

DYLAN TAYLOR:

Visionary Leader Impacts Outsourcing and Real Estate



Today, concepts like global account management and collaboration are commonplace in outsourcing engagements. But back in the 1990s, they were pioneering ideas that Dylan Taylor helped bring to the market in two different industries.

As he looks into the future, Taylor, the President and COO for Colliers International, sees the trends of coworking and freelance talent along with automation having a greater influence on how we work.

For this and his contributions to both outsourcing and society, Taylor will be honored by the industry at the IAOP Awards Luncheon at OWS17 when he is inducted into the IAOP Leadership Hall of Fame.

In his nomination, Dr. Michael Max Buehler, Head of Infrastructure & Urban Development at the World Economic Forum said Taylor was deserving of the honor for his “over 25 years of impact on the global outsourcing industry, his unique achievements in vanguard account management models that have proven both durable and transcending industries, his thought leadership and innovation that he has brought to the area of global commerce and global outsourcing, his impact on society through his efforts, and his commitment to IAOP and its goals and objectives.”

P: Tell me about some of your personal highlights related to outsourcing in your career.

Before my focus on real estate, I was in the electronics industry (at SAIA Burgess, Switzerland). In the early to mid 1990s, we wanted to come up with a way to service clients with respect to an outsourcing agreement that cut through the silos that existed. We helped pioneer the concept of global account management teams. Twenty years ago it was pretty revolutionary that you would take resources within a company and create an organization and P&L around a client, and manage them in a globally outsourced manner. I’m very proud of the fact that we were able to recognize the need and create a solution for the client that ended up applying to a lot of different industries, not only manufacturing, but also service businesses.

When I first entered the real estate industry, it was still the early days for outsourcing within the business. The challenge at that time was how do you create an integrated outsourcing

INTERVIEWS BY SANDY FRINTON

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relationship and provide an offering that delivered more value than just the sum of the parts with a focus on business needs and strategy. I was able to work with very talented professionals in the industry to tackle that problem.

P: What are some of the lessons you learned?

Most of my lessons, especially of late are about talent and talent management. At the end of the day, I believe that whoever has the best people has the best company. It's really that simple. It's all about the quality of your people and the extent you can train, and better yet, cross train your people. Having skill sets that can adapt to new roles is very important so you can create flexible, adaptable solutions for your clients.

P: Tell me how Colliers approaches outsourcing.

All organizations, in some way shape or form, use real estate. Colliers provides a whole suite of services from data administration (lease administration) to strategic planning to transaction management, project management and facility management. We take all those various services, customize them, integrate them and deliver that with a performance-based account model so the client has a single point of contact. Another thing we're very proud of - Colliers is probably the most global real estate firm, operating in 67 countries. We are very capable of delivering services across international markets. I think this is a key competitive advantage and differentiator for us.

P: What were some of your predictions in Corporate Real Estate 2010: The Strategic Role of Place, originally published in 2003 that are true of the outsourcing landscape today?

Some things seem pretty obvious now but weren't perhaps as obvious in 2003. We basically concluded there will be a huge trend toward offshoring. We said that if it's a task orientated effort, it will be offshored and if it's strategic it will be associated with a location that will house knowledge workers. In those days, it was actually a little bold to make those declarations. We also talked about how the workplace itself would evolve and offices would become more collaborative and more open plan because there would be a bigger need for cross functional collaboration to service clients.

P: What does the office of the future look like?

I think the coworking phenomenon is likely to continue to gain traction. I believe we will have more and more situations where we will have freelance talent co-located with full time talent.

I think it will be highly enabled by technology. Not too far out, you will have tools like virtual reality and augmented reality where you can better visualize what your office will look like. Hiring someone to do a particular task on a given day as opposed to having a full-time person to execute on that will be prevalent. I think where you locate will still matter because if it's a game of talent, you're going to want to attract and retain the best talent and therefore, you want to locate where top talent wants to be.

P: What impact will robotics and automation have on outsourcing?

