



VOICE OF BUSINESS

Work from home doesn't work for everyone



Chris Kershner
President and CEO
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of Commerce

For many of us, the pandemic changed our work routine, including making us accustomed to working virtually. Working from home was a necessary measure taken to ensure the population was safe and we could get out of the pandemic.

Today, emerging from the COVID-19 restrictions is forcing businesses to evolve into a new reality

for customers, clients and employees. For many, this new reality means a different work structure and different work environments, however, bringing our teams back to the office shouldn't be looked at as a sign of weakness or a sign of an old-school work environment. For many of us, it just works better.

Personal connections are an integral part of doing business. Whether those connections are with staff teams or with clients, there is no virtual replacement for a handshake, tone of conversation and emotion that is conveyed through interpersonal and direct communications. Convening as a business community, networking and building relationships is a proven

method for business development and using the "collective" to achieve more than we can as individual organizations. There's a reason why large contracts are negotiated in-person, new client pitches are done one on one and political candidates shake thousands of hands. In the Midwest, we do business with who we know, who we trust and with whom we are connected. It is a Midwestern value that makes us unique and gives a work ethic value proposition that can't be replicated.

It's not just about our customers, it's also about our internal teams. Building staff culture and cross-team collaboration is essential to many business models. Culture and collaboration are built

through understanding, respect and appreciation for the personal drivers that impact all our lives on a daily basis. Respecting your team and colleagues and appreciating what is important to them is done through personal interaction and engagement. A loss of culture building and support amongst team members can trickle into customer service and execution of the mission. If you lose culture on the front end, it will be noticed throughout the organization and every customer and potential employee will feel the vibe.

Additionally, there are individuals in our community who will be left behind in a fully virtual world. Let's not forget that the digital divide is real, and not everyone has access to

high speed, quality broadband. Going fully virtual automatically puts these individuals at a serious, inequitable disadvantage. We have made these mistakes before as a society, we can't do it again.

Young professionals need an in-person environment to climb the ladder and showcase their leadership potential. Remember when you were in your young 20's and hustling to make a name for yourself? Young professionals are doing that right now and working hard to establish business connections and showcase their value. There is no replacement for direct personal connections that help young professionals build their networks, achieve promotions and identify new

career opportunities. It is our responsibility to provide the best environment for the next generation of leaders to succeed.

Virtual meetings and remote work have advantages, and there will be hybrid work models that make sense for the business community. However, there is no replacement for a personal conversation and relationship that is built through a one on one connection. As the world goes through this workplace evolution, those who are able take advantage of the right opportunities and be in the right place, will reap the long-term benefits.

Chris Kershner is the president and CEO of the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce.

DAYTON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Chamber plans Denver/Boulder trip to share ideas, best practices

Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce

The Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce invites business leaders, community stakeholders and others to trek to the Rocky Mountains this August to network and share ideas with Denver and Boulder, Colorado.

This is the second trip in the chamber's "City2City" series that aims to explore new ideas and practices in

similar metro areas while providing an opportunity for networking and open dialogue amongst the travelers representing Dayton.

"City2City is a unique opportunity for our region's leaders both in the public and private sectors, to share ideas with leaders from other metros," said Holly Allen, marketing & communications director, Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce. "We chose Denver and Boulder

this year because those cities have done an outstanding job attracting young professionals. Looking to Dayton's future, succeeding at workforce attraction and alignment will be paramount to continuing the economic growth we're enjoying."

Denver is one of the fastest growing cities in the country, and has been ranked the first search location for out-of-state movers and the fourth most popular city among mil-

lennial home buyers. Just a 30-minute drive from Denver, Boulder is a popular playground for tech giants like Google, Amazon, Twitter, and Apple, all of which operate facilities there and have even grown their presence in recent years.

Beyond workforce attraction, the City2City travelers from Dayton will explore ideas such as comparing first floor activation in a metro and micropolitan, accommo-

DAYTON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Register for all events at
DaytonChamber.org.

