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BOMA International
DEEP DIVE

Looking to 2022: Property Professionals Accelerate on Their Positives

2021 was a year of normalization under new rules of engagement. Now, property professionals look ahead with increasing confidence.

By John Salustri

THE OVERVIEW

We get the name January from the Roman god Janus, a two-faced sort of fellow who looks simultaneously back and forward. He is also the god of doors, appropriate for this time in our professional lives, not to mention an apt metaphor for property managers.

In a sense, we are standing in a doorway as we approach January 2022. It is an odd, extended moment, with its curious mix of unanswered questions and its growing sense of hope for good growth in the coming months, something we certainly could not claim this time last year.

The duality of the situation, of course, comes at the hands of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is the virus and its variants that pose those questions and keep their consideration urgent. But the surprise-attack nature of the pandemic and the resultant fear of the dark that permeated much of the past 18-plus months have been largely vanquished by knowledge, understanding and experience. We have learned the lesson of COVID; we have learned how to navigate previously uncharted waters. We mourn our losses, lick our wounds and look to the future.

Now we can turn to 2022 with at least a bit more clarity than we had heading into 2021. We can continue to refine our new level of engagement with clients and tenants. We can continue to shore up those market sectors that need help and we can build on those that prospered.

This Deep Dive is designed to chart some of that clarity, and we do so—as always—through a wide variety of industry research, but especially through in-depth interviews with experts. This time, these experts also include members of BOMA International's National Advisory Council, which is made up of senior executives from major commercial real estate companies. What follows are top-level insights from industry leadership on the nature of change. And we are in the midst of enormous change. That is what doorways are all about. As we step through, we leave behind a period for which there was never a precedent.

Or was there?

"We've determined throughout the pandemic that interaction is critical to the human species, and the office environment can indeed be a safe and satisfying experience for such a large part of our lives."

– Kevin Fossum, Piedmont Office Realty Trust

THINGS WE MULL OVER AT 3AM

"One of the things clients always say is that there's no precedent for what we've been through," says one C-suite executive. "We take exception to this. There's a huge precedent."

Indeed. While COVID itself, in its scope and duration, is unprecedented, there was much in our responses that was already in place, things such as the growth of new property management technologies, working from home and the importance of flex space. How often over the past 18-plus months have you heard about trends that COVID did not start, but only accelerated? Therein lies her exception.

But partial solutions can ease only part of the COVID-based agita. During a recent meeting of BOMA International's National Advisory Council (or NAC), attendees were asked what issues kept them up at night.

Not surprisingly, the list can be separated into the issues we can address and those we cannot. Among the latter are the economic condition, the threat of inflation, the cost of raw construction materials and inconsistent mandates at various levels of the government concerning masking and vaccinations.

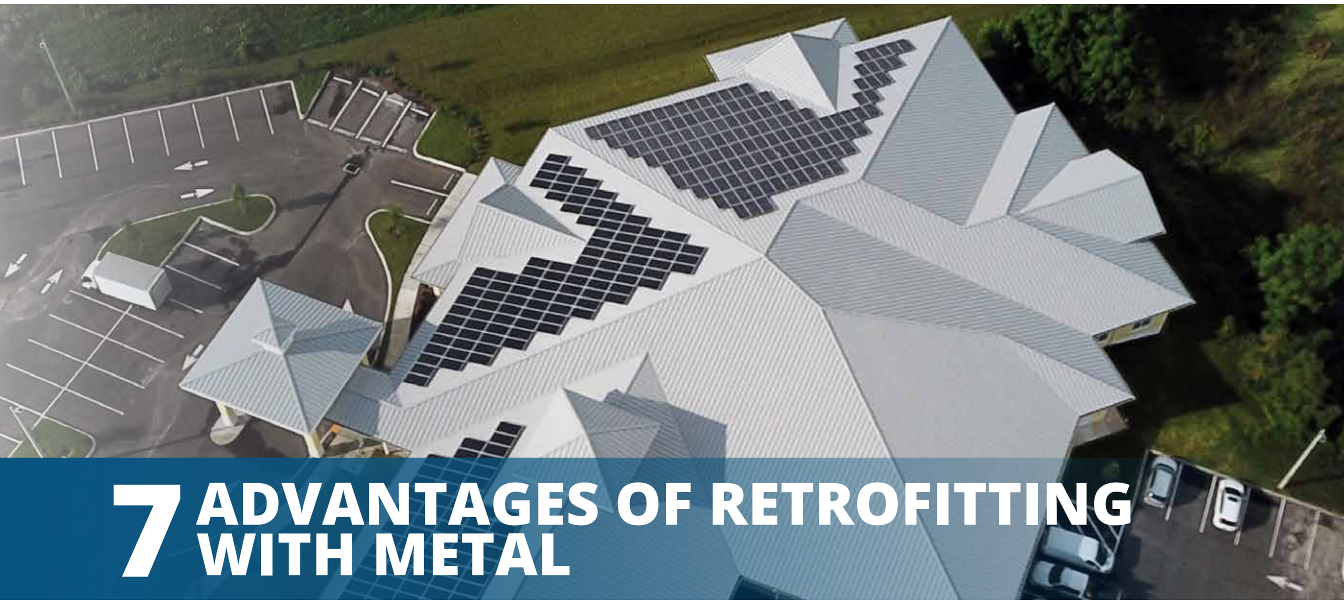
Property professionals continue to rank staffing concerns, including talent shortages and workforce development, as their top issue.