I think it's real. I see it as more disruptive for labor-orientated professions with repeatable tasks like factory automation, food service, driving a car, etc. Things like that will be disrupted. At its highest level, when you talk about servicing one client with the outsourcing platform of another company, by definition, you need to have talented experienced professionals that can understand that clients business and industry, and design a strategic solution around it. Then you also need talent and experienced people to execute on that. At the base level, tasks will be automated and disrupted but I see the more strategic roles, like account management, being much more resistant to disruption say over the next five to 10 years. Further out than that, it is hard to say.

P: Having worked in outsourcing in over 40 countries in your career, what are some of the hot outsourcing destinations/regions to watch?

Asia is still the biggest growth region of the world. Between China and India there are massive opportunities for outsourcing not only servicing North American-based companies that are expanding there but also domestic companies that are growing in those regions and also expanding around the world. In addition to Asia, Latin America is also a large growth opportunity for outsourcing. Longer term, 10 years out, I see Africa being important. (*For more on Africa as a Hot Spot, see PULSE Issue 26*).

P: What is on the horizon for Colliers?

Our strategy is to achieve faster than industry organic growth rates and then supplement that growth with strategic acquisitions. We've been active on the acquisition front. We've already announced several acquisitions so far this year. We're looking to invest in companies to supplement our abilities to service clients around the world, especially in the major markets.

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P: Tell me about your work on the World Economic Forum.

The first project I worked on was on future urbanization and we partnered with Tianjin, China. We were looking at what factors allow for urbanization to happen successfully. It was an interesting project. We ended up concluding among other things was mobility was one of the most important factors for success.

Later, I became vice chair of the Global Agenda Council on Real Estate and Urbanization and we asked how can we best impact real estate globally. We decided we wanted to have a clear voice on global sustainability principles because there were a lot of different organizations with views but there wasn't one master view that someone could point to and say these are the global sustainability principle we can all aspire to. Those principles were just recently released and seem to be getting traction.

P: Tell me about IAOP's influence on the industry.

In my mind it is hands down the most important organization in global outsourcing. It really has no peer in that regard. I love that the early outsourcing thought leaders saw the world the way IAOP saw it when it was first formed - that it's not a real estate issue, it's not a HR issue, it's not an IT issue, it's a global shared services issue. A lot of industries were tunnel vision for their industries. IAOP was really able to unlock for a lot of people this whole notion that it's a global outsourcing profession. All the training and certification programs, the Global Outsourcing 100, and other things they've created have been hugely beneficial to several industries.

P: What does this honor of being inducted into the IAOP Leadership Hall of Fame mean to you?

Well, this is truly a team award and it means a great deal to me to accept it on behalf of the team at Colliers. Colliers is really an unbelievably unique company. The term we use to describe Colliers is Enterprising. We're entrepreneurial and heavily innovative, can-do and pioneering. The most meaningful part of this award is it gives me the ability to talk about how special the company is and how great our people are.

For more on Taylor, see PULSE Issue 9.

AT A GLANCE: DYLAN TAYLOR



CURRENT ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES: President and COO for Colliers International and executive in charge of global outsourcing. Has complete responsibility for over 18,000 employees in 68 countries and revenues well in excess of \$2.5 billion.

COMPANY AWARDS: Under his leadership, Colliers was recognized as the number one commercial real estate firm in the United States by Commercial Property Magazine, and was named the second most recognized real estate brand in the world, according to the Lipsey Survey.

RECOGNITIONS: In September 2016, Real Estate Forum acknowledged Taylor as one of the top 70 leaders in the real estate industry for the past 70 years due to his special contribution to global real estate services, global outsourcing and thought leadership.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY: Selected as a Delphi Fellow for Big Think, a digital knowledge forum that brings together top thinkers from around the globe to contribute important ideas from their respective fields. He is the only real estate industry professional to receive this designation. Taylor is also a Henry Crown Fellow of the Aspen Institute.

Taylor provided thought leadership for the World Economic Forum representing the Commercial Real Estate Industry in a multi-stakeholder context. He was a member of the Future of Urban Development & Services Steering Committee and served as the Vice Chair of the Global Agenda Council on Real Estate and Urbanization.

CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS: Avid supporter for both the March of Dimes and the Kempe Foundation for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

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