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# Life at the Makeshift Office

## Lower Manhattan Workers Face Tight Quarters, New Commutes

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**O**nce upon a time, Malcolm Draper and his colleagues worked in a pretty ordinary office in Lower Manhattan. That was before the terrorist attack of Sept. 11 drove his company out of three buildings, shut off the power and phones, and left 60-foot heaps of smoldering rubble outside the Park Place building housing his firm's main computer center.

Multex.com Inc. workers have since been able to return to their headquarters at 100 William St., a few blocks from where the World Trade Center towers once stood. But now they saunter beneath two tons of electrical cables—the fat kind normally strung on outdoor poles—that stretch from a backup computer room, through crudely cut holes in the wall, across the ceiling, out a window and down six floors

to a huge generator in the street.

One group of employees is stuffed into what used to be a conference room, using improvised workstations jammed together on what used to be a fancy table. The room is half the size of the space it replaced and “a little bit tough to get used to,” said Eric Todor, a Multex manager. Other employees peer through a glass darkly, their windows still caked with the choking dust that billowed through the streets after the World Trade Center collapsed.

These are crazy times in the financial capital of the world.

Even as the noises and some of the normal rhythms of life return to the streets of Lower Manhattan, small companies such as Multex and giants like Merrill Lynch & Co. continue to cope with the aftermath of the terrorist attack: limited phone service, spotty power,

See **WORKERS**, E11, Col. 1



As the cleanup operation at the World Trade Center site continues, companies housed there or nearby have reopened elsewhere.

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# Back to Business, but Elsewhere

WORKERS, From E1

lingering fear, and employees moved by the tens of thousands to makeshift offices scattered across three states.

At Merrill, the huge financial services firm, 9,000 employees have been driven out of Lower Manhattan by the disaster. The lives of many have been whipsawed as whole departments have been moved to temporary quarters—and moved again, as far as 40 miles away, as the company has scrounged to find room for everybody.

"We've all been scrambling a little bit," said Jeff Hughes, a Merrill executive. "Basically you sit in a room and say, 'We gotta do it and we gotta do it now, and what does that take?'"

Commuting patterns in the New York region have been turned upside down by the attack. Some Merrill employees who used to have two-hour commutes—say, from southern or western New Jersey to Lower Manhattan—now have four-hour commutes to Jericho, N.Y., on Long Island, where the company has temporarily housed its international equities division.

Merrill has offered hotel rooms to the most-affected and counseling to all employees, but Hughes said the situation is taking an emotional toll.

With subway lines and stations that ran near the World Trade Center shut down, probably for years, workers who still commute to Lower Manhattan depend on ferry service, expanded after the attack. But it's a tough situation: Ferries and remaining trains, especially those to and from New Jersey, are jam-packed.

Christopher Feeney, Multex's president, lives 45 miles west of Manhattan and used to have a leisurely ferry ride into the city. "There are thousands of people doing it now, and there used to be hundreds," he said. "They're having a hard time just getting the crowds organized and getting the boats into the slips. We're in an old, reconditioned boat that leans to the left a lot of the time."

The disruption to business in New York extends well beyond the World Trade Center area. Thousands of nearby businesses, large and small, are without some essential service such as phones, power or sanitation. New York



BY JUSTIN LANE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Multex.com's operations and networking staff had to move from their building to the company's headquarters elsewhere in Lower Manhattan.**

City estimates that 80,000 to 100,000 employees, as many as a third of those who normally work in Lower Manhattan, have been displaced.

Many employees have found an emotional outlet in helping their companies get back into gear.

"It helps you overcome the tragic event," said Isaak Karaev, chairman and chief executive of Multex. "You start worrying right away, are my people okay? How do I get electricity? How do I get phones? How do I get the thousands of clients we have back up and running?"

The challenge of keeping business going has produced folk heroes at many companies. Malcolm Draper, Multex's vice president of international operations, is one of those—the sort of unflappable fellow you want to have around in a crisis.

When other employees fled Lower Manhattan right after the attacks, he and colleague Thomas D'Ambrosio, chief information officer, stayed. They slept on floors and scrounged around the office for food.

Multex, with 500 employees, normally supplies financial information to professional investors and other clients via electronic networks, but Draper and D'Ambrosio were forced to shut their systems down when power and phones went off. They began planning a recovery.

They realized that their main computer center, at 75 Park Place, would likely be out of service for a long time. But they were able to retrieve some equipment from there and add it to backup equip-

ment they had at headquarters.

They found a generator and got it shipped to Manhattan in the days after the attack, but initially couldn't get permission to move it through police lines. As the situation dragged on, the trucker hauling the rig parked overnight under a highway overpass near the East River. Afraid the man would give up and leave, Draper spent part of the night sleeping on the bed of the truck next to his precious generator, using his arm as a pillow.

"You get focused on what it is you need to do," Draper said. "So you just do it."

Eventually they got the generator through, improvised all manner of technological fixes, and were running their company on emergency power when the stock market reopened on Sept. 17.

"It was like 'Who cares what your job title is?'" said Samantha Topping, a spokeswoman for Multex. "Here's a drill. Cut through the wall."

Power has since been restored to the headquarters, but the situation in the area remains so chaotic that Draper isn't giving up the generator for a while.

Police captains were more worried about moving fire and rescue workers into the stricken zone than accommodating a small company like Multex, but they eventually cooperated. "Secondary on their minds," Draper said, "was that we don't want the terrorists to succeed in any more ways that we can help it."

Staff writer Carol Vinzant contributed to this report.

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Richard Drew/Associated Press

olph W. Giuliani, greeted with applause yesterday at the United Nations, said that "the era of moral relativism" on terrorism must end.

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