Then there is the list of those issues we can control, or at least influence. The talent shortage is one over which property managers can exert a surprising degree of influence, if not total control. Ditto leasing, valuation and inspiring tenants to return to the office.

Of those, the talent shortage was the top concern across the board, and it in turn connects directly to other issues, such as staff burnout, operational efficiency and growth.

In industry survey after survey over the past year, property professionals continue to rank staffing concerns as their number-one issue. A recent *Bisnow* report puts the overall staffing shortfall as impacting 60 to 70 percent of all commercial real estate firms, and certainly all disciplines.

"Right now, our major concern is hiring," says one contributor. "We're seeing an unusually large need for a variety of employees in management as well as engineering, and we're working hard to find creative ways to get the job done on behalf of our stakeholders while trying to attract and retain future talent."



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There are measures that can be taken, says one senior executive, to elevate the process from the traditional method of posting openings and hoping for a healthy response (what has been referred to as the "post-and-pray" technique) to a more proactive strategy.

"It's no longer passive," says one property manager. "It's an active networking process," one that has to be developed over time and consistently worked. "I'm a true believer that the firms that are active in recruiting and those that empower their teams, offering them the resources and great training programs," are those that will win the race for talent.

In an era when that talent can pick and choose where they want to work, the building itself plays a vital role in attraction and retention. "The way to distinguish a building from its peers is how much more it offers employees," says one contributor. People make employment decisions based, at least in part, on the physical environment.

But that won't overshadow the culture and the benefits of the company itself—a thought that applies as much to property management as to its tenancy. And experts we talked with indicate that a rethinking of corporate policies is a major call to action based on the COVID-19 experience.

"The first step to keeping your best people is to keep them paid, challenged and energized," says one exec. "But we don't want to sift through a lot of resumes." Instead, his firm empowers its people to join national associations, like BOMA International, and become involved. It not only makes for good business practices, but it also "creates relationships with people that we want to attract to our company when we have a need. Our best calling card is our people."

It involves a rethinking that, in the words of one contributor, embraces the "softer considerations of appreciation and recognition. It's such an important component of engagement for employees, whether they're ours or our tenants'." She confesses that, prior to the pandemic, her firm's leadership believed they were doing it well. "But we've strengthened what we thought we were pretty good at."

Other techniques employed by the C-suite to hire and retain include a stepped up social media presence, adjusting compensation to reflect market changes and adding benefits that reflect "the needs of our employees' families and their lifestyle and their physical and mental well-being objectives."

Supporting tenants' efforts in this area helps property managers with their own talent-shortage issues by reinforcing the building as a preferred place to be. That, in turn, speaks to the leasing and valuation picture. Is it in our control? No. Can we influence it? Yes.

"Much of the talk in the public media is related to the belief that offices are 'unnecessary,'" says one expert, "which makes our job of marketing space and maintaining demand that much harder than other sectors." That leads to constant brainstorming on ways to create buzz and communicate that people "can and should" return to the office. There, the messaging goes, they will not only be safe, but they also will be more productive. (We will have more on productivity in a later section.)

These various efforts might be having their effect. Cushman & Wakefield reports that some "40 percent of global office workers were in the office as of mid-September, and the percentage of U.S. employees in the office increased post-Labor Day from 31 percent to 35 percent by the end of September." These are not bell-ringing numbers. But they are a start, and of course, as the experts we spoke with indicate, occupancy will swing widely market to market, from low double digits to upward of 80 percent, depending in large part on the local state of COVID cases.

Cushman & Wakefield calls the current leasing picture an "inflection," one that bodes well for the office as the place to work. While still exhibiting some obvious scarring from the 2020 upheaval, "National leasing activity over the [first three quarters of 2021] is up 19%." And while absorption in gateway markets is still in the negative column, it is better than it was in 2020, "indicating that, regardless of current absorption metrics, businesses are locking in space as they plan to return to the office post-pandemic."

