

2019/20



# Xceptional Update Q3

THINK  
OUTSIDE  
THE BOX

# Contents

- ❖ Jan-Mar 2020 Founder Letter
- ❖ COVID-19 Business Response
- ❖ 100% Working from Home
- ❖ Staff News
- ❖ Candidate Workshop
- ❖ Product Update
- ❖ Recruitment
- ❖ Coaching
- ❖ Sales, Marketing & Public Relations
- ❖ Disappointments
- ❖ Pending Milestones
- ❖ Cool Stuff that's Happened
- ❖ Key Metrics



# Jan-Mar 2020 Founder Letter

Greetings,

This quarter has been one of both great promise and great challenge. From a weekly founder call I've been joining, many other businesses have a similar perspective.

Xceptional celebrated its 3rd birthday in March and ran our first 2020 assessment workshop in February. We expanded in Queensland as Aron moved to join Narelle who has been flying solo in Brisbane for 1 year.

In January we placed 3 people into work and looked on track for our best quarter yet in placements and revenue. This all led to some excitement across the team as we prepared for our first Autism Uncovered workshop for hiring managers. Oversubscribed with 86 people signed up we had to pull the event a week before it ran due to the Covid 19 restrictions

The Covid weeks have seen lots of change for us all. Having lived in Hong Kong for SARS and in Boston within earshot of the Boston marathon bombing, I have experienced my share of crises. Yet this is unprecedented.

In response, our team have been pouring our time into 3 areas related to Covid: candidate wellness; cutting costs, and; creative growth opportunities.

Our top priority has been on coaching through this time to ensure our candidates and staff are thriving. One upside of the restrictions is that our candidates and staff are doing the same or better than pre-Covid.

# From the Founder

One described working from home as “I’m finding it great, to be honest. I’m much less stressed and anxious without dealing with everything in the city.” See our coaching update on page 13 for more details.

Some clients, such as the state government, are continuing to hire. Others are temporarily pausing hiring. In response, we are cutting costs by 10-20%. Our management team has taken a 15% pay cut, we immediately cancelled our office rent and we have reduced costs in other areas.

Our driving goal has been to look for ways to grow during this period. We held an all team meeting to brainstorm ways we could adapt our products and services for this new situation. We have made large strides this quarter with our tech - see the product update, pg 9 - and we look forward to giving you a live demo soon.

One highlight of the quarter was placing Aiden without an interview: he did not leave his home end-to-end, assessed, placed and now working from home. Our team is so excited about his example, that he is mentioned in this report by our heads of coaching, recruitment and sales.

Ultimately, this change will have a positive impact on breaking barriers for other neurodiverse people like Aiden, allowing them in large numbers to enter the workforce and to work flexibly.

Regards,  
Mike

Mike Tozer, CEO and Founder

# COVID-19 Business Response

Our business, like all business, have put in place a business continuity plan in response to the challenges we currently face and anticipate facing throughout Covid 19 epidemic. We have been impacted in all areas of our business with the exception of software testing. Clients are pausing hiring, planned projects have been put on hold and businesses are taking a wait and see approach, especially when it comes to hiring new staff with autism. There are many reasons for this and we are working to address them in different ways. A high level summary of our staged response is below.

## **Level 1 Business response - linked to runway, burn rate and cash at bank**

1. Ensure all candidates and staff are thriving and equipped to do their work from home, thrive and feel connected to others and their work colleagues
2. Increase grant submissions and explore previously excluded grants
3. Bring forward, adapt current products and services or explore new revenue generation products and services that can be delivered remotely now and also add to long term business delivery capability
4. Immediate expense reductions across the business including salary reductions in order to preserve cash at bank.

## **Level 2 Business response - linked to runway, burn rate and cash at bank**

Further expense reductions across the business if possible and increased salary reductions.

## **Level 3 Business response - linked to runway, burn rate and cash at bank**

Further salary reductions and the beginning of headcount reductions

## **Level 4 Business response - linked to runway, burn rate and cash at bank**

Further salary reductions and more headcount reductions

# 100% Working from home

Xceptional has now transitioned to 100% working from home leaving our office at Fishburners rather empty. The transition was relatively painless as we were used to a remote workforce with key people in Brisbane and most of us working from home at one point or another.

