

WHITEPAPER

# CORONAVIRUS

CONSTRUCTION IS BRAVING  
THE STORM IN THE CLOUD



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## A NEW REALITY

Empty supermarket shelves, closed schools, lockdown, a growing number of affected by the novel coronavirus and NHS staff working beyond exhaustion to save people's lives. Over the last few months this has been a fraction of the heartbreaking reality for a world fighting an invisible enemy. This is a disturbing, confusing and difficult time for everyone regardless of location, occupation and line of business. While we are already getting used to the new 'normality', we should certainly admit that the pandemic has exceeded our expectations - it has been more severe and has taken far longer than anybody thought. It has in fact turned into a long-term challenge for many businesses and has raised many questions around how construction can carry on being efficient and profitable and improve resilience to unexpected crises.

## CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

It is beyond doubt that we live in unprecedented times and construction companies must adapt quickly. A lot has already been done but many people may still be exposed and affected by the coronavirus and the risk of mass absence from site is still here. Government advice is that construction sites can remain open for as long as they adhere to the social distancing guidance of 2 metres apart. However, this has already posed a lot of challenges to quite a few employees, especially in London where getting to site involves public transport. Despite trying to keep business as usual and the sites open, a lot of contractors have already been warning of the catastrophic impact COVID-19 could have on the industry.



Whilst we all feel that we are all living in a surreal bubble right now, everything that humanity is facing is quite real. We start asking questions that were not pressing concerns a couple of months ago. Yet, we need answers and we need them quickly. Is construction not one of the most vulnerable industries? Should we be getting more prepared on how to handle global (health) crises? And if so, is construction future-proof? Is it ready to face the challenges of today or the uncertainty of tomorrow?

Over the last few months there have been widespread site shutdowns and now more than ever is the time to ensure that there is a plan to continue operation in extraordinary circumstances. Quite a few companies have already remodelled their office space to provide a safer environment for their employees and to ensure the recommended distance of 2 metres apart. Construction companies have already restricted site access to visitors. Site workers are asked not to go into offices and vice versa.

While many at construction sites are involved in physical labour which is more challenging with reduced numbers, a lot of other activities can potentially be carried out from anywhere and work does not have to cease entirely because of site closures.

## OPPORTUNITY LIES IN EVERY CRISIS

The extent of the societal shock worldwide will drive a large portion of our personal and business activities to go online and highlight the importance of digital tools for business process management. Don't we all spend a lot of time in meetings that could have been achieved through emails, web meetings or simply a project progress update through a few clicks in your business management or ERP systems. Crisis times also present opportunities: more sophisticated and flexible use of technology being one of them. The time for change is now and businesses should embrace it if they want to overcome the challenges of today and bounce back tomorrow. If your business still operates with few digital tools to serve different departments, or you base your reports on spreadsheets, you need to reconsider your processes now. Coronavirus is a big challenge for every business and after this storm passes, we will all understand that it has transformed the way that we all work. Things are never going to be the same again.



“Is construction ready to face the challenges of today or the uncertainty of tomorrow.”



## NOW MORE THAN EVER

In a time of crisis construction companies need more than ever accurate and up-to-date reports to rely on and make informed decision for the future of their operations. This is the key to carefully control costs, review predicted margins, and forecast short to mid and long term financial risks due to COVID-19. These are important in everyday operation, but even more so in times of uncertainty when stopping operations means violating contractual obligations and potential penalties for project delays. Business leaders need to be able to trust and rely on a single source of truth that involves input from all departments across the business. Only through powerful insights into business data, finances and efficiency, construction companies can brave yet another storm.

It will be far more challenging for your staff to perform their daily activities from home and demonstrate the same level of productivity if your company does not benefit from a fully integrated end-to-end business management solution. If that's the case, you risk experiencing the amplified effects of miscommunication, an increased number of mistakes, duplicated data, compromised reports, cost overruns and poor efficiency.

Companies that have introduced end-to-end business management solutions and have set up their software in the cloud now experience the benefits of flexibility. They not only work with one single integrated system, and hence one source of the truth, but are also able to access it from anywhere and at any time. Not much has really changed for them in the times of the coronavirus pandemic. As usual, they have access to their documents and data from any device remotely and when they need them. This is what allows construction businesses to adapt quickly in difficult times. If you do not have a solution in the cloud such as 4PS Construct, that is a lot more difficult. How do you ensure that all data is kept up to date? And that the operational users have access to all documents and data? Even more importantly – do you feel you can trust the data that you make your decisions on?

## REMOTE WORKING IN CONSTRUCTION

In the construction industry not everyone can just work from home, because site staff simply can't do their job from home for obvious reasons. At the same time financial departments, project managers, admin, estimating teams and many more can easily be efficient working from home. With an "online workplace" employees have access to the digital environment of your organisation. Staff are no longer solely dependent on their office work station, but can log in from mobile, tablet or laptop as long as there is an internet connection and continue to be efficient remotely.



## **BRAVE THE STORM IN THE CLOUD**

It is beyond doubt that working in the cloud allows you to make the most of your “home office” during unannounced, challenging periods as we currently experience. And what it feels like managing a crisis today will become the norm tomorrow. Here are a few benefits of having your end-to-end business solution 4PS in the cloud:

### **SAFER AND MORE SECURE ENVIRONMENT**

Security is and should be one of the main reasons why companies in general consider moving to the cloud. In a world where cyber crime is a daily occurrence, we all try to protect identity, sensitive data and vulnerable business information. While compromising key information is likely to happen if laptops gets stolen or hacked, breaching the cloud security is very difficult. Moreover, when you have your data on the cloud, you can delete any sensitive information or move it to another account remotely should you have any doubts.