There is another softer-side component to making the office as enticing as possible. "It's our partnership with our tenants," says more than one property executive. "Partnership and trust are the most critical components of the tenant experience." Of course, just like work from home and technology were growing pre-pandemic, any property manager worth their salt already had a strong relationship with their constituents, be they ownership, occupants or vendors.

"Our tenants include our property managers and leasing teams in their overall plan for their return to work," says one senior executive. Along the way there are questions raised that remained behind the scenes before 2020, questions about sanitation, building systems and operations.

After all, who in your tenant roster ever heard of MERV-13 prior to the pandemic? "I can't count the number of articles I've read lately about filters."

None of us knows how long hand sanitizers and masks will be with us, or if they will ever totally go away (some of our sources predicted that they would not go away at all). That transparency, those partnerships, with a better-informed tenancy will define property management for a long time to come. And all of our experts agree: It's a good thing.

"I surveyed our regional managers in office and industrial and asked them their top priorities for 2022. Without fail, everyone listed talent in the top three."

— Kristin Mueller, JLL

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NEW RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

"There's nothing better than to collaborate with your peers," says one contributor, who is careful to include in that group "vendors, clients and tenants." It is (excuse the cliché) a growing circle of trust. "Through increasing rapport, we build tenants' trust that their property managers and operators are doing all the right things to support occupancy."

Transparency is simply one of the new rules of engagement. As is working through with tenants their health concerns (including safe work environments and mandates for vaccinations, masking and sanitation) and greater flexibility in how and where they work. The flip side of that transparency is, of course, continuing tenant education geared to providing occupants with greater understanding of why certain best practices are in place (a topic covered in depth in a previous Deep Dive).

"We have to demonstrate to our tenants that we are providing safe environments," says a C-suite exec whose firm has partnered with UL in their "verified building program." The protocol provides twice-yearly testing for air, water and hygiene, acoustics and cleanliness.

It should be noted that, while the program extends to the member's office portfolio, the net-leased nature of the industrial portion dictates that property management serve in an advisory capacity on such issues.

Most warehousing and distribution facilities were deemed essential during the depths of the pandemic, explains one property manager. And due to demand, most facilities burned lights 24/7. But as triple net tenants, "They would come to us for guidance, and we would direct them to resources, either through the relationships we had or to such federal agencies as the CDC or OSHA."

When it comes to such issues as masking and vaccinations, manager and tenant alike are largely in the hands of federal agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, as well as the local authorities having jurisdiction. In the name of safety, one executive said her firm will adhere to the mandates of whichever body imposes the strictest guidelines. In the case of a healthcare manager, that body is often the tenants themselves.

"We're in the customer service industry," she says, "so we adhere to their requests," which she admits is a challenge since it means making sure "every elevator contractor or plumber is fully vaccinated. Although I'm happy to say our vendors have been real partners."

Internally, most members of the C-suite we talked to are working largely on an honor or voluntary system, although some do require proof of vaccination. In all cases, it is a human resources issue and kept strictly confidential. One executive noted that, in the event of a COVID case, that person's identity is held in confidence unless there is reason to do otherwise, and then it is first discussed with that person.

Turning to the issue of space flexibility, that expectation is also nothing new. What has changed is the question of degree. Working remotely has become commonplace—whether it is at home, in a flex space or, to use the typical symbol of remote working, your local Starbucks. (It is not by coincidence that one flex space provider recently published a blog post entitled "Four Tips for Building a Strong Culture When You Have a Distributed Team.")

Are either working from home or the apparently growing corporate mandate that everyone has to return to the office permanent fixtures? The jury is still out. But, as this year's edition of PwC and the Urban Land Institute's *Emerging Trends in Real Estate* opines:

"The office sector seems to have forever changed in ways that would have been inconceivable before COVID. Firms in traditionally office-based sectors … are rethinking their space needs within an entirely new framework: Which workers need to come in and how often? In what type of space, and in which locations?"

But again, we return to the topic of precedents: "These issues are not entirely new," says *Emerging Trends*. It cites hot-desking and its variant strains as long-standing experiments in flexibility. "The difference now is the range of firms seriously considering permanent remote working arrangements, as well as the scope and scale of workers participating."

This includes property management firms, those where work from home is a viable option. But as one C-suite executive stated, "We're in the commercial real estate space. We need to set an example and demonstrate that it's safe to return to work."

"That's the traditional logic," counters one colleague. "We've pressed ourselves on how we can look at that differently and create a little flexibility and a bit of that hybrid range for our own people. There are things we do in this business that can be done either at an office or at home."

