

BLOG

One Year of COVID-19: Thriving in Times of Hardship

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One year ago, Risk Strategies had to make the unfathomable decision for everyone's safety and wellbeing to leave our offices and enact a mandatory remote work policy, following the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic as a national emergency and stay-at-home orders across the country.



Looking back, our quick response and swift transition to a fully remote workforce was an impressive feat. In a period of just five days, all of Risk Strategies employees across 100 offices nationwide seamlessly made the changeover to work from home.

Thanks to the entire team's flexibility, creativity and willingness to change, the transition could not have gone any better.

Resiliency

While the year 2020 immediately conjures words like "challenge," "hardship" and "crisis," there were many lessons learned, offering a unique opportunity to reflect.

We've been confronted with creating and adapting to new ways of learning, working, caring for loved ones, and living our lives amid stressors that we have never experienced before – all of which has made a lasting change on our society and constructed a "new normal."

But no matter the hardship or challenge, resiliency is the word that I keep going back to. Bouncing back is what we do when we face disappointment or defeat – instead of wallowing or letting things keep us down, we get back up and continue.

We adjusted, we adapted, and we will emerge with a far greater appreciation for our lives, loved ones and work – things easily taken for granted before. I can't help but be proud of the way we faced adversity and managed this new normal.

Survivors vs. Thrivers

There are two ways that people face difficult times and succeed in life. Most people want to thrive, yet they're programmed merely to survive. These two conditions — surviving and thriving — come from two entirely different mindsets.

A Survivor:

- Gets through the day, simply going through the motions
- Often reflects and wishes for life to return to “pre-pandemic” spending energy and emotion on looking backwards
- Struggles to accept the new normal

A Thriver:

- Has accepted, even embraced change and the new opportunities/possibilities the new normal has to offer, coming out stronger
- Made lemonade out of lemons, using the situation positively to better themselves personally or professionally. For example, having used the additional time to:
 - Strengthen networking relationships
 - Brush up on industry or product knowledge
 - Work on physical or mental health
 - Spend quality time with family
 - Discover new hobbies and passions

No matter how you would categorize yourself over the past year; as we look to the future, I hope everyone aims for the thriver mindset.

Pandemic Silver Linings

We miss face-to-face interactions, celebrations, after work drinks and countless other social events where we could all gather 'round and connect as a family in-person. However, thanks to supportive employees, we proved that we could carry on remotely. From costume contests to happy hours, coffee chats and award shows, our virtual events highlighted why we have been named a “Best Place to Work” three years in a row.

That said, we did find some positives while remote, such as:

- **Our 2021 sales conference.** The virtual setting allowed us to open the conference to all Risk Strategies employees nationwide, enabling us to connect, collaborate, and learn from one another no matter where we were. This would have been tough to do in-person even under pre-pandemic conditions.

- **The benefits of virtual work.** We transitioned to a remote work environment out of necessity, but we now see the advantages of it from both professional and personal perspectives. So much so that we have an internal taskforce working on evolving our telecommuting policy to offer viable flexible work options for when we're able to safely return to the physical office.
- **Our internal and external communications.** Out of necessity, the past twelve months has given us a great boost in the work we've put into keeping everyone up to date on our company progress, both advancing our brand and our value proposition for clients.

The Path Forward

The human spirit can withstand an incredible amount of stress, and this year hasn't been easy for anyone. We're not out of this quite yet and recognize there are still hard days on the horizon. The combination of our long-term vision and thriver mindset gives us as a company, an edge that will enable us to withstand the test of time. We are all thrivers, and because of this, I am confident in Risk Strategies' long-term success!

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