The biggest challenge going forward is for our staff with children also at home and the competing responsibilities. However, with flexibility of work hours and a truck load of patience this is being ironed out.

Kurt is in the midst of doing a home audit to ensure everyone's environment is suitable and safe.



# Staff News

## Wedding Bells

Congratulations to Brendan on his marriage to Thalia.



## Aron on the move

In January, Aron packed up his family and moved up to sunny Brisbane to open up our official office and join Narelle in representing QLD. While we missed Aron's energy about the office (for the short time between visits) his move has helped fast-track our expansion into Queensland.



# Candidate Workshop

**February 2019**

Applications = 42

Attendees = 12

The assessment workshop was supported by a team of client volunteers who acted as workshop aids from RBA, Alphasis. As well as an employer panel featuring hiring managers from NSW Government, Deputy and Google.

Coming out of the New Year break we had a shorter lead time and more DES recommendations, this could explain why we had fewer candidates with previous tech experience. To accommodate this, the group was split into two for the technical components which, while splitting our resources, provided a better experience all round.

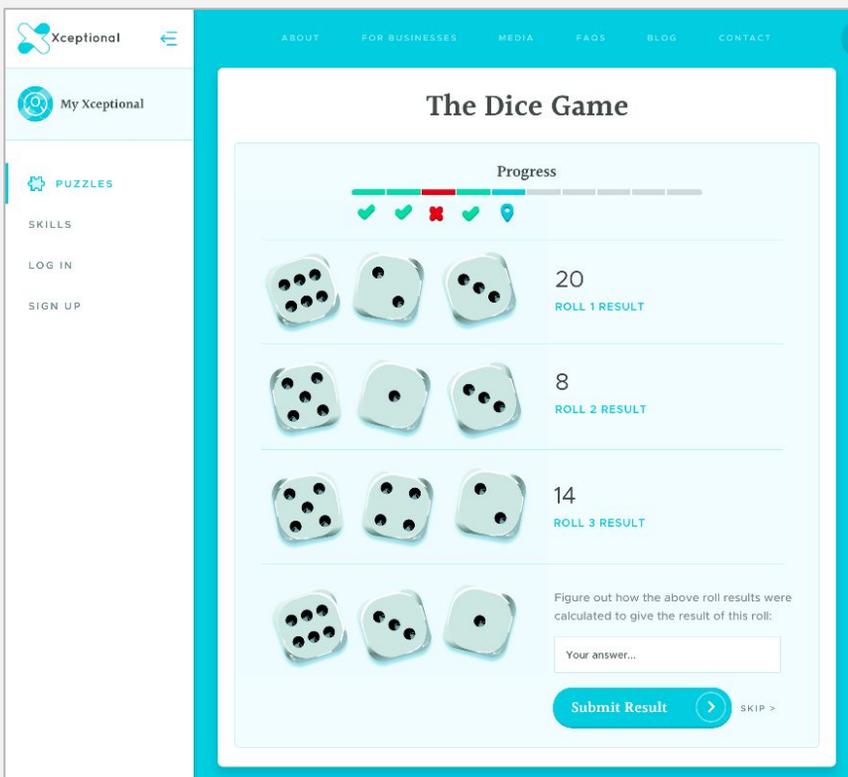


# Product Update

We started 2020 by locating the Xceptional development team at the Tech Insite office 3 days per week. This has facilitated good collaboration and knowledge sharing between Tech InSite and the Xceptional team.

The development effort is well underway for the first beta release of the MyXceptional platform. The development work currently in progress aims to produce R1, a beta release that meet the following goal:

*“The goal of R1 is to implement core functionality that allows us to commence beta testing by both candidate and recruiter users. This will allow us to incorporate feedback from end users into our development process sooner, ensuring that we build the right product.”*



*Screen shot of the Dice Game on the web page.*

# Product Update

*By the end of Q3, candidates will be able to start building their profile; by entering biographical information and career goals along with taking some of our tests. Our recruitment team will be able to view candidate profiles and test results by logging into a secure administration portal.”*

The top screenshot displays a 'Discrepancies' puzzle. It features two tables of US Census Bureau data. The first table, 'Sheet One', has columns for Year, Population, and Millions. The second table, 'Sheet Two', has columns for Year, Population, Millions, and another Year, Population, Millions. The puzzle instructions state: 'Spot the discrepancies between the two tables below. In 10 clicks or less, click the incorrect values on the second sheet.'

