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2020 Year in Review: Marianne Sullivan, Sullivan & Sullivan Auctioneers

December 25, 2020 - Spotlights

Marianne Sullivan
President and Lead Auctioneer
Sullivan & Sullivan Auctioneers

What was your greatest professional accomplishment or most notable project,

deal, or transaction in 2020? As an auction house with a large number of municipal clients, most of our live auctions would normally take place at town halls or other government buildings, virtually all of which were closed due to the pandemic. In response, we rapidly developed and launched both a mobile auction service and a proprietary live auction software platform. Together, these two innovations enabled us to continue to host safe and successful auctions on-site for our municipal clients while also giving bidders the option to participate in auctions remotely.

What is the best advice you have received, and who was it from? I have been a reader of Inc. Magazine since the days when my father was a subscriber. During the early days of the pandemic, I found myself going back to the fundamental principles I gleaned from that old guard publication. Things like being willing to hit the “reset” button when needed, writing down a temporary business plan and sticking to it.

What aspects of working from home have you enjoyed most? Working from home brought some unexpected benefits. As a result of not needing to run around to so many meetings or spending such long hours at the office, I found I had a much more predictable daily schedule. I was completely free to allocate my time each day to focus on priorities in managing both my business and my personal life. I even managed to make time for consistent daily exercise.

What was the most difficult part of working during the pandemic of 2020? It’s well established that markets hate uncertainty. Naturally business owners don’t like it very much either. The early days of the pandemic were rife with uncertainty across the board, making it very difficult to develop a plan with predictable results. It was challenging as a leader trying to plot a course for my business and my people, with so much on the line, and in the face of so many unknowns.

