On Thursday, July 23rd, the CoreNet NorCal End User SIG hosted a webcast and roundtable discussion on "Remote as a Location". According to a recent Gallup poll, over 60% of Americans employed are working from home. 1 in 5 of those employees would prefer to continue working remotely once public health restrictions are lifted. As CRE leaders, we've had to become more agile in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this session industry leaders discussed the best practices for managing remote workers.

APPROACH TOWARDS REMOTE WORK
Certain teams within industries are very place-based and have employees who truly cannot work from home. For these employees work from home means shutting down their team. On the other hand, COVID has been an eye-opening experience for teams who previously believed they could never work remotely.

The transition wasn't too difficult for companies that already offered remote options and has accelerated any initiatives to expand on remote work. The remote transition has increased the hiring talent pool to include different regions instead of specific locations and new tools are being created to hire remotely, managers are given resources for managing remotely, and policies are being created around employees who live outside of major cities.

HOW YOU ARE WORKING TOWARDS PRODUCTIVITY? WHAT WFH BENEFITS ARE PROVIDED?
While employees cannot take physical items from the office, employers have created 'work-from-home stores' and have given stipends to purchase home office furniture. Productivity and workload are being reevaluated by looking at the whole person and their situation. Do they have kids, tons of roommates, or other obstacles at home that prevent them from being their most productive? Childcare reimbursement and creating a social platform to support employees are being created to maintain connection and productivity.

HOW TO MAINTAIN COMPANY CULTURE AND ORGANIC MOMENTS
Having informal team meetings weekly or even daily, depending on company size, has served as a way of maintaining connections and organic moments that are normally had in the office. Smaller, localized teams can meet in person in public parks or do physical activities together while being safe and socially distant. Maintaining company culture and organic moments is still a challenging and evolving process.

HOW TO PREVENT BURNOUT
Remote work is allowing people to work longer hours since they are home which causes people to go beyond what they were doing prior. To help prevent burnout, policies need to be instituted to manage employees' time and mental health such as setting defined hours in the workday where no meetings can be scheduled, giving extended holiday breaks without making

employees take their own PTO, and surveying employees on how they're feeling and if they would prefer to continue to work remotely or return to campus once it is safe to do so. An increase in benefits is being offered by employers with an emphasis on mental health. Engaging leadership to share their remote problems and solutions and ask questions openly through coffee sessions has also been helpful.

DISTRIBUTED SPACES AND FINAL THOUGHTS
For global teams, going remote has been a great leveler and allowed distributed employees to have a say and to be heard. COVID has allowed companies to create a "network of places" and prove you can do work from anywhere by providing drop-in spaces away from the HQ office, which gives choice and flexibility to employees. Work from home has proven that when a team has a united purpose or common goal, they can feel united when not working in the same physical space

The next step is to figure out what the office will look like going forward. The office had a value, it separated us from home life and our commute gave us a transition from home to work and work to home. The office might not be the same as before, but there is a need for it.