



Lawyering in the time of COVID-19: an In-house perspective

The COVID-19 pandemic is creating once-in-a-lifetime challenges and change. For legal professionals, creating a new work from home routine and establishing boundaries has been the critical first step in establishing a new normal. In this series, we talk to legal professionals from different sectors of the industry about how they've adapted to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Here, we talk with **Aaron Taranto, Corporate Solicitor at Allianz**.



AARON TARANTO
CORPORATE SOLICITOR
Allianz

How prepared was your company to respond to the current crisis in terms of your “work from home” arrangements and capabilities?

Very well prepared. We already had good work from home capability but COVID-19 triggered early-release of a planned system upgrade to all users. This adjustment allowed us to move from some people working from home, to virtually everyone.

What does the day-to-day operation of your company look like today compared to a couple of months ago?

My immediate team dial-in to a stand-up meeting nearly every morning to quickly catch up on information and share planned work for the day. We continue to have fortnightly meetings across our broader legal team and are now onboard with team chat spaces. Other than that, our individual work is capable of being undertaken remotely. And all managers have been really supportive.

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What are the things that are working right now as your company adjusts to this new normal of working from home?

The knowledge-share from our daily stand-up meetings and chat spaces has been extremely beneficial in terms of recognising related matters and identifying consistent pain points. And the more light-hearted initiatives have brought us closer as a team – photos of workspaces, “a day in the life of” and #MeAt20. I think everyone understands the need to be dynamic at the moment.

What have been the main challenges over the last few weeks?

Apart from the usual problems with logging or dialling-in, I think everything has run smoothly from an organisational point of view. I think the forced change is in many ways positive.

On a personal level, I think the lag time in our interactions can be challenging, especially when drafting, taking instructions or trying to collaborate as a broad group. But that is nothing that a bit of patience and a few workarounds can't fix for the time being.

Mental health is a key concern at the moment with all the changes and uncertainty – are you doing anything in particular to support your own mental health?

I already have a good home yoga practice, so it has been nice to refocus on this while the studios are closed. Because I live in an apartment, I have also been enjoying long walks around my neighbourhood like many others. As much as you can, enjoy the sunshine – that is my motto. Our divisional GM has also arranged a mental health and well-being program that includes free online yoga and mindfulness classes and a wealth of health information.

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What are your best tips for working from home?

Be patient with yourself. You can't be 'on' the whole day and the beautiful thing about work from home is that you can work at hours that work best for you!

We have a key opportunity to approach our work differently and find more creative, efficient and effective angles. I usually write down my top three matters to progress and do one thing at a time.

I also cannot stress enough the important benefits that yoga and meditation practice have been to me. And a good desk and chair is a must.

How do you think this sudden and unexpected need to work from home will change the way you operate once this crisis is over?

I think it depends how long the shutdown lasts, on individual business strategies and whether the transition back to pre-COVID life is slow or sudden.

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If it's an extended period, I think people will be really motivated to collaborate, innovate and create when they return and organisations that pro-actively make space for these interactions will benefit most.

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I hope that everyone sees the benefit of allowing more work from home in order to find more balance in the future.

In the next edition of **Lawyering in the time of COVID-19**, we'll speak to Barrister's Clerk Michael Drummond about how barristers are continuing to work through the COVID-19 crisis – what's working, what's not and what they're learning along the way.

In the meantime, consider creating a [contingency plan](#) to make your firm crisis-proof and find the latest news, business updates and research materials to keep you on top of the current pandemic crisis at the LexisNexis® exclusive [COVID-19 information centre](#).