Sheet One			Sheet Two		
Year	Population	Millions	Year	Population	Millions
1950	369880000	369.9	1950	369880000	369.9
1951			1950	369880000	369.9
1952			1950	369880000	369.9
1953			1950	369880000	369.9
1954			1950	369880000	369.9
1955			1950	369880000	369.9
1956			1950	369880000	369.9
1957			1950	369880000	369.9
1958			1950	369880000	369.9
1959			1950	369880000	369.9
1960			1950	369880000	369.9
1961			1950	369880000	369.9
1962			1950	369880000	369.9
1963			1950	369880000	369.9
1964			1950	369880000	369.9
1965			1950	369880000	369.9
1966			1950	369880000	369.9
1967			1950	369880000	369.9
1968			1950	369880000	369.9

The bottom screenshot displays a 'Number Puzzle'. It features a progress bar with five indicators: three green checkmarks, one red X, and one blue location pin. The instructions state: 'Drag all of the digits from 1 to 9 into the circles so that the sum of the numbers in each straight line is the same. Each digit can only be used once.' The puzzle grid consists of a central circle connected to four other circles, which are further connected to a top row of three circles and a bottom row of two circles. The digits 1, 6, 8, and 4 are shown in circles on the left, and 3, 2, 9, 5, 7 are shown in circles on the right. A 'Submit Answer' button is at the bottom.

*Two more finished assessment puzzles.*

# Recruitment

## Partnerships

This quarter we signed an MOU with Wise Employment, a Disability Employment Service (DES) Provider with over 130 offices nationally. This now adds to our DES partnerships with APM and Matchworks reaching approximately 1500 autistic job seekers nationally.

## Social Media

We engaged Rachel Worsely, a neurodiverse journalist from Neurodiversity Media to publish a story on a recent success story. Our story on Aiden was published to Facebook, reaching over 60,000 readers and being shared across Facebook over 400 times. There was an overwhelming response of congratulations for Aiden.

<https://xceptional.io/employees/land-first-job-without-interview/>



# Recruitment cont.

## Registrations

160 new candidates registered this quarter

## Placed

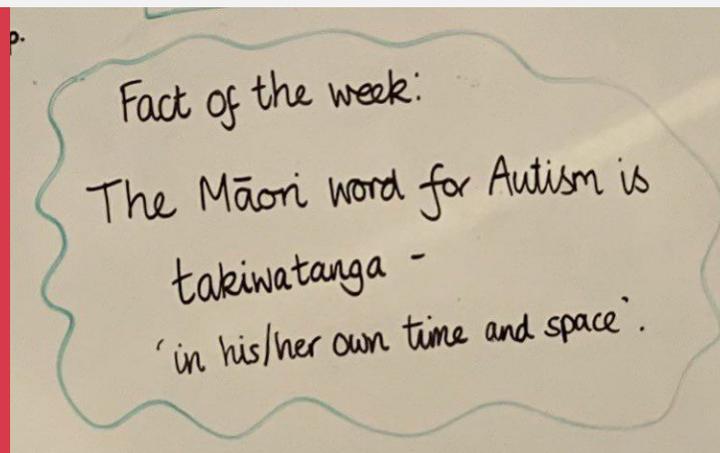
3 candidates (2 x Geosynergy, 1 x Mable)

## Assessments

Our candidates have participated in over 550 assessments in total this quarter including coding assessments, work sample challenges and TAO puzzles. In addition to our candidate assessments, the Dice Game on our website has been attempted over 350 times this quarter

## Looking Forward

The next quarter sees a focus on further partnerships with DES providers and streamlining our candidate experience to be more accessible and user friendly while improving its scalability to prepare for an increase in demand.



# Coaching

## Response to COVID -19

Coaching sessions dramatically increased in March due to the sudden changes to candidates working arrangements. As a general rule each candidate has happily transitioned to a working from home arrangement and are finding the situation positive. Coaching has focused on:

- Clear communication
- Self advocacy
- Asking for help
- Work/ Life balance and maintaining routines

Coaching also increased for managers as they build confidence with remote managing and having clear expectations.

As a response to COVID-19 guidelines on “Empowering Autistic Employees during a time of change” was developed and shared with managers.

