

A close-up portrait of Josh Krichefski, a man with a beard and blue eyes, wearing a dark blue shirt. The background is blurred, showing an office environment.

The future of work: Three questions with Josh Krichefski

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Josh Krichefski, MediaCom's Global COO, reviews how this year has impacted the way we work and what we can expect in 2021.

Describe how this year has been for you as a leader of a large workforce.

“Very challenging. It’s been a really good year in some ways: From a business perspective we have had to accelerate change in a way we wouldn’t have if we weren’t in a pandemic. We relaunched products, changed our positioning as a business, had to change CEO halfway through the year when our global CEO resigned. We’ve won loads of pitches and didn’t lose any clients. But from a mental health perspective it’s been a very difficult year. People have been very isolated. When you don’t spend time with people, it makes you spend more time internalizing than you would if surrounded by people and have more

positive distraction. As a result, it's had a very difficult impact on people's mental health, including myself. I'm always in a much better mood when I go into the office than when working from home. A lot of people have lost their jobs and the economy is in a difficult place which will have a lasting effect on people. I worry about people a lot."

How challenging has it been to maintain and grow professional relationships virtually?

"I've connected with all my local market CEOs in ways I wouldn't have before. We are a much more joined up network now. People have been able to connect with each other more emotionally, across borders. Previously, I would travel to all the different markets to spend time with a CEO and meet a few clients and that would take a whole week. Now, I have a conversation with all my CEOs in an hour. It's the same with a client pitch. When you're doing it in person sometimes 16 clients turn up at that meeting, and you're having to answer the needs of all the different people in the room without diluting the story you're trying to tell. On video you're able to cater more to people's needs through tech platforms. Of course, chemistry is hard to achieve in this way. But it's now all about how you use tech platforms as creatively as you can and that's an interesting challenge. The world has changed, less budget will be on travel and more on technology."

What enforced changes from this year will remain in 2021?

"With everything that's happened with Black Lives Matter this year, it's like finally companies have woken up to the importance of race, diversity and inclusion. I hope that's something that will remain a focus and not be a flash in the pan — the same with mental health. I also see the total shift to e-commerce as something that will stay. That's not to say the high street is dead — shopping is still something people want to do physically — but e-commerce will only continue to grow, and digital advertising will also. In a [third-party] cookieless world, we will see fewer annoying ads following people around the internet, that [ad targeting] will come of age in a much more powerful way. There will be much better, reach-driven advertising. Context and out-of-home will also stay. In the retail space — similar to how office space needs to change — retail outlets will need to change to be more experiential — that's an ongoing transformation that's been accelerated because of Covid-19."

This article is part of the Future of Work briefing by [Digiday](#), a weekly email with stories, interviews, trends and links about how work, workplaces and workforces are changing.