

# **Remote working is now business as usual for accountancy firm**

**Empowered by Cloud, an Edinburgh-focused accountancy firm, has become a permanent remote working operation as it prepares for life after lockdown.**

**The strategic switch to a 100% remote service came after a refocusing of its business strategy and has enabled the Cloud accountancy specialist's client base to double since March.**

The change was made by owner Laura Taylor as she sought to help small businesses cope with the fallout from the Covid-19 crisis by offering an enhanced service and the company is thought to be one of the first of its type in Scotland to adopt such an approach.

"We were keen to help companies during these tough times and revised our operating model accordingly," said Laura, who is an expert in Cloud-based accounting software platform Xero.

"We were all working from home from 15 March as we went into lockdown a week or so earlier than the rest of the country and by the end of April we had decided we wouldn't be going back to our previous set-up.

"It just made sound business sense given the circumstances. The move was welcomed by our clients as they could see the benefits. Previously there had been a bit of resistance as they wanted us on site, in front of them, and some were reluctant to explore another way of doing things.

“Now we are able to respond to people more quickly and work more closely with all of our clients who operate in real time. As soon as lockdown happened, we were able to forecast different scenarios for them within a couple of days as they had real time information.

“The digital transformation has been accelerated because of the pandemic and people have had to adapt – and now realise it’s a good way of working. I can jump on a call with a client down south, whereas previously I’d have to look at flights, co-ordinate diaries and spend so much time travelling.”

The company’s seven Xero consultants are spread across Scotland: in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Fife and Kilmarnock and the new set-up sees them gather online at 8am for a daily ‘business huddle’ to plan the workload.

Most clients are based in Edinburgh, though recent contract wins in Liverpool and Bedfordshire have allowed Empowered by Cloud, which is also a paper-free business, establish itself as a UK-wide operator.

“Not having to visit clients has given us a cost saving as we haven’t had to add travel expenses and time onto project costs,” said Laura.

“We have also been able to offer more in our service to retained clients, for example, such as Receipt Bank.

“Since lockdown we have been 100 per cent remote which was always our aim at some point. However, the lockdown enabled us to accelerate those plans.

“Doing so has allowed us to prove to people that it works, it gave us the chance to offer a better service and in turn help give energetic business owners better financial insight. We have strengthened relationships as a result and established new ones.

“Small businesses don’t always know their numbers or are using

outdated information, which often results in uninformed decisions and stunted growth. We empower small businesses to understand their finances using Xero and integrating apps. With more in-depth financial information, you can prevent future problems, dismiss unknowns, and create a clear road map for growth and development.”

Established in February 2018, the shift to a permanently remote business model looks set to help the company perform strongly this year. The business is split into two areas. A virtual finance department provides a finance director level service including bookkeeping, management accounts, cash flow forecasting and VAT returns, while the other half of the company is finance system set-up and automation.

Laura spent ten years in retail management before moving into accountancy, where her experience included working for top ten firm Mazars.