



**Hisham Farouk**  
UAE CEO, Grant Thornton

**A**gility and responsiveness have always been an essential part of our firm’s DNA. With that mindset, we have transitioned seamlessly and in stages, starting with prioritising our people’s health and safety, while ensuring that our client commitments are not disrupted.

Technology plays a key role in how we operate, and we have been able to leverage our tech infrastructure to ensure all our 350 team members are connected to various communication platforms.

Connectivity and communication remain a constant norm between our teams and clients.

Scenario planning is something that we help our clients with, and now we are applying it to our own organisation by asking the difficult questions to prepare for these uncertain times.

Any decision made by businesses must be examined through the lens of social responsibility.

This outbreak is a global phenomenon, and despite its repercussions, it has brought communities and businesses closer than ever before. Businesses are created for people: those keen to achieve short-term survival by compromising their values and communities may have a price to pay later on. The world may have slowed down, but transactions have not come to a complete halt. Both people and businesses have focused their spending towards those entities that are communicative, accessible and take part in rebuilding the economy. This approach is the new norm and will continue to be so even after the dust settles.

If businesses are not safeguarding their communities or providing value to the market, now would be the right time for them to take on a proactive approach by reviewing their strategies, fine-tuning

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them to the current climate, and finding new ways to evolve. This crisis has been a learning curve for everyone, and it is only with true collaboration and resilience that we can come out from the other side with an unmatched competitive advantage and growth - which I’m sure we will.



**Bal Krishen**  
CEO, Century Financial

**A**s the Covid-19 pandemic continues to spread across the world, we remain committed to stopping it in its tracks, sooner rather than later. We are cooperating with the local authorities in supporting social distancing and work-from-home,

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without affecting our clients and our employees in any way.

Century Financial places a strong emphasis on the health of our employees as well as our customers. Anticipating government restrictions, we deployed a remote working strategy. Since we already had a business continuity plan in place in the event of any crisis, we have been able to make a seamless transition. For example, our IT department has enhanced the capacity of our servers to deal with the rise in data traffic.

Using web-based video solutions, separate virtual team rooms have been created for the company’s management and various departments for ensuring ongoing and efficient decision-making.

Our in-house customer relationship management software is now available via the internet with enhanced security features. Those who need to access their office workstation and finance platforms are given a secure VPN connection. On the corporate level, we have adopted a remote working policy/code of conduct to ensure security as well as privacy of company data.

To counter the threat of phishing attacks on our computer systems, employees have been briefed on various measures on how to protect data and their systems and the efficient use of company network.

We firmly believe that the steps we have taken to date will not only benefit us, but will be valuable long after the pandemic has ended.

With the absence of any permanent cure, social distancing, self-isolation, and in extreme cases, quarantine, are strongly recommended as the best way to combat the spread of this pandemic.

We live in an age where internet connectivity has enabled us to get work done remotely. Utilise this innovation now and we shall weather this storm.