## Coaching

- With placed candidates: 7 (DPIE, WiseTech, Geosynergy, Mable)
- With external: 1 (Mindshare)
- Total hours: Jan =10, Feb =13.5, Mar = 23.5

*“ This process has shown me how important the coaching is in placing an individual in my company. It helps with fine tuning and getting the best out of people and it helps me adjust my management styles.”*

Geoff (GeoSynergy)

# Coaching cont...

*"How are you feeling today?",  
"Human," - Evgeny*

## Onboarding Assessments

- 2 (Felix, Maria) Face to face
- 1 (Cameron) Video link
- 1 (Aiden) an Xceptional first! A modified version of the onboarding assessment completely undertaken in text form via email.

## Training

- 45 min Rapid Fire training - Mable (30 participates)
- 60 min intro to Autism Employment DCS
- 45 min Rapid Fire training - Coder Academy

## Other areas

- February Assessment Workshop - increased soft skills and extended the groupwork components of the workshop.
- Meetings and possible collaborations with being discussed with Travenger, Provider Choice and Sydney University Student Support Services.
- Participation in webinar training on Executive Functioning with Barb Cook

*"I'm finding it [working from home] great, to be honest. I'm much less stressed and anxious without dealing with everything in the city and the office. I'm better able to focus and with communication being asynchronous I can ask for help more easily and understand the help I'm given more clearly."*

Felix (WiseTech)

# Sales, Marketing & PR

## **New Clients**

The quarter was productive both in terms of opportunities created and new business won. Opportunities were created with Seek, HireUp, Archirtar, WorkPac Group, Queensland Government, Zip, PWC & Karista. Agreements were signed with Alphasys, Affix, Mable, and Equifax.

## **Speaking**

Aron spoke at the Queensland client event for Affix. Unfortunately, Mike's engagements for B Sides in Melbourne and DevSecCon have been postponed due to the virus. Mike and Sarah spoke at the RegTech gala awards held online.

Mike recorded A Reason to Run - Life and Faith podcast,  
<https://www.publicchristianity.org/a-reason-to-run/>

## **Media/news**

We have had tremendous support from our investor Roslyn Baguley who has a background in media and PR. Each month we are producing a press release for example the February assessment workshop and distributing to AAP. To date we have had 2 HR publications contact us for interviews. In addition we have produced 3 blogs. The highlight was the story of Aiden, a selective mute autistic teenager who landed his first job without having an interview. The story reached 62,143 people on Facebook and was shared by 483 people!

## **Pending**

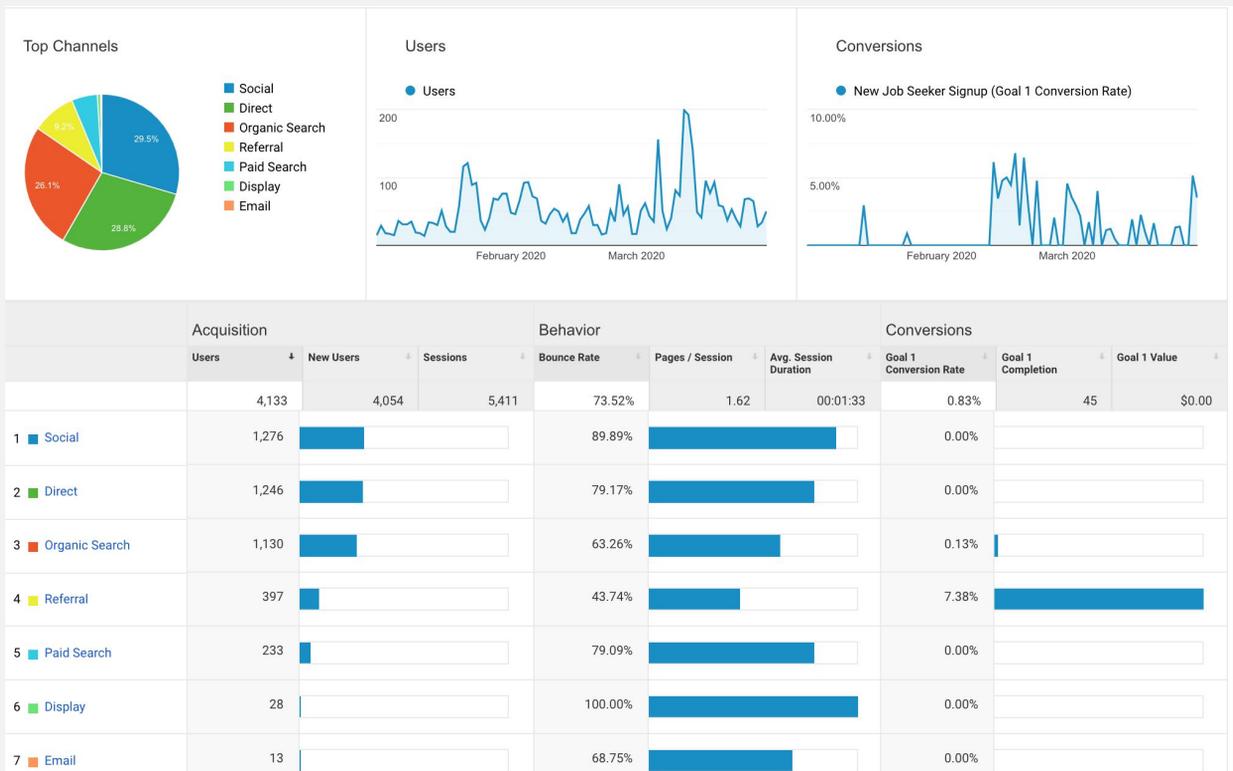
We have proposed a large program of work with NSW Government and are negotiating agreements with recruiting firms WorkPac Group and IPA. Our lengthy negotiations with CBA, AMP, Qantas and RBA continue with COVID19 slowing progress.

