale and delivery practices from now on and will have bottom line cost benefits, reducing rent/staff costs (once the required tech spend is absorbed).

This new normal will see a further decline in physical transaction completions with PSFs defaulting to electronic completion meetings, relying on electronic signatures etc to the maximum extent permitted under the law. Working to a remote/diffused location model will have minimal impact on brand reputation of well run and agile PSFs. Electronic marketing and client connectivity has been and remains core to brand/marketing strategies for progressive firms.

Clients will demand that PSFs bring the best virtual and collaborative practices and technologies to bear on what we do for them. This will be a basic 'hygiene' factor for client decisions as to which PSFs they engage.

| QUESTION TWO

Remote working is being seen as the new normal, how will this affect the culture of professional services firms?

Remote working will challenge the traditional hierarchical culture in many PSFs, but will provide greater opportunities for part-time employees and consultants who have valuable skills to offer.

PSFs will need to develop end-to-end training and HR strategies to enable them to engender and maintain their unique 'firm culture', assist staff to keep in touch and connected in real ways across the virtual divide and indeed to mentor and produce future generations of professionals. From now on time spent in the office will be focused on: a) 'connectivity' activities, keeping staff connected through face-to-face interaction and learning; and b) client interaction. Time 'On the Tools' actually executing work will increasingly be done remotely.

As the opportunity and appetite for face-to-face marketing and sales pitches declines, social media and online marketing will become even more critical for the growth of PSFs brand and business. Accepting that it's hard to 'get your foot in the door' or indeed to 'stay sticky' with a target or client over email, we will all need to incorporate Facetime/Teams/Video conferencing into our armoury.



We don't believe that the focus should be on updating GDPR rules, rather the focus should be on assessing and clarifying how those existing rules are interpreted and enforced during the current crisis.

| QUESTION THREE

With so many people now working from home using unsecure internet networks, should there be updated rules for data protection compliance? If so, should they be more relaxed given the crisis wrought by the pandemic?

We don't believe that the focus should be on updating GDPR rules, rather the focus should be on assessing and clarifying how those existing rules are interpreted and enforced during the current crisis. We also don't believe that internet connectivity/resilience/security is a COVID-19 issue per se, network availability and resilience remains a basic hygiene factor.

Various supervising authorities, including the Irish Data Protection Commissioner, have indicated they will adopt a reasonable and pragmatic approach during the lockdown in assessing compliance with the GDPR. They are recognising these unprecedented circumstances and the need for certain organisations to prioritise other issues over data protection compliance, which is sensible.

The Irish DPC has issued helpful guidance as to how employers and their employees can maintain appropriate data security measures while working remotely, entitled "Protecting Personal Data when working remotely". That guidance sets out sensible "tips" to keep personal data safe while working remotely, dealing with the use of remote devices and the need to keep them secure etc.

Self-evidently PSFs should still ensure that their employees are aware of the increased data protection risks which do arise with remote working, to include providing employees with training and, in Ireland, with a copy of the Irish DPC's guidance. PSFs should also review and take necessary precautions with their own systems and practices where required. Policies should be reviewed and extra security measures for homeworking should be taken where risks are identified.

That said, it is important that any new policies and procedures implemented by PSFs re data protection are necessary and proportionate in the circumstances.

As to the question whether healthcare should trump data privacy, we again believe that the Irish DPC has struck the right balance.

As the Duke of Wellington (who grew up a stone's throw from our office in Dublin) apparently said: "No plan survives contact with the enemy".



Founded in 2007, Leman Solicitors are Ireland's most innovative law firm. We specialise in Financial Services, Real Estate, Commercial and Technology. Our vision is to be a unique legal business providing an outstanding client experience by the most efficient means. We also have four key dedicated departments; Real Estate, Corporate, Dispute Resolution and Employment.

All of our lawyers are experts in their specialist fields, having worked in the largest law firms in Ireland and the United Kingdom and in-house with some of the largest corporations in the world. With Leman you can expect something different.

| Guidelines for dealing with Crisis Management in Ireland

Cash is King - Focus on cash flow is the priority, to include engaging early regarding Government support and with lenders.

Keep expenses in check.

Stress test operating budgets and plan for multiple financial scenarios.