"Anything a landlord can do to help tenants achieve a higher employee retention rate is critical. Tenants and owners alike are investing in it."

— Jim Clemo, Duke Realty

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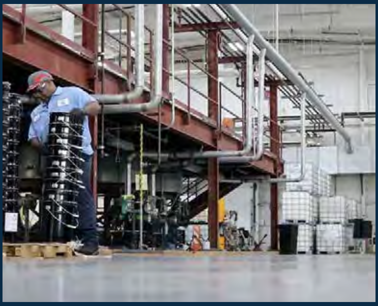

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More than one source stated that it is not a one-size-fits all consideration, neither for tenants nor the management companies that serve them. And more than one said that lease terms are being negotiated on a wide variety of bases, including total work-from-home approaches (although most stated that this was rare), as well as contractions, holding firm to current configurations or expansions for either social distancing or the anticipation of growth.

But as we have seen, there is a slowly growing recognition that the office is the place to be. According to a recent HOK study of "some of its largest clients," 49 percent plan on retaining their current location and footprint. Only 27 percent plan on cutting back. Not surprisingly, 70 percent plan on doing so with a hybrid office/remote policy in place. *(See "Let's Get Back to Work," below.)*

This dovetails nicely with at least one state's mandate. In a sign of the changing times for one of the states hit earliest by the pandemic in the United States, New York Governor Kathy Hochul, speaking at a November meeting of the Association for a Better New York, called for workers to return to their places of business—with an asterisk. "How about this New Year's resolution," she said, "that in the days after New Year's, we say, 'Everybody back in the office'? You can have a flextime, but we need you back, at least the majority of the week."

Let's Get Back to Work

In its recent Return to Office Survey, HOK polled more than 75 of their largest clients on their come-back plans. As stated, the great majority of surveyed executives (70 percent) are planning on hybrid work policies. For 49 percent, workers coming back will have their free choice of activity-based workspace, and corporate decision-makers are planning to redesign their spaces to provide that.

In terms of other design changes, it should come as no surprise that the number of space users planning on more enclosed spaces count only in the low single digits. Fully 51 percent are taking the more predictable—and more employee-friendly—route of redesigning for more amenities and gathering spaces.

For a more mobile employee base, 53 percent of corporate space users are planning to implement new remote work policies and procedures, while 44 percent will "leverage" existing protocols. Either way, they clearly see the pitfalls of remote work gone unmanaged.

Nearly a third (30 percent) of corporate decision makers are also planning on implementing a change management program to go along with their new ways of working. "Companies may be underestimating the need to prepare the people for RTO [return to office]," write HOK researchers. "Many people have adapted to new routines and/or have a heightened sensitivity to shared spaces. Change management that focuses on the workforce could be highly beneficial to aid in RTO strategies." It should be noted though that another 30 percent aren't planning any such thing, while just a few shy of that (27 percent) are still unsure.

The return to the office won't come without certain protections for all involved, of course, and HOK reports that 76 percent of their largest clients are planning some sort of screening, be it online questionnaires, home-based screenings or apps. Much as we saw with property managers who are trusting their teams to be forthright in their self-analyses, 54 percent of corporate space users in the survey are shifting responsibility for screening to their employees.

Yes, the office environment as depicted in this survey is vastly different from what it looked like even two years ago, even if many of the changes were already in the works. But it is also clear that the office still plays a vital role in the life of the corporate decision makers.

Hochul said that the local leaders would "do their part," although she left out specifics. But property managers already know, and they are already doing it, already influencing the leasing decision as much as they can. In addition to safe environments, they need to ensure the "experience" is there, which also includes a new set of amenities.

"Providing our tenants with on-site amenities and activated space is likely more important than ever," says one exec. "We need tenant employees to want to come to work in our buildings, and creating that elevated level of experience will be crucial."

One property manager made the statement flat out: "Hybrid is here to stay." But that brings with it a need for balance. "People want to balance convenience with being engaged with their coworkers and engaged in their workplace," as long as that workplace can guarantee—as much as possible—health and wellness.

