



Blog #3 – Mid-2010 – What is the new “norm”?

Now that we are almost halfway done with the new decade, I have seen business trends emerging due to the economy shifting back and forth. Are we pulling out of the deep recession? Everyone is speculating and hoping, looking for any signs that the world is pulling out of the mess it is in.

As a layperson who owns two small businesses, [Kramm Court Reporting](#) and [Discovery Conference Centre](#), I have been paying attention, reading the [WSJ](#) and blogs, articles on [Law.com](#), any information out there particularly dealing with the legal industry.

I am not an economist by trade or education. Reading what is happening with the European Union, and the fallout of Greece, Ireland, Spain and Portugal, alongside the United States, Europe, and Australia, I think about the last decade and what people thought was the “norm.” Many of my friends and acquaintances were buying things that I couldn’t figure out how they could afford. I knew people who were buying million dollar homes, Gucci bags, and motor homes. In my mind, I was calculating how much income these people were making and couldn’t figure out how they could afford their lifestyle. I assumed they were tremendous investors and really knew how to grow their money.

Then it became obvious the “norm” was all pretend. I am saddened to read about all of the foreclosures, the personal bankruptcies, and the fear that keeps Dads and Moms awake at night trying to figure out how they are going to get their children through college.

I believe now, mid-2010, the “norm” is shifting in a positive way. For the first time I hear people say they can’t afford certain things without embarrassment or apologizing. I believe in 2000-2007, no one wanted to admit they didn’t have the money to go on a shopping spree buying designer labels and would make excuses for why they were staying in their small home, not buying a mansion. In the summer of 2006 I recall a conversation with a friend who had gone out to a fancy home in [The Crosby](#) with her husband. When they got home, they shut the kitchen door and started planning on moving from their 4000sf home with a pool, guesthouse, and beautiful gardens, believing they needed to be in a gated community with a multimillion dollar home.

Because people no longer feel they have to apologize because they can’t afford to live a lifestyle that is not based on reality, I believe it is going to take a lot of pressure off of families. Keeping up with the Joneses is exhausting and takes energy as well as money. The public parks, mountains, deserts, beaches, and nature are where families can go and live the new “norm,” enjoying simple pleasures.

ROSALIE A. KRAMM, CRR *PRESIDENT
CSR #5469
[MAILTO:ROSALIE@KRAMM.COM](mailto:ROSALIE@KRAMM.COM)
2224 THIRD AVENUE, SAN DIEGO, CA 92101
T.800-939-0080
F.619-239-0206
WWW.KRAMM.COM
[HTTP://WWW.DISCOVERYCONFERENCECENTRE.COM](http://WWW.DISCOVERYCONFERENCECENTRE.COM)

Countries are made up of people who decide how they are going to live and what they value. I don't know how the countries of the European Union are going to solve their crises. I do know the people in the streets are feeling fear that their "norm" is shifting and worry for their families. I believe tremendous change is going to spill out of the great recession. As the working class, it is going to be up to us to decide how we want to live our lives and what our new "norm" is going to evolve into. Politicians and large corporations have power, but remember: We are the consumers. We are the voters.

When the world shifts back, let's remember the lessons we've learned. The simple life is great.

ROSALIE A. KRAMM, CRR *PRESIDENT
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[MAILTO:ROSALIE@KRAMM.COM](mailto:ROSALIE@KRAMM.COM)
2224 THIRD AVENUE, SAN DIEGO, CA 92101
T.800-939-0080
F.619-239-0206
WWW.KRAMM.COM
[HTTP://WWW.DISCOVERYCONFERENCECENTRE.COM](http://WWW.DISCOVERYCONFERENCECENTRE.COM)