Do the right thing - Remember that your actions now in dealing with employees and creditors will shape your reputation for years to come.

Communicate - Then communicate some more. All stakeholders, partners, staff, clients, creditors, banks and media contacts, need to be dealt with promptly, pro-actively and confidently.

PSF senior management need to deliver clear key messages about how you are coping with the crisis.

Evaluate Systems - Identify and deal with system weakness as a priority. If your systems can't enable you to deliver for your clients, you are in real trouble

Show Leadership - Remember a PSFs' employees are its lifeblood and must be the priority. Senior leaders need to lead, on mental health, professionalism and perspective.



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Ramanand is highly recommended by Chambers Asia-Pacific as a ranked Corporate M&A lawyer. In addition to M&A and company law matters, he advises on corporate finance and insolvency, and is also a specialist in corporate governance, having advised on high-profile board and shareholder disputes, and on board and management obligations following discovery of corporate fraud in listed and unlisted companies. Ramanand also appears before courts and tribunals in corporate disputes and is an empanelled commercial arbitrator with the Indian Institute of Arbitration and Mediation. Before returning to India, Ramanand worked for extended periods with the IMF and the UN.

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| QUESTION ONE

Will the professional service business model change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Almost every professional services firm in India was forced to adopt "work from home" practices as a result of the COVID-19 lockdowns in India. Yet, the change wasn't as disruptive to the provision of services as the earlier ubiquitous use of centralised offices might have suggested. Work still got done, contracts and briefs were sent out to clients in time and life moved on. In fact, a number of firms have been able to adapt quickly to the new remote working normal. News reports now suggest that with physical distancing norms becoming mandatory post lockdown, a number of firms are likely to continue to use "work from home" practices for a significant majority of their staff.

But how will this affect the business model of professional services? For starters, office space requirements will clearly be affected. Even after considering the additional space that may be required to ensure physical distancing in offices post-lockdown, it is likely that firms are not going to need as much space as they did, or be willing to pay the premium office rents they did. There will also inevitably be concerns with issues around contact (think of coffee machines and photocopiers) and air filtration systems in these offices, which in turn will lead to needs for (and incurring costs for) design innovation/office renovation to comply with physical distancing requirements.

Even so, centralised offices might not be completely written off just yet. Rather, it is likely that firms will initially maintain a mix of remote working and a reduced presence at a centralised location (at least until technological and medical advances make the use of one option over the other a 'no brainer'). But even in this transitory period (if it is transitory), the broader business models of professional services firms will change.

| QUESTION TWO

Remote working is being seen as the new normal, how will this affect the culture of professional services firms?

In the past a fairly significant part of an organisation's culture came from or manifested itself in the spontaneous and informal gatherings that were both common and frequent at all offices. Those water-cooler moments may soon become a thing of the past as more organisations move to remote working as the new normal. The way in which office colleagues interact is bound to be affected by these changes.

Professional services organisations invest a significant amount of time and effort in the way new joiners learn the culture of the organisation and its ways of working. This learning culture is likely to change. For example, young lawyers fresh out of law school, who learned from watching their senior colleagues, will have to adapt their learning methods to meet the expectations of the organization they are engaged by.



In this changing environment it will therefore be very important for people managers in professional services firms to not just be mindful of the likelihood of these changes but be watchful for the impact of these changes on morale, productivity and team spirit.

Other areas of culture will also be affected. Conducting 'difficult conversations' is going to become even more difficult if the conversations have to be conducted by telephone or videoconference. A recent edition of The Economist magazine ventures that remote working will also reduce the scope for office politics.

In this changing environment it will therefore be very important for people managers in professional services firms to not just be mindful of the likelihood of these changes but be watchful for the impact of these changes on morale, productivity and team spirit.

| QUESTION THREE

With so many people now working from home using unsecure internet networks, should there be updated rules for data protection compliance? If so, should they be more relaxed given the crisis wrought by the pandemic?

Most organisations were equipped to allow remote working even before the COVID-19 lockdowns. While this was intended to supplement centralised office work, the real change effected by the lockdown is in the amount of remote working now required relative to the amount previously practiced.

Therefore, while organisational IT security systems should be able to cope with the data security required to allow remote working, it might still be helpful for organisations to revisit the robustness of their existing security systems given the more widespread use of remote working.

