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**Attorney Laura Anthony
Examines Virtual
Conferencing in the
COVID Economy**

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Change is never invited and then welcomed with open arms. Change is inevitable, so it simply thrusts itself upon us.

[Facetime](#), [Skype](#) and various other audiovisual conferencing platforms were considered contingency options only a few months ago. They were used somewhat begrudgingly when flights were canceled or schedules conflicted. Although many forward-thinking micro-managers used them as primary forms of conferencing, there were plenty who did not.

Those who once considered audiovisual conferencing as “second best” to the real thing have been forced to re-evaluate their perspective.

Although electronic communication has always been far more efficient than traditional face-to-face meetings, contemporary earners, those in their late 40's and early 50's, came up through the ranks prior to the computer age. Writing term papers on electric typewriters and turning pages in a hardbound thesaurus, they were the final generation who made it through college without accessing a computer.

They cut their teeth when the old school was still in session and sat at hundreds, if not thousands, of conference tables. When the time came to transition to virtual meetings, some were hesitant since they had one foot firmly planted in the past and the other standing in the present.

Middle-Age Dogs, New Tricks

When professionals straddle old and new ways, some of them stick with what feels most comfortable. Embracing unfamiliar practices may be awkward at first, but in today's [COVID economy](#), it is imperative for their own well-being and the well-being of others.

These individuals are no different than previous professionals whose careers spanned the innovation and proliferation of other technological advancements. For whatever reason, technology that streamlines business is always met with a certain degree of skepticism and reluctance, even if it makes the task at hand easier and better.

Around 1976 rechargeable calculators could finally be mass-produced cheaply. Four-function liquid crystal display calculators sold for \$19.95 to \$24.95. As the name implies, these rechargeable bricks did exactly four things: add, subtract, multiply and divide. Although crude when compared to today's technology, these devices eliminated human error in terms of math, made general-purpose accounting faster and easier, and freed up an incalculable amount of time.

From a logical perspective, there was nothing but upside. However, like all technological advancements, there was resistance. Academics believed that people would rely less on their own brainpower and grow dependent on a machine to think for them. Established business leaders held similar beliefs and remained loyal to the pen-and paper-approach to basic math. After all, the old ways had always worked, so why retool and introduce a new variable?

These provincial beliefs were quickly abandoned once it became clear that this technology improved the bottom line.

Seeing Is Believing

In 2003 [Skype](#) broke the ice in terms of video conferencing. The introduction of Skype was revolutionary, but it was unique in the respect that it was one of the few technological advancements that was expected.



[Audiovisual communication](#) had been depicted and predicted for decades. Everyone knew it was simply a matter of time until technology made this concept possible. Consequently, Skype was almost immediately accepted as a practical form of one-on-one communication.

By 2010 there were more than 660 million users worldwide. It was only natural that this new platform of person-to-person communication would evolve to permit groups of people to interact in real time.

We are now on the downslope of the very same acceptance curve in terms of virtual meetings and remote work spaces. Fewer people are going to the office and some business sectors are actually improving since the [COVID economy](#) began earlier this year.

Some Adapt, Some Stagger

One example is [corporate and transactional law firms](#). While litigation firms are feeling the sting of social distancing because court appearances have become increasingly impractical, corporate law firms are experiencing an uptick in business. Commerce has once again proven to be a fickle mistress.

Litigation firms far outnumber corporate and transactional law firms since, until now, there was a greater demand for troublemakers than dealmakers. [Corporate law firms](#) were previously more susceptible to economic cycles. Litigation firms flourished because in good times or bad, someone always had a grievance.

As of today, even the most persuasive litigator is finding it extremely difficult to sway a judge or jury since it is nearly impossible to get 15 to 20 people in the same room at the same time. Pleading a case on a computer monitor just doesn't pack the same punch.

Since corporate law firms are already accustomed to coordinating start-ups, mergers and acquisitions between parties that are geographically located in different states or even different countries, the transition to virtual meetings has been much more agreeable.

[Pubco officers](#) and directors can log into a meeting anytime from virtually anywhere and maintain firsthand communication with their associates, legal team and any and all other persons needed to facilitate their next great deal. The old-schoolers who insist on doing things the way they've always been done, looking someone straight in the eye, and so on, may now find it impossible to accomplish anything of consequence.

Video Conferencing Booms

Even during the "resistance period," virtual-meeting platforms have become increasingly efficient and user-friendly.

According to PC Magazine, there are no fewer than ten video conferencing software packages that are quickly gaining traction:

[RingCentral Meetings](#) is a low-cost, high-value video conferencing solution that very nearly hits a home run but has problems in a few critical areas. Still, it's hard to argue with a free plan that offers so much value.

[Intermedia AnyMeeting](#) ticks most of the feature boxes that small businesses are looking for in a videoconferencing solution. And to spice things up, it adds some well-integrated collaboration and file-sharing tools, too.

