

## LAW FIRMS IN LOCKDOWN – REPORT 8 – JULY MONTH-END

### Introduction

Looking back over the 7 previous “Law Firms in Lockdown” surveys and reports that I have published (beginning back in March), the journey undertaken by most law firms who participated has been simple – and thankfully it has not been as bloody or as apocalyptic as many commentators feared.

The journey began with frantic activity – plus no little courage and a speed of response of which the profession can be proud. The legal sector is not as some people think stuck in the dark ages and the heavy, brave expenditure over the years by what are in most cases small owner-managed businesses with little in the way of funds for structural investment, paid dividends in these unforeseen times. The profession lived to fight another day.

The next stage of the journey was the settling into new ways of operating internally and new ways of engaging with clients externally. The financial results set out in my reports shows that law firms – on the back of amazing team efforts – coped with this admirably. New business models became the norm and it was left to factors out of the hands of law firms to dictate which way the journey would go. In short – would clients still need law firms?

My May and June reports showed that things were indeed heading in the right direction on that and other fronts. That brings us to this month’s report.

I am pleased to say that the journey towards a new health for the profession is continuing. There does indeed seem to have been a U-shaped (and in some work-types, a V-shaped recovery), rather than a dreaded L-type situation where things stay down in the dumps for a long period of time.

The reports below around new enquiries, file-openings, chargeable hours, billing, and cash are all positive. So are the reports around profit – billings are up but costs are down.

Absent a catastrophic return to national or local lockdown, the fighting has paid off and should carry on in that vein.

A key feature of this Report 8 though is not the financial reporting it contains. It is the musings and ponderings of law firms Management as to what happens next. It now seems that law firms’ Management have some time to think and are examining a much broader question than “will we make it through the month?”. The broader question is not “What the hell do we do now?” Rather, it is “Where might we go now?” I believe the new opportunities are sinking in, as is a realisation that many sacred cows have been killed (or at least wounded) – offices, teams of secretaries, face-to-face meetings with clients, paper, etc.

This is all really exciting stuff. Firms can and should come out fighting. It is easy to do. It starts at home and it starts with the simple stuff. Get the engine firing all cylinders before you start driving to a fancy destination – otherwise you might never get there.

As I write what is the last “Law Firms in Lockdown” Report, I actually complete a small journey of my own. I was holed up in self-imposed isolation in the Lakes back in February, writing the book I was passionate about which brought together all the things I had done right and wrong in law firm Management, and all the things that I had seen other firms do right and wrong.

In my Management Consultancy work with law firms I have brought all of that together into a model that I call The Perfect Legal Business, and my book set out all of these aspects, hence its title : “The Perfect Legal Business”.

I will never forget the moment that Lockdown came. I stopped writing the book and vowed to give something to the profession that hadn’t existed when, as Managing Partner of a large law firm, the legal sector hit the buffers in what became known as the Credit Crunch in 2007. I hope my “Law Firms in Lockdown” reports have been of value – the unsolicited feedback I have been getting tells me that they have.

As hopefully we move further and further away from the dangers of the locked-down world, I have been able to complete my book (it is available at the Books section of my website [www.mccrumandco.com](http://www.mccrumandco.com) ). I am convinced more than ever that the simple “stuff” that I talk about is the way to the stars – far more than any mergers or awards or chains of national or international offices could ever be. Indeed, to focus on these “shiny” things without getting the engine firing all cylinders first, can bring pain rather than pleasure.

I end firstly with a huge thank you to the many law firms who participated in my surveys. You know who you are. Without your honesty and your willingness to do another task as you fought fires, they couldn’t have happened. I’m sending each of you a free copy of my book as a “thank you”.

And I end secondly with my best wishes to all lawyers and law firms reading this – keep fighting the good fight.

