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2021 Women in Commercial Real Estate: Kelly Colón, Director of Workplace Strategy, Cresa

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Kelly Colón
Director of Workplace Strategy

In the past year, what project, transaction or accomplishment are you most proud of? I am most proud of my ability to continue to support my family, students, clients, and company during a global pandemic that forced every segment of our lives to change on a dime. Managing all the things: Remote learning and client meetings paired with virtual pitches, happy hours, and holidays. We not only came out physically healthy, we were actually able to navigate life successfully. My clients remained supported, my students were able to continue to be educated, my own family remained healthy and safe.

What time management strategies do you find to be the most effective for you? I start each day with a very hot cup of coffee, silence, and my bullet journal. This is a written activity where I plan out my day, jot down meetings and priorities, and identify key critical tasks that need to be completed that day. This simple act of starting my day before I ever log into a device puts my focus on what needs to happen. From there, I block out my day often in my calendar to accomplish various tasks and I take breaks often.

What led you to your current profession? During my teens I worked with my father in his title examination business conducting property research. I then pivoted to property management and residential real estate sales where my love for design, construction, and operations flourished. I went back to school and earned degrees in interior design and facility management. For 10 years I focused on supporting the construction and operation of buildings. My post-graduate work in industrial and organizational psychology allows me to support both the built environment as well as the people who navigate those environments

What are some of the benefits of being a mentor or having a mentor? I have had the fortune to be both a mentor and a mentee in my career. I think the benefits of being a mentor are much akin to the benefits I feel as a professor. For me, the ability to give back to share my experiences in the hopes that they can help a mentee achieve their goals is soul filling. Most importantly it allows me the ability to build authentic relationships which can last a lifetime. To be a part of someone's journey and to watch them succeed is an incredible gift.

What trends will dominate your industry in the coming months? We will see a paradigm shift in the way real estate is being utilized by organizations and their employees. Traditional usage of space will shift from static and inflexible spaces to more flexible spaces that afford employees opportunities to utilize the asset depending on the workstream they are being tasked to complete. Hybrid and flexible work will continue to evolve but how that translates into physical space will be customized based on each organization's specific goals. Amenities and experiences will become a bigger part of the conversation for employers as employees retain their capacity to choose where they work.

What is one characteristic that you believe every woman in commercial real estate should possess? If you asked me this years ago, my answer may have been different. Back then it may have been

confidence, passion, or drive. Now after living through a sustained global pandemic, I truly believe that every person's top trait should be empathy followed quickly by compassion, humility, and resilience. Merging all these traditionally labeled "soft skills" allows a more vulnerable and authentic leader to emerge. Those who can utilize these traits I believe will have less attrition and much more loyalty among those they work with. [87 words]

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