

System Upgrade: A Professional Services Reboot

2020 will be known as the year of disruption and destruction. 20/20 also is a measurement of perfect visual clarity and sharpness. It's why I have often referred to this year as the year of seeing things clearly.

As the dust settles, we see change, hope and opportunity. We see **humanity** – not just in a general sense but in each other through our shared experiences – experiences like working remotely, which has allowed us to see into each other's lives and homes. Among humanity, we have seen innovators and those in need of their creativity. We have seen the good and the bad occurring simultaneously, with tragedy befalling victims and heroes rising to the occasion to help.

We have seen so much this year. Nine months ago, we were afraid of all the changes, but now our eyes have opened, and adjusted, to new possibilities. Now you must ask yourself, "What will I do to take advantage of this opportunity for change?"

New Possibilities for Professional Services

When we see the positive in what 2020 has brought us, the possibilities are greater than ever. The best thing we can do for ourselves, our families, co-workers, partners and staff is to reflect, question, listen, and welcome and foster change.

Consider the possibility of reducing overhead costs by maintaining either a fully virtual or partially virtual place of work. What about the possibilities that this new remote environment will attract new talent – particularly more diverse talent – while creating possibilities for greater diversification of services?

It's possible to leave your Big Law practice and start your own firm; we've seen a lot of that this year. It's possible to change a culture or rebrand, clean house, merge and even retire. These possibilities are becoming realities, and they most likely would not have arisen if 2020 had not been so disruptive so quickly.

Exposing a Need for Change

We have been exposed to our competitors, clients, communities, staff, partners and stakeholders. We can see with more clarity the gaps, flaws, missteps, successes and superstars. Our technological capabilities have been exposed as anything from functional to dismal to life-saving, while many of our legacy marketing programs have been exposed as being no longer effective and relevant. And that is good news!

Exposing a need for change allows change to happen. We can clearly see that things



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aren't as transparent as they should be, including our [internal communications](#). We can now see that empathy and a culture of caring bring people together and that together, we can do great things.

We routinely expose ourselves and our brands through our marketing, websites, blog posts, speaking engagements and PR activities, yet the routines that we were comfortable with and are used to have changed while our need to stay visible has not. The tools we use to expose our brands, thought leadership and successes have not changed while the messaging, the purpose, the frequency and the philosophies related to using these tools have changed.

Our purpose now is to be a resource for others to succeed. Our strategies are to put others first. Our end goal is to [build relationships](#) – not just to sell professional services.

Time for a Reboot

There is no better time than now to hit the refresh button. (All the cool kids are doing it.) All businesses are going through this, including your clients and competitors. Know that they are expecting you to rise to the challenges of today and take this opportunity to stay relevant to them.

What do you need to refresh? Look at your [brand messaging](#), your [recruiting strategies](#), your use of [social media](#) and everything about your website. This all probably needs to change for you to adapt to the new demands that 2020 forced on us.

Hit reboot on addressing backroom conversations and issues like discrimination, inclusivity, and mental and physical well-being. Hit reboot on your leadership by inviting a diverse array of perspectives to take a seat at the table.

Embrace the opportunity to reboot strategies and champion change that will empower others. Reset the firm for today as well as for the next generation. Accept new tools and new collaborations, innovations and – most importantly – new relationships.

Now is the time to question it all, and then fix it, change it and improve it. If you don't, everyone that matters will see your inaction and question why you chose not to evolve and adapt when the opportunity was there.

Unsure how to hit the reboot button? Reach out to me, [Terry M. Isner](#), at tisner@jaffepr.com.