Here too there is likely to be a sharp learning curve. As the widely reported security concerns with the popular Zoom platform demonstrated, when applications are used at scales that were not previously anticipated, security arrangements need to be updated quickly.

Rules on these issues have been and are likely to be updated too. For instance, the Indian Government has taken to using Zoom for a number of official purposes, including conducting court proceedings. To address the security concerns associated with the use of this platform, the Government issued a set of standard operating procedures to address the security issues (such as the use of passwords and waiting rooms for access to the videoconferences). Similar changes in rules or standard procedures are likely in other remote working related areas as well.

Natural disasters, like the pandemic, should not provide a reason to dilute the guarantees and protections of personal rights - if anything, they should be treated as an opportunity to start doing things better.



Mundkur Law Partners is an award-winning corporate law firm based in Bangalore, India. The firm specialises in complex, international transactions and has a reputation for adding exceptional value in developing client strategies in transactions and disputes. The firm's clients range from listed multinationals to start-ups, with interests across diverse areas from brick and mortar manufacturing to cutting edge drug-discovery and technology-based businesses.

The firm's practice focuses on five areas: international M&A – including private equity and venture capital transactions – education law, life sciences and healthcare, insolvency resolution and complex commercial disputes. The firm values its reputation for exceptional client service and offers each client the assurance of complete partner involvement in every aspect of the engagement.

| Guidelines for dealing with Crisis Management in India

- The widespread use of remote working is going to result in a new normal. Firms best able to adapt to this new normal will be the ones that address not just the technological changes, but the cultural ones as well.
- In this changing environment it will be very important for people managers in professional services firms to not just be mindful of the likelihood of these changes but be watchful for the impact of these changes on morale, productivity and team spirit.
- While organisational IT security systems should be able to cope with the data security required to allow remote working, it might still be helpful for organisations to specifically revisit the robustness of their existing security systems.



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| QUESTION ONE

Will the professional service business model change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Professional service providers, following the standard operating procedure (SOP) prescribed by the government of Pakistan, are allowed to operate from their offices, but social distancing requirements also compel us to work from remote locations.

Professional service providers act as a bridge between clients and the regulatory bodies who enforce the law relating to the area of their practice. As a service provider we need to be based in a central location that is easily accessible for clients. Similarly, we are also located close to all the relevant regulatory bodies, so that we can visit them to carry out our professional obligations. Consequently, there is a little opportunity to move away from prime locations to avoid the premium rents.

Instead of making more investment on remote working practices, it will be more feasible for us to continue with the existing prime location office as a headquarters, controlling the work of the professionals working from their homes. Some lead colleagues will perform as coordinators from the HQ. This arrangement will also facilitate in-house meetings of professionals, meetings with clients and liaison with relevant regulatory bodies.

Operating from our prime location during COVID-19 will do no harm to our reputation as a top tier professional service provider. Indeed, we believe it will increase our reputation by maintaining our physical presence during the pandemic, while most of the other law firms practice remote working.

However, if COVID-19 continues and relocation become a necessity, I would personally vacate the office and shift the HQ to my residence. This is located in a prime city area and is ideal for clients.

| QUESTION TWO

Remote working is being seen as the new normal, how will this affect the culture of professional services firms?

With the spread of COVID-19, professional services firms are redesigning their work culture, operating smart offices in the heart of prime business areas with a network of remote locations. The smart office will house marketing executives and networking professionals, while other professionals will be working from their remote locations.

This new type of working could be an opportunity as it would be cost effective in the following ways:

- it will save rents, utility bills, transport/fuel, entertainment expenses;
- it will reduce the wage bill as professionals working from remote locations (mostly homes) will be more willing to work for lower salaries than is currently the case;
- the new normal will provide an opportunity to hire high quality professionals from remote locations who otherwise would not be willing to move to offices at prime locations; and
- it will open a new window for hiring highly educated talented women who were reluctant to travel a long way to prime location offices.

This new work design may face a threat of overburdening the work of key professionals in allocating, monitoring, guiding and finalising the work of their junior members of staff. Issues such as team discussions, intermediary liaisons, timely guidance and teaming up on the bigger assignments may be a problem. It may also create issues when adhering to tight timelines.