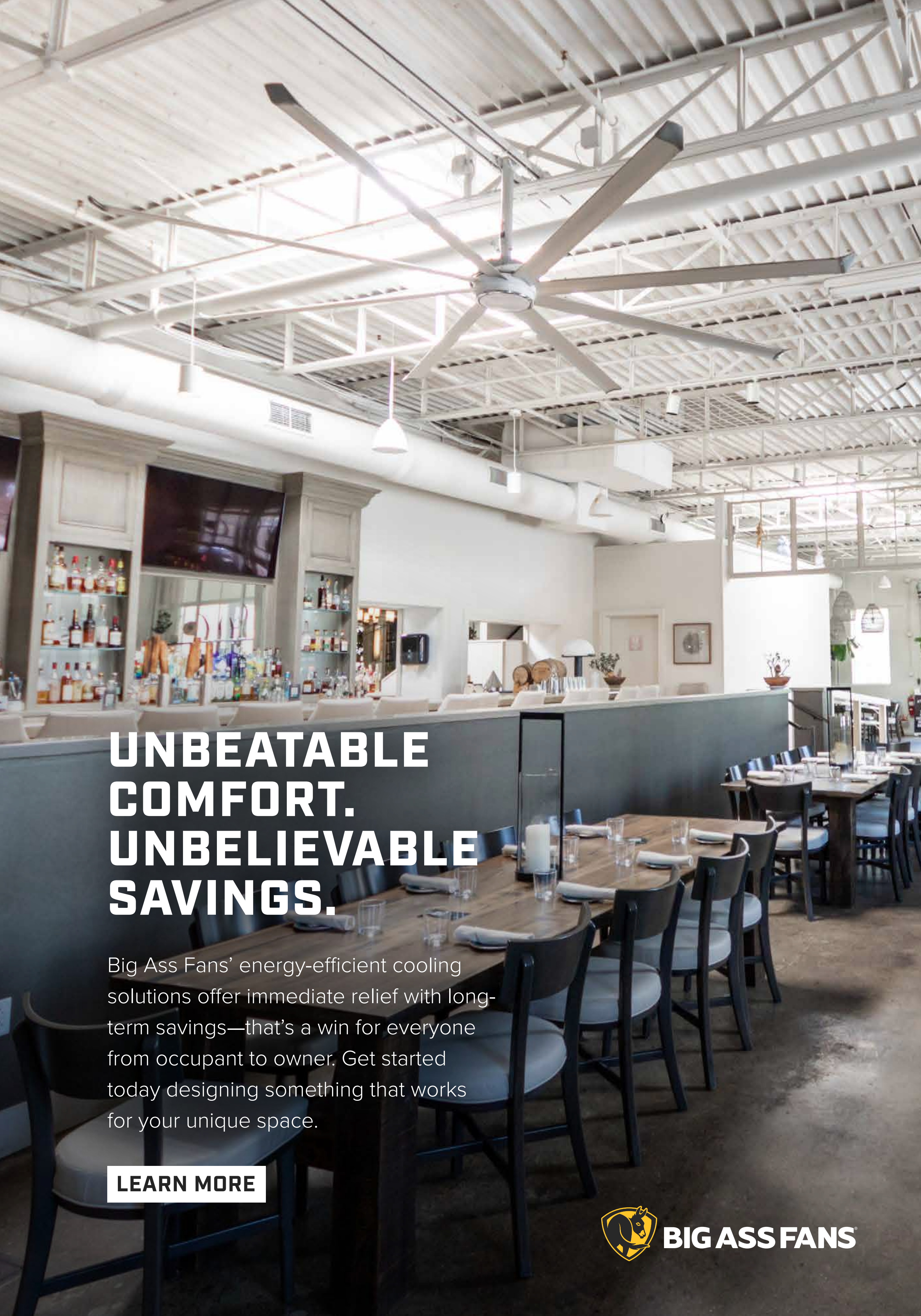
This returns us to the concept of the building as a hiring tool. Amenities such as more flex centers, outdoor spaces and fitness centers have gained a new cache in the post-COVID "experience, and tenants do relocate based on recruitment," says one contributor. "The stickier we make it, the more likely they are to return to the office," in the same building.

In the industrial sector as well, assets are seen as a reflection of brand, and as such, they too are more like "suburban offices," says a senior executive, with expanded break rooms, outdoor recreational areas, video boards and sound systems, "all to make the building more attractive not only to tenants and to the employees they're trying to attract, but ultimately to the institutional shareholders that expect it."

Presumably, they will all enjoy the ramped-up experience. And through enjoyment, they will be more productive.

"We feel good about the return to office. Now the focus is all about what the return will look like and how we can best partner with our tenants."

– Steve Herron, Zeller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IN PURSUIT OF THE CAPITAL "P"

But, as attendees at BOMA International's recent annual conference in Boston discovered, there are two types of productivity: that with a lower-case "p" and that with a capital "P." More on that in a moment.

Study after study has been conducted that shows remote or hybrid workers are just as productive as their in-office counterparts—if not more so. Some also point to remote work as a boon to both parenting and work-life balance—although others question the long-term implications of remote work for parents and caretakers. At the same time, research shows that remote workers tend to start their days earlier and end them later.