[Zoho Meeting](#) is a solid videoconferencing tool if you need screen sharing and web presentations. However, if you need features such as whiteboarding, recording, and social sharing, then there are better tools available for that.

[ClickMeeting](#) is a competent video conferencing solution for small businesses that's simple to use and nicely priced. It could stand to beef up its customer support, though.



[Zoom Meetings](#)' claims to fame are top-notch performance, affordability, and generous free plans. Some flaws have recently been discovered in the service and its messaging, but the company has been very quick to address them.

[GoToMeeting](#) is one of the easiest conferencing services to use, and its videoconferencing feature keeps the app relevant in today's competitive market.

[Microsoft Teams](#) provides features galore, including tight connectivity with Office 365. It's a great team-messaging app if your organization is a Microsoft shop.

Videoconferencing service [Cisco Webex Meetings](#) offers a generous free plan and it's dropped its price considerably in the past couple of years. However, it has some feature limitations you'll need to test carefully before committing.

[BlueJeans Meetings](#) is an excellent service for folks who just need to meet, whiteboard, and screen-share. Its Dolby-powered directional audio experience is unique and gives you a greater feeling of presence.

[Join.me](#) is an easy-to-use video conferencing software solution with a modern user interface and numerous features that will improve your online meetings.

Plan B Become Plan A

What was once considered a backup plan is now a necessity, and not just from a business perspective. In the past several months 325,000,000 Americans have come to the realization that if new safety protocols are disregarded, they run the risk of being incapacitated by the [COVID-19 virus](#). The need to take unnecessary risks has been greatly mitigated by cutting-edge and readily available videoconferencing technology.

Without it, professionals from all business sectors would be compelled to crowd into conference rooms, shoulder-to-shoulder with associates who have come directly from the airport, hailing from virtually any point in the continental US or even abroad. Since everyone needs to make a living, it would otherwise be impossible to dissuade them from clustering into high-risk groups.

Even those who ignore the seriousness of the [COVID outbreak](#), professionals who would still walk into a crowded facility without hesitation, now find themselves distanced by default. Since there are so many other professionals taking every possible precaution to remain healthy, there is almost no one for the COVID skeptics to meet with in person.

On the home front, audiovisual communication has become essential tech. We now know that if schools are shuttered due to a pandemic, our children can continue their education without interruption. This safety net supports all aspects of business and the economy itself. Unless things are on track at home, it is difficult to keep commerce moving forward on the straight and narrow.

[Business professionals](#) can also stay in contact with elderly parents and other relatives, providing all with peace of mind as they focus on pushing business forward.

Hopefully, by the time the number of [COVID cases](#) drops to a nominal or even nonexistent level, videoconferencing will not merely be relied upon most heavily in times of an outbreak, but may actually help prevent another one from gaining traction. In other words, now that professionals are accustomed to working remote, they may not return to the office when the coast is clear.

This is not meant to imply that business professionals should never again attend conferences or group together in person. But knowing what we know now, and having the technological means that allow [audiovisual communication](#), there exists a greater incentive to avoid unnecessary face-to-face scenarios.



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[Palm Beach securities attorney Laura Anthony](#) and her experienced legal team provide ongoing corporate counsel to small and mid-size private companies, OTC and exchange traded public companies as well as private companies going public on the Nasdaq, NYSE American or over-the-counter market, such as the OTCQB and OTCQX. For more than two decades [Anthony L.G., PLLC](#) has served clients providing fast, personalized, cutting-edge legal service. The firm's focus includes, but is not limited to Regulation D and Regulation S and PIPE Transactions, securities token offerings and initial coin offerings, [Regulation A/A+ offerings](#), as well as registration statements on Forms S-1, S-3, S-8 and merger registrations on Form S-4; compliance with the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, including registration on Form 10, reporting on Forms 10-Q, 10-K and 8-K, and 14C Information and 14A Proxy Statements; all forms of going public transactions; mergers and acquisitions including both reverse mergers and forward mergers; applications to and compliance with the corporate governance requirements of securities exchanges including [Nasdaq](#) and [NYSE American](#). Palm Beach attorney Laura Anthony is also the author of [SecuritiesLawBlog.com](#), the producer and host of [LawCast.com](#), Corporate Finance in Focus, and a contributor to The Huffington Post and Law360.

[Ms. Anthony](#) is involved throughout the community of Palm Beach. She is on the board of directors for the American Red Cross for Palm Beach and Martin Counties, and provides financial support to the Susan Komen Foundation, Opportunity, Inc., New Hope Charities, the Society of the Four Arts, the Norton Museum of Art, Palm Beach County Zoo Society, the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts and several other organizations. She is also a financial and hands-on supporter of Palm Beach Day Academy, one of Palm Beach's oldest and most respected educational institutions. She currently resides in Palm Beach with her husband and daughter.

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