Nevertheless, these new modes of working will have little impact on generating and delivering work as our clients will soon be used to the new post COVID-19 ways of working.

We believe in quality work, innovation and efficient delivery. It's a way we've always won the trust of our clients. This will continue regardless of new ways of working – indeed, we want our clients to see how efficient we are and how good our service delivery is in this new normal post COVID-19 world.

QUESTION THREE

With so many people now working from home using unsecure internet networks, should there be updated rules for data protection compliance? If so, should they be more relaxed given the crisis wrought by the pandemic?

Data protection authorities typically monitor and enforce protection about processing of personal data. The professional services providers, generally, under an agreement/contract to render the services, collect the data (over and above the personal data). Nevertheless, the security of clients' data in an automated environment is the responsibility of the service providers under the contractual obligations by and between the clients and also under the relevant data protection legislation.

As the world is passing through this post COVID-19 phase, the government must step in to facilitate the transition in a way that data secrecy/privacy may not be compromised. The government on the one hand may relax the penalties under the relevant data protection laws and on the other manage to provide easy and accessible infrastructure and/or technological support in order for the professional services providers to meet their obligations under the data protection laws and also under the contractual obligations.

This is also subject to cultural responsiveness among the members of society. The use of pirated software is common and due to cost constraints users normally rely on unsecured networks. The government may facilitate and encourage the use of copyrighted and secure networks and offer tax breaks for making investment and/or acquisition of patented software and for use of secure networks.



Technology companies should help by developing cost-friendly data protection solutions, particularly for small and medium size businesses.

Technology companies should help by developing cost-friendly data protection solutions, particularly for small and medium-size businesses. For monitoring and taking appropriate actions, during the pandemic, the authorities are heavily processing personal data. This collection and processing of data is beyond normal and exceptional but is required. There is a need to build consensus to make appropriate amendments in the data protection laws to balance healthcare monitoring by the government and the legislative safeguards with respect to privacy and personal data protection.



S.U.Khan Associates (SUK) was established to provide a distinctive range of services for its local and foreign clients. SUK offers expert services to public and private sectors. The firm provides innovative solutions to problems relating to International Trade, Anti-Trust Law, Data Protection, e-Commerce and IT laws, International Trade Development, Foreign Investment, International Trade Agreements, International Trade Management, etc. SUK's clients include top Pakistani and foreign companies.

All this experience along with the professional qualification of team members has made SUK one of the most successful professional consultants in Pakistan.

Guidelines for dealing with Crisis Management in Pakistan

- The safety of our professionals is important to us. We take all possible measures and follow the guidelines designed by healthcare scientists. We strictly observe social distancing and working from home and online.
- Doing work and assisting our clients at this time of COVID-19 is equally important to help economic activities continue so that a maximum number of jobs are saved, and people are protected from poverty.
- Devising innovative solutions in worsening work conditions on a client-to-client basis, even prescribing economic solutions to help them survive and thrive.
- Charging a minimum fee for rendering professional services considering that it is the time to share pain not to profit from gain.
- Assisting the regulatory bodies in discharging their functions, observing the pandemic safety requirements. Also advising them on to how further ease out their regulations for the smooth functioning of economic activities.



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resolucion.nl

| QUESTION ONE

Will the professional service business model change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Currently, the market of hiring office space has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. This applies to the market for new contracts or for expanding current contracts. Small law firms in the Netherlands have experienced a considerable drop in their turnover. Depending on the specialisation of these firms it is expected that in the second half of 2020 they will experience a boost in demand as their clients want to catch up on their own drop in business. Landlords of their offices with a long-term vision should act flexibly with the rent payments due. In the near future significant change could be expected as a result of so many employees working from home. The limits of the capacity and features of ICT hardware and software have become painfully visible, as well as the traditional approach by lawyers. The efficiency of online meetings as well as the pros and cons of employees working at home will have an important and lasting influence on decisions about the office space needed, and the way offices will be furnished and organised. Dynamic office space with reliable and secure printing and mail handling on demand – as well as support and attention for a secure working space at home with safe and secure ICT facilities – will need more attention than before. Probably new forms of sharing these services or new business models focused on outsourcing these services will evolve.

| QUESTION TWO

Remote working is being seen as the new normal, how will this affect the culture of professional services firms?

