

CIPF Podcast Series – Investor Protection in Times of Crisis
No. 5 – Insolvency in Times of Crisis

Transcript¹

Moderator: Ilana Singer

Speakers: Martin Daigneault and Marc Duchesne

Ilana Singer:

Welcome to another episode in the CIPF Podcast Series. I'm Ilana Singer. Our topic of conversation today is "Insolvency in Times of Crisis". This pandemic has truly changed the approach to managing insolvencies by regulators, courts, lawyers, and trustees, among others. Our discussion today will explore a number of innovative practices currently being used by the courts, lawyers, and trustees, given this new reality of working from home. My guests today are two leaders in the insolvency field who have been applying these new practices in their files over the past year, Martin Daigneault and Marc Duchesne.

Ilana Singer:

Martin Daigneault is a senior vice president with Ernst & Young in Montreal. He's a seasoned and well-respected advisory professional with a focus on corporate restructuring and insolvency. Marc Duchesne is a well-known and highly respected partner with Borden Ladner Gervais in Montreal. He provides legal advice to debtors and creditors.

Ilana Singer:

Martin and Marc, it is great to have you both participating in this podcast today. Why don't we get started? Martin, my first question goes to you. Can you describe your experience of transitioning from working in your office to the work from home model in such a sudden way? Can you also share with our listeners some of your more significant impressions from this time?

Martin Daigneault:

Thank you, Ilana. First of all, I wanted to thank CIPF for inviting me to participate in this podcast and sharing essentially how our businesses have changed drastically over the last year. It's been quite a ride, as anyone can attest. When the COVID situation started, who could have known we'd still be in it 11 months later? If someone would have told us that, we likely would have been in shock. Instead, we progressed slowly through it, week by week and month by month, and we gradually adapted. While I was more easily distracted in the first few weeks of working at home, with all the facilities of working there, I've adapted over time whereby I think that I'm as productive now, if not more, than I was 11 months ago.

¹ This transcript has been edited for clarity and ease of reading. This podcast is for informational purposes only and is not intended to constitute advice of any kind.

Martin Daigneault:

I was lucky, though, to already have started working from home from time to time in the year prior to COVID. I had two 24 inch monitors, a strong wifi, and a quiet place to work. With kids doing home study on and off over the past 11 months, I have to think that the quiet workspace was more precious than most of it. Having spoken to a lot of people, I think that's likely the case. I recall the stores being sold out of computer monitors and printers. Surprisingly, I also found out over the last year that I really didn't need a printer. My commute time has been converted to be more productive work time, and I actually get to workout a bit when I need to escape my laptop for a few minutes in the ever increasing volume of emails and Zoom and Team invitations. One thing for sure, though, we really didn't have an option but to develop, knowingly or passively, new work habits. And, I think we all slowly got used to this new reality.

Martin Daigneault:

The insolvency world out there resulting from COVID really didn't give us any downtime to passively learn these and study these new ways of working at home. We were thrown in at full throttle. While some were initially better equipped with home offices, strong wifi, and Skype, Teams, and Zoom that others didn't have, we've all moved up the learning curve, albeit at varying speed. Based on my various work relationships over the last year, I'm now under the impression that most professionals are now working essentially with similar tools and facilities. Most people have caught up to the technology requirements that COVID demands. Although some had a tougher go getting there, depending on where their firms were on that infamous March 13, 2020.

Ilana Singer:

So Marc, turning to you, can you describe your experience during this transition, and describe for our listeners any particular impressions that you think would benefit them?

Marc Duchesne:

Well, obviously for us lawyers to say, to use the expression, the experience was a bit different from Martin in his accounting firm. We, as lawyers, are more conservative in our approach and we value working at the office. We have less hoteling practices such as accounting firms. So really – we'd be at the office early and late and sweating the hours was really what it was. Overnight, our universe has changed. So, overnight, you can't go to the office or your colleagues won't go to the office, so you may be able to go there and be alone, but it doesn't work. You have to adapt.

Marc Duchesne:

Most of us were equipped to work from home punctually over the weekend or having an extra brief to prepare at night for tomorrow. That's all fine. But, spending five days a week, if not seven, at the beginning, at home made you change your environment. Now, you had to adapt. Your house has grown from one screen to three screens and an office chair to something more comfortable and headsets. All of this, suddenly, is more important than it was before. I must say we were lucky because overnight, I mean, you had 730 lawyers working from home and, maybe, over 500 support staff working from home. And, sometimes, I thank the vision of our IT departments for thinking ahead, because they basically took decisions two, three years ago that we are now reaping the benefit of, and without which we wouldn't have been able to function as a law firm. I must say that if you were not a believer, now you have to be a believer.

