

# Turning the Corner

**I went to pick up a pizza the other day and had a hard time finding a spot in the restaurant's lot.**

I was a little surprised by this, because I personally haven't eaten in a restaurant in about a year. But there were lots of people inside, eating at tables — acting almost as if life were normal.

I know that at least part of this comes from the fact that people are just fed up with COVID. Some are ready to get on with life regardless of the risks. Another part of this is the local authorities and state governments pushing to get the engines of the economy going again. In some places, we're opening up whether we're ready or not.

Although some would argue that things are opening up too fast, and this rush to normalcy is ill-advised, it's beginning to feel like more than that. Kids are going back to school. Friends and families are visiting each other. People are getting vaccinated.

And that's a big deal. Every single person I've heard from who's gotten vaccinated feels safer. They don't even have to tell me. You can hear the hope in their voices and see the relief in their facial expressions. Their overwhelming fear is gone, and it's being replaced by a sense of hope and an eagerness return to living.

Don't get me wrong. COVID isn't beaten yet. In many areas of the world, it's still an overwhelming crisis. Even in places where it's starting to feel more normal, people are still getting sick and dying from this disease. The war isn't over. But for the first time in a long time, it feels like we might be winning.

Of course, when things finally do return to normal, it's not going to be the same normal we remember from before 2020. In fact, a lot of things will never be the same—like the way we work, collaborate with teams. For example, meetings held via Zoom are never going away. We've figured out how to be productive, even from a distance.

A case in point was the recent AGMA/ABMA Annual Meeting, which was held virtually via an online platform. Although it had fewer participants than some of the previous annual meetings, it gave the gear and bearings industries the opportunity to meet with, learn from and network with peers. All the participants I talked to were glad they participated, and they were universally impressed with the ease of using the platform. It was easy to meet new people as well as connect with old friends, customers and colleagues.



Online platforms like this are a great addition to our productivity toolbox, and I'm confident we'll continue to find ways to use them again in the future.

But even though we've learned a lot about holding meetings and collaborating online, there's still something to be said for going to a place, meeting people in person and giving them your undivided attention.

And those days are coming again. Real, in-person events are coming back.

Over the summer, you'll start to see more trade shows, seminars and educational opportunities cropping up. Maybe you won't be ready to hop on an airplane in stay in a hotel room by July. It will probably be some time before many of your companies even allow you to travel for business. But by next fall, we're expecting trade shows to really start to pick up again.

We're particularly excited about the upcoming Motion+Power Technology Expo, which will be held—live and in person—in St. Louis, September 14–16. If things keep going the way they are, it promises to be one of the first shows that has the real potential to be productive for both exhibitors and visitors alike.

We're going to be there, along with our sister publication, *Gear Technology*. We'll be talking to exhibitors, getting feedback from subscribers and learning about the latest technologies related to the field of mechanical power transmission. Will we still be wearing masks? Maybe. And yeah, there's a good chance we'll still be social distancing and using hand sanitizer. But this show is going to happen, and we believe it's going to be a productive three days for anyone who joins us.

So keep your calendars open for mid-September. It will be good to see you again.