We've started this newsletter several times, because we found it really tough to wrap up a year like 2020. It seems like every other newsletter we've read recently starts by reflecting on the bad things of 2020. Therefore we thought we'd be different (what's new?) and reflect on the positive things in 2020. This time last year, there was no way to see what the onrushing train called 2020 would bring us. Bush fires – the likes of which we'd never seen - ravaged the country. And then on March 1st, a Perth man became the first Australian COVID-19 fatality.

But as we reflect on the year from a positive perspective, there is a lot to be grateful for. COVID helped us shine a light on what is most important in life. It showed how wonderful the world can be when it is quiet and it proved that if we all worked together, we can achieve some great things.

We're also grateful for our clients who demonstrated incredible resilience and strength. From our view, so many people took to 'Working From Home' and using video conferencing without skipping (much of) a beat. For many, there were lots of balls to juggle and keep in the air – whether it was the challenge of keeping school aged children engaged in learning to simply finding a space in a home or apartment to concentrate on the never ending stream of video calls. We're grateful for all of those who simply 'got on with it' and demonstrated an impressive level of courage, patience and perseverance!

Finally we're also extremely grateful for an incredible number of NEW clients in 2020. In March we would have never thought we would have tallied 27 new clients in 2020. For us, it's always been about building long term, trusted relationships and we're grateful to those new clients who have given us the opportunity to establish relationships with them this year!

Human-kind's resilience and flexibility to adjust to new (digital) modes of operation is the big winner in 2020, and one we should take a moment to appreciate! If you want more 'good things' of 2020 – check out the Washington Post, The World Economic Forum, or My Modern Met. Stay positive – the recent outbreak in Sydney highlights we're not through the end of it yet.

## The digital pivot and looking after your new digital customers.

The Economist calls this the year 'when everything changed' and will be remembered as a turning point. The pandemic is proof that change is possible even in conservative industries like health care. Harvard Business Review has a few great stories of how businesses have successfully pivoted during the pandemic. One of our local 'pivot' favourites is Providoor – a great 2020 story of shift and resilience.

Engaging with your customers via digital channels is here to stay too. McKinsey found "75 percent of people using digital channels for the first time indicate that they will continue to use them when things return to 'normal'. Companies will need to ensure that their digital channels are on par with, or better than, those of their competition to succeed."

New digital users are likely the most vulnerable to cyber threats – new digital users less aware of cyber hygiene like not re-using passwords. As you (re)build your new digital channels, you must helped them better protect themselves by building security into these channels such as two-factor authentication, password complexity checking, using geolocation techniques, or even providing simple do's and don'ts. Digital is here to stay and you will need to engage with your customers in many digital ways – but protect those customers because they'll continue to be important to you in the foreseeable future.

Also, don't just get your digital channels "penetration tested". Have a meaningful conversation with an expert on what can go wrong and areas to explore to ensure you're getting true protection not just a 'test'. For example, cloud configuration errors often leave the doors open to your databases, and consider what is getting logged and monitored, or confirm you're using encryption correctly. Simply drop us a note if you want a straight forward 'laundry list' of things to consider and why they're relevant.

## Pivot your cyber plans to reflect COVID lessons.

Many think working from home will last. One source thinks "25-30% of the workforce will be working from home multiple days a week by the end of 2021". There are some interesting thoughts here too.

But what does this mean for cyber security programs?  A majority of data breaches start with a phishing attack and it's time to protect your weakest link – your staff who are likely to be working from home. Cyber Awareness is about behaviour change – not putting up posters in the (now mostly dormant) building lift well. Frequency, reinforcement and 'operant conditioning' are key principles to consider, and it's essential to pivot from 'protecting the perimeter' to empowering your staff to make the right decision. Let us know if you want help – we do it a lot – there are some really good approaches and automated platforms that can make a difference and justify the effort in real improvements.

## 2020 was a good year to better understand the cloud too…

Thirty senior leaders kindly shared their thinking, ideas and challenges as their organisations adopted cloud technology (large to small and government to commercial).

Watch this space. In early 2021 we'll formally publish the results of forty questions exploring various aspects of cloud adoption and security. For example, we found that ALL (100%) of those leaders are embracing the cloud and now 40% of their data in the cloud is considered to be SENSITIVE. Cloud adoption has been quick and is in full swing. On the flip side, 43% do not discuss cloud-specific risks at the Board level, and while 80% had well defined organisational policies for cloud use, over two thirds (68%) felt those policies were not actually followed.

At first blush, we wondered if cloud adoption had gone too fast. But we learned from our leaders that it's actually the rest of the 'business' needs to catch up and (re)align the organisation's investments, priorities, policies and processes to be more reflective of the cloud and its unique risks.  Digital is here to stay, and it's time the rest of the organisation caught up with cloud adoption. Watch this space for more Leader insights!

## Parting thoughts

Unless you switched off a bit early for the holidays, you would have undoubtedly seen lots about the 'Solar Winds' compromise. In true form, Wired's latest is a good summary. There's a lot of complexity to it and a few believe "the magnitude of this ongoing attack is hard to overstate". If you have Solar Winds and would like help understanding what to do, give us a call. Irrespective, we think the 'real' lesson here is that we're all vulnerable and need a plan for when things go pear shaped. That's why we partnered with Israeli's 'Be-Strategic' platform to help organisations develop a practical and actionable Incident Response Plan. You can learn more about it here, or just drop us a note.

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Let's finish with our start – there are a lot of things to be grateful of in 2020. 2021 will continue to have challenges, but we should take a moment to appreciate the positives and look for the silver linings as it's 'how we all make it through'! That said, our sincere thoughts and wishes go out to those who have lost, or who may still lose, family and friends in these difficult times. We sadly counted a few ourselves this year. Again, keep positive – together we are strong. We hope you have a spectacular 2021.

Thanks for being part of our community. Please 'follow us' on LinkedIn or Twitter, and don't hesitate to send this to others or have them subscribe here.

Kind regards,

we're **independent** consultants – it's about **your** business and **your** success
with a **singular focus** – cyber security is all we do
leveraging **experienced** professionals – credentials, not checklists