Marc Duchesne:

After the initial shock, obviously, I think what happened is basically that at the beginning of the pandemic, there was absolutely no, let's call it ethics, in the sense that clients, colleagues would phone you or have Zoom meetings with your teams meeting almost 24/7. I mean, you're at home, you can't travel, you can't go anywhere, so obviously you must be available. You don't eat, you don't sleep. So all of this, it was abusive, I would say, at the beginning. But, slowly the business community adopted some non-written rules of ethics, and that came back to a normal pace soon thereafter.

Marc Duchesne:

But, obviously, with all this efficiency, it's all great. It works pretty well. But, we all miss the human contact for sure. I mean, these conversations, walking to a colleague's office to discuss a case, or have you seen this before, or this is new? What do you think about this? Or, I have this insolvable problem, can you help me with this? That is much less frequent now. However, we've all adapted, and now we have learned that you can have Zoom meetings. But, still, human contact is where we lose a lot, and that's important. It's very important for our young professionals. They value this; they value the experience. So, we have to keep a close eye on this. And, again, thank you for an IT department that has vision, and thank you for partners that have chosen to invest in this, because without it, today it would be very difficult to practice, if not impossible.

Ilana Singer:

I could not agree more with both of you, Marc and Martin, about the visionary IT departments that have really played such an important role in all of our lives. Similarly, at CIPF, I'd say we have very strong IT personnel who also were visionary, so we've also benefited from that. And, I guess what you were saying as well, Marc, was that this change was both sudden and truly transformative. Turning to you again, Marc, can you comment on the role that technology has played? You've already spoken a little bit about it, especially in your role as a lawyer in the insolvency space.

Marc Duchesne:

Well, luckily enough, and if my IT department is listening they'll ask for a raise I'm sure, but luckily enough, they moved the platform for document management from a very old system that every law firm used to use for the last 20 years, which didn't really evolve, basically. You open a box somewhere on a server with your file number and everything gets thrown in without much classification of any kind or indexation or whatever. So, thank [goodness], we moved to iManage, in February, just before the pandemic in March. And, we were all afraid when this happened, how our daily lives are [going to be affected]. That's it. The other one is closed. You have to use this. That's the only tool. So, what if I can't? Well, great accomplishments in technology. These things are user-friendly and they duplicate basically your physical file on a virtual platform. It was quite easy to adapt. Certainly without this, it would have been impossible to practice because, otherwise, you're always saying: "Well, I need this file." You ask your assistant. Walk out of your office. "Could you get it for me?" "Which drawer is it?" "I can't remember." "Where did you put it? How come it's not there?" These are all things of the past now. It's all at your fingertips. That has made a big change.

Marc Duchesne:

We've provided laptops to our assistants many months ago, so the transition was quite easy for them. Your assistant is part of your team. Without his or her help, it's impossible to function, so that also changed our lives.

Marc Duchesne:

Voice over IP phones. This is crucial. You can phone me on my same number that's on the website, I'm at home or I'm in a train, I'm climbing the highest mountains, but you can always reach me. That changed our view of the world also.

Marc Duchesne:

Teams and WebEx. I mean, what did we do without them before? We are now all very capable of handling most of the tasks ourselves. Again, virtual hearings at court. We all had to adapt. Our justice system had to adapt and to embrace technology, and, for governments, it's not easy. I mean, they can't turn around that quickly as private enterprise. But, they stepped up and they had kind of a dysfunctional system that they used, and then they quickly moved to Teams and suddenly we're in 2021. Everything's functioning now. So, necessity is the mother of invention. That's really true in our world also. Examinations out of court - very different. Your witness is in some city, you're in another city, your adversary's on the other end of the world, so that's quite a change also for us. But, without virtual connection, it would be impossible.

Marc Duchesne:

Doing conflicts. Every new file you want to open, you have to do a conflict search. Now, it's instantly [done], we have a system, you can do it on your phone and suddenly it takes charge and it gives you your answers. I always envied the accounting firms for being so savvy, for having all these bells and whistles, but now we're there. I mean, the lawyers had to step up, basically like

their corner store who has to compete against Amazon. We're the same thing now. We've got our own system and it works great. We had to adapt and all this technology is now part of our daily lives and part of our budget expenses.