■ In-person: Dayton/Miami Valley Safety Council Reconnect, July 8, 7:30-9 a.m. Topic — Catch up with your safety counterparts in person or learn about joining. Location — The Mandalay, 2700 E. River Road
■ In-person: Breakfast

Briefing, July 9, 8-9:15 a.m. Topic — We're back and ready for the Roaring '20s. Speaker — Rob Connelly, CEO of Henny Penny. Location — NCR Country Club, 4435 Dogwood Trail, Kettering.
■ Virtual: Safety Breakfast with Experts, July 15, 8-9 a.m. Topic — Legal implications of mandating COVID-19 vaccine

dating an expanding workforce through smart infrastructure and creating an inclusive workplace for today and tomorrow's talent.

The City2City trip will take place Aug. 4-6, 2021. Spots are still available. Register for City2City at DaytonChamber.org.

Shortages

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beyond autos. From fashion to food processing to pharmaceuticals, companies have embraced Just In Time to stay nimble, allowing them to adapt to changing market demands, while cutting costs.

But the tumultuous events of the past year have challenged the merits of paring inventories, while reinvigorating concerns that some industries have gone too far, leaving them vulnerable to disruption. As the pandemic has hampered factory operations and sown chaos in global shipping, many economies around the world have been bedeviled by shortages of a vast range of goods — from electronics to lumber to clothing.

In a time of extraordinary upheaval in the global economy, Just In Time is running late.

"It's sort of like supply chain run amok," said Willy C. Shih, an international trade

expert at Harvard Business School. "In a race to get to the lowest cost, I have concentrated my risk. We are at the logical conclusion of all that."

The most prominent manifestation of too much reliance on Just In Time is found in the very industry that invented it: Automakers have been crippled by a shortage of computer chips — vital car components produced mostly in Asia. Without enough chips on hand, auto factories from India to the United States to Brazil have been forced to halt assembly lines.

But the breadth and persistence of the shortages reveal the extent to which the Just In Time idea has come to dominate commercial life. This helps explain why Nike and other apparel brands struggle to stock retail outlets with their wares. It's one of the reasons construction companies are having trouble purchasing paints and sealants. It was a principal contributor to the tragic shortages of personal protective

equipment early in the pandemic, which left frontline medical workers without adequate gear.

Just In Time has amounted to no less than a revolution in the business world. By keeping inventories thin, major retailers have been able to use more of their space to display a wider array of goods. Just In Time has enabled manufacturers to customize their wares. And lean production has significantly cut costs while allowing companies to pivot quickly to new products.

These virtues have added value to companies, spurred innovation and promoted trade, ensuring that Just In Time will retain its force long after the current crisis abates. The approach has also enriched shareholders by generating savings that companies have distributed in the form of dividends and share buybacks.

Still, the shortages raise questions about whether some companies have been too aggressive in harvesting savings by slashing inventory,

leaving them unprepared for whatever trouble inevitably emerges.

"It's the investments that they don't make," said William Lazonick, an economist at the University of Massachusetts.

Chaos on the seas

The shortages in the world economy stem from factors beyond lean inventories. The spread of COVID-19 has sidelined port workers and truck drivers, impeding the unloading and distribution of goods made at factories in Asia and arriving by ship to North America and Europe. The pandemic has slowed sawmill operations, causing a shortage of lumber that has stymied home building in the United States.

Winter storms that shut down petrochemical plants in the Gulf of Mexico have left key products in short supply. Andrew Romano, who runs sales at a chemical company outside Philadelphia, has grown accustomed to telling customers they must wait on

their orders.

"You have a confluence of forces," he said. "It just ripples through the supply."

Dramatic increases in demand made pet food scarce and Grape-Nuts cereal all but disappear from American store shelves for a time.

Some companies were especially exposed to such forces given that they were already running lean as the crisis began.

And many businesses have combined a dedication to Just In Time with a reliance on suppliers in low-wage countries like China and India, making any disruption to global shipping an immediate problem. That has amplified the damage when something goes awry — as when an enormous vessel lodged in the Suez Canal this year, closing the primary channel linking Europe and Asia.

'It all cascades'

In Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, Romano is literally waiting for his ship to come in.

He is vice president of sales at Van Horn, Metz & Co., which buys chemicals from suppliers around the world and sells them to factories that make paint, ink and other industrial products.