### **LOWER COST**

Choosing and maintaining the right hardware is very expensive and requires technicians to install and look after equipment. When you move to the cloud these services are included, and hence you have much better control over the cost. So, no need to allocate budget for maintenance.

### **BE FLEXIBLE**

We are driven by technology in our personal lives and expect the same level of flexibility and availability in our business lives. One of the big advantages of cloud solutions is that they can be accessed at any time and from anywhere. This is especially convenient for construction businesses where easy information exchange between the office and the field is essential. All you need is a reliable Internet connection.

### **PROCESSING POWER AND EASY SCALABILITY**

Rather than purchasing and keeping servers, finding appropriate storage and hiring more technicians, you can choose to have all this sorted out for you through the cloud option. If you have your business management systems on premise, all of your hardware will be in your office and you may need to plan ahead and draft out how much storage you may need going forward. As a comparison, scaling up and down on the cloud is easy and instant.

### **NO DATA LOSS DUE TO LOW STORAGE**

With traditional on-premise solutions, you need to perform regular back-ups and there is the question of whether there will be enough storage for them. Through the cloud this will not be an issue as you can easily meet the needs of your business and back up blueprints, CVR reports and project management activities within a few clicks.

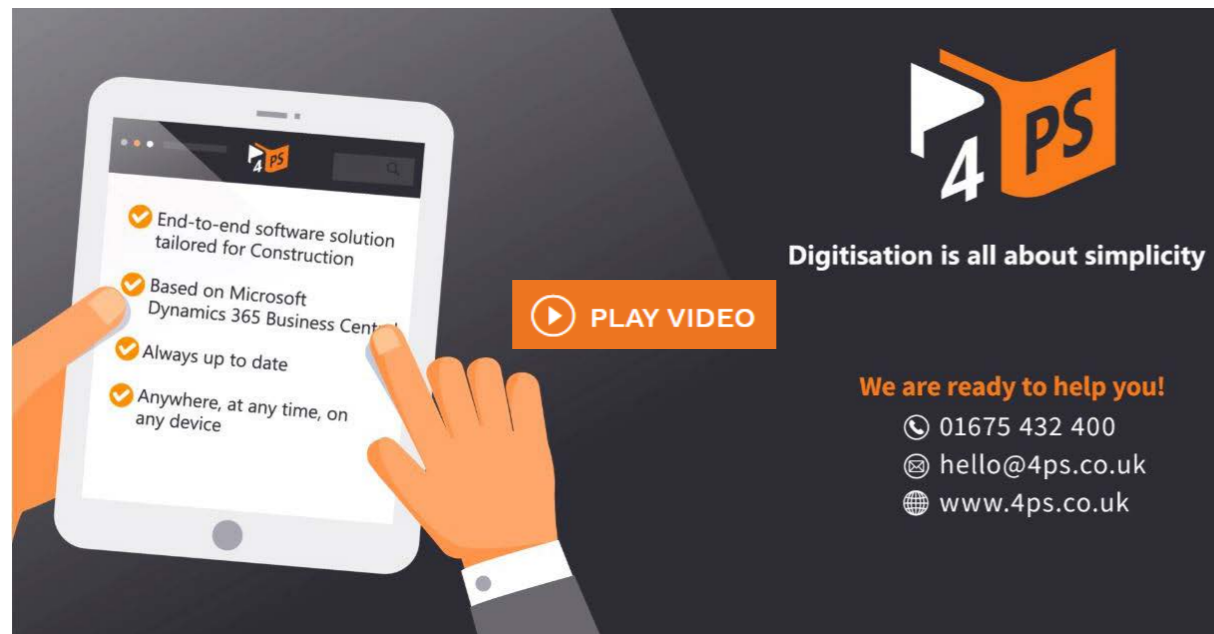
### **FUTURE-PROOF AND ALWAYS UP TO DATE**

Let’s face it, cloud is the future – always up to date, sustainable and with the latest functionality. Our 4PS solution on the cloud updates happen smoothly so that there is no disruption to your business. At the same time, you benefit from the latest technology at your fingertips. Hence, improved system performance and better user experience.



## 4PS CONSTRUCT – THE AWARD-WINNING SOLUTION FOR YOUR CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS

When you have the right ERP solution that could also be cloud-based such as 4PS Construct, your data is stored in the Microsoft Azure cloud. Based on Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central, formerly known as Navision or Microsoft Dynamics NAV, the [award-winning 4PS Construct](#) is an all-in-one business management solution for your business processes. By choosing a cloud-based solution, your data is available anytime, anywhere and on any device. Wondering how working in the cloud with the ERP solution 4PS Construct based on Business Central works? Watch our [animation video](#) to see if our integrated software solution is right for you.



**4PS**

Digitisation is all about simplicity

[▶ PLAY VIDEO](#)

**We are ready to help you!**

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- ✓ Based on Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central
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- ✓ Anywhere, at any time, on any device



### About the author

**Peter Jaworski** | Peter has over 13 years of experience in the construction industry working with contractors - analysing their business processes and implementing digital software solutions to improve profits, drive efficiencies and meet the growing demands of clients.

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