Ilana Singer:

Well, Marc, it sounds like your firm and you have adapted incredibly well and quickly and quite effectively to this new world with technology in your back pocket and the visionaries that you described. So, Martin, how about you? How have you and your firm evolved in this area?

Martin Daigneault:

Well, as Marc was saying, accounting firms have been a bit ahead of the curve on many of these items, and we were moving on to Teams already, and it was scheduled for March of last year when the pandemic happened, so the timing couldn't have been better. Technology is an incredible thing. It keeps us moving forward at a faster and faster pace every year, doing things that a few years ago, we likely would have thought were ridiculous. Previously, some trends were progressing at a steady and gradual pace. And, like Marc said, I think the lawyers would have all ended up where they are now, but it might've taken a longer period. COVID has forced us to accelerate everything. They've all learned from what everybody else has done, and they saw the ones who weren't already on that curve, they learned what other people were doing, and they jumped in.

Martin Daigneault:

In the days of COVID, though, no one has time to wait and see if the competitors attempts are going to work and see if we're going to replicate them or not. There's no time to watch them passively. We all have to act now. We're all migrating with similar working tools and we're working from home and getting faster, unlimited wifi. We all scrambled to get an extra, or possibly two monitors, and we've gotten used to reading and editing documents online rather than printing them - which I hated that myself and I was wondering how I would adapt to that. And, curiously, as Marc said, necessity is the mother of invention. We're all there because we've had no choice. It was obviously a trend before, but now it's the model.

Martin Daigneault:

The first big restructuring assignment I worked on when the pandemic started was Cirque du Soleil. I wondered every day in the early days of that mandate, "How are we going to make this work without ever meeting in person? How do we exchange masses of documents and develop working relationships and analyze stuff and ask each other questions?" You want to be in an interactive setting to be able to have those discussions and move forward quickly. Thankfully, we were already migrating to Teams in early 2020, and Cirque was already there. We had no choice but to find solutions quickly on how we could work and share information in a fast and efficient manner. There's no time to complain. You've just got to do it. So, we quickly learned how to use Teams, whereby typically it probably would have been a gradual process. And as Marc said, we're all there now. We all started from a different point in time and a different status,

but we've all moved up and we're all pretty much on an equal footing, which makes the system work.

Ilana Singer:

Thank you. I agree with your comments, Martin, about how we've all gotten here. It might've taken some of us a lot longer. Years, perhaps even decades, but we've all been forced, and in many positive respects, a lot of these practices will likely transcend the pandemic, which is I know something we will be talking about later on in this discussion. Speaking of practices and processes, Martin, turning to you, have you observed any best practices or processes used by the courts, your firm, or perhaps even your clients during this time?

Martin Daigneault:

I think that COVID has forced us all to work in a more efficient manner. It's forced us all to move forward technologically, where in certain cases, probably would've elected to stay in their set manner while making limited changes or moving forward at a much slower pace. There are few positives to COVID, but I think it's forced us to find better, more efficient ways to work. We found out we can be effective working from home without all the hassles of commuting. For many people, their work-life balance improved a lot, as long as they learned to fold down their laptop screen at a certain point in time in a day.

Martin Daigneault:

I recall in the early days of the pandemic, it wasn't unusual for me to be live and available and solicited from all parts 18 hours a day. And most of us obliged as we weren't turning off our computers when leaving the office like we traditionally did before. We all thought we had to be available 24/7. Thank [goodness] over time, it seems that there's an unknowing voice that brought us all back to some reasonable sense of work-life balance. The people I work with all seem to gradually have moved to a place where they'll only answer emergencies after 7:00. They don't expect replies to their emails on a Saturday at 10:00.

Martin Daigneault:

Once COVID is behind us, I think many of the new ways to work we have developed in the last 13 months are going to remain. Professionals are not going to mechanically work five days a week from the office and the days of working from home will not be the exception. I think that people will go to the office when there's real need to be there. People are probably going to stagger their hours to avoid heavy traffic in rush hour. I think we might develop the habit of looking at the estimated travel time on Google Maps or Waze before deciding if we're going to go to the office or not today.

Martin Daigneault:

A lot of the accounting firms have already been doing some hoteling whereby we reserve our desks daily for the days we're going to be in the office. With the newfound productivity of working from home, office-based requirements are probably going to decline for a professional

services firm or otherwise they'll be able to accommodate new hirings without the need to increase office space. One of the things that was previously keeping us going to the office was our files or records or documents, and it took a while to get there, but I think during COVID, we learned to PDF and download just about everything and we can access it anywhere we go. And, I think we're all going to crave the ability to meet and chat at the coffee machine once we all go back to the office but once that dies down, after a certain period of time, I think we're going to settle into a much different mix of office versus home office, obviously leaning more than before on the home office than before.