**SIMON MCCRUM**

**AUGUST 2020**

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MY QUESTION	YOUR ANSWER
<p>Taking your firm as a whole, in <i>billing</i> terms how was July as a business month?</p> <p>A – Superb                      B – Good                      C – Okay                      D – Poor                      E – Very poor                      F - Catastrophic</p>	<p>B</p> <p>B</p> <p>B</p> <p>B</p> <p>B - we billed the same this month as the same month last year.</p> <p>C - some patchy results.</p> <p>B+ so ahead of our reduced budgets, back to pre-lockdown buoyant trading levels.</p> <p>C – although we were 4% below the month’s target it was a respectable outcome and still leaves us ahead for the year to date.</p> <p>B</p> <p>A – a very good July billing month. Consistent across most of the firm’s work types and it was Litigation that gave us a big injection of cash.</p> <p>C</p> <p>C</p> <p>B - 85% of pre-Covid budget levels</p> <p>B - on a par with July 2019</p> <p>B - we were 75% of a normal month for this time of year.</p> <p>B – I was forecasting that the lockdown pipeline would start to complete this month so was forecasting a higher month than we achieved. We weren’t far off it though and this is against a background</p>

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	<p>of the last 2 months being way better than forecast (and there are still bills to be posted into last month so we may yet hit target).</p>
<p>Which teams are having a buoyant time, and which teams are really suffering?</p>	<p>Conveyancing is the busiest it has ever been. Crime is picking up a bit. Family are still suffering.</p> <p>Court of Protection work continues to do well, both in terms of billing and an increase in the WIP value.</p> <p>All teams are steady, with Property billing building up nicely</p> <p>Employment and Residential Conveyancing are very busy. Transactional teams (Corporate and Commercial Property) are still suffering.</p> <p>Residential conveyancing is really busy. New matters In July were higher than pre-lockdown levels. No-one is really struggling.</p> <p>Buoyant – Private Client, PI, Family, Disputes, Employment, Resi.          Neutral – Company &amp; Commercial, Agriculture. Slightly down – Commercial Property.</p> <p>Care and Family are flying. The balance are a mixed bag of level Performance, or underperformance</p> <p>Litigation good, Conveyancing suffering</p> <p>PI – C, Clin Neg – B</p> <p>Across the board things are good as we only do Private Client work.</p> <p>Residential and Insolvency are buoyant (the latter a worrying thought going forward). Employment and Litigation good, Comm Prop returning to normal. Corporate very quiet, Family and Private Client showing signs of cooling down.</p> <p>Private Client is very busy – particularly wills and powers of attorney.</p> <p>Most teams have been equally and evenly busy</p> <p>Conveyancing are doing brilliantly – we are recruiting 12 more staff. We are having to turn the volumes down. In Remortgage we have already turned the volumes down and some of the recruitment is to allow us to turn it back up again. Private Client is looking steady –</p>

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	<p>though we are still being hindered by slowness at the Probate Registry. None of our teams are suffering.</p> <p>Legal Aid, Commercial Property and Residential are all picking up</p> <p>Most teams have performed well. Conveyancing is down on what we would have wanted but for good reason. We are now seeing Conveyancing have some of the best months since the Government announcement of the Stamp Duty freeze.</p> <p>Contentious Probate is on fire, Resi has gone mad. Corporate and Real Estate are the only two areas that are a bit flat still.</p> <p>There is a drop off of work in some areas, and in Ligation, Commercial, and Private Client we are seeing a trend of people wanting help and advice but not wanting to pay for it. A lot of people have more time to do things themselves – such as LPAs or probates. Employment has been on the up for the last few months and conveyancing has gone through the roof since lockdown eased – again that needs careful management to make sure the staff are not drowning under the workload as they are opening far more files per month at the moment than ever before. How long that will go on for, we don't know, so let's make hay whilst we can and hope it doesn't just crash overnight. Family &amp; Matrimonial work fell off a cliff at first but has now started building up considerably, and Domestic Abuse work has (sadly for the clients) increased massively.</p>
<p>How were July's chargeable hours – returning to normal levels or still down? Hugely down?</p>	<p>Down in Family and Crime. Up in Conveyancing.</p> <p>Down a little</p> <p>Down across the firm from normal levels but only slightly.</p> <p>Good – a record month</p> <p>About 10% down – a few lawyers are still on furlough, but gradually it's coming back to pre-lockdown levels.</p> <p>Chargeable hours are still 10% below March, and even this position is masked by higher-costing lawyers working harder and their time is not likely to be recoverable at their rates across all matters so further discounting is expected.</p> <p>Chargeable hours are back to normal levels</p>

