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2020 Year in Review: Hilary Troia, Office Gallery International

December 25, 2020 - Spotlights

Hilary Troia
President
Office Gallery International

What was the most difficult part of working during the pandemic of 2020? Not working! The initial halt of business and the not knowing if we'd have a business to come home to, especially in our industry, where we saw several businesses close for good. Additionally challenging (in good ways and bad) was the constant shifting – from offering plexiglass installments to furnishing home offices to offering ergonomic desk chairs. We were constantly thinking about how we were going to reinvent ourselves to remain relevant.

What was your greatest professional accomplishment or most notable project,

deal, or transaction in 2020? The fact that we were able to come back – and that we came roaring back – was a very pleasant surprise. Additionally, being able to maintain a sense of calmness throughout our business has been important. From the initial shutdown when we sent everyone home, and then slowly opening up – and then having our showroom flood in early summer right as we were getting back in the groove – actually worked to create a unity.

among our team that we can handle anything.

What aspects of working from home have you enjoyed most? As a family business (my husband is co-owner and CEO, and our son is currently working as an intern with us), we already have a lot of togetherness, so when we were working from home that wasn't such a big change. Much more of a challenge was trying to maintain some form of routine. And I worked out a lot more!

What are your predictions for commercial real estate in 2021? I think everything is going to come back. Between what is happening in the stock market, 401(k) contributions, and bonuses, people are feeling bullish, and this can only bode well for the CRE market – especially in the suburbs, which

I think will explode.

What is the best advice you have received, and who was it from? In my early retail days, my dad shared an experience from his Navy days. He served on two aircraft carriers – the USS Midway, and the USS Oriskany. Even though they were essentially the same ship, on one of them he had had a horrible experience, and on the other he had the best experience of his Naval career. He realized, “It’s the captain of the ship that sets the tone, and if you’re the head of your business, you’re the captain of the ship, setting the tone for the whole business.” I carry that with me to this day.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540