



COVID-19 Battle Plan

a complete guide to help your clients in these challenging times

- **Quickly triage all your clients**
- **Effectively deal with those who are critical and provide ongoing support for all others**
- **Get your entire team involved**
- **Detailed implementation plan and system notes to accompany this guide**

Now more than ever is the time for accountants, bookkeepers and advisers to shine!

We have the inherent abilities and all the necessary skills and training to support small businesses in their time of need.

However, to ensure that we can contact ALL our clients effectively and efficiently, whilst offering valuable advice and support, we need the right combination of people, process and technology.

You have the people and we have built the processes and technology for you.

Now, I really don't mind what technology you actually use, what I do care about is that you provide support to all the small business out there that really need you!

Having said that, we've teamed up with Futrli to provide you with some outstanding bundled offers - using both Clarity and Futrli together. Both firms share many common values and a belief that accountants have the ability to make a massive difference to ALL their small business clients by helping them; understand their numbers and how they can make them better, strategic planning, budgets and projections, reporting, KPIs, holding them accountable and ultimately driving their stability, growth and success.

We also both operate in the nebulously-termed 'business advisory' space and, whilst both firms come at this from different angles, together we have a complete wrap-around solution that empowers accountants to create, package, price and deliver business growth and support services that small business owners desperately need and want.

Our solutions (leverage technology together with the necessary systems and processes) and our combined experience of the worlds of small business and accounting, enable your firm to protect and engage with every client, supporting them through the challenges of today and into the growth of tomorrow.

Please feel free to use this guide together with the detailed implementation plan and adapt as you see fit - you can of course substitute scripts, processes and technology!

But, If you want to roll it out-of-the-box, then we are confident that this easy to use step-by-step plan will make a difference. Be sure to get all your team involved and this guide will help you do that.

Business isn't one dimensional. Obviously your advice shouldn't be either. Whilst cash is vitally important, there are so many other elements to consider. That's why we've come together with this complete solution, that will help you and your clients now and in the future.

We hope that you, your family team and loved ones are safe and well. And remember to look after all of them too and, of course, make sure you take time out for yourself!

Aynsley Damery
CEO, Clarity



our 5 step guide

We have created a 5 step process for you so that you can quickly deal with all your clients, using a systemised approach, and can provide further help and support to those who will undoubtedly need it. We have also written this so that you can get all you team can involved.

All clients, who have the potential to continue operations, to whatever extent, should be put through this simple 5 step process and these notes should be read in conjunction with the [Clarity video guide](#) and the [Futrli video guide](#).

The detailed implementation plan and system notes for your firm (including example emails and agendas) are set out in the accompanying notes and these notes also provide details on an alternative process for those businesses who are completely shut down by the coronavirus.

1 what you can do today

You need to treat your portfolio in the same way a paramedic would deal with carnage following a multiple car accident on the motorway. It is essential that you **TRIAGE**, that is identify which of your clients are in critical condition, those that are serious, and those there are stable (for now). This process is not about size of business or importance of client to your firm. Every client needs you to help them and to do that you need prioritise those who are most critical.

Establish these facts immediately. It is the most important thing you can do for them but also for your business. During this economic environment, there is no such thing as business as usual, you are likely doing this already, but if not, put non urgent compliance/admin to the bottom of the list. Protecting your clients is vital for your business and theirs.

This is what we suggest you do immediately:

Get in contact with every client

To be done at scale and, to quickly connect with every one of your clients, we suggest that you use email. Most people are working from home and so trying to track them down via office phones/mobiles will be much harder and you have no time to waste. However, they need to hear from you. Many of your smaller clients will be on their own and even those with teams are now isolated at home.

Do not underestimate the psychological trauma many of them will be experiencing and the relief you will provide by reaching out. If you use Calendly or similar, put a link to your calendar booking tool at the bottom of the email, if not encourage a response by reply. See the detailed systems notes for example emails.

Accept that it is NOT business as usual

This email should prompt an immediate response from your clients. Expect almost every one of your clients to book in. However, if they do not, you will need to proactively chase them. To manage this, you and your teams must clear your calendars for the foreseeable future. Your priority is to risk assess your portfolio of clients and protect as many of them as you can. Keep a record of those that have booked and have not. Follow up with those that haven't responded on the phone. Be persistent. Remember this is not business as usual and no one expects it to be, your clients need you to do this for them, so manage expectations of other work that has been scheduled, or being postponed.

NB. Many firms we work with do not have a database or CRM system in place. Now is not the time to tackle this but you will need to record the conversations that you are having. A simple spreadsheet will do just fine for now. Download [this template](#) if you are not sure of where to start. Don't rely on your own memory or that of your client's at times like this.

Run a web event with the team from Clarity for all your clients. You can be involved as much or as little as you like. Get your event booked in straight away! And send our our **small business COVID19 guide**.

2 initial assessment call

You will need to prepare for this call - see the implementation plan. This preparation should take no longer than 15mins. Skipping step 2 is not an option if you want to speak quickly with ALL your clients and, from experience, clients won't be prepared to go straight to a strategy meeting without setting the scene and introducing the need.