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	<p>Hours were down at 90% of target but this was more a reflection of holidays than of the underlying business.</p> <p>Normal levels have returned</p> <p>Still down, but our headcount is slightly down.</p> <p>Still down on pre-lockdown levels but we have only just returned all of the fee-earning staff in July. We expect to see a return to pre-lockdown levels (on a comparable basis, as we have fewer fee earners).</p> <p>Higher than normal, as we are a Private Client firm.</p> <p>Down but mainly due to fewer staff working - we are at circa 85% of normal activity</p> <p>Conveyancing was still way down for a July but all other departments are slightly up and I put this down to working from home. No travel, no distractions in the office or social chat which is a shame as I think this is important to have a good relationship with your team.</p>
<p>How is profitability faring?</p>	<p>Okay. We have less revenue than pre COVID-19 times but the savings we have made have kept profitability there or thereabouts.</p> <p>This is the last month of furlough money and we have now brought everyone back. So, for July, profitability is ok.</p> <p>Normal levels – same as prior to COVID times</p> <p>Profitability is good – the costs savings have worked very well.</p> <p>Profitability is okay but we are carrying a property overhead and reduced income, so overall it will be down</p> <p>Profitability is still a challenge</p> <p>Better than forecast as outgoings are still lower as offices have been closed.</p> <p>Currently profitability is looking good as fees have held up but costs are down. The issue we are mindful of is the looming recession coupled with the removal of the Government support</p>

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	<p>Profit is reasonable. We are making small net profit margins.</p> <p>Profitability is under more pressure but only because we are hiring and have been using lockdown to invest in further new software, infrastructure etc.</p> <p>Profitability is modest, but we are profitable</p> <p>We are slightly over breakeven for the 4 months of Lockdown.</p> <p>Overall profitability is looking very good. Where we have profitability issues these are not related to COVID but to other internal issues which we are tackling or have already tackled</p> <p>Our profitability is appreciably better than budget, reflecting over-budget billing and under-budget expenditure.</p> <p>Profitability is good - expenses are down as our offices remain closed so despite a lower turnover, we expect profitability to hold up. There have also been savings flowing from a partnership restructure and from an admin support restructure as we lock in the move towards fee-earner self-sufficiency bought on by lockdown.</p>
<p>Cash : Are things getting tight on the cash front? Has the cash position been helped by any Government schemes? Are debtors defaulting?</p>	<p>We are not seeing any bad debt issues at all. Cash is fine.</p> <p>Cash is good at present but our forecasting always demonstrated it would hold up in 2020 and our pinch point would come June/July 2021. The Government furlough scheme has been a massive help. Although we deferred some payments e.g. VAT we are now starting to pay these off. We have a CBIL facility available but have not yet drawn anything down. Debtor behaviour has not changed so far.</p> <p>Following a very good Q2 where good billing was enhanced by HMRC payment deferrals, we have always expected September and October in particular to get tight again, and nothing so far has altered our view in that respect.</p> <p>Cash is okay. We are not seeing any debtor defaults but are keeping in mind taking money on account where appropriate. We have taken a CBILS loans to help fund our expansion.</p> <p>Cash is better than anticipated, but also eased by the pause on VAT and CRT collection by Government.</p>

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Our cash position is good. The Government schemes help.

We took out a large CBILs loan as a safety precaution but at the moment still haven't used a penny of it.

Debtors are slightly better over the last few months. We have a CBIL in reserve but have not needed any of it and the current forecast is to not require it.

Cash is currently okay, supported by a CBILS loan and VAT deferral

Cash is still good, and we have lasted another month without drawing down on the CBILs loan or our general reserves. Furlough has certainly helped.

While we have deferred tax and VAT we have separate reserves to cover these. These reserves are being kept in case of a stormy path over the last quarter of this year and the first quarter of next year.

Cash is fine for now, as we have taken advantage of the deferral of VAT and also a Bounce-Back loan.

