

Education: JD, Fordham University School of Law; BA, University of British Columbia
Company Name: Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP
Industry: Law
Company CEO: Theodore V.H. Mayer (Managing Partner)
Company Headquarters Location: New York, New York
Number of Employees: 215 attorneys
Words you live by: Measure twice, cut once.
Personal Philosophy: Everything in moderation—including moderation.
What book are you reading: *Five Points* by Tyler Anbinder
What was your first job: Making pizzas in my parents' restaurant.
Favorite charity: Doctors Without Borders
Interests: Travel to places where they make good wine or chocolate, pop culture, and world-history podcasts
Family: I've been married for nine years to another lawyer. We have two boys, ages six and two.



We're Still All in this Together

As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, companies can build on the lessons of the pandemic workplace by offering three things: more flexibility, more communication, and more empathy.

First, the experience of the past year has proved that flexible working arrangements do not have a negative effect on productivity. Allowing employees to work from home as needed, for a specified number of days per week, or to schedule their days to balance work and home responsibilities, increases goodwill, prevents burnout, and makes employees feel trusted and valued.

Offering the flexibility to work from home does not necessarily mean full-time remote working. There are tangible and intangible benefits to being in the office on a regular basis, and companies should continue to encourage in-person days as well. Being in the office allows for impromptu conversations that build trust and camaraderie, and for junior employees, in-person interactions are often critical for mentoring and on-the-job learning. So long as employees are available when needed, companies should embrace policies that allow employees to balance work and family needs. Such policies are likely to be key recruitment and retention tools going forward. Particularly in a year that has resulted in women being forced to leave the workforce in droves, holding on to talented women will require more flexible policies.

Second, the pandemic has demonstrated the importance of regular communication between management

and employees. At the beginning of the pandemic, our managing partner began sending out a weekly "State of the Firm" message to all employees. During the period that the world seemed to be spiraling out of control, those simple messages were crucial, not only to communicate information about how the firm expected everyone to handle working during lockdown, but also to help everyone feel connected to the business and their colleagues. More than a year later, the State of the Firm emails continue, and the message that they communicate continues to be critical: that leadership is transparent about what it is doing and that we are all in this together. That message is as welcome now as it was a year ago.

Finally, companies should continue to show empathy to their workers, even after the immediate crisis of the pandemic has passed. There is tremendous benefit in demonstrating that companies value their employees and are willing to be in a dialogue about what employees need. During the pandemic, many companies listened when employees discussed what they needed to make their home office situation better, and responded to concerns about lost mentoring and team-building opportunities by boosting mentorship programs and planning virtual events. Envisioning what the post-pandemic workplace will look like should be a collaborative process that builds on the experiences of the past year with the goal of creating a better working environment for everyone.