



CREDIBLE THINKING

# A Virtual New Start

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Steph and Jamie joined DTRE in January 2021 and sit in DTRE's Industrial Investment team. This Credible Thinking article deals with how they have found integrating themselves into a new job with the backdrop of a pandemic.

The past year has been one of new and peculiar experiences for many – adapting to working from home, learning the ins and outs of the intricacies of Zoom, and becoming overly familiar with local parks. For us, this included starting a new job in the midst of lockdown 3.0. Starting a job in lockdown is much like starting a job at any other time. You turn up filled with excitement and nerves, hoping that you don't forget your own name at the first sign of an introduction; except this time, 'turning up' meant walking 10 steps to our DIY desks and there was no risk of forgetting our own names, or anybody else's for that matter, thanks to Zoom's name labels.

Fortunately, we were already well acquainted with working from home, having been doing so in our previous roles for much of 2020. Unlike an ordinary start, our laptops, screens, phones, and various other equipment was delivered in advance, ensuring that we were well equipped and ready to go from day one. We expected a handful of computer malfunctions and forgotten passwords, but the well-organised setup meant that we suffered surprisingly few technological hiccups and, overall, had a seamless experience. Tick for the tech and HR processes.

The virtual start has meant we have been unable to immerse ourselves in the company culture that played such a key role in our desire to join DTRE. Initially, our interactions were largely limited to 2D, and we became familiar with the inside of our colleagues' homes before we had ever seen their legs. Training has embodied some of these challenges as the 'share screen' method of learning will always come second to a hands-on approach; therein lies the downside. The team has made us welcome and involved from the outset. Working remotely is something that requires that much more effort to achieve full engagement and connection, but we have always felt able to pick up the phone to our new 'virtual' colleagues. Regular team meetings across the business and virtual socials, including

a weekly HIIT session, were valuable. Virtual drinks were also a welcome initiation for us... although it will always be hard to beat the buzz of a Thursday evening in the West End.

As has been widely debated, we believe there is no substitute for face-to-face contact in a business environment. Phone and Zoom calls are not nearly as convenient as being able to stick your head up over your computer screen and ask questions. Similarly, one is less able to absorb the workings of your new environment through osmosis by overhearing conversations and understanding team dynamics.

With the world slowly returning to a semblance of normality, we wait to see if things will return to 'pre-Covid-normal' or if we are seeing the beginning of a 'new-normal'; whether that be a hybrid of home and office working, a dominance of virtual or face-to-face interaction driven by agendas such as ESG and wellbeing alongside prioritising client's requirements. These topics are front of mind for DTRE.

One thing is for certain - as lockdown begins to ease, we are excited to get to know DTRE, the business, the culture, and our colleagues even better as we start to return to the office... whichever normality awaits us.

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