# Sales, Marketing & PR cont.

## Looking forward

The deliberate change in focus to startups and scaleups is aimed at decreasing the sales cycle to less than 90 days. While COVID19 will result in some firms scaling back we are focusing attention on growth industries while doubling our efforts with the NSW & QLD Government who will continue to hire during this time.

Our tech team is supporting marketing by providing visibility to our web traffic and conversion to new job seeker through Google Analytics (see below example).



# Disappointments

COVID19 has undoubtedly had an unexpected and sudden impact on a number of our clients and prospects at a time we were ramping up.

- Bside, Regtech and DevSecCon conferences were postponed to later in the year.
- Slowdown in recruitment for some customers.
- PEERS Training Course postponed to later in the year.
- We were also informed that we were unsuccessful in our ILC grant submission.

A big disappointment was having to postpone Autism Uncovered, the event was our main activation activity for employers, it generated widespread interest and was sold out in only 2 weeks. While we look forward to the rescheduled event we will be releasing stories from the speakers as blogs in the coming months. Each of the 8 panel members has recommitted to the August event with one hiring manager from WiseTech willing to fly from Melbourne to speak, saying 'I really believe in what you do'.

# Pending Milestones

- Full transition to our internal tech team for the continuing build of our assessment tech.
- Signed multi-year agreement for large government client for complete suite of autism hiring program of work
- Launch of new products and services to complement our existing suite
- Release of our assessment and profile tech for beta testing with select client group
- Becoming a registered NDIS supplier - we are looking into this currently at the request of the NDIS. There are a number of hurdles we need to overcome and work through to determine if the effort is worth the reward
- NDIS recruitment - They have approached us to see if we can supply them with candidates to fill roles within the NDIA itself.
- April Zoom meeting with Professor Simon Baron-Cohen - the world's leading expert in adults with autism to begin a conversation around partnership, knowledge exchange and assessment assistance.

## Items we are working on or need help with

Introductions to senior level business line executives within Australian federal and state government departments. We would really appreciate warm introductions to enable us to connect with them and let them know about our work.

We have a number of businesses on our prospect list, including Canva, Domain, hiPages and IRESS. We are targeting heads of technology and HR/recruitment leads. Can you connect us with startups/scaleups that are growing through this time? Please reach out if you have connections that may help.

# Cool stuff that's happened

## Social Traders

Xceptional became certified as a social enterprise through Social Traders. With the rise of social procurement we see opportunity to expand our reach with prospective customers.



## Queensland Office

Aron moved to Brisbane to expand the Queensland office. We have secured 12 months free rent at the Hub, Brisbane's premier coworking space.