Which raises two vital questions: How are those workers actually feeling and how do those studies define productivity? The first question points right back to one of the primary up-at-night concerns stated by NAC members, especially in light of the talent shortage: burnout.

According to Mariana Bockarova, Ph.D., a behavioral scientist who explored this topic in *Psychology Today*, "people are burning out and at higher rates during COVID-19, particularly for those who had little work-from-home experience and identified as female…. With all of the devastation that we've collectively endured since the emergence of COVID-19, it's no wonder that burnout rates are rising, so much so that there is now even a dedicated psychological scale to measure by how much."

One C-suite executive said remote employees worked, on average, 10 hours more per week than their office-based colleagues. They are essentially "rolling their former commute time into the workday. That comes at a cost." Indeed.

The other question is exactly what is getting done, and that is where the capitalization comes in. As DORIS Research Vice President of Operations Meghan Tooman stated in her presentation during BOMA International's annual conference, little "p" productivity is the work one can accomplish at home, the heads-down tasks that get the worker through the day, checking off items on their to-do list. Uppercase Productivity embraces the larger corporate picture, the work that advances the strategies and growth of the company.

That is the stuff born of all the benefits the office can bring, say the experts we spoke with: the collaboration, the face-to-face meetings and even the happy accidents that occur from chance encounters in the break areas. "It's hard to innovate when everyone is scattered to the wind," says one executive. "What's keeping CEOs up at night isn't necessarily producing something fast enough. It's the quality of what they're producing. Productivity has suffered, although no one is talking about that."

We are now.

Productivity can also suffer from a failure to manage remote work properly. "What exactly is being produced?" asks one contributor, "and how do we know it's not the same work being done by someone else?"

Without guard rails in the form of well-wrought policies, working remotely can feel like a chaotic free-for-all. One property manager offered up some potentially sticky questions: Should management specify when employees can work from home? Can they take off in the afternoon and work in the evening? If they're told to come in two or three days a week, who pays for their travel? How is in-person collaboration managed? Will they come in to find their collaborators working remotely, thus spending their whole time in the office just staring at a Zoom screen? "There needs to be guard rails so that we end up being effective and not just frustrating everyone," she says.

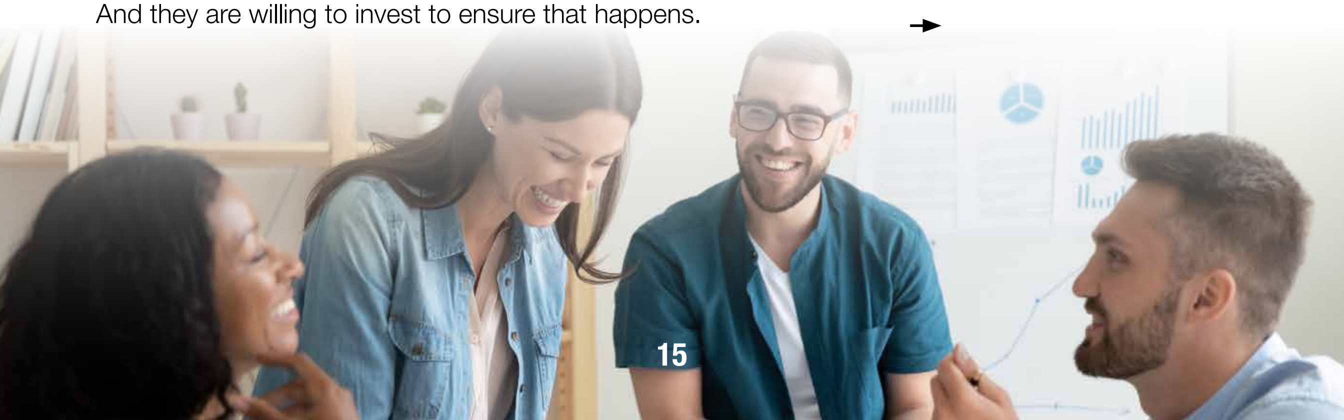
One senior executive explains that, at her firm, all work-from-home requests are subject to department manager approval. There also can be no pending deadlines for in-person projects that would interfere. Other execs are taking a more hands-off approach for the time being, hoping the innate urge to connect in person with colleagues again creates a natural uptick in time spent working in the office.

Research shows that remote workers tend to start their days earlier and end them later.

Gensler Co-CEO Andy Cohen sees a clear connection between the office and the capital "P" and said as much in a recent *Fortune* article: "Both in this time of limbo and in the post-pandemic future, the physical workplace has a significant role to play in supporting and improving the health, happiness, productivity and overall well-being of employees."

