
Fear Of Missing Out (on LIFE)

Industry experts seem to be fighting the old adage that no one ever ends up on their death bed, wishing they had spent more

time at work. Everyone is feverishly polishing and shining their crystal balls until they reveal positive signs of workers enthusiastically returning to the office in some fashion that will relieve sublease and lender pressures. One of the terms I see increasingly referenced (which I confess I was starting to really like and use myself) as a big driver of this trend was the notion of “Fear Of Missing Out”. This was the idea that if we could just get a few more workers in the office, the rest would quickly follow behind for fear of missing out (or as some have cynically said, “fear of not being missed at all and thus more easily let go”). Yet, as I continue to meet with a wide-ranging mix of peers and industry thought leaders, I have been hearing a couple of nuggets that warrant some careful consideration for both companies and owners and operators of the assets from which companies rent space.

Soul Searching Alert: We have all had a little extra time to think about a lot of things over the last year. I would be willing to guess that very few of us are coming out of this moment without some serious self-evaluation. How can I be better? Where am I allocating my energy and should that change going forward? What’s really important in life? Statistically, one of the places all of us spend the biggest chunk of our lives is at “work” and in this moment, it is an area under the microscope perhaps the most. If companies and owners of office assets quickly try to pivot and just make a little tweak here and there to balance “office” days and “WFH” days, without fundamentally digging-in to flush out the general consensus of the average employee’s soul-searching journey, we risk creating a CRE office sector that will underperform for years.

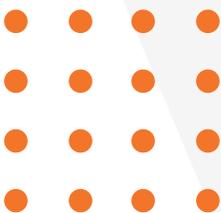




Blurring the Lines: I have been blessed to work in some amazing environments and with some amazing teams. The connections that were made extended beyond office hours. As we all know is true, people do not work for companies; they work for people. Those deep connections simply cannot be made and maintained virtually long term so coming back together seems natural. But I am amazed at how many marketing brochures I have been asked to review lately that all seem to say and show the same basic things: updated conference rooms, gyms, café, lobby, etc. These all scream very definitively “WORK!” We must get back to leveraging new advances in technology, better space options, and compelling environments that help workers remember how badly they need those connections. Yes, those moments will spark new innovations and productivity boosts, but they should also help companies and employees achieve better boundaries and balance as people recalibrate their lives.



Tell a story: A couple of summers ago, thanks to nightly outings at the dog park next to the house we were staying at, we met several new friends – amazing how man’s best friend helps us all find new ones too. One of those people was a professional storyteller, which in and of itself was fascinating. I was not quite sure what to think until we heard one of her stories. It was fantastic. It was carefully crafted but authentic and pulled us into it. Given everything that everyone has been through this past year, we need to reimagine “work” environments we ourselves would want to come back to. Then we need to carefully reimagine through marketing and other channels how to tell that story in a way that will paint for companies and employees a compelling picture that we are prepared to execute.



I heard a great quote the other day that when we are born, we look like our parents, but when we die, we look like our choices. That image becomes a big gulp moment for most of us, but it can also become a rallying cry and motivation for better choices. People will be more selective about the decisions they make, including the kind of work they do, who they work with, where they work and how they work. I want to be part of assembling and operating those kind of life-giving environments that accrue to the “good choices” side of peoples’ ledger.



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