Cash has been good and this is down to the Litigation team, getting cash on account from clients, and to final costs on account dropping in. We still have 4 staff on furlough but some are now working part time. We have been rejected for a loan twice.

We are very cash positive. Furlough grants and CBIL have helped, as has the deferral of VAT. We are confident we can cope with whatever turmoil lies ahead.

Cash is okay as we were able to pay personal tax and VAT on a weekly basis instead of in a lump sum.

Legal aid billing has been brilliant, and generally it's amazing what people can find to bill in a crisis, so cashflow is really good at the moment without us having to get any outside support. We have decided - after putting it off - that we may apply for a CBILs loan so the facility is there if we need it, and we will probably use it to pay the March VAT payment which we deferred, just to spread payments whilst it's interest free. We have made sure we have paid everything else up to date so there is no big shock coming down the line, so the main concern is the economy and what that will do to people's ability to pay for legal services in the future.

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<p>How are file-opening levels across your teams?</p>	<p>File-openings are down</p> <p>File-openings are huge in conveyancing, steady in Private Client, and very slow in Family.</p> <p>File-openings are holding up well and are increasing</p> <p>Across the board, we are at 85% of pre-Covid levels</p> <p>Excellent in Property – good elsewhere</p> <p>At or slightly ahead of pre-lockdown levels for most teams.</p> <p>Very good in most teams. Only Corporate is poor now, as even Commercial Property are starting to see new instructions come in.</p> <p>As a Private Client firm, file-openings remain higher than pre-lockdown but have settled.</p> <p>File-openings increased in June by circa 40%, and are stable in July.</p> <p>They were getting out of control until we turned the volumes down from ‘ridiculous’ to ‘really busy’</p> <p>June and July were both very high months for new work.</p> <p>Conveyancing is now through the roof, Wills have been higher than Normal, and the other departments have been consistent.</p> <p>File-opening levels are a bit down but slowly catching up to pre-lockdown levels. Employment for example is now back to pre-lockdown levels and Conveyancing is ahead. New business calls are also double what we saw pre-lockdown so it’s buoyant and we anticipate that will feed into a continuing growth in new matters.</p>
<p>Is “Working From Home” a permanent part of your business now?</p> <p>Do your staff want to continue WFH?</p> <p>Are you re-assessing your need for office space?</p>	<p>All bar two people are now back in the office.</p> <p>Our staff mostly want to return to the office either permanently or certainly for most of the week. We are not rushing to jump on to the WFH bandwagon – though will continue to allow it on an ad hoc basis. We think that productivity and the generation of new ideas and new business is best done from the office. The profession has a duty to support local businesses. Home working will destroy the economy.</p>

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WFH is now a part of our business and more people have expressed a desire to operate that way for the longer term. We will be facilitating a greater level of WFH than occurred pre lockdown but making it an employee choice and not an employer demand. We are already looking at plans for our offices to be re-modelled as our proof of concept for a space that is more about collaboration and training and less geared up as the place to go and sit at a desk for 8 hours.

We are still working 100% from home with a small number of exceptions where people go into the office for practical reasons, eg use of a scanner, use of software that exists only on desktop PC's, collecting physical files, etc. I would expect that even when things return to "normal", we will be encouraging all staff to work from home at least 2 or 3 days per week. Unfortunately, we signed a new lease in January, but there is a two-year break clause and I would anticipate that we will look to release at least one of the floors, if not relocate completely. I believe there will always be the need for some kind of head-office presence with meeting rooms and storage capacity, however.

Yes, it is and will continue to be. Staff are continuing to WFH but there is a general feeling from the majority that they'd like to see at least a partial return. We are not reassessing our need for office space as we see a physical presence (as much for staff as clients) as important but we are re-designing the layout. On return to the office (starting in September, all other things being equal), we will experiment with how the mix of WFH and office will best work for our staff and business.

Yes, and yes in some cases. We are not re-assessing our need for office space but are assessing IT needs to ensure staff can work at home fully effectively with proper furniture/fittings also being assessed.