Team building and ways to manage teams of professionals will have to change. Working from home or outside the office will offer new opportunities for employees. At the same time more and new forms of stress will need the special attention of management. Nevertheless, more sustainable forms of international business meetings will remain. People need some element of social interaction and physical meetings will need to be organised, which means there needs to be a balance between working in the office and at home. Similar developments have occurred and will occur at the offices of our clients, and no doubt this will permanently change the traditionally conservative approach of law firms to meet and serve their clients.



Team building and ways to manage teams of professionals will have to change. Working from home or outside the office will offer new opportunities for employees.

| QUESTION THREE

With so many people now working from home using unsecure internet networks, should there be updated rules for data protection compliance? If so, should they be more relaxed given the crisis wrought by the pandemic?

The past few months of the pandemic have revealed the vulnerabilities of ICT systems. This involves not only the unsecure internet connections used while working from home, which creates risks of breaching data protection rules, but also the limited capacity of these networks. This includes outdated hardware and a lack of experience by people using the tools available to work from home or remotely. Already data protection authorities are alert to the risks involved of remote working. Certainly, law enforcement action is necessary here. Professional services firms should give high priority to increase their efforts to improve the systems they use and the facilities they offer to the people working for them, as well as their clients.

These systems should be ready for the post COVID-19 era. Online meetings or meetings for remote workers will need high speed connections and an assurance that they're compliant with all the latest security and data protection. If data protection rules are relaxed through political pressure during the COVID-19 restrictions, this relaxation cannot continue in the post COVID-19 era.

Resolución

Resolución is uniquely positioned to advise clients with insightful, dedicated and innovative legal advice and representation, specialising in navigating through the complex issues surrounding regulatory and administrative law. Resolución is your legal adviser on strategies to achieve business objectives, to reduce legal and regulatory risks and on legislative developments, national, European, international and comparative. If necessary, Resolución is your representation in litigation. Resolución gives a tailored, practical and innovative approach, to help you and your firm navigate through all fields of administrative and regulatory law.

Resolución specializes in:

- General Administrative Law
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- European (Administrative) Law
- Compliance
- Law Enforcement
- Administrative Sanctions

Resolución is your lawyer, adviser, sparring-partner, specialist, and strategist all at once, not to mention an expansive network of specialists in other fields of law, and other jurisdictions, if necessary.

Guidelines for dealing with Crisis Management in the Netherlands

Communicate with and support your clients more than ever. Many of your clients are dealing with difficult situations and need to take difficult decisions. It is our job to assist, support and give advice, even in difficult times. Stay in contact, communicate and assist. Share best practices to deal with the current unknown territories. Turnover and fees are second.

Modernize the management of your team. Put more effort in stimulating communication with and between the members of your team. Listen and learn from them more. Create an open environment with lots of room to collect ideas to deal with the coming post Corona era, and to improve the energy, social cohesion, commitment and quality of your team. Develop new ways together to interact and socialize as a team in a reality of out-of-office working.

Reconsider the use of office space. Working at home or out of the office means a different use of the office. Rethink the organization of office assistance and consider new ways to share services such as production and mailing of documents. Find ways to organize the office space to better serve the purpose of interacting and socializing the members of your team.

Improve the quality of your ICT-infrastructure. For sure you know now the limits of your ICT-infrastructure. Deal with it quickly and think ahead. Consult ICT-professionals. Do not forget to incorporate developing demands in data protection in the reality of massive out-of-the office working and client contacts.

An aerial photograph of a river valley. The river is a vibrant blue, winding through a valley with green, mossy hillsides. The surrounding landscape is a mix of green vegetation and brownish-grey rocky terrain. The overall scene is a natural, scenic view of a river valley.

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In this changing environment it will therefore be very important for people managers in professional services firms to not just be mindful of the likelihood of these changes but be watchful for the impact of these changes on morale, productivity and team spirit.

Ramanand Mundkur Managing Partner, Mundkur Law Partners (India)

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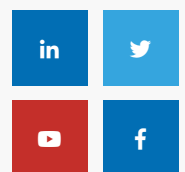
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