Martin Daigneault:

But, there are a couple of problems that I'm seeing. On the other hand, I think there's a part of my job that as much as I try, and as much as technology evolves, I don't think I'll be able to automate or move away from.

Martin Daigneault:

Usually, when I get involved in a file, there are problems obviously. They could be operational, financial or both, and I'm called in as a sort of fireman to figure out the problem quickly, try to fix it and in some cases, try to maximize recovery for creditors or investors by liquidating the assets or transferring investor assets to new brokers. To do that, I usually require two principle pillars. That's my personal knowledge and experience, but also identifying and working with the key internal resources at the company. The problem I face right now is that working in a remote environment, I still need to move quickly and identify key company personnel, but working remotely and not seeing people face-to-face live makes that a bit difficult.

Martin Daigneault:

I can review and assess documents, reports. If a cashflow looks reasonable, I can do that remotely, but figuring out who I can and can't trust and rely on to help me to do my job fast and efficiently, there's so much I can do on a video call and that part is critical to performing my job in the most effective way and I've got to be expeditious in doing these things. So, I don't think I can put out fires remotely - that requires meeting people face-to-face and being in the office. In such cases, it's still the best way to do my job.

Marc Duchesne:

Well, that is a great segue into this, Martin. I can tell you that it does create a different environment for us. I used to go before the court. One of the things that I think I miss the most is the eye contact with the judge, because, basically, when you're close, and depending on the quality of the video and where the camera is situated - but, in some instances, the judge is in his office and it's very easy, because it's like you and me having a video conference. You see the reaction. You can see if the judge is listening or taking notes, and you can pause and let them think or whatever. But, if you're in a courtroom and there's a camera in the courtroom, usually the judge is very far from the camera. So, you lose that sense of communication with the judge and trying to read the judge, which is all part of our business. I mean, we have to analyze the

reactions to adapt and see - Is this receptive? Is this negative? Is this hostile? All these signs that you have to interpret. So, that's a big change, obviously.

Marc Duchesne:

There are changes that came also from the pandemic. For example, the government by decree extended limitation periods. Under statutes in every province, you have a limited time to institute your recourses. Governments have adopted this from legislations to extend those times, and the only times I've seen this - It was the ice storm back 20 years ago, basically. And, it was just administrative delays that were extended to file memorandums or file appeal briefs. But, this is the first time I've seen they actually suspended the limitation period to institute recourses. That's the way that the justice system adapted, just like hospitals, basically. Now, they have to deal with backlogs of cases, so they couldn't stand still for a lot of time, and that's why virtual hearings came into [being] shortly after the announcement of the pandemic and the prohibition on going to public places and everything. They had to adapt.

Marc Duchesne:

And when you think of hearings, it's all nice. Most of the time on the commercial list, we have hearings where basically you have no witnesses, or only, I call them professional witnesses, such as people like you, Martin, and monitors, trustees, and they basically deliver their report. But, when you have a contested case where the evidence has to be made, obviously, witnesses testifying, having them contradicted through a serious cross examination, is not as easy virtually as when you're sitting or standing actually within a foot of the witness and trying to see what their physiognomy is. Are they sweating? Are they not sweating? Are they reacting properly? Look at the judge, look at the witness. Is he catching this? All this interaction is a bit lost in the translation. So, we'll have to adapt, and that is why you will still have real trials with presence in court, because when you have a three-month trial or six-month trial or four-day trial, it's obvious that some evidence has to be introduced the old fashioned way. And, we have the apparition of all these accessories in the courtrooms. All these shields everywhere to protect everyone. But, it's certainly uncomfortable, and I'm glad that on the commercial list, we can do things differently and more virtual than others.

Marc Duchesne:

Certainly, it has changed our habits, having an examination out of court. We all have this. People produce affidavits. You need to examine a witness. So, you're here, your witness is in a different city. It's either your witness, my colleague's witness, and you're trying to figure out how do you prepare. Usually, you had them in your office and have a meeting and prepare the examination. Refresh their memory with documents and everything. Now, suddenly, "Okay, I have to rethink all of this." We had to adapt and we have to adapt, because we can't say, "Well, I won't have a hearing or a discovery because I can't have it in the presence of others." I mean, stenographers adapted. They take their stenography at distance. So, there is no choice. This has changed and it's going to be there for awhile and it's going to happen.

