

Navigating through uncertain times: Balancing people and business needs with care

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In these unprecedented times, companies across the globe are focussed on ensuring business continuity keeping in mind the wellbeing of their employees and partners. At Acuity Knowledge Partners, we endeavoured to provide seamless services to our clients across the globe. For the Lending business unit this meant transitioning 400+ employees from four locations in three countries to work from remotely.

To continue business operations at the same high standards, we established a COVID-19 monitoring committee with management representation from all our delivery centres. The committee works closely with our site managers, delivery heads and Human Resources teams to assess the local impact and review guidelines based on recommendations from local authorities on a daily basis. It also closely monitors the evolving COVID-19 situation at a local and global level.

We decided on four main priorities to minimize disruptions:

- Business continuity (keeping our clients serviced)
- Safety of our teams operating across the globe
- Safeguarding the accessibility and security of our infrastructure
- Promoting remote collaboration and human connection

The Commercial Lending business unit pre-empted a potential lockdown in Gurugram, Bangalore and Colombo during the second week of March and initiated discussions with clients and obtained the required sign-off from the Compliance team to enable the teams to work from home. The delivery teams led by example and managed risk by updating all standard operating practices to reflect the most recent procedures for all tasks. Furthermore, they completed assessments to understand the volumes the onshore teams expected on a weekly basis, helping them to do the following:

- Measure and monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) of priority processes
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- Continue forecasting for key functions and adjust forecasts, as needed
- Analyse data feeds for rapid responses to changing risks

As the coronavirus situation continues to evolve, we remain committed to servicing and supporting our customers worldwide. We have built redundancy into all our critical teams such as Leverage Lending, Financial Spreading, Covenant Monitoring, Counterparty Risk Reviews and Portfolio Monitoring, along with other functions, to ensure SLAs are not impacted. We continue to focus on scaling our teams and capabilities to provide the world-class experience you have come to expect from us. Following the guidelines and instructions from the authorities, our employees have been equipped to perform their work from home while safeguarding information security. Our decisions on remote working are based on government regulations and recommendations, and are tied to assessed risk levels. With adequate and proactive preparedness, the results have been outstanding:

- Majority of the teams were operating at full capacity on day 2 of the lockdown
- Achieved uncompromised security and 100% compliance by using encrypted infrastructure
- Teams are partnering with banks to estimate the potential impact of the pandemic and to take the necessary steps to counter it, by
 - classifying reviews under a watch-list and escalating them for increased supervision
 - incorporating additional information in the reviews to assess the impact of the pandemic on the industry and on the operations and financial performance of borrowers/counterparties
- Extensively tracking news for each borrower, capturing rating downgrades and recommending credit model refresh where necessary
- Creating supplementary dashboards to monitor daily loan price movements, borrower liquidity positions and borrower covenant headroom

Our global clients have been impressed by the continuity of service, excellent quality and SLA-compliant performance in all the segments we cover.

Feedback from our clients

“Acuity family, thank you so very much for all your hard work and dedication during this time. The swell of this pandemic has shrunk over vast globe, as we collectively experience the impact of the wave. We could not manage the needs of our clients during this time without your support, and are very thankful to have you as part of the team. All the best to you and your families. Stay healthy”

– *Middle Market Credit Campus Leader*

“The efforts undertaken by Acuity are amazing. Within short notice, team is able to start regular deliveries through work from home and made us feel regular BAU scenario. Appreciate a lot the extra time the team is spending on daily basis for delivery support”

– *National Portfolio Manager, Commercial Real Estate*

“I want to specifically thank your leaders and team members who came in over weekends and early/late hours to help with the distribution of laptops to make this all possible. I also want to thank you all in advance for the hard work and effort you are putting in now and in the coming weeks to help as we move through the next few weeks with a smaller team size”

– *Head of SBA, BB and MM Portfolio Monitoring*

We believe that in such times of uncertainty, we need to demonstrate humaneness and empathy in every conversation we have, every decision we make, and every action we take. Let’s take care of ourselves and each other

Stay safe; we’re in this together!

About Acuity Knowledge Partners

Acuity Knowledge Partners is a leading provider of high-value research, analytics and business intelligence to the financial services sector. The company supports over 300+ financial institutions and consulting companies through a team of over 2,500+ subject matter experts who work as an extension of the clients’ teams based out of various global delivery centres.

We empower our clients to drive revenues higher. We innovate using our proprietary technology and automation solutions. We enable our clients to transform their operating model and cost base.