We have advised staff that we will open a review of the option to work from the office and or home. This is a substantial piece of work which we have advised staff will take time. Yes, we are reducing space, as the leases are all up for renewal (different Landlords). We asked for more flexible terms, which have not been forthcoming by one Landlord so we are closing their property and handing back.

Yes. Some staff definitely want to work from home. Others want to get back to back to the office. I seeing it as freeing up space.

I would not call it permanent – but we have no reason to change it as it works and it is safer. They like it but the senior lawyers like to go to the office once or twice a week.

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Yes, but only for a small part of the working week. We are looking at adjusting our policies so that most staff can work from home 1 day a week. As this puts a burden on those in the office we feel the ratio of 4:1 is about right. For the staff it breaks up the week nicely and allows them to timetable quieter tasks for when they are at home. We (and staff) felt that whilst they can work from home full-time they miss the office environment, and some struggle to switch off at the end of the day. We relaxed the dress code at the start of lockdown and are also retaining this – with the proviso that if you look scruffy you can't come into reception and need to keep smart clothes available for if you see clients. Most of our clients are remote so it isn't really a problem. In terms of office space. This should all slow down our need for additional premises.

WFH is likely to remain part of our business, although the exact form that will take is yet to be discussed in any great detail. Opinion is split but the majority want flexibility – part office and part at home. This will likely form part of the shaping the future firm discussions that are inevitably going to have to take place soon.

Yes. Some are keen to spend most time at home. We will assess our need for office space ahead of any possible lease breaks.

It is not a given, but it is probable to a greater or lesser extent. Some teams have adapted well; productivity in others is down. Overall efficiency is down. We need everyone back in the office and then we can assess the appetite and need for WFH balanced against potential reduced office space costs. Some staff are keen to be back in; others are resistant. Main reasons for WFH are child-care issues and being comfortable. The latter = lower productivity. We have to work out a way of maintaining the firm ethos and team spirit if we do adopt WFH, but I only see that being part-time at best.

WFH will not go away now, although it will undoubtedly diminish when “normality” returns (whatever that turns out to be). Staff generally want a mix of in-office and WFH going forward and we are happy to accommodate that in principle. Whilst we thought that in a year or two we would definitely need more space, we are now pretty sure that we will not.

WFH for many staff members will be an expectation, though if there is a second wave they will all retreat to WFH. We have reassessed our need for office space but with the lease commitments we have there is not much that can be done

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	<p>The senior management team discuss every week whether we should return to the office to offer appointment-only slots to clients. About 88% of the firm want to continue working from home. We may look to open the office space to the staff that do want to return but it will have to be done right with strict guidelines. We are tied into the lease till 2026 so we have this overhead until then.</p> <p>We anticipate more flexible working but still see office working and building teams as important moving forward. We have just refurbished all our property and had already reduced our stock so don't see any big changes.</p> <p>We are just doing a staff survey which is now about ¾ completed and the overwhelming preference from most staff is that they would like to work more from home in the future, with some saying they would like to do it permanently. That's really interesting and gives us the opportunity for more conversations about what we actually need to provide our service.</p>
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<p>Are things returning to normal – or has the old normal gone? Please give me your assessment of what you see as the outlook for your firm over the next 6 months – are redundancies inevitable? Do you see lasting change to your business?</p>	<p>We do not see lasting change. Other than improving IT and certain efficiencies, we expect to return to the old normal!</p> <p>We have an exciting future ahead and I would not want to return fully to pre-lockdown ways. The next 6 months need to be about embedding change whilst the appetite to accept it is still in place. We do not envisage making any Covid-related redundancies but as we move toward our new future we will re-organise the way we deliver our services which may, or may not, lead to redundancies</p> <p>I believe that workload and business levels will stay just as buoyant as they have been over the past six months, and there is certainly room for further growth and investment in at least half of our practice areas, as well as a new practice area starting to materialise. I foresee no redundancies in the foreseeable future – the business could benefit in the long-term from growth in capacity, although short-term cash constraints are a limiting factor in achieving this.</p>
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In terms of the way our staff work and how we interact, the old normal has gone. We have developed even better working relationships and further embraced WFH. I believe loyalty has increased. Over the next 6 months, I see the firm capitalising on our ability to be adaptive, nimble and opportunistic in our decision-making: a benefit of being a small and fairly young law firm and lacking bureaucracy. I see no redundancies. The challenge for us is how quickly can we grow. I definitely see lasting change to our business, but in a positive way.

