

It is precisely the global nature of our sector and its necessary responsiveness fueled by the inherent volatility in the commodity markets that makes our world so robust.

Most organizations, and its execs, were well used to remote working prior to the pandemic and so it was an easy transition for most at the organizational and individual level. Even within commodity facilities, from refineries to terminals, existing pressures on costs and safety have forced many to focus on automation and limit the number of employees on site. (On that note, we have seen a surge in interest in automation and integration talent).

Here in Houston where I am based, hurricane preparedness has meant many organizations had excellent business continuance plans. Furthermore, all are “essential” industries meaning work must and can continue. Our food and nutrition clients, like the utilities, cannot keep pace with the increased demand.

Last, but not least, is the mindset of our community. The participants are finely tuned to opportunity and such disruptions and dislocations have always fueled the traders. Not least from a talent perspective where many organizations are starting to see this as an unparalleled opportunity to engage with individuals and teams that might have more openness to take the discussion or may be in organizations that are experiencing outsized impact from the pandemic. Unlike in all previous global events like the global financial crisis, this one will have an end date.

HC & the pandemic

For many of the reasons above, HC has been severely impacted but is also demonstrating its robustness. Operating on a practice model with each spread over six offices for more than a decade, with culture of trust and empowerment and with most people travelling for a good portion of the time, working from home has been an easy transition for us. Our systems have been in the cloud for the same reason (plus the security required given the nature of our business), so online collaboration was already in place. In-person meetings have just moved to video conferences.

As regards to the impact, it is and was severe, though we are all a lot more confident in April than we were in March. Hiring continues as does being commissioned on new projects. We probably share the sentiment of many that 2020 has gone from a potential record breaking one to one of just getting it over with.

There have been some positives. This event has brought us even closer to our clients as we plan to capture opportunities together. It has also given us more time to just catch up with our connections throughout the market. And in a strange way, internally, we have all gotten closer: working from home shares more of our lives as kids and pets periodically enter the shot. Certainly, some of our new rituals and rhythms will survive

the pandemic such as all-company global video conferences. Though, I won't miss the all-family battles over the WIFI.

We hope you all remain safe. Please let us know if we can be of service, or if you just want to reconnect.

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This article was produced as part of HC Insider. HC Insider is Human Capital's dedicated media service. In addition to providing subscribers with relevant and informative editorials, we also report on people moves in the energy and natural resource world.

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