The purpose of this initial 30min call is not necessarily about long term solutions. It's to ask questions and gather enough data to enable you to quickly prepare an initial three-way projection (that you will go through in detail with the client during the strategy meeting).

However, where appropriate offer help and support and answer their questions and allay their initial concerns. Remember, your clients may take the opportunity to offload/vent. Acknowledge but try not to indulge and bring the conversation back to the agenda.

Make sure you document any agreed actions - what the client will be doing and what you have agreed to do. Send out a simple who/what/when summary after the meeting together with the date and time of the follow up strategy meeting.

3 strategy meeting prep

Following the initial assessment call, the priority is to take these insights and combine them with their reconciled financial data to create an accurate cash flow projection for the next 12 months. This should take approximately 15-30mins (see page 5 of the implementation plan).

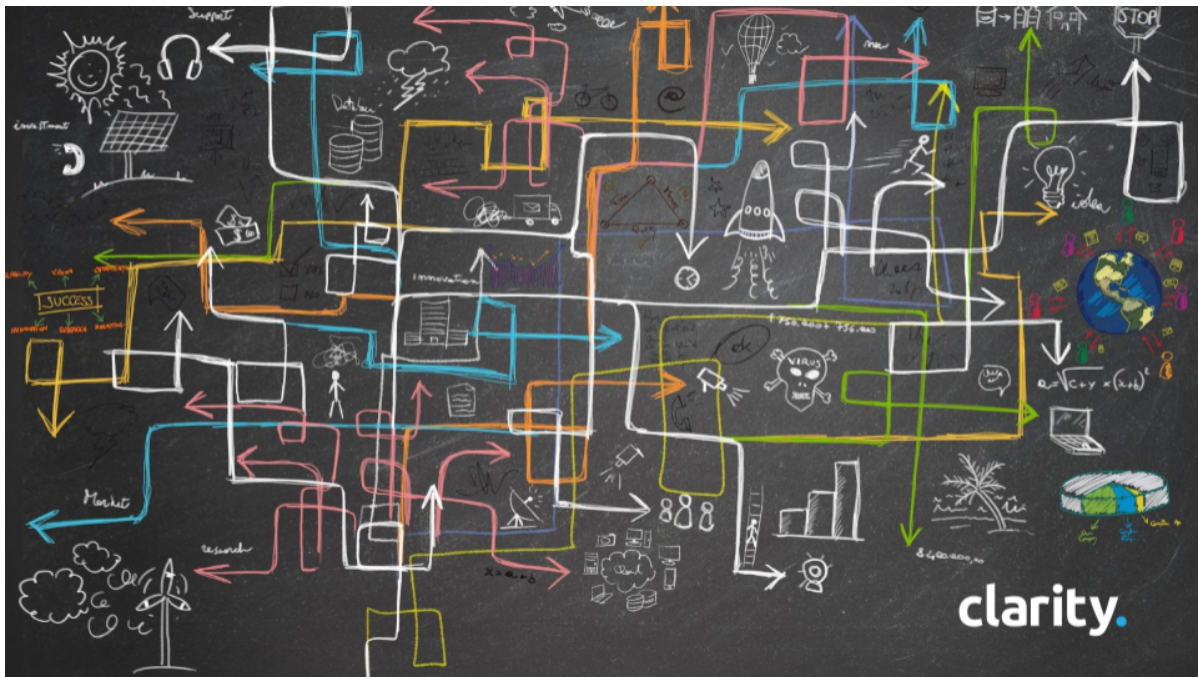
NB how you charge for this after the initial free call is up to you. However, we do not advise charging for this service at this point. Please allocate the time cost impact if you must, to client retention. It is in your interest to make sure they get through this challenging period. The value you establish during this time will pay dividends on the other side. You can of course issue an invoice and credit note if you wish.

New tools for a new world

You cannot help your clients through this period without using the technology that has been built to help you with just this. You may be tempted to revert to Excel but don't. You simply do not have the time and you will not be able to scale that to every client. It is also not equipped for accurate 3-way projections without formula error risk. You also do not have the time to trial all of the suggested cash flow products on the market, to help you drill down what you are looking for it is vital to consider the following:

Project the P&L, Balance Sheet and Cash flow

Projections based upon invoices or bills alone, or approximations of VAT/GST based upon historical activity, (rather than being calculated) is not accurate enough for the diagnosis required. The critical decisions businesses have to make require the ability to model debt, payment days, payroll etc. The balance sheet holds critical elements that have to be considered, and are not by many tools.



A further note on VAT/GST - be aware

It is vital that the forecast data that you are using to strategically plan your client's survival is accurate. VAT/GST in many add-ons are projected forward from prior periods, rather than calculated from transactions. Such inaccuracy could be deadly in the economic climate of today.

Dashboards are more important than ever

Presenting your clients with a cash flow projection and planning their survival strategy is of huge value. However extending this value past the meeting and giving them a tool which means they can monitor how they are tracking against the strategy you have set together is truly game changing.

