



THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL—WHAT WE'VE LEARNED, LOATHED AND LOVED ABOUT THIS PAST YEAR

It's been more than a year since the COVID-19 pandemic began and I think we can all agree it's been a challenging time. Our lives changed in almost an instant.

As the hopeful end of this pandemic draws near, we reflect on the trials we faced and lessons we learned. We saw the good, bad and ugly. We learned to pivot and adapt—maybe tried a new hobby or two. In other words, we learned some stuff, loathed some stuff and loved some stuff about pandemic life.

I asked a few Sullair employees and members of our Sullair Authorized Distributor network to look back at the past year and share their experiences. Here's what they had to say:

What is your name, company and title?

- **Dave Henning**, Diversified Air Systems, Sales Manager
- **John Landry**, Air Compressor Energy Systems (ACES), Sales Manager
- **Chad McKeever**, Sullair, Vice President – Operations
- **Brian Sloan**, Sullair, Senior Manager – Aftermarket
- **Brian Tylisz**, Sullair, Senior Vice President – Sales – Americas

What was the greatest lesson(s) you learned over the past year?

- **Dave Henning:** Importance of self-discipline! Without self-discipline, it would be very hard to keep focused on your job and get sidetracked with things that go on at your home every day. I was fortunate enough that I do not have many distractions at my home such as children. I was able to go to my "office" in my lower level each day and only surface at lunch time and at the end of the day in most cases.

I also learned that many people do want personal interaction of some sort. Utilizing the time spent with customers in the most productive way. Being more aware of tools available to contact people such as LinkedIn, network groups.

- **John Landry:** Patience has always been something I've had but it has gotten better with the way things have unfolded this past year.
- **Chad McKeever:** There is no substitution for human interaction and the importance people have in our lives. Our employees continue to be our greatest asset, and their perseverance to overcome difficult and challenging times is quite humbling.
- **Brian Sloan:** Patience, in my own family life, we were always running around 100 mph daily. With the pandemic, we've needed to learn more patience. Waiting in line to get into a store, waiting for someone to move from an area so you can grab your item and waiting for something you wanted now and is on back order or store ran out.
- **Brian Tylisz:** That we must be nimble in our thinking and approach to the markets we serve at all times. This year has taught us that our environment can change drastically in a short period of time.

What did you loathe about this past year?

- **Dave Henning:** Being locked down! I thrive on being outside of the "office" and making personal contact. Being in front of a computer for 8 hours a day does not fit my personality or skill set.
- **John Landry:** The lack of person to person interaction in reference to sales calls/meetings, etc.
- **Chad McKeever:** The inability to interact and communicate easily with others. We are in a people business, and it was difficult to further build working relationships when distance was required to maintain our individual safety and well-being.
- **Brian Sloan:** Seeing a lot of friends and family lose their jobs or take pay cuts.
- **Brian Tylisz:** Not seeing our customers face to face to understand their needs and help them with compressed air solutions.

What did you love about this past year?

- **Dave Henning:** Not really a whole lot! Other than it increased my bank account because I could not do anything!
- **John Landry:** Most people/customers understand how challenging it has been to deliver products/services on time and have rolled with the punches so I would say the understanding of the boat we are all in.
- **Chad McKeever:** Learning the depth of our employee's intestinal fortitude and passion to meet our customer's needs. Sullair remains strong as a result of the dedication displayed by employees throughout our global company.
- **Brian Sloan:** I loved how things seemed to slow down a bit, started grocery shopping more and cooking at home with the family instead of always just grabbing food on the go. It has helped with more family time and fun games and movies with the family.
- **Brian Tylisz:** Spending more time learning how to effectively connect with people via digital means – email, text, phone (voice), and video conferencing.

Is there anything implemented in the past year you'd be glad to keep in the future?

- **Dave Henning:** Honestly other than working from home (which I pretty much have always done) not much more was changed on my side. I do see the value in some employees not returning to an office, but on the flipside, there are many who do not work well at home and need to have supervision.
- **John Landry:** Virtual meetings seem like they're here to stay and are an efficient way to conduct a lot of business.

- **Chad McKeever:** Utilization of employee wellness checklists and in-plant temperature monitoring. Both have led to better choices made by our on-site employees and protection of our co-workers.

Despite experiencing the pandemic this year, our employees have maintained a higher level of general health by relentlessly refusing to pass sickness from one to another, which was previously culturally acceptable. Coming to work sick is no longer viewed as a badge of courage but seen as being selfish and irresponsible to those we work alongside.

- **Brian Sloan:** Just being more proactive with life and work needs.
- **Brian Tylisz:** I think many have become more accustomed to video conferencing to help communicate better when you cannot be there in person. I think that is a great tool going forward but cannot replace in person meetings when the discussion has critical elements.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed your life/way of thinking?

- **Dave Henning:** It certainly has made you more thankful for those important in your life! Created many questions on civil liberties, what we can or cannot do!
- **John Landry:** Continuing to be respectful of other people's time and space is something I have always tried to do, but I think it has brought new light to respecting others.
- **Chad McKeever:** To be considerate of others by not spreading germs unnecessarily. I will continue to wash my hands more often, only touch what is necessary, wear my mask and limit my exposure to others when not feeling well. I am not only responsible for my health, but the health of all those around me.
- **Brian Sloan:** As I stated before, patience!!!!
- **Brian Tylisz:** It has taught me to value personal relationships more than ever. While we cannot be together physically, I am thankful for the relationships developed prior to COVID as it has helped to continue good communication in these strange times. It is challenging to cultivate a new relationship solely via digital means.

Is there anything you've gained greater appreciation for over the past year?

- **Dave Henning:** Definitely the value of family! As many of us were unable to meet and or have personal contact with family (and friends).
- **John Landry:** Family time has always been a number one thing for us. Being able to spend more time with family has been great.
- **Chad McKeever:** Enjoying time with co-workers, friends and family in traditional ways. Whether it was stopping for a drink after work, celebrating our annual family picnic, or riding together in the same car on the way for a team lunch, I have missed it all dearly and can't wait to do so again.
- **Brian Sloan:** Front line essential employees.
- **Brian Tylisz:** I have a greater appreciation for the relationships I have developed over the years with colleagues, customers, and business partners. I have also learned to cherish time with family as it can become difficult to spend time with them during a pandemic, especially those that may be in high risk categories.