



## Cloud in COVID-19

The Greek philosopher Plato said that necessity is the mother of invention and it seems that over the past 3 ½ months this has never been truer for those in government, business owners and their employees. There has been a well publicised boom in the use of video conferencing and chat apps, such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, along with online selling and mobile/contactless payment solutions, but technology solutions have enabled businesses, including ours, to react to the changing circumstances and in some cases stay afloat.

For many of our clients meeting the daily demand of running a business is managed very well. However, we often identify problems in respect of the adoption and implementation of technology where the pace of change is relentless. Migrating products or internal systems to the cloud, using AI and big data, digitising customer facing interactions, using APIs or OpenBanking to connect systems and data are just some of things both us and our clients have done or are considering.

Too often the reasons given for not adopting new technologies (financial, fear of change, time – all excuses we've used within our business) are reflective of management not feeling fully comfortable embracing or taking a risk on something a little unknown. As a result, change often happens more informally from the bottom up. The adversity of the coronavirus pandemic has obliterated decision making torpor with enforced change being the order of the moment. And whilst much change has been positive this does present its own risks challenging your resilience as a business owner or employee.

Let's be clear, technology isn't a silver bullet solving all business woes, but it is a facilitator or enabler of wider positive change within an organisation. Let us give you 3 examples of the positives we see as a result of COVID-19, with some reasonable, we hope, questions:

1. For some of our clients the unfortunate consequence of coronavirus has been the need to significantly reduce or completely cease business operations and many have relied upon the various government support schemes available as a result. This has created time to make strategic decisions, enabling business owners to remain in control. For one of our clients, with our help, this has meant a complete overhaul of their website, the creation of an online shop along with replacing their old desktop based accounts and stock management system with a fully integrated cloud system. The result being that they have managed to improve the operating efficiency of the business, open new sales channels and through better data make more informed decisions. All very positive, but just think, if this business had made this investment 5 or so years ago would they have needed to furlough as many staff or reduce their operations so significantly?
2. For another client, at the other end of the spectrum in terms of their investment in technology and drive for efficiency, the disruption initially hit hard as their sales pipeline dried up relatively quickly. For the staff who weren't furloughed there was minimal disruption, due to the systems in place, and management reported an unexpected increase in efficiency for those working from home. The key challenge was to get the sales pipeline moving again. The business employs several salespeople who travel the country to pre-arranged meetings with prospects who would, on average, attend 2 meetings per day. Having switched to using Zoom the sales reps are able to attend up to 5 meetings per day. There is a general acceptance that this is the way to hold meetings, at least for now, and there is certainly a value in face to face meetings but why wasn't this considered before given the cost savings and environmental impact?

## Cloud in COVID-19

For us mobilising 200 staff to work from home was for some relatively easy but for others it was more of a challenge. Some of our teams are equipped with laptops and are used to working away from the office on a regular basis but other teams traditionally worked from the office, with equipment and systems to match. As a result, new IT equipment (laptops and servers) along with remote working licences were required. Microsoft Teams, only used by a handful of staff prior to the outbreak, has become our default messaging and meeting service reducing email clutter and providing us with the opportunity to talk with each other and clients face to face. These changes, forced on us like so many in these circumstances, have enabled us to continue to deliver our full service offering to all our clients with minimal disruption and we think are indicative of the experience of many of our other clients.

However, whilst some disruption may have been inevitable we must ask whether we might have avoided some of the difficulties encountered, and some of the financial outlay right at the outset of the pandemic had we embraced alternative technological solutions earlier. So, we are asking ourselves how we are embracing and managing change in the future. And we would advise all our clients to do likewise.

**As always if you want more information, or if we can help in any other way, please get in touch.**

Manchester | Blackburn | Birmingham | London - [www.beeverstruthers.co.uk](http://www.beeverstruthers.co.uk)



Accredited  
Until 2021



FINANCIAL  
MANAGEMENT  
LIMITED



WE ARE AN INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF  
THE GLOBAL ADVISORY  
AND ACCOUNTING NETWORK

BEEVER  
AND  
STRUTHERS

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS  
AND BUSINESS ADVISORS

**Disclaimer:** Please note that this literature is provided for your information only. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy, information contained in this literature may not be comprehensive and you should not act upon it without professional advice.