## New Merchandise

Our new range of merchandise has arrived from Spectrum Designs our partner in the US. This time we also ordered Polo Shirts and a range in Navy which look great.



# Key Metrics

*"My only regret is that I didn't come to Xceptional sooner."  
Wisetech employee.*

## Finance

<b>Sales and other Revenue</b>	\$37,943
<b>Grant Revenue</b>	\$163,203
<b>Expenses</b>	\$404,531
<b>Profit/Loss</b>	-\$202.168

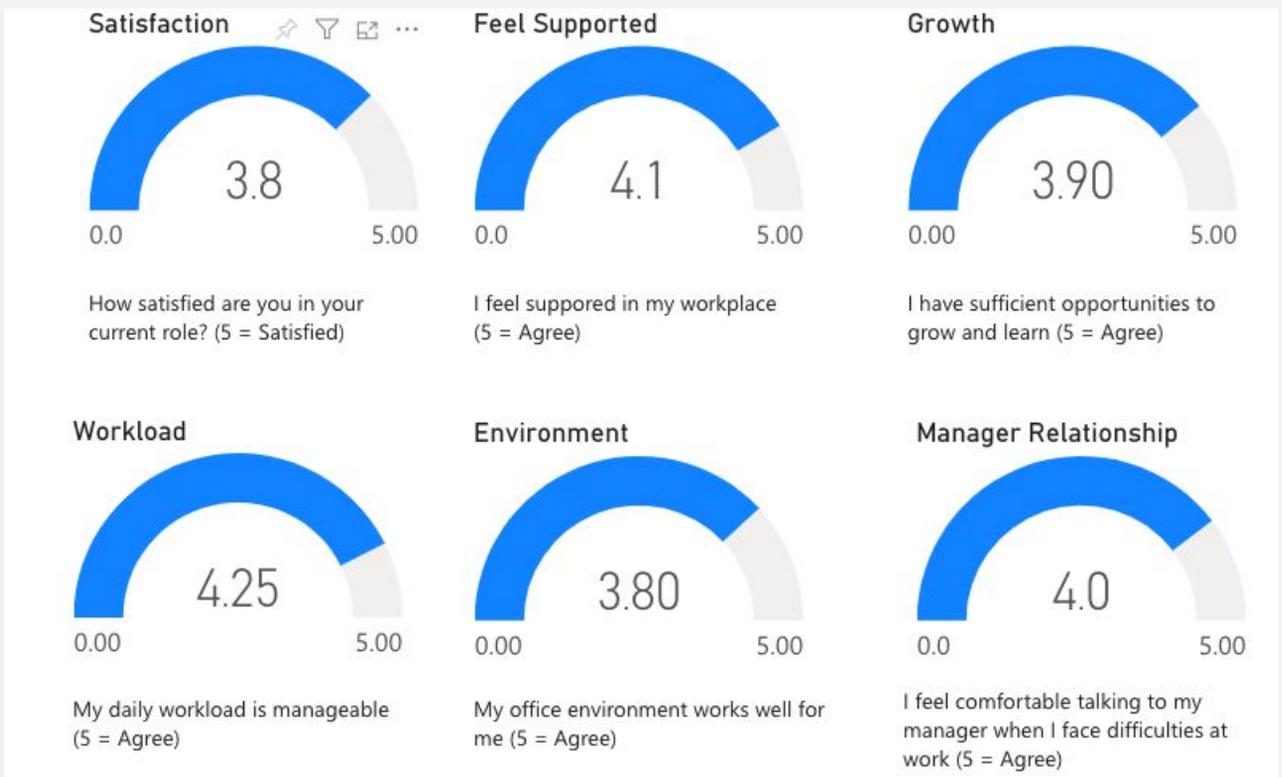
## Candidate

<b>Placements</b>	3
<b>Satisfaction in job</b> Scale - 1 not satisfied and 10 very satisfied	8.2/10 10 responded - 43.5% response rate
<b>Happiness with Xceptional engagement</b> Scale - 1 not happy and 10 very happy	9.0/10 10 responded - 43.5% response rate

# Key Metrics

## Candidate

This is a preview of our new social impact dashboard which collates data on the happiness and wellness of our candidates. The data comes from our monthly survey of candidates placed into work. This data allows our job coaches to see how our candidates are progressing individually and on a per-employer basis.



Help us make the Xceptional, ordinary

