

This morning we received a beautiful Christmas card. The type with the right kind of paper, heavy weighted, forcing you to give the card the attention it deserves. The paper ink blue coloured, with gold foil little stars printed into it. Once you get us started, some of us tend to go on and on about our love for paper, but in this card the words struck us even more. Elegantly embossed at the bottom it read:

*Il est grand temps de rallumer les étoiles.*

Undoubtedly the sender was intending to give its readers a push of positivity. As one of those readers, we took the card as an opportunity to reflect on the bogged down circumstances of 2020, to see the silver lining and to look beyond.

With the arrival of Covid-19 we entered a new era. One where our sense of community was heightened, and at the same time tested. One where our quality of life was no longer evident. One where our health visibly became our joint first concern. Dinners and drinks, visits to friends and family, our prime childcare and education system and our ease to travel became concepts surrounded by scarcity. Dancing the night away, losing track of time and laughing our head off in good company quickly became nostalgic memories.

At Argo it became once again clear that one of our biggest motivators is the people we get to spend our time. During the months of March and April the lockdown seemed like an opportunity to release work and social pressure by working from home, cutting down on our social contacts and spending more time with our families, but although refreshing for a while it turned out not to be a beatific solution. Separation between work and home proves ultra-beneficial and much needed. We crave social contact with our colleagues and clients. And boy do we miss proximity. A cup of coffee and a random office joke suddenly became so much more valuable.

Nevertheless we got creative with our new virtual professional life. We joined countless video calls. Our first closings were held digitally and this rapidly became the new standard. An internal seminar on mental wellbeing was hosted by Bettermindsatwork, followed by a virtual afterwork drink (or at least a nice try to host the latter). Nothing like the real deal though. Last week we were united at our virtual Christmas dinner where our hearts were warmed by Nico's annual Christmas speech, our joint Spotify Christmas playlist and a brilliant photo contest in our WhatsApp group.

We count our blessings as in these uncertain times we remain grateful for the trust our clients confide in us, allowing us to do what we do best: assist our clients in our pragmatic, down to earth and personal style. As we have said many times before, we are all about the human connect. And although we prefer to experience our relations face-to-face, we are grateful for what we have: our health first and foremost, our warm homes and on top of that our lasting fruitful relationships with our clients and colleagues. We know that better times will return. And when they do, nothing is to be taken for granted and intensely grateful we will be. And we will dance... that too.

Until that time, we keep our feet on the ground but our eyes on the stars, relighting them one by one.

Wishing you and yours a joyous holiday season and a healthy and happy new year.

Your Argo Team

Nico, Kris, Philippe, Bert, Hannes, Pieter, Emilie, Noemi, Freya, Louis, Jolien, Evelyn, Hans, Henri, Mattias, Hannelore, Olivier, Lawrence, Christophe, Pieter-Jan, Frederik, Arnaud, Charlotte, Steven, Madjda, Leander, Silke, Maxime, Ben, Mathieu, Lise, Charlotte, Pauline, Margaux, Julie, Dorien, Seppe, Pierre, Bea, Laura, Ann, Veerle & Sarah.