He speaks of the human experience as a priority in the reimagined office, a space "that embodies company values and culture." And once again, he points to the positive impact that would have on hiring and retention. "The most desirable workplaces will be those that foster collaboration, support the health and wellness of users and empower employees with a sense of choice." Note how clearly the role of the property manager is laid out there. Once again, softer considerations come into play as a catalyst for harder realities. After our extended global quarantine, "People miss the camaraderie and collaboration of their coworkers," says one senior executive. She adds that "employers are going to require returns in productivity."

And they are willing to invest to ensure that happens.



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TECHNOLOGY, THE OFFICE AND THE KITCHEN TABLE

Technology is one of the major investments—and one of the positives—that came out of the COVID-19 pandemic. As *Emerging Trends* states: "The property technology (proptech) industry has reached a level of acceptance usually reserved for a more mature sector. The use of technology to better understand and manage properties has accelerated sharply. Despite the higher acceptance, the proptech industry still holds significant areas for future growth.

"The pandemic is providing new impetus and scope for technology adoption," it continues. "Proptech can now do more than efficiently operate and manage a property; it can also help tenants efficiently use their leased space as the way people work continues to evolve."

There is a myriad of ways that tech will clearly inform the tenant experience, but many of these are behind the scenes, "in air purification and through ultra-violet applications," says one source. But tenant- or employee-facing applications do not seem to be catching on, at least according to the aforementioned HOK survey.

Thirty-two percent of surveyed clients intend to employ booking and reservation systems to manage the ebb and flow of their workers. Another 22 percent see the monitoring of space utilization being tech-enabled.

Only 14 percent seem interested in employment experience apps and even fewer—11 percent—plan on installing low- or no-touch sensors or apps. Clearly, concludes HOK, "tech is not being leveraged to the fullest extent possible to aid in RTO [return to office] and employee experiences."

"When we can be flexible and supportive of our folks working from home, we have seen it be successful. But there are certainly benefits to being in the office, and we encourage the collaborative face-to-face interaction that helps foster innovation across BioMed's entire platform of professionals."

– Tracy M. Perrelle, BioMed Realty

The survey does not, however, reflect every property manager's experience. "I'm seeing a tremendous increase in technology," says one source, and this includes "a host of little things," such as sensors to render cabinet doors touchless.

And if they are not universal, there is at least a rise in the popularity of tenant experience apps, designed, as one expert put it, for tenant "convenience. More buildings are implementing apps to order food and beverage, to set up a massage on site if it's offered or schedule time in the fitness center."

Those are terrific creature comforts, and the sum of those parts will lead to a work experience that surpasses the kitchen table. It gets even better when such apps can also be used "to find a parking space in the building," a potentially frustrating way to start one's day at the office, what one source described as the "lump in the snake" of productivity. They can also be used to see how commuter traffic is running, to call elevators without touching buttons and to monitor, even control, locally zoned temperatures.

It would be easy to picture tenants checking their phones throughout the day to see how the building's filtration systems are working, but convenience renders it all much more subliminal than that. "People walk into a building and just know it feels comfortable," says a property manager. "They can feel the fresh air because the systems are working."

In the meantime, the property management team can monitor the use of various functions as well as keep a virtual eye on such amenities as fitness centers and determine if they need to be relocated or expanded. "COVID has changed how we present a building and the activities it offers," says a senior executive. "And it's all for the better."

Which bodes well indeed for the coming months.

"It's in our DNA as property managers to operate efficiently, responsibly and with intention to ensure tenants' comfort and safety."

– Katie Sakach, Transwestern

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE SETS ITS SIGHTS ON 2022

As we open the door to 2022, we seem fairly well armed against most surprises. We have lived through a global pandemic and a variety of economic downturns of various depths and durations. With extreme caution we ask, what is there left to throw us off our game?

Indeed, virtually all commercial real estate sectors are trending toward optimism. The industrial and medical office sectors, both of which were thriving prior to the pandemic, show few battle scars, with the exception of some bumps in the road (such as the availability of industrial space).

"I joke with my industrial peers that they need to find jackets with a lot of extra pockets for all the money," one C-suite executive quipped.

As phenomena such as ghost kitchens and online shopping pump even more adrenaline into the industrial sector, a sort of side effect of the pandemic, the fortunes of medical office came as a direct result. "The pandemic has only reinforced the importance of research and innovation and life changing solutions our tenants bring forth every day," says an executive working in healthcare real estate.

In retail, while health is measured on a market-by-market basis, national trends are certainly looking up, despite the aforementioned online shopping trend. "Overall vacancy peaked in the first quarter of this year and has since trended lower while rents continue to rise," reports Marcus & Millichap. "Year over year, total foot traffic is up 16 percent."