Dashboard solutions should be able to compare future scenarios visually, as well as tracking against actual data or assessing historical performance.

Ongoing advisory and client retention comes from this foundational base.

4 strategy meeting

The work you have done to date, the detailed system notes (set out at page 5 of the implementation plan) and videos will prepare you well for this meeting (up to 1 hr).

During the meeting, we are looking to get an update after the initial assessment call, including a review of agreed actions, take the client through the draft projections we've prepared, identify any further possible effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business and update the projections.

We also want to make sure that the client is clear about the the government and other support available. We should offer our help where appropriate and inevitably the client will need our support with loan applications, if relevant. We should agree a list of actions for both them and us.

5 don't forget the follow up!

a note about online meetings

This may be the first online meeting either you or your client (or both) have ever been a part of. Whilst Zoom is easy to use, make sure you are online 5 minutes early and ready. The more composed you are, the calmer your client will be. These are not normal advisory meetings, you are not selling, you are crisis managing your scared and worried client through their immediate future. Follow these simple rules for every client meeting:

Camera on!

Make sure you have a working video camera, if your computer doesn't have one, get one delivered. It is an essential part of the new remote working world we find ourselves in. Your client's need you to have one: difficult business decisions cannot be suggested by a voice on the other side of a black screen. Ask your clients to put their camera on too.

Failing no computer cameras: Facetime them and mute your computers as you screen share.

Set the agenda

This is your meeting, you need to establish yourself as the leader. They need you to take charge and guide them through their current position and of course what happens next. Set the agenda (see the examples in the detailed system notes), ensure it is simple and starts immediately after salutations.

Lets get started on this session as we only have 30mins (or an hour depending on the meeting) and there's quite a lot to go through. My proposal for this meeting is [to take you through a high level picture of your numbers, gather as much information as I can to prepare more detailed numbers for you, answer any urgent questions you have and set a date for the next meeting] or

[for you to give me a quick update on the days since we last spoke, let me know of any further impacts or changes. I will then take you through a couple of models have for your business, both focused on your cash flow. Finally let's look at the best way forward together and agree a list of actions.] Anything you want to add to this?

Start with an assessment

On both calls you will want to either assess the current position or reassess after the initial assessment call. Confirm your understanding of the impacts of the virus felt or find out if there are any further changes. Things are moving daily and so it is vital to see if scenarios need to be updated. You can easily do this during the meeting with both Clarity and Futrli.

Keep eyes on

Share the dashboard screen first, keeping your camera on at all times - they need the human face behind the numbers and it will enable you to read their faces. Gauging an individual's reaction to what you are discussing is so much harder from behind a screen. Their face is the best indication.

Look for confusion, worry, fear and invite their participation. Remember some terms you may need to explain as well as the impact positively or negatively of what you're showing. You're the trained professional, they aren't. Make them feel comfortable about their numbers.



online meetings cont'd

Keep it focused

Bring the business on both Clarity and Futrli to life. Don't expect them to read the numbers. Make sure you have a beginning, a middle and an end. It is always tempting to present the solution from the off but you must take your client on a journey. Educate them and make sure they are on the same page. To help them understand and not be over whelmed by information, keep the meeting to the agendas.

Let them talk

Make sure that you ask your client throughout the meeting if they understand what you are explaining and if they have any questions. It is a lot of information that they are probably hearing for the first time. Do not flip from report to report assuming they are on the same page as you, it is highly likely that they aren't. Ask them to repeat what they understood - it will help engage them with what you are showing.

End with purpose

This meeting is about more than just a conversation, you need your client to walk away with a clear plan for the future. You must agree actions and outcomes that are to be taken by them and you. Fix urgent deadlines and update everything in the dashboard notes/action plan as well as booking the next check in. Be friendly. This may sound obvious but be empathetic, be kind. It is tough times and they will respond so much better if you are clearly in their corner.

Don't forget the detailed implementation plan and system notes accompanying this guide!

our promise to you

We will help you so that you can help your clients.

Time is critical. We will make it very easy to get started. No certification, no big training manuals, just simple focused support so that you will be able to action everything in this strategy, quickly and at scale.

We also acknowledge that additional costs can be hurdles, we have introduced special rates for all new clients during this time.

There are packages for every firm.



Appendix - list of government and other support available

- UK** [UK Government COVID-19: support for businesses](#)
[The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme \(CBILS\)](#)
[Enterprise Nation Guidance for Small Business](#)
- Ireland** [Government & others supports for COVID-19 impacted businesses](#)
- Australia** [Government Coronavirus information and support for business](#)
[COVID-19: The financial support available to small business, state-by-state](#)
- NZ** [Government & others COVID-19: Information for businesses](#)
- Canada** [Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan: Support for Canadians & Businesses](#)
- RSA** [Breakdown of SA Government's Economic Response to Covid-19](#)
[South Africa's economic plan for Covid-19](#)
- USA** [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Small Business Guidance & Loan Resources](#)
[COVID-19: How the federal government is supporting small business](#)

Don't forget the detailed implementation plan and system notes accompanying this guide!