In normal times, the company is behind in filling perhaps 1% of its customers' orders. On a recent morning, it could not complete a tenth of its orders because it was waiting for supplies to arrive.

The company could not secure enough of a specialized resin that it sells to manufacturers that make construction materials. The American supplier of the resin was itself lacking one element that it purchases from a petrochemical plant in China.

One of Romano's regular customers, a paint manufacturer, was holding off on ordering chemicals because it could not locate enough of the metal cans it uses to ship its finished product.

"It all cascades," Romano said. "It's just a mess."

BUSINESS AWARDS

Grant aids COVID impacted businesses

CityWide Development Corporation recently announced that the **Dayton Region New Market Fund (DRNMF)**, a qualified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) sponsored by CityWide has received a \$1,826,265 grant from the US Treasury through their Rapid Response Program. (RRP). The RRP is designed to provide low-cost capital to businesses negatively impacted by COVID-19.

The RRP grant will allow CityWide to expand small business lending throughout Montgomery County, said Senior Vice President for Development Dan Kane. "As a CDFI, we are always seeking ways to offer affordable and creative financial solutions in our economic development work. With this award we can fill market gaps and advance lending

in underserved areas," said Kane.

Since obtaining CDFI certification in 2015, CityWide Development Corporation has created a variety of loan funds to support small business growth and job creation in Montgomery County. An example of this is the creation of the Downtown Dayton Investment Fund (DDIF) that has attracted two rounds of investment totaling \$5.3 million. The fund has been utilized to assist developers, building owners, and tenants of downtown and near downtown office buildings with creative and flexible financing alternatives that help complete office renovations and build-out which attracts more workers to these previously under-occupied areas.

Through Dayton Region New Market Fund lending, 28 loans have been made to disadvantaged business enterprises, totaling

\$69.4M including 13 loans to small businesses and micro enterprise financing totaling \$3.9M.

Hurst receives award

Britni Hurst, a member of PuroClean Emergency Services team in Moraine, received PuroClean's Rainmaker Award at the company's international convention held this month at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood, Florida. Selected from more than 350 franchise locations across North America, Hurst was nominated by franchise owners for this accolade as someone who has gone above and beyond to achieve success within the network, dedicating herself to the success of others and her community.

Hurst joined PuroClean Emergency Services in Moraine in 2008. With a strong commitment to PuroClean's core value of giving

back, the office supports various organizations and events, including fundraising activities, youth and high school athletics, various faith-based events, The Red Cross, the Alzheimer's Association, the Society for the Improvement of Conditions for Stray Animals (SICSA), Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and numerous others.

PuroClean is one of the leading restoration franchise companies in the nation. Each year, PuroClean performs thousands of jobs throughout the United States and Canada, providing restoration services from common household mishaps to large-scale disasters.

For more information about PuroClean, contact 800-775-7876 or visit www.puroclean.com; for franchise information, visit www.puroclean.com/franchise.

Martin recognized

On June 16, the National

Association of Regional Councils recognized Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission Executive Director **Brian O. Martin**, AICP with the Walter Scheiber Leadership Award.

The Walter Scheiber Leadership Award recognizes significant impacts a regional council executive director has made at the local, state, and national levels.

"MVRPC Executive Director Brian O. Martin is an ideal candidate to receive The Walter Scheiber Leadership Award in recognition of his efforts to establish a regional consensus on the need for equity, access to opportunity and social justice," wrote MVRPC Board of Directors Chairperson Chris Ducher in the award nomination. "Martin is well known in the NARC community, having dedicated decades of his career to the leadership of regional councils. He is a tireless advocate for

the importance of planning for transportation, land-use and environmental matters at the Regional level. In recent years, Martin has also championed the need for disparities in opportunity, equity and social justice to be addressed through the same collaborative, regional approach."

Under Martin's leadership, MVRPC has taken bold steps to advance equity and to make a commitment to diversity a normal part of how the agency conducts all business. This began long before the events of 2020 which amplified interest in how systemic racism pervades all aspects of our communities.

Established in 1964, the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission promotes collaboration among communities, stakeholders, and residents to advance regional priorities.