The old normal has gone. We expect to see circa 6/8 of employees given notice this month, and some option to bring back staff on flexible furlough (but only a handful). The end of furlough is the watershed moment. The difficulty will be balancing a busier Property market now against other teams getting quieter. The end of furlough might seriously cool the Residential market if major unemployment numbers are seen?

At the moment we are seeing a few staff on furlough making their own decisions, despite us always trying to keep communication going, so whilst redundancies were included in our lockdown financial plans, at the moment if anything the concern is that we might see more than were in that plan want to change their work/lifestyle. So, redundancies are not inevitable. The turnover challenge is certainly here for some months yet. Commercial activity is low and profitability is thin on transactional work. Agile working will remain an option.

Things are returning to normal or a new normal. We don't see a need for redundancies. Lasting changes – yes, like WFH, Zoom, Teams, and Docuscan.

We opened one of our receptions to the public today, and are decorating another one ready for a safe opening. We also installed screens across the offices over the last week which would allow most staff to come back into the office now and remain safe. The screens are surprisingly unobtrusive. I see us returning to more normal operations over the coming months. We don't foresee any redundancies - we are currently recruiting more people. Should there be a dip in the housing market then obviously that would change things – but there is no dip on the horizon at the moment despite the best efforts of the media. We will always need to keep a watchful eye on the market and react accordingly.

What we once called normal will never be again. The situation has shown that remote working is possible and COVID brought forward those discussion by 5-10 years. Those who can't adapt may not do as well as those who can. The questions is whether a bricks and mortar presence in the high street is as important now as it once was. We have made redundancies – the majority in secretarial, paralegal, and departmental support roles. In truth our ratios were high so this is something we should have been doing anyway. The situation has sped up and made the decision making simpler in truth.

Most furloughed colleagues have now returned to work, but our offices are not yet open to the public other than by prior appointment. Redundancies are not inevitable, but performance issues in parts of the business are being addressed. The outlook is generally positive but there is still significant uncertainty, with our main office currently in the new lockdown area. It will be a tough year ahead but we are going to get through it! It will be a new normal and we are working to ensure that we can harness the positive elements of it.

We do not see lasting change to our business, only to the way we work. We anticipate no redundancies in the next 6 months and are looking at possibly a couple of new recruits in that time.

We are in the new normal – the old is gone. In the next 6 months we will hold steady and may need to look at a couple of support staff redundancies. Fee-earners may have to be looked at but more from an efficiency point of view. The business model will need to evolve

Yes, we do see lasting change and I suspect we will have numerous requests for flexible working if and when life gets back to normal. Now it's been proved that it can be done this might be worthwhile. We would still want to see staff in the office at least once in a working week. We are considering redundancies.

We anticipate all f/e coming back. We have restructured the partnership to make it more efficient and in line with our culture. We anticipate a reduction in admin support and fee-earners being more self-sufficient and are investing in rolling out a series of innovations to remove or minimise admin processes. We are also working on filling key strategic gaps – we have secured one lateral hire and are close to a few other developments which will help move us forward.

