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2020 Year in Review: Phil Forzley, Fuss & O'Neill

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Phil Forzley, PE
Vice President | Vermont Office Manager
Fuss & O'Neill

What are your predictions for commercial real estate in 2021? I think 2021 will be a transition year. I'm basing this on anecdotal evidence from many other companies and individuals that think working from home at least part-time is beneficial. I envision space sharing in offices as folks rotate in and out during the week, which might reduce the space needed in the short-term at least. So this may really re-shape the long-term future of office design, but will likely change short-term needs as well. Companies who were looking to expand prior to 2020 are likely reconsidering and other companies may look to downsize their current building size. But after the year that was 2020, I make no solid predictions about anything!

What aspects of working from home have you enjoyed most? I have a short commute, only about 30 minutes, but between packing up before and after the day and the drive, I get around 90 minutes more to myself, which I can put to great use. Vermont has some beautiful bike trails that I've been able to check out.

What was the most difficult part of working during the pandemic of 2020? Part of my job is to develop new business relationships, and it's often about making a connection with someone in a conversation. Compared to an in-person meeting, it's challenging when you're having a voice call or even a video call. You really can't read body language so you have to be hyper-aware of folks' responses if you want to have a conversation that's enjoyable and fruitful.

What was your greatest professional accomplishment or most notable project,

deal, or transaction in 2020? I recently moved up to lead our Vermont office, which I'm helping grow in terms of staffing and business. This may be the challenge of my career, but I feel like I've made good progress this year – even with this year's specific challenges. With the incredible support I'm getting from all of our offices, I'm really excited about the future of our Vermont office and Fuss & O'Neill as a whole.

What is the best advice you have received, and who was it from? The best advice I have received really developed through personal observations of a former boss' behavior around clients. He was a master communicator in that he could stop a sentence or thought mid-stream (think Tiger Woods stopping his golf shot at the top of his swing) if a client wanted to shift direction, meaning he was a very good listener. I learned and try to teach others that our business is all about excellent communication.

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