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CULHANE
MEADOWS^{PLLC}
Big Law for the New Economy

Rise and Shine

Texas Lawyer

What's Happening:

As the COVID-19 outbreak rages across Texas, forcing mayors, county judges and Gov. Greg Abbott to take the unprecedented measure of issuing stay-at-home orders, law firms have been forced to make extraordinary changes to how they conduct their business, according to a [recent story](#) by Brenda Sapino Jeffreys.

Despite all the obstacles and disruption to their normal operations, the quarantine also creates opportunities for firms to show their clients what they're made of and how capable they are of remaining composed and handling business under pressure. Similarly, lawyers can prove their worth to their firms by showing how adaptable they are, even under extreme circumstances.

Mishell Kneeland, a partner at [Culhane Meadows](#) in Austin, said that although this is a scary time for a lot of people, lawyers must keep calm and carry on.

"I really think it's been amazing to see how people are stepping up and being able to pivot so quickly to their way of doing business and to still be able to provide really great client service during this time," Kneeland said. "My law firm is non-traditional in that it's cloud-based, but I am seeing this across all kinds of firms, and I think it's going to be interesting to see how this shakes out in general for the flexibility of the legal profession by allowing people to service their clients in the way that works best for them. It's been pretty amazing to see, so far."

What It Means for You:

Now is the time to demonstrate your value to your clients and your firm.

"To be a good lawyer you have to always be asking, 'How do I deliver the best service to my clients no matter what the circumstances are?'" Kneeland said. "So this is really going to give people an opportunity to show what they can do and how they can help a lot of their clients who are really hurting right now."

In addition, Kneeland said, attorneys can make a lasting impression on their law firm colleagues by showing an ability to rally their teams remotely and get things done.

Now is also the time to embrace technology.

"If you are not very tech-savvy, this is a very hard time to be a lawyer because you have to learn the Blackboard platform, and there are teams you have to deal with that have done Zoom meetings, so learning these various platforms so that you can collaborate seamlessly is essential," Kneeland said.

What You Should Do For Your Clients:

Per Kneeland:

- **Affirmatively reach out to your clients and let them know you are there for them and that they have access to the appropriate records and documents they'll need.**
- **Let your clients know you're thinking proactively about how to service them.** It's important for us to be leaders by saying, "We can do this and you can too."

Questions You Should Be Asking as a Law Firm Leader:

Per Kneeland:

- **Where is your data located?**
- **How easily, without the help of a consultant, can you transition to where you need your people to be no matter where they are?**
- **What kind of security protocols do you have in place for that?** Confidentiality needs to remain paramount; you can't just upload this stuff all in Dropbox.
- **Are you using your IT people, consultant and vendors to help you with these things?** You have allies and partners who can help you with this—it is an expense, but these are people who know how to do it and know how to get it done quickly, so you should use them.

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The largest woman-owned national full-service business law firm in the U.S., Culhane Meadows fields over 70 partners in ten major markets across the country. Uniquely structured, the firm's Disruptive Law® business model gives attorneys greater work-life flexibility while delivering outstanding, partner-level legal services to major corporations and emerging companies across industry sectors more efficiently and cost-effectively than conventional law firms. Clients enjoy exceptional and highly-efficient legal services provided exclusively by partner-level attorneys with significant experience and training from large law firms or in-house legal departments of respected corporations. U.S. News & World Report has named Culhane Meadows among the country's

“Best Law Firms” in its 2014 through 2020 rankings and many of the firm’s partners are regularly recognized in Chambers, Super Lawyers, Best Lawyers and Martindale-Hubbell Peer Reviews.