

# PROFILES OF SURVIVAL



BY  
**ROXANA TOFAN**

JUST AS THE WORLD has been reshaped by COVID-19, many industries have also experienced transformations. Over the last two years, I covered restaurant, property management, brokerage, lender, developer, investment, coaching, consulting, marketing, fitness, engineering, and media companies and heard how they navigated through COVID. **Commercial real estate remains strong. The first part of 2022 allowed investors to put more of their money in commercial real estate with rents continuing to go up and interest rates stabilizing. Even with continued challenges in supply chain, staffing, tenants' new space requirements and the legal sector, most commercial real estate properties are performing well.** I was particularly curious recently to hear how the legal world changed through COVID.

Some people call me crazy. I prefer happy with a twist.



I had the pleasure of visiting with **James Rosenblatt** who had been practicing law for nearly 30 years, worked for medium and national law firms, and had been general counsel for a construction company before starting his own firm 17 years ago. He is **the president of an 11-attorney law firm in San Antonio** and an avid collector of old maps—and he used a large portion of his personal collection to decorate his office.

**Roxana: What type of work does your firm specialize in?**

**James:** We work with many business owners helping them start, operate, and sell their businesses. Our other areas of practice include civil litigation, probate and



estate planning, asset protection, construction, real estate, oil and gas, and appellate and motion practice.

**Roxana: What's your favorite thing about running your practice?**

**James:** Working with clients to solve problems.

**Roxana: Did the firm face any challenges during COVID? How did you overcome them?**

**James:** We faced several challenges ranging from dealing with employees and their unique situations as well as helping clients who were dealing with new issues. Thanks to preparation before COVID began, we were well equipped to let people work from home. Interestingly, many of our employees were happy to come back to the office once allowed, and we could provide safety measures. Due to the shift in how information was being shared, the firm decided to reach out to our clients with increased blogging and seminars to get important information into their hands. We created templates for PPP loans, ETRC credits, and information packages to help clients apply for and manage these changing programs.

**Roxana: What areas of law boomed? And in what areas have you seen faced challenges?**

**James:** At different points in the last two years, different areas of law have boomed and busted. During COVID, the ability to evict a tenant, especially in the residential setting, became almost impossible. Employment law, on the other hand,

stayed constant. And all governmental work from courts to IRS to state agencies became increasingly more difficult due to reductions in staff and increased remote employees.

**Roxana: How does the courtroom look now compared to 3 years ago?**

**James:** Zoom courtrooms were not only non-existent prior to COVID, they were considered unconstitutional. Today, in-person hearings are the exception to the rule. Hearings, depositions, discovery disputes, and even trials are no longer controlled by the location of witnesses, parties, or litigators. The result is a much more efficient system for attorneys which should result in cost savings for clients.

**Roxana: What do you anticipate in the immediate future?**

**James:** Our firm has been able to stay busy with the current economy. We are looking to hire additional employees as the need arises, and we have adjusted some compensation and added benefits to keep our employees happy and motivated.

**Roxana: How does your firm remain a partner in the community and ahead of others?**

**James:** With my experience in international law firms, being in-house counsel, my business background, and MBA, we approach problems like business owners with legal backgrounds. We can help business owners anticipate problems and prepare them for issues because we've been there and we've learned from experience.

The COVID-19 challenge is unprecedented, both for the economy and for aspects of the legal system. As a law firm leader, James adjusted operations for his firm accordingly and managed with a "through-cycle" mindset, giving appropriate attention to near-term pressures while laying the groundwork for long-term success. ■

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