Marc Duchesne:

The only thing I may say, and you touched on it - technology in the courthouse is still [developing]. Teams is a great improvement, but I think where we'll see a greater improvement in the future is when you file documents into court. Now, it's all paper and it has to become paperless, because the world is going paperless and we work without paper. When you say filing exhibits, you need to hire someone to print something, then send it to the judge, who will put it in a box, will never look at it anymore because he's going to read it on screen either as PDF or other document. So, that has to change and will change, I'm confident. It's just that it's the next step. But, certainly, our practice, the practice of law as we see it, is very different.

Ilana Singer:

Thank you, Marc. Speaking of best practices and some of these that you've described as being quite a positive development and progression in the area of law, are there any that you believe will remain after the end of the pandemic?

Marc Duchesne:

Well, I think now even if practitioners and some justices were reluctant to have virtual hearings at the beginning, I think now everybody's in the mood and I think it's there to stay, especially for practice court, uncontested motions, or hearings like Cirque du Soleil, or Aldo, where I was at the beginning of the year where everything's ready to be debated and you don't have as many witnesses or evidence to bring. I think this is there to stay. Practice courts, I think, will function very well virtually going forward. It's going to be more justice by appointment. There will be a call of the roll in the morning, and then they'll say, "Okay, please leave the virtual room and come back at four o'clock in room something, and your judge will be waiting for you."

Marc Duchesne:

There's going to be much less waiting and walking in the corridors of the courthouse. More time spent efficiently. Virtual presentation of documents. When you present a plan of arguments, now you need to put a link to the doctrine or case law into your documents so that the judge only presses his button on your PDF and is directly brought to CanLII or whatever source you're referring to. So, that's a big change. I mean more preparation, but certainly much more efficient, and that's progress even in our industry. We're paperless and the courts will be paperless and lawyers will be more efficient.

Ilana Singer:

Martin, how about you? Are you seeing the same kind of evolution in terms of more efficiencies, more cost savings for clients in your world as a trustee?

Martin Daigneault:

Well, definitely. COVID has forced us all to work in a more efficient manner. It's forced us all to move forward with technology, where in certain cases, parties would have liked it to stay in their set manner while making limited changes or moving at a slower pace.

Martin Daigneault:

I also found myself working from the cottage many times over the last few months. I don't imagine my counterparts saw any difference in it for them, as long as you're there and available. And, with voice over IP, they can reach you anywhere. They phone the same phone number and they reach you wherever you are. The shifts makes me wonder how this will affect downtown real estate office towers, though. There's been some positive sides for technology and how we are all going to work more efficiently. I'm curious what's going to happen to downtown office cores and the resulting impact, and will there be a transformation of downtown cores?

Ilana Singer:

Thank you Martin. I think that's a great question, possibly for another podcast. But, one thing that you touched on, and that Marc touched on as well, relates to communication and how some people, in fact, many people are missing the human contact, the type of communication that one would have at the coffee machine, in the kitchen, in the corridor, et cetera. At CIPF, we've observed the importance of frequent and clear communication during crises. How have you and those at your firm adapted your communications plans or strategies as a result of this crisis?

Martin Daigneault:

Well, obviously one thing I've learned is that too much communication is a lot better than too few communications. And, here, I'm talking about real live discussions, face-to-face discussions. I'm not talking about the ever increasing volume of email communication, which tends to get lost and diluted in the whole process. At E&Y, we developed early on in the crisis that meetings should be planned regularly and well in advance, be they national, local, or by department. I mean the coffee machine that we used to have, or the impromptu discussion that starts by crossing paths walking in the office, that's not just a social event. It's a meeting where advice is sought, expertise is shared, and opportunities are identified. With all those informal forums being gone, it's important to create opportunities to bring about those discussions.

Martin Daigneault:

From time to time, we've had meetings where much of the agenda was planned and well laid out. Presentations, updates on major cases, jurisprudence, comings and goings in law firms and banks. But, the important thing is that even when nothing specific was planned on the agenda, we held those meetings, in part to make sure that we stayed in touch with each other. It also happened quite often where open discussions on anything and everything ended up generating new ideas, initiatives, the sharing of market data, and seeking advice on large and problematic files where everybody would chip in, everybody would bring their comments, and you had the benefit of having 15 people giving you advice. Maybe that's too much, but you certainly got more input than you would have had just by yourself.

