

C H A N G E



COVID-19 brings some positive change to business operations; An insight into our COVID learnings and how we adapted as a firm.

The level 4 Covid-19 lockdown earlier this year meant many businesses needed to quickly adapt to the new working environment.

It is often true, that the most rapid changes in society come at a time of greatest need. Certainly, the COVID-19 crisis has resulted in many businesses making permanent changes to the way they operate. As a public sector accountancy practice, at CooperAITken we have already taken many of these changes onboard as the new “normal” in our operations.

The great news is that the technological advancements we have made in recent years served us well through the crisis. Further development of processes enhanced the technology already in use.

We have a great team who really pulled together, to work hard for our clients, to support each other’s wellbeing, and to share knowledge.

After all, there was an enormous amount of new knowledge to keep up with from wage subsidy issues, to changing tax legislation and development of new operational policies. Directors became champions in different fields of knowledge which helped a lot with the changes.

While adapting to the new changes thrown upon us, we ensured our team were available to our clients, providing up to date information and support, including a free consultation offering to those affected. The increased communication and support was much appreciated, and we feel it really strengthened client relationships.

Filing GST returns continued, but without receiving paper records for processing. This resulted in developing a more efficient process will continue for much of our compliance processing going forward. Where clients still use cheques, we are offering help to upskill them to become more tech savvy, knowing several banks will be ceasing the use of cheques in the near future.

Having much data stored electronically proved its worth beyond doubt. Now any mail received into the office is scanned to ensure it is available at any time.

A new way of running meetings were successfully replaced by Zoom meetings, conference calls, Microsoft Teams or Skype. Although face-to-face meetings are often preferred, the alternative forms are already being widely used on a daily basis.

Remote access to enable working from home

had not previously been available to the whole team. Fortunately, this was arranged well before the day of “the announcement”. We found on returning to work some people prefer to work from home with better efficiency due to the lack of distraction of others around them. However, we were amazed by how many of our team could not wait to get back to work once the rules allowed it. The social role of the workplace is often underestimated.

Maintaining excellent team culture often needs some creative ideas to keep up the motivation and morale. The use of a closed Facebook group for the team is one such idea that was initiated. A bit of fun as well as a great way to link employees from several branches, this is another idea which will continue.

The changes which were required to enable businesses to continue to operate through the pandemic are in many cases changes for the better. These unexpected benefits will be changes that become the new “norm”.

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