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	<p>We let two members of staff go but that was because we felt that they were not a good fit for us. Our concern is how to manage the influx of conveyancing. Our staff are tired, but in financial terms is it too risky to bring in extra staff?</p> <p>We still have the majority of people working from home and some furloughed, although we have had to bring some back full or part-time. It's a difficult decision-making process to get the balance between people crying out for more support, the cost of that support, and the desire to get people working more efficiently and smarter. I feel I am having a constant fight to stop people dropping back into old habits and routines, when I was hoping that this whole experience would make people change for the better.</p>
<p>What is keeping you awake at night now?</p>	<p>As always, cash, new matters, and whether we have enough work in the litigation department to continue running with the same level of staff.</p> <p>The mainstream media's constant negativity and inaccurate reporting of data. Confidence remains very fragile....</p> <p>Nothing but I have a healthy concern about the cashflow needs of our expansion plans.</p> <p>Staff and their focus to keep concentrating and work as a collegiate team supporting each other.</p> <p>Whether to re-open the offices – it's complex and there are totally split views on whether it's good or bad.</p> <p>We need to look at rewarding staff and implementing the pay rises we put off in March as there are restless noises starting and a general feeling of "we have worked harder than ever and are not getting rewarded for it" – goodwill is starting to wear a little thin in some places, particularly with the feeling that some people have been furloughed and getting paid for doing nothing, and we need to act on that to ensure we don't lose good people.</p> <p>My challenge/problem now is that fee-earner numbers had actually decreased in the lead up to COVID just by chance. A couple of retirements, a relocation, some maternity, and a couple of people being managed out. The good news is that this meant we didn't need to make any fee earners redundant. But our capacity has been reduced by nearly £1M, and we need to recruit now to get back to</p>

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	<p>full strength. But there is nervousness amongst the equity partners, understandably, about doing that with a recession looming.</p>
<p>How is morale –</p> <p>(a) At staff level          (b) At Management level?</p>	<p>Morale is very good on both counts. Staff morale anecdotally seem to broadly be good with a few pockets of understandable anxiety but we will be surveying staff again shortly for a more accurate assessment. Management are very upbeat</p> <p>Morale seems okay. Our Monday morning ‘Zoom’ get-togethers are well-attended, and we have a Friday afternoon quiz every few weeks which also gets at least 60% attendance. Chargeable hours are higher than ever and there is a sense of real drive and commitment to continue achieving the firm’s potential.</p> <p>Morale is good on both fronts</p> <p>Morale is excellent at all levels but I see that a lot of us are in need of a holiday, which we are encouraging our staff to take.</p> <p>Morale is good. Some staff declined returning to full-time hours and we expect a small uptake in flexible working and working fewer hours/days per week!</p> <p>It’s hard to tell – many of us are working from home and are not managing effectively or being managed effectively by Partners.</p> <p>Generally staff morale is good but with a few outliers who kick stuff about. Management are generally positive now we have got through phases 1 and 2. Those leaders caught in lower volumes/value at the moment are worried.</p> <p>At staff level, morale is mostly high – the recruitment we are doing sends a good message and instils confidence in the rest of the staff which offsets nervousness created by media panic. Some staff are nervous about the virus when first coming back to work but soon get into the swing of things. At Management level, morale is high. We are finding it hard to believe it was only a few months ago that we were modelling all sorts of disaster scenarios and how we would react to each one.</p> <p>In terms of staff morale, we are just finishing our redundancy consultations so we would be foolish to think it is high at the moment. We need to explore measures as a firm to gauge this and improve it once the consultations are over. In terms of Management, the mood</p>

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feels positive. There is a business still there which has solid foundations. Staff support ratios are better. Office costs could be reduced if we plan for future needs well. While we are smaller in income terms we can now grow from a more efficient position which will help profitability going forward meaning we can invest in the right areas to continue to grow successfully.

Morale is good across the firm, although a number of key people are in need of a well-deserved holiday to recharge batteries.

At staff level morale seems to be okay. At Management level it's very good as we are now able to make the changes we have craved for many years. Very exciting times are ahead for us.

Morale is generally pretty high across the business, although lockdown fatigue is starting to bite.

Staff morale is difficult to judge but it's showing signs of holding up, and Management morale is holding up too – we are determined to keep all challenges at bay.

Our staff are fed up with lockdown and with WFH - but morale is not too bad in all the circumstances. Management are feeling good – there is a feeling that we are ahead of the issues and are taking positive steps to position the company where it needs to be.

Some staff are on the floor and others are quite buoyant.

The feedback in terms of the support we have provided to our people is so positive and we have had lots of lovely comments – which is really uplifting. I also know that some of our staff, particularly at junior level, know people working elsewhere who have not had nearly as good an experience, and that has helped us considerably. In some ways this has brought our team together like never before.