



**Leslie Cook, KBE-NY, LLC**

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What was the most challenging part of working during the pandemic?

Working during the pandemic was very challenging. Our company was able execute a plan to keep everyone on payroll and not furlough our staff (project managers and field staff). We were able to keep our essential projects open during the pandemic. Personally, the hardest challenge was balancing being a working mother of children that were currently adjusting to virtual school.

What aspects of working from home did you enjoy most?

In the beginning I was able to work from home a few days and go to the site. This balance was great to adjust but the construction industry needs to be on site. Our team is very technology forward so the adjustment was not difficult. We have documents cloud based and everyone is equipped with laptops, ipads, tools to continue working seamlessly.

What was your greatest professional accomplishment in 2020?

My greatest professional accomplishment was working together as a team to keep work in place while adjusting to the many new hurdles (health, safety, commuting during the pandemic, material shortages, labor issues, NYC DOB regulations).

What was your most notable project, deal, or transaction in 2020?

We have many notable projects but one we are proud of is Sunrise of Staten Island. We turned the negative situation into a positive and strategically pushed certain trades to complete their scope. This allowed us to keep work in place while social distancing or working safe and compliant. Now that all our projects are open, the workers can transition back without being laid off.

What are your predictions for commercial real estate in 2021?

My prediction for commercial real estate is that it will not be the same. It has and will change for good. Outdoor flexible space with indoor space and Biophilic Design (Biophilic design is a concept used within the building industry to increase occupant connectivity to the natural environment through the use of direct nature, indirect nature, and space and place conditions.) is going to be more important in office/commercial space. Durst is an innovator when it comes to this type of mixed-use space. You will see a lot of living/work space with outdoor elements more than ever. I believe most of us learned to appreciate our family/loved ones and quality of life a lot more. We took a step back and took time to reflect. 2020 has been hard but New York is tough, and we will

overcome this together.

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