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Five Impactful USPTO Procedural Developments for Patent Practitioners

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As the world pivoted to navigate obstacles brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the USPTO not only adapted to address the challenges, but appeared to make the most of this period by improving existing procedures. Widely publicized adjustments, such as efficiently moving 13,000 examiners and other employees to a remote working environment and reducing the average examination time, overshadow equally laudable advances that have resulted in more robust and streamlined examination, with a seeming aim at achieving improved customer service toward its applicants and stronger international partnerships. This article summarizes five procedural developments that have greatly impacted U.S. prosecution, and in many instances, improved the experience for USPTO customers.