The same hopeful path stretches out before the office sector, and the outlook of our sources has a relatively narrow—and positive—range, from cautiously optimistic to "bullish. Anything that was trending before COVID will continue into 2022. We're picking up where we left off."

"In 2022, we believe you'll see more people returning to work and coming back to more of a normal office scenario, but with the recent surges in the delta and omicron variants, the return to office may again be delayed. Most of our tenants continue to evaluate a work-from-home hybrid model, waiting to see what happens as we navigate this flu season."

– Melanie Colbert, LBA Realty

One source sees 2022—in fact, Q1 or, at the latest, Q2 of 2022—as the time when the course will correct itself, with a 65 percent RTO. "Businesses are learning to manage within the new normal," he says. "They're setting the confusion and anxiety behind, and they're getting better at handling the ship." While the aftereffects of the pandemic will be with us for months to come, "most of the larger institutions have moved their return to work to early 2022. I feel good about that."

And while 65 percent is not a landslide, it does cross a threshold of stability, when support services, such as restaurants and stores find reopening viable. At that point as well, with their space partially populated, office occupiers can see how they want their footprints to shape up for the long term.

If there is still caution—and there is—it comes in the still tenuous nature of the pandemic's resolution and the threat of an economic slowdown. "We're definitely on a path," says one expert. "The only thing that would make me think we haven't reached a fork in the road is that the RTO across the U.S. is pretty low."

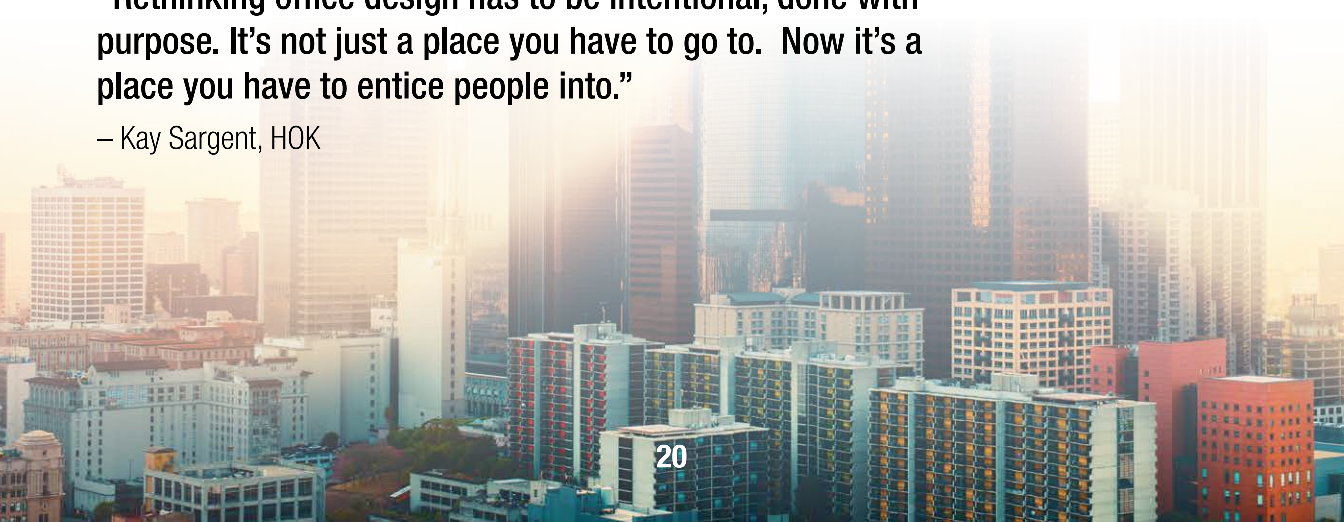
"We're starting to see a big uptick in Q4, and we are excited about that," says another source. "But we're in the middle of an evolving situation, and it will take some time for us to work out the details, to see how it all plays out."

Much like retail, the office sector is banking on an experience of place unlike anything that working from home can provide. In every Deep Dive BOMA International has produced in 2021, a clear message has emerged: Property managers are doing all they can to make the workplace safe, flexible and social. They are true partners of their constituents, and they are positioning themselves ahead of the wave of evolution that will define the workplace in the years to come.

Different real estate sectors have progressed differently through 2021, and, yes, there are still challenges all of them face. But as we cross the threshold into 2022, there will be one constant, as one executive made clear: Whether the conversation is about office, healthcare real estate, retail or industrial: "We're accelerating on our positives."

"Rethinking office design has to be intentional, done with purpose. It's not just a place you have to go to. Now it's a place you have to entice people into."

– Kay Sargent, HOK



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