



Education: JD, Duke University School of Law; MBA, University of Texas–San Antonio; BA, Duke University

Company Name: Latham & Watkins LLP

Industry: Law

Company CEO: N/A

Company Headquarters Location: N/A

Number of Employees: 5,000+

Your Location (if different from above): San Diego, California

Words you live by: “Be so good they can’t ignore you.” –Steve Martin

Personal Philosophy: Make sure you enjoy what you do, otherwise why are you doing it?

What book are you reading: *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling (for the third time)

What was your first job: Cleaning and restocking airplanes for Delta

Favorite charity: San Diego Food Bank

Interests: Running, reading, and Duke basketball

Family: A very patient husband and two adorable cats

“ ... remember the face time, whether in person or through a video chat (or even occasionally through a well-curated meme). ”

My Pandemic Life Lesson

The COVID-19 pandemic and transition to working from home posed a lot of professional challenges to our industry. For me personally, being physically remote from my amazing teams challenged me to step up my communication.

In the early days of the pandemic, lots of leaders identified the importance of regular interaction and video calls with our teams to combat the fear, uncertainty, and isolation people felt from staying home, and often staying alone. Very quickly, I realized this need for focused human contact was not just a pandemic issue.

Before the pandemic, I had fallen into a pattern of leaving my teams to run themselves, because they were

so capable. But I realized I was neglecting some of the most important aspects of teamwork and mentoring: being there, listening, and guiding. Faced with the video screen of myself and my teammates, I reevaluated how I was communicating, what support I was lending, and how I was showing my appreciation for their tremendous work and loyalty.

To be a good leader, I long ago learned to give people space and freedom to work independently, trusting them to do things right and come to me with questions or issues. But getting out of colleagues’ way is not the same as being out of touch. Once the quarantine spurred me to start regular video and phone

calls with my teams, I understood they could feel just as isolated when working in the office if I didn’t make an effort to stay in touch and be present in our work together. Clearly, not everyone needs a daily or even weekly call, but as my teams continue to show up and deliver great work, I need to show up and deliver feedback and support, praise and thanks, and a regular dose of humor.

So my Pandemic Life Lesson, for which I am grateful, is to remember the face time, whether in person or through a video chat (or even occasionally through a well-curated meme). And I will be on the lookout for the next Life Lesson without waiting for a global crisis.