

## The Best Laid Plans in Pandemic Times

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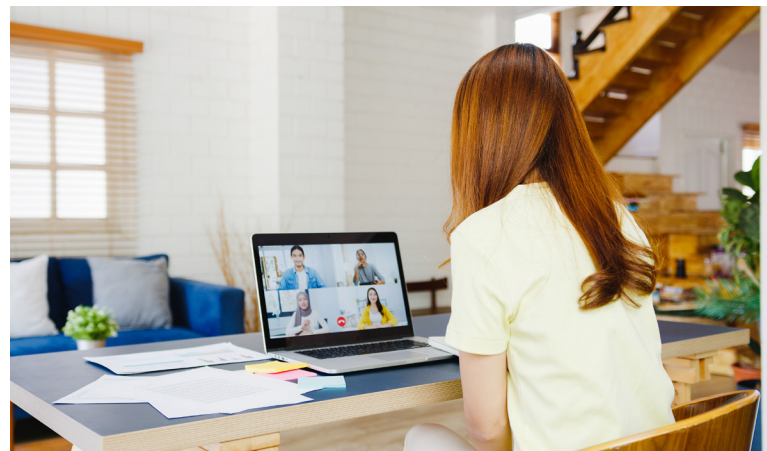
### Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic changed our world dramatically on a lot of levels, and we're still adjusting. The rules tend to blur, sometimes week to week. Curled edge, sun-bleached signs taped to store windows blare the message that masks are required. Fast forward two months and the signs are gone, requirement gone, only to reappear for one week and then disappear again.

Our routines, too, are altered. For some, the change is permanent. For many, it can be hard to remember what it's like to go into the office every day. It may feel unthinkable to wear anything other than elastic waist lounge pants for our work day, which are hidden under desks or dining room tables below well-lit faces and button down shirts that are camera-ready for the back-to-back video calls.

Pets, children, and the parcel delivery driver interrupt our work days, which can start early and end late, punctuated by breaks for math homework help or a doggie mess in the living room and a pop-up client need.

When it comes to making plans for a vacation, traveling to see family, or even doing project or career planning, we may be planning and replanning due to rapid changes in travel



restrictions, resource availability, and procurement delays. An international assignment, something that you always had your sights set on, might now be out of the question. There may be worry over maintaining visibility with supervisors to ensure that you are not forgotten in the virtual work world, so that you don't miss out on opportunities to grow.

While we accept that it's critical to stay agile in the pandemic times, the starting and restarting affects your brain and maybe your confidence, too. How do you plan for your future when there are so many factors out of your control in the world and in society?

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## Flexibility with a Capital F

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Below are three strategies for flexibility that I've found useful to help maintain project, professional, and personal goals in our current environment:

1. Set your goals with a sliding timeline of accomplishment. Instead of choosing a specific end date, consider setting an achieve-by date to be a month or quarter of the year. When it comes to supply chain issues for materials, consider if a make or buy analysis can help keep things moving.
2. Have a list of alternate personal goals and interests, pulling in goal #1b when #1a isn't possible at the moment.
3. Practice becoming resilient, thinking ahead about how you will handle an issue or conflict in a positive way. Picture yourself handling the issue in a strong and self-assured manner and assess what you need to stay on track. Make each problem you face an opportunity to grow your personal and professional resiliency.


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## Conclusion

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Change fatigue is real and everyone experiences it, from unsettled plans at home for the holidays to revision seven of the company's return-to-work plan.

A theme that we've heard since early 2020 regarding COVID-19 is that we're all in this together. This theme still holds true. Your fellow construction managers and colleagues are likely experiencing similar challenges. Consider reaching out to members of your network to talk through project difficulties and share ideas on solutions.

Learning how to remain flexible and resilient are key traits for thriving in the pandemic times. 



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### About the Author

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