Martin Daigneault:

While there's a lot of professionals that have been working at their craft for years and we've been working together, there's also a rising crop of new entries in our field of business that need to be integrated and need to feel they're part of the team. Some of them have joined our team and I have never even met them personally, so it's important that those forums help integrate them until the day that we can meet and greet them in a live setting. It's very difficult to establish a sense of belonging when you don't meet anyone in person, so you have to make the extra effort to integrate them.

Martin Daigneault:

Professional resources at various levels, I'm not sure if law firms have the same issue, they're stretched thin in these COVID times. You need to make sure no one's left behind. You need to take care of the people you have because they are the future of your business. They will help you grow and move on to the next level. So, you have to make the effort and some of them are single and not everybody has a family around them, and some of them have small apartments or are alone and they may feel the brunt of this COVID pandemic after 11 months a lot more than others have.

Ilana Singer:

Thank you, Martin. It's clear that empathy and clear communication is top of mind for you and your firm in terms of getting through this pandemic in the most effective and positive way possible. Marc, can you comment on this question of communication and frequency during a crisis?

Marc Duchesne:

Well, I totally agree with Martin. I mean, communication is key at all levels. Every second week we have our national managing partner and COO give us an update on how we're doing and what's going right, what's not going right. Our new initiatives. What are people doing. New major clients. And that's great. It's important because you need to be part of a team. What is the team doing and how good are we doing? That's important. We also have department meetings. The ones I cherish the most are the smaller meetings of our restructuring group, let's say Montreal, where we exchange on what's the market, who has moved from where to where, and what's new, what new judges we have, what's their habits? We all need this information to get better at our craft, but, also, it gives us a chance to meet.

Marc Duchesne:

I would say I see more of my partners now than I used to see them, even when I was in the office, because we all take that same break during the day. You can't say you're at the courthouse, you're at the client. We all take this video break and have a chat and discuss professional issues, but, also, how are you doing, how are you coping? Have you tried a good recipe these days? It's a good mental exercise. We do it also with our support staff. Every second week, we ask our support staff to join that meeting because they're part of the team. I mean, they

answer questions to the client. They make us look efficient. They have to understand the urgency and the importance of what they do. We want to make them feel part of the team all the time. What's new in our world, what's new in their world, and how they're adapting. And, yes, sometimes you see a dog or a cat or a baby crossing by, and it just adds to the good times of having communication.

Marc Duchesne:

So, communications are key, but they don't have to be all that planned, all that majestic, and all that serious. We found that this is great. I think we interact more as a business unit since we've done this. Everybody's geared to delivering the service and they feel as important or real as we are in getting that delivery there, because they often are the first ones answering the client, and they're the ones producing the documents that we need to be produced and they make us look good. They're part of the team. So that's quite important. The other thing that I've noticed is obviously how do you market yourself in a pandemic? You can't ask a client, "Would you want to go for lunch or dinner or let's go do this, or..." There's a lot of impromptu calls with clients, having a coffee with a client virtually, or sometimes you just start talking about your file, but soon you ask, "Well, how are you doing?"

Marc Duchesne:

And, you see their environment. I feel that clients are open to having these discussions. They really want to go beyond, "Yeah, we do business. That's fine." to "But, really what's your life about, and what good tricks have you come up with dealing with this thing and how is your province doing?" I had a call with Italy the other day and we were comparing confinements and rules, because that's our reality. It's brought the practice to a more human level, I find. It's even with colleagues or your adversaries all day, you're competing for files, mandates, you're bashing each other in court on different arguments and taking positions, but you always ask, "How are you doing? I haven't seen you in a while. What's going on with you?" And to me, it gives us some faith in the human race. At the end, we're all in this together. We'll pull through.

Ilana Singer:

Well, thank you, Marc. That is a very positive, optimistic outlook, and I think really we can all benefit from that in terms of having key takeaways and key processes and practices that will transcend this pandemic, including, for example, in the IT area, in terms of empathy and reaching out to colleagues and having this more frequent and real human connection with people, both professionally and personally. It really has been a pleasure, Marc and Martin, to have you both with us today. It's been an engaging and truly thought provoking discussion.

Ilana Singer:

However, unfortunately, our time together is up. So, first, I'd like to thank our listeners for their time and attention, and I hope they have found the discussion as interesting as I have. We also always welcome your comments, and the best way to reach us is through our website at

www.cipf.ca. Finally, we look forward to welcoming you back to listen to the next CIPF podcast. In the meantime, stay tuned and be well. Thank you again, Marc and Martin.

Martin Daigneault:

It was a pleasure, Ilana.

Marc Duchesne:

Thanks, Ilana.